

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOURAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The Relationship between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance as Mediated by Work Engagement in Ethiopian Research Universities

By:

Nega Balcha Tolosa

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Educational Planning and Management of Addis Ababa University, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy and Leadership

October, 2025

The Relationship between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance as Mediated by Work Engagement in Ethiopian Research Universities

By:

Nega Balcha Tolosa

Supervisor

Dr. Jeilu Oumer Hussien

(Associate Professor)

Department of Educational Planning and Management

College of Education and Language Studies

Addis Ababa University

October, 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The Relationship between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance as Mediated by Work Engagement in Ethiopian Research Universities

By:

Nega Balcha Tolosa

We hereby certify that Nega Balcha Tolosa's dissertation meets acceptable standards and is fully adequate in scope and quality. Therefore, we approve it as fulfilling the dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Educational Policy and Leadership degree.

Chairperson Degene Aligaz (PhD)	**Signature**	**Date** 21/01/2026
Advisor Jeff Dunn	**Signature**	**Date** 05/05/2018
Internal Examiner prof. Derebssa Dufera	**Signature**	**Date** 7/05/2018
External Examiner Dr. Abeya Geleta	**Signature**	**Date** 8/05/2018

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this PhD dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. I further confirm that all sources of materials used for this dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place: _____

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed supervisor, Dr. Jeilu Oumer Hussien (Associate Professor), for his unwavering guidance, insightful feedback, and steadfast support throughout every stage of this research, from the initial proposal planning to the completion of this empirical study. His commitment and encouragement were instrumental in determining the direction and depth of my work. In addition to his comments and suggestions, his belief in my capacities inspired me to strive for even greater achievements. I truly cannot express how grateful I am for everything he has taught me and for his professional advice, which significantly contributed to the success of my dissertation. I sincerely thank him.

Secondly, the completion of this research work was the efforts of many people who deserve appreciation. Thus, I would like to extend my gratitude to Addis Ababa University as an institution for its financial support and overall services, as well as to the Educational Planning and Management department and the sister departments in the College of Education and Language Studies at Addis Ababa University. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Mitiku Hambisa for guiding me through advanced statistical applications and concepts. I also wish to express my sincere love and appreciation to my beloved wife, Sukare Nega, my son, Natoli Nega, and my daughter, Asanti Nega, for their love, moral support, and encouragement, as well as for their efforts to shoulder the overall challenges that may affect my work and family life in general.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ethiopian Sample Research Universities, their leaders, and the academic and non-academic staff for their willingness to provide essential information through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which enabled the completion of this study.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMU	Arba Minch University
AS	Academic Staff
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CM	Change Management
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
HU	Haramaya University
JU	Jima University
LCH	Leadership Change
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
NAS	Non-Academic Staff
OCH	Organizational Change
OSCH	Organizational Structure Change
RUE	Research Universities of Ethiopia
SCP	Staff Contextual Performance
SJP	Staff Job Performance
STP	Staff Task Performance
TECH	Technological Change
WE	Work Engagement

Table of Contents

Contents **Page**

Acknowledgments v
Abbreviations and acronyms vi
List of Tables xi
List of Figures xii
Appendices xii
About the Author xiv
Abstract xv
CHAPTER ONE 1
1. Introduction 1
1.1. Background of the Study 1
1.2. Statement of the Problem 10
1.2.1. Basic Research Questions 14
1.2.2. Objectives of the Study 16
1.3. Conceptual Framework of the Study 17
1.3.1.Organizational Change as an Independent Variable 19
1.3.2.Work Engagement as the Mediating Variable 20
1.3.3.Staff Job Performance as a Dependent Variable 21
1.4. Significance of the Study 23
1.5. Delimitations of the Study 25
1.6. Limitations of the Study 26
1.7. Definition of Key Terms 27
1.8. Organization of the Study 28
CHAPTER TWO 29
2. Review of the Related Literature 29
2.1. Underpinning Theories 29
2.1.1. Change Management Theories and Models 30
2.2. The Concept of Change: An Overview 44
2.3. Organizational Change Management 46
2.4.Organizational Change 48

2.5.Drivers of Organizational Change 52
2.5.1.Leadership Change 54
2.5.2.Organizational Structural Change 56
2.5.3.Technological Change 59
2.6.Change Management Practice in Public Universities 60
2.7.Staff Job Performance Defined 62
2.7.1. Components of Staff Job Performance 64
2.8.Work Engagement 68
2.8.1. Components of Work Engagement 70
2.9. The Relationship Between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance 71
2.9.1. The Link Between Leadership Change and Staff Job Performance 72
2.9.2. The Link Between Structure Change and Staff Job Performance 73
2.9.3. The Link Between Technological Change and Staff Job Performance 75
2.9.4. The Link Between Work-Engagement and Staff Job Performance 76
2.9.5. The Link Among Organizational Change, WE, and SJP 77
2.9.6. The Mediation Role of WE in the Link Between OCH and SJP 78
2.10.Ethiopian Higher Education Context 78
2.11.Emerging Policy Reform and Organizational Change in Ethiopian Higher Education 79
2.12.Critical Literature Review 82
2.13.Chapter Summary 90
CHAPTER THREE 92
3. **Research Design and Methodology** 92
3.1.Philosophical Assumptions 92
3.2.Research Approach 96
3.3.Research Design 97
3.4.Source of Data 97
3.5. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques 98
3.5.1.Target Population of the Study 98
3.5.2.Sample Size and Sampling Techniques 99
3.6.Data Collection Instruments 102
3.6.1.Questionnaire 102

3.6.2.In-depth Interview 104
3.7.Validity and Reliability of the Instruments 105
3.7.1.Tool Validation 105
3.7.1.Pilot study 106
3.8. Data Collection Procedures 107
3.8.1. Quantitative Data Collection Procedures 107
3.8.2.Qualitative Data Collection Procedures 107
3.9. Methods of Data Analysis 108
3.9.1. Quantitative Methods of Data Analysis 109
3.9.2.Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis 109
3.9.3. Integration of the Results from the Two Data Sets 110
3.10.Ethical Considerations 112
3.11.Overall Summary of Design and Research Methodology 112
CHAPTER FOUR 114
4. **Results and Discussion** 114
4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents 114
4.1.1. Measurement Models for Structural Equations 118
4.1.2. Measurement Models for Endogenous Variables 121
4.1.3. Assessment of Model Accuracy for the Staff Job Performance Construct 124
4.2. What is the Status of Factors Influencing OCH, WE, and SJP at RUE? 126
4.3. Relationships between the Key Factors of OCH, WE, and SJP 128
4.4. Contribution of Dimensions of OCH Factors to the Dimensions of WE and SJP 133
4.5. The Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of OCH Factors on SJP 135
4.6. The Results of Qualitative Data 137
4.6.1. Participants' Profile in Semi-Structured Interview 138
4.6.2.Themes and Subthemes Emerged from Qualitative Analysis 139
4.6.3. The Practices of Organizational Change Factors: An Overview 140
4.6.4. The Practice of Work Engagement Factor 158
4.6.5. The Practice of Staff Job Performance 161
4.7. The Relationship Between OCH Factors, WE and SJP 165
4.7.1. The Relationship Between Organizational Change Factors and SJP 165

4.7.2. The Relationship Between Work Engagement and SJP 172
4.7.3.Relationships Among Organizational Change, WE, and Staff Job Performance 176
4.7.4. The Contribution of OCH and Work Engagement to SJP 180
4.7.5.Direct and Indirect Effects of OCH on the Staff Job Performance 183
4.8. Discussion from the Two Data Sets 184
4.8.1. The Status of OCH Factors, WE, and Staff Job Performance 184
4.8.2. The Relationships Among OCH Factors, WE, and SJP 190
4.8.3. Contributions of OCH Factors and WE to SJP 195
4.8.4.Direct and Indirect Effects of OCH on SJP 199
CHAPTER FIVE 203
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations 203
5.1.Summary 203
5.1.1. Summary of the study 203
5.1.2. Summary of Key Findings 204
5.2.Conclusions 206
5.3.Recommendations 208
5.4. Implications for Future Research 210
5.5.Model Proposed for the Relationship Between OCH and SJP as Mediated by WE 211
References 212

List of Tables

Table 1: Components of Staff Job Performance 65
Table 2: Instrument Reliability for Pilot (n=242) and Main (n=893) Studies.....107
Table 3: Summary of the Design and Research Methodology 114
Table 4: Institutions and Staff Categories of Respondents 115
Table 5: Gender, Education Level, and Career Ranking of the Respondents..... 116
Table 6: Age and Experience of Respondents 118
Table 7: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for OCH Factors..... 122
Table 8: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for Staff WE..... 124
Table 9: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for SJP..... 127
Table 10: Status of Organizational Change Factors, WE, and SJP (N=893)..... 128
Table 11: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-Fit for the CFA Final Structural Model 131
Table 12: The Relationships among OCH Factors, WE, and SJP 132
Table 13: Multi-collinearity Diagnosis..... 133
Table 14: Effect of OCH Factors on the Dimensions of WE and SJP..... 134
Table 15: The Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of OCH Factors on SJP..... 135
Table 16: Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants 138
Table 17: Emerged Themes and Subthemes from Qualitative Data..... 140

List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study.....20

Figure 2: Dimensions of Staff Job Performance.....24

Figure 3: Staff Job Performance Components..... 67

Figure 4: Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Design..... 112

Figure 5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Exogenous Factors.....121

Figure 6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Work Engagement Factor.....124

Figure 7: Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Staff Job Performance Factor.....126

Figure 8: Initial Structural Model.....130

Figure 9: Final Structural Model.....131

Figure 10: Proposed Structural Model for Future Research and Practice.....212

APPENDICES

Appendix –A: Sampled University Consent Form

Appendix –B: Consent Letter for Research Participants

Appendix –C: Questionnaire For Academic and Non-Academic Staff

Appendix –D: Interview Guide for Academic and Non-Academic Staff and Their Leaders

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nega Balcha Tolosa has been a teacher since July 2008, serving in both teaching and school principal roles at various primary and secondary schools in Moyale Woreda, Borana Zone, Southern Ethiopia. In Moyale Woreda, he has also served as the head of the Woreda Education Office and the Government Communication Affairs Office. Later, he became a lecturer in the Department of Educational Planning and Management at Bule Hora University in June 2017. He teaches courses such as research methodology, change management, educational leadership, and economics of education in the undergraduate program. With over 10 years of experience as a senior lecturer, he has held various positions, including Dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Studies at Bule Hora University, Ethiopia.

The author received his MA degree in Educational Leadership and Management from Arsi University and his B.Ed. in Geography and Environmental Studies from Jima University. His research interests include educational administration and management, organizational change, policy, and leadership. In 2025, he and his dissertation supervisor co-authored two works based on his PhD study, entitled: **1**. The Link between Organizational Structure Change and Staff Job Performance: Evidence from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. **2.** Work Engagement as a Mediator: Linking Organizational Structural Change to Staff Job Performance in Ethiopian Research Universities.

Abstract

Despite scant local studies in public higher education governance, there has been little research on whether work engagement serves as a mediator in the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance in Ethiopian Research Universities. Employing a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design, data were collected from three randomly selected universities out of eight. A total of 923 participants were selected through a multi-stage sampling process, and 30 academic and administrative staff members were chosen purposively. Quantitative data were collected using adapted questionnaires that measured SJP, WE, and OCH dimensions. Analysis included descriptive statistics, correlations, factor analyses, and structural equation modeling using SPSS and AMOS (version 23.0). Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that both task and extra-role performance scores exceeded expectations. High mean scores were also observed for OSCH, TECH, and WE dimensions—vigor, dedication, and absorption—while leadership change received comparatively less emphasis. A strong, statistically significant relationship was found among OCH, WE, and SJP. Collectively, organizational change factors and work engagement explained 55% of the variance in staff job performance ($R^2 = 0.55$). Technological and structural changes indirectly influenced SJP through WE, whereas LCH showed no significant indirect effect. The study suggests the importance of integrating organizational change initiatives with strategies that enhance employee engagement. It is also recommended that the Ethiopian Research Universities adopt a holistic approach emphasizing adaptive leadership, technological innovation, and supportive structures to foster engagement and optimize SJP. These findings carry vital theoretical and policy implications, highlighting the pivotal role of structural and technological change in driving academic excellence and fulfilling institutional missions.

***Keywords**:* Organizational change, work engagement, direct and indirect effect, staff job performance, Research University

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter one of this dissertation comprises several components. The first section is the introduction, which outlines the study's background, problem statement, key research questions, objectives, conceptual framework, significance, scope (including delimitations), limitations, operational definitions of key terms, and the organization of the study.

1.1.Background of the Study

The world is becoming a global village due to globalization, where organizations constantly compete for change and often find themselves in conflict. Today's universities worldwide operate in a volatile and dynamic environment, facing increasing responsibilities from both internal and external stakeholders (Tipuric, 2022). These turbulent circumstances require leaders and managers to sustain the Earth, enabling it to prosper amid rapid changes. As a result, they should play a crucial role in this hustle, prioritizing the best interests of future generations and societal benefits. The creation and distribution of new value must be considered within a broader context, especially by avoiding self-serving motives. Therefore, leaders within organizations should not remain silent behind closed doors, solely discussing the organization's survival. They are required to look beyond the horizon and the limits of their organizations, considering organizational change and the long-term demands of growth (Tipuric, 2022). Consequently, "leadership" has become a ‘change agent’ for all evolving organizations to compete successfully in the highly competitive global market. Leaders in every organization must also become the "Champions of Change” to sustain the organizational change process and uphold high performance and operational integrity among staff and the organization (Neyisci & Erdoan, 2019).

However, the persistent obstacles of organizational change (OCH) make this path the most difficult. These challenges stem from the complexity of the change process, the presence of diverse organizational cultures, and the lack of a single theory of organizational change that can accurately predict the success of organizations in every situation (Hidayah et al., 2015; Neyisci & Erdoan, 2022), even within the same country (Jacobs et al., 2013; Northouse, 2016). It is also clear that many challenges stem directly from the concept of organizational change itself. However, scholars in the field offer more concrete definitions of organizational change. Some define it in terms of methods, while others focus on the issue of change itself, and still others emphasize organizational components and their characteristics. Technically, organizational change is seen as a shift in an organization's demographics, functions, structure, and purpose. It also involves reviewing the beliefs and behaviors of change agents to accommodate new experiences (Orth & Cheng, 2019). Another definition provided by Hechanova et al. (2018) and Mustafa et al. (2019) describes organizational change as the evolution of an entity within an organization that has altered in form, quality, practices, and status over time. These definitions vary widely depending on how individuals use the phrase to describe change at both organizational and individual levels. Nonetheless, all scholars agree on the concept as organizational reform in terms of principles and practices (Hechanova et al., 2018), and it is connected to organizational factors such as work engagement and performance (Funminiyi, 2018; Kaur & Jain, 2020).

Academics are increasingly adopting work engagement (WE), a concept that has gained substantial traction in the business and consulting sectors. It describes an employee's relationship with their job, including their connection to the organization. This illustrates a staff member's bond with their employment and covers ties to the company. However, engagement can be challenging to distinguish from related terms such as commitment and extra-role behavior (Aldabbas et al.,

2023). As Kahn (1990) explains, it is a dynamic, dialectical interaction between the individual who invests personal energy in their role and the work purpose that allows them to express themselves. Similarly, the current study defines work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, job-related state of mind measured as vigor, dedication, and absorption, as described by Schaufeli and Bakker (2008).

Staff job performance (SJP) is an important variable in organizational studies. Scholars have examined the concept of SJP from different perspectives. For example, Altındağ and Kösedağı (2015) defined employee performance as the idea that explains how a person applies their actual knowledge, skills, and talents—or their potential—to achieve the goals and expectations set by the organization or themselves. According to Cheng and Osman (2021), "employee performance" refers to the quantity and quality of work that employees complete to fulfill their assigned responsibilities, where the individual, group, or organization performing the task may achieve a predefined objective related to their work.

Contextual and task performance are two aspects of SJP that are explored in the study. According to Bacha (2014) and Donohoe (2019), task performance is defined as carrying out duties according to one's job description, referred to as in-role performance. In contrast, contextual performance is the efforts made by workers to perform essential activities that extend beyond their official job descriptions, thereby contributing to overall organizational productivity (Daz-Vilela et al., 2015). Contextual performance, which is also supported and encouraged by the organization, includes cooperative behavior and assisting others as examples of positive social and psychological behaviors. These behaviors encompass accepting and advocating for organizational goals, helping colleagues, adhering to organizational policies and procedures, and actively participating in the workplace (Leo & Lightning, 2017).

Research shows that organizational change and work engagement (WE) enhance staff job performance by helping maintain their ability to adapt to change and encouraging a more strategic approach to solving problems for better results (Aduku et al., 2021; Borst et al., 2020; Mensah et al., 2023; Zakiy et al., 2023). The connection between organizational change and staff performance makes understanding this relationship more complex. According to Kwizera et al. (2019) and Ekechi and Umar (2020), change agents are essential because they reduce resistance, support organizational change, lessen employee anxiety, and improve staff performance. Likewise, the positive association between work engagement and employees' performance and well-being has caught the interest of managers and organizational practitioners (Borst et al., 2020; Meenakshi Sharma, 2023). Many researchers believe the connection between these two factors is mutually beneficial (Meenakshi Sharma, 2023; Suleiman et al., 2023). Recent studies also emphasize the importance of work engagement in enhancing employee performance (Jiang & Men, 2017). Meenakshi Sharma (2023) also found that engaged employees tend to be more involved than their peers. However, some studies disagree about the link between work engagement and staff job performance (Jaya & Ariyanto, 2021; Wang & Chen, 2020). While few empirical studies examine their interactions as non-interdependent variables, despite growing evidence suggesting they are positively related (Jaya & Ariyanto, 2021; Wang, 2020).

Many scholars also believe that the interaction among organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance is harmonious (Funminiyi, 2018; Kaur & Jain, 2020). Additionally, a recent study emphasized the significance of organizational change in improving workplace wellness (Jiang & Men, 2017). The link among these variables is complex, but it influences the effectiveness of an organization and its overall success. According to Meenakshi Sharma (2023), workers who are highly engaged at work tend to be more productive and

innovative. Essentially, these employees are more involved than their colleagues. However, previous studies have shown that the relationship between work engagement and staff job performance is unclear. Some researchers suggest that when individuals are engaged at work, their emotional, mental, and proactive behaviors improve, resulting in higher performance (Wang & Chen, 2020). Despite the increasing consensus that they are related, some empirical studies examine their relationship as separate, non-interdependent variables (Sulaiman et al., 2023).

Many researchers identified a mediating effect between organizational change factors and staff job performance (Abel & Hailemichael, 2024; Ali et al., 2017; Hidayat & Nasution, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Wang, 2020; Wangui et al., 2022). Liu et al. (2024) found that work engagement positively mediates the link between organizational change and staff creative performance. Abel and Hailemichael (2024) also found that work engagement partly mediates the link between leadership empowerment and staff job performance. The demographic factors revealed by Johari and Yahya (2019) help explain these variations. The first distinction was the possibility of cultural diversity within research universities.

In Ethiopia, the concept of a research university was a recent phenomenon. The federal government delayed nearly 12 years before considering a research university as part of its 2016-2020 higher education policy revision (Hunde et al., 2023). In the 2020s, the former Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) designated eight HEIs as research universities: Addis Ababa University, Haramaya University, Hawassa University, Arba Minch University, Gondar University, Bahir Dar University, Mekelle University, and Jimma University. Such a policy move is now seen as a significant development in the HEI landscape.

In the nation, the slow-moving history of university progress is linked to the newness of the industry (it started in the 1950s) that has experienced significant development over the past

three decades. This growth has been driven by substantial government spending to enhance the number of existing institutions and construct new ones in the country. As a result, the number of government-operated universities has risen from two to around fifty, while more than 270 privately held higher education institutions (HEIs) now exist. These significant increases in higher education numbers in Ethiopia reflect the government's strong commitment to improving educational accessibility and equity, as well as its aim to produce educated professionals who can foster social and economic advancement (Bekele et al., 2022). Consequently, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ethiopia face unprecedented pressures in this era of unpredictable change. These include rising enrollment and diversity, accountability issues, the need to save expenses, and the possibility of compromising educational quality, all of which have contributed to a fall in HEI public reputation. Additionally, higher learning institutions are constantly adapting to new technologies, increased competition, shifting social attitudes, emerging fields, changing demographics, and societal developments (Arega, 2016; Kang Chen et al., 2022).

The issues of expansion, quality concerns, and related factors have prompted the Ethiopian government to adopt a differentiation strategy in higher education institutions (HEIs) as part of its national development plan (Hunde et al., 2023; MoHSE, 2021). This differentiation reflects the growing variety of tasks and responsibilities that higher education fulfills, along with the institutions, processes, and organizational structures established to coordinate and manage the increasingly complex reality. Therefore, differentiation aims to eliminate unnecessary duplication by assigning distinct academic programs, research profiles, and strategic missions to each university (Weingarten, 2010). Implementing reward systems enhances effectiveness and efficiency, enabling each HEI to leverage its unique contextual advantages.

As a result, the Ethiopian higher education system eliminated the old designations of first generation, second generation, third generation, and fourth generation, which referred to institutions by their year of establishment. These were replaced with an excellence-based classification of public universities: applied Science, technology, research, and comprehensive universities, providing a broad overview of tertiary education institutions in the country. This framework allows for the classification of eight (8) universities as research universities, fifteen (15) public universities as applied main universities, twenty-one (21) universities as comprehensive universities, and two (2) universities as technology universities (MoHSE, 2021). However, currently, there are about fifty Ethiopian Public Universities across these four classifications (Hunde et al., 2023).

The study was specifically conducted at the Research Universities of Ethiopia (RUE). In developing nations like Ethiopia, Research Universities strive to mitigate the impacts of brain drain by giving access to a local institutional framework. This may increase engagement in the worldwide scientific community. By doing so, they reduce the loss of talented youth and highly skilled scholars. However, the current state of education does not support the growth of research-focused universities, and higher education institutions are not particularly dedicated to this goal. As a result, challenges arise that must be wisely addressed and managed (Hunde et al., 2023; MoSHE, 2019). According to Gebregiyorgis (2018), for an institution to qualify as a research university, at least 20% of its students must be enrolled in graduate programs, and 50% of the academic staff should hold a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) or an equivalent degree. Currently, higher education in Ethiopia does not support research-focused universities. For example, in 2012, universities allocated only about 1% of their total budget to research, and by 2020, this is expected to increase to 5%. The percentages of graduate students and the national average of professors with

a third degree—15% and 5.2%, respectively—are far below the 50% and 20% targets (Hunde et al., 2023). Therefore, research universities seek significant government funding, as well as institutional autonomy for resource generation, program development, management, and internal affairs (ibid.).

However, the Government of Ethiopia has consistently developed policies since the inception of contemporary education to address issues within higher education institutions (HEIs). These policies aim to enhance educational delivery, leadership, and management based on the belief that education improves citizens' socio-economic and political well-being. This initiative was initiated by the administration of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), which has undergone significant changes to achieve its growth and transformation goals over the past few decades. The government has also pledged to support and encourage these initiatives by expanding higher education institutions as part of this effort (Salmi et al., 2017; MoE, 2010). As a result, the government has implemented various initiatives in HEIs for at least three decades to stimulate economic growth, modernize government agencies, and elevate the nation into the middle-income bracket by 2025 (Addisalem, 2020; Akalu, 2014; Daniel, 2022; MOE, 2010; Salmi et al., 2017) as the foundation for the reform initiatives.

Since the introduction of the main document, the Education and Training Policy (ETP), in 1994, various management tools—such as Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), the Kaizen philosophy, and the recent British-inspired Deliverology model—have been implemented in the higher education system at different times to improve institutional and employee performance, as well as governance and management. However, internal university stakeholders and researchers have noted that these reform measures were ineffective in transforming higher education organizations (Daniel, 2022; Ayalew, 2017). The Education Sector

Development Program (ESDP VI) states that a main challenge to effectively implementing and reaching the sector plan is the limited capacity of the education system and its management (MoE, 2021).

As a result, the Ethiopian government continuously prioritizes developing effective leadership, management, and governance across all levels of educational and training institutions, as demonstrated in successive ESDPs (ESDP IV, ESDP V, ESDP VI, and GTP II). The guiding principles of the commendable system outlined in ESDP VI emphasize good governance while enhancing leadership and management to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of employees and educational organizations. This initiative is recognized as one of the key development programs in the sector, serving as the primary action plan for Ethiopia's educational advancement from 2019 to 2025/26 in the national development plan (MoE, 2021). This plan provides specific guidelines to universities through directives and policy documents, particularly in higher education proclamations from 2003, 2009, and 2019 (Bekele et al., 2022). The ESDPs, often known as action plans, are crucial documents that guide public institutions, including Research Universities, which are currently in the sixth stage of implementation. Although the two previous national independent buffer organizations, the Education Strategy Centre and the Higher Educational Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA), have been dissolved, with the latter being renamed, they played an essential role in educational leadership and management by conducting quality audits, assessing relevance, accrediting primarily private higher education providers, and facilitating organizational change in higher education (Bishaw & Melesse, 2017).

However, the quality of change agents and the leading role of organizational management in facilitating change factors contribute to the ongoing failures of change initiatives and the difficult prospects for Ethiopian Universities in improving projects and programs. On the other

hand, many researchers focus more on how organizations are led and managed to bring about change rather than on how such change might affect staff job performance. Therefore, in the opinion of the student researcher, and considering the available literature, the link between organizational change and staff job performance, as mediated by staff work engagement, has been overlooked. This context necessitates significant improvements, particularly regarding the data and the beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions of leaders and staff about change initiatives. As a result, the study sought to analyze this occurrence in Ethiopia's public research institutions within the framework of this policy.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Scholars have demonstrated that organizational change frequently fails worldwide (Brakmann et al., 2013; Kotter, 1995; Seipp, 2019; Tudor, 2014). They have also identified a recurring pattern of ineffective change management strategies. Kotter (1995) claimed that approximately 30% of major change initiatives (MCIs) are completed, and this low success rate persisted more than a decade later, in 2009, despite the growing adoption of change management methods. Axel Uhl (2012) observed similar results in his follow-up study, noting that only 40% of planned changes are successfully implemented, mainly due to resistance from staff and management. According to newer research by Seipp (2019), about 70% of planned changes fail due to opposition from managers, leaders, and employees alike.

The Government of Ethiopia has undergone significant changes over the past few decades, aimed at achieving its growth and reform goals. As part of these efforts, the government has committed to expanding higher education institutions and improving support mechanisms in reform initiatives (Salmi et al., 2017). As a result, Ethiopian higher education and the leadership of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia have experienced rapid change, requiring

significant adjustments to stay socially relevant, update and strengthen government agencies, enhance education quality, introduce new learning approaches, support faculty development in higher education institutions, and enable organizations to operate efficiently (Yohannes, 2017).

However, the organizational change in Ethiopia has either failed or been excessively sluggish in response to global trends. Scholars (see Daniel, 2022; Girma & Matebe, 2017; Yehualashet, 2020) have demonstrated the ineffectiveness of many change attempts and programs in Ethiopia across various periods. Daniel's (2022) study revealed that a primary reason for the failure of change at Haramaya University is the staff's lack of readiness for change. Girma and Matebe (2017) noted that the effectiveness of change initiatives at Bahir Dar University is consistently questioned and prone to failure due to various pressures. They further emphasized that these initiatives have not succeeded and fail to address institutional issues in developing countries. Reasons for failure include a lack of experience with systematic change management approaches and a weaker alignment between change agents and the change management strategy. These findings raise doubts about how change agents engage institutional members in the change management process.

Therefore, despite many reform efforts, organizational change initiatives in Ethiopian Research Universities have not led to proportional improvements in staff job performance, especially the mediating role of work engagement remains unclear. Most existing studies mainly focus on non-academic or corporate settings, leaving a conceptual, methodological, and contextual gap within Ethiopia's Research Universities (Aduku et al., 2021; Girma & Matebe, 2017; Karanja, 2015; Khosa et al., 2015; Mensah et al., 2023; Ogbu & Obiora, 2019; Osunsan et al., 2019; Yehualashet, 2020; Zakiy et al., 2023).

For example, the study on organizational change and staff extra-role behavior conducted by Ogbu and Obiora (2019) examines several private secondary schools in Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was used. The study found that organizational change, measured by effective communication and worker participation, enhances contextual performance at work. Zakiy et al. (2023) also explored the impact of organizational changes on staff performance at a Sharia bank. This study shows that affective commitment may serve as a mediator in the negative relationship between employee performance and organizational change. Aduku et al. (2021) studied the connection between organizational change and employee performance in Nigeria. The study revealed that complexity, employee attitudes toward change, and their tolerance for it have a significant negative impact. It recommends that bank executives maintain their level of change tolerance and develop a more strategic plan to fight fraud and related activities, assisting staff in north-central Nigeria to improve their performance. The study titled "Influence of Organizational Change on Employee Performance" at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation was also conducted by Mensah et al. (2023). The findings indicate that changes in technology, strategy, and organizational structure have a significant impact on employee job performance. However, the evaluation of these impacts revealed that technological development had the greatest effect. Beatrice et al. (2018) examined how managerial characteristics influence employee performance at Kenyan university campuses in Nakuru. The research identified a strong connection between employee performance and factors like organizational culture, structure, training, and leadership.

Similarly, local studies have also identified poor leadership changes as a major factor in inadequate employee performance (Aman & Wake, 2021; Girma & Matebe, 2018; Sinte et al., 2023; Yohannes & Kant, 2023). For example, most findings from these studies support the idea that there is a positive connection between organizational change and employee performance.

Research on organizational factors affecting staff job performance in certain public sector organizations within Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, was conducted by Biniyam and Elias (2019). The results show that organizational structure, communication, leadership style, and cultural characteristics account for 89.6% of the determination coefficient, which explains employee performance. Academic and non-academic staff were selected using stratified sampling. The study suggested that public service organizations should strengthen teamwork, update management systems to support organizational culture, create opportunities for employee-manager interactions to improve communication, foster innovation, increase salaries, implement loyalty programs, and reward long-serving employees. Mehari (2016) also conducted research at Mekelle University on governance reforms in Ethiopia's higher education system. The results indicated that issues such as a lack of leadership at all university levels hindered the implementation of change initiatives. Additionally, Mehari noted disparities in performance among academic units. However, he does not specifically address how leadership influences change at Mekelle University.

On the other hand, little is known about the perceived link between organizational change and staff job performance in a multidimensional way (task and contextual performance) at Ethiopian Public Universities. Therefore, research using the currently recommended methodology with this scale has not been conducted at the Ethiopian Research University; consequently, the results cannot be entirely generalized to educational institutions, particularly higher education institutions (HEIs), due to differences in organizational norms and legal frameworks. This highlights the knowledge gap that the current study aims to address. In this context, Hofstede (1980) explicitly supports that organizational and national culture are critical for effective management attributes, yet cross-cultural differences exist between organizations.

The above international and local empirical studies identified gaps in concepts, knowledge, theory, practice, and methodology that must be addressed to develop effective and innovative learning environments in Research Universities of Ethiopia (RUE). Addressing these gaps encourages educational leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to implement comprehensive organizational change strategies and staff job performance (both task and contextual performance). Thus, the researcher conducted an extensive study on how supporting individual performance relates to organizational change and work engagement as an important component for developing policies at Ethiopian Public Research Universities. There have also been few or no published papers in the nation that emphasize the direct and/or indirect relationships between organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in Ethiopian higher education institutions. Thus, the data clearly show gaps in knowledge, methodology, concept, and context regarding the positions, perceptions, and responses related to the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the positions, perceptions, and responses of leaders and staff members concerning the link between organizational change dimensions and staff job performance, as mediated by work engagement, in the Research Universities of Ethiopia (RUE).

1.2.1. Basic Research Questions

To conduct this investigation, the five basic research questions, the corresponding sub-questions, and hypotheses were addressed.

1. What is the current status of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance among academic and non-academic staff in Ethiopian Research Universities?

1.1. What is the status of organizational change dimensions (organizational structure change, technological change, and leadership change) in RUE?

1.2. What is the status of staff work engagement in RUE?

1.3. What is the status of staff job performance in RUE?

2. What is the nature and strength of the relationships among organizational change dimensions (leadership, structure, and technology), work engagement, and staff job performance?

H0 1: There is no significant positive relationship between organizational change dimensions (structure, leadership, technology) and staff job performance in RUE.

H0 2: There is no significant positive relationship between work engagement and staff job performance in RUE.

3. What portion of the variance in staff job performance is explained by organizational change and work engagement separately and jointly in RUE?

H0 3: Organizational change dimensions (structure, leadership, technology) do not have a significant positive effect on staff job performance in RUE.

H0 4: Work engagement does not have a significant positive effect on staff job performance in RUE.

H0 5: The organizational change and work engagement dimensions do not have a significant positive effect on staff job performance jointly in RUE.

4. To what extent does work engagement mediate the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance in RUE?

H0 6: Work engagement does not significantly mediate the relationship between organizational change factors (structure, technology, leadership) and staff job performance in the RUE.

5. How does staff job performance relate to organizational change dimensions when mediated by work engagement, in the RUE?

1.2.2. Objectives of the Study

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following general and specific objectives were addressed.

1.2.2.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the perception and response of leaders and staff (academic and non-academic) regarding the relationship between organizational change dimensions and staff job performance as mediated by employee work engagement in the RUE.

1.2.2.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the current status of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE.
   - **1.1.**To determine the status of organizational change factors (organizational structure change, technological change, and leadership change) in RUE?
   - **1.2.**To identify the status of staff work engagement in RUE?
   - **1.3.**To indicate the status of staff job performance in RUE?
2. To determine the strength and direction of relationships among organizational change dimensions, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE.

3. To assess the portion of the variance in staff job performance that is explained by organizational change and work engagement separately and jointly in RUE.
4. To examine whether a statistically significant effect of organizational change dimensions on staff job performance as mediated by staff work engagement in the RUE.
5. To explore how staff job performance relates to organizational change dimensions when mediated by work engagement in the RUE.

1.3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to Kivunja (2018) and Hughes et al. (2019), using a conceptual framework that illustrates dynamic interactions is helpful. Kivunja further argued that a conceptual framework "is the total, logical orientation and associations of anything and everything that form the underlying thinking, structures, plans, and practices, and implementation of your entire research project" (p. 47). As a result, the conceptual framework includes your thoughts on the problem being studied, the topic of the research, the questions that need answers, the theories to be used, the methodology you will follow, the methods, procedures, and instruments, as well as the interpretation and analysis of findings, recommendations, and conclusions. A conceptual framework, as defined by Hughes et al. (2019), is a visual or written document that describes the key elements to be examined, the important aspects, ideas, or variables, and the assumed relationships among them, either visually or narratively. The theoretical and conceptual foundations of the current study are explained in Figure 1.

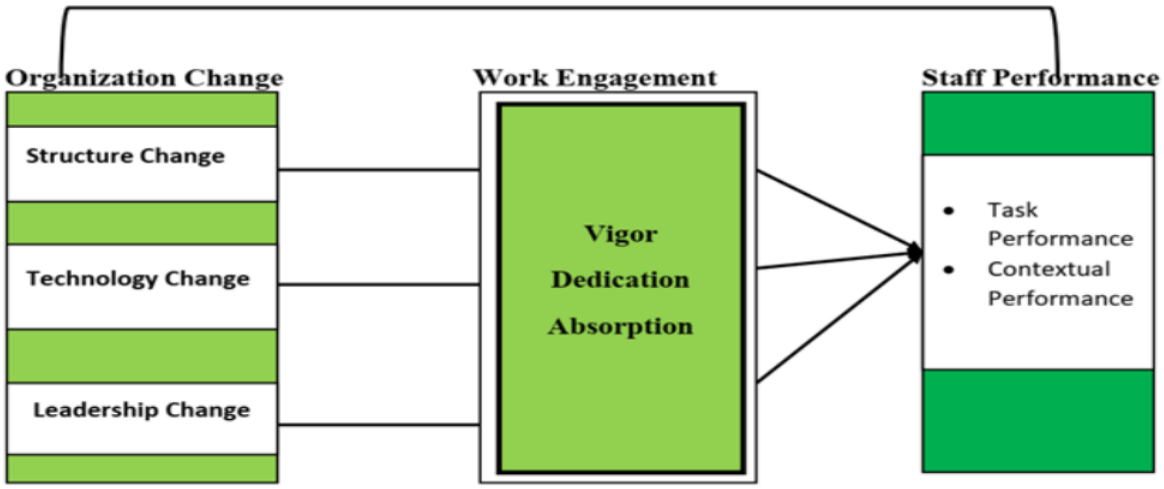
The current research modified the organizational change factors from the Burke-Litwin Model (1992, 1996), which is also known as the organizational change and performance model. This model suggests two environments—external and internal—that influence organizational change and enhance individual and organizational performance. The external environment

encompasses key change dimensions, including technology, market conditions, and regulatory environments. The internal environments consist of leadership, culture, structure, and management practices. As a result, this model incorporated technological change from the external environment, as seen in Hassan et al. (2015), and two dimensions from the internal environment—organizational structure and leadership change—used in Waclawski's (2002) integrated model of large-scale organizational change research. Additionally, the Burke-Litwin model (1992, 1996) was linked with Kulikowski's three-component work engagement theory (2018) and Motowidlo et al.'s (1997) staff job performance theory of individual differences, serving as conceptual models for the current study.

The conceptual framework represents the researcher's thoughts on the relationships between the variables of interest. As a result, the conceptual model shows that the independent variable (OCH) has three key sub-dimensions (organizational structure change, changes in technology, and leadership change). These components were then linked to the sub-dimensions within the dependent variable (SJP) via the three-dimensional factor of work engagement (WE): vigor, dedication, and absorption (see Fig. 2). Thus, the study deepens the existing literature on higher education institutions, especially in the areas of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance—all thoroughly discussed in prior research. It uses various change theories as its theoretical framework.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Framed and Developed by the Researcher

1.3.1. Organizational Change as an Independent Variable

Organizational change aims to optimize human resources by helping individuals become more skilled and effectively integrating various factors to enhance overall organizational performance. This facilitates better adaptation to the organization's technology, roles, and structure. Burke-Litwin (1992) identified five key components of change management that contribute to effective organizational change: changes in people, technology, tasks, structure, and culture. As a result, the study aims to identify effective change dimensions based on the issues that significantly contribute to organizational change within Ethiopian higher education institutions (HEIs) and to determine the change factor most frequently highlighted in the existing literature. In light of this scenario, this study primarily utilizes the Burke-Litwin Model, which integrates technical and human elements and proposes the three change factors derived from the model for successful change: (a) leadership change, (b) changes in organizational structure, and (c) changes

in technology. These dimensions are the focus of this study as independent variables that constitute the organizational change construct affecting staff job performance.

1.3.2. Work Engagement as the Mediating Variable

High levels of personal investment in one's job are known as work engagement and include traits such as energy, cognitive alertness, and a willingness to go above and beyond to achieve goals (Kulikowski, 2018). Research on work engagement has gained increased attention in recent decades and is now regarded as a vital and valuable area of study (Bouckenooghe et al., 2022). Work engagement is a term commonly used in both business and academic contexts. Unlike traditional assessments that focus on job burnout and satisfaction, the UWES stresses the positive sides of engagement. This shift is significant because engaged individuals tend to be more innovative, productive, and committed to their employers.

The significance of UWES lies in its ability to improve employee well-being by measuring work engagement. It assists organizations in identifying areas for improvement to promote better employee health. Employee engagement leads to higher job satisfaction and improved mental health, which reduces the risk of burnout. It also affects organizational performance, as greater engagement is connected to better job performance, lower absenteeism, and increased productivity. Engaged employees are more likely to exceed expectations, resulting in overall better company outcomes (Kulikowski, 2018). The insights from UWES can also help companies develop strategies for staff retention and development. By understanding what drives engagement, leaders can create personalized programs to foster a more engaged workforce.

Work engagement, as measured by the UWES-9, is likely explained by three interconnected dimensions (Yao et al., 2022): vigor, dedication, and absorption. **Vigor**: This component reflects the level of energy and psychological resilience that employees exhibit at work.

Engaged employees show significant enthusiasm and are motivated to put in hard work. Vigor is essential because it enhances employees' ability to tackle challenges effectively, fostering a more dynamic work environment. **Dedication**: Dedication reveals the sense of pride and purpose employees derive from their work. It encompasses elements such as commitment, inspiration, and a desire to contribute to organizational goals. Employees who feel dedicated are more likely to connect with their organization's objectives, leading to better harmony between personal and organizational goals. **Absorption**: This element assesses how fully engaged employees are in their jobs. Absorption is branded by a state of flow, where people lose track of time and focus entirely on their tasks. When people are engrossed in their jobs, they tend to be highly productive, innovative, and creative, benefiting the corporation as a whole. Together, these three elements provide a complete understanding of work engagement, giving companies insights into their employees' experiences. By evaluating these factors, companies can find areas that need attention and intervention (Kulikowski, 2018).

1.3.3. Staff Job Performance as a Dependent Variable

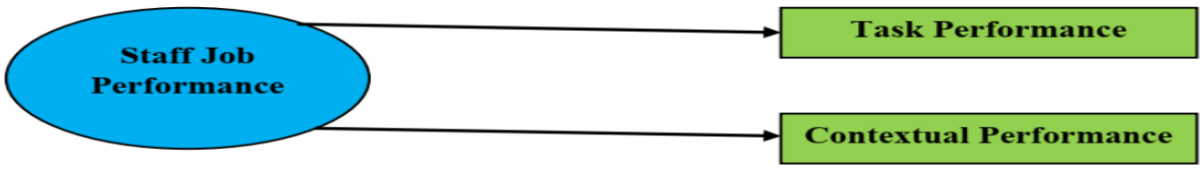
Academics assign various meanings to job performance. According to Murphy (1989), performance definitions should emphasize behaviors over outcomes, as the latter may lead employees to seek the quickest and simplest path to intended results, which can be harmful to the organization by hindering other essential behaviors. Similarly, Campbell (1990) viewed performance as a tangible, measurable behavior that reflects proficiency rather than merely a result. Later, Campbell et al. (1993) argued that behavior shapes performance, rather than the outcome of the activity. In other words, job performance is fundamentally the result of a set of behaviors that employees authentically display in the workplace and that are observable by others.

However, researchers have developed multi-dimensional frameworks and models of job performance over the last few decades (Bono & Judge, 2003; Campbell et al., 1993; Hartini et al., 2019; Motowidlo et al., 1997). In 1990, Campbell introduced a well-respected approach to measuring job performance. He proposed that this model includes eight main dimensions: (a) task proficiency specific to a job; (b) non-task proficiency; (c) oral and written communication; (d) effort; (e) self-discipline; (f) supporting peer and team efforts; (g) supervision; and (h) administration and management. Later, Motowidlo et al. (1997) developed the "Theory of Individual Differences," which builds on Campbell's findings (1990) and suggests that task and contextual performance are the only two sets of characteristics appropriate for evaluating an individual's job performance. In this research, the student researcher adapted what was initially hypothesized by Motowidlo et al. (2013), which confirms that people possess different personalities and levels of cognitive capacity. Finally, Motowidlo et al. identified personality traits as more influential for contextual performance, while cognitive ability is closely related to task performance.

The two concepts of task and contextual performance emerge as fundamentally different constructs. Several studies (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Yousof et al., 2015) provide strong empirical evidence showing that task and contextual performance are distinct and independently contribute to overall performance. Consequently, the diagrammatic representation of staff job performance illustrated in Fig. 1 is as follows:

Figure 2

Dimensions of Staff Job Performance



Source: Adapted from Hartini et al. (2019)

Although academics argue that contextual and task performance are separate and important aspects of job performance, there has not been much research examining both constructs simultaneously in the same study, and even less so regarding studies linked to managers' intentions to change the organization. Therefore, to fill this gap, the proposed research will build on the two types of employee job performance theory developed by Motowidlo et al. (1997) by examining performance variability and identifying elements that enhance more effective contextual and task performance in HEI settings.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study aims to provide new insights into existing knowledge about organizational change (OCH), work engagement (WE), and staff job performance (SJP) in higher education institutions. Meanwhile, efforts to implement organizational change are becoming more common because they are linked to various factors that influence individual behavior, organizational decision-making, system change, and overall outcomes (Champoom & Intrawong, 2019). As a result, this research has potential significance for educational practices, supports the development of educational policies, and contributes to future theoretical research in higher education institutions.

Practical Significance: University leaders bear a significant responsibility for driving organizational change. Until now, theory and practice have struggled to identify the path through which university leadership can positively influence employee performance. If positive connections exist between university change management techniques, work engagement, and staff performance, a model could emerge from the data. The study's findings could have several practical implications. First, leaders as change agents are recognized as key drivers of organizational change; yet, little is known about their effectiveness and how organizational change

and work engagement relate to staff performance in Ethiopian Public Universities. Therefore, the study highlights organizational change initiatives that could benefit both scholars and practitioners in higher education. Additionally, it may serve as a valuable resource for those involved in Research University leadership and organizational change projects. Third, it might improve leaders' understanding of how their actions and behaviors influence organizational change and enhance overall productivity through improved staff job performance. Fourth, technology-based training may raise awareness of leadership decentralization and staff engagement. As a result, leaders can strategically allocate resources toward institutional change and adapt management strategies to meet specific contextual demands. Moreover, it could offer insights into leadership practices related to organizational change for Research University staff. Leaders, staff, and other practitioners will also gain a better understanding of the advantages of simultaneously changing organizational factors to boost staff performance and foster greater awareness among staff members regarding their administrators' behaviors.

Significance for Policy and Decision-making: The findings of this research benefit policymakers, training organizations, and educators in various ways. First, the commission can utilize the study's findings to develop policies that support institutional and research university leaders in thriving, improving efficiency, and enhancing their effectiveness amid financial instability. Second, the study provides key policy insights for Ethiopian policymakers regarding higher education institutions. This could simultaneously assist the government, society at large, and RUE. Third, it may deliver valuable information to all levels of education authorities, especially the Minister of Education, to empower and support university leaders’ efforts in institutional transformation.

Significance for Theoretical Research: It is now too late to conduct large-scale research on the relationship between organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance through local studies. However, the study may have an exceptional opportunity to broadly introduce organizational change to improve staff job performance in a learning environment. Therefore, the current research is expected to contribute to the prevailing body of knowledge by connecting change agents involved in the leadership of Research Universities to speed up change implementation and boost staff effectiveness. This also provides evidence for the ongoing scholarly debate on whether employee work engagement mediates the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance in influencing institutional reform efforts. Additionally, the study lays a foundation for future research in educational management, aiming to develop strategies for managing organizational change in higher education to increase employee engagement and staff performance.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

Because of time and financial limitations, this study was kept manageable, meaning not every issue could be addressed in a single study. As a result, the scope of this research focuses on several major areas: the contextual, conceptual, methodological, and population aspects. Due to financial and time constraints, the study was limited to three Research Universities out of the eight as of 2022. This is especially crucial because research universities are commonly regarded as "leading" institutions in most African countries, yet the current three were chosen using a basic random method. Accordingly, respondents included both non-academic and academic staff, along with staff leaders such as directors, coordinators, deans, team leaders, and department heads. Three key variables were examined within the conceptual scope: organizational change, with three sub-factors serving as independent variables; work engagement, as a mediating variable; and staff job

performance, with two sub-factors acting as dependent variables. However, it excluded cultural and strategic dimensions to maintain conceptual focus. In terms of design and methodological scope, this study used a mixed approach with a convergent-parallel design, which provided a broad platform for data analysis and helped to meet the study's objectives.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Even though the current study used both qualitative and quantitative methods (QUAN + QUAL), employed advanced analysis techniques, and developed a model with important theoretical and practical implications, like all scientific research, it has limitations that should be considered when interpreting and applying the results. To begin with, only three of the research universities (about 42.9%) participated in this project. Despite the researchers' efforts to address additional issues that might affect external validity, the limited sample size of only three out of eight research universities could influence the study's overall generalizability. Second, due to financial and time constraints, the sample respondents were limited to academic and non-academic staff, as well as staff leaders, of the universities. However, students, who are the primary recipients of changes, along with the governing boards of each university and the MoE, are excluded. Third, although change research typically necessitates a longitudinal design, this study employs a cross-sectional research design, which restricts the ability to establish a causal relationship between OCH, WE, and SJP. This was addressed by triangulating quantitative and qualitative data. Fourth, despite building a favorable rapport and using adapted data collection techniques, performance was assessed through self-reporting, which may still be affected by social desirability bias, causing respondents to answer based on what is socially acceptable rather than their true beliefs. Despite memory biases and social desirability being unavoidable, their effects can be minimized by asking participants to honestly reflect on their experiences over the past week and by considering social

desirability influences. Finally, regarding methodology, the study employed a convergent parallel design of mixed methods, collecting both sets of data simultaneously. This approach reduces the need for repetitive data collection processes. However, the researcher takes responsibility for identifying and addressing these constraints by carefully collecting data to ensure that the study's findings are accurately interpreted and effectively communicated. As a result, Subsequent studies should employ longitudinal or other mixed-method techniques rather than convergent parallel, and their coverage should broaden to include private and public universities outside of RUE.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

This section presents key terms that were used in the research to facilitate readers' understanding.

Organizational Change (OCH): Includes any structural, strategic, technological, leadership, cultural, or human modifications that can potentially impact an organization (Wood, 2000).

Work Engagement (WE): Is a state in which employees express and devote their physical, emotional, and cognitive identities while executing their job (Kahn, 1990).

Staff Job Performance (SJP): It refers to how much an employee demonstrates the expected behaviors and fulfills their responsibilities according to the organization's policies (Çalişkan & Köroğlu, 2022).

University: Is an institution of higher education, either private or public, established by the Commission on Higher Education. Its primary aim is to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel both in their personal lives and their professional careers.

Research Universities (RU): A university dedicated to “undertaking research and teaching with special focus on graduate programs” as a primary component of its mission (Hunde et al., 2023, p. 89).

1.8. Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides the background of the study, describes the problem, outlines key questions, states the objectives, presents the conceptual framework, highlights the significance, defines the delimitations and limitations, explains the operational terms, and includes the current section. The second chapter reviews related literature, while the third chapter tackles methodological issues such as context description, philosophical assumptions, research approach, research design, data sources, study population, sample, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of these instruments, data collection procedures, analysis methods, and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter offers results and discussions. Chapter five summarizes the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Finally, the study is backed by references and necessary appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter of the dissertation reviews relevant literature in the field. The process involves using comprehensive review techniques to include both theoretical and empirical literature. First, the student researcher aimed to explore relevant theories and models that underpin the study, discuss essential concepts related to the study's phenomenon, including change, organizational change management, organizational change, drivers of organizational change, and change management practices in public research universities in Ethiopia. Next, a detailed examination of organizational change and its sub-dimensions, alongside staff job performance and its sub-components, as well as the staff work engagement variable, was addressed as a whole. Similarly, the relationship between organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in organizational management was analyzed. Finally, comprehensive empirical literature reviews were conducted to identify gaps and the foundational theories of the study, leading to the creation of the chapter summary.

2.1. Underpinning Theories

According to Kivunja (2018), a theoretical framework consists of theories presented by experts on the topic into which you want to conduct research, which you rely on to give a 'theoretical coat hanger' regarding your data analysis and result interpretation. Put another way,

> The theoretical framework is a structure that summarizes concepts and theories that you develop from previously tested and published knowledge that you synthesize to help you have a theoretical background or basis for your data analysis and interpretation of the meaning contained in your research data. (p. 46)

The theoretical framework provides a foundation for reviewing literature, methodologies, and analysis. According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), it is like a house plan, with researchers acting as architects who decide what to create and how to build it according to their vision. Once the blueprint is complete, researchers will have a clear understanding of the principles and concepts necessary for developing their ideas and methods. They can start building the study only after establishing the house layout. Based on the literature review, the researcher will discuss the importance of change models (Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947; Mento et al., 2002), a theory of individual differences (Motowidlo et al., 1997), the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and the Burke-Litwin Organizational Change Model (1992) in the current study.

2.1.1. Change Management Theories and Models

A model provides a systematic way to gather, understand, and categorize data about an organization. Models often highlight key organizational factors that were previously predicted based on earlier research. They also show the relationships between these important factors, such as how one organizational variable might influence another. When no model is available to guide data collection and interpretation, a diagnostician must rely on intuition and look for patterns or themes within the data. Although many professionals have internal models in their minds, due to the complex nature of organizations and the large amount of accessible information for analysis (Falletta, 2005), having an explicit model significantly helps the diagnostic process.

There are two types of change models based on their direction of development: emergent change and planned change models, which follow the principles of change initiatives. Emergent change examines what is happening within the organization (Doyle & Brady, 2018), while planned change involves guiding the organization from its current state to a future one. Leaders identify the current and desired states and then develop a strategy to help the organization reach its goals

(Doyle & Brady, 2018). This approach to leading change emphasizes providing adequate support for project deliverables, managing time effectively, and allocating resources. In authoritarian systems, planned changes can succeed if the administration implements them according to established goals (Marshak & Bushe, 2018). Leaders and managers can utilize each strategy to achieve different outcomes—the effects can range from individual acceptance to the development of a symbiotic relationship among various organizational systems (Laig & Abocejo, 2021). Change professionals who adopt a planned change approach aim to reach a new state as directed by managers, rather than focusing on the authority and political aspects within an organization (Doyle & Brady, 2018).

In the upcoming sections, the three change models—Lewin's change model, Mento et al.'s (2002) change model, and Kotter's 8-step strategic model—will be discussed in detail. Regarding all related tasks, Liwin's model is relevant. Although the model is designed for planned change, it remains useful when unexpected modifications occur, making it important for educational institutions. While Mento, Jones, and Dirmofer's model recommends 12 complex steps, it is most effective for leading transformational change. Although Kotter's 8-step model primarily supports implementing change at a strategic level within an organization, its multiple phases allow for evaluating change, which is crucial for university leaders.

2.1.1.1. Kurt Lewin's Change Model.

The founding father of the change management model, Kurt Lewin, developed the classical approach to the change process in three steps. According to Errida and Lotfi (2021) and Armstrong (2006), this approach is called the 'three-step model,' which was created in 1947. The model breaks down the change management process into three stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Armstrong elaborates on this strategic process as follows: **Unfreezing** involves

changing the current stable equilibrium that maintains present practices and attitudes. This method must include the potential risks that change poses to individuals, as well as the need to motivate those affected to reach their natural state of stability by embracing change. The unfreezing process is the time needed to prepare for change, help staff accept the upcoming change, and analyze the current situation identified during the review conducted before realizing that changes are essential for survival. **Changing:** developing new responses based on updated information. Employees may need to learn new ways to perform their duties after the change is implemented, whether they are in their current jobs in new locations or new roles in the same locations. Once workers accept the changes, they can easily support and adapt to them. **Refreezing**: Stabilizing the recent change by incorporating new reactions into the personalities of those affected helps embed the change. When this happens, trust in the organization grows, often along with a renewed sense of hope and a brighter outlook for everyone involved. At this stage, refreezing should occur. A celebration to recognize the new organization should be held, allowing everyone to feel appreciated for their contributions to the change.

This model also focuses on reducing resistance to change by examining two factors within an organization: driving forces and restraining forces. Calder (2013) discusses these forces, although Armstrong (2006) explains how Lewin proposes a framework for evaluating change called 'field force analyses,' which involves the following: Assessing the pushing or restraining forces that influence the transition to the future state includes considering the attitudes of individuals who see change as unimportant or as a threat. It is crucial to identify which of the pushing or restraining factors is more significant to take appropriate action, either by strengthening the driving forces or by reducing the restraining ones.

For effective transformation, Lewin outlined several key assumptions. His first premise was that a change driver is necessary for change to occur. The second premise was that employees are central to organizational transformation. According to his third premise, those impacted by the change must alter their daily routines, abandon old habits, and adapt. Finally, Lewin argues that resistance to change is common, even when the goals are positive. Attitudes and behaviors within the organization that change need to support the change for it to succeed. This is similar to overcoming negative habits by replacing them with new ones. Like organizational operations, individuals must be determined and committed to change and take the right actions, despite any challenges, to succeed in the change process—the ultimate goal (Galli, 2018).

2.1.1.2. John Kotter's Change Model.

Another model examined in the study of change management was John Kotter's 8-step model. Kotter, an expert and professor at Harvard University in change management, developed a model to address what he identified as the eight main causes of ineffective change efforts in organizations (Calder, 2013). Instead of concentrating on managing change itself, he focused on leadership. The 1995 original article by Kotter, with the same title, quickly became essential reading for organizational leaders involved in change strategy and implementation. According to Kotter's (2007) framework, top-level management holds significant responsibility for guiding the organization through change. Later, he argued that there are eight critical steps leaders must perform correctly and in the proper order to achieve successful organizational change. While Kotter recognizes that some organizations have improved their practices through change initiatives, many others have experienced disappointing results, with serious effects on both employees and those overseeing the process. According to Kotter, the biggest mistake people make when attempting to reform an organization is moving too quickly without first establishing a strong

sense of urgency among coworkers and employees. Similarly, one of the main reasons change initiatives fail is the belief that such failure could never happen to their organization.

The eight steps of Kotter's model include **creating a sense of urgency.** The leadership team or organization recognizes the need for change at this stage, which is when they create a sense of urgency to move things forward. People can better prepare for change by being informed of its ongoing necessity. In the publication of 'Harvard Business Review', Kotter and Cohen (2012) noted that instilling a sense of urgency is crucial for raising an organization's awareness of the need for strategic adjustments and the constant presence of opportunities. Secondly, **building a core coalition** is important in the model. People with the right knowledge, abilities, and power will be driven to take part in the transformation process if the first stage is completed. The right team members, especially successful leaders, are crucial for success (Bystydzienski et al., 2017; Fisher & Henderson, 2018). According to Kotter (1995), a successful change occurs when a group of effective leaders unite to create urgency around the need for change.

The stage that guides the change process toward a shared, well-known, and desired new state is called **Creating a strategic vision**. To be achieved, this vision requires support from successful, relevant, and practical strategies (Graham, 2012). Without a clear strategic vision, change initiatives are likely to fail because the project team will lack a comprehensive plan to implement the change. **Communicating and sharing vision.** This is the process of keeping everyone informed about the new outlook and plan, especially those who might be affected. According to Bystydzienski et al. (2017), a major change is only effective when everyone is on board and moving in the same direction. **Empowering others on the vision** is the fifth stage that occurs before full-scale change becomes effective; all potential barriers to change must be

identified and eliminated (Kotter & Cohen, 2012). Allowing workers to experiment with new ideas and methods is known as empowering them.

Celebrating small accomplishments along the way can serve as an emotional reward during the change process and promote achievement, a concept known as **creating short-term wins** (Kotter & Cohen, 2012), which is followed by **consolidating improvements and pursuing further change.** Members may lose their sense of urgency as the change takes place, get worn out, or revert to their previous patterns (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). The change must be regularly reviewed and improved to ensure that everyone stays passionately committed and to prevent similar situations. The project team should build on its successes and drive greater change. The goal is to avoid complacency and to make improvements daily. Finally, **anchoring new changes in the corporate culture** is when change is institutionalized, becomes commonplace among people, and the knowledge, abilities, and mindsets have been distributed; it can be considered successful. Therefore, a process needs to be established to make sure successors in governance keep going, strengthening the change (Kotter & Cohen, 2012).

2.1.1.3. Mento's Model of Change

The Mento et al. (2002) model was developed from three well-known models: Kotter's 8-step strategic model for change, Jick's 10-step tactical model for realizing change, and General Electric's seven-step process for accelerating change. This model offers a broader scope than other models. It includes the following steps for change implementation:

Step 1: The idea and its context. At this stage, it's essential to describe the concept that needs to be changed to create the change vision before starting a change. This is when creative tension arises from clearly understanding where we need to go—the vision—while also recognizing our current state, or our actual position, known as our current reality.

Step 2: Defining the change initiatives. The goals at this stage are to identify the major participants in all change activities, including strategists, implementers, and recipients.

Step 3: Assessing the climate for change. Strategists and implementers need to understand how the organization functions within its environment, how it operates, and what its strengths and weaknesses are during this phase.

Step 4: Create a change plan. This stage involves developing a plan for implementing the change. The plan should include clear goals and detailed, unambiguous responsibilities for strategists, implementers, and those affected.

Step 5: Finding and nurturing a sponsor. This step's main goal is to identify and develop individuals within the organization who will support and legitimize the change effort.

Step 6: Preparing the target audience, the recipients of change. Mento et al. (2002) argue that no change can happen unless individuals are willing to change themselves. However, regardless of whether the change is negative or positive, implementers will always encounter resistance. This is because people tend to prefer what they recognize, and the arrival of change feels unfamiliar, which can cause anxiety among the receivers. Therefore, a clear strategy for preparing recipients for change should be established.

Step 7: Creating the cultural fit (ensuring the change sticks). According to Mento et al. (2002), every effort at change must become integrated into the existing organizational culture for it to last.

Step 8: Developing and selecting a leadership team. At this stage, the change model recommends forming a 'Leader Team.' A team of this kind can be assembled to enhance the required skill sets.

Step 9: Celebrating small wins' boosts motivation. Throughout a change effort, stakeholder motivation is crucial. In 1996, Kotter identified creating short-term wins as a way to build and

maintain motivation during a change process (Wheeler & Holmes, 2017). The goal of establishing a short-term win is to acknowledge stakeholders who actively participate in the change effort.

Step 10: Consistently and strategically communicate the change. This step is similar to Jick's step 9: 'Communicate, involve others, and be honest' (1991). The main goal is to contact the sponsor and establish a two-way communication channel between the implementers and strategists who manage the essential resources.

Step 11: Measuring the improvement of the change effort involves adjustments to progress monitoring. This includes developing and implementing metrics to evaluate the program's effectiveness and tracking progress using benchmarks and milestones (Prokesch, 2009).

Step 12: Integrating lessons learned. Unlike other change models, this one stands out in its approach. It offers the chance for "reflection" to be at the core of learning lessons. Reflection is a human cognitive activity that requires stepping back from an event to consciously and persistently consider its meaning through forming inferences (Bindels et al., 2018).

The goal of these change management models was to sustain the momentum of the change until it was fully implemented and became a core part of the organization's culture or operations. Changes in organization and performance heavily rely on the planning and execution of change initiatives (Samal & Chatterjee, 2020). Organizations must be able to adapt to changes in the social, cultural, technological, political, and economic areas if they want to survive. According to Samal and Chatterjee (2020), when discussing organizational change concepts, the change management framework often includes terms like resistance to change, readiness for change, the speed of change, and the extent of change. Constant change can hinder organizational performance, but managing change effectively can also be beneficial for organizations (Samal & Chatterjee, 2020).

Ensuring that individuals can handle change is crucial for successful change management. The leadership is responsible for managing change in company operations and its effects on personnel.

According to Hansen (2018), the implementation of organizational change mainly depends on the organization's leadership, culture, and communication styles, regardless of the reasons behind the change. Hansen also explains that organizational changes can often lead to completely new perspectives and procedures that may conflict with previously held beliefs, which is likely the main driver of the change. Therefore, the goal is to create opportunities that allow management to fully leverage employee dedication and engagement, possibly through communication, culture, and leadership. It is essential to understand how these factors can foster a change-friendly environment within the organization when change is unavoidable.

However, the impact of these factors as methods for promoting change within the organization might not be fully understood. Therefore, by consistently adjusting strategies and adopting new technology, many organizations have managed to stay competitive (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997). The idea of organizational change remains a popular term that describes the process of maintaining organizational progress, despite the challenges faced by change management practitioners. These activities typically support the development of a sustainable strategy, encourage participation and communication, and oversee the process (Lewis et al., 2006).

2.1.1.4.Burke-Litwin Organizational Change Model

The Burke-Litwin[1] model considers both internal and external factors that influence organizational change and performance. Culture, structure, management practices, leadership,

[1] Warner Burke has served as a pioneering scientist in the field of organizational development for almost 60 years. He has not only impacted the literature with over twenty books and numerous articles, but he has also worked as a consultant and trainer of the method of organizational change design in academia and the public and private sectors (Church & Pasmore, 2020). Surprisingly, despite his significant contribution to literature, it is difficult to obtain details regarding George

processes, and policies are some of the most essential elements within an organization. External factors include technology, regulatory conditions, market trends, and societal shifts, among others (Burke 2008). The external environment is considered the driving force behind factors outside the organization that influence its performance. These factors may include customer behavior, market dynamics, political events, government restrictions, and the global economy (Burke 2008). The external environment directly influences an organization's top decision-makers, such as leaders and senior executives. These decision-makers set the mission and strategy, or can alter variables like the mission, leadership, strategy, and culture. In simple terms, transformational forces cause the fastest and most direct responses to external environmental changes (Burke 2008). Rapid shifts in the organizational environment demand adaptable and responsive procedures and structures, making traditional bureaucratic organizations ineffective (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), as cited in Friedlander and Brown (1977).

Mission, strategy, and goal are related concepts, but they serve distinct roles in organizational transformation. The mission addresses the organization's core objectives. Strategy focuses on the methods to achieve the mission, such as technology. Vision is primarily about leadership and concentrates on the desired outcome. The mission differs from the vision because it is more directly tied to the organization's goals and is strongly rooted in the company's current state (Burke, 2008).

Structure refers to the design of an organization, including its functions and units. It encompasses decision levels, decision-making authority, and communication channels (Burke, 2008). Burke and Litwin are unsure about the results of structural change; however, they feel that,

---

Litwin. He received a doctorate from Harvard University and finally worked as a psychologist for organizations at" The Ever-Changing Company" (LinkedIn, 2021).

depending on the environment, structural changes may or may not impact the change process (Burke & Litwin, 1992).

Among the many scholars highlighting the importance of leadership, the Burke-Litwin model stands out. However, external factors often trigger change, usually at the leadership level, to enable organizational transformation (Majewska-Button, 2010). Managers' daily tasks include implementing organizational plans using management techniques, technology, computer programs, and other tools that support organizational management. Managers and technology are part of the scope of systems and regulations.

Burke-Litwin (1992) describes organizational climate as a set of shared perceptions about a specific work environment among employees. According to Litwin et al. (1978), there is a positive relationship between the quality of the workplace climate and organizational performance. Burke-Litwin (1992) explains that climate differs from culture because climate reflects members' views, whereas culture includes shared beliefs and values.

The Burke-Litwin model presents the ship-of-change model, which explores organizational factors during change by using well-established frameworks, especially the Burke-Litwin model. This model highlights communication as a crucial element in understanding the change process (Swearingen, 2019). Martins and Coetze (2009) used the Burke-Litwin Model as a diagnostic tool to assess organizational performance. They emphasize the model's ability to explain relationships, establish cause-and-effect links between internal and external factors, and distinguish between transactional and transformational components involved in organizational behavior and change. Due to its complexity, models like Burke-Litwin provide scholars with a taxonomy of key organizational aspects, aiding in understanding and analyzing individual organizational changes (Bejinariu et al., 2017).

Anderson-Rudolf (1996) evaluated the Burke-Litwin model's effectiveness as a conceptually and analytically strong framework for essential organizational change, concluding that leadership has a greater impact on organizational shifts than other factors within the model. The findings, along with other research using the model, provide solid evidence for the value of the Burke-Litwin (1992) framework in understanding organizational change.

Although the Burke-Litwin Model is more commonly used in private industry, experts in the public sector are increasingly interested in adopting it, especially at the local level. Cook (2015) investigated how a small junior college transformed into a baccalaureate institution, with an emphasis on transformational leadership and the Burke-Litwin model serving as the organizational change framework. Cooper (2015) analyzed collaborative service models used in enrollment management departments across 121 higher education institutions, employing the model for conceptual analysis. Bouska (2015) proposed that the Burke-Litwin model could help develop a unified framework to understand government organization employee performance. Although research on governmental organizational change using the Burke-Litwin paradigm has been conducted outside the United States, it has yet to be implemented and thoroughly studied within the context of organizational change in Ethiopian higher education institutions.

2.1.1.5.Individual Differences Theory

In 1997, Motowidlo et al. first introduced the Individual Differences Theory (IDT) to assess individual job performance. Similar to Campbell et al. (1993), who developed the first multi-dimensional models of job performance, Motowidlo et al. (1997) suggest that individual career performance is a multi-dimensional concept that can be distinguished. Performance is a social construct within this framework. However, according to this view, performance, behavior, and outcomes are not the same. Likewise, Campbell (1990) regarded performance as an actual activity

that is measurable, flexible, and related to proficiency rather than results. Later, Campbell et al. (1993) maintained that performance is driven by behavior, not the outcome of the activity.

Consequently, performance is viewed as a behavior involving an evaluation element—an action that has a positive or negative impact on an individual's or organization's effectiveness. Results are conditions of people or objects that change due to performance and either support or hinder the achievement of organizational goals. Focusing on results when assessing individual performance is helpful because they demonstrate how a person's actions contribute to or hinder an organization's ability to achieve its objectives. Therefore, job success results from a combination of genuine workplace behaviors that individuals exhibit and make visible to others. Task and contextual performance are the two main dimensions of the individual difference theory (Motowidlo et al., 1997). Task performance encompasses all actions directly related to the organization’s primary goals, whereas contextual performance involves social behaviors that influence the organizational, psychological, and social environment, thereby supporting the organization’s key objectives. As a result, the study will examine what happens to SJP when organizations change at research universities.

2.1.1.6. Social Exchange Theory

Some scholars have used social exchange theory to explain how and why social behavior can enhance organizational relationships and performance, as well as to clarify the nature of staff job performance. George Homans' Social Exchange Theory, introduced in 1950, served as the basis for this study (Homans, 1961). Although some researchers call it stimulus-response theory, it is also known as action-reaction theory. It is a hypothesis that predicts people's voluntarily chosen behaviors.

Social exchange theory is applied in nearly every setting, including politics, marriage, consumer purchasing decisions, and organizational management (Redmond, 2015). Its primary goal, according to Redmond, is to promote equality, distributive justice, social influence, balance, conformity, and cohesion. Early social exchange theorists, such as Homans, believed that social interactions involve exchanging both material and immaterial resources between two or more people. They thought these interactions could encompass both social and economic relationships, involving the transfer of physical resources that particularly create obligations in economic contexts.

The organizational change, or supportive organizational environment, that grants favors to staff members is considered a direct social exchange because it comes directly from the organizational environment to the employees (Nohe & Hertel, 2017). This idea was highlighted in social exchange discussions related to organizing and staffing. Notably, social interactions involve a demand for reciprocity and an uncertain obligation (Blau, 1964). As a result, over time, when followers see their relationship as highly valuable, they start to feel compelled to respond to their organization.

According to the idea, workers' voluntary actions and reactions are caused by activities or stimuli initiated by organizations. The main focus of this research was that incentives and supportive organizational change influence employees' voluntary actions and reactions related to job performance. It was found, using social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), that social exchange dynamics create bonds and blur boundaries between supportive organizational change and employees. As a result of fulfilling their responsibilities, people gradually improve their performance. Organizational workers are primarily constrained by social responsibilities. The

current study explored this knowledge through the lens of organizational change, specifically positive organizational change within the social exchange theory framework.

Furthermore, it examines whether the impact of an organizational change mechanism on the relationship between staff job performance is equally strong. Consequently, this proposed study investigates how organizational change works and how its key components serve as vital competitive tools necessary for a positive effect on staff performance. The core dynamics of organizational change (leadership, structural, cultural, and technical changes) and staff performance (task and contextual performance), mediated by work engagement, are best explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

2.2. The Concept of Change: An Overview

Throughout history, people have debated the idea of change. Since change is constant, it occurs at home, at work, and within our communities. Change has consistently been a priority for organizations since the rise of globalization, just as it has always played a vital role in human life. However, change can sometimes push people out of their comfort zones and force them to make difficult lifestyle adjustments, which become increasingly challenging for individuals to accept (Cummings & Worley, 2014).

Change is a frequent occurrence in organizations due to quick shifts in public opinion, the environment, and the economy. According to Herold et al. (2008), organizational change includes various actions that lead to new directions and/or methods affecting how organizations are structured and operate. While some management researchers view change as progressive and continuous, others see it as discontinuous and episodic. Change is a constant process of adjustment and readjustment as individuals modify their behaviors to keep up with their ever-changing surroundings (Abocejo, 2017). Additionally, organizational change that involves both internal and

external shifts in people's beliefs, aspirations, and actions is called deep transformation. Most scholars and professionals agree that human systems have experienced ongoing change, regardless of the researcher's view on change (Cummings & Worley, 2014; Storberg-Walker & Torraco, 2004).

Poole and Van de Ven (2004) proposed several typologies of change that help understand how the process of change can differ depending on the circumstances in which it occurs. There are four types of change: (1) the lifecycle approach, which depicts change as happening in phases or stages; (2) the teleological approach, which suggests that changes follow a cycle of creation, implementation, evaluation, and modification of decisions or goals; (3) the dialectical approach, which interprets change as a response to conflict and confrontation between opposing forces; and (4) the evolutionary approach (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004; Poole et al., 2000), which views change as a struggle for limited natural resources among groups within the same community. At the system level, change can be transformative while remaining transactional at the individual level, or vice versa. Because change is unpredictable and complex, identifying its types, levels, and scales greatly improves understanding of this phenomenon.

Additionally, in identifying various forms of organizational change, Gerwing (2016) revealed that in the early 1990s, scholars like Porras and his colleagues, Silver and Robertson, examined organizational change theory and literature broadly while conducting extensive research in the field. This work highlighted the difference between unplanned and planned changes, as well as between first-order and second-order changes. They argue that while unplanned change responds to "external influences," planned change is a deliberate decision to advance the organization's goals. New technology or competitors can impact an organization's core operations through external factors. In such cases, the researcher suggested that organizations should respond

proactively to adapt in line with the intended changes. First-order changes involve modifications to existing systems or processes, such as reorganizing an organization's structure, and they represent "continuous improvement'—a less fundamental impact on the organization. In contrast, second-order change is more significant and profound. Porras and Robertson (1992) called this type of change "revolutionary change" because it is associated with unexpected shifts. However, Gerwing (2016) questioned Porras and Robertson's findings, arguing that they were hard to understand due to the misconception that "evolutionary" and "revolutionary" changes could not be planned at the same time.

2.3. Organizational Change Management

An organization is a group of individuals or teams working within structured systems to achieve personal or organizational goals. Muo and Muo (2014) describe the organization as a group of people cooperating within a system to accomplish both the organization's objectives and those of the individuals. Essentially, it is a group of people collaborating to reach long-term goals and fulfill their aims. An organization is a social unit made up of two or more individuals who work together consistently to achieve shared goals. Another way to view organizations is as a set of responsibilities and a series of actions directed toward reaching a common purpose. According to Armstrong (2006), this perspective emphasizes the importance of organizational structure and procedures in achieving shared objectives.

Managing change within organizations has become increasingly vital in today's world, where globalization and competition continuously grow. Managers view the current organizational climate and market demands as complex, chaotic, unpredictable, disruptive, and constantly evolving. Compared to the past three to four decades, levels of complexity, connectivity, interdependence, and speed have significantly increased. This has created a markedly different

environment that requires new strategies for transformation (Worley & Mohrman, 2014). The term "change management" refers to the study of how people within changing organizations adapt, as well as the theory and practice of reorganizing institutions to adapt and succeed in a dynamic setting. As a result, the phrase "organizational change management" is broad and encompasses any strategy to help a company manage change, whether transformative or gradual. To implement organizational change, a series of procedures known as "change management" is used to ensure that major changes are conducted in an organized, controlled, and systematic manner.

Change management involves procedures that ensure adjustments happen due to planned or unexpected organizational changes. These processes include strategies that influence organizational systems, corporate culture, policies, and structure (Lines et al., 2015). According to Alqatawenah (2018), change management is a process that uses best practices to implement change in line with corporate goals and the intended purpose of the change. Through change initiatives, change management acts as an agent to help organizational managers prevent future problems rather than just solve current ones. Armstrong (2006) emphasizes that change management emphasizes developing plans and strategies that respond to ongoing changes in the organization's external environment and align with broader organizational aims and objectives. To achieve optimal alignment between corporate strategy and plans, practitioners must interpret and adapt this approach. As a result, integrating all institutional activities, committing to overarching organizational goals, and responding to the external environment are key themes of change management.

Change management is vital for an organization's growth and long-term success. It involves a systematic study of how change aligns with organizational efficiency through structural adjustments. A structured approach can transform systems, behaviors, and processes to boost an

organization's effectiveness. Successfully managing organizational changes to achieve peak performance is a key aspect of effective change management, which requires regular updates to goals, objectives, structures, and skills (Belias et al., 2019). Adapting to and handling situations that help organizational leaders integrate change into their operations is an essential part of this process. Additionally, the perception of well-implemented change efforts has a significant influence on change management (Hechanova et al., 2018).

Organizations have taken different stances on change management. Classical views argue that managing change is a process that requires intentional techniques to shift beliefs and create meaning, rather than just changing actions or assigning meaning. Because change management involves shifting attitudes rather than applying force, effective communication is essential for implementing organizational change. Hornstein (2015) points out that change management extends beyond merely focusing on procedural details; it also involves motivating leadership that guides strategic initiatives. The change management approach renews an institutional manager's direction and skills to support key aspects of change. For sustainability, it is crucial to define the vision for organizational management and align it with plans and recommendations for change (Hornstein, 2015). Holten et al. (2019) developed change management to define managerial goals and the skills needed to enable organizational change. An organization's vision for managing change includes recognizing past failures and viewing change as a fundamental revolution led by transformative leadership (Alqatawenah, 2018).

2.4. Organizational Change

Many researchers and professionals are working to establish a comprehensive definition of organizational change. Accordingly, Park and Kim (2015) defined the concept of organizational change as the foundation of a researcher's perspective. While some writers focus on the content of

change in their definitions, others emphasize the processes involved; however, all authors discuss organizational reform in terms of practices and principles. According to Rosenbaum et al. (2018), other definitions highlight organizational components while concentrating on the characteristics of organizational change. Park and Kim (2015) also elaborated on the definition of change within an organization as the way essential system components interact to shape an organization's evolution.

In light of this, Appelbaum et al. (2017) provided a detailed analysis of change by defining it in organizations as a controlled system, process, and behavioral response to an occurrence or trigger. Organizational change can be achieved through various strategies. However, understanding this phenomenon broadly is challenging due to the wide range of techniques, from downsizing and cultural shifts to mergers and acquisitions. Implementing organizational change is complex and requires organizations to select change agents, gather relevant data on employee issues, and develop new policies to support the transition. Organizational change involves updates to the structure, purpose, demographics, and roles within an organization. It includes assessing the attitudes and behaviors of change agents to adapt to new circumstances (Orth & Cheng, 2019). Organizational change also involves recognizing new growth opportunities and making internal adjustments necessary for success. According to Park and Kim (2015), organizational change is technological and encompasses executive declines, management innovations, and system development. Additionally, realigning an organization in a way that impacts people, processes, strategy, and work is another way to describe organizational change. The primary goal is for organizational change to intentionally modify elements such as the organization's vision, mission, strategy, objectives, capabilities, and structures to improve overall effectiveness.

Organizational change is defined by Cummings et al. (2016) as the process of moving an organization from its current state to its ideal future state, with the manager's goal of improving efficiency. Different definitions describe organizational change based on its type, scale, impact, and origin. According to Gupta and Singla (2016), organizational change involves a shift in the behavior of every individual within the company to modify its operations and procedures. Without learning or a change in perspective, these adjustments, regardless of their size, are ineffective. Since organizational change involves major shifts in culture, policy, and mindsets, scholars believe that corporate change is equivalent to changes in values and strategy (Mustafa et al., 2019). According to Hechanova et al. (2018), employees find organizational change challenging due to shifts in behavior and values, which often lead to tension and anxiety.

As a result, improving change acceptance and employee motivation, along with reducing stress related to change, receives significant focus in organizational change research (Ekechi & Umar, 2020). Therefore, organizational change involves adapting and modifying existing organizations to meet specific needs. The main elements of successful organizational change are identifying what needs to be changed and determining how to implement that change. Consequently, understanding employees' perspectives on change and knowing which changes they are willing to accept and support are crucial for effective organizational change.

Change in organizations should be carried out at three distinct levels for success: micro (individuals), meso (groups), and macro (organizations and populations of institutions). Some studies examine the psychological aspects of organizational change, focusing on how change affects people, usually those who benefit from it (see Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005); the 'meso' perspective is used by the second approach. Group-level change aims to effectively integrate new technology while adjusting organizational processes. According to Van Leeuwen et al. (2003), this

perspective emphasizes the organizational context of change and how organizational change influences and is influenced by the organization's recognition and institutionalization processes.

The third line of research explores organizational change from a macro perspective, using sociology's ecological view to analyze structural stability and organizational inertia. Its main goal at this level is to reorganize the organization. It examines how imprinting and organizational change impact an organization's fitness, competitiveness, and ultimately its risk of failure (Baron & Hannan, 2002). Leadership plays a distinct role at each stage of change, as leaders must manage people and motivate their best efforts to support change for the organization's benefit (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). Although implementing change across all levels requires a comprehensive, multidimensional approach, this study emphasizes the people side of change, focusing on organizational change factors and staff performance as mediated by staff work engagement.

As previously mentioned, another view that emphasizes the differences in the organizational change literature is the disciplinary perspective. Poole and Van de Ven (2004) explain that extensive research has been carried out on change processes, both at the individual and group levels (mainly by psychologists, social psychologists, and communication scholars) and at the organizational and community levels (by sociologists, political scientists, and scholars in fields such as business management, public policy, urban planning, medical care, and others). It is typical for research in different disciplines to develop in isolated silos, with scholars often failing to cite relevant work from other fields. Therefore, for effective organizational change, as Errida and Lotfi (2021) stress, there is a crucial need for cross-disciplinary integration and theory comparison.

Carter et al. (2013) explored the idea of organizational change. They discovered that, although organizational change happens often, many organizations see it as a challenging process.

Organizations need to adjust their strategies, rearrange resources, or implement new technologies in response to advancements in innovation, new competitors, or shifts in customer demands. When these situations occur, an organization must adapt "for survival and an important part of life." Lewis (2019), however, argued that organizational change can also be a way to address various challenges, such as new policies, compliance requirements, and the need for increased overall effectiveness. Carter et al. (2013) confirmed that, although these motivating factors can trigger change initiatives of different sizes and impacts, improving performance remains the main goal of organizational change management.

2.5. Drivers of Organizational Change

Understanding the forces behind change is essential (Predişcan & Roiban, 2014). Organizations do not operate in isolation, as Kreitner et al. (2002) and Cummings and Worley (2014) highlight; therefore, drivers of change can originate from both internal and external sources. Consequently, organizational change involves an open system that interacts with both internal and external environments. Changes in an organization's mission, shifts in employee expectations, modifications in management, inefficiencies in current processes, or demographic shifts can all affect the organization’s internal environment. Sometimes, poor leadership performance can also signal a need for change (Anderson & Anderson, 2001). External factors such as legal, political, or market changes, technological advances, increased competition, or socio-economic influences may require organizations to adapt. As Paton and McCalman (2008) explain, external forces can lead to alterations in internal structures and operations. Changes implemented in one area often impact other areas due to the interconnected nature of the factors driving change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). This complexity demands greater organizational flexibility.

Therefore, organizations face significant pressure to adapt due to the complexity of events and the rapid pace of technological advancements in their environment. They are driven to implement change initiatives for various reasons and ongoing developments. Both external and internal factors within organizations act as sources of these pressures to change. External influences, such as the government, competitors, or technological progress, can create external pressures. Internal drivers of change include individuals like stakeholders, management, and workers (Thomas, 2014). Factors such as globalization, emerging technology, and cultural shifts contribute to the dynamic environment in which companies adjust their operations. As a result, organizations must adapt more frequently to their environments. Management constantly faces the challenge of how to respond to change, regardless of its source, when it becomes necessary. Changing an organization's goals, strategies, technology, human resources, organizational structure, or business environment is a common challenge (Thomas, 2014).

Changes in management structure, employee and management culture, strategic adjustments, and modifications to the human resource management process—all of which are linked to increased labor productivity and efficiency—along with skill and competency development, changes in the operational environment caused by the integration of new technologies into organizational processes, and systemic changes are all part of the typology of organizational changes (Bersenaite et al., 2012).

Organizational change aims to enhance human resources by helping individuals develop skills and effectively integrating other factors to improve overall organizational performance. This involves supporting them in better adapting to the organization's technology, roles, and structure. The five components of organizational change include changes in people, technology, tasks, structure, and culture (Burke-Litwin, 1992). Additionally, in educational institutions, Wanza and

Nkuraru (2016) note that universities operate in dynamic environments where change significantly influences their survival and performance. Various factors, including organizational structure, personnel changes, technological advancements, and the nature of the change, affect university operations and staff performance. Therefore, organizational managers must constantly and simultaneously handle multiple issues to manage change and achieve optimal results. Eckechi and Umar (2020) also identify change factors such as leadership change, structural adjustments, cultural shifts, and technological updates.

Therefore, the student researcher aims to identify the main change factors by analyzing which ones are most often mentioned in existing literature and which ones significantly influence organizational transformation within Ethiopian organizations. Based on this understanding, the study suggests three combined change factors for successful change, which serve as the focus of this research as independent variables affecting staff performance through staff work engagement. These include (a) leadership changes, (b) changes in organizational structure, and (c) technological changes.

2.5.1. Leadership Change

According to Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015), leadership and change are closely connected, and organizations can only adapt quickly and effectively to changing conditions through leadership. This idea supports that view. Additionally, the authors stated that since change may be essential for an organization's survival, leadership is a key driver of significant change within organizations. Leaders embrace change despite its challenges because they believe it enhances performance and benefits the organization. Persuading others to act in ways that support the group's goals is the core of leadership (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Leaders have the power to inspire employees, increase their confidence, and maintain trust. Today's organizations require capable

leaders who understand the complexity and dynamics of the business environment. Because there are many different approaches to leadership, there are no universal styles or skills that all leaders must follow. Moreover, leadership is especially vital during times of change, as it helps ensure effective implementation by providing direction, support, and guidance toward the organization's desired future (Asbari et al., 2021).

The capability to persuade others through personal advocacy, vision, and desire, as well as the skill to gather resources for building a solid foundation for change, is known as leadership change management. Often, leadership is seen as essential for effective change (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). They also view leadership change as an act that aims to achieve the interests of individuals and the group simultaneously. Furthermore, it is a mindset and work ethic that enables someone in any position to take the lead at the middle, bottom, or top of an organization. According to Men et al. (2020), to improve overall staff and company performance, managers and other leaders should develop a strong organizational culture.

Organizational leaders drive strategic initiatives and processes that impact the long-term performance of their teams and the organization as a whole. One key managerial responsibility is leadership, which is the method by which an individual, known as the leader, guides the actions of others, or their followers, toward achieving predetermined objectives (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019). It also includes the capacity, aptitude, mindset, and skills of university administrators and managers to develop, create, distribute, communicate visions, resolve conflicts, and overcome opposition to change—known as organizational leadership change. Since organizational leadership changes are inevitable, resistance from subordinates can occur. People often need to adjust to new routines and step outside their comfort zones during leadership transitions. For example, the department head might instruct university employees who report at 9 a.m. to start work at 8 a.m. and to sign the

attendance log-in and log-out book. This specific decision may cause discomfort among staff and lead to resistance.

According to Holten and Brenner's (2015) claims, leaders are essential because they motivate employees to act in ways that support the organization's goals. Utilizing various leadership philosophies is crucial for enhancing worker performance and behavior, as well as for achieving established objectives. Popli and Rizvi (2016) state that there are two traditional leadership philosophies. The first features a more directive, authoritarian management style that is mostly task-oriented, while the second involves information sharing, collaborative decision-making, consultation, and involvement, which are worker-focused and reflective. Therefore, leadership roles and commitment are crucial to the success of organizational change and staff performance (Holten & Brenner, 2015).

2.5.2. Organizational Structural Change

Organizational structure refers to the official arrangement of authority, relationships, and responsibilities that directs and coordinates employee actions to achieve the organization's objectives (John & Shafi, 2020). It outlines the official layout of roles within companies (Castillo et al., 2023), explaining how authority and responsibility are assigned and how management enforces rules. Organizational structure involves stable elements of the organizational environment characterized by two features: formalization and specialization (Jimenez, 2017).

Involvement in decision-making and the authority hierarchy are two key elements of centralization that relate to how power is distributed within the organization (Johari & Yahya, 2019). Even if the hierarchical structure of authority is connected to the level of autonomy employees have in their responsibilities, a centralized decision-making process shows how much influence workers can exert on decisions (Hage & Aiken, 1967). In this context, the ability to make

decisions is exercised at the highest levels of the overall system. This variable is evaluated by looking at the hierarchy of authority and how centralized decision-making is. As Hage and Aiken (ibid.) state, the first category examines how much subordinates rely on their supervisors for decisions, while the second determines the level of centralization in resource distribution and policy creation.

Formalization refers to how much organizational policies and processes are officially documented and communicated to employees. It is divided into two sub-constructs: rule observing (Johari & Yahya, 2019) and job codification (Kelly, 2017). Job codification, as defined by the formalization variable, is the degree to which an organization accurately establishes rules and processes related to occupations in different contexts. It assesses the accuracy of job descriptions and what staff members are expected to do according to applicable laws and regulations. Rule observation has become a way to measure how closely staff are monitored and followed up with to ensure they adhere to the parameters outlined in job codification.

The level of formalization in an organization depends on its size. Some businesses become more formal by establishing regulations, while others become less formal because they think formalization can hinder and discourage innovation, independent work, and academic efforts (Shabbir, 2017). When formalization is high, employees have less freedom in their tasks, but low formalization allows for greater flexibility (Jimenez, 2017).

Many researchers and experts are working to define organizational change clearly. Park and Kim's (2015) approach emphasizes the idea as the basis of a researcher's perspective, while others focus on the reality and processes of change. Still, all authors discuss change in organizations in terms of practice and principles. For example, Cummings et al. (2016) described organizational change as the process of moving an organization from its current state to a more

desirable one, to increase efficiency. As Karanja (2015) states, organizational transformation is defined as any activity or set of activities that leads to a shift in process or direction, affecting how an organization functions.

Structure-related changes involve modifications to an organization's setup caused by internal or external forces (Rodrik, 2013). Changes in the command system, organizational hierarchy, management systems, and administrative procedures all qualify as structural change. These include the division of responsibility and authority within organizations, how jobs are structured, and how management enforces rules and regulations (Castillo et al., 2023). Examples of situations that require structural change include acquisitions and mergers, market upheavals, employment duplication, and legal changes. According to Rodrik (2013), both internal and external factors can lead to structural change within an organization. Many researchers have studied organizational change from various perspectives. For example, Ackerman (1997), referenced by Karaxha et al. (2018), noted that structural changes can be incremental, transitional, or transformative.

Transitional change is more challenging because it requires shifts in duties, roles, authority structures, and processes. It involves moving toward a familiar and desired state that is not identical to the current one. These organizational changes can be occasional, intentional, or drastic. Several studies on organizational change have identified different paradigms of transitional shifts (Karaxha et al., 2018). Kotter (1996) identified three types of change: gradual, technical, and business process re-engineering. Business process re-engineering is a management approach focused on developing and accessing procedures and guidelines within a company, replacing outdated methods with more effective ways of implementing changes (Elapatha & Jehan, 2020). Transitional changes aim to replace outdated procedures with new ones.

Developmental change happens gradually, aiming to improve skills or procedures within a company (Karaxha et al., 2018). Karaxha et al. also described developmental change as "changes that enhance or correct the existing aspects of an organization, often focusing on improving skills or processes" (p. 31). Unlike business process re-engineering, incremental change involves making small adjustments to reach the desired outcome (Kotter, 1996). Transformational change involves completely restructuring an organization's tactics and procedures in response to external factors, resulting in significant shifts in its structure, culture, and operations. Organizations that continually learn and adapt strive to enhance their overall effectiveness. Transformational changes significantly alter an organization's business and operational strategies, often leading to changes in workplace culture (Karaxha et al., 2018).

2.5.3. Technological Change

According to Antonelli (2012), technological change includes the development of new technologies (which encompass processes) and their marketing through research and development, leading to emerging technologies. It also involves ongoing improvements that reduce costs and the spread of technology within the industry. Similar to measuring devices or computers, it refers to tools that assist in the process. These types of changes emphasize the importance of external adaptability and focus on the organizational capacities of information technology, management practices, and production systems.

Technology has had a profound impact on the world, both positively and negatively. The rapid advancement of technology and increasing market competition drive changes in organizations. Idemudia (2020) argued that adopting new systems or software to improve organizational processes is a common aspect of technological change. However, sometimes the goals of technological initiatives are unclear and poorly communicated, which can upset and

frustrate employees and lead to resistance. According to Sharma (2020), the two main pillars of technology change management—focused on boosting productivity and profitability—are identifying the key technology and implementing it. Although technology aims to enhance people's lives, learning curves can make it difficult to adopt new ideas.

Every country needs technology, and its use in organizations has sky rocketed. According to Pohekar (2018), technology is a collaborative tool that encourages knowledge sharing among users and supports traditional topics. The rapid advances in technology development and implementation over the past 20 years will continue to influence policies, plans, activities, operations, and strategies worldwide. Since the inception of technology, every university in Africa has made substantial investments in it. Therefore, organizational managers should enhance technological tools at universities to improve performance, reduce labor-intensive tasks, and allow for faster job completion.

2.6. Change Management Practice in Public Universities

There are notable similarities between research universities and industry in terms of change, and personnel in both sectors often struggle with inadequate change management. However, there are also several key differences. For example, publicly funded institutions might follow different rules than for-profit businesses. Additionally, while administrative offices manage change, academics are also deeply involved in these processes. To support change, higher education institutions frequently hire consultants. According to Taylor et al. (2019), executive coaches have proven effective in helping leaders meet their "self-discovery and purposeful action" needs, which are connected to competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Although higher education managers are experts in various disciplines with different levels of expertise and achievement in research, innovative teaching, or knowledge transfer, a

comprehensive and cohesive approach to managing change in organizations still seems to be missing, according to a University of Amsterdam study on coaches working with higher education leaders on change management (Vlachopoulos, 2021). The findings also indicate that leaders' professional and academic backgrounds are highly appreciated during the change process. Additionally, it emphasizes that understanding the challenges faced by coaches, along with the professional and personal qualities of successful academic leaders, is essential for academic leaders to guide and implement organizational change effectively.

Cardona Mejía et al. (2020) conducted research in Colombia suggesting that managers and academics approach change by considering the internal and external factors that drive it. The report states that managers need to understand how to handle coercive influences from institutional government, such as HEIs, and national government policies through the Ministry of National Education, which the National Council of Accreditation represents. To secure or maintain institutional accreditation, the latter applies coercive pressure. The sources of mimetic pressure are other HEIs that imitate behavior patterns and face similar circumstances due to environmental demands. It is also important to note that in HEIs, academic networks exert mimetic pressure as well. Lastly, the development of specialized communities with specific knowledge interests promotes particular behaviors that others attempt to imitate, serving as a source of normative pressures.

Yehualashet (2020) conducted a comprehensive study on change management practices in Ethiopian higher education institutions. The study gathered ample evidence and concluded that most institutions' change management practices fell well short of expectations, leading to high failure rates, demotivation, and industrial instability. Daniel (2022) also discovered how the activity of leading change in the country fails, supported by evidence. Therefore, the individuals

and groups affected by the change must actively participate for the implementation to be successful. As a result, all interested parties need to be heard and their interests considered when managing change. Additionally, to remain competitive in modern communities, leaders of higher education institutions must launch several transformation initiatives. These reforms will help address societal needs and keep institutions relevant. However, the implementation of change efforts should not be done blindly. This highlights the importance of change management. Consequently, this study examines the perceptions of university staff and leaders regarding organizational change and its impact on staff job performance in Ethiopian research universities.

Consequently, the next segment also provides a detailed review of staff job performance that the investigator considers important within the realm of organizational change.

2.7. Staff Job Performance Defined

A growing number of organizations are beginning to see their workforce as their most valuable asset. According to Altmdag and Kosedagr (2015), performance is a concept that describes how an individual can utilize their potential or actual knowledge, skills, and talents to meet their own or the organization's expectations and objectives. Therefore, the process by which employees perform their organizational duties and complete their work can be described as SJP. Additionally, it reflects the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the output produced by an organization (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). The behavior of employees at work and how successfully they execute their assigned tasks are also considered aspects of staff performance. According to Cheng and Osman (2021), "performance" is defined as the quantity and quality of work an employee completes to fulfill their assigned responsibilities, where the individual, team, or organization doing the work aims to reach a planned goal related to their work. Consequently, activities designed to assess how well workers perform their duties are called performance

evaluations. Customer satisfaction, the organization's overall economic contribution, and its strategic objectives are all closely linked to performance. Staff job performance also includes both the process of performing activities and the results that emerge from completing those tasks.

Individual performance, however, is the result of work based on both the quantity and quality of established work standards (Yousaf et al., 2015). From this, it is clear that two factors, specifically the employee's work quality, must be considered when evaluating a single employee. According to the definition provided above, performance is defined as the work output that can be achieved from a project using specific processes to meet the organization's goals, following jointly established standards.

Two forms of staff job performance—task performance and contextual performance—were identified by earlier scholars like Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Motowidlo et al. (1997) as crucial for organizational efficiency. Most research studies define staff performance as task performance related to employees' work responsibilities (see Cheng & Osman, 2021; Landa, 2018; Safitri & Lathifah, 2019; Sartika, 2014). However, staff job performance is explained using two components: in-role and extra-role performance. Although some literature considers many factors to describe staff performance, there is consistency among these different terms. Extra-role performance refers to voluntary work beyond the scope of one's official job description, while in-role performance involves activities associated with one's job duties (Biswas & Varma, 2012). According to Ismail et al. (2009) and Yousof et al. (2015), task performance is another term for in-role performance, whereas contextual performance relates to out-of-role work. Additionally, other research defines task performance as fulfilling duties that align with a job description, including performing in-role tasks, as mentioned by Bacha (2014) and Donohoe (2019).

There are different ways to categorize SJP in research. For example, previous studies on SJP (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Koopmans et al., 2014; Bernaard et al., 2014; Yousaf et al., 2015) have tried to classify it based on the key difference between task performance and context-specific performance. According to Yousaf et al. (2015), task performance includes all actions an individual takes that directly relate to the organization's main goal. Contextual performance results from an individual's actions that, by influencing the organizational, psychological, and social environment, subtly support the organization's primary objective. Motowidlo et al. (1997) further divided these contextual behaviors into teamwork, actively helping improve work, and functioning as a team within the organization. This is considered extra-role performance, performed at the employee's request, and not outlined in their official job description (Yousaf et al., 2015). Other studies (Van Scotter et al., 2000; Yousaf et al., 2015) have recommended evaluating followers' performance by using both categories of employee job performance. Therefore, as other researchers have emphasized, it is important and helpful to assess both in-role and extra-role factors to understand what influences SJP. Consequently, these two aspects of staff job performance were included in the current study.

2.7.1. Components of Staff Job Performance

According to some research on performance, staff members can perform in two different ways: extra-role and in-role performance (Ismail et al., 2009; Morrison, 1994). Contextual performance, also known as extra-role performance, refers to the contributions employees make to the psychological and social framework of an organization (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Contextual performance describes an individual's actions that uphold and enhance the social recognition of an organization, as well as the psychological capital needed to enable task completion and technical performance. Extra-role performance is defined as actions taken by an

employee at their discretion and outside of formal role requirements (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). In-role performance is also considered an employee's actions to meet the requirements of their job description (Ismail et al., 2009). In summary, several factors influence staff job performance, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Components of Staff Job Performance

Author(s)	**Aspects of Staff Performance**
Kacmar et al. (2007)	Contextual Performance
Ismail et al. (2009)	In-role Performance.
Walumbwa & Hartnell (2011)	Personal initiative, self-direction, and innovation
Koopmans et al. (2014)	Contextual Performance, Task Performance, and Counterproductive Work Behavior
Bacha (2014)	Task Performance
Yousaf et al. (2015)	Task and contextual performance
Pradhan & Jena (2017)	Task performance

Source. Own Illustration of the Researcher

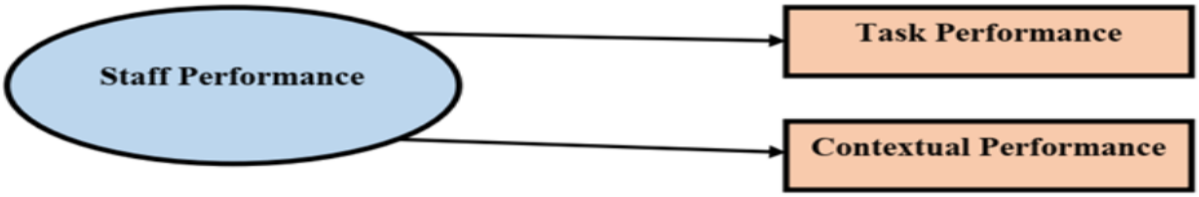
Task performance, on the other hand, is often defined as fulfilling responsibilities according to the person's job description and is usually called in-role performance. In contrast, extra-role and voluntary performance involve tasks outside one's formal job description that benefit the organization and are linked to personal initiative and self-direction. Conversely, creative performance pertains to behaviors where workers demonstrate originality and creative problem-solving during their work.

The studies included in this dissertation primarily focus on SJP from the perspectives of (a) task performance and (b) contextual or extra-role performance, aiming to assess followers' performance in these two important areas. The goal of this study is also to determine whether organizational change enhances followers' performance on both in-role and extra-role duties in

terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Consequently, Figure 3 replicates the task and contextual performance aspects identified by Bono and Judge (2003) and Hartini et al. (2019).

Figure 3.

Staff Job Performance Components



Source. *Bono and Judge (2003) and Hartini et al. (2019)*

2.7.1.1. Task Performance.

Task performance involves actions that either directly contribute to producing products or services or are connected to activities that support an organization's core technical operations. As a result, many scholars define task performance based on clearly specified job behaviors, such as basic duties listed in a job description (Bacha, 2014; Cheng et al., 2014; Pradhan & Jena, 2017; Yousaf et al., 2015). Therefore, mastering specific job tasks forms the basis of task performance. Compared to work sample measurements, it is more comprehensive but still highlights skilled, job-specific performance. Ultimately, task performance encompasses the part of the performance domain that differentiates between various jobs.

Task performance refers to an individual worker's ability to execute key responsibilities associated with their job. According to Maxham et al. (2008), the concept of task performance is comparable to related ideas such as "job-specific task proficiency," "in-role performance," and "technical proficiency," including work quality, quantity, and job knowledge. It involves the ability of employees to perform officially recognized tasks that directly contribute to the organization's core functions, either by executing technical procedures or indirectly by providing essential resources. Cheng and Osman (2021) identify knowledge, skills, ability, attitude, work

engagement, and commitment as fundamental components of task performance. Behaviors related to task performance include planning and organization, prioritization, demonstrating responsibility, and producing results efficiently and purposefully (Arwab et al., 2022; Harmancı Seren et al., 2018). Therefore, task performance is vital for achieving both individual and organizational objectives (Hultin et al., 2019; Jonsson et al., 2021). The student researcher will then explore the second type of staff work performance, called contextual performance, in the next section.

2.7.1.2. Contextual Job Performance

Conversely, contextual performance is seen as the actions taken by employees that go beyond formal job descriptions to help complete essential tasks (Díaz-Vilela et al., 2015). According to Aboagye et al. (2022), it promotes the growth of the organization's social and psychological environment. In other words, staff job performance includes voluntary behaviors that improve their circumstances (Palenzuela et al., 2019). While task performance involves actions explicitly outlined within the organization and focused on specific tasks, contextual performance typically consists of actions aimed at enhancing task performance (Motowidlo, 1997). However, there is some overlap between the two types of performance. Simply expressed, contextual performance refers to a social transformation process in which volunteers benefit the company even when it is not expressly required by the official function. In this way, contextual performance is characterized by positive behaviors that support and are encouraged by the organization, such as helping others and cooperating. These behaviors include accepting and defending organizational goals, assisting colleagues, following organizational policies and procedures, and willingly participating in work (Leo & Lightning, 2017).

2.7.1.3. Difference between Task and Contextual Job Performance

Organizational objectives are achieved through both task and contextual performance efforts, but using different methods. The following three key principles differentiate task and contextual performance: (1) actions related to task performance vary between jobs, while activities related to contextual performance are similar; (2) task performance is linked to ability, whereas contextual performance is connected to personality and motivation; (3) task performance is mandated and involves in-role conduct, while contextual performance is optional and pertains to extra-role activities (Borman & Motowidlo 1997). Motowidlo et al. (1997) also added that task performance relates to cognitive ability, while contextual performance relates to personality.

While contextual performance stays steady across most jobs, task performance varies and sets different roles apart. Task performance involves how well tasks are completed. Differences in employee task performance are linked to variations in the tasks themselves as well as personal abilities, skills, and knowledge (Motowidlo et al. 1997). Contextual performance affects the maintenance of the larger organizational, psychological, and social environment in which the core work takes place. Therefore, instead of being a single set of consistent behaviors, contextual performance is a wide, multi-layered concept that includes creative activities, self-direction, and personal initiative. According to Taylor (2013), personal initiative is a behavior that results from someone adopting an active, self-starting attitude toward their work and going beyond what is technically required for a specific role. Thus, contextual performance is more about choice than managers' skill levels; it is more closely tied to human dispositions and personalities.

2.8. Work Engagement

Research on work engagement has increased significantly over the past 20 years. Engagement includes everyday concepts such as involvement, energy, focused effort, passion, enthusiasm, and absorption. Practitioners and scholars often disagree on a single definition of work

engagement. However, we offer a detailed overview of the main academic perspectives on engagement below. Positive, affective-motivational states characterized by high energy, strong dedication, and intense focus on work are all considered aspects of work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). Kahn (1990), an ethnographic scholar, was the first to define work engagement as the use of organizational members' own identities in their work roles: during role performance, people utilize and express themselves cognitively, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Kahn also noted that there is a dynamic, dialectical relationship between the individual who allocates personal resources (cognitive, emotional, physical, and mental) into their job role and the employment role that enables the person to express themselves.

Later, Kahn (1992) distinguished between engagement and psychological presence, or the feeling of "being fully present,' which occurs when people feel and are mindful, attached, focused, and integrated into their role performance. Therefore, work engagement is viewed as the positive opposite of burnout. Unlike those who struggle with burnout, engaged employees experience a sense of energy and develop effective relationships with their work; instead of stress and difficulty, they see their work as challenging. Alternatively, engagement is considered a separate concept that is negatively linked to burnout. Engagement is also described as a satisfying, enjoyable, job-related mental state characterized by dedication, vigor, and absorption (Enock Katere et al., 2022). For example, vigor means having mental resilience and energy while working, being willing to put effort into tasks, and maintaining persistence despite obstacles. Dedication involves being highly engaged in one's work, fostering feelings of inspiration, motivation, pride, and purpose (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). Kahn (1990) explains that when someone is fully absorbed and happy with their job, time seems to pass quickly, and it becomes hard to stop working. This state is called

absorption. That’s why engaged individuals tend to put in a lot of effort (Aldabbas et al., 2023; Kahn, 1990).

2.8.1. Components of Work Engagement

Engagement is defined as a person's emotional and intellectual commitment to an organization (Riyanto & Lukertina, 2019). Work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, and satisfying mental state at work, characterized by three components: vigor, absorption, and dedication (Khusanova et al., 2021; Wang, 2018; Wang & Chen, 2020). Vigor is a set of related affective states experienced at work, involving feelings of physical strength, mental energy, and cognitive activity. It also represents one aspect of employee engagement, indicating high enthusiasm, mental resilience, and dedication to one’s work, along with persistence when faced with challenges (Wang & Chen, 2020; Jaya & Ariyanto, 2021). This includes having high energy levels, eagerness to exert effort, and persistence through challenges. Vigor is a high level of energy and intellectual enthusiasm at work, characterized by full focus on tasks, to the extent that external events are unlikely to influence job performance (Wang & Chen, 2020).

A stable mental state and a positive outlook on work to achieve personally meaningful results are traits of dedication (Sadovaya & Korchagina, 2016). Meanwhile, Khusanova and colleagues (2021) define job dedication as a person's controlled behavior at work, which involves following rules, working hard, showing resilience in completing tasks, and being able to take the lead in resolving issues. Conversely, dedicated employees are likely to go beyond to protect the company's reputation because they understand and share its values. As a result, dedication is described as having a solid sense of purpose, passion, excitement, pride, and a feeling of challenge when working. It is demonstrated by high levels of job involvement as well as feelings of significance, passion, bravery, and confidence in facing adversity.

Absorption measures how much a person concentrates on their work role, which appears as losing track of time, becoming immersed in work, and experiencing a sense of 'self-in-role.' Whether called work attentiveness or work absorption, both terms reflect the investment of time, energy, and mental focus in one's work (Wang, 2018). Absorption is a component of employee engagement and relates to a deeper, more lasting mental state (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). It describes the feeling when someone is so absorbed in their work that they ignore their surroundings, focus intensely, and lose awareness of time spent on tasks (Wang, 2018; Wang & Chen, 2020). Absorption can help organizations meet their goals because employees who are absorbed are more likely to fulfill their responsibilities effectively (Enock Katere et al., 2022). Ultimately, it means being fully engaged and happily involved in one's work, which causes time to pass quickly and makes it difficult to disengage.

2.9. The Relationship Between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance

The influence of organizational change management on workers' job performance can be used to assess the relationship between the two. Usually, organizational change has a positive, neutral, or negative effect on employees' attitudes towards management and performance. This is why, if not implemented properly, an organizational change can lead to internal identity conflicts and a loss of external legitimacy. These issues can then harm organizational effectiveness (Jacobs et al., 2013). Therefore, leaders need to develop a proper strategy to manage change. Effective change management is critical for accelerating the process and mitigating any negative effects on workers and organizational performance. When organizational change is well managed, employees are more likely to see the benefits of the proposed change and be receptive to it. Well-managed employees also enjoy several advantages during change, including reduced workloads through technological improvements, suitable organizational structures, effective communication,

and a positive work environment. Factors that offer individuals opportunities to develop their skills and increase job satisfaction can further enhance employee performance. Ultimately, how effectively organizational management handles change processes and drivers determines its impact on worker performance (Hashim & Dodo, 2015).

On the other hand, to have the power and obligation to prompt action, the authority must grant the organization full autonomy. The change management component, which assesses the structure's flexibility and demonstrates a positive link between the area needing change and employee performance, is available in either an internal or external context. Therefore, strategies should be employed to improve employee performance through change management, and it is also recognized that when management adjusts policies, owner-employees may be affected either positively or negatively. As it is intended to introduce new and improved practices within the organization that help increase worker performance, well-managed organizational change consistently yields positive results (Hashim & Dodo, 2015). Work modifications can enable these elements, which are beneficial for enhancing employee performance.

2.9.1. The Link Between Leadership Change and Staff Job Performance

The ability to persuade others through personal advocacy, vision, and desire, as well as the skill to secure resources to build a strong foundation for change, is known as leadership change management. Organizational leaders drive strategic initiatives and procedures that can influence the long-term performance of their teams and the entire organization. According to Ibrahim and Daniel (2019), leadership involves a managerial role where a leader guides the actions of subordinates or followers toward achieving predefined goals. The capacity, skills, mindset, and agility of university administrators and managers to develop, craft, share, communicate, and promote visions, resolve conflicts, and overcome resistance to change is referred to as

organizational leadership change. According to Korbi (2015), a significant or minor shift in leadership indicates a departure from previous conditions, and a move toward a new equilibrium or an improvement over existing circumstances helps to enhance staff performance.

The ability to persuade others through personal advocacy, vision, and passion, along with the capacity to secure resources to lay a solid foundation for change, is known as leadership change. Organizational leaders drive strategic initiatives and processes that can greatly influence the long-term performance of their teams and the organization as a whole. According to Ibrahim and Daniel (2019), leadership is a managerial role that involves a process where an individual, called the leader, guides the actions of others—subordinates or followers—toward achieving predefined goals. The capacity, skills, mindset, and expertise of university administrators and managers to develop, create, communicate, promote, and implement visions, resolve conflicts, and overcome resistance to change constitute organizational leadership change. The ability to motivate and inspire others through one's advocacy, vision, and passion, as well as the capability to obtain resources to establish a strong foundation for change, are essential. According to Korbi (2015), a significant or minor shift in leadership indicates a departure from previous circumstances and a move toward a new balance or an improvement of existing conditions.

2.9.2. The Link Between Structure Change and Staff Job Performance

A corporate structure is a plan that outlines the particular steps required to achieve the organization's overarching aims. These actions include roles, rules, and responsibilities (Kenton, 2023). According to Castillo, Manimtim et al. (2023), a strong link was found between regularly achieving goals and organizational structure. Many scholars also identify the connection between job performance and organizational structure. Several studies have shown how organizational structure impacts job performance. According to Johari and Yahya (2019), as well as Murphy and

Kroeker (1989), "people perform better, tasks are divided, and productivity is increased when a clear structure exists." Murphy and Kroeker's (1989) explanation of the components of job performance can help further explore this relationship between the three elements of organizational structure. While departmentalization and effective communication relate to relationships with coworkers and overall performance, specialization focuses on task execution, habits during downtime, and job skills. Lastly, employee performance affects the decision-making hierarchy, and the hierarchy also influences employee performance.

According to Ajagbe (2007), an organization can choose how its members behave, which attitudes to promote, and which goals to attain. It can also decide to support the development of cultural norms and values to achieve these desired behaviors, attitudes, and objectives. According to Johari and Yahya (2019), an organization's structure greatly influences its performance. Johari and Yahya further explain that high performers tend to conform to the structure even in poorly designed systems. According to Castillo et al. (2023), managers must make several critical decisions regarding the organization's structure to implement their plans effectively. The organizational structure must align with the strategies. Deciding how to organize relationships, communication, and activities among internal stakeholders is crucial to structuring an organization. This can be done by emphasizing markets, goods, collaboration, functionality, or products.

According to Castillo et al. (2023), there is a significant link between an organization's structure and its consistent achievement of goals. Many researchers have explored the landscape of the relationship between SJP and organizational structure (Castillo et al., 2023; Murphy & Kroeker, 1989). Others have demonstrated that OSCH affects SJP. As a result, Johari and Yahya (2019), along with Murphy and Kroeker (1989), found that a smoother division of work leads to

higher productivity and better individual performance. Similarly, Murphy and Kroeker's (ibid.) description of the components of SJP can help examine the relationships among the three aspects of organizational structure. Departmentalization and clear communication are related to coworker relationships and contextual performance, while structural specializations are connected to task performance, downtime behaviors, and job skills. Ultimately, SJP influences decision-making structures and vice versa.

Following Castillo et al. (2023), a company can decide how its members should behave, which attitudes to encourage, and what goals to aim for. It may also opt to promote the development of social standards and beliefs to achieve desired actions, perspectives, and objectives. Johari and Yahya (2019) state that an organization's operating system impacts its overall effectiveness. Similarly, Johari and Yahya observed that high performers tend to conform to the structure within a poorly designed system. According to Castillo et al. (2023), management needs to make several crucial decisions regarding the organization's structure to achieve specific goals. The plans must be aligned with the organization’s structure. Determining how to establish interactions, communication, and activities among internal stakeholders is a key part of organizational structure.

2.9.3. The Link Between Technological Change and Staff Job Performance

With the right technology, an organization can significantly improve its overall effectiveness and success in the marketplace, as well as boost productivity, morale, engagement, and communication across its entire workforce. Implementing new technologies to enhance productivity should be viewed as a strategic move (Obialor, 2020). In other words, managers and leaders should avoid rushing into decisions about which technologies to adopt. Instead, they should take the time to carefully select the most appropriate technology. Technological change is defined

as an increase in the efficiency of a product or process that boosts output without raising input (Pohekar, 2018). Technology can lead to higher production or improved performance only when used ethically and productively, in conjunction with other resources, which is the responsibility of human resources. Technological change is a means to an end, not an end in itself, since many factors can influence an organization’s effectiveness. Therefore, the development and implementation of new technologies can impact organizations and management practices (Amanuel & Chalchissa, 2021). When managed properly, technological innovation can improve employee effectiveness and organizational efficiency (Obialor, 2020).

Technological advancements seem to influence university staff members' ability to perform their jobs. Every country depends on technology, and organizations are adopting it at an astonishing pace. According to Pohekar (2018), technology is a collaborative tool that facilitates knowledge sharing among users and supports traditional topics. The world's policies, programs, activities, operations, and strategies will continue to be shaped by the rapid advances in high-technology implementation that have occurred over the past few decades. Since technology's inception, Ethiopia's universities have invested heavily in it. Improvements in technological tools at universities seem to align with higher employee performance, fewer labor-intensive tasks, and faster job completion.

2.9.4. The Link Between Work-Engagement and Staff Job Performance

Employees share responsibility for their level of engagement at work and remain accountable for taking the initiative. The term "work engagement" refers to employees' desire, joy, and motivation within an organization that boost efficiency (Sypniewska et al., 2023). Since every aspect of the organization influences employees and their work processes, understanding the link between staff engagement and performance is crucial. Therefore, engagement is one of the factors

that enhances worker performance, as noted by various experts (Aldabbas et al., 2023; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2008). According to Qalati et al. (2022), when employees believe they have greater control over their work steps and can significantly affect the organization's success or failure, as well as decision-making at work, their performance improves. Prior research has demonstrated that work engagement significantly boosts performance among employees (Jufrizen et al., 2024; Kahn, 1990; Qalati et al., 2022; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2008; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

2.9.5. The Link Among Organizational Change, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance

Many scholars believe that variables such as organizational structure change, work engagement, and staff job performance work together harmoniously (Johari & Yahya, 2019; Meenakshi Sharma, 2023). Furthermore, a recent study highlighted the role of organizational change in boosting employee engagement at work (Jiang & Men, 2017). The relationship among organizational structure change, work engagement, and staff job performance is complex, yet it influences an organization's effectiveness and overall success. The connection between SJP, OCH, and WE is often complementary. Meenakshi Sharma (2023) states that highly engaged workers tend to be productive and innovative. In short, these employees are usually more involved than their peers. However, previous research suggests that the link between staff job performance and work engagement remains unclear. Some researchers argue that when individuals are engaged at work, their emotional, cognitive, and proactive behaviors increase, leading to higher productivity (Meenakshi Sharma, 2023). Although there is growing agreement that they are related, few empirical studies examine their association as non-interdependent factors (Sulaiman et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the researcher believes this may be due to differences in organizational context, culture, and type.

2.9.6. The Mediation Role of Work Engagement in the Link Between Organization Change and Staff Performance

Research on how work engagement mediates the link between organizational change and employee job performance is still ongoing and has not yet reached a final conclusion. Several studies have shown that work engagement mediates the relationship between organizational change and staff performance (Hidayat & Nasution, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Apileslipi et al., 2025). Other research identified partial mediation of work engagement between leadership and staff performance (Ali et al., 2017; Abel & Hailemichael, 2024). Although many studies explore factors influencing employee performance, research on the link between organizational change and staff job performance through work engagement remains limited (Ali et al., 2017). Therefore, this study aims to address that gap by examining the relationship between organizational change and employee performance, mediated by job engagement.

Organizational change often involves updates in technology and leadership. It includes practical activities related to change that companies must evaluate and implement. Employees who participate in training have the opportunity to improve their skills, which in turn increases workplace engagement during transitions. Additionally, new policies and systems are usually introduced as part of organizational change, and leaders focus heavily on staff performance under these new rules. They encourage and promote work engagement and proactive responses during periods of change while providing timely feedback on performance. Support from leaders, technology, and structural changes serves as essential resources for employees, boosting motivation and engagement, which in turn leads to a stronger desire to perform (Ali et al., 2017).

2.10. Ethiopian Higher Education Context

Ethiopia, situated in the Horn of Africa, is recognized as the world's oldest independent nation. It contains diverse religions, ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds. As Africa's

symbol of freedom after colonization, it is a founding affiliate of both the League of Nations and the African Union (Abdela & Pillay, 2014). Ethiopia is the region's most chaotic yet strategically important sub-region, with a population of about 122 million. The country is home to over 85 ethnic groups and is divided into 11 regions and two city administrations, most organized along linguistic lines (Semela & Tsige, 2023). It is among the fastest-growing countries and the second populous after Nigeria. Higher education in Ethiopia has a relatively recent history, dating back to the 1950s. The government's substantial investment has expanded the number of higher education institutions and led to the creation of new ones. As a result, higher education has surged, with over 270 private HEIs currently operational, and the number of government-owned institutions increasing from two to around fifty. This rapid expansion demonstrates the government's strong commitment to improving access and equity in education while aiming to produce skilled professionals to support socioeconomic development.

2.11. Emerging Policy Reform and Organizational Change in Ethiopian Higher Education

This section discusses recently introduced policy initiatives in higher education institutions. These new policy themes aim to help institutions achieve excellence, improve their ability to address urgent needs, and increase their contribution and engagement toward national and international development goals. These policy measures include updates to various national guidelines, differentiation policies, comprehensive national examinations, internationalization efforts, partnerships, and collaborations, among others.

The Ethiopian government recently introduced a new educational policy that overhauled the structure of freshman programs and shifted the country's higher education system to a ratio of 4:2:4. The ministry established standards and guidelines for student placement across different fields. These areas were divided into two main categories: natural sciences and social sciences,

each with six bands. Band 1 includes engineering science; Band 2 covers natural and computational science; Band 3 encompasses medicine and health science; and Band 4 includes agricultural and natural sciences, forming the natural science stream. Band 5 involves business and economics, and Band 6 covers social sciences and humanities, constituting the social science stream. After completing their freshman courses, students will choose their field of study from available university programs through a competitive process (Hunde et al., 2024).

The MoE (previously MoSHE) also created national guidelines for recruiting, campaigning for, and giving scholarships to academic professionals. Public colleges must adhere to this guideline and implement it into their operating policies. The guideline describes the procedures, qualifications, specific criteria, and scoring methodologies for promotion and scholarship positions (Tareke et al., 2024).

Differentiation in higher education is a relatively new idea in Ethiopian education. Growth, quality concerns, and other factors led Ethiopia's government to adopt a differentiation strategy in higher education institutions as part of its national development plan (MoHSE, 2021). This approach aims to reduce unnecessary duplication by providing each institution with a unique set of academic programs, research interests, and long-term goals (Woldegiyorgis, 2018). Implementing incentive systems enhances effectiveness and efficiency, enabling each higher education institution to leverage its unique contextual advantages. These steps lay the foundation for establishing new academic universities in Ethiopia within a revised organizational structure.

The Ministry of Education is taking the initiative to strengthen public institutions through a differentiation strategy. According to the national educational policy (2018-2030), differentiating universities is vital for quality development (Boateng, 2020). Moreover, this is a great opportunity to change a sector that has long followed consistent patterns and trends. Until differentiation is

completely operational, practically all public colleges in the country have nearly identical objectives, visions, organizational structures, university entrance procedures, fundamental operations, and disciplinary action mixtures that characterize their curricula, resulting in limited differences. As part of ongoing educational reform, Woldegiyorgis (2018) underlined the importance of developing differentiation across higher education institutions, especially to meet distinct organizational and developmental goals.

Another system-wide endeavor is the Integrated National Examination. According to news releases from the past two years, the Ministry has adopted strict regulations controlling national assessments for grade 12 pupils, undergraduate and postgraduate admissions (Tareke et al., 2024). According to the MoE news release from August 2023, only 30,034 (3.3%) of the 896,520 candidates in 2022 and 27,267 (3.2%) of the 845,099 candidates in 2023 passed the entrance examination. Of course, the exit examination is not new-fangled in the context of higher education. Some programs, such as law school, have employed exit examinations to assess potential graduates. The MoE has enlarged the exit test to cover all potential undergraduate students. Likewise, the ministry started to develop a new postgraduate entrance exam for every applicant to master's degrees in any discipline, dubbed the Centrally Managed ‘National Graduate Admission Test' (Tareke et al., 2024).

Internationalization, partnerships, and collaborations are among the reform attempts in higher education institutions. Studies have demonstrated that international collaborations and relationships have an important influence on the high performance of public higher education institutions, particularly in developing nations such as Ethiopia. Gonfa et al. (2024) identified particular measures to help higher education institutions become more internationalized. These tactics include relationships with sister universities abroad, staff exchanges, and collaborative

research projects. However, many international trends, such as student exchanges, remain uncommon in Ethiopian higher education institutions, except for a few scholarships to nearby countries like Eritrea and South Sudan. Although attempts have been made to encourage institutions to engage on a global scale, there aren't any particular policy guidelines that promote institutional internationalization (Tareke et al., 2024). As a result, building comprehensive conceptions of internationalization, organizational collaboration and cooperation, and publishing policy guidelines should be the following priority for HEI involvement in this sector.

2.12. Critical Literature Review

The goal of reviewing the empirical literature is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the variables examined in the research and to identify gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed. To find these gaps in knowledge, techniques, and other areas, the researcher should review both global and local literature sources.

For instance, the study on organizational change and employee extra-role behavior conducted by Ogbu and Obiora (2019) examines several private secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was used. Similarly, all private secondary schools in Rivers State are part of the target population. The accessible population includes 120 classroom instructors and administrative staff from 10 carefully selected private secondary schools. The study shows that organizational change, as measured by effective communication and employee participation, encourages contextual performance at work. Furthermore, it suggests that private secondary school administrators should use employee participation and effective communication to overcome resistance to change in the workplace.

The research on organizational changes and their effects on the performance of Sharia bank workers through emotional commitment was conducted by Zakiy et al. (2023). An advanced

analysis technique, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), was applied to 165 workers from Bank Syariah Indonesia (BSI) using the Smart PLS 3.2 program. The data collection procedure was conducted online. This study shows that affective commitment can act as a mediator in the negative relationship between employee performance and organizational change. Finally, the study recommends that, to promote organizational change, employees should strengthen their emotional commitment to enhance performance.

Aduku et al. (2021) examined the link between organizational change and employee performance in Nigeria. The study used a sample of 189 and a survey research method, finding that factors like organizational culture, strategic changes, organizational structure, fraud activity, and employees' tolerance for change affected bank employees' performance. It also notes that complexity, employee attitudes toward change, and their tolerance have a significant negative impact. Conversely, perceived benefits and motivation positively influence bank workers' acceptance of change. The study recommends that bank leaders maintain their level of change tolerance and develop a more strategic plan to combat fraud activities, helping staff in north-central Nigeria achieve better performance.

The study titled "Organizational change and its influence on employee performance at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation" was conducted by Mensah et al. (2023). Data for the research were collected from 278 respondents using structured questionnaires and convenience sampling methods. The analysis utilized both inferential and descriptive statistics. The results indicate that changes in technology, strategy, and structure all work together to significantly affect employee performance. However, the analysis of the strength of these influences revealed that technological development had the most significant impact. Therefore, strategic and structural changes should be adopted.

Karanja (2015) carried out a study examining the correlation between employee performance and organizational changes, using the Postal Corporation in Kenya as a case study. The investigation focused on the organizational changes that took place over the past seven years. Using stratified random sampling, the researcher selected 61 employees, representing 20% of the target population, as the sample. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The study concluded that organizational reform has a positive impact on employee performance. It is recommended that organizations communicate the need and urgency of these reforms.

Khosa et al. (2015) investigated the impact of organizational change on employee performance in Pakistan's banking industry. The findings indicate that organizational change has a significant impact on improving employee performance in Pakistan's banking sector. The study recommends conducting further research across different industries and increasing organizational change initiatives to understand the overall impact on employee performance. Beatrice et al. (2018) studied the effect of managerial variables on employee performance at Kenyan university campuses in Nakuru County. The study used a survey methodology, selecting 138 staff members as a sample through stratified and census sampling techniques. The research found a strong relationship between employee performance and factors such as organizational culture, structure, training and development, and leadership. According to the study, management should promote transparency, encourage independent judgment, and respect formal processes. It should also support employees in performing their duties according to established protocols and values.

Osunsan et al. (2019) examined the impact of organizational change on staff job performance in a subset of commercial banks in Bujumbura, Burundi. The study found that employee performance was significantly affected by organizational change. Their recommendations included that management should frequently adjust business practices to quickly

meet the evolving needs of customers. Additionally, managers should regularly train staff to keep them informed and capable when changes occur. Similarly, commercial bank management should embrace technological innovation as a way to enhance the company's operations.

At Greenwich University in Karachi, Pakistan, Gohar and Masood (2022) examined empirical research on the relationship between "employee performance and organizational change management." The study indicates that change management initiatives significantly influence employee performance. Employee preparedness, willingness, and changes in behavior and attitude are key components of successful change management for organizations. The research suggests that companies can gain a competitive advantage by effectively implementing and managing change to ensure high employee performance.

Ekechi and Umar (2020) examined how change management influenced employee performance in Nigerian universities. The study involved 3,627 workers across five institutions located in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja and used a descriptive survey research method. For their analysis, 315 employees were selected through a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The findings showed that employee performance is highly valued in Nigerian universities, but there is limited evidence concerning technological or organizational leadership changes. The study also found that change management indicators—such as technological and organizational leadership changes—significantly affect employee performance. Consequently, it was recommended that the university's change management processes should be tailored around staff functions like teaching, research, and community service, as well as their interactions related to perception, norms, virtues, and behaviors.

Thus, the researcher acknowledges that the literature in the broader context has several flaws, including that most of it focuses on non-educational institutions, uses a quantitative survey approach without mediation, and is limited to a specific environment.

The student researcher also reviewed several locally published studies to identify patterns of findings in the area of organizational change and staff performance. Some studies explored governance reform and its relationship to the process of adapting to change, while others examined the impact of change management on performance in profit-focused organizations. Additionally, some evaluations looked at performance from a general standpoint as a single variable. In contrast, others focused solely on change leadership; some analyzed change management practices through adaptive change, and others linked leadership styles to organizational change. Nevertheless, most of these local studies supported the idea that there is a positive connection between organizational change and employee performance.

Research on organizational factors affecting worker performance in specific public sector organizations within the administration of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, was carried out by Biniyam and Elias (2019). The findings show that organizational structure, communication, leadership style, and cultural traits account for 89.6% of the determination coefficient test value, which explains employee performance. This study used a quantitative approach and involved a total sample of 205 respondents; however, 181 completed the survey, leading to a response rate of 88%. Academic staff and support staff were chosen through a stratified sampling method. The study provides several recommendations for the management of public service organizations, such as strengthening teamwork and improving existing management systems to support organizational culture; creating opportunities for employees to interact with managers to enhance communication;

encouraging employee innovation; increasing salaries; implementing organizational loyalty programs; and rewarding long-serving employees.

Mehari (2016) also conducted research at Mekelle University on reforms in Ethiopia's higher education governance. The results showed that several issues, including an unexpected lack of leadership at all university levels, hindered the process of implementing change initiatives. Furthermore, Mehari argued that disparities in performance among academic units in adapting to change were mostly related to leadership quality. However, Mahari does not specifically address how leadership influences change at Mekelle University. Similarly, Daniel (2022) evaluated the leadership of change in public higher education institutions in Ethiopia. According to his findings, one of the main barriers to effective change implementation is a lack of change leadership and employee commitment.

Aman and Wake (2021) conducted a study titled "Practice and Challenges of Change Management and its Impact on Organizational Performance." The research was carried out in the Ethio-Telecom industry in the western region of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Their findings identified the main obstacles as inadequate employee training for implementing changes; unfair advantages for strategic customers; an unsuitable environment for change management programs; poor communication; and limited use of performance tools such as the quality circle, balanced scorecard, Kaizen philosophy, and individual development plans within the selected telecom shops. The report recommended that to build staff capacity, Ethio-Telecom in the western region of Addis should promote experience sharing both within and across shops.

Sinte et al. (2023) examined the methods and challenges of managing change at the Ethiopian Federal Court of Appeal. Data sources include 204 respondents who properly completed and returned the surveys, as well as five leaders who were interviewed. The organization's change

management implementation faces several difficulties. The main issues involve employee resistance, insufficient employee engagement in training, and a lack of awareness about change management, especially the change management approach. According to the study's findings, the organization's change efforts have been inadequate. It is recommended that the Federal Supreme Court involve its staff in the change management process to reduce obstacles and achieve its goals.

After reviewing the national literature, the researcher found little research on the topic, especially on the mechanism of mediation influence. Several studies were conducted at educational institutions, primarily at Ethiopian research universities. Therefore, further research is recommended to address the existing gaps.

The following section focuses on identifying gaps in what is known and what remains underexplored. The empirical literature highlights certain advancements and gaps that future research should address. On a positive note, all the studies highlight the success of leadership in managing organizations to promote change management by fostering employee performance efforts. These studies have contributed to developing an organization's ability to adapt and survive through transformation. As a result, most of the local studies reviewed were useful in identifying flaws in the leadership of Ethiopian public universities in leading and managing change. This presents an opportunity for higher education practitioners and policymakers to closely examine Ethiopian public university leadership and management to resolve organizational issues. Additionally, different organizations and their change management capacities may have varied connections to employee performance.

For instance, in the study by Al-Jaradat et al. (2013), in Jordanian university libraries, the organizational structure cannot be adaptable and, as a result, is not suitable for the university library's commercial operation needs, while in other organizations in the same country, the same

structure functions well. Therefore, in research universities in Ethiopia, the organizational change has not yet been studied to determine how it affects staff job performance in the area. This idea itself could serve as input for leaders and organizations involved in higher education leadership, such as MoSHE and MoE, to become aware of how research university leaders use change management approaches to alter the organization and intentionally influence staff job performance in higher education settings.

On the downside, several studies on organizational change and employee job performance have been conducted worldwide. However, none of them used the same methodology, tools, or tactics. Similarly, all local research related to the topics of the proposed study focuses on organizations mainly for profit, such as banks, courts, non-academic institutions, and service organizations, rather than higher education institutions. These studies relate to specific industries (non-educational) and institutions (outside public universities), which makes their conclusions hard to apply broadly. Likewise, most local research on employee performance and organizational change is carried out by private or for-profit organizations. Due to differences in organizational norms and legal frameworks, the findings cannot be generalized to educational institutions, especially higher education institutions.

However, the current proposed study examines how organizational change affects both task performance and contextual performance, unlike earlier studies that only explored the direct relationship between leadership and staff job performance in a unidirectional manner. Previous research has identified poor leadership during change as a major factor in the failure of organizational change and employee performance (Aman & Wake, 2021; Chala, 2014; Girma & Matebe, 2018; Sinte et al., 2023; Yohannes & Kant, 2023). First, these local studies have noticeable gaps, such as a lack of research in this area (specifically in research universities)—the

contextual gap. In this regard, Hofstede (1980) clearly stated that organizational and national cultures are crucial for effective managerial traits, but cross-cultural differences have also been observed across organizations. Second, these studies do not provide a thorough explanation of how organizational change improves employee performance, which is rare and especially absent in learning institutions. Third, little is known about how organizational change relates to staff job performance, particularly regarding task and contextual performance in HEIs of Ethiopia. Fourth, there has been no large-scale study with the current methodology in Ethiopia generally, nor within the context of Research Universities specifically. This highlights the significant knowledge gap that the present study aims to fill. Therefore, this research seeks to address these gaps by thoroughly exploring how organizational change influences staff job performance, mediated by work engagement, across research universities in Ethiopia.

2.13. Chapter Summary

This section summarizes the relevant literature reviewed to support the present study. Although not exhaustive, an effort has been made to access all available literature sources, including theoretical and empirical materials such as books, book chapters, proceedings, journal articles, periodicals, PhD dissertations, and more. The covered topics and subtopics include the review of relevant theories and models that ground the study, concepts of change, change management, performance, and their application globally, with a particular focus on our country. Additionally, a comprehensive examination of change management, its sub-dimensions, and models of change was highlighted. The concept and the components of work engagement were discussed. Furthermore, the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance, as mediated by staff work engagement in higher education institutions (HEIs), was established.

The empirical literature was assessed, gaps in the literature were explained, and finally, the current part of the related literature review was thoroughly presented.

Despite the wealth of literature on organizational change, staff work engagement, and staff job performance, there is limited research that integrates these three areas, particularly organizational change and staff job performance. Only a few studies (see Aman & Wake, 2021; Chala, 2014; Sinte et al., 2023; Yohannes & Kant, 2023) have been conducted regarding this topic. Similarly, there is scant literature on the mediation study, especially on the relationships between organizational change and staff job performance as mediated by work engagement. However, the existing few studies focus on specific industries (non-educational) and institutions (outside of public universities) and deal with change management rather than organizational change, making their conclusions difficult to generalize. A key difficulty in the local literature about organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance is that the few studies available were undertaken by private or for-profit enterprises. A large-scale study employing the suggested technique is lacking at the Research University of Ethiopia, and there is a contextual gap. Due to differences in organizational norms and legal frameworks, the findings cannot be applied to public higher education institutions—colleges and universities. Furthermore, none of the studies employed the same methodology, tools, or tactics. Most notably, the local studies exhibit a lack of research in this area, indicating a contextual gap. Therefore, this study is necessary to address the knowledge gap.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter examines research design and methodology, addressing the following subtopics: philosophical assumptions, research methods, research design, data sources, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, as well as the validity and reliability of these instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1.Philosophical Assumptions

Recognizing and understanding the research paradigm is a crucial first step for any researcher before embarking on their academic journey (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A research paradigm serves as the conceptual foundation for a researcher and significantly impacts every decision made during the study process, including the choice of methodology and approaches. For instance, Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe a paradigm as a fundamental set of beliefs or a worldview that governs research activities and inquiries. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2018), specialists in qualitative research, define paradigms as human constructs that address essential principles or concepts, reveal the researcher's perspective, and facilitate the meaning generated from data. Paradigms are vital in academic disciplines, shaping the ideas and principles that determine which subjects should be investigated, the methodologies employed, and how research findings are interpreted. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), a paradigm acts as a conceptual lens through which researchers assess the methodological components of their studies, select the appropriate research methodologies, and guide data analysis.

The interplay of ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues shapes the researcher's philosophical perspective and affects all elements of the research process. Due to the close relationship among these three components, the researcher's philosophical understanding requires awareness of their ontological and epistemological stance, which in turn guides their methodological approach. Ontological assumptions, as noted by Cohen et al. (2007), give birth to epistemological assumptions, which delineate methodological considerations, including issues related to instrumentation and data collection. This perspective, according to Cohen et al. (2007), moves us beyond seeing research techniques merely as technical exercises and underscores their significance in understanding the world. Our perceptions of the world, our grasp of what constitutes knowledge, and our evaluations of the objectives of understanding all shape our comprehension. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) also point out that crafting a paradigm declaration compels researchers to critically examine their assumptions about the nature of reality and how the methodological implications of their paradigm choice permeate various aspects of the research process, such as formulating research questions, selecting participants, designing data collection instruments and procedures, and analyzing the gathered data.

Cohen et al. (2007) examine four sets of assumptions based on the framework proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979; 1984). The first group focuses on ontological assumptions regarding the essential nature or essence of the social phenomenon under investigation, particularly the relationship between organizational change, staff work engagement, and its connection to staff performance in the current study. The philosophical argument framed by the "nominalist-realist" debate is introduced in this discussion. According to the nominalist perspective, thoughts are essentially verbal constructs, lacking any independent reality beyond the words used to express them. The realist perspective, conversely, argues that objects possess inherent reality and are not

contingent upon the knower's experience. In this study, the researcher embraces both viewpoints as they employ an integrated approach and seek to leverage the advantages provided by both paradigms.

The second assumption, according to these experts, is epistemological. The name "epistemology" is derived from the Greek word "episteme," which means "knowledge." Epistemology examines the fundamental underpinnings of knowledge, encompassing its nature, various forms, methods of acquisition, and modes of communication among individuals. Its primary goal is to understand the essence of human understanding and knowledge, allowing researchers and learners to expand, deepen, and enhance their grasp of specialized study topics. There are two opposing viewpoints in the field of epistemology. The positivist view holds that understanding is objective, concrete, and based on empirical facts, assigning researchers the role of observers and emphasizing adherence to the methods of natural science. The anti-positivist perspective, in contrast, views knowledge as personal, subjective, and unique. It encourages investigators to engage with their subjects rather than rely on the traditional techniques used by natural scientists. Within this context, researchers must articulate their support for both the positivist and anti-positivist viewpoints, as they recognize the complex nature of knowledge. Consequently, they understand the importance of considering both the objectivist and subjectivist aspects of knowledge acquisition, leading them to adopt a nuanced concept of knowledge in their research.

The third assumption explores the dichotomy between determinism and voluntarism proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and referenced by Cohen et al. (2007). This assumption focuses on human nature, particularly the relationship between individuals and their environment. Determinism depicts humans as mechanically and predictably responding to their circumstances,

essentially as products shaped by their surroundings. In contrast, voluntarism views individuals as initiators of their actions, equipped with free choice and creativity, actively crafting their contexts. These two assumptions are vital within the scope of the current study. The investigator recognizes the potential influence of external factors on the phenomena being studied by incorporating determinism. At the same time, recognizing voluntarism allows the researcher to appreciate human agency and autonomy, emphasizing the capacity to engage in purposeful activities and shape their environments. The investigator aims to comprehend the interplay between these two perspectives while also acknowledging the diverse nature of human behavior within the context of the study.

Indeed, these three assumptions are crucial for researchers' methodological choices. Conventional research methods, such as surveys, experiments, and quantitative data analysis, are often used by researchers who adopt an objectivist perspective that highlights objective reality and the search for general laws. These approaches are referred to as nomothetic because they seek to establish broad patterns and principles. Conversely, subjectivist researchers emphasize the subjective experiences and interpretations that individuals attach to their experiences, often utilizing qualitative research methods such as interviews, observation, and analysis of personal narratives. These approaches are idiographic, focusing on understanding individual behavior and gathering rich, context-specific data. In the study, which has used a convergent mixed research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative and quantitative methods were applied concurrently. This approach facilitates the integration of data from various sources and perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the study's phenomenon. By combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study can capture overarching trends and specific experiences, effectively addressing the complex nature of the research topics.

In conclusion, the study recognized the methodological implications of ontological, epistemological, and deterministic assumptions by employing a convergent mixed research design that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative techniques to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being examined.

The investigator in this study utilized a pragmatic paradigm for its conceptual framework based on the provided facts. According to Cherryholmes (1992) and Creswell and Creswell (2018), pragmatism is influenced by contemporary scholars such as Morgan (2014) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010). Knowledge claims within the pragmatist paradigm are derived from actions, circumstances, and outcomes rather than relying solely on prior conditions, as seen in post-positivism. Pragmatism emphasizes practical applications, seeking to determine "what works" and what effectively addresses issues. The focus is on the research topic itself, with a willingness to employ a variety of methodologies to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject. A pragmatic paradigm enables researchers to concentrate on the problem rather than strictly adhering to specific methodologies, fostering a diverse and flexible approach to their studies. As a result, pragmatism offers opportunities for various methodologies, perspectives, foundational assumptions, and alternative strategies for data collection and analysis for interdisciplinary researchers.

3.2.Research Approach

The study adopted a research strategy that utilizes both QUAN-QUAL models to evaluate the status of organizational change and its impact on enhancing staff performance, as mediated by work engagement, at research universities in Ethiopia. According to Creswell (2014), the mixed-method approach has gained attention for drawing on the strengths of positivism and constructivism. It also aims to deepen its analysis and obtain a comprehensive perspective on the

research issue by employing this strategy to integrate quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Indeed, it combines the depth of qualitative insights with the generalizability of quantitative data (Ahmed et al., 2024).

3.3. Research Design

A mixed research design was used in the current research. According to Ahmed et al. (2024), mixed designs enable the integration of data from the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, resulting in a more nuanced understanding of the study topic. Therefore, researchers must deepen their understanding by synthesizing evidence from various methodological perspectives, which leads to more nuanced insights that can guide improved practice. Consequently, the researcher utilized a convergent parallel mixed design to "merge quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 52). The rationale for this decision, among other reasons, depends on its economic benefits regarding time and cost, as it constitutes a single phase of design, and on the belief that a more profound understanding of the problem and findings can be captured more readily when presented and assessed simultaneously. Quantitative research focuses on statistically testing hypothesized links and mediation effects, whereas qualitative research investigates and comprehends the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to contextual factors and perceptions of organizational change, staff performance, and work engagement.

3.4. Source of Data

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. During the data collection phase, firsthand information was gathered from university leaders, including deans, directors, department heads, team leaders, coordinators, and both academic and non-academic staff at Ethiopian research universities. These individuals were selected with the understanding that

primary data must be collected from people who are familiar with the time and context of the topic being investigated (Neuman, 2014).

3.5. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

3.5.1. Target Population of the Study

A population is a group of organizations or individuals that share common characteristics (Creswell, 2014). Currently, universities in Ethiopia no longer adhere to a generation-based classification as they did in the past. Instead, the classification now follows an excellence-based system, which includes research universities, applied science universities, comprehensive universities, and technology universities. This categorization offers a broader understanding of the setting of higher education institutions in the country. Consequently, eight (8) universities are specifically classified as research universities; fifteen (15) belong to the applied science category; the third group comprises twenty-one (21) comprehensive universities; and two (2) technology universities constitute the fourth classification of universities. This totals forty-six (46) Ethiopian Public Universities across the four classifications (Bekele et al., 2022; MoSHE, 2023).

Therefore, the target population for the current study was the community of university leaders (both academic and non-academic) and staff (both academic and non-academic) at Ethiopian research universities. Research universities were selected based on their proven track record and capacity to provide exceptional management experience, which can be analyzed and utilized to promote best practices among other public and private higher education institutions in Ethiopia. This is particularly relevant since research universities are frequently acknowledged as "leading" institutions in most African countries. They tend to be the largest and most prominent in their respective national systems, serving as models for influence and replication. These institutions are recognized as leaders in higher education by both systems and nations and have

often played a crucial role in the political and social development of emerging nations (Ayalew, 2017). The rationale for selecting leaders and staff (both academic and non-academic) is to gain insight into the core phenomenon of the study by engaging with individuals directly connected to the issue under investigation (Creswell, 2012).

3.5.2. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Scholars determined that numerous factors, including time and cost, might impact study sample selection decisions. In our case, time constraints, budget limitations (Cohen et al., 2007), and the geographic distribution of universities across the nation made it challenging to include every research university. Therefore, it was essential to select a small sample that is representative of the chosen category from research universities. Specifically, a larger sample size—6 to 7 universities in this instance—is anticipated with a 95% confidence level due to the relatively small population of 8 research universities. Cohen et al. referenced Borg and Gall (1979), who noted that costs related to time, money, anxiety, administrative support, the inadequacy of researchers, and other factors may limit the sample size. This illustrates a classic example relevant to the current study.

Regarding the MoE, the research university programs encompass six priority areas. To align the selection with bands and focus areas, the selection emphasizes three of the six bands—Band 2: Engineering, Band 4: Medicine and Health Sciences, and Band 3: Agriculture and Life Sciences—randomly chosen from the emphasis areas using simple random sampling techniques. Consequently, the researcher decided to include only 37.5% of the eight universities in the sample, ultimately resulting in three universities. The target population at these three universities was utilized to determine the sample size of both academic and non-academic leaders and staff. In this context, three universities—Haramaya University, Arba Minch University, and Jima University—

were selected through simple random sampling from the eight research institutions: Addis Ababa University, Haramaya University, Gondar University, Bahir Dar University, Arba Minch University, Hawassa University, Mekele University, and Jima University (MoE, 2019). The researcher selected bands based on the MoSHE Differentiation study (MoSHE, 2023). Using simple random sampling to select the institutions from the three bands is appropriate because every individual in the population under investigation has an equal chance of being selected, and the likelihood of any member being chosen remains unaffected by the selections made by others in the population (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Zikmund et al. (2013), this random sampling method minimizes the risk of human error and bias when selecting respondents. A multistage sampling technique was employed to identify academic and non-academic university units. Subsequently, bands and/or colleges/institutes/schools, departments, academic and non-academic staff, and heads of all academic and non-academic units were sampled.

According to statistics from the then-MoSHE (MoSHE, 2024), at the time of data collection, there were a total of 4,584 academic staff (male = 3858, female = 726) at these universities: Jimma (male = 1,286, female = 280), Haramaya (male = 1,145, female = 194), and Arba Minch (male = 1,427, female = 252). The non-academic staff included in the sample consists of those with a bachelor's degree or higher. These participants are better equipped to understand the questionnaire than their lower-ranked counterparts. The non-academic personnel at the sampled universities numbered 2,879 (Jimma = 1,044, Haramaya = 615, and Arba Minch = 1,220). Thus, based on this information, the total accessible population for the study comprises 4,584 academics and 2,879 non-academics.

The target population and sample size for the study were determined using Kline's (2018) proportional approach. Consequently, the minimum number of samples typically used for a

fundamental structural equation modeling study was 200. A sample size guideline is based on a ratio of the total number of individuals involved (N) to the total number of parameters that need to be examined (q) (N:q); an N:q ratio of 20:1 is the highest, whereas an N:q ratio of 10:1 is less optimal. Simply put, the credibility of SEM study findings decreases as the N:q ratio drops below 10:1. Among the initially examined models in this research, the variables had the most parameters available for estimation, totaling 60. The researchers utilized an N:q ratio of 13:1 to collect a sample of 780 respondents. It was anticipated that the sample sizes deemed appropriate for the model with the most parameters would also be adequate for models with fewer parameters. To accommodate respondents who might hesitate to participate in the survey, as well as potential missing or incorrect responses, the sample size was increased by 20% (for instance, 20% of 780 equals 156 added to the sample size). Consequently, 936 academic and non-academic staff members participated in the study. However, data screening revealed that 43 respondents had missing values on the scale items. Since SEM software, particularly Assessment in Moment Structures (AMOS), provides comprehensive statistical findings and performs modification indices for datasets without missing values, 43 missing values were excluded. This reduced the number of eligible participants in the study to 893.

For the qualitative part of the study, the snowball sampling technique was utilized to select information-rich cases from leaders and staff (both academic and non-academic) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In light of this, a total of 30 participants—three academic staff members, one department head, one academic dean, one academic precedent, and three support staff members, including one coordinator or one director—were chosen from the non-academic sections of the three universities to participate in the semi-structured interview phase of this study.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collected data for this study using two primary data collection tools: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. These tools are suitable for this application since the study employed a mixed-method approach (Cohen et al., 2007).

3.6.1. Questionnaire

The instruments used to gather data for the current study have already been validated across various industries, professions, and work settings. The tools are adapted as standardized instruments. During the adaptation process, we removed certain items and rephrased others to better align with the current study's objectives. Indeed, the tools are also piloted and evaluated by experts in the field. The instruments have been validated across various sectors, professions, and contexts. Research conducted in Ethiopia also utilized some of these instruments (Dereje & Felekech, 2022; Endalkachew & Zemede, 2023). All instruments demonstrate high psychometric qualities and are scientifically, methodologically, and systematically sound. Consequently, these questionnaires were administered to a sample of leaders and staff (both academic and non-academic) from each of the selected universities. For all participants in the quantitative data, three separate sets of closed-ended questionnaires were used. This questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A) includes questions about respondents' demographics; Section B) includes questions related to organizational change; and Section C) includes questions regarding respondents' perceptions of staff job performance. The first section of the document collects demographic data to gather the following information about the respondents: institution, college, school, department or team, age, marital status, gender, academic rank, and leadership title. All independent variables were measured using standardized scales.

For example, the instrument developed by Hage and Aiken (1967) was adapted to evaluate organizational structural change. This variable includes four dimensions: centralized decision-making, power hierarchy, job codification, and rule observance. A total of 16 questions were used to measure the construct of organizational structure, as recently employed by Johari and Yahya (2019). Similarly, measures for technological change and leadership change are adapted from Riel (2019) and Ekechi and Umar (2020), respectively. This section of the scale includes eight questions to evaluate technological change, and six questions were used to assess leadership change. The aim of adapting these questionnaires is to provide adequate information about the success criteria, such as the organization's dynamism and agility, and to facilitate the analysis of both the current state and the desired future state.

Consequently, the three change drivers consist of the independent variables: leadership change, organizational structure change, and technological change. The items in this section were categorized under these subscales using a 5-point Likert scale (Not at all =1, to a little extent =2, Moderate extent = 3, Great extent =4, and Very Great extent =5). Overall, the questionnaire comprises 60 items, some of which are reverse-keyed to ensure that respondents provide honest answers. The survey items that have been reverse-keyed were corrected and analyzed alongside the other items.

The next portion measures staff work engagement and their relationships. For instance, the instrument developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2008) was adapted to assess the work engagement variable. This variable has three dimensions: vigor, absorption, and dedication. A total of 12 questions were used to measure the work engagement construct, as recently employed by Yao et al. (2022). The items in this section were distributed across the subscales using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5).

The final portion of the survey measures staff job performance, which is treated as a dependent variable. The student researcher adapts the questionnaire from the original developed and validated by Koopmans et al. (2012; 2014), Pradhan and Jena (2017), and Çalişkan and Köroğlu (2022). The questionnaire contains 18 items divided into two main dimensions: STP and SCP, which constitute the SJP. For each item on the questionnaire given to study participants, a five-point Likert scale is used, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree." According to Dillman et al. (2014), a five- or seven-point scale produces more effective results than four-, six-, and ten-point scales. However, Pedhazur and Schmelkin (2013) indicated that the purpose of using a questionnaire to gather a large amount of data is to save money and time.

3.6.2. In-depth Interview

The second data-gathering tool was a semi-structured interview with experienced leaders and staff (both academic and non-academic) from research universities to explore the topic in depth. A sufficient number of informants were deliberately selected from the participating universities and interviewed to achieve data saturation. The goal is not to obtain a representative sample, but rather to identify "individuals who can best help us understand our central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 205) and "to gather participants' perspectives on their experiences related to the research topic" (McIntosh and Morse, 2015, p. 1). Several semi-structured interview questions about organizational change, staff work engagement, and staff job performance were adapted from Burke and Litwin (1992), incorporating insights from relevant theories. Additionally, the researcher believes it is crucial to capture the participants' genuine experiences regarding their roles, perceptions, and reactions to organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance.

Interview questions were provided to participants before the interviews. These one-on-one interviews were conducted in both Amharic and English in a quiet room, allowing participants to express their opinions freely. Based on the participants' responses, probing questions were utilized to clarify any ambiguous answers or to encourage further elaboration. With the respondents' consent, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in preparation for later data analysis. This method facilitates guiding the interviews of study participants to uncover the essence of the central phenomenon. The researcher continued conducting interviews and gathering qualitative data until theoretical saturation was reached, the point at which no new information was revealed.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

3.7.1. Tool Validation

The degree to which a data collection tool accurately assesses what it is intended to measure is called validity (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Four professionals in educational leadership and psychology from Bule Hora and/or Addis Ababa University provided their feedback on the adapted questionnaire to ensure its validity and accuracy. This feedback was considered before administering the questionnaire. While some instruments are standardized, their cultural relevance, face validity, and contextual clarity were evaluated by experts in the field. The investigator later piloted all questionnaires in this context to confirm the consistency of the tools. Cronbach's alpha is a vibrant measure for determining the internal consistency of items was used to measure the consistency of the instruments as observed in Table 2.

3.7.1. Pilot study

Pilot testing was conducted using an instrument developed from literature, tangible examinations, and scales, with their content validated through Lawshe's technique. Before the main investigation began, a pilot study was undertaken to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, conducted at universities not involved in the main study (Addis Ababa University). Throughout the pilot test, participants were briefed about the study's aim and encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions on specific items as well as the instrument's overall content and format. The reliability and validity of the data points were assessed using the SPSS software package. Table 2 displays the tool's internal consistency and reliability.

Table 2: Instrument Reliability for Pilot (n=242) and Main (n=893) Studies

		Pilot Data		Main Data	
Variables	**Sub-scales**	**K***	**Alpha**	**K***	**Alpha**
Organizational Structural Change	Decision Making	3	.898	3	.889
	Hierarchy of Authority	3	.901	3	.836
	Rule Observation	3	.858	3	.868
	Job Codification	4	.872	3	.830
Technological Change	Technological Change	8	.802	5	.763
Leadership Change	Leadership Change	6	.712	5	.858
Work Engagement	Vigor	4	.856	4	.901
	Absorption	4	.838	4	.914
	Dedication	4	.907	4	.912
Staff Job Performance Dimensions	Staff task performance	8	.825	8	.899
	Staff Contextual Performance	12	.860	10	.860

***Source*.** Researchers Survey (2024) **K* =** Number of Items

Similarly, Cronbach's alpha values for the factors range from 0.712 to 0.914. Hair et al. (2006) state that the acceptable lower limit is between 0.60 and 0.70. Consequently, all dimensions of the exogenous and endogenous variables show an adequate level of reliability (i.e., above 0.70).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the concept of "trustworthiness" serves as an alternative to traditional views of reliability and validity regarding qualitative data obtained from

interviews. Components such as credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are essential for minimizing bias and ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the data. Consequently, the researcher met the criteria for the quality of the resulting interview data.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, specifically the convergent parallel mixed method. Consequently, the two sets of data for the research were collected simultaneously. To achieve this, the researcher followed a series of data collection procedures to address the core research questions. First, the researcher contacted the sampled research universities (gatekeepers) for permission to gather data after obtaining a letter of authorization from Addis Ababa University. Next, in-person consultations with the selected sample respondents enabled the researcher to present his objectives and goals to the participants and reach an agreement with them.

3.8.1. Quantitative Data Collection Procedures

In this case, three sets of questionnaires were utilized to explain the study's objectives, confidentiality assurances, respondents' consent, and important instructions. A randomly selected group of research participants received the questionnaires; consequently, they were distributed to 893 respondents (483 academic staff and 410 support staff) across the three sampled universities. The researcher permitted them to answer each question individually while assisting by clarifying any inquiries related to the tools. The questionnaires were collected and organized for subsequent data analysis at a scheduled time. The response rate from the sample universities for the distributed questionnaires was evaluated and included in the report.

3.8.2. Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Before the interview began, various ethical concerns regarding qualitative data needed to be addressed. Consequently, all individuals contacted were carefully selected and provided with a

brief explanation of the research topic, their involvement, and its implications. Academic leaders, non-academic leaders, and staff (both academic and non-academic) who were intentionally chosen as interviewees participated in the interview process to share their perspectives on the study's phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher emphasized that participation is completely voluntary, and individuals can opt out at any time and withdraw their data before it is published. After these steps, study participants received informed consent and set up an appointment with the researcher.

Next, an interview protocol was developed to guide the process of interviewing informants and exploring their perceptions of the research topic. Consequently, the interviews were conducted individually at different times. To enhance data quality, the interviews took place in the informants' usual environments, such as their offices or designated workspaces, in a quiet setting. Based on their responses, probing questions were used to gather additional information or clarify answers that appeared confusing or unclear. All interview responses were audio recorded with the respondents' consent, and the researcher subsequently transcribed them verbatim as a precursor to further data analysis. Additionally, handwritten notes were taken to supplement the recorded data in case the audio was disrupted. To improve the availability and quality of data, interviews were conducted in two languages: English and Amharic. The Amharic responses were later translated into English during transcription using a back-and-forth translation process.

3.9. Methods of Data Analysis

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis independently. As a result, quantitative and qualitative data analysis methodologies are addressed in the next section.

3.9.1. Quantitative Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitatively gathered data were validated through data checking and cleansing of the completed questionnaire to identify valid responses and eliminate invalid ones. The data were then evaluated using a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS-26). Consequently, both inferential and descriptive statistics were applied. The descriptive data analysis included percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations, while the inferential analysis involved correlation analysis to examine the relationships among the three variables in question: organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance. These relationships were assessed according to the Evans (1996) cutoff points defined for the absolute value of r: (r = .00-.19 is very weak), (r = .20-.39 is weak), (r = .40-.59 is moderate), (r = .60-.79 is strong), and (r = .80-1.0 is very strong). These tests were chosen based on the researcher's rationale for parametric test assumptions, which include normality and homoscedasticity. Pearson's correlation (r) was used to identify the relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Following this, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, along with path analysis, were conducted to determine the extent to which exogenous variables explain the endogenous variables.

3.9.2. Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis

The qualitative process yielded interview data that was prepared and analyzed manually. Analysis began immediately after the first interview, and all data were processed and transcribed directly from the Amharic language used during the interview. Data preparation involved three interview texts and documents obtained from each of the three research universities. Furthermore, the data were categorized into academic and non-academic staff. These groupings are essential for exploring potential variations across each case (category). Consequently, the student researcher carefully read and reread the transcribed data from each respondent, coding the data chunks from

the entire category as a cohesive unit through descriptive coding. Descriptive coding is the process that "assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase—most often a noun—the basic topic of a passage" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 8). While engaging in this task, the researcher remained mindful of the primary research questions and insights gained from the literature review. Records of response for research university participants were transcribed and coded as interview participants (IP1-IP30). During the coding process, several sub-themes may emerge, enabling the identification and consolidation of major themes within similar categories for data analysis. Based on these themes, a comparative analysis was conducted alongside the quantitative data collected. This thematic analysis aimed to comprehend patterns, disagreements, and contextual insights in qualitative data (Miles et al., 2014).

3.9.3. Integration of the Results from the Two Data Sets

The foundation of integration in the proposed study is merging, using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that the complexity of implementing a convergent parallel mixed-methods strategy in practice arises from the need to manage two distinct datasets (textual and numerical) gathered from different sample sizes, which are analyzed independently before being integrated in a process referred to as data integration. This is important because combining qualitative and quantitative data involves merging (Plano-Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

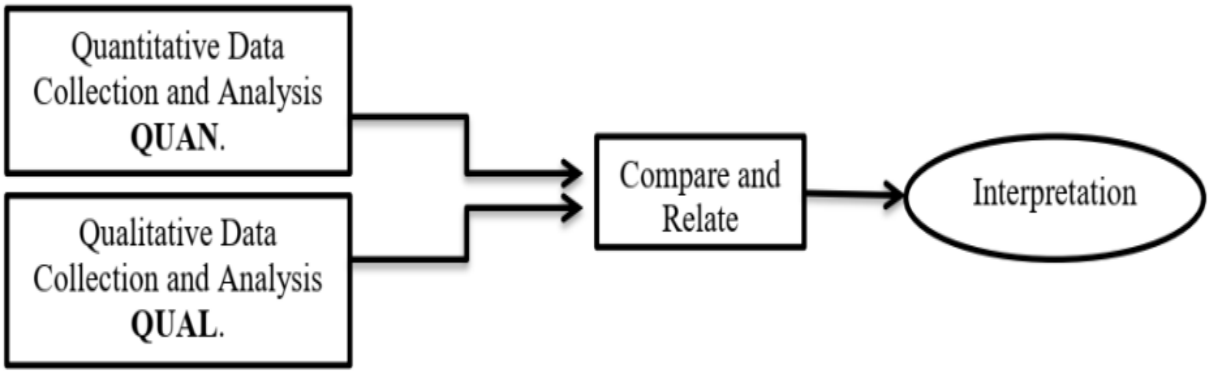
There are several ways to merge the two databases; however, Creswell (2014) identifies three main strategies that can be employed. The first strategy, known as a side-by-side comparison, is evident in the discussion sections of mixed-methods studies when the researcher presents data by first showing one set of results and then another. In doing so, the researcher highlights the qualitative findings (such as themes) that support or challenge the statistical results after reporting

the quantitative data. Alternatively, the investigator may start with the qualitative results and then compare them to the quantitative outcomes. The second method of integration is referred to as data transformation. In this approach, the researcher combines the two quantitative databases by converting qualitative codes or themes into quantitative variables. This process involves creating quantitative measures by counting and grouping the converted qualitative themes or codes. The third and final step is termed a joint display of data, where the researcher merges the two data sets into a graph or table.

In this study, the two separately analyzed data sets (quantitative and qualitative) were used for a side-by-side comparison to integrate the qualitative and quantitative results in the subsequent discussions of outcomes, as illustrated in Fig. 4.

Figure 4

Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Design



Source. Adapted from Demir and Pismek (2018)

The meaning of the two mixed data sets was also included in the study's discussion section through a report comparing the results of the two databases and highlighting whether there is divergence or convergence between the two distinct sources of data.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

When designing, conducting, and reviewing research, as well as reporting the findings, ethical issues and proper conduct are critical (Blumberg et al., 2005). Ethical considerations are essential in all research endeavors and require researchers to uphold the dignity and self-confidence of their participants while accurately disseminating the studied information. The purpose of ethical considerations is to ensure participants' safety from any risks associated with the study. Consequently, researchers must consider relevant ethical aspects, such as explaining the study's goals and objectives, ensuring that participation is voluntary without negative consequences for accepting or declining, and guaranteeing the confidentiality of each participant's information. Researchers also affirm that the information provided is used solely for the study, and classifications and reporting of results are conducted anonymously.

Accordingly, pseudonyms were used in place of participants' real names and their institutions' real names to safeguard their identities. Thus, fictitious names were used for universities to identify them in the report and to keep their anonymity and confidentiality. Also, a consent form was attached to each survey question, which respondents signed to indicate their consent. Interviewees were also asked to sign it before the interview session. Lastly, ethical permission, including letters, was sought from the appropriate university boards in order to get in touch with all involved parties and institutional study participants. Overall, ethical issues in research must adhere to the highest ethical standards throughout the design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of findings (Woldegiyorgis, 2018).

3.11. Overall Summary of Design and Research Methodology

Table 3 presents a variety of data metrics, including population(s), data collection tools, data types, data analysis methods, and other relevant variables.

Table 3: Summary of the Design and Research Methodology

No.	Research Questions	Type of Data	Source of data	Tool(s)	Data Analysis Techniques
Q1	What is the status of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE?	Both Quantitative and Qualitative	Academics and non-academic staff in RUEs	Questionnaire and Interview	Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis
Q2	What are the relationships (i.e., direction, statistical significance, and strength) among the basics of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE?	Both Quantitative and Qualitative	Academics and non-academic staff in RUEs	Questionnaire and Interview	-Descriptive statistics -Inferential statistics such as Pearson's product-moment correlation, - SEM -thematic analysis
Q3	What portion of the variance in staff job performance is explained by organizational change and work engagement separately and jointly?	Both Quantitative and Qualitative	Academics and non-academic staff in RUEs	Questionnaire and Interview	-Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and percentage -Inferential statistics such as Pearson product-moment correlation, regression analysis, SEM, and thematic analysis
Q4	Is there a statistically significant mediation effect of organizational change on staff job performance via work engagement?	Both Quantitative and Qualitative	Academics and non-academic staff in RUEs	Questionnaire and Interview	
Q5	How does SJP relate to OSCH and WE in the research university of Ethiopia?	Both Quantitative and Qualitative	Academics and non-academic staff in RUEs	Questionnaire and Interview	

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. It examines the analysis of data concerning the respondents' demographic information and the relevant fundamental research questions. Furthermore, the chapter reviews the key findings while incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. This section presents, analyzes, interprets, and discusses the quantitative survey and qualitative results obtained from the questionnaire and interviews.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Under this subsection, the profiles of research participants, including demographic variables such as institution, staff category, age, sex, years of service at the current institution, education level, and career rank, are presented. Consequently, the institutions of respondents and their staff categories are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Institutions and Staff Categories of Respondents

Demographic Variables	University	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Institutions	Jima University (JU)	319	35.7	35.7
	Arba Minch University (AMU)	283	31.7	67.4
	Haramaya University (HU)	291	32.6	100
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100**
Staff Categories	Academic Staff (AS)	483	54.1	54.1
	Non-academic Staff (NAS)	410	45.9	100.00
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100.00**

The two groups of respondents—academic staff and non-academic personnel—were distributed among the three research universities surveyed, commonly referred to as first-generation universities, as shown in Table 4. JU had the largest share of respondents (35.7%), followed by HU (32.6%) and AMU (31.7%). This suggests that, while JU is relatively the newest

university, it has a larger staff population. Furthermore, the sample size from each university was determined proportionally, meaning that HU and AMU provided a smaller number of respondents for the study.

Regarding staff categories, Table 4 presents two groups of survey participants: academic staff (AS) and non-academic staff (NAS). It shows that academic staff members comprised the majority of respondents (54.1%), while non-academic staff from the three participating institutions represented 45.9%. The table highlights the unequal distribution of respondents between the two groups—NAS and AS—with corresponding percentage values of 45.9% and 54.1%, respectively. A balanced proportion of these two groups is essential for the researcher, as one of the key research questions was whether AS and NAS had differing perceptions of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance. However, NAS responses become less proportionate when excluding those with contracts and career positions below a bachelor's degree. As a result, the researcher is not concerned about this small imbalance since the number of respondents in both groups is roughly equal. The next demographic variables are the sex, education, and career rank of the respondents (see Table 5).

Table 5: Gender, Education Level, and Career Ranking of the Respondents

Demographic Variables	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Sex	Male	614	68.8	68.8
	Female	279	31.2	100
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100.00**
Education Level	PhD	120	13.4	13.4
	MA/MSc	483	55.7	69.1
	BA/BSc	276	30.9	100.00
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100.00**
Career rank	Associate Professor	30	3.4	3.4
	Assistance Professor	144	16.1	19.5
	Lecturer	309	34.6	54.1
	0ther	410	45.9	100
	Total	**893**	**100.00**	**100.00**

A total of 893 respondents completed the questionnaire and submitted it. Among the survey participants, 279 (31.2%) were female, while 614 (68.8%) were male. These descriptive statistics show that the majority of respondents were male. This situation reflects the population of the study, as there are significantly more male staff members at research universities than female staff members. For instance, the proportion of female participants in the study (31.2%) suggests a lack of female representation. Consequently, male staff predominated in Ethiopian research universities, while female staff were noticeably underrepresented. This highlights that the number of female staff remains low compared to the broader societal reality, which has nearly equal male and female populations. Additionally, the percentage in Table 5 declines when excluding female non-academic staff members. Therefore, more efforts are needed to address the concerning gender imbalance in Ethiopia's research universities. This issue also requires serious attention from all relevant stakeholders, including government decision-makers and institutional leaders, to ensure that both females and males are equally represented in higher education teaching and staffing.

Respondents from two groups—AS and NAS—reported their educational attainment according to recognized Ethiopian academic levels, including master's, doctoral, diploma, and degree. Table 5 presents the results in terms of frequency and percentage. Consequently, BA/BSc and MA/MSc holders predominated in the responses, making up 55.7% and 30.9%, respectively. Respondents with diploma levels (NAS) were excluded from the sample. However, for this study, BA/BSc, MA/MSc, and PhD holders are considered qualified to understand the content of the questionnaire and provide valid responses to the questions regarding the two variables.

Table 5 also shows that non-academic personnel comprised the majority of respondents (45.9%), followed by lecturers (34.6%), assistant professors (16.1%), and associate professors (3.4%). Lecturers and assistant professors are estimated to represent the largest segment of the

population, and the sample reflects this trend. This aligns with the study's demographics, which primarily consist of non-academic personnel with BA/BSc degrees. Notably, no professors participated in the survey as academic staff, underscoring the rarity of the professor rank at universities. Throughout the study, only a handful of professors were present among the academic personnel at these institutions. For this research, the groups of academic staff with the highest levels of participation were deemed trustworthy and consistent in providing valid responses, leading the researcher to believe that valid and reliable data were gathered from these individuals. In contrast, the respondents' years of service and work experience were the primary focus of the study's variables (see Table 6).

Table 6: Age and Experience of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Age in Years	25-30	106	11.9	11.9
	31-35	220	24.6	36.5
	36-40	231	26	62.5
	Above 40	336	37.5	100
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100.00**
Work experience	5-10	385	43.1	43.1
	11-20	433	48.5	91.6
	>20	75	8.4	100
	Total	**893**	**100**	**100.00**

Participants were asked to specify their age as an ongoing parameter. The results revealed that respondents' ages ranged from 25 to 61. For clarity, the data were grouped into four categories. The aggregated results showed that 106 respondents, or 11.9% of the total, were between the ages of 25 and 30; 220 respondents, or 24.6% of the total, fell within the age range of 31 to 35; and 231 respondents, or 26% of the total, were between the ages of 36 and 40. The majority, 336 respondents, or 37.5% of those surveyed, were over 40. This age distribution appears to reflect that of the general population. Population data indicate that 62.5% of respondents were under 40

years old. This suggests that most of the university staff at the research site were relatively young. This age distribution may imply that the majority of the staff at the study site were in their productive ages.

Respondents' years of service represented another variable in the survey. The results in Table 6 indicated that their years of service ranged from 3 to 33. For presentation purposes, the researcher organized the respondents' data into three groups. The majority of research participants had years of service that fell into the first two categories, with those having 5 to 10 years accounting for 43.1% (385), 11 to 20 years for 48.5% (433), and those with more than 20 years for 8.4% (75). The findings indicated that the most common years of service among research participants were between 11 and 20 years. Additionally, a significant number of respondents had extensive years of service, which corresponds with their age distribution. Based on this data, it can be concluded that the respondents' ages and years of service offer sufficient information about the specified variables. In other words, the respondents possess the knowledge and maturity necessary to responsibly provide the essential information for the current study.

4.1.1. Measurement Models for Structural Equations

4.1.1.1. Measurement Models for Exogenous Variables

The current study identified external variables as factors influencing organizational change. It examined three aspects of organizational change—structural, technological, and leadership changes—to assess their relationship with and ability to predict work engagement and employee job performance. The items used in this assessment were thoroughly tested to ensure their reliability and validity, as shown in Table 2. The findings indicate that all items have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7, signifying a high level of item consistency. Additionally, all items had factor loadings equal to or greater than the minimum threshold of 0.50, and the average variance

extracted values exceeded 0.60. These results support both convergent reliability and composite validity. Furthermore, the correlation coefficients among variables are meaningfully lower than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for every construct. Likewise, the squared values of the relationships among the constructs are notably lower than the AVE values for all constructs. This evidence supports the discriminant validity of the constructs, confirming their appropriateness. These findings were obtained through confirmatory factor analysis, a rigorous method for verifying both reliability and validity.

Evaluations of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for the constructs of exogenous variables—organizational structure change, technological change, and leadership change—showed that the dimensions of the organizational change questionnaire items underwent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Accordingly, the KMO measure was .854, and Bartlett's test was significant at p = .000, indicating that the correlation matrix contains some latent components. The EFA revealed six components that accounted for a total of 69.081% of the variation. However, four items were removed from organizational structural change, three from technological change, and one from leadership change because their loading values were below 0.50, suggesting that the model was not adequately loaded, thus reducing its fitness. This revised model includes four components of organizational structural change, all of which are dimensions of organizational structure change: factor 1 is labeled decision-making (DM), factor 2 is labeled hierarchy of authority (HA), factor 3 is labeled job codifications (JC), and factor 4 is labeled rule observation (RO), along with one factor each for technological change and leadership change (see Figure 5).

4.1.1.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Exogenous Factors

The confirmatory factor analysis of the dimensions of organizational change, technological change, and leadership change is shown in Figure 5.

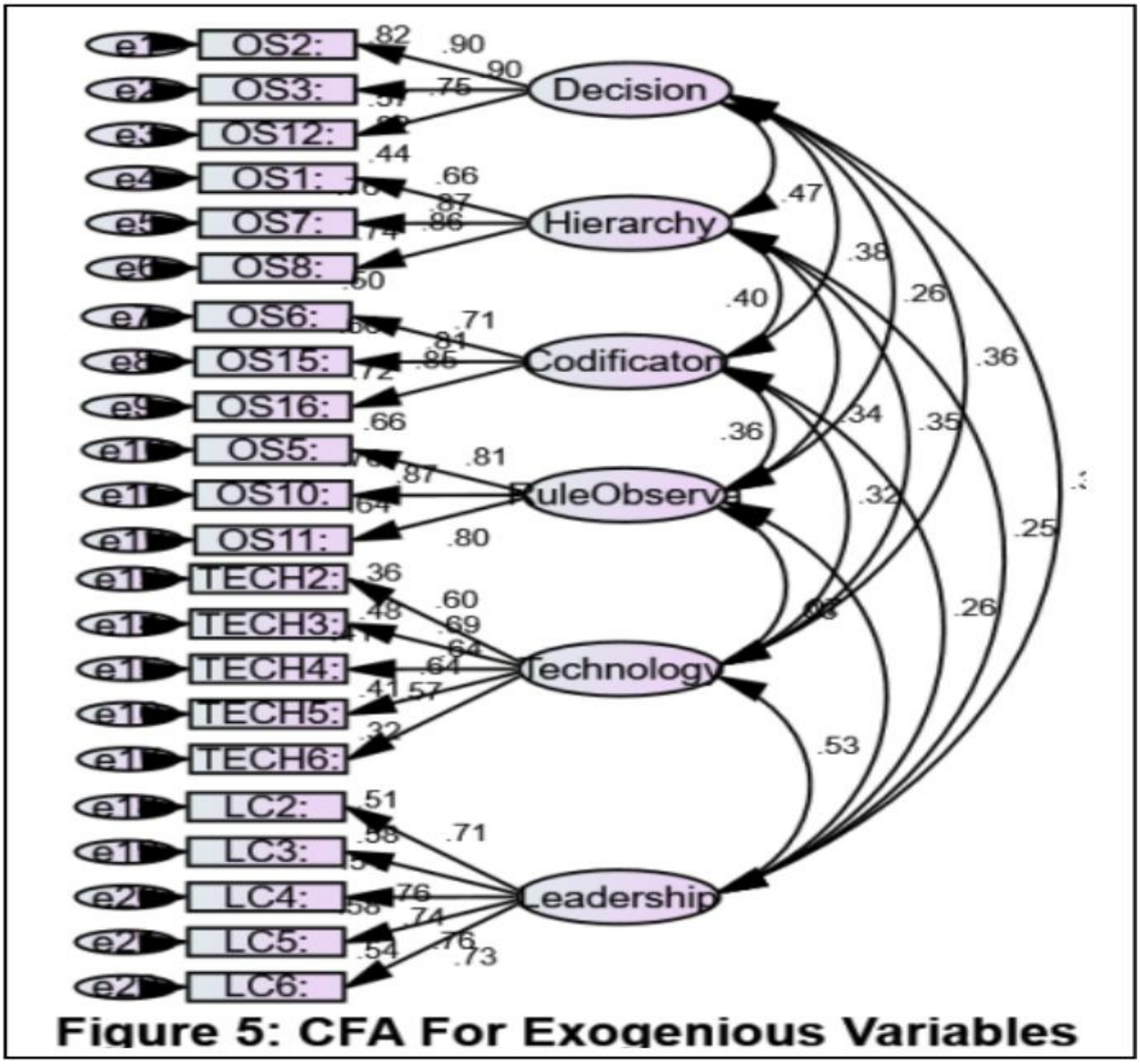


Figure 5: CFA For Exogenious Variables

The test summary in Table 7 analyzes the measurement characteristics of the organizational change variable presented in Figure 5. These findings stem from confirmatory factor analysis, a robust method for validating data reliability and validity. Consequently, the same table displays the organizational change in the CFA model to indicate the goodness-of-fit. Additionally, assessments of model fit for the organizational change component were carried out. The RMSEA measurement in the CFA model is 0.039, which falls within the close fit range, as Cudeck et al.

(1993) consider a value of less than 0.08 to indicate a good fit. The OCH of the three-factor CFA model fits the data well [χ^2 (231) = 9121.663, p < 0.001; PCLOSE =.299].

Table 7: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for Organizational Change Factors

No.	Index	Critical Value	Results	Model Fit
1	Chi-Square	The smaller the better	461.179	less fit
2	CMIN/DF	≤ 5.00	2.377	Fit
3	CFI	≥.90	0.970	Fit
4	TLI	>.90	0.965	Fit
5	SRMS	≤ 0.60	0.0343	Fit
6	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.039	Fit

Source. Researcher survey, 2024

The structural model consists of three sub-dimensions: Organizational Structure Change (OSCH), Leadership Change (LCH), and Technological Change (TECH). OSCH includes four sub-dimensions, represented by a composite of 12 relatively high-quality items that remain in the model. The second dimension, TECH, contains five high-quality items, while the LCH component comprises five quality items in the third dimension. The model's standardized mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.038, which is below the minimum threshold set by Cudeck et al. (1993). Additionally, the model's Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) is 0.965, and its comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.970, both of which exceed the suggested minimum of 0.90. Therefore, the absolute and comparative fit indices (TLI = 0.965 and CFI = 0.970) indicate that the model provides a good fit.

4.1.2. Measurement Models for Endogenous Variables

The endogenous variables for the current study included staff work engagement and job performance. To provide a clear overview of each component, the researcher aimed to present the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of both endogenous factors separately in the following sections.

The study's findings on construct reliability and validity indicated that all items used to measure the concepts are appropriate, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.901, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. Furthermore, the factor loadings meet or exceed the minimum required level, and the median variance extracted values exceed 0.50. These results suggest the presence of convergent validity and composite reliability. Additionally, the correlation coefficients for each variable are significantly lower than the square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE). Similarly, the squared correlation values between the constructs are considerably less than their corresponding AVE values. Consequently, we can conclude that the variables demonstrate discriminant validity.

4.1.2.1. Assessment of Model Accuracy for the Work Engagement Factor

The assessments of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for the work engagement construct were conducted. Consequently, the dimensions of the staff work engagement questionnaire items underwent an EFA. As a result, the KMO value was .919, and Bartlett's test was significant at p = .000, indicating that the correlation matrix contains latent variables. The EFA identified three components that accounted for 78.714% of the variation. The new model, similar to the previous one, includes three components, all representing dimensions of work engagement: factor one is labeled vigor (Vi), factor two is labeled absorption (Ab), and factor three is labeled dedication (De) (see Figure 6).

4.1.2.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Work Engagement Factor

The confirmatory factor analysis of the variable of staff work engagement is evaluated, as shown in Figure 6.

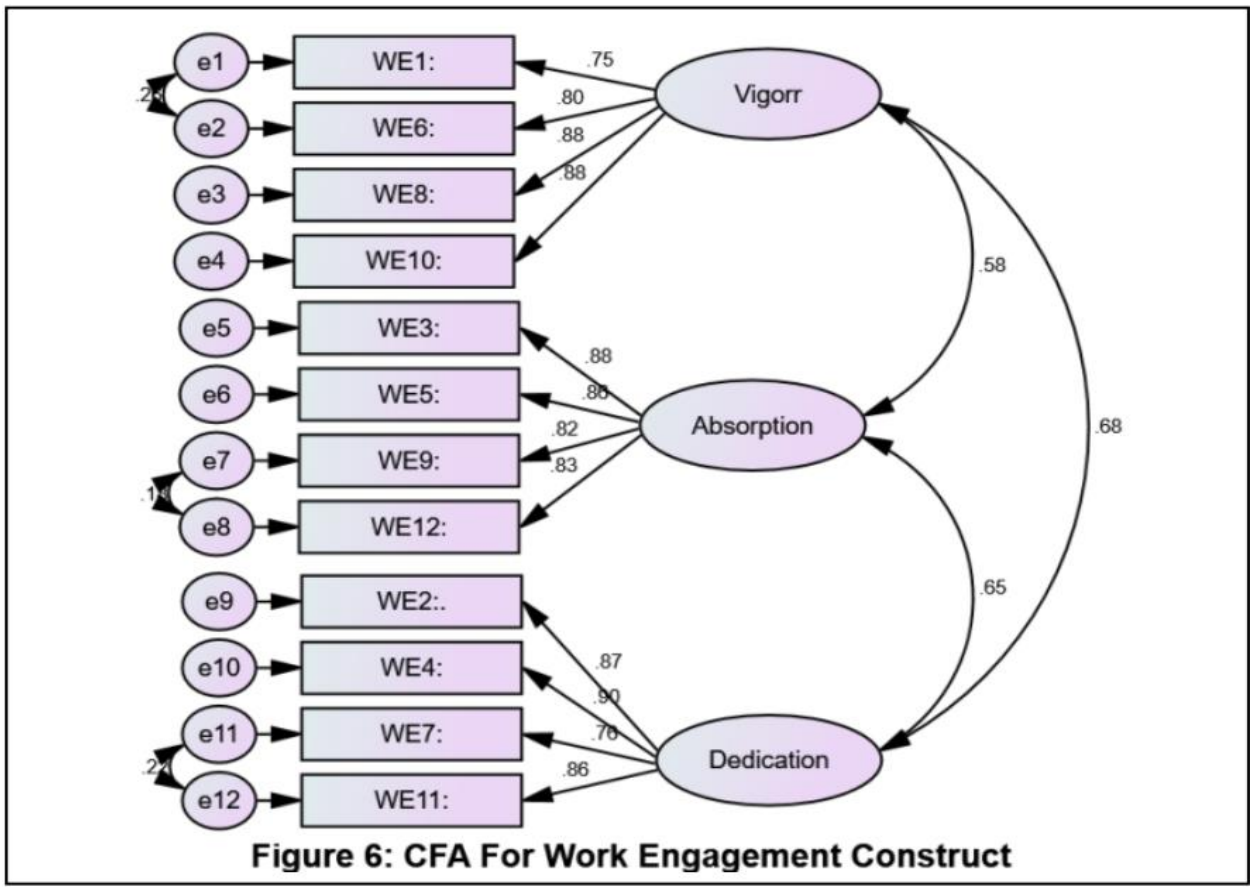


Figure 6: CFA For Work Engagement Construct

Table 8: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for Staff Work Engagement

No.	Index	Critical Value	Results	Model Fit
1	Chi-Square	The smaller the better	195.762	less fit
2	CMIN/DF	≤ 5.00	4.078	Fit
3	CFI	≥.90	0.982	Fit
4	TLI	>.90	0.975	Fit
5	SRMS	≤ 0.60	0.0331	Fit
6	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.059	Fit

Source. Researcher survey, 2024

The test summary in Table 8 provides a comprehensive overview of the measurement aspects related to the staff work engagement variable illustrated in Figure 6. These findings stem from confirmatory factor analysis, a reliable method for validating data accuracy and consistency. Consequently, the same table displays the goodness-of-fit for the CFA model concerning staff work engagement. Additionally, evaluations of model fit for the work engagement component

were performed. The RMSEA value for the CFA model is 0.059, which falls within the close fit range, as Cudeck et al. (1993) indicate that a value below 0.08 represents a good fit. The three-factor WE CFA model fits the data well [χ^2 (66) = 195.762, $p < 0.001$; PCLOSE = .144].

The composite of the 12 generally high-quality items that emerged in the model reflects the three dimensions of the structural model. The model's standardized mean square residual (SRMR) is 0.0331, which is below the minimum threshold established by Cudeck et al. (1993). Additionally, the model's Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) is 0.975, and its comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.982, both exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.90. Therefore, the absolute and comparative fit indices (TLI = 0.975 and CFI = 0.982) indicate that the model is well-fitted.

4.1.3. Assessment of Model Accuracy for the Staff Job Performance Construct

The study findings on construct reliability and validity indicate that all items used to assess concepts are appropriate, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.860, demonstrating a high level of internal consistency among them. Furthermore, the items' factor loadings meet or exceed the minimum required level, and the median variance extracted values surpass 0.50. These results suggest the presence of convergent validity and composite reliability. Additionally, the correlation coefficients for each variable are significantly smaller than the square root of each construct's average variance extracted (AVE). Similarly, the squared correlation values between the constructs are well below their corresponding AVE values. Therefore, we can conclude that the variable exhibits discriminant validity.

4.1.3.1.Exploratory Factor Analysis for Staff Job Performance Factor

The assessments of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for the SJP construct were carried out. For the EFA, the KMO value measuring SJP was .942, and Bartlett's test was significant (p = .000), indicating that the correlation matrix is influenced by multiple latent components. The EFA

identified two components that accounted for a total variance of 52.778%. The first factor was labeled staff task performance (STP), while the second was referred to as staff contextual performance (SCP). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) demonstrated that the two components in the CFA model fit the data well at [χ^2 (153) = 7191.119, p < 0.001] following the initial model adjustment (see Figure 7).

4.1.3.2.Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Staff Job Performance Factor

The confirmatory factor analysis of staff job performance is presented, as shown in Figure 7.

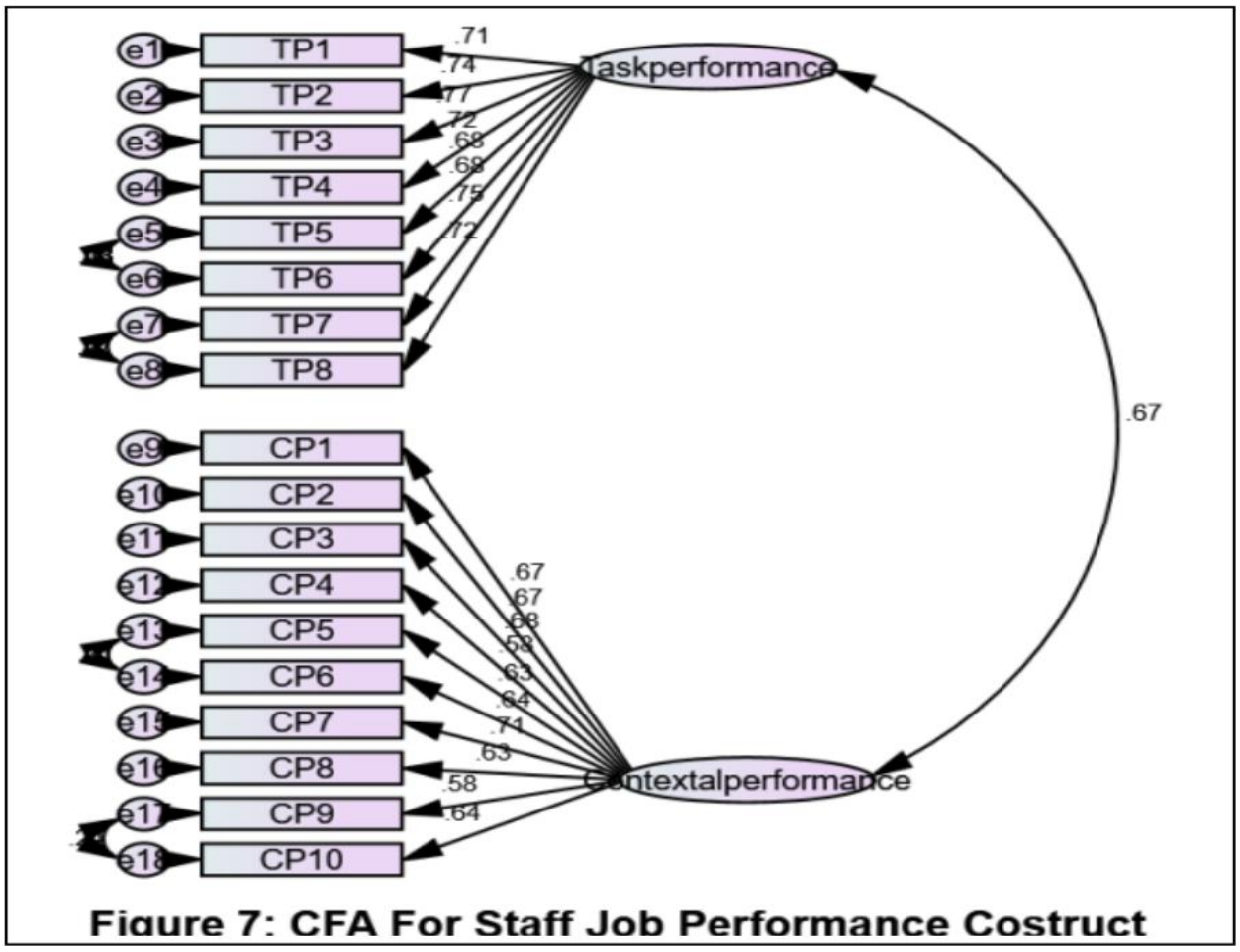


Figure 7: CFA For Staff Job Performance Costruct

A comprehensive analysis of the measurement characteristics of the staff job performance variable, as shown in Figure 7, is provided in the test summary presented in Table 9. The researcher

employed confirmatory factor analysis, a powerful method for assessing data validity and reliability, to derive these results. Consequently, the goodness-of-fit for the staff job performance CFA model is presented in the same table.

Descriptive fit indices that aligned the sample covariance matrix with the expected covariance matrix were used to assess the model's fit after the CFA evaluation. The RMSEA value for the model in question is 0.046, which is within the acceptable range of < 0.08, indicating a good fit. Cudeck et al. (1993) propose a cutoff threshold of less than 0.08, which renders this model acceptable. Additionally, the comparative fit indices are CFI = 0.966 and TLI = 0.960, signifying a good fit to the model, with a PCLOSE = .898. The path model's two dimensions were represented by a combination of the remaining 18 high-quality items.

Table 9: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-fit Model CFA for Staff Job Performance

No.	Index	Critical Value	Results	Model Fit
1	Chi-Square	The smaller the better	372.719	less fit
2	CMIN/DF	$\leq$ 5.00	2.867	Fit
3	CFI	$\geq$.90	0.966	Fit
4	TLI,	>.90	0.960	Fit
5	SRMS	$\leq$ 0.60	0.0287	Fit
6	RMSEA	$\leq$ 0.08	0.046	Fit

Source. Researcher survey, 2024

4.2. What is the Status of Factors Influencing Organizational Change, Work Engagement, and Employee Job Performance at RUE?

The first research question of the current study was to assess the status of key variables, including organizational change, staff work engagement, and job performance. Accordingly, Table 10 presents descriptive statistics for these main factors. The current status of the study's primary variables was determined by comparing the obtained mean scores with the expected average variable means. A one-sample t-test was utilized to evaluate whether the discrepancy between the

observed and anticipated means was statistically significant. Consequently, scores that were significantly higher than predicted were considered to reflect high levels, while scores that were notably lower than expected were viewed as indicating low practice with the variables. Variables with scores showing no statistically significant difference between the expected and obtained means were classified as displaying moderate engagement.

To determine the extent of organizational change based on the key variables of the study, Table 10 compares the anticipated and actual means for the three dimensions of organizational change (see the three shaded cells in the same table above). The mean score for organizational structural change (OSCH) was significantly higher than expected (t=3.046, p<.01, ES=.102), followed by technological changes (TECH) (t=21.264, p<.001, ES=.711), while leadership change (LCH) was not significantly lower than anticipated.

Table 10. Status of Organizational Change Factors, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance **(N=893)**

Variables	**Dimensions**	**(Minimum, Maximum score)**	**Obtained Mean**	**SD**	**Expected mean**	**T**	**ES**
Organizational structural change (OSCH)	Decision making	(1.33, 5)	3.48	.777	3.165	12.138***	.406
	Hierarchy Authority	(1.33, 5)	3.31	.665	3.165	6.603***	.221
	Rule observation	(1, 5)	2.76	.819	3.00	-8.682***	-.290
	Job codifications	(1, 5)	3.32	.677	3.00	13.988***	.399
	OSCH dimension	(1.58, 4.75)	3.22	.519	3.165	3.046**	.102
Technological change	Technological change	(1, 5)	3.48	.685	3.00	21.264***	.711
Leadership change	Leadership change	(1.33, 5)	3.14	.703	3.165	-.944	-.032
Work engagement (WE)	Vigor	(1.25, 5)	3.49	.829	3.125	13.487***	.451
	Absorption	(1, 5)	3.69	.857	3.00	24.356***	.814
	Dedication	(1,5)	3.57	.862	3.00	20.027***	.670
	WE Dimension	(1.33, 5)	3.59	.724	3.169	19.270***	.572
Staff job performance (SJP)	Task performance	(1.38, 5)	3.86	.662	3.19	30.389***	1.016
	Contextual performance	(1.6, 5)	3.72	.628	3.3	18.637***	.623
	SJP Dimension	(1.5, 5)	3.78	.574	3.25	27.855***	.931

Notes: ES = effect size, **p<.01, ***p<.001, SD=Standard deviation

As shown in Table 10, the implementation of leadership change was found to be not at an adequate level, whereas the implementation of structural and technological changes was moderately high in the research universities of Ethiopia.

Similarly, in Table 10, the three aspects of work engagement (WE) — Vigor (Vi), Absorption (Ab.), and Dedication (De) — were significantly higher than predicted. Specifically, Vigor was notably elevated ($t=13.487$, $p<.001$, ES=.451), while Absorption substantially exceeded the expected mean ($t=24.356$, $p<.001$, ES=.814), and Dedication was also significantly above expectations ($t=20.027$, $p<.001$, ES=.670). Overall, the WE dimensions surpassed the anticipated mean ($t=19.270$, $p<.001$, ES=.572). Similarly, several qualitative participants noted that work engagement practices are moderately high.

Table 10 indicates that the dimensions of TP and CP are significantly above the expected mean for TP ($t=30.389$, $p<.001$, ES=1.016) and CP ($t=18.637$, $p<.001$, ES=.623), respectively. Additionally, staff job performance (SJP) is also significantly above the expected mean ($t=27.855$, $p<.001$, ES=.931). Therefore, one could argue that the performance of research university staff is notably high.

4.3. Relationships between the Key Factors of Organizational Change, Work Engagement, and Employee Job Performance

First and foremost, before evaluating the relationships, the assumption of multivariate normality must be checked with SPSS Amos. SEM uses maximum likelihood estimation; therefore, confirming multivariate normality is crucial. Guidelines recommend an acceptable range of ±1.96 for normality across multiple factors. The actual critical ratio ranged from -1.129 to 1.851, indicating a normal distribution. A bootstrap resampling with 2000 observations was performed at 95% confidence to test the model's fit. If the chi-square value falls within the bootstrap range, it

suggests that bootstrapping can improve model fit. Consequently, bootstrapping is an effective method for aligning the model with the data.

Next, the study aimed to investigate the relationship between components of organizational change, staff work engagement, and job performance. To achieve this goal, the student researcher must evaluate the model's fitness that guides the study (see Figure 8). This evaluation assesses whether the model is suitable for the data before focusing on the correlations among the variables of interest. Before measuring the associations (correlation and regression coefficients), it is essential to determine the model's fitness. This is necessary because if the model does not fit the data satisfactorily, estimates of variable associations will be unrealistic. Therefore, the structural model represented in Figure 8 was initially examined.

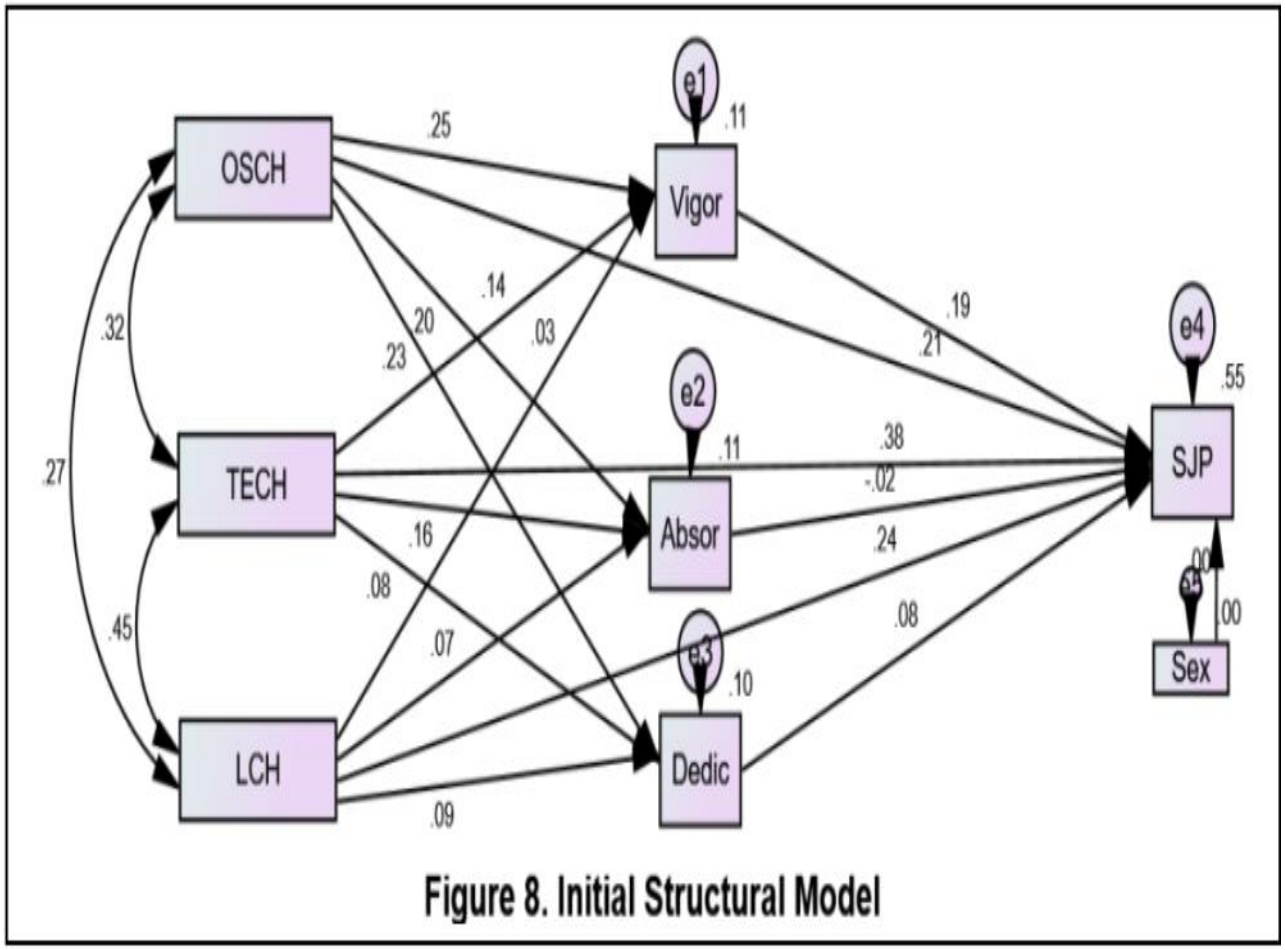


Figure 8. Initial Structural Model

The default model does not match the data well at [x^2 (9) = 767.352, p < .001, CFI = .632, GFI = .816, RMSEA = .307 (90% CI = (.306, .441), PCLOSE = .000]. A closer examination of the modification indices revealed that the updated and final model depicted in Figure 9 shows the most parameter changes and the smallest discrepancy from the data. This final model fits the data well at [x^2 (6) = 8.666, p < .001, CFI = .998, TLI = .994, GFI = .998, RMSEA = .022, PCLOSE = .931], demonstrating that the difference between the data and the final model is relatively low (see Table 11).

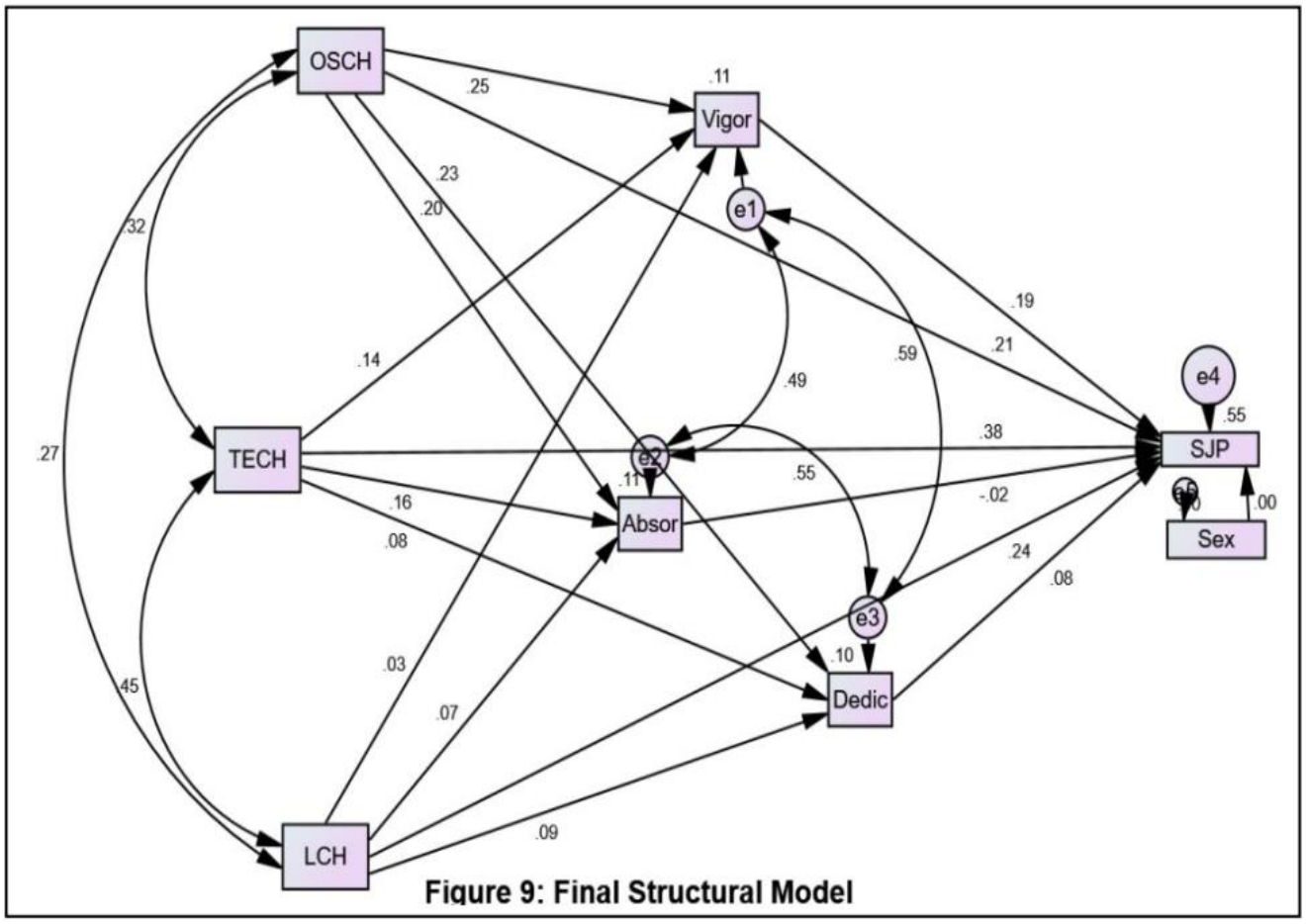


Figure 9: Final Structural Model

The test description in Table 11 thoroughly examines the measuring components of the CFA final structural model presented in Figure 9. These findings were obtained through confirmatory factor analysis, a robust method for verifying the reliability and validity of the data.

Consequently, the same table presents the goodness-of-fit for the CFA model of the final structural model. Additionally, assessments of model fitness for the model component were conducted.

Table 11: Test Outcomes of the Goodness-of-Fit for the CFA Final Structural Model

No.	Index	Critical Value	Results	Model Fit
1	Chi-Square	The smaller, the better	8.666	less fit
2	CMIN/DF	$\leq$ 5.00	1.444	Fit
3	CFI	$\geq$.90	.998	Fit
4	TLI,	>.90	.994	Fit
5	SRMS	$\leq$ 0.60	.0179	Fit
6	RMSEA	$\leq$ 0.08	.022	Fit

Source. Researcher survey, 2024

The RMSEA measurement for the CFA model is 0.022, which falls within the close fit range, as Cudeck et al. (1993) consider a value less than 0.08 to indicate a good fit. Furthermore, all the main fit indices indicate an excellent fit for the structural model.

After determining the model's fit to the data, the second research question of the current study was investigated: the nature of the relationships between organizational change factors, staff work engagement, and job performance. A correlation matrix provides a preliminary examination for further regression analysis. It also enables the researcher to identify any variables that could cause issues with multicollinearity. With these objectives in mind, all variables in the structural model had pairwise correlations assessed to determine whether they were significantly associated. As a result, Table 12 shows the correlation matrix.

Table 12 illustrates the correlations among the variables calculated to demonstrate the relationships among their dimensions. Consequently, all correlations among the variables of interest were positive and statistically significant. The correlation coefficients indicated notable associations among the constructs at the ($p < 0.001$) significance level. Organizational structural change, technological change, and leadership change were significantly linked to all work engagement characteristics (vigor, absorption, and dedication), as well as with the staff job

performance construct at ($p < .001$). All correlation coefficients exceeded 0.160, r (893), demonstrating weak to moderately positive associations. The strongest correlation coefficient was observed between technological change and staff job performance (r = .608). A weak correlation was noted between the vigor dimension of work engagement and leadership change (r = .160), as well as between dedication and leadership change (r = .185).

Table 12: The Relationships among Organizational Change Factors, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance

Variable	Dimension	Dimensions of Organizational Change			Dimensions of Work Engagement		
		OSCH	TECH	LCH	Vi.	Ab.	De.
WE	Vi.	.300***	.230***	.160***	1	.	
	Ab.	.269***	.256***	.196***	546***	1	
	De.	.278***	.193***	.185***	.633***	.590***	1
SJP	SJP	.470***	.608***	.509***	.414***	.328***	.363***

Notes. ***p<.001, SJP=Staff job performance, WE=work engagement, OSCH= organizational structural change, TECH=technological change, LCH= leadership change, Vi=vigor, Ab=absorption, De=dedication.

All independent factors showed significant associations with the dependent variable; each has a correlation coefficient of r (893) > 0.16. Among the various associations, the correlation between technological change and staff job performance is the strongest, with r (893) = .608, followed by the correlation between leadership change and staff job performance, r (893) = .509. The relationship between leadership change and vigor exhibited the lowest correlation coefficient, r (893) = .160. Overall, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was assessed as ranging from weak to moderately strong.

A correlation matrix provides an initial assessment for subsequent regression analyses. As a result, researchers must identify factors that could lead to potential collinearity issues. In this

context, the study investigates multi-collinearity between two or more variables (See Table 13). To address these concerns, each variable in the structural model was checked for tolerance values and variance inflation factors (VIF). According to common guidelines, if the tolerance value exceeds 0.1 and the VIF is less than five, it indicates there is no collinearity problem.

Table 13: Multi-collinearity Diagnosis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.710	.100		7.073	.000		
	TECH	.313	.022	.373	14.163	.000	.745	1.343
	LCH	.195	.021	.259	9.291	.000	.780	1.282
	OSCH	.240	.028	.221	8.640	.000	.820	1.220
	WE	.166	.019	.310	8.550	.000	.857	1.166

Dependent Variable: SJP

Consequently, the VIF for all variables is below five, and the tolerance values were above 0.1. Therefore, there are no collinearity issues among the variables in this study.

4.4. Contribution of Dimensions of Organizational Change Factors to the Dimensions of Work Engagement and Staff Job Performance

The third research question in this study examined the extent to which the dimensions of organizational change factors and work engagement explain the variability in staff job performance (see Table 14). Table 14 illustrates how factors of organizational change—specifically technological change, structure, and leadership change, and work engagement variables—affect the elements of staff job performance.

The influence of organizational change on staff job performance is also assessed. Technological change has the most substantial influence on staff job performance (R^2=37%), followed by leadership change (R^2=26%), and Organizational structure change also has a significant impact on staff job performance (R^2=22.1%). These three factors—technological

change, organizational structure change, and leadership changes—jointly account for (R^2=50%) of the variation in employee job performance.

Table 14: Effect of Organizational Change Factors on the Dimensions of Work Engagement and Job Performance

Dimensions of Organizational Change Factors and Employee Work Engagement	**Dependent variable**	**Squared multiple Correlations (R^2)**
Organizational structure change	SJP	.221
Technological change	SJP	.37
Leadership change	SJP	.26
Structural, technological, and leadership change	SJP	.50
Vigor	SJP	0.1714
Absorption	SJP	0.1076
Dedication	SJP	0.1318
Vigor, Absorption, Dedication	SJP	0.195
Structural, technological, leadership change, Vigor, Absorption, Dedication	SJP	.538

Note. SJP = Staff Job Performance

Similarly, the combined effects of organizational change and work engagement factors on employee job performance are discussed in the following parts. As shown in Table 14, the evaluated impact of the dimensions of work engagement on staff job performance. Vigor contributes the most to staff job performance (R^2=17.2%), followed by dedication (R^2=13.2%) and absorption (R^2=10.8%). Additionally, we examined the combined effect of the dimensions of staff work engagement on job performance. The analysis indicated that this combined effect explained the variance (R^2=31%) in staff job performance.

Table 14 also displays the combined contributions of the dimensions of organizational change (technological change, organizational structural change, and leadership change) alongside the dimensions of work engagement (vigor, absorption, and dedication), resulting in an R^2 of 55%. From these illustrations, we can infer that the factors of organizational change (technological change, organizational structural change, and leadership change) had a more significant impact on

the variability in staff job performance compared to the work engagement variable in the research universities of Ethiopia.

4.5. The Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Organizational Change Factors on Staff Job Performance

Table 15: The Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Organizational Change Factors on Staff Job Performance

Relationships	Specific indirect effect	Total indirect effect	Direct effect
OSCH ⟶ Vi ⟶SJP	.0475**		
OSCH ⟶ Ab ⟶SJP	-.004*	.0619***	.212***
OSCH ⟶ De ⟶SJP	.0184**		
TCH ⟶ Vi ⟶SJP	.027**		
TCH ⟶ Ab ⟶SJP	-.0032	.028**	.376***
TCH ⟶ De ⟶SJP	.0064*		
LCH ⟶ Vi ⟶SJP	.0057		
LCH ⟶ Ab ⟶SJP	-.0014	.012	.244***
LCH ⟶ De ⟶SJP	.0072		

Notes: *P<0.05; **P<0.01; ***P<0.001

The fourth research question in this study explores the direct and indirect effects of organizational change on staff job performance through work engagement. Table 15 displays the analysis of the direct, specific, and total indirect influence of all three aspects of organizational changes on staff job performance (SJP). Among the three direct effects presented in Table 15, all (100%) were statistically significant. OSCH ($\beta = .212$, $p < .001$), TECH ($\beta = .376$, $p < .001$), and LCH ($\beta = .244$, $p < .001$) significantly influenced SJP. Specifically, the unmediated effect of OSCH on SJP indicates that an increase of one standard deviation in OSCH leads to a 0.212 standard deviation increase in SJP. Similarly, the analysis revealed that TECH's direct effect on SJP results in a 0.376 standard deviation increase for each one standard deviation increase in

TECH. Additionally, due to LCH's direct influence on SJP, increasing LCH by one standard deviation raises SJP by 0.244 standard deviations.

In contrast, two out of three total indirect effects (75%) were statistically significant. This suggests that the organizational change dimensions do not fully convey their influence indirectly through the WE dimensions. It's important to note that OSCH and TECH of organizational change variables had an indirect statistical influence on SJP. LCH was unable to achieve statistical significance in its indirect impacts on SJP. Additionally, the total indirect effects of OSCH were found to be significantly greater than those of TECH.

OSCH's overall indirect effect on SJP was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .0619$, $p < .001$). This indicates that, due to OSCH's mediated impact on SJP, a one-standard-deviation increase in OSCH leads to a 0.0619-standard-deviation increase in SJP. Furthermore, TCH's mediated influence on SJP showed that raising TECH by one standard deviation increased SJP by 0.028 standard deviations. While the total indirect effect of TECH on SJP was less than that of OSCH, both effects remained positive and statistically significant. In contrast, LCH was found to have only direct effects on SJP, with its indirect impact being not significant.

The total mediated effect was analyzed to identify specific indirect effects. Among all statistically significant indirect effects, the level of work engagement in terms of vigor was stronger than the dimensions of absorption and dedication. Overall, the factors associated with organizational change have a greater direct impact on SJP than their indirect effects; however, they also demonstrate a significant mediation effect. Thus, the OCH variable in this research area partially influences staff job performance through the work engagement variable.

4.6.The Results of Qualitative Data

This study used a mixed-methods approach, utilizing a Convergent Parallel Design. This design requires the researcher to conduct both quantitative and qualitative components concurrently, balance the approaches equally, analyze each independently, and interpret the results collectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consequently, quantitative data were collected alongside qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with thirty informants from three research universities and documents were also reviewed.

The qualitative data included in this study provide a deeper and broader understanding of how respondents perceive organizational change, employee engagement, job performance, and their interactions with one another, as well as the study participants' reactions to all these variables. Consequently, the researcher sought to explore the challenges at hand. The data collected from semi-structured interviews were interpreted and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The subsequent sections analyze the qualitative data. These analyses frequently utilize verbatim reports from informants, incorporating both long and short quotations, whether within the text or formatted in indented form. This method purposefully prioritizes the informants' lived experiences over the researcher's, which is characteristic of qualitative research that emphasizes the "emic" viewpoint rather than the "etic." Furthermore, because the informants were very influential university academics and support personnel, their exact comments were viewed as powerful statements that could effectively convey their opinions. Since direct statements and clauses are often more enlightening and straightforward compared to the researchers' interpretations, Creswell and Creswell (2018) further support this notion by noting that certain research studies include extended verbatim discussions to preserve the essence of the original data.

Additionally, they emphasize the importance of adhering to the precise wording used. Direct communication can produce incredibly detailed information.

4.6.1. Participants' Profile in Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty participants from three universities; participants from each group (leaders from academic and non-academic staff, as well as academics and non-academics) were selected to gather qualitative data. Table 16 highlights the demographic data for qualitative participants.

Table 16: Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

Demographics	**Category**	**Informants number**	**Participants Category**
University	Jimma	11	Academic staff leaders, support staff leaders, and academic and non-academic staff
	Arba Minch	9	
	Haramaya	10	
	Total	30	
Educational background	≥ PhD	11	
	MA/MSc	13	
	BA/BSc	6	
	Total	**30**	
Work experience	4-10	5	
	Above 10	25	
	Total	**30**	
Age in Years	30-40	10	
	40-60	16	
	>60	4	
	Total	**30**	

Table 16 presents the profiles of participants from the semi-structured interview. The participants were carefully selected from three research universities using the snowball sampling technique, totaling thirty individuals. The interviews included both academic and non-academic personnel, as well as staff leaders from the three chosen universities. The ages of the respondents range from thirty-eight to sixty-four, demonstrating their maturity for participating in the

interview. In terms of marital status, twenty-seven of the thirty participants were married, while two were single and one was divorced. Likewise, the participants' years of service varied from four to thirty-two, indicating that they have been affiliated with the university for a significant period and may have experienced reform programs. As a result, they are likely to provide reliable and valid information during the interview. The participants' educational levels included PhD or higher (11), Master's (13), and BA/BSc/B.Ed. (6).

4.6.2. Themes and Subthemes Emerged from Qualitative Analysis

Table 17 presents themes, sub-themes, and code frequencies derived from qualitative data analysis. The code frequencies column shows how often the codes that generated the themes and their sub-themes were utilized. Table 17 also indicates that at least six codes combine to create a sub-theme. Qualitative results offered evidence for practices of OCH, WE, and SJP. The responses varied from those indicating the presence of low OCH to those asserting that it is widely practiced.

The analysis follows these theme categories, and the findings are presented below. The direct quotations used in this section reflect the research participants' thoughts and opinions, which were employed frequently, as outlined in the qualitative data processing methods section, either in quotation or indentation. The terms 'informant,' 'respondent,' and 'participants' were used interchangeably throughout this section of the dissertation.

This is one of the seven main themes that emerged during the analysis of interview data. This theme also gave rise to the previously mentioned sub-themes. These subthemes were supported by empirical evidence and data obtained from direct or paraphrased quotes from the informants' original statements.

Table 17: Emerged Themes and Subthemes from Qualitative Data

No.	Emerged themes and subthemes	Code Frequencies
1.	**Practice of Organizational Change Factors**	44
	1.1.Organizational Structure Change	14
	1.2.Technological change	18
	1.3.Leadership Change	12
2.	**Practice of Staff Work Engagement**	22
	2.1.Vigor	8
	2.2.Absorption	6
	2.3.Dedications	8
3.	**Practice of Staff Job Performance**	29
	3.1.Staff Task Performance	14
	3.2.Contextual Performance	15
4.	**Relationships among variables**	79
	4.1.The relationships between the LCH and staff job performance	11
	4.2.The relationships between the OSCH and Staff job performance	18
	4.3.The relationships between TECH and Staff job performance	19
	4.4.The relationships between WE and Staff job performance	16
	4.5.The relationships among OCH, WE, and SJP	15
5.	**Contribution of OCH and WE to SJP**	53
	5.1.OCH → **SJP**	24
	5.2.WE → **SJP**	12
	5.3. OCH + WE →**SJP**	17
6.	**Direct, indirect, and total indirect effect of OCH on SJP**	12

4.6.3. The Practices of Organizational Change Factors: An Overview

Change within an organization is essential and achieved through various strategies. It involves modifications to an organization's structure, purpose, technology, demographics, and roles. Organizational change signifies the ability to recognize new development opportunities and the insight needed to make necessary internal adjustments for success. Additionally, it entails realigning an organization in ways that affect people, processes, strategy, and work. Ultimately, organizational change involves intentionally altering elements such as the organization's vision, mission, strategy, objectives, capabilities, and structures to enhance overall effectiveness. According to Gupta and Singla (2016), organizational change requires a shift in the behavior of

every individual within the company to transform the company's operations and procedures. These changes in people, technology, tasks, structure, and leadership within the organization make up the five components that drive organizational change, impacting universities and staff performance (Burke-Litwin, 1992; Wanza & Nkuraru, 2016).

As a result, the student researcher aims to present and analyze research participants' opinions to identify the factors that significantly contribute to organizational change in Ethiopian research universities. In light of this setting and the emerging themes, three integrated factors for successful change—leadership changes, organizational structure, and technology—have been identified as independent variables impacting staff performance, either or not mediated by staff work engagement. However, understanding this phenomenon poses inherent challenges due to the variety of techniques involved, which can include downsizing, cultural shifts, mergers, and acquisitions. It requires assessing the attitudes and behaviors of change agents to adapt to new circumstances (Orth & Cheng, 2019). Accordingly, research participants shared their perspectives on organizational change in Ethiopian research universities as follows.

The research participants noted that, despite some changes being recognized as developmental, many other changes have taken place at higher education institutions in Ethiopia as a result of MoSHE’s 2020 initiatives. For instance, they remarked that all universities are engaged in similar activities, graduate the same students, teach the same programs, and approve the same curriculum. After evaluating this trend, the Ministry of Education concluded that this approach is not conducive to institutional development. As a result, all universities are encouraged to embrace a differentiation philosophy. This concept led the ministry to designate eight universities as research-intensive institutions, thereby initiating the ideas of differentiation and

institutional autonomy. However, the participants indicated that the process was slow for various reasons. One of the research participants stated that:

> *Our university has undergone various changes since the 2020 MoSHE declarations that designated eight universities as research universities. These changes include internal differentiations, the process of becoming a research-intensive university, and the mission toward autonomy, which are still in progress and not yet finalized. However, there has been significant movement recently to implement these changes. Nevertheless, many of the new structures introduced to facilitate the research-intensive university have been modified. The university's human resources department has created training programs for administrative staff who were selected and assigned based on their structure and position. We have adjusted the vice presidency; previously, we had four vice presidents, but now we have three, following the Ministry of Education's directive. Similarly, guidelines have been formulated to address issues of differentiation and autonomy. Additionally, the internal demarcation of certain fields has been established. Thus, the university has now been reorganized into 5-6 thematic aspects, literally called Bands.* (IP4)

Participants noted that although the change process is in its infancy and not yet finalized, structural changes have begun at certain research universities. They reported mergers and reorganizations within organizational structures. These changes involve both academic and non-academic staff at the universities. Consequently, all three universities have reviewed their 10- and 5-year strategic plans alongside their respective senate legislation, ultimately gaining approval from the Ministry of Education. The qualitative data indicated that, due to the mergers, some bureaucratic activities have been simplified. For instance, an informant from HU noted that “since some offices are merged, some activities that have been supervised by four to five offices are currently becoming administered by a single organ” (IP30). As a result, the informant from one of the research-participating universities quoted at length as follows:

> *The previous unmanageable structure was merged to make it manageable. Consequently, at this university (AMU), the structures that required merging and those that needed to be*

split were also divided. This structural change includes both academic and non-academic staff in the research universities. Collaborative efforts from the two wings and the research society, along with the establishment of the third pillar structure, were initiated. Based on this structural change, all personnel were aligned with the new structure. (IP15)

Participants from other institutions discuss frequent changes beyond the planned initiatives (differentiation, research-intensive universities, and the concept of autonomy) introduced to research universities. The research participants raised staff attendance management techniques as a change observed in the research universities. For instance, a respondent from HU noted that "we tried to control the attendance of academic staff per month and the attendance of non-academic staff four times per day. This brought change and enhanced work engagement and performance of staff in the university" (IP25). They also mentioned revisions to the guidelines, including those related to career growth, scholarship, promotion, and publication. For instance, one participant expressed his views as follows:

Previously, if an individual had publications, they could get promoted to assistant professor or further. Currently, to be promoted to the assistant professor level, a candidate must have graduated with a third degree (PhD) in a specific field of study. Currently, the accepted publications in our institutions are papers published in reputable, indexed journals. Additionally, many changes have occurred. For instance, in the last four to five years, individuals applying for the position must come from local resources (from the surrounding community) and should be capable of working for the leaders, not just be qualified to occupy the position. In the previous environment, individuals like me couldn't hold the position; I may not be considered a leader, nor was I expecting a leadership position at this university (AMU), since I don't fit the required clan prototype. Currently, the issue is becoming merit-based, allowing individuals like me to attain the position without having the previously required prototype or strong connections within the university's leadership groups. (IP13)

The preceding remark indicates the extent to which rules, policies, and guidelines are evaluated and enforced during the organization's five-year lifespan. These established and revised rules may facilitate or change relationships among individuals in organizations. Changes in these relationships can also influence the leadership environment nearby. Such factors impact the tasks completed and objectives achieved. Therefore, training and ongoing supervision are essential in helping individuals cope with continuous change. As a result, regular follow-ups on the changes made and raising awareness are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of these ongoing changes.

Another research participant also supported this view, stating that there are numerous policy ideas, institutional policies, and guidelines that have either been abandoned by the Ministry of Education or were initiated at various times by the institutions themselves.

> *...there have been numerous changes since the concept of differentiation was introduced in Ethiopia's higher education institutions. Many guidelines, policies, and rules have been revised and implemented in practice. After their preparation and approval by the senate of the respective university, these changes have taken effect from last year onward. However, these changes have not been fully implemented; rather, they are currently in active movement.* (IP11)

This participant's perspective suggests that a series of changes, categorized as developmental or transformational, have been implemented at the university alongside BPR. However, these changes may take time to materialize, possibly requiring a few years or more. Nonetheless, all institutions considered have entered a phase of vigorous movement, actively promoting the concepts of differentiation, research-intensive universities, and institutional autonomy. This study identifies three change drivers based on emerging themes: organizational structure, technology, and leadership change. Consequently, each theme is discussed separately in the following sections.

4.6.3.1.Organizational Structure Change

Establishing an organizational structure is essential for defining work relationships within the organization. The change in organizational structure, as discussed in chapter two, refers to alterations in an organization's framework that may arise from internal or external factors (Rodrik, 2013). The organizational structure is the formal arrangement of authority relationships and duties that govern and coordinate employee activities and behaviors to achieve organizational goals (John & Shafi, 2020). Structural change encompasses modifications in the chain of command, organizational hierarchy, management systems, and administrative procedures. It outlines the distribution of authority and responsibilities within organizations, the arrangement of positions, and the enforcement of policies and procedures by management (Castillo et al., 2023). Examples of situations that may necessitate structural change include mergers and acquisitions, market shifts, job duplication, and legislative changes.

Organizational structure is a stable aspect of the organizational environment, characterized by two features: centralization and formalization (Jimenez, 2017). Centralization pertains to the distribution of power within the organization and includes two sub-factors: participation in decision-making and the hierarchy of authority. Decision-making is centralized when "the ability to make decisions is utilized at the uppermost levels of the operating system." The hierarchy of authority indicates the degree of independence that employees are granted within their roles; this decision-making style reflects the extent to which workers can influence the decision-making process (Hage & Aiken, 1967).

Formalization signifies the extent to which rules and procedures are officially documented and communicated among an organization's employees. It consists of two sub-constructs: job codification (Kelly, 2017) and rule observations (Johari & Yahya, 2019). Job codification assesses

the clarity of job descriptions and the expectations for employees regarding compliance with laws and regulations. Rule observation is a method to gauge how closely employees are monitored and followed up with to ensure adherence to the guidelines provided in job codification.

The study participants in this qualitative part reported that the university's structure is flexible in fostering relationships and has eliminated some non-functional elements. They also indicated that activities related to structural creation, such as mergers and spin-offs, aim to improve the organization's functionality. However, nearly all research participants confirmed that these changes are currently underway. According to IP15, AMU, various types of structural changes have occurred, and in nearly all structures, staff assignments were made based on the new framework for administrative staff. In contrast, academic staff in departmental divisions—large groups that present management challenges for the department chair—are led by a chair who organizes the unit, even though this aspect is currently overlooked. From the interviews, four distinct subthemes about organizational structural change emerged. These subthemes cover the four dimensions of organizational structure: decision-making, hierarchy of authority, job codification, and rule observance. Therefore, the researcher presents the informants' verbatim statements as expressed in the following section of the paper.

To start, the interview participants (IP16 & IP8) argued that the decision-making structure at their universities is flexible. The respondent noted the tolerance within this structure, which is lacking in the university's previous culture. Among these respondents, one expanded on his comment and stated,

> *Regarding the decision-making structure, I must say the tolerance at all levels is high and commendable. It seems that leaders tend to adopt a democratic approach to decision-making. If something goes wrong, they do not rush to punish; instead, they reflect on what they can learn from the situation. In our previous culture, this was not apparent, as*

> *employees often felt intimidated by the institution's rules rather than guided by advice. Currently, I have noticed a culture of persuasion and agreement on various issues. I am not suggesting there are no problems; this is simply what I have observed in most decisions made within the organization.* (IP16)

The other participant from the next institution (IP8) also agreed that all offices, departments, colleges, and other units of the university have frameworks for making decisions and acting accordingly. "I see that the structure is very flexible while still retaining the necessary veto power for us to make decisions, and no one is in a position to interfere with our decisions unless we have make unlawful ones." Another informant also argued that "my power as department chair is not constrained; rather, issues concerning my department, such as teachers, course assignments, and related matters, fall within the scope of my decision" (IP22). Similarly, IP11, argued that "in our university, there are no complaints regarding interference from various structures affecting the decision-making domains of other parties unless a unit exceeds its decision-making authority or rule violations occur." Accordingly, among all these perspectives shared, the most iterative one is quoted in length as follows:

> *Regarding the structure change and decision-making issues at the college level, I possess veto power over decisions, not as before, and no one interferes with my choices unless I make unlawful decisions. In such instances, intervention is necessary. Beyond that, I hold the authority to make decisions at the college level. I can decide on finance, procurement, academic staff matters, and related issues; however, I do not have the right to an additional budget. Furthermore, I do not believe there are any problems with decision-making across various academic and non-academic units. Therefore, I conclude that we have the right to determine the mandates given to us.* (IP4)

The above quotes show that decision-making in the participating organizations is more flexible and somewhat participatory. This reflects the decentralization of decision-making power

to lower levels within the organizations, with the top authorities only stepping in when unlawful activities happen within the organizations.

The second subtheme of organizational structure is the hierarchy of authority. This hierarchy shows how much employees can influence decision-making and defines the level at which staff members can set their duties. Therefore, one respondent from HU attested that "the legal framework at the university grants individuals the right to decide on their responsibilities" (IP29). The other informant from JU argued that "the staff have academic freedom; as a result, academic rules and regulations are reviewed and decided collectively, and they have full autonomy to carry out their jobs" (IP6). Contrary to what others believe, one respondent from JU raised the issue that role confusion within organizations prevents decisions from being left to individuals, and the autonomy of the staff is a serious concern. Accordingly, this informant supported his argument as follows:

> *There is also role confusion within the organization. Some individuals do not understand their scope of responsibilities. After becoming leaders, they forget whether they are employees or owners of the organization. When someone becomes the university president, they cannot perform the role of a teacher; they can only embrace the presidential duties. They cannot act as security personnel or administrative staff—each of us has specific roles to fulfill. Currently, the culture suggests that if you attain a position, it's possible to assume any role.* (IP10)

The research participant above stated that the decision-making environment is confusing. Leaders interfere with others' decisions and may command individuals. This primarily suggests that employees cannot act autonomously within the organization. However, another informant from the same staff expressed their views as follows: "Employees are autonomous in their work. As long as you are performing your activities as expected, no one is in a position to see you, absolutely no one" (IP5). Furthermore, the respondent indicated that limited interference often

comes from political arenas, stating, “In the rare case we observed, the political interference. For example, I observed the staff who had been imprisoned for several months for unknown reasons. And finally left the prison without any tangible crime.” This may illustrate the existence of decision interference from the top tiers of the organization. Another informant noted the political pressures at the highest levels regarding the hierarchy of authority. This is highlighted by the fact that even when very smart, capable, and positive thinkers ascend to positions of power, one might initially think the right person has arrived. However, once they reach that position, they start to see the issues they once condemned as normal. This informant asked, “If you can say, the institution and the individual’s autonomy, autonomy for whom? What is the extent of autonomy? Since universities are becoming not the university for the nation, but rather the university for the surrounding community only.” The respondent further inquired, “Look, is the president of the university elected from individuals who can fit the position, or from the local people within the surrounding community?” (IP9). Thus, this informant concluded that this is due to interference from the upper echelon, whether from politics or the Ministry of Education.

However, most informants indicate that the staff at research universities and their degree of autonomy in decision-making have changed gradually. Within the hierarchy of authority, each staff member can express their opinions and make decisions within their purview without being discouraged or interfered with by their leaders. Informants from HU and AMU suggested that, while the level of decision-making autonomy differs between academic and non-academic staff, the hierarchy is relatively flat, particularly for academic staff. For instance, an informant from AMU illustrated the repeated response as follows:

> *All teachers receive training in their areas of specialization and are required to teach accordingly. Regarding their freedom in teaching methods and grade assignments, a framework exists within which they can make decisions as they see fit; they have complete*

freedom to do so, and no one interferes with this aspect of academics. We only supervise course completion and the final grade report. (IP13)

Therefore, it can be concluded that research universities have a relatively autonomous hierarchy of authority. Despite variations in autonomy among different categories of staff, this structure allows employees to perform their roles and responsibilities without interference. As the respondents affirmed, the level of staff authorized to make their own decisions without interference is relatively moderate and subject to change. However, a few respondents noted that occasional role confusion and interference can affect staff members' autonomy in making independent decisions within their areas of responsibility.

The third subtheme of organizational structure change is the extent to which rule observation is enhanced in research universities. Rule observation reflects how closely employees are monitored and followed up on to ensure adherence to the guidelines outlined in job codification. Similarly, the informant in this study noted that the level of rule observation is low. They also stated that rules are important in all institutions to guide jobs, helping to keep activities and behaviors aligned with preplanned objectives. The research participant from HU also mentioned that "not everything is controlled to the extent that staff do not perform their work. We have a budget and cars, but if people follow the rules, the strict control at the university is unnecessary" (IP28). The next informant from AMU stated that "the rule is highly flexible unless it's broken. For instance, if teachers are free to teach by following the department schedules, there is no such strict controlling mechanism. Thus, there is a rule, but, is very flexible" (IP14). The staff respondents from JU also indicated the extent of rule flexibility at the university. Regarding rule observation, one of the informants demonstrated an iterative response as:

I am not always in a position to confine myself to the rules. I try to find a loophole where I can address special concerns. Under the umbrella of the rule, it is possible to explore

options and consider ways to accommodate. Stick to the rules, but look for chances to accept beneficial differences, and I follow this way of thinking. I believe the university does the same; I recall that during promotions, program endorsements, graduation approvals, etc., we always follow the rules, but we also seek ways to accept individual differences within those rules. Naturally, legal frameworks have some loopholes. The key is to carefully analyze the rules and find areas where you can take advantage of those differences. That's what makes leadership adaptable. It means doing the right things and doing things right, and I am ready to do things right.

In the above quote, the research participants attempt to indicate how much an individual leader and the institution, in general, signify the level of relaxed rule observation. This participant confirms that the level of rule observation is not always strict in the decisions made and job activities performed. Similarly, another informant from the same institution (JU) confirmed that "as my understanding was concerned, ... I see rule flexibility in our work. Look, if we follow the strict rule, the people may be negatively affected; if we consider only people, the job may be negatively affected, as a result, we consider the context" (IP7). Other participating department heads corroborated that, "if the rule is not flexible, the organization may not be healthier due to unnecessary conflicts. As much as my understanding was concerned, rule flexibility is slightly improving" (IP24). Another informant from AMU also commented on the area of non-academic staff concerning the rule observation. She demonstrated her response as:

When you approach the administrative staff, they must adhere to specific rules and regulations. For instance, the finance office cannot simply authorize payments at its discretion, and the Human Resource Office cannot hire personnel at will; various guidelines govern their actions. Certain organizations inspect these offices to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations. An environment that supports employees in working freely is essential. (IP15)

To conclude this portion of the qualitative data findings, the level of rule observations at the research university is quite low. Therefore, the lack of rules does not hinder employees' innovation and creativity. Generally, the level of organizational structural change in the research universities indicated an important shift due to the existing gradual modifications and ongoing initiatives.

4.6.3.2.Technological Change

The second evolving theme of organizational change is technological change. Technological change is crucial for organizations to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in their work. According to Pohekar (2018), technology is a collaborative instrument that facilitates knowledge sharing among users and enhances traditional topics. The rapid advances in technology over the past 20 years will continue to influence policies, plans, activities, operations, and strategies worldwide. This trend is evident at every university across Africa, including Ethiopia, where substantial investments and managerial focus are necessary to improve technological tools at these institutions. It also requires efforts to correlate with higher performance, less labor-intensive tasks, and faster job completion times. To illustrate this finding, extracts from the informants' insights in the three research universities are presented as follows.

Consequently, respondents from all universities agreed on the expansion of technology within their organizations. According to the informant from HMU, the university’s expansion and adoption of technological tools are significant, and we are campaigning to eliminate the use of hard copy materials (IP26). Similarly, the informant from JU argued that “the team's expertise has developed JU's ICT infrastructure, which is in a good state.” Furthermore, he expressed confidence in the university's ability to support other Ethiopian universities with technology expansion and infrastructure development (IP6). The next informant from AMU confirms that the university

boasts a robust ICT infrastructure, a large data center with extensive storage, and a well-organized ICT service infrastructure. An informant from the same university acknowledged that the "ICT infrastructure helps to control the students' data through the students' management system; currently, all students are taking e-learning training, and with the collaboration of MoE and Monash University, more than half teachers are enrolled in the e-she program" (IP13). The program can help teachers integrate and blend technology into their teaching.

Regarding the technological change in research universities, almost all the informants confirmed that the pace itself is faster than any development in the vicinity. According to one informant from JU, the university's internet and technology usage is moving faster than ever. This informant quoted in length as follows:

> *The trend of increasing internet and technology use is evident. For example, ten years ago, most academic staff members couldn't send emails on their own, but now, every staff member is expected to have a JU-mail (Jima University email) and communicate through it. Without it, they cannot access the students' registration system (SRS), where they enter students' grades. Currently, we have our own SRS, and all teachers are expected to use it. Additionally, since last year, a directive from top management states that JU-mail should be the only official communication channel. Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MoE) offers online training, including a master class, which also requires an email address. Most teachers are signed up for this training, and many have completed it for online course delivery. (IP4)*

The above quote illustrates the rapid movement in technology adoption among research universities. Additionally, management is encouraging staff to enhance the process of technology adaptation and utilization. The next informant from AMU confirmed this quote and expressed his perspective as, "currently there is no physical contact with students as the current trend illuminates and all things become digitalized." He further stated, "We have developed a smart class which is furnished with ICT infrastructures and surprisingly our ICT has developed very fast.... On this

issue, we are happy and I appreciate the management of JU" (IP20). Others also shared their responses as follows:

> *On the issue of technological change, we are advancing rapidly, and we have a robust culture of technology use. We possess a vast data center with substantial storage; our ICT infrastructure is comprehensive and well-organized, human resources in this field are plentiful, and the speed of data capturing and processing is optimal. All stakeholders in the organization—students, teachers, and other staff—utilize it for disseminating information, keeping themselves updated, teaching students, and assisting non-academic staff in enhancing job productivity. We also employ it in leadership as a communication channel, using platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram, or email. Additionally, we utilize all other methods for reporting.* (IP15)

The above quote indicates that the level of technological expansion, the process of updating existing technologies, and their usage have reached an improved stage. The informants from the three universities demonstrated similar views regarding technological change and expansion. For instance, IP18 stated, "To be honest, I have worked in various organizations; in relative terms, AMU is better in technological change, usage, and updating the infrastructure." Similarly, IP27, IP11, and IP29 share perceptions about the pace of technological change in their organizations, all agreeing that the change in ICT infrastructure has been too rapid. They further noted that there are Wi-Fi networks available throughout the campuses.

The research participants also agreed that there is currently a shift in technology within higher education institutions. Similarly, to enhance the digital literacy of the university academic community, many programs have been initiated within higher education. The e-she is the one introduced to higher education institutions. For instance, teachers are participating in master's card training, and students are engaging in selected courses as online-based programs. Both teachers and students will receive certification at the end of their training programs. As the informants

shared their ideas, these training sessions are intended to count as online teaching and learning as one of the teaching modalities.

However, as a challenge posed by technological advancement, one of the informants from JU argued that despite the rapid improvement and updating of ICT infrastructures on their campuses, the current progression in ICT is muted, contrary to expectations. The reason was that, "ICT becomes business and the ICT personnel learned that they can benefit more if they are working outside of the university than at the university" (IP4). This may negatively affect the trend of technological infrastructure advancement in the university. In a similar vein, an informant from AMU opined about technology usage, stating that regarding students and academic staff, non-academic staff are digitally illiterate. This informant demonstrated that if people are to use technology, they should be technologically literate, especially when you take academic staff, students, and non-academic staff, the non-academic staff are not digitally literate. However, teachers and students are relatively better" (IP17).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of technological change is high in research universities. This change has contributed to the ease of work activities and is expected to expedite job execution. However, the staff's technological illiteracy negatively impacts the use of integrated technologies, especially among non-academic staff. On the other hand, the preference for ICT work outside the university, rather than at the university, hinders the swift updating of technology. Thus, the degree of technological change in research universities remains high despite certain obstacles.

4.6.3.3.Leadership Change

One of the managerial responsibilities is leadership, which is the process by which one individual, referred to as the leader, guides the actions of others, i.e., their followers, toward the

accomplishment of predetermined objectives (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019). It's also the capacity, aptitude, mindset, and skill of university administrators and managers to develop, conceive, support, disseminate, and announce visions, resolve differences, and overcome opposition to change, known as organizational leadership change.

The replies from the informants regarding this qualitative portion revealed that the universities under investigation have strong leadership. Likewise, an informant from HU indicated their leaders' efforts in goal-setting and expressed the extent to which they engage in planning through stakeholder discussions (IP26). Similarly, an informant from JU added that favorable conditions exist for leadership change, such as training from various organizations. According to this informant, the leadership training aims to nurture and prepare leaders for the future. This is further demonstrated in the following quote:

> *Jima University aims to cultivate the leadership skills and critical thinking abilities of individuals who take on their responsibilities and advance the institution. I recall the former MoSHE training for university presidents, deans, department heads, and directors in various leadership roles. I also received training in Gambella; however, that training was not continued. Nonetheless, I observed that the leaders recognize individual differences, support others, establish goals, and guide the staff toward the vision, which signifies improvement.* (IP6)

Others also emphasized how the leadership change manifested at their university. According to IP22, rumors have been circulating there for several years. However, he noted that the atmosphere of rumors has diminished due to the support and guidance of leaders. Currently, the number of complaints on our campuses appears minimal. Similarly, the next informant from HU remarked that:

> *Here are the leadership practices at Haramaya University. As a college dean, if I have the opportunity to share my experience genuinely, I aim to establish a leadership practice that considers equity and equal opportunity for all, regardless of their background, and*

supports them in achieving success in their endeavors. We strive to accomplish this, but I don't think it is 100% perfect. People tend to make assumptions from different perspectives; even when you have supported them, they may interpret it differently. Therefore, from my viewpoint, I concentrate on making things more equitable, fair, and free from bias. (IP25)

Despite changes in leadership equity, equality, support mechanisms, goal-setting, and vision-sharing culture, research participants also discussed barriers to leadership change in research universities. An AMU informant noted that, despite the university's strong team spirit, there is a growing sentiment that local human resources should take precedence. This informant openly proclaims that "the university in Ethiopia is becoming the property of the local community." Look, the presidents are indigenous people who live in the adjacent area, and other posts are filled by local human resources" (IP13). According to this respondent, the current scenario must be corrected before it becomes established practice in the academic setting. Despite these difficulties, the responding head from JU demonstrated his belief regarding the leadership change as follows:

Before I joined this department three years ago, conditions in most departments of our college and at the university as a whole were quite challenging. There were rumors among staff about conflicts and low job performance. This situation even led to changes in various positions, including my current role in the psychology department and within our college. I believe the source of the previous rumors stemmed from immature and less participative leadership. However, the current situation is significantly different and has improved. I have observed that the current leadership is more participatory and supportive than the previous one. (IP11)

One can conclude that, despite the challenges, changes in leadership at research universities appear to be progressing. Certain factors negatively impact leadership in the study areas, including the centralization of university leadership and some political interventions. However, the emphasis

on equitable, fair, and free decision-making, alongside leaders' guidance and support, is contributing to the evolving landscape of leadership at research universities in Ethiopia.

4.6.4. The Practice of Work Engagement Factor

Work engagement refers to a fulfilling, positive, and satisfying professional mental state characterized by three components: vigor, absorption, and dedication (Khusanova et al., 2021; Wang & Chen, 2020). Vigor represents a high level of energy and intellectual spirit at work, marked by intense focus that makes external events unlikely to have an impact. Dedication encompasses job involvement, combined with feelings of significance, passion, courage, and confidence in facing challenges. Absorption is experienced through losing track of time, becoming fully immersed in work, and feeling a 'self-in-role.' Regardless of the distinctions, both work attentiveness and work absorption signify an investment of time, energy, and mental presence in one's work domain.

Despite some challenges in work engagement within Ethiopian public organizations, qualitative data highlighted positive work engagement practices in Ethiopia's research universities. This section of qualitative responses emphasizes that the data reflect employee work engagement levels by presenting both facts and issues. When the informants shared their views, one participant noted that the culture in public organizations makes it quite challenging to witness effective work engagement. According to this informant, the engagement culture in public universities is demanding. She mentioned that she has worked in NGOs for many years and has been at a public university for a few years. Currently, she is a member of the university senate at the participating institution. She shared her experiences regarding the culture of work engagement in public universities as follows:

When I first joined this university, my boss assigned work to me. Later that evening, he called me and acknowledged that I was at the office. I immediately asked him to either print the work or email it to him. He then asked, "Where are you?" I replied, "I am at the office." Suddenly, he asked, "What are you doing at this time from the office?" I replied, "I am working on the job that you had given me to do last time." I also inquired, "Is it not an important job?" while appreciating the culture I had joined. Since that time, I have tried to adapt to the culture in which I started working. The current generation has adopted this culture, which is not beneficial. In this culture, engaging in work and achieving the best results is not the norm. However, I observed that people are trying to dedicate themselves within the time frame that the organization allows each individual to work per day. (IP15)

This idea allows us to infer that the work engagement culture of the respondent and the current organization appears to differ. From this participant's perspective, issues such as significance, passion, bravery, absolute devotion, and intense focus on work are somewhat lacking in Ethiopian public organizations. Regarding the participants' beliefs, elements of work engagement—including energy, job absorption, and strong dedication—are inadequate in their organization. However, on a positive note, she later added that people are doing their best to commit their efforts and energy to their work. Similarly, other participants expressed their belief that effective work engagement practices exist. The informants from JU elaborated on their responses as follows:

I can say that staff work engagement is promising. Most of them are at a good engagement level, although a few individuals are somewhat negative. Some individuals joke about their work, but the majority of the staff are fully engaged. The staff at Jima University have special affections and intuitions, and no one feels inclined to mention the negative aspects of Jima University. Of course, I heard from five to six individuals who joined another university that they still appreciate Jima University. These are indicators that can enhance staff work engagement. (IP5)

In the above quote, one can infer that staff work engagement is promising. The dedication that staff devote to the organization enables them to stay and maintain a certain energy to carry out their assignments. In a similar vein, one participant from his qualitative interview supported the idea that “people who love their profession, have an interest, who are ready to teach, volunteer to work... I can be the living witness... as to me, people work engagement is good” (IP25).

On the other hand, one study participant explained why staff engagement is below expectations. He suggested that “currently our staff is not obtaining satisfaction from their job due to inflation and their [lower] income. Their level of work engagement is lower than predicted due to these issues" (IP8). Another research participant from HU also indicated that the level of staff work engagement is limited by factors such as lack of incentives, harsh inflation, inadequate salary, and insufficient budgets in institutions of higher learning. This participant further expressed his belief as follows:

> *Academic and non-academic staff are engaging in their work. However, some factors are working against this. The budget shortfall is the primary issue. Our employees occasionally feel shocked and wonder, ‘How are we designated as a research university, and the budget for research is reduced by an alarming amount,’ even though the problem is a national one. Life is becoming increasingly difficult; as a result, salaries are insufficient to cover living expenses, and there are no incentives at the university. All of these factors contribute to a decline in staff engagement at our university.* (IP30)

From the above suggestions regarding staff work engagement, the research participants expressed not only optimism about promising situations but also concerns within the research universities. The individuals involved from these organizations highlighted a poor culture of engagement and the factors that undermine employee work engagement. Specifically, they identified inadequate budgets and salaries, a lack of incentives within the organizations, and the challenges of life due to severe inflation as major factors that diminish staff commitment,

enthusiasm, and the spirit of immersion in work at research universities. Thus, one can conclude that the level of work engagement in the study area appears moderate due to balancing forces.

4.6.5. The Practice of Staff Job Performance

Employee performance is categorized into task and contextual performance. These two types of performance are the most recognized forms of staff job performance identified in the literature. Task performance relates to job-focused task competence, in-role performance, and technical personnel proficiency, which includes work quality, quantity, and job knowledge (Maxham et al., 2008). Conversely, contextual performance is the actions taken by employees that exceed their formal job descriptions. It also encompasses behaviors that enhance the social, organizational, psychological, and voluntary aspects, positively affecting the organizational environment (Aboagye et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021).

As a result, the research participants indicate the existence of performance, although it varies from individual to individual based on their perceptions. One participant from HU argued that non-academic and academic staff attempt to fulfill their assigned tasks, but they are uncertain whether they will continue their careers under the newly introduced institutional autonomy concept. Consequently, employees are less committed to their work than before, and their commitment decreases over time. Similarly, participants from JU elaborated that the ongoing change is already negatively affecting performance. For instance, according to (IP8), “the staff's performance and confidence regarding their decision to stay permanently with the organization were becoming ambiguous because most of our administrative staff do not possess the qualifications required by the change agenda.” However, another participant from AMU noted that staff performance is exemplary in their organization. According to this informant, the staff actively

participates in various institutional activities and has won several awards. Accordingly, he demonstrated his response as follows:

> *The performance of our staff is evident in many ways, including the quality of our laboratory, the achievements of our students, the way our staff competes in international contests, and their commitment to advancing their education. For instance, last year, we offered four programs designed to prepare students for the exit exam, with a substantial number of participants coming from our department. In the exit exam, we achieved a 100% pass rate in three of these programs and received certification. This success is not the work of an individual; rather, it reflects the collective contribution of all our staff. Additionally, consider the publications on this notice board; they highlight our staff's efforts. Thus, staff performance is exceptionally high at our institution.* (IP17)

Similarly, other participants were informed about ongoing improvements in staff performance at the research universities. A participant from JU compared his experience with that of another university, stating that the performance of the staff at Jima University is better than that of other universities. He opined that "regarding the universities where I have worked previously, the performance of the JU staff looks great" (IP6). However, the next informant from the same university shared his perceptions as follows:

> *Honestly, a few years ago, most university staff were not as effective or efficient in carrying out their tasks. Why? Because when I assessed the academic staff, there tended to be insufficient time dedicated to teaching. They only addressed a few key issues, and negotiations took place where teachers and students reached an agreement, after which they faded away. No one knows; you only see the grades. The grades might be perfect, but the actual performance is nearly nonexistent. Currently, students are beginning to question this situation because it is not the teachers who sit for the exit exam. Thus, the students demand that the academic staff fully commit to teaching. These changes may transform the situation. Regarding the non-academic staff, most do not demonstrate productivity. They are present, have their workloads, spend time on the computer, chat, watch videos, and then go home.* (IP4)

The arguments above indicate the low performance of both academic staff, which is improving, and non-academic staff in their jobs. However, staff performance varies from institution to institution. In some institutions, performance appears satisfactory, while in others, it is relatively lacking. Notably, the performance of academic staff at Jima University has shown improvements, whereas that of non-academic staff has significantly declined.

The participants from JU indicated that the staff are highly fearful of the ongoing changes related to differentiation, autonomy, and the research-intensive nature of the university. The respondent argued that "there are staff who left the university from my college when asked for 'COC'. I remember two individuals who have already left it. I asked, 'Why did you leave?'. He answered, Let's safely depart before the university discards me" (IP5). Another response from a different university (AMU) regarding staff job performance confirmed that various factors hinder staff performance in Ethiopian research universities. Specifically, an informant from AMU demonstrated his repose as:

> *There are staff members who perform even the most extraordinary tasks. However, some situations discourage them. For instance, due to the differentiation program, employees compete for positions based on established criteria, which include performing community service, conducting research, and engaging in teaching and learning. Based on this, we identified the positions of our teachers. As a result of ongoing changes, educators have lost hope. Additionally, due to insufficient compensation, nearly half of our instructors work another job off-campus. Some staff members sell lottery tickets in the city, while others rent land from farmers to plow. Some teachers collaborate to cultivate the land. They hurry as much as possible to earn their daily bread. Currently, the academic staff is not focused on academic careers. Only a few can present a grant project relevant to their profession. These employees view this as a business that allows them to earn extra money while also assisting the university.* (IP14)

The above quote shows that various factors are diminishing the staff's performance. The vast majority of responses expressed dissatisfaction with the university's compensation structure, and the staff are concerned about their job security regarding the new initiatives. Consequently, staff members, particularly academic staff, are scrambling to earn a living. This suggests that they are not fully dedicating their time to an academic career. Therefore, one can infer that the performance of academic staff in research and community service is negatively impacted compared to teaching and learning due to a lack of focus on academics.

The first theme that emerged from the qualitative data regarding staff job performance was task performance. The interviewee from HU explained his belief that the task performance of administrative staff has decreased due to their low income. He noted that the slight improvement in morale among the administrative staff and their commitment to their jobs began after the recent salary adjustment. He quoted at length about the task performance of the administrative staff.

> *I have served in four offices at this university, holding various leadership positions. I have a secretary; some are junior while others serve as executive secretaries. In principle, an executive secretary should be capable of writing letters independently. However, the reality is quite different. You might draft a letter and give it to her to complete, but you may need to correct it once, twice, or even a third time. Nowadays, I dislike this approach and have started to think: if I can draft, why shouldn't I write it directly on my computer? I can save time and do it my way. Generally, we can achieve more if our personnel perform better, yet we could have accomplished even more.* (IP12)

The above quote illustrates the inadequate performance of administrative staff within the institutions. This performance emphasizes the degree to which technical jobs (task performances) are facing difficulties, even though other performance indicators, such as students' learning outcomes and staff competitiveness at the international competition, were promising.

The second subtheme of staff job performance that emerged from the qualitative data was contextual performance. This theme discussed the extent to which staff performed beyond the levels outlined in their job descriptions. Similarly, the tone of the research participant highlighted that the contextual performance of the university's staff contributes to their recognition. He stated that, "academic and non-academic staff members are always willing to assist one another, work together, and even provide some financial support to those in need" (IP6). Other participants sought to emphasize instances of extraordinary performance among staff at other universities, as demonstrated by the following example: "staff even do jobs for others; ...even they carry out tasks for their colleagues; ...not only these, there is also the staff that enrolls in three to four committees without considering it as extra work" (IP24).

However, the qualitative data indicate that the staff's job performance is quite good due to the positive factors are balancing the negative forces within the context of staff performance.

4.7.The Relationship Between Organizational Change Factors, Work Engagement, and SJP

4.7.1. The Relationship Between Organizational Change Factors and Staff Job Performance

The current section evaluates the relationships among factors of organizational change and staff job performance at the selected research universities. This study found that various aspects of organizational change—organizational structure, leadership changes, and technological changes—are positively related to staff job performance. Furthermore, qualitative study participants provided feedback on the effectiveness of technological changes, leadership, and structure in enhancing staff job performance. The emerging themes regarding the relationships between organizational change will be discussed in the following sections.

4.7.1.1.The Relationship Between Organizational Structure Changes and Staff Job Performance

This section aimed to explore the relationships between changes in organizational structure and staff job performance at the identified research universities. The participants in the qualitative study expressed their belief that they are witnessing mergers and downsizing of the structure, which are significant for staff job performance. Consequently, one informant opined that the structure at their university has, in a real sense, merged and separated, while others also experienced downsizing. Accordingly, this participant says,

> *If you have seen the programs offered at our university, you will be amazed by them. Some departments even teach the same content under different names. The programs can be managed under a single unit. Given certain structures, they are available for free. Depending on your choices, you may wonder which structure to select. If you examine the structures in these organizations, you will be surprised by what has been deemed functional. Therefore, I support the reform that universities undertake to merge or separate the structures, as it can enhance the performance of both individuals and the organization.* (IP27)

The above quote indicates that if the structures within organizations are carefully designed and restructured by merging those that need to be combined and separating those that require division, the functionality of the structure will further develop. As a result, positive structural changes can enhance staff performance on the job. Similarly, the research participant from AMU noticed that,

The decision-making structure also reflects the understanding that decentralized decisions enhance staff performance. Observing the current differentiation program reveals that it allocates more power to the departmental unit. This change primarily aims to distribute concentrated power to the lower tier, enabling faster decision-making and empowering staff, ultimately enhancing

performance within the organization. Accordingly, the research participant from AMU suggested that "our organization already identified what is required to be treated by the center at the organization levels, and after the things that need institutional response are identified, all decisions are decentralized to the lower part of the organization" (IP18). Similarly, the informant from JU argued that, "in our university (JU), the power distance between senior, younger staff, admin staff as well as leaders is very narrow. This is good for friendly discussion among staff to boost the organizational and staff job performance" (IP5). Additionally, the participating faculty dean from AMU further confirmed that "there is no problem of power distance [hierarchy of authority] in our university, especially among academic staff, but though a little it is manifested in admin staff that is not good for smooth decision-making across various hierarchies and staff performance" (IP17).

The qualitative data indicated positive relationships between changes in organizational structure and staff performance. This implies that a favorable structural change enhances staff performance in research universities. Accordingly, a responding research participant from HU confirmed that a rigid organizational structure negatively affects performance. The same holds when the structure is hierarchical. Therefore, a flexible and flat structure is more suitable for organizations where many decisions are expected to be made. For instance, an informant from the same university expressed his beliefs as follows:

> *At this university (HU), most individuals, including professors and leaders at various levels, are approachable and not distant from the staff. Anyone can visit the president's office to discuss matters if they wish; there is no power distance. Regarding rule flexibility, I can provide an example: once we decided to dismiss around seventy PhD students for various reasons. Later, we also aimed to address the students' social and personal issues to facilitate their re-enrollment. This is achieved by collaborating with different levels within the system. Thus, we view this limited power distance and rule flexibility as fertile ground for staff job performance.* (IP27)

Based on the data gathered from the interview participants, the universities in the study indicate that favorable structural changes enhance staff job performance. As a result, the research participants noted that appropriate structural adjustments can improve staff job performance in research universities. Hence, it can be inferred that the connection between organizational structure and staff job performance is positive in the research universities of Ethiopia.

4.7.1.2.The Relationship Between Leadership Change and Staff Job Performance

Leadership change is defined as the ability to inspire and encourage others through personal support, vision, and passion, as well as by accessing resources to establish a strong foundation for change. Staff are also the most valuable asset in organizations; without them, targets and objectives cannot be met. Leadership is a crucial driving force in enhancing corporate performance.

One of the study's specific objectives was to assess the leadership changes that occurred at the research universities and their relationships with staff performance. Consequently, participants were asked whether there were significant leadership changes in the organization and how these related to the staff's work performance. The participants' responses were integrated to form a cohesive theme among the study's themes. The views of the study's participants suggested that leadership changes were related to staff job performance.

As a result, the research participants suggested their beliefs according to the following quotes. For instance, a participating head from JU opined that:

> *The current nominated leadership has altered the way I operate. I now work for outcomes, not pay. This is due to significant changes in the work environment. We are now accountable for any issues that arise from my job, so I must be very careful not to make mistakes.* (IP11)

Similarly, IP16 demonstrates his belief as follows:

> *I believe that this leadership change has positively impacted performance among personnel and within the faculty. The office is now more efficient, which I attribute to their work ethic. There has been a complete shift in the working climate in the faculty; the workforce now feels a sense of accountability, which has greatly improved operations in the department.* (IP16)

On the other hand, the respondents from HU commented as;

> *The organization is currently employing fresh individuals to fill positions, and these newcomers are making a significant impact. As a result of this effort, I've noticed that most offices and institutions are returning to normal operations. People are also competing with each other. Thus, I believe that a change in leadership contributes to positive changes in staff performance.* (IP26)

The quotes above illustrate the positive relationship between staff job performance and leadership changes at research universities in Ethiopia. These relationships highlight the beneficial impact on staff performance in this context. In contrast to the aforementioned responses, the interviewee from AMU stated, "The leadership change in our university is not significant by itself, thus when evaluated with the outcomes, I can say there is no visible performance change" (IP18). Some individuals suggested that the relationship is also positive, despite negative performance. For example, the informant from JU noted that a decrease in leadership functionality makes staff performance difficult. Finally, he presented his response as follows:

> *There is staff research; to your surprise, most proposals were defended. However, the majority (80%) of the staff do not know about the research. As you know, the proposal is a promise; there is a concerned office at the college, the department heads, and the president. Regarding funding, it comes from taxpayers and should address one of their issues. However, there is a weak follow-up on the work completed. The staff are all enthusiastic about the proposal, possibly due to the funding. After the proposal defense, everyone is silent. I believe this indicates a positive relationship between leadership changes and staff performance due to the decrease in leadership changes and the decline in staff performance.* (IP10)

Based on the comments, one can conclude that whether leadership progresses in a favorable or negative direction, or remains static, staff performance reflects the leadership situation. This means that when leadership improves, employees perform well; when leadership changes negatively, staff perform poorly; and when leadership stagnates, no change in performance occurs. Thus, leadership changes and staff job performance in a research institution are closely linked.

4.7.1.3.The Relationship Between Technological Change and Staff Job Performance

With the right technology, an organization can significantly enhance its overall effectiveness and success in terms of productivity, morale, engagement, and communication across its workforce. Employing new technologies to boost productivity requires careful strategic planning, and staff must choose the most suitable technology. Technology can lead to higher performance only when used ethically and productively alongside other resources. Consequently, when managed effectively, technological innovation enhances employee effectiveness and organizational efficiency (Obialor, 2020). As a result, the research participants indicated that these two variables are positively related. For instance, as the intensity of technology increases, productivity also rises accordingly. An informant from JU says, "technology and the existing change simplifies our work through reducing face-to-face contact, simplifying human effort, reducing cost, job burden, and making the job performance speedy" (IP10). Similarly, the informant from the research-participating universities described how the intensity of technological change simplified job activities and enhanced the swift delivery of tasks and services rendered. For instance, the participant from HU elaborated on the situation in their university as follows:

> *We hope to integrate technological change into our job performance and service delivery, primarily to expedite the completion of predetermined tasks. In earlier years, a letter written by the academic vice president would reach the departmental unit; it could remain in the mailbox for a week or more, causing responses to important letters to be delayed in*

the pipeline. However, every staff member now has their institutional email, allowing messages from top management to reach each unit with a single click. This demonstrates how appropriate technological progress enhances worker productivity in the area. (IP30)

The above quote highlights how technological advancement simplifies and accelerates job performance. Similarly, participants confirm that technological changes in research universities have streamlined administrative processes. For instance, a respondent from JU argued that the "attendance system in the university is automated to simply identify who is on board or not in the non-academic staff. Do you think how much this simple and finger print machine support in enhancing and supporting staff performance?" (IP9). Others have expressed the same belief; for example, the participating academic dean from AMU states that, "the technological tools such as WhatsApp, telegram and email supports for reaching all staff within a short time, helps in facilitating effective and efficient performance and to report the performance itself" (IP16).

The data from the research informants in this part of the study reveal that technological improvements in the study area enable staff to become digitally literate and enhance their efficiency in teaching and learning throughout their academic careers. As a result, participants from HMU argued that currently, each session has its own Telegram group for communication with its students. This allows teachers and students to interact with one another as if they live in a single home" (IP24). Similarly, the informant from the participating academic dean from JU expressed his belief that technology positively influences staff job performance in the following way:

Since last year, we have discontinued providing the course outline in hard copy. Each teacher should share a digital copy with their students through Telegram or WhatsApp groups. Present this information on a slide before introducing the course outline, detailing the course and any relevant information. Additionally, we have LCDs and one desktop available for each class. This approach aims to encourage our teachers to utilize these

materials and facilities for teaching. We believe that these technologies can simplify teaching, enhance student achievement, and boost staff and organizational performance. (IP4)

Overall, the information from this part of the study indicates that technological change and use can enhance staff performance in the study context. Consequently, the relationship between technological change and staff performance at the research university in Ethiopia is positive, suggesting that as technology advances and integrates into activities and services, staff performance and productivity improve.

From the analyzed data, one can infer that the organizational changes implemented positively contribute to the staff's job performance in Ethiopian research universities. According to the participating individuals, although there are negative factors that hinder favorable change in higher education organizations, there are positive developments in technology, structure, and leadership that further enhance staff job performance in the area. The universities involved in the study indicate that promising changes in structure, leadership, and technology can improve staff job performance in this context. Consequently, the research participants testified that appropriate structural adjustments can enhance staff job performance in research universities. Therefore, it can be inferred that the relationship among organizational structure, favorable changes in leadership, and technology can result in positive staff job performance in Ethiopia's research universities. Similarly, the study revealed that the cumulative effect of positive leadership, structural improvements, and technological advancements in the context demonstrates development in staff job performance.

4.7.2. The Relationship Between Work Engagement and Staff Job Performance

This section of the dissertation explores the relationships between staff job performance and work engagement at the selected research universities. Participants in the qualitative study

expressed their belief in a positive relationship between the two variables. The descriptive examination of these variables indicates that, compared to institutions with higher staff engagement, those with lower employee engagement also experience poorer staff performance, and vice versa. Indeed, qualitative data collected from the research participants revealed positive connections between the variables of interest. This application feature indicates causal linkages between the variables. The antecedent factors contributing to the overall causality of these variables may simultaneously lead to increases or decreases in job performance and work engagement in the same direction. These elements are divided into two themes: those that enhance employee engagement and those that diminish it, aiming to better align engagement with performance. These factors are analyzed within the framework of the underlying job demand-resource model (JD-RM) and self-determination theory.

The idea specified that the first section should concentrate on the factors that impede employee engagement and performance improvement. According to self-determination theory, employees lose their commitment when they are not genuinely motivated to work, as they do not expect tangible benefits (Goodboy et al., 2020). The qualitative analysis also revealed the reality of the relationship and the effects of WE on SJP in research universities in Ethiopia; for instance, the following reaction represents the recurring opinions of the respondents:

> *Due to low salaries at the university, over 50% of our teachers are taking on additional work outside their university jobs. This situation negatively impacts staff engagement, including those who have rented farmland and sell lottery tickets on the street. Such scenarios create challenges for teachers who are unable to secure grants or project proposals and are compelled to seek alternative employment. This trend also affects work engagement and has a detrimental effect on job performance.* (IP5)

According to the JD-R Model, work resources such as salary and promotion opportunities influence employee work engagement levels in organizations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Consequently, the most common responses indicated that work engagement negatively affects social job performance, as one survey participant stated:

> *Current inflation, low salaries, and issues related to peace have caused both academic and non-academic staff to feel dissatisfied with their work, despite a slight increase in earnings for administrative workers. Academics have expressed disappointment regarding their minimal salary adjustment, and these factors negatively affect staff engagement and further reduce job performance.* (IP18)

The above quote indicates that various factors are diminishing staff work engagement in research universities. This informant identified issues such as inadequate salaries, inflation, and concerns for peace, which frustrate the staff and further reduce both work engagement and job performance. One of the qualitative participants supported these points by stating that reduced engagement practices can also lead to lower performance outcomes:

> *Currently, instead of staying at work, they look for other opportunities—other choices. If you assign them work-related duties, they commit to completing them; however, as soon as class activities end, they leave the compound. Unless a few teachers remain in their offices, most do not stay there. There is a 50% decrease in the inclination to do extra work at the university, excluding in-class instruction. Instead, they exit the compound to seek additional job opportunities. I know staff who manage shops, restaurants, and similar establishments in the neighborhood and set up classes at private colleges and high schools. For these reasons, I believe staff job performance in terms of research, community service, and teaching-learning has been declining due to this low work engagement.* (IP21)

The opinion from one of the research universities indicates that both academic and non-academic staff are not in the right mood to engage in their work; instead, they seek additional jobs or start their own ventures, such as running shops and restaurants. This suggests that they are not adequately committed, lack energy, and are not fully immersed in their academic careers, which negatively affects their performance. Conversely, among the qualitative participants, one

respondent revealed that the factors hindering engagement further reduced staff performance in research universities. He quoted at length as follows:

> *As an expert and leader at this university, I have held various positions. For example, although employees are currently performing better in academic and administrative roles, challenges such as limited research funds, inadequate salaries, inflation, and other factors are decreasing staff engagement. Consequently, these issues negatively impact staff motivation, job interest, and commitment, further undermining staff performance.* (IP19)

According to the beliefs of the above respondent, inadequate research funding is one of the challenges impacting the research engagement and performance of academic staff in research activities. This insufficiency in research funding, along with other factors, negatively affects staff motivation and interest in participating in research at universities. Despite the challenges to staff work engagement, certain factors enhance staff engagement and performance in research universities in Ethiopia. Based on self-determination theory, employees who have social relationships [social resources] and experience less workplace bullying possess a strong sense of autonomy, allowing them to engage in their work and outperform those who face workplace bullying (Goodboy et al., 2020). Consequently, the recurring response supports the following quote:

> *I have been working at this university for a long time. To be honest, our staff relationships are like family; we help each other, and our team members feel free to carry out their work activities. Our leaders treat us respectfully, and there is no negative communication from them. Every staff member feels empowered to work autonomously. We enjoy full autonomy, and our staff is dedicated; this is why morale remains consistently high. We celebrate each other's successes and support one another during challenges, creating a positive and collaborative environment that fosters personal and professional growth. As a result, engagement and performance are strong at our university.* (IP6)

The suggestion from the above informants indicates that social support and positive communication from leaders among staff members empower them to commit with confidence. This may enhance staff engagement and performance in the study area. According to the JD-R model, workers' internal resources, such as psychological capital, determine the relationship between work engagement and performance (Woerner, 2018). Accordingly, one of the interview participants demonstrates,

> *The majority of the staff at this university demonstrates confidence when facing challenges and exhibits dedication to their jobs. Despite the obstacles they encounter, I admire their unwavering confidence in their work; they never express doubts and consistently perform with assurance in their careers.* (IP8)

In general, despite factors that negatively affect employee work engagement and staff performance in Ethiopian research universities—such as inadequate salaries, insufficient research funding, inflation, and peace issues that hinder staff involvement and output—several factors significantly contribute positively to these variables. For instance, social support and positive communication from leaders encourage staff to engage and further enhance their job performance.

4.7.3. Relationships Among Organizational Change, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance

This section of the dissertation examines the relationships between organizational change, staff job performance, and work engagement at the selected research universities. Participants in the qualitative study expressed their belief that these variables have a positive relationship with one another. The descriptive analysis of these variables indicates that, compared to institutions with higher staff engagement, those with lower employee engagement also experience poorer staff performance, and vice versa. Indeed, qualitative data collected from the research participants revealed positive connections among the variables of interest. The relationship among SJP, OSCH,

and WE can often be complementary. It is recognized from the qualitative data that highly engaged workers are typically productive and innovative in their work. In summary, these employees tend to be more involved than their peers. Furthermore, the qualitative aspect of this research claims that when individuals are engaged at work, their emotional, cognitive, and proactive behaviors increase, leading to enhanced productivity (Meenakshi Sharma, 2023).

The research participants were also informed about the positive relationships among organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance variables. One of the qualitative participants stated that:

> *We have observed that the staff at our university excel in their job performance. The challenge lies in staff engagement due to life circumstances. However, when positive organizational changes occur, we anticipate improved engagement. For example, as technology advances, individuals tend to engage more fully, resulting in enhanced employee performance. Indeed, when leadership transforms positively to become supportive, encouraging, and participative, staff members are more likely to engage, contributing to better performance. Therefore, based on my extensive experience, these three variables are positively interconnected*. (IP8)

The other responses from the participating individuals indicate that the relationships among the variables of interest are more or less positive. For instance, one of the informants from HU raised his belief as follows:

> *I can easily explain the relationships among the variables of organizational change, work engagement, and staff performance. For instance, the decision-making structure at our university is improving. This development visibly enhances the staff's work engagement and performance. When I arrived at this college, the academic staff were not familiar with email, Telegram, and WhatsApp. However, it has improved since then, and staff work engagement and performance are on the rise.* (IP24)

The above quotes illustrate that work engagement and employee job performance are affected by organizational change factors. This suggests that when organizational changes are implemented positively, employee engagement improves and job performance increases. Conversely, when these organizational factors deteriorate, employee engagement and performance decline. Consequently, other participants also highlight the positive relationships among the variables. One participant from JU stated that "the change in the leadership, such as rule restriction, decreases the staff engagement" (IP26). Similarly, other participants indicated that favorable technological changes boost employee engagement. For example, one informant mentioned, "Truly speaking, when technology acceptance and implementation improved, the staff performance and their work engagement also enhanced." However, the current challenge regarding engagement is that it is declining due to low available incentives and the rising cost of living" (IP19).

Conversely, the interview participants also indicated that changes in organization, work engagement, and staff job performance move in the same direction. For instance, the repeated responses demonstrated that:

> *As an expert at this university, I have observed that the positive changes in the organization have enhanced staff work engagement and performance. This is evident in the structural changes made at the university, which have reduced the time needed to perform and complete tasks. Furthermore, the technology and leadership currently being introduced at the university as part of the differentiation initiative are fostering positive changes in work engagement and staff job performance.* (IP20)

Supporting the above quotes, one of the interview participants demonstrated his response as below:

> *As a researcher with experience at this university, I've noticed that the leadership in the department, colleges, institutions, and universities—those who are supposed to oversee the research—aren't paying enough attention to it. Despite the university's status as a research*

> *university, funding is minimal, and leadership is ineffective at allocating and tracking project costs. Consequently, employees' motivation for project work appears to be as low as their performance. Therefore, I can conclude that the relationships between organizational change, work engagement, and employee job performance are all heading in the same direction.* (IP5)

Similarly, the interview data indicate that unfavorable changes in the organizational factors lead to a reduction in staff work engagement and performance. For instance, one of the interview participants opined that “when leadership change in our university is low, the engagement and performance also mimic the situation” (IP10). Conversely, a participating college dean from the same university opposes this situation as follows:

> *The leadership at our university [JU] has shifted significantly; the change is in how we treat the staff. The current leadership appears to be supportive. As a college dean, I have the authority to communicate with the president of the university about any organizational concerns. They are encouraging, motivating, and passionate about their peers, staff, and leaders. I believe this leadership behavior has motivated me to engage deeply and excel in my role.* (IP4*)*

In the same vein, IP2 identified that relationships between the variables are linear. As a result, he presents his case as follows: "Everybody can tell you the relationship; improvements in technology, for example, promote staff engagement; further, engaged employees outperform less engaged employees; this is it” (IP2).

The findings above indicated that the relationship among the three variables was positive. This means that an increase in technology and favorable changes in leadership improve staff work engagement and performance in Ethiopia's research universities. This also shows that deterioration in technology, structure, and leadership leads to decreases in work engagement and staff performance. Indeed, when organizational change factors advance, employee work engagement

improves, and staff performance is also enhanced. Thus, the direction of change in organizational factors, work engagement, and staff job performance moved in the same direction.

4.7.4. The Contribution of Organizational Change and Work Engagement to Staff Job Performance

Organizational change is essential and can be achieved through various methods. It involves adjustments in an organization's structure, purpose, technology, demographics, and roles. Positive change contributes to staff performance within the organization. Similarly, work engagement refers to an encouraging, fulfilling, and satisfying professional mental state characterized by three components: vigor, absorption, and dedication (Wang & Chen, 2020). The greater the staff's dedication and energy toward commitment and absorption, the better their performance. Therefore, a favorable environment created by organizational change and work engagement significantly enhances staff job performance.

The interviewees were also shown the previously mentioned reality to the study participants. For instance, an interviewee from HU mentioned that the changes in leadership and structure at our university contributed to staff performance" (IP28). The next informant from AMU stated that "the rule is highly flexible unless it's broken." Another respondent from the same university indicated that the favorable technological changes significantly contribute to staff job performance in their institution. For example, according to IP20, it demonstrates that "where in the sector the leaders are good in giving direction and supportive, thus, these are relatively the indicators of better employee work engagement and high contributions to staff performance" (IP20). Similarly, other informants further indicated that the improved organizational structure has considerable staff engagement and performance. He has stated the situation as follows,

> *I am clear about the current initiative to restructure the organization. The existing structure is thought to impact job performance levels within the organization. I also believe that a shortened, participatory, and flexible structure enhances relationships between staff and their leaders, further contributing to the staff's job performance at our university.* (IP16)

On the same note, another participant also demonstrated his belief in length as follows,

> *Effective strategies in technology and organizational structures influence how employees adapt and manage their performance. A lack of leadership strategies can negatively impact employee performance and reduce productivity. The factors of organizational change also affect employees' emotions as they face and embrace change. In contrast, strategies for managing change can help reduce negative consequences for employees within the organization. Therefore, both employees and leaders should maintain a positive outlook to embrace changes that will ultimately enhance their work engagement and performance.* (IP27)

The most common response from nearly all organizations in the study highlights the significant impact of organizational changes and work engagement on staff performance in the study area. The responding participant provided his responses as follows:

> *When considering how work engagement impacts staff job performance, I believe engaged employees are generally more energetic, enthusiastic, and proud of their work. Those who feel engaged tend to be more focused and driven compared to their disengaged counterparts. It is also clear that employees are more engaged in their work when they have high-quality exchanges of information with their leaders, as these leaders support their job performance while anticipating excellent results in return. Encouraging and supporting employee involvement within organizations seems to enhance job performance. Therefore, I conclude that the work they do has a significant influence on their employees' performance.* (IP8)

There are also research participants who have raised and supported the above arguments. The recurring response confirmed that greater staff engagement significantly contributed to employee performance. The respondents from AMU say,

> *Employees at our university are active and strongly connected to their work, even though they face challenges in affording their living. Despite these struggles and various difficulties at work, they still proactively find new ways to enhance their performance. They are also confident in their work. This demonstrates the extent to which work engagement contributes to the staff's job performance at our university.* (IP17)

Participants are also asked to comment on how organizational change variables and work engagement affect staff job performance. Consequently, the informant's response indicates that the combination of organizational change and work engagement has a significant and positive impact on staff job performance. According to IP4, the combined contribution of organizational change and work engagement is significant. He demonstrated it as follows:

> *In reality, positive change within an organization enhances employee engagement and productivity. I believe that both organizational reform and work engagement elevate employee performance. The same holds, as both aspects contribute to improved staff performance. Look, if technological innovation aligns with work demands, employees will invest more physical and mental effort, ultimately improving employee performance.* (IP18)

The preceding results suggest that considerations of organizational change have a greater impact on staff job performance and work engagement. Similarly, the combined effect of organizational change and work engagement is such that the majority of respondents indicated that both organizational change and work engagement have a favorable impact.

4.7.5. Direct and Indirect Effects of Organizational Change On the Staff Job Performance

The current study's fourth research question aimed to explore the direct and indirect effects of organizational change on staff job performance through work engagement. Findings from a qualitative assessment provided insight into how changes in organizational factors impact staff job performance both directly and indirectly. Favorable changes in organizational factors suggest an improvement in staff job performance in both respects, as illustrated by the responses of qualitative research participants. For instance, the respondent from HU noted that "obviously the suitable change in the technology, for instance, can enhance the engagement and the performance of the engaged staff is most of the time further improved" (IP28). Another informant also stated that if the factors of organizational change, such as technology and structural improvements, are made, it can improve performance either directly or indirectly" (IP6). Regarding the direct and indirect effects of organizational change on staff job performance, one of the research participants expressed his belief as follows;

> *In terms of how work engagement affects staff job performance, I believe that engaged employees tend to be more energetic, enthusiastic, and proud of their work. Individuals who feel engaged are more focused and driven than those who are disengaged. It is also clear that employees are more engaged at work when they have a high-quality exchange of information with their leaders, as their leaders support their job performance while expecting excellence.* (IP4)

The above response illustrates the direct and indirect effects of organizational change factors on staff job performance in Ethiopia's research universities. Changes in technology, leadership, or structure similarly influence staff performance. For instance, one of the respondents says, "The leadership change in the HU due to participating young leaders in the leadership arena

stimulated some people to carry out the work, which brought changes directly and indirectly to the staff performance" (IP24).

4.8. Discussion from the Two Data Sets

This part of the dissertation presents the main findings of the current study. The findings from the two databases were presented separately in the previous section. In this section, the two independently provided data sets are integrated using the techniques first introduced by Creswell (2014). The study employed various theories as a theoretical framework aligned with its objectives and research questions. The Burke-Litween Model was employed as a theoretical lens (coat hunger) to relate it to the study's objectives and research questions.

The focus was on exploring the reactions and perspectives of university leaders, along with academic and non-academic staff at Ethiopian research universities, regarding the status of organizational change factors, work engagement, and employee job performance. Next, the findings on staff work engagement are analyzed, followed by a discussion of reactions to employee job performance. This part will then address the primary data on the relationships between the variable dimensions (organizational structure change, work engagement, and leadership change), the contributions of organizational change factors and work engagement to staff job performance, and the direct and indirect effects of organizational change factors on staff job performance.

4.8.1. The Status of Organizational Change Factors, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance

The primary goal of the current session was to assess the status of organizational change factors, work engagement, and staff job performance within the study context. Ensuring the status of these factors in RUE is critical for academic advancement. The literature on the aspects of organizational change examined in Chapter 2 indicates that practices influence staff job

performance, potentially affecting the overall efficacy of learning organizations. Therefore, it is essential to understand how corporations and research universities implement organizational change. Components of organizational change, such as leadership change, organizational structure changes, and technological advancements, are included in the quantitative findings as independent variables that can impact staff job performance. This section should begin with the study's first crucial question: to what extent are organizational change components, work engagement, and staff job performance practiced in RUE? Consequently, the organizational change variable encompasses three subsections: organizational structure change, leadership change, and technological change. Thus, succeeding section covered data from both qualitative and quantitative sources and compared the results side-by-side to discuss the results further.

Status of Organizational Structure Change: The first subtheme of organizational change factors focused on organizational structure change. To explore this fundamental question regarding structure change, sixteen items categorized into four sub-scales—decision-making, hierarchy of authority, job codification, and rule observation—were included in the survey to gather respondents' perspectives on these practices. The data were analyzed using means and standard deviations (SDs). Consequently, the quantitative findings revealed that the organizational structural change (OSCH) has a mean score of 3.1 with an SD of 0.745. This suggests that the OSCH practices at the surveyed research universities are slightly above the median average score of 2.5, as indicated by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), cited in Rimes (2011). This indicates that organizational structure change practices seem to be less effective (Table 8). This response lies between "Agree" and "Undecided," leaning more towards "Undecided." This implies that respondents did not agree or strongly agree with the major scale of OSCH.

The status of organizational structure change in the study area is well understood from the qualitative data analyzed. The change in organizational structure has been a natural phenomenon that was later significantly initiated by the previous MoSHE designation of the organization as a research university. The data indicate that activities related to structural creation, such as mergers and split-offs, aimed to enhance administrative flexibility. According to Castillo et al. (2023), organizational structure change involves the distribution of authority and responsibilities within organizations, the ordering of positions, and the enforcement of policies and procedures by management. Thus, the findings illustrate that autonomy in decision-making and the flexibility in the hierarchy of authority have gradually improved. However, the findings revealed that these changes, mixed with occasional role confusion and interference, can impact staff members' autonomy in making independent decisions within their areas of responsibility, with a few structural changes actively ongoing. Additionally, the change in structure and the initiated reform were stagnated and remain at the infant stage of structural change. Most of the data from the responding research participants also indicated that the change in structure is primarily gradual, except for the preexisting and gradually improving participatory approach, narrowed hierarchical relations, rule codification, and flexibility of rules within the organizations.

The findings also indicate that the staff at research universities and the extent of their autonomy in decision-making have gradually changed, creating a flexible decision-making structure at their universities. The data indicate tolerance within this structure, which was absent in the university's previous culture. Karaxha et al. (2018) noted this type of change as developmental change, which is denoted as "changes that enhance or correct the existing aspects of an organization, often focusing on improving skills or processes" (p. 31). The purpose of this change is to gradually make it available.

Status of Leadership Change: The quantitative findings in Table 10 indicate that the leadership change (LCH) was not significantly less than the expected mean. Likewise, quantitative data revealed that the leadership change (LCH) had a mean score of 3.14 with a standard deviation of 0.703. This shows that the LCH practices at the sampled research institutions are slightly higher than the median average score of 2.5, as reported by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) and mentioned in Rimes (2011). This data suggests that leadership change practices are less effective (Table 10). This response lies between "agree" and "undecided" and is even closer to "undecided." This means that respondents did not agree or strongly agree with LCH's major scale. Thus, the practice of leadership change is ineffective.

The qualitative interview converges with the quantitative data. The qualitative findings revealed that, despite the challenges, leadership changes in research universities seem to be progressing. Some factors complicate leadership in the study areas, such as the localization of university leadership and certain political interventions. However, the training and development of equitable, fair, and free decision-making, along with leaders' guidance and support, are among the changes occurring in Ethiopia's research university leadership. This finding aligns with the work of Ogbu and Obiora (2019), who demonstrated how leadership change can influence extrinsic behavior (contextual performance) in Nigeria, and Osunsan et al. (2019), who studied the effect of organizational change on employee performance in commercial banks in Bujumbura, Burundi.

Status of Technological Change: One of the objectives of this study was to assess the reactions and perceptions of the staff members and leaders of the Research University regarding technological change in their institutions. To achieve this objective, the basic questions were established, and the data were collected from the responses gathered during quantitative and

qualitative interviews to capture the reactions exhibited by leaders, academic staff, and non-academic staff as a result of the introduction of technology in the participating universities.

Quantitative data findings revealed that technological change (TECH) has a mean score of 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.745. This suggests that the implementation of TECH at the sampled Research Universities significantly exceeds the median score of 2.5. Likewise, the mean score for technological changes (TECH) was considerably higher than anticipated ($t=21.264$, $p<.001$, $ES=.711$). This indicates that the implementation of TECH appears to be effective (see Tables 10 & 12). This score falls between "Agree" and "Undecided," leaning closer to "Agree." This shows that respondents are supportive of the change on the scale measuring technological change.

The qualitative data also converge, indicating the rapid technology adoption among Research Universities, with a current shift in technology within higher education institutions. Moreover, to enhance the digital literacy of the university academic community, many initiatives have been launched within higher education. The e-she is one such example introduced to higher education institutions. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of technological change is high in research universities. The data also suggests that the extent of technological expansion, the process of updating existing technologies, and their application have reached a significant stage.

This improvement has improved the ease of work assignments and is meant to accelerate task completion. However, technological illiteracy negatively impacts the adoption of integrated technologies, particularly among non-academic staff. Conversely, the demand for ICT work outside of an organization, rather than within it, hinders rapid technical progress. Therefore, despite various constraints, Research Universities continue to achieve rapid technological advancements. These findings align with those of Boatemaa et al. (2023), a study that assessed the

effect of organizational changes on the performance of Ghanaian technical university institutions, the situation at Accra Technical University, and the research by Osunsan et al. (2019), which examined the impact of organizational change on staff productivity in Burundi's commercial banks, finding that the technological advancement influenced their staff performance.

Status of Staff Work Engagement: One of the goals of this section of the study was to analyze the emotions and perspectives of staff members and research university administrators regarding the status of staff work engagement at Ethiopian research universities. To achieve this goal, fundamental questions were crafted, and data were collected from quantitative and qualitative data to assess the attitudes of personnel at participating universities.

Consequently, quantitative results indicate that the three dimensions of work engagement—vigor is beyond the expected mean ($t=13.487$, $p<.001$, $ES=.451$); absorption greatly exceeded the expected mean ($t=24.356$, $p<.001$, $ES=.814$); and dedication was also above expectations ($t=20.027$, $p<.001$, $ES=.670$). The WE dimensions surpassed the anticipated mean ($t=19.270$, $p<.001$, $ES=.572$). Thus, this data indicates the WE in the RUE is moderate.

Despite numerous hurdles to employee engagement, the data converged and show similar core ideas. The qualitative participants reported that work engagement at RUE varies; it is low in research and community service but quite high in the teaching-learning process. However, the primary data confirm that the overall work engagement was fairly good. The present study's findings are partly compatible with those of Enock Katere et al. (2022), who looked into instructor's engagement and performance in Ghana's private universities. Likewise, the current findings are consistent with those of Shusha and Abdelkader (2016) in Egyptian higher education.

Status of Staff Job Performance: Table 10 indicates that the dimensions of TP and CP are significantly above the expected mean for TP ($t=30.389$, $p<.001$, $ES=1.016$) and CP ($t=18.637$,

p<.001, ES=.623), respectively. Additionally, staff job performance (SJP) is also significantly higher than the expected mean (t=27.855, p<.001, ES=.931). Therefore, one might argue that the performance of research university staff is effective.

The qualitative results are also in line with quantitative data. It suggests that, compared to contextual performance, task performance is the most commonly practiced. However, the staff's job performance, as revealed by the qualitative data, is quite good due to the balance of positive and negative influences within the employee performance context. The current study's findings align somewhat with those of Abdulrahaman (2021), who explored the structure of the organization and faculty members' performance at Yusuf Maitama Sule's University in Nigeria. Specifically, the current practice of staff performance is in line with the findings of Salmi et al. (2017) in Ethiopian Public Research Universities.

4.8.2. The Relationships Among Organizational Change Factors, Work Engagement, and Staff Job Performance

The current section discusses the correlations between aspects of organizational change and staff job performance, as well as the link between work engagement and staff job performance within Public Research Universities. The focus is on the link between employee engagement, changes in organizational factors (technology, leadership, and organizational structure), and staff job performance.

The quantitative data showed a positive and statistically significant link between changes in organizational structure and staff job performance. The correlation coefficients demonstrated meaningful associations among the constructs at the $p < 0.001$ significance level. This figure confirms that the connection between organizational structure change and staff job performance was both positive and statistically significant.

The interview data aligns with the quantitative data. Accordingly, the relationship between the OSCH and SJP in the qualitative data shows positive and essential connections. This supports the idea that changes in OSCH lead to corresponding changes in SJP in the same direction. It suggests that universities in the study experienced beneficial structure changes that improved staff job performance. As a result, the participants noted that making appropriate structural adjustments can enhance staff job performance in research universities. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive link between favorable organizational structure changes and staff job performance in the Public Research Universities of Ethiopia.

These results align with George et al.'s (2019) examination of OSCH and staff performance in Kakamega County, Kenya, as well as Mensah's (2023) study at Ghana Broadcast Corporation. However, this finding contrasts with Alipoor et al. (2017), who explored the relationship between OSCH and SJP in privately owned medical centers in Ahvaz, Iran. They found that structural factors negatively affected SJP in these centers. The differences and similarities in research stem from various circumstances. When structural improvements and modifications are connected to all units and entities of the organization, the relationship with employee performance is enhanced. Moreover, performance improves in the same direction when employees understand change, and unfavorable conditions may be reduced to elevate performance.

The next topic of discussion is the link between technological change and employee job performance. The quantitative results show that the link between technological advancement and worker performance is positive and statistically significant. The current findings of this study indicate a strong relationship between the willingness to adopt technological innovations and job performance among administrative support staff.

The qualitative findings are consistent with the quantitative results. The interview portion of the study indicates that technological change and usage can enhance staff performance in this context. Therefore, the relationship between technological change and staff performance at the research university in Ethiopia is positive, suggesting that as technology advances and is integrated into activities and services, staff performance and productivity improve.

The findings of this study agree with those of Amanuel and Chalchissa (2021), Binannual et al. (2019), Hasan and Nadzar (2010), and Popli and Upadhyaya (2023), all of whom explored the link between technological change and staff job performance. These results align with those published by Amanuel and Chalchissa (2021), who observed positive relationships between technological change and employee job performance in Ethiopia's public sector. However, these findings contradict those of Boatemaa et al. (2023), who examined how organizational changes impacted the performance of technological universities in Ghana.

The results also showed that the relationship between LCH and SJP is stronger and more favorable in the Public Research Universities. The association between leadership change and employee job performance is r = 0.509, which indicates a positive and statistically significant correlation.

The results from qualitative data also align with the quantitative findings, showing a positive link between leadership, effective communication, teamwork, goal setting, and management involvement in staff job performance. The qualitative data further indicate that, despite challenges, changes in leadership at public research universities seem to be making progress. Even though some factors negatively affect leadership in the study areas, such as the centralization of university leadership and political interventions, the focus on fair, transparent,

and independent decision-making, along with leaders' guidance and support, is helping shape the evolving leadership landscape at public research universities in Ethiopia.

These findings resemble those of Bassey (2023), who assessed the effects of change management on employee productivity at Comestar Manufacturing in Anambra, Southeast Nigeria. The study found that the correlation coefficient, r = 0.950, shows a strong positive relationship between leadership changes and worker performance at Comestar, a manufacturing company. Likewise, the study confirms the results of Rael (2019) and Beatrice et al. (2018), who found that leadership changes significantly positively affect organizational performance. Ekechi and Umar (2020) investigated how change management impacts staff performance within Nigerian universities. Their findings reveal that changes in executive leadership have a notable effect on staff performance in these universities.

The fourth point of discussion was the link between work engagement and SJP. Accordingly, the quantitative results show that the relationship between work engagement and staff job performance was both positive and statistically significant. It indicates that increases in work engagement lead to improvements in staff job performance.

The qualitative findings support the quantitative results, which show that the relationship between WE and SJP is both positive and strong, meaning that an increase in employee work engagement leads to a proportional increase in SJP in the same direction. Overall, despite factors that hinder employee work engagement and staff performance in Ethiopian research universities—such as low salaries, limited research funding, inflation, and peace issues affecting staff involvement and output—several factors significantly positively influence these variables. For example, social support and positive communication from leaders motivate staff to engage more and improve their job performance.

The current findings align with prior empirical research across various fields (see Ismail et al., 2019b; Jufrizen et al., 2024; Khusanova et al., 2021; Paliga, 2022; Yao et al., 2022). For example, Fan and Cai (2017), Meenakshi Sharma (2023), Jaya and Ariyanto (2021), and Shusha and Abdelkader (2016) identified a strong positive connection between job performance and staff work engagement. Similarly, Li et al. (2021) and Ismail et al. (2019b) found a significant, positive relationship between staff performance and work engagement. Khusanova et al. (2021), Yao et al. (2022), and Jufrizen et al. (2024) all reported a positive, statistically significant link between WE and SJP.

In contrast to these findings, Wang (2020) questioned the positive correlation between employee WE and SJP, while Jaya and Ariyanto (2021) found no significant link between the absorption dimension of WE and SJP. Bouckenooghe et al. (2022) also criticized the assumption of a linear association between the two variables, contradicting previous results. They revealed a curvilinear association between work engagement and SJP, suggesting that the positive connection weakens after a certain point. The researchers noted that although many studies on work engagement focus on Western countries, we tested our hypothesis using data from Ethiopia, a largely overlooked nation with a collectivist culture and a high prevalence of feedback-seeking behavior. However, Bouckenooghe et al. (2022) found that employees less inclined to seek feedback, such as those in the West, are more impacted by the diminishing returns of high WE on job performance. These studies also observed that when there is a stronger inclination to seek feedback, job performance increases steadily across all levels of work engagement. This alleviates the resource depletion caused by high task engagement. In Ethiopia, the degree of feedback-seeking from supervisors disrupts the linearity between the variables. Although the typical work environment in Ethiopia is more demanding and stressful than in Western developed countries,

Shimazu et al. (2018) argued that strong work engagement leads to minimal long-term negative effects on psychological discomfort. Additionally, Shimazu et al. (2018) stated that prolonged work engagement has no adverse consequences for job performance. Considering the Ethiopian environment and the people's collectivist and feedback-seeking mindsets, these characteristics could influence the linearity of the relationship.

4.8.3. Contributions of Organizational Change Factors and Work Engagement to Staff Job Performance

This section examines how factors of organizational change impact SJP and how WE influences SJP in research universities. It also evaluates how each aspect of organizational change affects employee job performance. The quantitative results show that all dimensions of organizational change have a positive and significant effect on SJP. For example, TECH has the strongest impact (R^2=37%), followed by LCH (R^2=26%) and OSCH (R^2=22.1%). Collectively, these three factors—technological change, organizational structure change, and leadership changes—explain (R^2=50%) of the variation in employee job performance. The role of each organizational factor in staff performance is discussed in the following section.

The quantitative findings indicate that OSCH considerably and positively improves the SJP. This research suggests that decentralizing the organizational structure promotes decision-making and has a favorable impact on SJP. Overall, the OSCH (R^2=22.1%) explains that a unit change in OSCH leads to a 22 percent increase in SJP. This suggests that the impact of organizational structure changes on staff job performance is both positive and statistically significant.

The qualitative findings aligned with the quantitative results. In this study, the qualitative data showed that when the work relationship is appropriate, staff performance improves within the

context. Therefore, interview data indicated that improvements in the favorable structure further enhanced the SJP at the Research University of Ethiopia.

The current findings align with Funminiyi (2018), who found that structural decentralization enhances staff productivity. Conversely, Johari and Yahya (2019) discovered that it did not significantly increase staff productivity. Nonetheless, the present study shows that decentralization improves SJP. Variations in spans of control can lead to different outcomes depending on an organization's goals (Meier & Bohte, 2000). Additionally, the statistics indicate that the hierarchy of power at RUE positively influences staff performance. This supports Shabbir's (2017) and Abdulrahman's (2019) findings that a highly structured environment significantly impacts staff performance.

However, this study contradicts Alipoor et al.'s (2017) finding that a more rigid structure limits staff flexibility. Funminiyi (2018) observed that a more streamlined structure correlates with better SJP. Previous research on non-educational organizations did not show a hierarchical structure; however, at universities, hierarchy and seniority remain important for administration, which may explain the difference. The findings also reveal that the job codification aspect of structure at the institution has a positive and significant effect. One possible reason is that reducing rule compliance enhances the university's SJP while other factors stay constant. The results are consistent with Johari and Yahya (2019) and Abdulrahman (2019), supporting the idea that lowering the range of control may improve SJP variability (Meier & Bohte, 2000). Therefore, structural changes lead to improvements in SJP at RUEs.

Technological progress makes a positive and significant contribution to SJP. The quantitative data reveal that technological advancement positively impacts staff job performance. For instance, a unit change in technology affects staff performance by 37%. This means that

advances in technology at the Research University of Ethiopia significantly enhance staff performance.

The qualitative research results corroborate the quantitative ones, both showing the significant and positive impact of technological change on SJP in the RUE. The research participants thoroughly agreed that the technological change in the institutions improved the staff performance. Therefore, the technology implementations in the Research University of Ethiopia affect the staff performance.

These findings support the results of Amanuel and Chalchissa (2021), who found that integrating advances in technology improves both organizational and individual performance. The study examined the role of technology change management and discovered that it enhanced staff performance at commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County (Wanyama, 2022). Wanyama also stated that the creation and use of new technologies can have a substantial effect on organizations and management processes. However, this study conflicts with Popli and Upadhyaya's (2023) findings, which indicated that technological development had a non-significant but positive impact on techno-stress, cognitive and interpersonal skills, and individual performance. This difference may be due to variations in study methods, sample sizes, contextual factors, and worker dynamics, which can lead to differing results, as noted by Abbas et al. (2014).

The contribution of leadership change leads to significant advancements in SJP. Similarly, the quantitative and qualitative findings are converging, suggesting that a positive leadership change in the organization has a substantial beneficial impact on SJP in the RUE.

This finding aligns with that of Ekechi and Umar (2020), who explored how managing change affects staff performance in Nigerian universities. The study also showed that change management indicators, such as technology and organizational leadership changes, significantly

influence staff performance at Nigerian universities. This result matches the findings of Bassey (2023), who found that leadership changes impact employee performance by causing shifts in policies, procedures, organizational structure, workflows, and operational procedures, which then affect employee performance. Indeed, it is consistent with the findings of Beatrice et al. (2018) at Kenyan higher education institutions in Nakuru County. The study found that organizational culture, structure, development and training, and leadership all play a significant role in employee performance.

The current study also aims to determine how employee work engagement levels contribute to SJP at the RUE. The research findings indicate that each aspect of WE (vigor, devotion, and absorption) influences the SJP of first-generation university employees. Combined, the three dimensions explained a larger portion of the variance in the endogenous variable. Enhancements in employee job performance are positively associated with strong WE throughout the organization. These findings also support the job demands-resources model (JD-RM) and the self-determination theory (SDT), which argue that engaged workers believe their job resources are sufficient to meet expectations, and that employees are more likely to exhibit dedication and full engagement in their assigned activities if they feel empowered at work and have supportive social networks. From this perspective, leaders enhance the quality of interpersonal interactions while maintaining a balance between the organization's needs and resource allocation. Thus, strong WE serves as an indicator of high-quality SJP (Paliga, 2022). This finding aligns with an empirical study conducted by Jufrizen et al. (2024), which found that effective WE practices can improve SJP, reinforcing the idea that positive engagement enhances SJP. Similarly, Shusha and Abdelkader's (2016) research on higher education institutions shows that an optimal working environment fosters the development of SJP among university faculty. In contrast, Jaya and

Ariyanto (2021) argue that the absorption component does not influence job performance among PT Garuda's Indonesian employees and is therefore irrelevant. Likewise, Wang's (2020) findings questioned the positive effects of these variables. Conversely, limited research funding, inadequate salaries, inflation, and other related psychological factors diminish employee engagement, whereas universities' social capital, reduced workplace bullying, employee psychological assets, and a supportive environment positively contribute to WE and SJP in Ethiopian research universities.

4.8.4. Direct and Indirect Effects of Organizational Change on Staff Job Performance

The purpose of this part of the study was to examine the direct and indirect effects of organizational change factors on SJP, both with and without mediation. As a result, all three direct impacts assessed (100%) were statistically significant. OSCH ($\beta = .212$, $p < .001$), TECH ($\beta = .376$, $p < .001$), and LCH ($\beta = .244$, $p < .001$) had a significant influence. These findings indicated that when features of WE are statistically controlled; dimensions of organizational change have a substantial impact on SJP. In contrast, two out of three total indirect effects (75%) were statistically significant. This conclusion implies that the additional effects of organizational change dimensions are communicated to SJP indirectly. The dimensions of WE mediated the relationship between OCH and SJP.

However, the quantitative results showed that LCH did not have an indirect effect on SJP. This indicates that LCH did not provide universities with strong leadership experiences that could significantly influence SJP through WE. Instead, the current study revealed that OSCH (followed by TECH) has significant indirect effects on SJP. Another notable finding is that, among all significant indirect effects, the effect through the vigor dimension of WE was stronger than those through the dedication and absorption dimensions. This suggests that the vigor component of WE

is more influential than the dedication and absorption dimensions in transmitting the impact of OCH to SJP.

The qualitative findings show consistency between the two data sets by indicating that OCH can influence SJP both directly and indirectly through WE. Consequently, the data sets are aligned, except that the LCH in the qualitative data points to an indirect effect on SJP via WE, which indicates some divergence in this case. Therefore, the study's WE variable demonstrated that all indirect effects were statistically significant. This suggests that different aspects of OCH have an indirect influence on SJP, with WE mediating the relationship between them, as explained below.

The following section discusses the indirect effect of organizational factors on SJP through WE. For example, the study's quantitative results show that WE mediates the relationship between OSCH and SJP. The data indicate that OSCH ($\beta = .0619$, $p < .001$) significantly influences SJP through WE. This means that, due to OSCH's indirect effect on SJP, increasing OSCH by one standard deviation raises SJP by .0619 standard deviations. Therefore, changes in organizational structure significantly affect staff job performance.

The current study's findings align with those of Wangui et al. (2022), Liu et al. (2024), and Wang (2020), who found that WE positively and significantly mediates the effects of OSCH on SJP. This contrasts with Johari and Yahya's (2019) findings, which showed that WE only mediates the connection between SJP and a specific part of organizational structure (job codification). This difference could be due to the demographic factors identified by Johari and Yahya (2019). Respondents in the current study were academic professionals over age 30 who have the ability to make informed decisions and follow norms and laws, as mentioned by Johari and Yahya (ibid).

The results also show that TECH has a significant indirect effect on SJP through the WE variable. Therefore, the data TECH ($\beta = .028$, $p < .001$) demonstrates that it significantly influences SJP via the WE factor. This indicates that, due to TECH's indirect effect on SJP, increasing TECH by one standard deviation raises SJP by .028 standard deviations. Consequently, the analysis concludes that the WE variable mediates the relationship between TECH and SJP. This means some of TECH's influence on SJP is transmitted through the WE variable. Additionally, the findings reveal that when WE features are statistically controlled, dimensions of technological change have a substantial impact on SJP.

The qualitative findings align, demonstrating the consistency of the two data sets. The results show that implementing organizational change factors, such as technological improvements, can enhance performance either directly or indirectly. Therefore, technological changes and acceptance significantly influence staff job performance.

This finding aligns with those of Amanuel and Chalchissa (2021), who showed that integrating technological advancements improves both organizational and individual performance. The study examined the influence of technological change management and found that it enhanced staff performance at commercial banking institutions in Trans Nzoia County (Wanyama, 2022). This demonstrated that technological progress positively and significantly affects SJP. Similarly, the findings are consistent with earlier empirical studies conducted across various sectors (Jufrizen et al., 2024; Khusanova et al., 2021; Paliga, 2022; Yao et al., 2022). For example, Fan and Cai (2017), Meenakshi Sharma (2023), Jaya and Ariyanto (2021), and Shusha and Abdelkader (2016) found a strong link between job success and employee work engagement. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to confirm that the evidence suggests WE can moderate the link between technological change and staff work performance.

Finally, the current analysis found no significant effect of LCH on SJP through the WE variable. Therefore, the data LCH ($\beta = 0.012$, $p > .05$) shows that it has no meaningful impact on SJP via the WE factor. This means that, because of LCH's indirect influence on SJP, increasing LCH by one standard deviation raises SJP by 0.012 standard deviations. As a result, the quantitative findings showed no statistically significant indirect effects of LCH on SJP through WE dimensions. This suggests that LCH does not have a significant indirect influence on SJP via work engagement.

In contrast, the qualitative results diverge from the quantitative results regarding the indirect influence of LCH on SJP through work engagement. The qualitative findings indicate that LCH had an indirect impact on SJP. The interview data suggest that improving leadership influence, both directly and indirectly, enhances staff performance. However, this discrepancy can be attributed to the qualitative results of this study, which align with those reported by Cao et al. (2024), Ali et al. (2017), and Wen et al. (2023). Conversely, Hidayat and Nasution (2024) found that work engagement does not strongly mediate the link between transformational leadership style and staff job performance. Meanwhile, Abel and Hailemichael (2024) determined that work engagement partly mediates the link between empowering leadership and staff job performance. Therefore, these findings highlight the divergence in results about whether work engagement mediates the link between leadership change and staff job performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.SUMMARY

5.1.1. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore the relationship among the variables of organizational change (OCH), work engagement (WE), and staff job performance (SJP) in RUE, with the ultimate goal of contributing valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge. This study adds significant experience to higher education leadership knowledge in the Ethiopian context. The available research has primarily focused on the effects of technology or structure, with little regard for other dimensions (LCH and other external factors like regulatory changes); thus, the sociotechnical system model and the Burke-Litwin Model have not been evaluated within the Ethiopian HEI setting. In other words, there are a few conceptual and theoretical gaps, along with methodological and operational gaps, that necessitate modifications for a thorough and empirical investigation of the specific environment. Therefore, this study is guided by the Burke-Litwin model as a theoretical lens, which is now the dominant paradigm and is widely utilized in management and leadership research worldwide. Consequently, the researcher formulates six distinct research questions that require in-depth investigation in the Ethiopian higher education context:

1. What is the status of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE?
2. What are the relationships (i.e., direction, statistical significance, and strength) among the basics of organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance in RUE?

3. What portion of the variance in staff job performance is explained by organizational change and work engagement separately and jointly?
4. Is there a statistically significant mediation effect of organizational change on staff job performance via work engagement?
5. How does SJP relate to OSCH and WE in the research university of Ethiopia?

Furthermore, this study utilized a pragmatic philosophical assumption, a mixed research approach, and a convergent parallel mixed research design (QUAN + QUAN) to evaluate the relationships among OSCH, TECH, LCH, WE, and SJP in the context of HEIs from the perspective of employee work engagement. Samples were collected using simple random sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Consequently, 893 respondents from Arba Minch University, Haramaya University, and Jimma University filled out questionnaires, and 30 were interviewed. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously using adapted questionnaires, with qualitative data obtained through interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, while the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Later, both types of data were combined, evaluated, and discussed. Based on this premise, the researcher explored the relationship between dimensions of OCH, WE, and SJP in RUEs to determine how to address conceptual, theoretical, practical, and methodological dilemmas related to the mediating effects of OCH components on SJP through WE.

5.1.2. Summary of Key Findings

This section presents the key findings from the assessment of the link among OCH factors, WE, and SJP in RUE.

5.1.2.1.The Status of Factors Influencing Organizational Change

Regarding the status of the dimensions of OCH (OSCH, TECH, LCH), the means for OSCH and TECH were significantly higher than the expected ideal mean. At the same time, LCH was not significantly lower than the expected mean. The three dimensions — OCH, OSCH, and TECH — are practiced at an elevated level, whereas LCH is practiced at a moderate level. Thus, OSCH and TECH show ongoing progress, mainly evident in this study. In contrast, the levels of dedication, vigor, and absorption in work engagement practices at selected research universities were found to be high. Similarly, among the two dimensions of SJP, the means for staff task performance (STP) and staff contextual performance (SCP) were significantly above the expected mean. These findings imply that research universities prioritize structural and technological changes while often overlooking leadership development.

5.1.2.2.The Relationships Among OCH Dimensions, WE, and SJP

Regarding the study's factors, changes in organizational structure, technology, and leadership were found to be positively and significantly related to the dimensions of staff job performance. Likewise, the dimensions of WE and SJP were positively and significantly linked, indicating that improvements in WE dimensions lead to enhancements in SJP dimensions, and vice versa.

5.1.2.3.The Contributions of OCH and WE to SJP

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education classified the universities participating in this survey as research-oriented and found that their main activities were teaching and learning. Since combining the two data sets, the contributions of OCH and WE to SJP, along with three organizational characteristics, have significantly and positively impacted staff job performance.

As a result, the contributions of technological change (37%), leadership change (26%), and organizational structure change (22.1%) to staff job performance were identified. Similarly, within the dimensions of WE, vigor contributed the most to staff work performance (17.2%), followed by dedication (13.2%) and absorption (10.8%). Compared to the contributions of WE dimensions to SJP, the combined effect of the three OCH dimensions (OSCH, TECH, and LCH) explained the highest variation in SJP (R2 = 50%). Lastly, the combined contribution of OCH and WE to SJP exceeds their impacts (55%).

5.1.2.4.The Direct and Indirect Effects of OCH Factors on SJP

The direct effects of OSCH, TECH, and LCH on SJP were positive and statistically significant, as were the indirect effects of OSCH and TECH on SJP through WE dimensions. Conversely, the indirect effect of LCH on SJP was less pronounced compared to that of OSCH and TECH. Additionally, the effects of OSCH and TECH on SJP were statistically significant both directly and indirectly. Nonetheless, the direct effect of OSCH, TECH, and LCH on SJP exceeded their total indirect effects. However, LCH was found to have only a direct influence on SJP, as the indirect effect is not significant. However, the qualitative findings contradict the quantitative results.

5.2.Conclusions

The gathered and evaluated data led to the following conclusions about the relationships between OCH factors and SJP, mediated by staff work engagement. First, among the three aspects related to organizational change, TECH is the most widely practiced, followed by structure and leadership change in RUEs. Second, the overall state of work engagement is moderate, although the absorption dimension of WE is used more than the dedication and vigor aspects. Third, staff performance in research universities is satisfactory, with technical performance (task performance)

being more common than contextual performance. Fourth, all OCH aspects (i.e., OSCH, TECH, and leadership change) positively relate to staff job performance, indicating that as the degrees of OCH dimensions increase, staff job performance also increases. Fifth, OSCH, TECH, and LCH show a positive association with the three dimensions of WE, suggesting that increases in OSCH, TECH, and LCH activities lead to higher levels of work engagement. Sixth, work engagement dimensions are positively and slightly associated with staff job performance, implying that as WE aspects increase, so does SJP. Seventh, the combined contribution of the three dimensions of OSCH to staff job performance is greater than their contributions, indicating that organizations capable of changing all three aspects may be more effective than those limited to just one, and their staff may also be better positioned to handle comprehensive change.

The combined influence of the three dimensions of work engagement (WE) explains more variance in staff job performance (SJP) than their contributions, suggesting that companies can achieve peak staff job performance by focusing on all three components: vigor, absorption, and devotion. The combined contribution of organizational change (OCH) factors and WE's three facets to SJP surpasses their separate contributions, indicating that the interaction between these two broader constructs significantly impacts staff job performance. Additionally, both organizational skill and competency handling (OSCH) and technical skills (TECH) indirectly influence employee job performance through the dimensions of WE, with OSCH exerting a stronger indirect effect than TECH. While OCH's three dimensions—OSCH, TECH, and LCH—have greater direct effects on staff job performance, they also have an indirect influence, except for LCH, which directly impacts SJP only. This suggests that OSCH and TECH are more effective in indirectly influencing SJP. Thus, the link between organizational change factors and staff job

performance is positively mediated by employee work engagement in the research university of Ethiopia.

5.3.Recommendations

Several recommendations emerged from the findings and discussions of the current study, emphasizing the following theoretical, policy, methodological, conceptual, and practical implications.

1. All organizations involved in leading Ethiopian research universities should train leaders in various roles on capacity building so they can recognize individual differences and learn to lead the university and the broader community with fairness, equity, encouragement, communication, and collaboration. Also, they should focus on developing and implementing suitable technology and structures to enhance staff performance in Ethiopia's public research universities.
2. University administrators, in collaboration with other academic and non-academic units, should encourage staff to engage in their work and both types of performance (task and contextual), as all individuals learn and contribute to the positive atmosphere that has been created.
3. Research universities and their academic and non-academic units should revise their staff performance appraisals to align with their overarching missions. Staff performance should not be taken for granted. Instead, let visible actions, such as work reports included in the portfolio, serve as the basis for performance evaluation. Consequently, cumulative individual staff performance should reflect organizational performance.
4. Organs involved in university leadership should collectively address comprehensive aspects such as organizational structure, leadership, and technological change, rather than

tackling them separately, to bring about large-scale positive change that can improve the job performance of both academic and non-academic employees at RUE.

5. Leaders in Public Research Universities should acknowledge the positive impact of organizational changes on productivity and excel at rewarding their subordinates for meeting work objectives. This practice motivates employees to improve their skills and confidence in delivering outstanding staff performance.
6. Every administrative entity, including departments and colleges, should involve its staff in decision-making by collecting feedback and setting work goals that foster an open organizational environment and inspire individuals to achieve outstanding results. Thus, the inspired staff will engage in their work to boost their performance.
7. Academic staff should actively participate in the project's implementation and grant acquisition process to benefit the university and its community. Therefore, academic staff at all levels should stop worrying about small incentives and routines that only lead to minimal increases in government salaries. Instead, academic circles should focus on developing the skills needed to secure grants that will benefit the university and its community. In fact, as part of the research university requirements, the relevant entities should allocate sufficient budgets for research efforts and enhance staff expertise to conduct research, rather than allowing staff to focus only on pursuing small salary increases and insignificant incentives.
8. To improve performance outcomes, Policymakers, HEI leadership at all levels, including MoE and Research University leaders and staff, should develop a modest operational structure that promotes leadership change, goes hand-in-hand with appropriate and current technologies, and lifts the work engagement.

9. Organizational policymakers should consider the combined impact of OCH factors and WE rather than analyzing them individually to support the research university's missions and improve staff engagement and performance at Research University by maintaining the quality of teaching, research, and community outreach.
10. The policymakers in the education sector should understand the significant direct and indirect impact of appropriate technology, effective leadership, and modest organizational structures on staff job performance and should act accordingly. As a result, university leaders, practitioners, and other stakeholders should translate the updated policy into practice, which further directly and/or indirectly influences staff job performance in public research universities.

5.4. Implications for Future Research

The study's conclusions have implications for all educational stakeholders, especially those in the sector, researchers, and policymakers. First, it emphasizes the importance of OCH and WE in improving SJP while also providing relevant facts about the challenges faced by Ethiopian research universities. Second, it benefits policymakers, educational organizations, training institutions, and other industry stakeholders. Additionally, it advances the field of organizational leadership, particularly in Ethiopia, by offering valuable insights and recommendations to promote organizational change, employee engagement, performance, and efficiency in public higher education institutions. Third, it adds to the existing literature by highlighting the significance of organizational change and work engagement, focusing on the specific dynamics and challenges encountered by Ethiopian research universities. Fourth, the conclusions will help policymakers understand how technological advancements and organizational structure changes are more

effective in boosting staff work engagement and their job performance. Moreover, it builds on previous research by emphasizing the role of change agents working alongside university officials.

5.5. Model Proposed for the Relationship Between Organizational Change and Staff Job Performance as Mediated by Work Engagement

The study recommends a structurally organized model using large amounts of data collected through standardized questionnaires, following established and accepted theories. This new model is based on both confirmatory and exploratory analyses of various factors. Ultimately, the model was built using key components, each with its dimensions, as outlined in the methodology section. The main components and their dimensions are: Organizational change factors (OSCH, TECH, LCH), WE (vigor, dedication, and absorption), and SJP, as shown below.

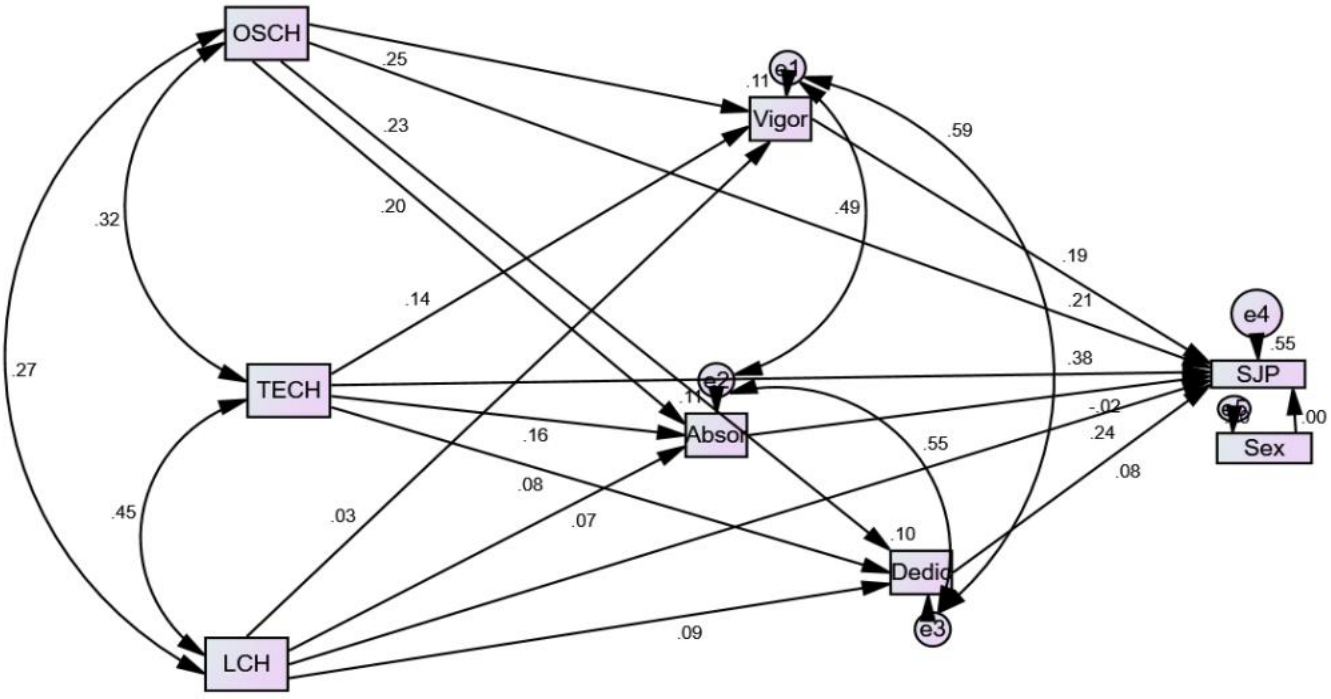


Figure 10: Proposed Structural Model for Future Research and Practice

The suggested model builds on the Burke-Litwin framework by including work engagement as an internal psychological process that connects structural and technological change to job

performance in knowledge-intensive public organizations. Leadership changes have an indirect impact on performance, as they affect employee engagement and organizational structural flexibility.

References

Abbas, J., Muzaffar, A., Mahmood, H. K., Ramzan, M. A., & Rizvi, S. S. U. H. (2014). Impact of technology on the performance of employees (a case study on Allied Bank Ltd, Pakistan). *World Applied Sciences Journal*, *29*(2), 271-276. https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.wasj.2014.29.02.1897

Abel, G. M., & Hailemichael, M. (2024). The effect of empowering leadership practices on employees' performance with the mediating role of work engagement: the case of Ethio-Telecom. *Cogent Business and Management*, *11*(1), 2-17, 2307066. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2307066

Abocejo, F. T. (2014). The impact of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) on the Philippines. *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, *2*(1), 20-24.

Addisalem, A. Y. (2020). Higher Education in Ethiopia: Recent Developments and Challenges. *AfricArXiv Preprints*, *20*(1)1-50. https://doi.org/10.14293/111.000/000009.v1

Ahmed, A., Pereira, L., & Jane, K. (2024). Mixed methods research: Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. *en. In: ResearchGate (Sept. 2024)*, 1-10.

Akalu, G. A. (2014). Higher Education in Ethiopia: Expansion, Quality Assurance, and Institutional Autonomy. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *68*(4), 394-415.https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ. 12036

Aldabbas, H., Pinnington, A., & Lahrech, A. (2023). The influence of perceived organizational support on employee creativity: The mediating role of work engagement. *Current Psychology*, *42*(8), 6501–6515. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01992-1

Ali, K. S., bin Ahmad, F., & Johari, H. (2017). The mediating effect of job engagement on the relationship between organizational structure and organizational performance: a theoretical model. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, *5*(3), 188-197.

Ally, H. B., Agbolade, O. K., & Adunni, A. H. (2016). Perception of change management in Nigerian universities. *Revista de Administração FACES journal*, 68-80.

Altındağ, E., & Kösedağı, Y. (2015). The relationship between the emotional intelligence of managers, innovative corporate culture, and employee performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *210*, 270-282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.367

Gemechu, A., & Wake, M. I. (2021). Effects of change management practices on organizational performance: The case of Ethio-Telecom South region, Ethiopia. *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology*, *5*(12), 53-62. http://www.ijeast.com/

Anderson, D., & Anderson, L. A. (2011). Conscious change leadership: Achieving breakthrough results. *Leader to Leader*, *2011*(62), 51-59.

Antonelli, C. (2012). The economics of localized technological change and industrial dynamics (Vol. 3). Springer Science and Business Media.

Appelbaum, S. H., Cameron, A., Ensink, F., Hazarika, J., Attir, R., Ezzedine, R., & Shekhar, V. (2017). Factors that impact the success of an organizational change: a case study analysis. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, *49*(5), 213-230. https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-02-2017-0006

Arega, Y. (2016). Quality of education in private higher institutions in Ethiopia: The role of governance. *SAGE Open*, *6*(1), 1-12, 2158244015624950. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015624950

Arifin, Z., Rimbano, D., Jonathan, A., Racdhasuni, B., Angiasari, H., Letami, O., ... & Prayoga, A. (2023, December). The Influence of Communication and Work Environment On Employee Performance. In *Proceedings International Conference on Economic and Social Sciences*, *1*(1), 43-59.

Armstrong, M. (2006). A handbook of human resource management practice (19th ed.). Kogan Page Publishers.

Ayalew, E. (2017). Once a flagship, always a flagship? Addis Ababa University in perspective. Flagship universities in Africa. *Palgrave Macmillan*, 91-142.10. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49403-6_4

Baron, J. N., & Hannan, M. T. (2002). Organizational blueprints for success in high-tech start-ups: Lessons from the Stanford project on emerging companies. *California Management Review*, *44*(3), 8-36. https://doi.org/10.2307/41166130

Bekele, W. A., Samuel, F., & Wildschut, A. (2022). Towards developing a Collaborative PhD Program across ARUA Member Universities. *African Research Universities Alliance*, 1-27

Beatrice, O. N., Lagat, C., & Odunga, R. (2018). Effect of organizational factors on employee performance in Kenyan Universities' Campuses: A Case of Nakuru County. *Journal of Human Resource and Leadership*, *2*(3), 1-26.

Bin Anual, N., bin Samat, M. F., & bin Zakaria, I. (2019). The Effect of Technological Changes on Employees' Performance Among Non-Academic Staff. *Malaysian Journal of Business and Economics (MJBE)*, (2), 158–168. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-076-3_15

Biniyam, D. K., & Elias, W. A. (2019). Organizational Factors Affecting Employee Performance: The Case of Selected Public Service Organizations in Dire Dawa Administration, Ethiopia. *Order*, *9*(10), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.7176/PPAR/9-10-01

Bishaw, A., & Melesse, S. (2017). Historical analysis of the challenges and opportunities of higher education in Ethiopia. *Higher Education for the Future*, *4*(1), 31-43. https://doi.org/0.1177/2347631116681212

Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological Inquiry*, *34*(2), 193-206. *https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1964.tb00583.x*

Boatemaa, F. N. Y., Danso, M. K., Quartey-Papafio, B., & Adjei, D. (2023). The Impact of Organizational Change on the Performance of Technical University Institutions in Ghana: A Case of Accra Technical University. *European Journal of Human Resource Management Studies*, *7*(1), 85-129. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejhrms.v7i1.1559

Brown, S. L., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (1997). The art of continuous change: Linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *42*(1), 1-34. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2393807.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1984). Educational research: An introduction. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *32*(3), 274-274. https://doi.org/10.2307/3121583

Borst, R. T., Kruyen, P. M., Lako, C. J., & De Vries, M. S. (2020). The Attitudinal, Behavioral, and Performance Outcomes of Work Engagement: A Comparative Meta-Analysis Across the Public, Semipublic, and Private Sector. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *40*(4), 613–640. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19840399

Burke, W. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1992). A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of Management*, *18*(3), 523-545.

Bystydzienski, J., Thomas, N., Howe, S., & Desai, A. (2017). The Leadership Role of College Deans and Department Chairs in Academic Culture Change. *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(12), 2301-2315. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1152464

Calder, A. M. (2013). Organizational change: Models for successfully implementing change. Undergraduate Honors Capstone Projects, https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/honors/144

Campbell, J. P. (1990). Modeling the performance prediction problem in industrial and organizational psychology. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 687–732). Consulting Psychologists Press.

ÇALIŞKAN, A., & KÖROĞLU, E. Ö. (2022). Job Performance, Task Performance, Contextual Performance: Development and Validation of a New Scale. *Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, *8*(2), 180-201. https://doi.org/180-201.10.29131/uiibd.1201880

Castillo, A., Manimtim, E., Vigonte, F., & Abante, M. V. (2023). Demographic Data, Organizational Structure, and Employee Performance: An Input in Crafting a Customized Management Training Matrix. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/.4621 646

Chaudhary, J. K. (2021). Impact of Technological Changes on Job Performance of Teachers in Higher Education Institutions: A study concerning quality accredited colleges in Province 2, Nepal. *Research Journal on Multi-Disciplinary Issues*, *3*(1), 18-28.

Cherryholmes, C. H. (1992). Notes on pragmatism and scientific realism. *Educational researcher*, *21*(6), 13-17.

Cook, M. A. (2015). *A case study of organizational change in a small, private junior college*. [Doctoral dissertation, Northeastern University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Cooper, R. (2015). The shared services organizational model in higher education enrollment management: The application of the transactional components of the Burke-Litwin Model of organizational performance and change and the moderating effect of employee engagement on individual motivation. *Human Resource Development* (Theses and Dissertations), Paper 9. http://hdl.handle.net/10950/310

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative And qualitative research (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Approach (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: A qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach (5th ed.). California, CA: Sage.

Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2014). Organization development and change. Cengage learning.

Cummings, S., Bridgman, T., & Brown, K. G. (2016). Unfreezing change as three steps: Rethinking Kurt Lewin's legacy for change management. *Human Relations*, *69*(1), 33-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715577707

Daniel, C. O. (2019). Effect of organizational change on employee job performance—*Asian Journal of Business and Management*, *7*(1), 22-27.

Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *52*(2), 221-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863

Dejene, D. & Felekech, E. G. (2022). An Investigation of Organizational Culture of Higher Education: The Case of Hawassa University. *Education Research International*, 2022, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/1222779

Demir, S. B., & Pismek, N. (2018). A Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Study of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Classes: A Clash of Ideologies. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, *18*(1), 119-149. https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2018.1.0298

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). The Sage handbook of qualitative research. Sage (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Ekechi, F. O., & Umar, A. I. (2020). Effect of change management on employees' performance in Nigerian universities. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *12*(20), 39-48.

Elapatha, V. W., & Jehan, S. N. (2020). An Analysis of the Implementation of Business Process Re-engineering in Public Services. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *6*(4), 114. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc6040114

Elkhdr, H. (2019). The relationship between strategic management and leadership: A critical literature review. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, *8*(2), 58-61.

Endalkachew, D. & Zemede, C. (2023). Assessing the Organizational Communication Style and Its Effect on Employees' Performance in the Case of Wachemo University. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, *15*(3 (J)), 1-21.

Errida, A., & Lotfi, B. (2021). The determinants of organizational change management success: Literature review and case study. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, *13*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/18479790211016273

Evans, J. D. (1996). Straightforward statistics for the behavioral sciences. Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Faupel, S., & Süß, S. (2019). The effect of transformational leadership on employees during organizational change–an empirical analysis. *Journal of Change Management*, *19*(3), 145-166. https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2018.1447006

Fisher, K. Q., & Henderson, C. (2018). Department-level instructional change: Comparing prescribed versus emergent strategies. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, *17*(4), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.17-02-0031

Friedlander, F., & Brown, L. D. (1977). Research on organization development: a synthesis and some implications. *Current Issues and Strategies in Organization Development, Human Science Press, New York, NY*.

Funminiyi, A. K. (2018). Impact of Organizational Structure on Employee Engagement: Evidence from North Central Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering, Management and Science*, *4*(8), 579–589. https://doi.org/10.22161/ijaems.4.8.1

Galli, B. J. (2018). Change management models: A comparative analysis and concerns. *IEEE Engineering Management Review*, *46*(3), 124-132. https://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2018.2866860

Gerwing, C. (2016). Meaning of change agents within organizational change. *Journal of Applied Leadership and Management*, *4*, 21-40. http://www.journal-alm.org/article/view/17107

Girma, M. S., & Matebe, G. T. (2018). Leading changes through adaptive design: Change management practice in one of the universities in a developing nation. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences. [Online]*, *5*(4), 23-44. http://www.prosoc.eu

Gonfa, D. K., Gibbons, P., Sugrue, C., & Kuma, B. (2024). Internationalisation of Higher Education in Ethiopia: A Strategic Process? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *28*(4), 546-567.

Gohar, A., & Masood, H. (2022). A review of organizational changes, management, and employee performance. *Journal of Xidian University*, *16*(1), 494-506. https://doi.org/10.37896/jxu16.1/043

Graham, R. (2012). The one less traveled by: The road to lasting systemic change in engineering education. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *101*(4), 596–600.

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house". *Administrative Issues Journal*, *4*(2), 4. https://dc.swosu.edu/aij/vol4/iss2/4

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, *2*(163-194), 105-117.

Gupta, S., & Singla, A. (2016). Organizational change and job satisfaction: An analysis of the mediating effect of organizational trust. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies*, *7*(3), 07-13.

Hage, J., & Aiken, M. (1967). Relationship of centralization to other structural properties. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *12*(1), 72-92. https://doi.org/10.2307/2391213

Hasan, H., & Mohd Nadzar, F. (2010). Acceptance of technological changes and job performance among administrative support personnel in the government offices in Maran, Pahang Darul Makmur. *Gading Journal for the Social Sciences*, *14*(1), 21-32.

Hansen, M. (2018). Cultivating change: The relationship between organizational culture, leadership style, and communication style with organizational change (Master's Thesis, *Marquette University*). http://epublications.marquette.edu/theses_open/450

Harmancı Seren, A. K. H., Tuna, R., & Bacaksiz, F. E. (2018). Reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the Job Performance Scale instrument. *Journal of Nursing Research*, *26*(1), 27-35.

Hartini, H., Fakhrorazi, A., & Islam, R. (2019). The effects of cultural intelligence on task performance and contextual performance: an empirical study on public sector employees in Malaysia. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, *7*(1), 215-227. https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.7126

Hashim, Y. A., & Dodo, P. G. (2015). Impact of Change Management on Staff Performance in Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Nigeria. International Journal of Engineering and Management Research (IJEMR), *5*(6), 197-205.

Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, *18*(3), 66-67. https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129

Hechanova, M. R. M., Caringal-Go, J. F., & Magsaysay, J. F. (2018). Implicit change leadership, change management, and affective commitment to change: Comparing academic institutions vs business enterprises. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *39*(7), 914-925. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-01-2018-0013

Herold, D. M., Fedor, D. B., Caldwell, S., & Liu, Y. (2008). The effects of transformational and change leadership on employees' commitment to a change: a multilevel study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(2), 346. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.346

Hidayah, N., Ernie Tisnawati, S., Yuyun, W., & Septiadi, P. (2015). How to develop strategic leadership in higher education institutions. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, *3*(5), 1164-1175.

Hidayat, Y. P., & Nasution, Y. (2023, September). Analysis of the Effect of Transformational Leadership On Job Performance, Trust in Leadership, And Innovative Work Behavior with Work Engagement as A Mediating Variable. In *7th Global Conference on Business, Management, and Entrepreneurship (GCBME 2022)* (pp. 1486-1495). Atlantis Press.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Motivation, leadership, and organization: *Do American theories apply abroad? Organizational Dynamics, 9*(1), 42-63.

Holten, A. L., & Brenner, S. O. (2015). Leadership style and the process of organizational change. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *36*(1), 2-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-11-2012-0155

Holten, A. L., Hancock, G. R., & Bøllingtoft, A. (2019). Studying the importance of change leadership and change management in layoffs, mergers, and closures. *Management Decision*, *58*(3), 393-409.https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2017-0278

Homans, G. C. (1961). Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York.

Hughes, A. M., Zajac, S., Woods, A. L., & Salas, E. (2019). The role of work environment in training sustainment: A meta-analysis. *Human Factors*, *62*(1), 166-183. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018720819845988

Hultin, M., Jonsson, K., Härgestam, M., Lindkvist, M., & Brulin, C. (2019). Reliability of instruments that measure situation awareness, team performance, and task performance in a simulation setting with medical students. *BMJ Open*, *9*(9), 1-10. http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen- 2019/029412

Hunde, A. B., Yacob, E. T., Tadesse, G. A., Guesh, K., Gobaw, M. K., Dechassa, N., ... & Wondie, Y. (2023). Differentiating the Higher Education System of Ethiopia. *A National Study Report: Springer Nature*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39082-2

Ibrahim, A. U., & Daniel, C. O. (2019). Impact of leadership on organizational performance. *International Journal of Business, Management and Social Research*, *6*(2), 367-374. https://doi.org/10.18801/ijbmsr.060219.39

Idemudia, E. C. (Ed.). (2019). Handbook of Research on Social and Organizational Dynamics in the Digital Era. *IGI Global*. 22-42. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-8933-4.ch002

Ismail, A., Baizura, N., Abidin, N., & Tudin, R. (2009). Relationship between transformational leadership, empowerment, and followers' performance: an empirical study in Malaysia. *Negotium: Revista De Ciencias Gerenciales*, *5*(13), 5-22.

Jacobs, G., Van Witteloostuijn, A., & Christe-Zeyse, J. (2013). A theoretical framework of organizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *26*(5), 772-792. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-09-2012-0137

Jaya, L. H. S., & Ariyanto, E. (2021). The Effect of Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption on the Employee Performance of PT Garuda Indonesia Cargo. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, *6*(4), 311–316. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2021.6.4.1006

Jensen, M. C., & Murphy, K. J. (1990). Performance pay and top-management incentives. *Journal of Political Economy*, *98*(2), 225-264.

Jiang, H., & Men, R. L. (2017). Creating an Engaged Workforce: The Impact of Authentic Leadership, Transparent Organizational Communication, and Work-Life Enrichment. *Communication Research*, *44*(2), 225–243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215613137

Jiménez, B. S. (2017). The effects of hierarchy, centralization, and formalization on municipal fiscal health: An empirical test of the bureaucratic ideal. *Public Administration*, *95*(3), 791–806. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12327

Johari, J., & Yahya, K. K. (2019). Organizational structure, work involvement, and job performance of public servants. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *42*(8), 654-663. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1498106

John, L. M., & Shafi, M. (2020). Impact of organizational structure and social support on pro-social rule breaking: A frontline perspective. *Cogent Business & Management*, *7*(1), 1781994. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1781994

Johari, J., & Yahya, K. K. (2019). Organizational Structure, Work Involvement, and Job Performance of Public Servants. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *42*(8), 654–663. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1498106

Jonsson, K., Hultin, M., Härgestam, M., Lindkvist, M., & Brulin, C. (2021). Factors influencing team and task performance in intensive care teams in a simulated scenario. *Simulation in Healthcare*, *16*(1), 29-36. https://doi.org/10.1097/SIH.0000000000000462

Joseph, O. O., & Kibera, F. (2019). Organizational culture and performance: Evidence from microfinance institutions in Kenya. *SAGE Open*, *9*(1), 1-10, 2158244019835934. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019835934

Jumanne, A. S. & Njoroge, J. (2018). Organizational change management and employee performance in public sector organizations in Kenya: The case of the parliamentary service commission. *International Journal of Education and Research*, *6*(6), 317-336.

Kacmar, K. M., Zivnuska, S., & White, C. D. (2007). Control and exchange: The impact of work environment on the work effort of low relationship quality employees. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *18*(1), 69-84. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.11.002

Kahn, W. A. (1990). *Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work*. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(4), 692-724.

Kalogiannidis, S. (2020). Impact of effective business communication on employee performance. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, *5*(6). 1-6. http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2020.5.6.631

Kang, S. P., Chen, Y., Svihla, V., Gallup, A., Ferris, K., & Datye, A. K. (2022). Guiding change in higher education: An emergent, iterative application of Kotter's change model. *Studies in Higher Education, 47*(2), 270-289. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1741540

Karamipour, M. R., Mehraban, M., & Jahani, S. (2015). The effect of organizational culture on the employee's creativity. *SAUSSUREA Multidisciplinary International Peer-Reviewed Journal*, *3*(2), 40-53.

Karaxha, H., & Ramosaj, B. (2018). *The Main Types of Organizational Changes: A Case Study of Kosovo*.

Karanja, A. W. (2015). Organizational change and employee performance: A case of the Postal Corporation of Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *7*(11), 232-241.

Kelly, K. (2017). *Review of Existing Models for Formal Structures about Innovation*.

Kenton, W. (2023). Organizational structure for companies with examples and benefits. Investopedia. *com/terms/o/organizational structure. asp*.

Khosa, Z. A., Rehman, Z. U., Asad, A., Bilal, M. A., Hussain, N., & Scholars, M. P. (2015). The impact of organizational change on the employees' performance in the banking sector of Pakistan. *Journal of Business and Management*, *17*(3), 54-61. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-17325461

Kimhi, S., & Oliel, Y. (2019). Change management and organizational performance in selected manufacturing companies in Anambra State, Nigeria. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, *6*(05), 5437-5445. https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v6i5.06

Kivunja, C. (2018). Distinguishing between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework: A systematic review of lessons from the field. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *7*(6), 44-53. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n6p44

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(5), 26-41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26

Klimas, P. (2016). Organizational culture and coopetition: An exploratory study of the features, models, and role in the Polish Aviation Industry. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *53*, 91-102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.11.012

Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C., Hildebrandt, V., Van Buuren, S., Van der Beek, A. J., & De Vet, H. C. (2012). Development of an individual work performance questionnaire. International *Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *62*(1), 6-28.

Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C. M., Hildebrandt, V. H., De Vet, H. C., & Van der Beek, A. J. (2014). Construct validity of the individual work performance questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *56*(3), 331-337. https://doi.org/10.1108/17410401311285273

Kotter, J. P. (1996). Leading change. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press. Kouzes, JM, & Posner, BZ (2002). The leadership challenge. San Francisco, CA.

Kotter, J. P. (2007). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail.

Kotter, J. (2012). How the most innovative companies capitalize on today's rapid-fire strategic challenges still make their numbers. *Harvard Business Review*, *90*(11), 43-58.

Kotter, J. P., & Cohen, D. S. (2012). The heart of change: Real-life stories of how people change their organizations. Harvard Business Press.

Kotter, J. P., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2008). Choosing Strategies for Change- In an increasingly dynamic environment, managers need to learn how to combat resistance to change. They can start by recognizing which of the four most common types of resistance they face and then choosing the right combination of techniques to overcome it. Harvard Business Review, 130.

Kopar, E. A. (2015). Influence of organizational culture on strategy implementation at the University of Nairobi (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Korbi, K. (2015). Leadership and strategic change. *The Journal of Organizational Management Studies*, *2015*, 1-32. https://doi.org/10.5171/2015.638847

Kaur, S., & Jain, D. P. K. (2020). Impact of Organizational Communication On Employee Engagement*: A Review*. *17*(2), 2-16.

Kulikowski, K. (2018). Measurement of work engagement with a single-item measure. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, *49*(4), 406-415. https://doi.org/10.24425/119509

Kumarasinghe, H. P. N. I., & Dilan, H. (2021). Organizational change and change management. *Contemporary Innovations in Management*, 49-69.

Kwizera, M., Osunsan, O. K., Abiria, P., Florence, I., Augustine, W., & Innocent, B. (2019). Effect of Organizational Change on Employee Performance among Selected Commercial Banks

in Bujumbura, Burundi. *East African Scholars Journal of Economics, Business and Management*, *2*(4), 225–234. http://www.easpublisher.com/easjebm/

Landa, E. (2018). Influence of Training on Employees' Performance in Public Institutions in Tanzania. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, *8*(2), 324-336.

Leavitt, H. J., & Kaufman, R. (2003). Why hierarchies thrive. *Harvard Business Review*, *81*(3), 96-112. http://harvardbusinessonline.sp.harvard.edu/b01/en/hbr/hbrsa/cuent/0303/article.

Lewis, L. (2019). Organizational change: Creating change through strategic communication. John Wiley & Sons.

Liu, T., Wang, H., Liu, Y., Li, Z., Zhang, Y., Zhu, H., ... & Jiang, D. (2025). Effect of organizational change on employee innovation performance: A dual mediation model. *PloS One*, *20*(2),1-26, e0313056. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313056

Lines, B. C., Sullivan, K. T., Smithwick, J. B., & Mischung, J. (2015). Overcoming resistance to change in engineering and construction: Change management factors for owner organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, *33*(5), 1170-1179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2015.01.008

Lukaszewski, J. (2006). Rethinking employee communication: A strategic analysis (No. 5). Jim Lukaszewski Strategy.

Majewska-Button, M. (2010). *Factors influencing organizational change in the Department of Defense*. The University of Oklahoma. [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation].

Makumbe, W. (2016). Predictors of effective change management: A literature review. *African Journal of Business Management*, *10*(23), 585-593. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2016.8208

Maxham III, J. G., Netemeyer, R. G., & Lichtenstein, D. R. (2008). The retail value chain: linking employee perceptions to employee performance, customer evaluations, and store performance. *Marketing Science*, *27*(2), 147-167. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1070.0282

Men, L. R., Neill, M., & Yue, C. A. (2020). Examining the effects of symmetrical internal communication and employee engagement on organizational change outcomes. *Public Relations Journal*, *13*(4), 1-19.

Meenakshi Sharma, et al. (2023). Analyzing the Relationship between Employee Engagement and Job Performance. *Tuijin Jishu/Journal of Propulsion Technology*, *44*(4), 1627–1635. https://doi.org/10.52783/tjjpt.v44.i4.1115

McIntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, *2*(1), 1-12 2333393615597674. https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393615597674

MOE. (2010a). Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP) IV (2010/11–2014/15). Program action plan, Addis Ababa: Author

Morrison, E. W. (1994). Role definitions and organizational citizenship behavior: The importance of the employee's perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, *37*(6), 1543-1567. https://doi.org/10.5465/256798

Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *20*(8), 1045-1053. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513733

Motowidlo, S. J., Borman, W. C., & Schmit, M. J. (1997). A theory of individual differences in task and contextual performance. Human Performance. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315799254

Muo, M.C. & Muo, I.K. (2014). Organizational Behaviour: A Coincidental Introduction. Ibadan, Famous books.

Murphy, K. R., & Kroeker, L. P. (1989). Dimensions of job performance. Testing: Applied and theoretical perspectives, 218-247.

Mustafa, N., Nakov, L., & Islami, X. (2019). The Impact of Organizational Changes on Increasing SMEs' Competitiveness. *Acta Universitatis Danubius: Oeconomica*, *15*(2),104-128.

Narayana, A. (2017). A critical review of organizational culture on employee performance. *American Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, *2*(5), 72-76. doi: https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajetm.20170205.13

Neyişci, N., & Erdoğan, A. (2022). Strategic leadership and its reflections in educational organizations. *JETT*, *13*(3), 15-22. https://doi.org/10.47750/jett.2022.13.03.002

Newman, D. A. (2014). Missing data: Five practical guidelines. Organizational Research Methods, *Agepub.Com/Journals Permissions. Nav*, *17*(4), 372-411. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114548590

Nohe, C., & Hertel, G. (2017). Transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: A meta-analytic test of underlying mechanisms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 1-13, 253589. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01364

Northouse, P. G. (2016). Leadership theory and practice (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Obialor, D. C. (2020). Information Technology and Global Supply Chain Management. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, *9*(8), 214-220. https://doi.org/10.24940/ijird/2020/v9/i8/AUG20058

Oreg, S., & Berson, Y. (2019). Leaders' impact on organizational change: Bridging theoretical and methodological chasms. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(1), 272-307. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2016.0138

Orth, P. B., & Cheng, A. S. (2019). Organizational change in the US Forest Service: Negotiating organizational boundaries in the collaborative process. *Environmental management*, *64*(1), 64-78. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-019-01145-y

Ogbu Edeh, PhD, F., & Obiora, O. C. (2019). Organisational change and employee extra-role behaviour: A study of selected private secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria. *Rhema University Journal of Management and Social Sciences, 7*(1), 149-159.

Osunsan, O. K., Florence, I., Augustine, W., Abiria, P., & Innocent, B. (2019). Effect of organizational change on employee performance among selected commercial banks in Bujumbura, *Burundi—East African Scholars Journal of Economics*, *2*(4), 225-234.

Paais, M., & Pattiruhu, J. R. (2020). Effect of motivation, leadership, and organizational culture on satisfaction and employee performance. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, *7*(8), 577-588. https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb. 2020.vol7.no8.577

Palenzuela, P., Delgado, N., & Rodríguez, J. A. (2019). Exploring the relationship between contextual performance and burnout in healthcare professionals. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, *35*(2), 115-121. https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2019a13

Park, S., & Kim, E. J. (2015). Revisiting knowledge sharing from the organizational change perspective. *European Journal of Training and Development*, *39*(9), 769-797. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-06-2015-0042

Pohekar, D. (2018). Role of ICT in universities' administrative services and management. *International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology*, *5*(11), 266-271.

Popli, S., & Rizvi, I. A. (2016). Drivers of employee engagement: The role of leadership style. *Global Business Review*, *17*(4), 965-979. https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150916645701

Popli, P., & Upadhyaya, A. (2023, February). A study on effect of technological shift on employees in the Higher education sector. In *ICASDMBW 2022: Proceedings of the International Conference on Application of AI and Statistical Decision Making for the Business World, ICASDMBW 2022, 16-17 December 2022, Rukmini Devi Institute of Advanced Studies, Delhi, India* (p. 195). European Alliance for Innovation.

Poole, M. S., & Van de Ven, A. H. (Eds.). (2004). Handbook of organizational change and innovation. Oxford University Press.

Poole, M. S., Van de Ven, A. H., Dooley, K., & Holmes, M. E. (2000). Organizational change and innovation processes: Theory and methods for research. Oxford University Press.

Porras, J. I., & Robertson, P. J. (1992). Organizational development: Theory, practice, and research. Consulting Psychologists Press.

Pradhan, R. K., & Jena, L. K. (2017). Employee performance at the workplace: Conceptual model and empirical validation. *Business Perspectives and Research*, *5*(1), 69-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/2278533716671630

Raineri, A. B. (2011). Change management practices: Impact on perceived change results. *Journal of Business Research*, *64*(3), 266-272. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.11.011

Riel, C. (2019). Effect of strategic leadership and organizational change on organizational performance in chartered universities, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Egerton University).

Safitri, F. A. (2019). The Effect of Training, Discipline, Motivation, and Satisfaction on Employee Achievement. SSRN.

Salmi, J., Sursock, A., & Olefir, A. (2017). Improving the performance of Ethiopian universities in science and technology: A policy note. Improving the Performance of Ethiopian Universities in Science and Technology: A Policy Note, World Bank Group.

Samal, A., & Chatterjee, D. (2020). Rethinking Organizational Change: Towards a Conceptual Framework. *South Asian Journal of Management*, *27*(2), 30.

Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2010). Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept. Work engagement: *A Handbook of Essential Theory and Research*, *12*(2010), 10-24.

Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2008). *Defining and measuring work engagement: Bringing clarity to the concept*.

Shabbir, M. S. (2018). *Organizational Structure and Employees' Performance: A Study of Brewing Firms in Nigeria*.

Sinte, A., Cherinet, Y., Desta, M., Achamyeleh, Y., & Minwyelet, Y. (2023). Practices and Challenges of Change Management in the Ethiopian Federal Supreme Court, *6*(4), 2554-2567. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V6-i4-38

Sirkin, H. L., Keenan, P., & Jackson, A. (2005). The hard side of change management. *Harvard Business Review*, *83*(10), 1-11.

Sulaiman, N. S., Abdullah, Z., & Man, N. I. (2023). The Effects of Employee Communication and Engagement On Organizational Performance: A Conceptual Study. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business*, *8*(46), 233 – 251. https://doi.org/10.55573/IJAFB.084616

Swearingen, R. L. (2019). *The ship of change: A model for organizational diagnosis and change management*. North Dakota State University.

Tamrat, W., & Teferra, D. (2018). Disparities and parallels in internationalization: The Ethiopian experience. *International Higher Education*, (92), 17-19.

Tareke, T. G., Woreta, G. T., Zewude, G. T., Amukune, S., Oo, T. Z., & Józsa, K. (2024). Overview of Ethiopian public higher education: Trends, system, challenges, and quality issues. *Education Sciences*, *14*(10), 1065.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). Putting the human back in ''human research methodology'': The researcher in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *4*(4), 271-277. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689810382532

Taylor, P. (2013). The effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the internationalization of SMEs in developing countries. African *Journal of Business Management*, *17*(19), 927-1937. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2013.1633

Taylor, S. N., Passarelli, A. M., & Van Oosten, E. B. (2019). Leadership coach effectiveness in fostering self-determined, sustained change. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *30*(6), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2019.101313

Thomas, O. O. (2014). Change management and its effects on organizational performance of Nigerian telecoms industries: Empirical Insight from Airtel Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, *1*(11), 170-179. https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v6i5.06

Tipurić, D. (2022). The Enactment of Strategic Leadership: A Critical Perspective (p. 323). Springer Nature

Ujhelyi, M., Barizsné, E. H., & Kun, A. I. (2015). Analyzing Organizational Changes–The Connection between the Scale of Change and Employees' Attitudes. *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Science Series*, *24*(1), 1191-1198.

Van Leeuwen, E., Van Knippenberg, D., & Ellemers, N. (2003). Continuing and changing group identities: The effects of merging on social identification and in-group bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *29*(6), 679-690. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203251210

Vakola, M., & Nikolaou, I. (2005). Attitudes towards organizational change: what is the role of employees' stress and commitment? *Employee Relations*, *27*(2), 160-174. https://doi.org/10.1108/01425450510572685

Van Scotter, J., Motowidlo, S. J., & Cross, T. C. (2000). Effects of task performance and contextual performance on systemic rewards. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(4), 526-535. https://doi.org/I0.1037M02I-9010.I5A526

Vlachopoulos, D. (2021). Organizational change management in higher education through the lens of executive coaches. *Education Sciences*, *11*(6), 2-15. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060269

Waclawski, J. (2002). Large-scale organizational change and performance: An empirical examination. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *13*(3), 289-305.

Walumbwa, F. O., & Hartnell, C. A. (2011). Understanding transformational leadership–employee performance links: The role of relational identification and self-efficacy. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, *84*(1), 153-172. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317910X485818

Wang, P. (2020). Reconsidering the costs and benefits of work engagement on work–family interaction and turnover intention: The antecedents and outcomes. *Community, Work & Family*, *23*(2), 224–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1492906

Wang, C.-H., & Chen, H.-T. (2020). Relationships among workplace incivility, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *3*(4), 415–429. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-09-2019-0105

Wang, G., Oh, I. S., Courtright, S. H., & Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group and Organization Management*, *36*(2), 223-270. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601111401017

Wanza, L., & Nkuraru, J. K. (2016). Influence of change management on employee performance: A case of the University of Eldoret, Kenya. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *7*(4), 190-199.

Wen, L. K., Salleh, A. L., Rahman, A. A., & Musaddad, H. A. (2023). The Mediating Effect of Work Engagement on the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Job Performance. In *Finance, Accounting and Law in the Digital Age: The Impact of Technology and Innovation in the Financial Services Sector* (pp. 789-799). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Woldegiyorgis, A. A. (2018). The case for an Ethiopian research university.

Worley, C. G., & Mohrman, S. A. (2014). Is change management obsolete? *Organizational Dynamics*, *43*(3), 214-224.

Yehualashet, G.A. (2020). Effective change management for sustainable development in higher education institutions. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *12*(10), 10-7176. https://doi.org/10.7176/JESD/11-7-03

Yohannis, D. B., & Kant, S. (2023). Effect of change management on employee performance in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, 12* (7), 151-160. http://ijmer.in.doi./2023/12.07.83

Yousaf, A., Yang, H., & Sanders, K. (2015). Effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on task and contextual performance of Pakistani professionals: The mediating role of commitment foci. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *30*(2), 133-150. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JMP-09-2012-0277

Zakiy, M., Kinasih, P., & As'ad, S. (2023). Organizational Changes and the Impact on the Performance of Sharia Bank Employees through Affective Commitment. *Jurnal Ekonomi and Bisnis Islam*, *9*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.20473/jebis.v9i1.34743

Zikmund, W. G., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C., & Griffin, M. (2013). Business research methods (Book Only). Cengage learning.

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX –A:

SAMPLED UNIVERSITY CONSENT FORM

Dear Responding Universities,

I am **Nega Balcha Tolosa**, a student currently pursuing a doctoral program in the philosophy of education policy and leadership at Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioral Studies. The topic of my study is "**The relationship between organizational change and staff job performance as mediated by work engagement in Ethiopian Research Universities**." Accordingly, the researcher randomly selected a sample of universities from the eight research universities. As a result, your university was among those chosen through the lottery method (Haramaya University, Arba Minch University, and Jimma University).

Therefore, the student researcher would like to request your consent regarding your university's participation and permission to collect data by accepted research ethical principles. Concerning the confidentiality and anonymity of the study, the data obtained from documents and individuals will be kept confidential, and it will be used solely for academic purposes with great care.

Thank you for your cooperation.

With Best Regards,

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX –B:

CONSENT LETTER FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear Research Participants,

I am **Nega Balcha Tolosa**, a PhD student at Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Language Studies.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of university staff (both academic and non-academic) regarding the relationships between organizational change and staff job performance, as mediated by work engagement, in Ethiopian research universities. This study is solely for academic purposes; your responses will be kept confidential and will not affect you personally or organizationally. All research participants will be assigned a code instead of their real names, allowing the investigator to easily identify participant responses without disclosing who is involved in the study.

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from participation without any penalty if you wish.

Therefore, I would like to request that you indicate your consent to participate in this study and provide me with accurate information, which will be essential for the success of my research endeavor. I hope you are clear about this, have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study, and fully understand why you are participating in this study.

Thank you for your participation.

Nega Balcha Tolosa, PhD student, mobile phone at **(912) 0999-30**; or email **negabalcha2000@gmail.com.**

Name of Participant's _____ Date_____ Signature_____

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

APPENDIX –C:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

General Direction: The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather relevant data required to assess **"the relationship between organizational change and staff job performance as mediated by work engagement in Ethiopian research universities."** Hence, you are kindly requested to give the necessary information on issues related to the study. The success of this study depends on your honest and genuine response to the questions. The student researcher also wants to assure you that your response will be kept confidential and that the information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

Section I/Demographic Information

Instruction: Please indicate your personal information by putting a tick (√) mark or writing information in the blank space for personal data.

1. Sex: - Male _____ Female_____ 2. Age: _____
3. Service year in this University: - _____
4. Qualification: - Diploma____ Bachelor's Degree____ MA/MSc____ PhD____ Other_____
5. Current Position: Academic Staff_____ Admin. Staff _____ In leadership _____
6. University: _____
7. Current Career rank: - (Only for Academic staff) Professor _____ Associate professor _____ Assistance Professor _____ Lecturer_____ Assistance Lecturer _____ Graduate Assistance _____Other_____

Section II/ Organizational Change

This questionnaire is to assess your perception concerning ***organizational change, work engagement, and staff performance at your institution since it began to work as a research University in 2020, or the ongoing change, if any.*** Please answer all items by putting a tick (√) mark on the scale options found to the right of each statement. As a result, sixty (60) descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how each statement fits your university's organizational change reality. Please **encircle** the rating **scales 1–5** below to show the extent the statement illustrates the reality.

Part I: Please use the scales 1–5 below to indicate the extent to which organizational change led to changes in the aspects of organizational structure for the **last five** years.

Not at all	To a little extent	Moderate extent	Great extent	Very great extent
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

No	**Change at this university has led the current organization to:**					
A	**Structure Change**	**Options**				
1	Increase my participation in job-related affairs.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	Improved my participation in the adoption of new initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Develop my participation in decisions for the adoption of new policies.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Enhance my participation in departmental planning.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I ask my leader before I do almost anything.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Where a person who makes their own decision is encouraged	1	2	3	4	5
7	Where issues sent to the immediate leader for approval were reduced.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Reduced actions that were taken here for the leader's approval.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Any decisions I make should be approved by leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Where I feel that I am in charge of most matters.	1	2	3	4	5
11	A person can decide without checking with their leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
12	A place where how the work is done is left up to the individual worker.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I perform my work without considerable interference.	1	2	3	4	5
14	The rule prohibits me from creating my work procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I was continuously monitored to ensure that I obeyed the rules.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I feel as if they are continuously being checked for my rule violations.	1	2	3	4	5
	Technological Change	**Options**				
17	Increase in organization-wide use of reliable online resources.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Reduced repetitive tasks are due to flexible technology.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Simplified student registration procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Improved data capturing speed and accuracy.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Increase in the storage and dissemination of data.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Increased speed in the retrieval of information.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Reduced the illegal activities within university administrative spaces.	1	2	3	4	5

24	Expansion of your organization's electronic management records.	1	2	3	4	5
	Leadership Change	**Options**				
25	Leadership that encourages workers' professional development (SPD).	1	2	3	4	5
26	Leadership who assigns tasks based on staff members' level of expertise.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Leadership to encourage department/office collaborative work.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Organizational leader to translates his/her goals to members of the office.	1	2	3	4	5
29	Leadership that encourages staff to take part in decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Leadership that can provide sufficient corporate direction.	1	2	3	4	5

Section III/ Staff Perceptions of Their Work Engagement

Kindly indicate your agreement for perception concerning the following twelve (12) descriptive statements, which are all related to your ***work engagement,*** and put the "√" mark under the appropriate options. Please use the agreement scales below to indicate your perception level.

Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Undecided (UD)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

A	**Work-Engagement**	**Options**				
1	I feel energized and strong at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I see my work is meaningful and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The time flies when I'm absorbed in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
4	In this university, I am proud of my job.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I forget everything around me while at work.	1	2	3	4	5
6	When I wake up in the morning, I am eager to go to work.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I find my job challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can work for extended periods without stopping.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I feel happy at this university when I work intensely.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I choose to stick to work, even when challenges arise.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am inspired by my job at this university.	1	2	3	4	5
12	It's hard for me to separate myself from my job.	1	2	3	4	5

Section IV/ Staff on their Job Performance

Kindly indicate your agreement of perception concerning the following eighteen (18) descriptive statements, which are all related to your ***job performance,*** and put the -√- mark under the appropriate options. Please use the agreement scales below to indicate your perception level.

Strongly Disagree (SD)	disagree (D)	Undecided (UD)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

No.	**Staff Job Performance**	**Options**				
1	I maintain a high standard of work.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am capable of handling my assignments without much supervision	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am very passionate about my work.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I know I can handle multiple assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I complete my assignments on time.	1	2	3	4	5
6	My colleagues believe I am a high performer.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can separate the main issues from the side issues at work.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I work in a planned manner to complete my tasks on time	1	2	3	4	5
9	I extend help to my co-workers when asked or needed.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I love to handle extra responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I actively participate in group discussions and work Meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I praise my co-workers for their good work.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I derive a lot of satisfaction from developing others in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I share work knowledge and ideas with my team.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I maintain good coordination among fellow workers.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I communicate with my colleagues about organizational problems.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I came up with creative solutions to new problems.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I kept looking for new challenges in my job.	1	2	3	4	5

I appreciate your willingness and thoughtful collaboration in advance!!

Nega Balcha, PhD Candidate!

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

APPENDIX –D:

Interview Guide for Academic and Non-Academic Staff and Their Leaders

Dear Participants,

The purpose of this semi-structured interview is to gather data for the study entitled "**The relationship between organizational change and staff job performance as mediated by work engagement in Ethiopian Research Universities**." The researcher has kindly invited you to participate because of your experience as a researcher at Research University and your clear understanding of the phenomenon under study. Participation in this interview is voluntary, and the data collected will be used for research purposes only. The interview will take approximately 40 minutes of the informants' time and can be conducted in either English or Amharic.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

Nega Balcha Tolosa
Cell Phone: (912)-0999-30

Part I: Demographic Information

- May you introduce yourself: your **age**, **sex**, **college/institute/school**, **work unit, marital status, service year**, **academic rank,** and **Leadership position**?

Part II: Key Research Questions

A/ Organizational Change

1. Can you identify any specific changes that have occurred or are currently taking place at this university since it was designated as a research university by MoSHE in 2020?
2. Could you discuss how your organization has changed regarding **leadership** (fairness, collaboration, encouragement, goal-setting, observing individual differences, and others), **structure** (decision-making, hierarchy of authority, staff perceiving themselves as their boss, strict adherence to rules), and **technology** (internet services, ICT services, the use of other electronic media, the speed of data capture, and data retrieval)?

B/ Work Engagement Practice

3. What does the work engagement in your university look like? (dedication, absorption, and vigor?).

C/Staff Job Performance

4. Could you describe how your staff performs their jobs as outlined in the job description?
5. To what extent does your staff perform beyond their job description or engage in extra-role activities, such as helping each other, supporting new staff, and others, if any?

D/ Relationship among organizational change, Work engagement, and staff job performance

6. Can you create the relationships among organizational change, work engagement, and staff job performance?
7. Could you explain how factors of organizational change (such as leadership, structure, and technology) affect staff job performance (both task-related and extra-role) in your institution?
8. Could you explain how work engagement affects staff job performance?
9. Can you explain the direct and indirect effects of organizational change factors on staff job performance through work engagement?

If you have any points that are missing or additional suggestions, please specify. _____.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

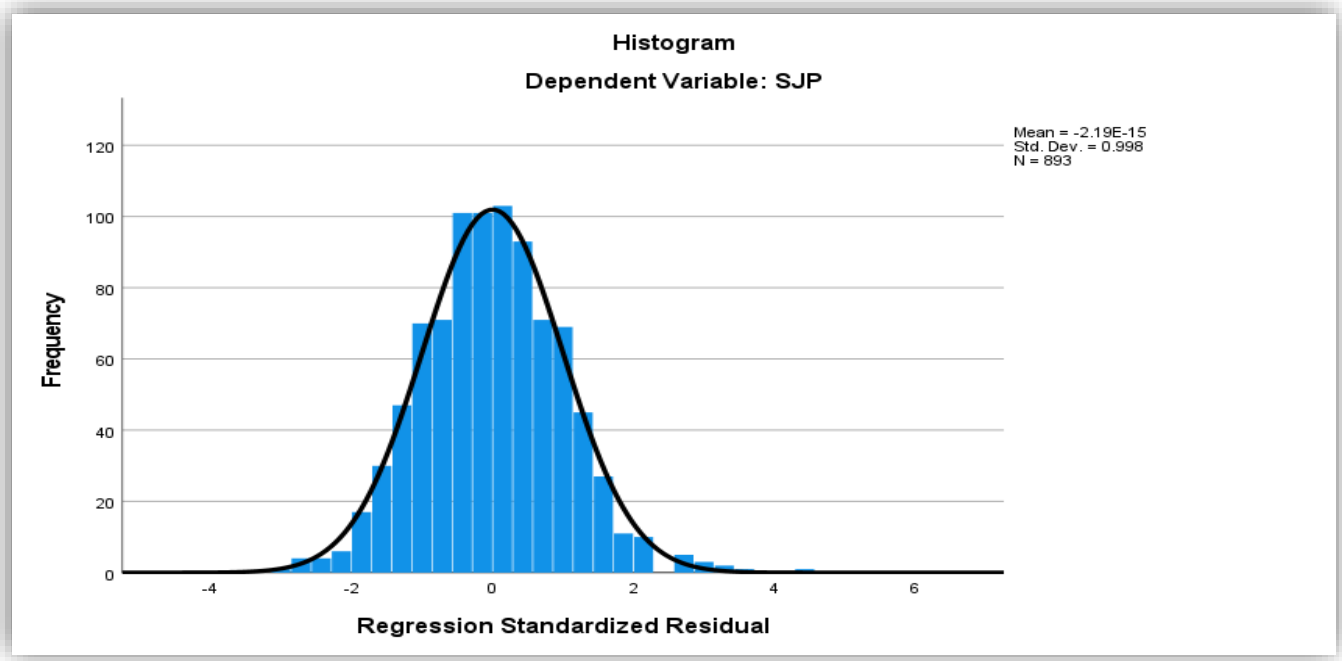
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES

APPENDIX –E:

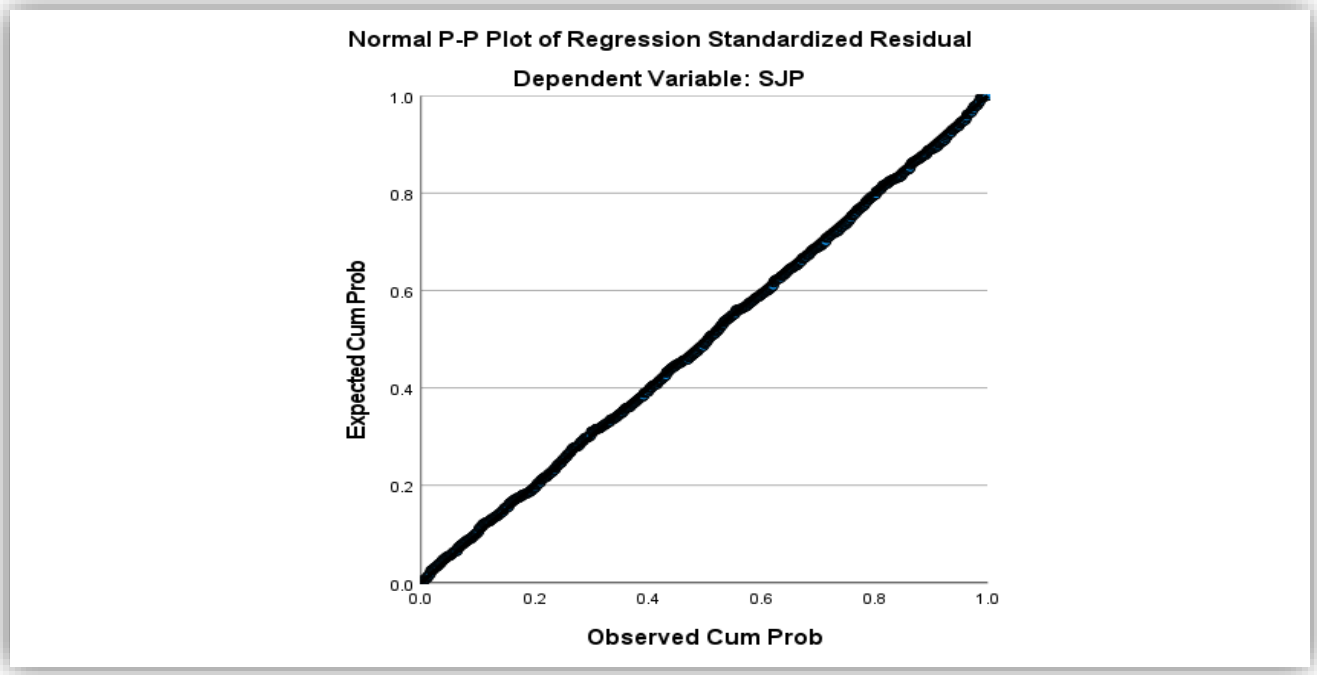
Collinearity Statistics

Coefficients[a]											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.980	.099		9.880	.000					
	TECH	.339	.023	.404	14.891	.000	.605	.447	.352	.759	1.318
	LCH	.208	.022	.255	9.554	.000	.509	.305	.226	.784	1.276
	OSCH	.301	.028	.273	10.801	.000	.470	.341	.256	.879	1.138
a. Dependent Variable: SJP											

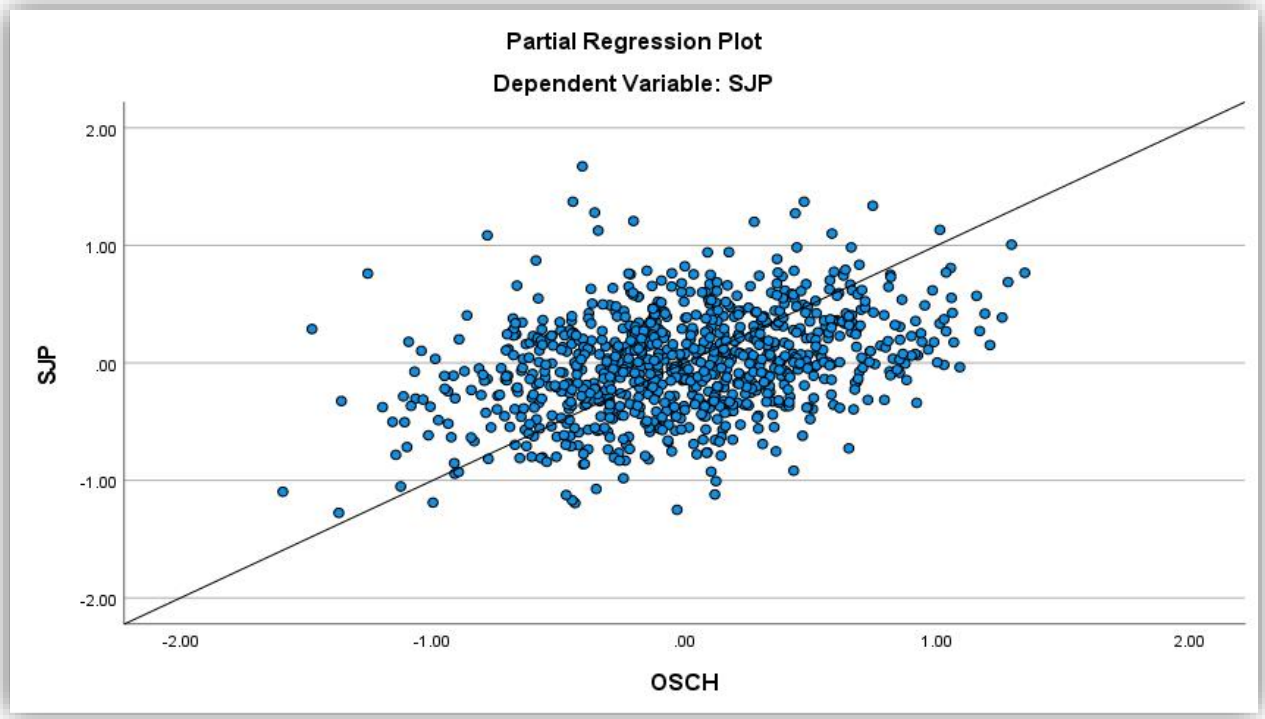
Normality Test

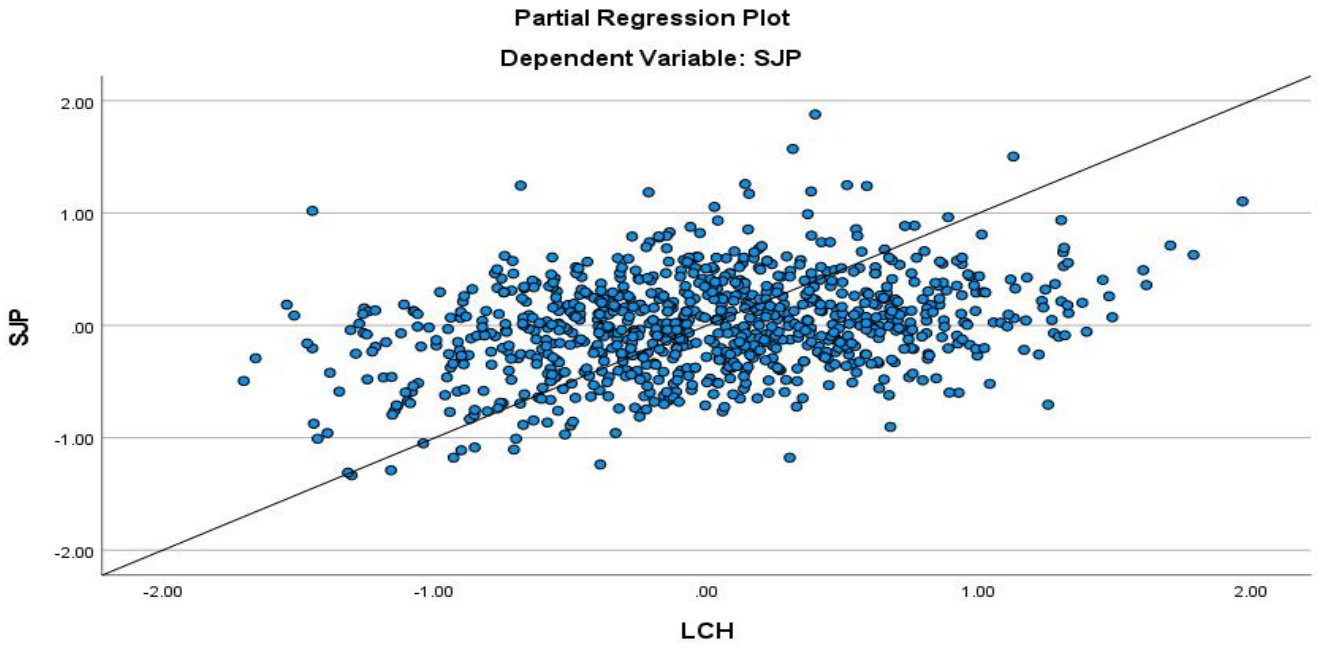


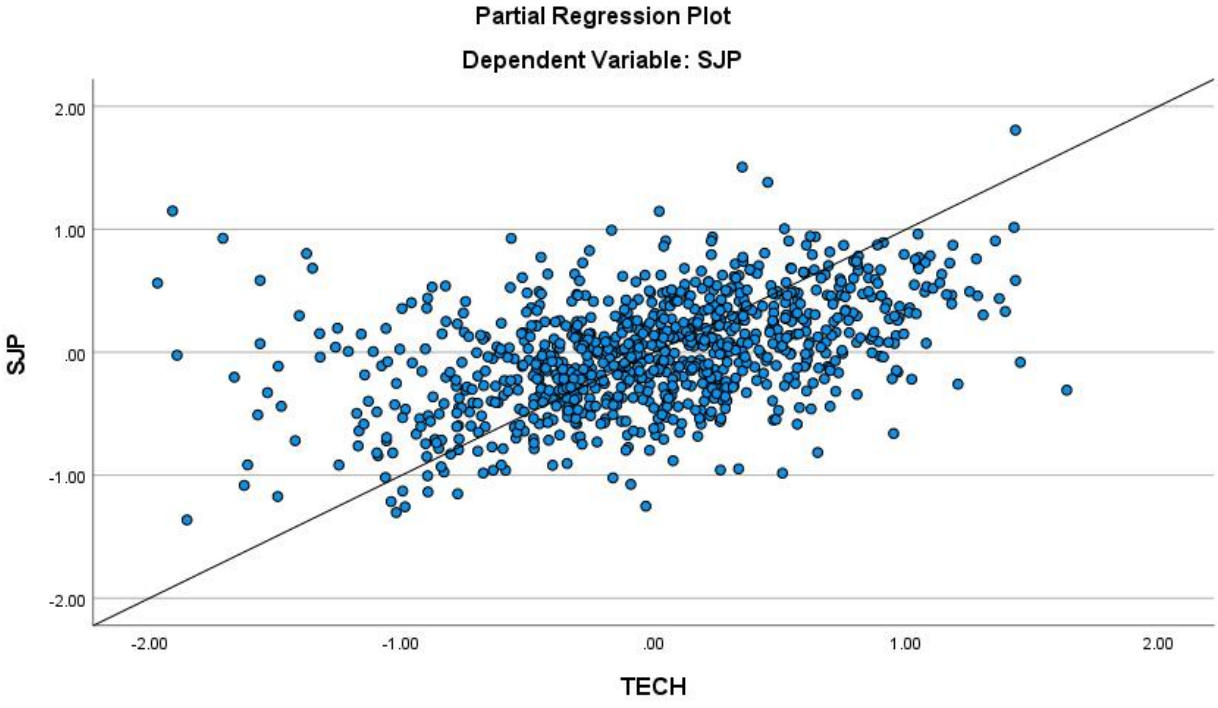
Linearity Test



Homoscedasticity Test




Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: SJP
SJP
2.00
1.00
.00
-1.00
-2.00
-2.00
-1.00
.00
1.00
2.00
LCH


Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: SJP
SJP
2.00
1.00
.00
-1.00
-2.00
-2.00
-1.00
.00
1.00
2.00
TECH

International Society for Educational Planning

Educational Planning Journal

Letter of Acceptance

The paper currently titled:

WORK ENGAGEMENT AS A MEDIATOR: LINKING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURAL CHANGE TO STAFF PERFORMANCE IN ETHIOPIAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Authors: NEGA BALCHA TOLOSA and JEILU OUMER HUSSIEN

has been accepted for publication in the journal.

All rights, and interests in, and the copyright in this paper, which are owned by **NEGA BALCHA TOLOSA and JEILU OUMER HUSSIEN** have been transferred to The International Society for Educational Planning for publication in *EDUCATIONAL PLANNING*.

The paper is now presented to the Publication Office to be prepared for final editing. It is scheduled for online publication in the Fall Issue 2025 (Volume 32, Issue No. 4) of the journal. The Publication Office anticipates publishing the journal issue by the end of November, 2025.

The journal editors want to express special thanks to the authors for their unique contributions to the journal.



Dr. T. C. Chan
Editor-in-Chief

Date: July 17, 2025.

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የትምህርትና የባህርይ ጥናት ኮሌጅ
የትምህርት ዕቅድ እና ሥራ
አመራር ትምህርት ክፍል

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
BEHAVIORAL STUDIES
Department of Educational Planning
and Management

Date:- Nov. 11/2024

To Whom It May Concern

Nega Baicha Tolosa is PhD student in the Department of Educational Planning and Management. He/She is currently writing on the title:-

The relationships between organizational change factors and staff job performance as mediate by work engagement in Ethiopian Research universities

This is therefore, to kindly request your good office to offer him/her with the requested information. The department would like to thank your good office in advance for your cooperation.

With Regards,

Demoze Rev...ta (PhD)
Chairman, Department of Educational Planning and Management
Addis Ababa University

☎ 239280 | ✉ AAU 1176 | Fax 01 1101240 9249 | E.Mail