

# Determinants of change management practice in public sectors: The case of Awi National Administration, Ethiopia

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## Abstract

*The study investigated the factors that influence change management in the public sector of the Awi National Administration. The research aimed to explore the relationship between determinants and change management practices, assess the impact of those practices, and identify the key factors that affect change management in public sectors. It employed a descriptive and explanatory research design with a quantitative approach to achieve objectives. The researchers used the census sampling technique to obtain information for the study. It utilized primary data collected from 288 participants through a structured questionnaire. A Likert scale with a 5-point rating system was used to measure the respondents' levels of agreement. The results indicate that Communication ( $\beta=0.664$ ), organizational structure ( $\beta=0.138$ ), employee attitude ( $\beta=0.164$ ), and organizational culture ( $\beta=0.054$ ) were positively and significantly associated with change management practice at the 5% level of significance. The findings emphasize the essential role of communication, organizational culture, employee attitudes, and structure in facilitating effective change management.*

**Keywords:** Change management, Communication, Employee attitude, Organizational culture, Organizational structure

## Introduction

One of the most important aspects of the government system that has undergone significant modifications is still the public sector, so reforms in the public sector are becoming more often seen when using available public funding. The current reforms in the private sector and the ideals established by the new public management with regard to strategy and execution have impacts on these reforms (Obudo and Wario, 2015).

Change is unavoidable, and managers everywhere are taking to adjust to changing circumstances in the market while also realizing that a proactive management system is required, not a reactive one. They are looking at strategies to deal with a workforce that is more skilled or works in teams, as well as technology that becoming more sophisticated. Managers should be more than piecemeal, ad hoc change programs that simply address current issues if they are to accomplish a variety of goals (Ekechi and Umar, 2020; Junnaid et al., 2020; Ogohi Daniel, 2019; Kumarasinghe and Dilan, 2021; Nyekazi and Sip, 2023).

Change management is currently highly in demand as a business management technology. Many consider it the most challenging aspect of a manager's role, requiring complex skills. This is particularly relevant in today's business environment, where frequent and significant changes are seen as crucial for companies to adjust shifts in market demands and the global economic landscape. Change management has evolved in recent years, with the development of models, processes, and plans aimed at mitigating the impact of change on organizations (Teczke et al., 2017).

It is crucial for enhancing the performance of the public sector in both developed and developing countries. Despite the focus on change management, organizations, including the public sector, find it difficult to manage organizational change effectively. The discipline still seeks general principles of change to guide practices. The goals of change management vary across different sectors, but they all aim to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness to rapid changes (Mayende and Wanyoike, 2016; Schmidt et al., 2017).

In Ethiopia, the government is responsible for upholding stability and fostering rapid economy in addition to social progress. Effective public service delivery is a key element of this transformation. Change management practices should focus on transitioning from outdated methods to contemporary adaptive procedures (Engida et al., 2022). Successful change should be implemented at operational, strategic, and people levels. Change management is increasingly the focus of studies to prevent obstacles (Mon et al., 2019). Public sector organizations should assess their performance, systems, strategy, and processes to identify necessary adjustments and be aware of how changes may affect employees based on their backgrounds, cultures, and capacities for change (B.A. Bhuiyan and Alam, 2014; Radwan, 2022). Change management is a planned approach for dealing with organizational, human, and environmental changes (Kahunyo, 2020).

Numerous issues influence the process of change in organizations, particularly in the public sector. Change is needed for poor environmental compatibility, and its successful management requires optimistic mindset and willingness to change. Broad stakeholder participation and the enhancement of skills and competencies are key to promoting effective change management (Errida and Lotfi, 2021; Hodges, 2018; Nyaguthii, 2022). Change management practices are essential for organizations to adapt changes in technology, the marketplace, and the global economy. In the context of Ethiopian public sectors, the challenges of change implementation have been evident, leading to the need for a detailed investigation into the determinants of change

management practices, to respond to the changes in technology, marketplace, global economy, social values, and political environment, organizations should adopt change management strategies with speed, efficiency, and success. These strategies are necessary for achieving desired results within a predetermined period (S.H. Bhuiyan and Amagoh, 2011; Kahunyo and Waithaka, 2019; Solomon et al., 2018). It is noted that there is a lack of adequate research on the determinants of change management practice in the public sectors at Awi Nationality Administration, indicating a need for detailed investigation into the determinants of change management practice in the area. The study was aimed to test the following hypothesis: 1) organizational culture has a significant effect on change management practice; 2) communication has a significant effect on change management practice; 3) employee attitude has a significant effect on change management practice; 4) organizational structure has a significant effect on change management practice.

## **Methods**

### **Research design and research approach**

This study used a quantitative research approach, and the data were gathered using questionnaires. In addition, the researchers employed descriptive and explanatory research designs to describe the variables that influence change management practices in the studied area.

### **Population and sampling technique**

The researchers conducted the study on public sector offices with 288 employees. The census sampling technique was used to obtain useful information for the study. Therefore, all of the employees were included in the data collection process.

### **Source of data**

The researchers used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. A Likert scale with a 5-point rating system to measure respondents' levels of agreement was employed. In this particular level of agreement, (1) indicates strongly disagree, (2) refers to disagree, (3) shows moderate, (4) indicates agree, and (5) shows strongly agree. The secondary data were also gathered from books, journals, and articles.

### **Methods of data analysis**

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 software, which produced regression and correlation models and descriptive statistics. To determine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, the researchers did correlation and multiple regression analyses. The Pearson correlation analysis was likely used to

examine the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The researchers developed a multiple regression model with the following structure:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where, Y is the dépendent variable (change management practice)

$\beta_0$  is the régression constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$  are the coefficients of the Independent variables

X1-X4 are the indépendant variables (employée attitude, organisation structure, organisation culture, and communication) respectively.

$\varepsilon$  is an error term.

## Results

The respondents' demographic profile shows, that while 60.1% were males, the remaining 39.9% were females (Table 1). Most participants (27%) were 26–30 years old, while 24.9% were over 40 years old. The majority of them hold a degree (72.9%) and work as experts (83.3%). Over half (60.8%) have more than six years of working experience, while 24% have 3 to 4 years of experience. The data reflects a skilled and experienced workforce, with a strong representation in expert roles and higher education qualifications.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics**

Participant profile		Percent
Age	Male	60.1
	Female	39.9
	18-25	5.5
	26-30	27.0
	31-35	18.7
	36-40	23.5
Educational level	>40	24.9
	Diploma	11.8
	Degree	72.9
	Masters	14.9
	Other	.3
Current position	Supporter	6.6
	Expert	83.3
	Management	10.1
Working experience	<2	3.1
	3-4	24.0
	5-6	12.2
	>6	60.8

Employee attitude towards change management has the highest average mean score of (3.89), indicating strong agreement with effective change management practices. Employees perceived organizational structure's role in change management with a moderate average mean of (3.28), reflecting a moderate level of agreement.

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of Employee Attitude**

Item	Mean	Standard deviation
Employee Attitude	3.89	0.88
Organization Structure	3.28	0.95
Organizational Culture	3.74	0.87
Communication	3.96	0.90
Change Management Practice	3.58	1.03

The appraisal of "organizational culture" also has a moderate average mean of 3.74, suggesting a moderate awareness of its impact on change management. Communication received the highest evaluation score of 3.96, indicating good judgment regarding its importance. The practice of change management was rated with a moderate average mean of 3.58, showing a moderately positive view among respondents.

### **Correlational analysis**

The correlation analysis examined the strength and direction of the relationships between the different variables examined in the study. A correlation coefficient close to 1 or -1 would suggest a strong positive or negative linear association between the variables, while a value near 0 would indicate little to no linear relationship (Lee Rodgers and Nicewander, 1988).

The correlation matrix results show that all of the independent variables included in the study were positively related to one another and these relationships were statistically significant at the 1% level (Table 3). This suggests the variables tend to move in the same direction - as one increases, the others also tend to increase, and vice versa.

**Table 3: Pearson correlation matrix of variables**

Correlations		change manageme nt practice	Employee e attitude	organizatio nal structure	Organizatio nal culture	Commu nication
change management practice	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1				
Employee attitude	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.494**	1			
organizational structure	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.592**	.333**	1		
Organizational culture	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.122*	-.049	.070	1	
Communication	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.850**	.476**	.532**	.063	1
		.000	.000	.000	.285	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

**Multiple linear regression analysis**

The results suggest the predictor variables are not highly correlated with each other, and multicollinearity does not appear to be a concern in this model Table 4.

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) explained ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	104.425	4	26.106	226.938	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	32.555	283	.115		
	Total	136.980	287			
Dependent Variable: change management practice						
Predictors: (Constant), communication, Organizational culture, Employee attitude, organizational structure						

The ANOVA results show an F-statistic of (226.938) and degrees of freedom (F (4, 287) = 226.938) (Table 4). The p-value associated with this F-statistic is reported as ( $p < 0.000$ ), which indicates the ANOVA model is highly statistically significant. The statistical significance of the ANOVA suggests that the overall regression model,

including all the predictor variables, is effective in explaining a significant portion of the variation in the dependent variable. In other words, the combination of predictor variables included in the model collectively has a significant association with the outcome variable. The high F-statistic value of (226.938) further reinforces that the model has a good overall fit to the data. The larger the F-statistic, the greater the explanatory power of the regression model.

The R-squared value accounts for (76.2%) of the explanatory power of the variables in the model (Table 5). This suggests that (76.2%) of the variance in change management can be explained by the variables included in the study's model. However, the remaining (23.8%) is attributable to other factors not covered in this study. The adjusted R-squared of (75.9%) further confirms that the variation in the dependent variable is well explained by the set of explanatory variables included in the model. The regression model was able to explain (76.2%) of the variation in change management using the four independent variables examined. This suggests the model provides a good fit to the data and that these four factors are important predictors of change management practices. However, still other variables not captured in the model account for (23.8%) of the variation in the dependent variable.

**Table 5: Model Summary and Coefficients Summary**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	-.089	.157	-.569	.570
	Employee attitude	.138	.044	.104	.002
1	organizational structure	.164	.031	.180	.000
	Organizational culture	.054	.023	.070	.017
	Communication	.664	.035	.701	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Change management practice					
R= .873		R <sup>2</sup> = .762		adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .759	

The regression model was developed to analyze this study.

$$\text{CMP} = -0.089 + 0.138\text{EA} + 0.164\text{OS} + 0.054\text{OC} + 0.664\text{COM}$$

The variables employee attitude, organizational structure, organizational culture, and communication were all found to be statistically significant at a 5% significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 5). This suggests that these variables were all important for predicting the outcome. Additionally, the study revealed that among these variables, communication is the most crucial, with a beta coefficient of (0.664) and a p-value of (0.000). This indicates that for every unit increase in communication, the outcome changes by (0.664) units in the same direction. The second most important variable is

organizational structure, with a beta coefficient of (0.164) and a p-value of (0.000). The third and fourth most important variables were employee attitude and organizational culture, with beta coefficients of (0.138) and (0.054), and p-values of (0.000), respectively.

## **Discussion**

According to the regression analysis results, the beta coefficient for organizational culture, suggesting a positive relationship between the two variables. This implies that for every unit increase in the evaluation of organizational culture, change management practices increase in the same direction. The p-value is statistically significant at the 5% level, indicating that the respondents' evaluation of organizational culture significantly affects change management practices. Therefore, based on the p-value and the regression coefficient, the first hypothesis that organizational culture has a significant positive effect on change management practice is accepted. This result is consistent with (Kakucha et al., 2018; Mayende and Wanyoike, 2016) (Radwan, 2022) (Ayan, 2018).

Communication variable has a positive and statistically significant correlation with employees' change management practices. This implies that as communication increases, change management practices also increase. The beta coefficient suggests that a one-unit increase in communication leads to increase in change management practices in the same direction. The p-value indicates that the relationship between communication and change management practices is statistically significant at the 5% significance level. This means that respondents with a higher evaluation of communication tend to have a greater practice of change management. In other words, higher levels of communication within an organization are associated with employees having a more positive view and greater practice of change management in their jobs. Based on the regression results, with a significant p-value, the hypothesis that communication has a significant positive effect on the practice of change management is accepted. This highly significant value obtained from communication with change management practice is supported by the study of (M. A. B. Ahmad and Malaysia, 2016; Obudo and Wario, 2015).

The regression analysis to test the effect of employee attitude on the practice of change management indicates that employee attitude has a positive effect on the practice of change management, as perceived by the respondents. A one-unit increase in the evaluation of employee attitude will lead increase in the practice of change



management in the same direction. The p-value is statistically significant at the 5% level, suggesting that the level of employee attitude significantly affects the practice of change management. Therefore, based on the significant p-value from the regression result, the hypothesis stating that employees' attitude has a significant effect on the practice of change management was accepted.

This variable also has an important effect on the practice of change management. The results indicate that organizational structure has a positive and statistically significant effect on the practice of change management at the 1% significance level. The regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for this explanatory variable suggests that a one-unit increase in organizational structure is associated with change in the practice of change management in the same direction. Therefore, based on the significant p-value and the regression coefficient, the hypothesis that organizational structure has a significant effect on the practice of change management is accepted. This result is in line with Kakucha et al., 2018.

## **Conclusion**

The study aimed to assess the variables driving management change in the Awi National Administration public sector. The study concludes that effective communication, favorable organizational culture, positive employee attitude, and appropriate organizational structure all have a substantial impact on change management. This is because the analysis shows a statistically significant relationship between these influencing elements and change management, with a p-value of less than 5%. The independent variables (communication, organizational culture, employee attitude, and organizational structure) contribute approximately (76.2%) to explaining change management practices, according to the R-squared value of (0.762).

## **Suggestions for further research**

The study examined the influence of employee attitude, communication, organizational culture, and organizational structure on change management practice. However, this study only accounted for 75.9% of change management attribution. This means there are other determinants that influence change management practice. So, future researchers should explore leadership, employee commitment, teamwork, and readiness to change, as well as other determinants.

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**Data availability statement**

All the important data are included in the article. If additional data are required, the corresponding author (Samrawit Tilahun Bogale) can be responsible for it.

**Author's contribution statement**

This work was carried out in collaboration between authors. Samrawit Tilahun Bogale proposed the study, developed the proposal, and wrote the manuscript, techniques, and all steps of the research until final submission. Yilkal Andualem Demeke designed the study, wrote the proposal, analyzed the data, interpreted the results, wrote the first draft, and revised the first versions of the manuscript.

**Disclosure statement**

The authors stated no potential conflict of interest.

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