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Leading Change at The Faculty of Education in Light of Kotter's Change Model

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine Kotter's leading change model at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum with a major purpose of evaluating the contribution of this theory to enhance the importance and understanding of leading change at the University context. In doing so, a survey research design was employed. Among 239 staff members at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum, data were collected from 106 (44.00%) respondents using questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using one sample t-test. The result showed that creating a climate for change has been practised in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. The Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has engaged and enabled the whole organization in the change process. The findings also indicated that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has implemented and sustained change process. Hence, the implication of these findings adds to the understanding of how college officials ought to play a role model in embedding the change in their behaviors.

Keywords: *Leadership, Change, Kotter Model*

Abstrak:

tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji model perubahan terkemuka Kotter di Fakultas Pendidikan Universitas Khartoum dengan tujuan utama mengevaluasi kontribusi teori ini untuk meningkatkan pentingnya dan pemahaman tentang memimpin perubahan pada konteks Universitas. Desain penelitian ini menggunakan survey. Di antara 239 staf di Fakultas Pendidikan Universitas Khartoum, data dikumpulkan dari 106 (44,00%) responden dengan menggunakan kuesioner. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa menciptakan iklim untuk perubahan telah dipraktikkan di Fakultas Pendidikan Universitas Khartoum. Fakultas Pendidikan Universitas Khartoum melibatkan seluruh organisasi dalam proses perubahan. Temuan ini juga menunjukkan bahwa Fakultas Pendidikan Universitas Khartoum menerapkan dan mempertahankan proses perubahan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menambah pemahaman tentang bagaimana seharusnya pejabat perguruan tinggi menjadi panutan dalam menanamkan perubahan.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan, Perubahan, Model Kotter

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of change in organizations can be perceived and implemented in many ways (Khodeir & Nabawy, 2021). Change defines something that is shifting from one state to another in general. We live in a world where change and development mean leaving old paradigms and embracing new perspectives. Similarly, academic institutions are called to adapt to an increasingly competitive and complex environment (Guzmán, 2011). Organizations need change processes to enable them to nimbly innovate, introduce more productive practices and processes (Redding, 2012). In the same way, the most frequently cited explanations for change found in the literature are: changing institution type, offering new courses, building capacity, becoming a research institution, and improving quality (Chandler, 2013). So, the approach a leader (or organization) takes with regard to a specific change initiative represents change leadership (Farkas, 2013).

Due to a variety of external social, economic, and political pressures, higher education institutions around the world are becoming more dynamic and changing. In this respect, Kondakci (2019) discusses many of the pressures for a change facing higher education. They stress on the need for effective leadership to respond effectively to the change (Lamidi, 2014). In the same way, Universities are changing in today's world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily (Ramaley, 2014). This shows that major changes in Universities need to be prepared, enforced, and sustained to turn the universities into institutions that can be functioned effectively and efficiently in the tumultuous climate (Ghasemy, 2014).

Hooper and Potter (2000) state that change leadership is creating a vision for the organization, making strategies that enable that vision to become reality, and ensuring that the people in the organization are driving towards the same goals. Robbins (2001) as cited in (Genie, 2019) mentions that building and communicating a shared vision, building supportive environment, redesigning/adjusting the organization and performance are dimensions of basic leadership behaviors and competencies that all successful leaders should behave while leading change. Herold (2008) proves that most of the change leadership behaviors such as communicating the plan for the change, building a guiding coalition, developing a sense of urgency or a compelling rationale for the change, and providing support are linked to support for the change. Kotter (1996) in his theory discusses leading change in terms of creating the climate for change by creating a sense of urgency, forming powerful guiding coalition, developing and communicating a vision, engage and enable the whole organization in leading change by removing obstacles and implementing and sustaining change.

Moreover, this study is based on John Kotter's Leading Change model. This model can be classified into three phases: create a climate for change, engage and enable the whole organization in leading change, and implementing and sustaining change (Kang'ethe, 2014). It has been used as a valuable framework within the university to identify faculty developers as facilitators of change (Diamond, 2005; Dawson et al., 2010). Carneiro (2010) uses it to analyze the effectiveness of strategic change and innovation on staff in higher education in general. Hence, this study is built on three phases of change leadership by Kotter (1996): creating the climate for change, engaging and enabling the whole organization in leading change, and implementing and sustaining change. Gill (2003), therefore, states that leading change enables the forceful movement of the members toward common visions, mission and goals of the higher education institutions.

Review of the literature demonstrates that leading change in higher education institutions has been the topic of many scholars such as: Al-Asbahi (2007) aimed to propose a model for leading change in Yemeni public universities in light of contemporary reality and trends. The study population consists of the academic, administrative leaders working in all Yemeni public universities, amount 145 leaders, 133 of them respond in the academic year (2006-2007). The study indicates that the reality of change leadership in Yemeni public universities from the point of view of the administrative leaders is in an averaged manner.

Similarly, Bunjak et al., (2022), Mittal et al., (2022) aims to determine what areas of change are most vulnerable to employee resistance. Its causes and the most prominent indicators of resistance to change, and the most critical leadership methods for dealing with change resisters from the viewpoint of the academic and administrative members. The researcher finds that the routine is one of the most important reasons for employees' resistance to change leadership. The researcher concludes with the importance of making change leadership and development part of the university's culture (Alqudah et al., 2022).

Another study conducted by Saqqa (2011) aimes to identify the skills required by academic leaders to lead change and the degree of their practice of those skills at Umm Al-Qura University. The study reaches the leading change of educational leaders from the faculty members' point of view, and the degree of practicing the motivation skills of the academic leaders is high.

Al-Lihyani (2011) aims to monitor the degree of department heads' practice of change leadership from the point of view of deans, department heads, and faculty members. The researcher uses the descriptive and analytical approach, and the questionnaire is used as a study tool. The study sample reaches 84 deans, department heads, and faculty members. The most important results the heads of departments in the Faculties of Education practice change to a high degree.

Al-Hubob (2012) aims at identifying the reality of the culture of change in Yemeni universities. Among the most prominent results are those Yemeni universities face many challenges that make them unable to keep pace with change requirements. Perhaps the most notable of these challenges are the rigidity of academic references, the absence of change management, the lack of transformational leadership, and the dominance of traditional teaching curricula and methods. The researcher recommends activating the university's role in spreading the culture of change. Furthermore, Samra (2014) aims to identify the degree of practicing change leadership to the heads of academic departments in the Palestinian universities. The researcher uses the descriptive-analytical method. The findings include the degree of practicing change leadership to the heads of academic departments in Palestinian universities from their perspective (4.01) and rated (80.27%). This rate means that there is a high degree of approval.

Al-Qarni (2016) aims to recognize the reality of the practice of the heads of academic departments at Tabuk University to leading change from the viewpoint of faculty members. The study reveals that the reality of the heads of academic departments at Tabuk University for the change leadership from the viewpoint of faculty members is high, and in an average of (4.02), the dimension of the modeling of behavior gets a very high estimation.

Another study conducted by Al-Kurdi (2017) aims to formulate a proposed strategy for the development of leading change in the HEIs in Gaza governorates in the light of the principles of sustainable development; through identifying the reality of leading change in the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG). The researcher adopts the analytical-descriptive approach, as well as the constructivist approach. The study reaches to the total degree of the questionnaire of the development of leading change in the light of sustainable development from the viewpoints of the percentage weight of (deans, deputy deans, heads of departments, and directors) is (69.20%), indicating that there is a high degree of consensus.

In addition, Al-Thubaiti (2017) aims to determine the degree of leading change in educational administration departments in Saudi universities in light of the Kotter model of change. The Kotter model of change in its eight dimensions is used with a descriptive survey approach. The study population consists of all the staff members in the educational administration departments of Saudi universities, amount 107 faculty members. The study results indicate that the degree of leading change in educational administration departments in Saudi universities is moderate, with an average of 3.20. The results show that the first dimension of the Kotter model for change, "create a sense for an urgent change", come with a high degree, while the degree of the other seven dimensions of the Kotter model of change come in a medium degree.

From the previous studies reviewed, leaders in higher education environments often receive little training and education on how to lead change efforts (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019; Wang et al., 2021; Banmairuroy et al., 2021; Banmairuroy et al., 2021). As a result, several problems can arise in institutions that cannot practice change leadership, employees unwilling or disqualified from obtaining new knowledge and skills, look askance at change (Savas et al., 2015). Because of this frustration, staff resist change in many ways, such as leaving work and slowing down, hindering, sabotaging, protesting, or showing indifference to work. Hence, this investigation has tried to study leading change at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum with a major purpose to capture staff members' perception of the creating a climate for change, engaging and enabling the whole organization and implementing and sustaining change. With this purpose, the following basic questions are developed to guide the study: 1) To what extent has the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum created a climate for change?; 2) How does the whole organization engage in the change at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum?; 3) To what the extent has change been implemented and sustained at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum?

RESEARCH METHODS

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

The population of this study was all staff members in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. Therefore, from the total population 239 of staff members in the Faculty of Education, a sample size of 106 respondents was optimal for this study, which represents (44.00%). The staff members were selected by stratified random sampling because in this type all members of the population stood a chance of being selected. The stratification variable of interest is sex of staff members, with two subgroups—male, and female. The researcher classified staff members into the subgroups. Of the 239 staff members, 49%, or 117, were male staff members and 51%, or 122, were female staff members. As we want proportional representation, in this study 49% of the sample (52 staff members) were male staff members, and 51% (54 staff members) were female staff members.

A closed-ended questionnaire was employed to answer the research questions raised of the study. The researcher developed this questionnaire according to Kotter's leading change model and some related literature like (Hurd, 2007; Liu, 2010; Herold et al., 2008). This questionnaire consisted of three phases: create a climate for change, engage and enable the whole organization, and implementing and sustaining change. Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) that was used for all items under each phase. The questionnaire comprised in total 27-items (nine items for each dimension of leading change).

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and the result was found to be 0.96 for creating the climate for change, 0.95 engaging and enabling the whole organization, and 0.96 for implementing and sustaining change. The Cronbacha's alpha of the overall questionnaire was 0.98. Churchill (1979) stated that high values of alpha indicate that the items are highly correlated with true scores. The data collected was analyzed using one sample t-test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study obtained from questionnaire and a discussion of key findings.

1. To what extent has the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum created a climate for change?

Staff members were asked to indicate their perceptions about the extent the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has created a climate for change. Table 1 presents the results of survey respondents' perceptions of creating a climate for change.

			0		Tes	st Value = 3
Create a climate for Change	Ν	Me	SD	Т	Df	Sig. (2-
		an				tailed)
Develops a clear vision for what is	106	3.61	1.001	6.309	105	.000
going to be achieved by our work unit.						
Develops strategies for achieving that	106	3.48	.988	5.015	105	.000
vision.						
Makes it clear up front to those in our	106	3.90	1.023	9.021	105	.000
unit why the change is necessary.						
Plans for visible successful change in	106	3.71	1.112	6.548	105	.000
all areas of the university.						
Makes a case for the urgency of this	106	3.58	.975	6.074	105	.000
change prior to implementation.						
Attracts key change leaders by	106	3.72	1.058	6.978	105	.000
showing commitment.						
Builds a broad coalition up front to	106	3.50	1.017	5.064	105	.000
support the change.						
Encourages the group to work together	106	3.92	1.066	8.926	105	.000
as a team.						
Spreads change culture in the	106	3.68	1.092	6.407	105	.000
university.						

Table 1. One-Sample T-test for the extent the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum
has created a climate for change

It is evident from Table 1 that the perceptions of staff members in all items of creating a climate for change have mean scores that are statistically and significantly higher than the respective test values with (sig. 0.000 at p <.05). This indicates that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has created a climate for leading change in light of Kotter's leading change model. As its obvious the item "encourages the group to work together as a team" got a high mean score (m= 3.92), which means the Faculty support collaboration between staff members to achieve change goals. In this respect, Bagga et al., (2022) revealed that change will not occur if only a few people are on board with the idea. Also, the Faculty "makes it clear up front to those in our unit why the change is necessary" with the mean score (m= 3.90). This can be explained by the fact that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum made it clears up front to those in each college, department why the change is necessary.

Besides, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has created climate for change by building a broad coalition up front to support the change with the mean score (m=3.22). Supporting this idea, Sidorko (2008) shows the need to create numerous leadership coalitions on multiple occasions to tackle various aspects of the change process. On the other hand, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum needs to develop strategies for achieving that vision. Since achieving vision is crucial for the success of the change initiative, Kotter (2012) states that repeating the change vision in discussions with employees on all levels and leading by the example is important for a permanent change.

In creating a climate for the change process, practical leaders need to create a climate for change by creating a sense of urgency. This involves helping employees to see what the need for the change is; what is driving the change? People need to know the context (Rabiul et al., 2022; Hennig et al., 2022; Jaiswal et al., 2022). Rabiul et al., (2022) state that change will not occur if a few people are on board with the idea. According to Kotter (2012), creating a sense of urgency is making people in the organization see that the change is needed, and it is needed now.

A true sense of urgency is when people think it is necessary to take action on a matter now, not later. In a true sense of urgency, the value is so high that it is treated as a winning or losing situation (Kotter, 2008). Kotter believes that a visible crisis can be helpful to get attention and raise urgency. Another way to raise urgency is to set goals so high that they cannot be reached in the status quo (Kotter, 1996). Kotter further states that leaders must find ways to communicate the information "broadly and dramatically" in the organization to keep the employees up to date.

2. How do the whole organization engage and enable in the change at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum?

In order to analyze how the whole organization engage and enable in the change process happened in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum, the researchers uses one-sample t-test, and the result shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, engage and enable the whole organization in the change process has happened in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum as mean scores are statistically and significantly higher than the respective test value 3 with (p. value <.05). The meaning is that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has engaged and enabled the whole organization in the change process according to the Kotter's leading change model. The item "recognizes staff who help create successful short-term wins" get high mean score (m=3.78). Kotter (2007) states that every short-term win gives an opportunity to explore what is done right and what is done wrong and from that setting new goals and make the necessary improvements towards the main and final goals. Also, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum enlists others to help with this change before started (m=3.77). Supporting this result, Shurrab (2013) states that it takes a long time to achieve major and serious transformations. But, it is quite possible to avoid employee resistance over a long period of time required to achieve such a long transition successfully.

					Test	Value = 3
Engage and Enable the Whole Organization	Ν	Mean	SD	Т	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Creates strategic alignment among all elements of the university.	106	3.55	1.006	5.600	105	.000
Communicates the change prior to implementation.	106	3.42	1.060	4.125	105	.037
Inspires staff in the work unit to embrace the change.	106	3.48	1.123	4.410	105	.008
Gives individual attention to those who had more trouble with the	106	3.40	1.110	3.675	105	.013
change implementation. Is effective at identifying supporters of the change prior to implementation.	106	3.28	1.058	2.754	105	.080
Prepares staff beforehand for adjustments they would have to make once the change is underway.	106	3.71	1.121	6.499	105	.000
Enlists other to help with this change before started.	106	3.77	1.140	6.984	105	.000
Eliminates of obstacles to the change.	106	3.43	1.096	4.078	105	.001
Recognizes staff who help create successful short-term wins.	106	3.78	1.171	6.884	105	.000

 Table 2. One-Sample T-test on how the whole organization engage and enable in the change process occured in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum

On the other hand, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum needs to give individual attention to those who had more trouble with the implementation, and communicates the change change prior to implementation. In this respect, Bunjak et al., (2022) state that communication is a crucial element of the cycle of change leadership because it can minimize confusion. This result can be explained by the fact that unclear communication may influence the form of positive or negative response to changes in the organization (Ekeowa, 2017). Kotter (2012) confirms that leaders are also incredibly important in helping workers resolve their challenges during implementation. Kotter (1996) further states that leaders must find ways to communicate the information "broadly and dramatically" in the organization to keep the employees up to date. Hence, establishing a clear communication system in the university between staff members is important for successful changes and lead to avoid many troubles as well.

Furthermore, involving the whole organization in planning for those achievements can easily be made visible to the organization, planned followthrough with those achievements, and recognition and rewards for employees who are involved. Kotter, therefore, confirms that engaging and enabling the organization is a process in which the practice leader and the steering team need to formulate plans for implementation that will include all levels of the organization in the process of change. Specifically, the practical leaders need to accomplish communicating a vision. The management has to engage and enable the rest of the organization to communicate the vision after building the climate for change (Kotter, 2012). Thus, the vision has to be clear and frequently communicated as well as implemented into the day-to-day work, applying the vision in all operations from training to performance reviews (Kotter, 2007).

Besides, engaging the whole organization in the change process is expected to abolish all obstacles that would interfere with the change, change systems or structures; this is a step of removing obstacles (Kotter, 2012).

3. To what extent has change been implemented and sustained at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum?

Staff members were asked to indicate their perceptions about the extent the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has implemented and sustained change. Table 3 presents the results of survey respondents' perceptions of implementing and sustaining change.

Table 3. One-Sample T-test for the extent change has been implemented and sustained in the
Faculty of Education University of Khartoum
Test Value = 3

					Te	st Value = 3
Implementing and Sustaining Change	Ν	Mean	SD	Т	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Implements action plans.	106	3.75	1.067	7.280	105	.000
Empowers staff to implement the	106	3.67	1.049	6.577	105	.000
change.						
Model expected behavior for	106	3.61	1.074	5.878	105	.000
subordinate during implementation.						
Keeps everyone informed during	106	3.56	1.079	5.313	105	.000
the change implementation						
Provides resources needed to	106	3.38	1.046	3.714	105	.003
support the implementation.						
Helps staff deal with the pain of	106	3.52	1.062	5.029	105	.000
change implementation.						
Monitors progress of the change	106	3.60	1.066	5.830	105	.000
implementation.						
Recognizes staff who contributes to	106	3.87	1.015	8.805	105	.000
the success of the implementation.						
Works to make the change the	106	3.70	1.044	6.888	105	.000
university culture.						

As presented in Table 3, the perceptions of staff members about implementing and sustaining change in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum have mean scores that are statistically and significantly higher than the respective test value 3 with (p. value <.05). This indicates the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has implemented and sustained change dimension according to the Kotter's leading change model. The result of this study agrees with the result of Rowland and Higgs (2008) in that 50% of the variance in change success can be explained by successful change implementation. Haas (2016) finds that the change implementation process can be strategically structured in various ways to effectively implement change; stakeholder buy-in, support, and quality communication are paramount to effectively implement change.

Besides, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum recognizes staff who contributes to the success of the implementation, implements action plans, and empowers staff to implement the change. Kotter (2012) suggests that in making people in the organization see that the change is needed. On the other hand, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum needs to provide resources required to support the change implementation. In addition to helping staff deal with the pain of change implementation, this result can be explained by the fact that the successful implementation of change in organizations requires a wide range of facilities and leadership behaviors. Some of the behaviors involve political and administrative aspects, and others involve motivating, supporting, and guiding people. Yukl (2010) states that even the people who initially endorse a change will need support and assistance to sustain their enthusiasm and optimism as the inevitable difficulties and setbacks occur.

In line with what has mentioned above, implementing and sustaining change includes recruiting, encouraging, and cultivating workers who are willing to execute the vision and re-energizing the organization with new initiatives, concepts, and agents for change (Kavanagh, p.3). According to Kotter, even if the early stages can be successful, there will always be resistance, and the team cannot stop working to their main goals (Kotter, 2007). The organization has to identify the people who are resisting the change and get them the needed tools, methods or support that would make it easier for them to change, and solving the problems that are caused by the resistance (Kotter, 2007).

Any major change implementation needs people to take action (Kotter, 2012). It is very likely that any attempt would fail if somebody from a group, manager or, in particular, any executives try to undermine the effort to make a shift. Kotter (2012) stresses the importance of remembering these workers as a whole venture may have resulted in a tragedy. Leaders are also incredibly important in helping workers resolve their challenges during implementation, as they only exist in their minds in most situations.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to examine leading change at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum in light of Kotter's change model. Kotter's leading change model is one of the broadest recognized change leadership and management models. Therefore, this study tried to test Kotter's leading change model at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum with a major purpose of evaluating the contribution of this theory to enhance the importance and understanding of leading change practices at the University context. Hence, the focus of this study is on three phases of Kotter's leading change model: creating the climate for change, engaging and enabling the whole organization, and implementing and sustaining change.

The result of the study indicates that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has created a climate for leading change according to the Kotter's leading change model. This means that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum made it clear upfront to those in each department why the change is necessary. The study reveals that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has engaged and enabled the whole organization in the change process according to the Kotter's change model. This indicates that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum recognizes staff who help create successful change implementation. Furthermore, the study found that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has implemented and sustained change dimension according to the Kotter's leading change model. It is obvious that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum implements action plans, and empowers staff to implement the change. Hence, the implications of these findings may add to the understanding of how college officials should play a role model in embedding the change in their behaviors.

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends to get staff members involved in the change vision, the college officials should frequently communicate as well as implement the change vision into the day-to-day work. To make the change move forward, the college officials should delegate authority and decision-making, sharing information that can empower staff members to work toward the change goals.

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