



Analysis of Change Management Facilitation for Library System Migration in Academic Libraries in Kenya: A Case of Moi University, Eldoret

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Abstract

Implementing organizational change is one of the most fundamental challenges for leaders and other stakeholders responsible for the organization's improvement and sustainability and academic libraries which exist in an unprecedented environment of change, managing change arising chiefly from internal and external technological factors is a major concern. Change management studies often propose the use of managerial practices to facilitate the management of organizational change processes. Despite increased development of change management best practices and empirical evidence showing the success of change initiatives, the literature estimates the failure rates of organizational change initiatives to be high and yet, there is no single-full proof strategy for organizational change management. Hence, more research is needed to model change processes, track the progress of major organizational change efforts, and document their effectiveness. This study set out to examine ways in which academic libraries can ease the transition from one library system to another, with emphasis on change management practices so as to provide insights and recommendations of a change approach that would ensure minimal disruption for all the stakeholders. Four key models including Kurt Lewin's, McKinsey 7s, Kotter's theory, and ADKAR change model framed the research. In this case study, a qualitative research design was adopted, and 37 staff were purposively selected from Moi University library to be interviewed. Semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data and a thematic analysis technique was used in the analysis. The study established that change management in academic libraries is not only peripherally adopted but is also occasioned by failure to understand the dynamics of the intended change initiatives and inadequate dedicated resources and infrastructure for the library system migration. Implementing change more successfully during library system migration requires clear understanding of the triggers of change, resources required to deliver the change, the risks involved, and the people affected, strategies to implement change, and the expected outcomes. Well-defined change management processes and practices determine successful change implementation during a library system migration.

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Introduction

Changes are at the core of human society and have been particularly prominent through technological advances in the past few decades. As such, organisations are bound to implement and manage changes to survive and successfully develop in this dynamic and turbulent environment (Pettus et al., 2009). Change management is a structured approach to transition individuals, teams, and organisations from a current state to a desired future state to implement a vision and strategy (Njuguna & Muathe, 2016). System migration is a fundamental aspect of system automation. It is the movement or change from one system to another. A paradigm shift triggered by Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has been a major phenomenon in the service sector and a key driving force for change in most organisations. This shift is fundamental to library and information services; the modern academic library is ICT-dependent and driven. Change management is vital if libraries are to respond successfully to technological advancements. This study analyses change management processes and practices to identify the most important factors influencing change management success, tested in the Moi University library that carried out a system migration. This study also intends to contribute to evidence-based change management strategy, best practices, and guidelines tailored to library system migration in the Kenyan context.

Organisational change

Organisational change as a phenomenon has been researched widely. According to Prosci's best practices in change management research, an organisation require changes to improve performance, seize opportunities and address key issues. Huse and Cummings (1989) define organisational change as a transition between the current state and a future one towards which the organisation is directed. Graetz (2010) argues that leading organisational change is today's most important task for management. Organisational change calls for a change in the individual behaviour of the employees. Many researchers acknowledge that the success of any type of change depends on the people, and they need to alter their perspectives and values according to the overall mission of the organisation (Jacobs et al., 2013; Moran & Brightman, 2001). Organisational change, therefore, depicts happenings in response to or as a result of external or internal pressures, which require understanding and a holistic approach that includes all relevant factors.

Change management

Moran and Brightman (2001) define change management as continually renewing an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers. Change management is not a singular concept; rather, it includes a set of best practices and experiences used to handle internal and external changes. Studies have shown that change is difficult to pull off, explaining why more organisations have had low success rates (Teczke et al., 2017; Anyieni et al., 2013). Any form of organisational change can impact directly or indirectly upon those involved and the nature of their work. It can arguably be concluded that change is important to the survival and success of any organisation, academic libraries included, and that effective management of change is fundamental to responding successfully to technological developments. Different change management models have been developed to create a common ideology and concept of change.

Conceptual models

Change management models serve as a guide to facilitate or lead change efforts (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005) by determining the specific processes and steps to follow, illustrating the various factors influencing change, or determining the levers used to succeed in the change management process. Several change management models have been developed using various theories and principles from different disciplines (Galli, 2018). It should be noted that none of the approaches and models for



change management is ideal. The choice of a particular approach should be based on consideration of real conditions and when integrating several models (Teczke et al., 2017). Therefore, using a single or few models is insufficient to cover various change situations (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). This study identified different models to provide a comprehensive view of change management. The study considered Lewin's model of change, Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) model, Kotter's model and McKinsey 7s model.

Lewin's model of change

Kurt Lewin's model is the early fundamental planned change model explaining the striving forces to maintain the status quo and push for change (Lewin, 1947). This process denotes the steps of unfreezing, changing and refreezing, so employees are being involved and instructed by change leaders regarding the issues related to the change process (Porrás & Robertson, 1992). The change leaders could achieve this by reinforcing new behaviours, updating procedures and providing continuous learning.

Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (ADKAR) model

The ADKAR model is a holistic, individual-focused model that helps organisations and individuals manage change effectively. It focuses on five key stages of change: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement. The ADKAR change management model is based on the simple principle that organisational change can only happen when individuals change.

Kotter's model

Kotter's model is an eight-step process that helps organisations implement change effectively. It focuses on creating a sense of urgency, building a coalition, developing a vision, communicating the vision, empowering others to act on the vision, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains, and anchoring the new approaches in the organisation's culture. Following Kotter's change management theory, change leaders could foster a supportive and adaptive environment enabling successful change implementation.

McKinsey 7s model

The McKinsey 7s model aligns seven key elements within an organisation: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skills. The strength of the McKinsey 7s model lies in its ability to highlight the interdependencies between different aspects of an organisation and emphasise the need for alignment across these elements. Change leaders can utilise this framework to assess their organisation's current state, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies that enhance overall effectiveness.

Conceptual framework

Table 3 illustrates change activities that create a successful change initiative during library system migration. The framework highlights the essential practices in a change process.



Table 3: A Framework for effective change management for system migration in Moi University library

Phase 1: Plan for change	Phase 2: Prepare for change	Phase 3: Change	Phase 4: Review and refine	Phase 5: Implement
Create and communicate need for change Manage reactions to change Develop a vision for change Determine the system migration requirements and resources Develop migration plan	Communicate the vision Involve employees in decisions Address fears and concerns Create quick wins Review work-flows and data Prepare staff for migration	Launch the change Communicate progress Review, test and revise Staff training	Inhibit old habits Identify and address pitfalls Maintain change commitment Update processes Anchor and plant the change	Work-flows and processes integrated System review Quality controls, assurances Celebrate achievements Discontinue old system or parallel run

Method

This study used the qualitative approach and case study design to achieve the research objectives. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to collect data from an academic library to analyse change management practices for library system migration in academic libraries in Kenya. The participants comprised 26 library staff members, including senior management and other staff. As such, the target population comprises library staff directly involved in or whose tasks are bound to be affected by the system migration and who have at least five years of service in the library. This criterion of service duration cap was necessary to ensure that the respondents had sufficient experience and knowledge to provide good empirical information. Purposive sampling was used at different levels in the study. This sampling procedure was used in selection of the university campus where the study was focused, departments relevant for the study and the selection of actual respondents. The analysis of the empirical data collected was performed through thematic analysis where coding was used to determine the emerging themes and patterns from the literature.

Results

Drivers of change in library system migration

This research examined respondents’ knowledge and understanding of the forces of change in libraries to warrant system migration. From a general perspective, it was revealed that the purpose of any change initiative is to enhance performance. Technological changes and digitisation of the library environment are forces to adapt to new digital tools to secure a competitive advantage. Some participants highlighted that problems and mistakes in the current library system necessitated change. Thus, the reason for the change was to adapt to new technologies and realign to emerging information consumption methods to meet developing user needs. An interview with the library management established that the current changes came from external forces to put the library in a competitive



position. Generally, efficiency is the word that kept being mentioned repeatedly during interviews. Responses also showed that the main driving force for system migration was the need to keep up with technological trends.

Change management process for library system migration

Change management literature recognises frequent main elements such as phases in the change management process.

Planning/initiating the need for change: Another important finding was that when managing change, identifying its need comes from the management. All the respondents mentioned that their change leaders had established a clear plan on how to implement the system migration. Other responses indicated that the respondents were not involved in recognising the need for the change phase of the library system migration project. In this case, it could be denoted that there was limited involvement, which could hinder attitude when implementing change. On training and education, the respondents reported that various training sessions about the new system were conducted for the staff involved. They revealed that the training helped them overcome their fears and made them aware of the new system's advantages. Other responses suggested that the level of understanding of change management and its associated processes and practices was basic. Some respondents pointed out that any form of change had significant effects. According to them, change always results in apprehension, anxiety, fear, disillusionment, and shock. In what came out as inadequate planning, several respondents resisted change rather than seeing it as a chance to initiate improvements.

They were afraid of losing something because they had incomplete information on how the change processes would affect their responsibilities. However, a few perceived that the change initiative was appropriate for the library's needs.

Change implementation: The respondents reiterated that the implementation plan included integrating the new library system. Many reported that the practices involved engaging all the stakeholders about the upcoming or ongoing implementations and their progress. The cataloguing staff specifically emphasised that training to execute the changes was essential when implementing something new. In line with this, the empirical findings suggest that training and education lead to a change-minded status.

Sustaining the change: In light of this aspect, there was a reaction that evaluated the change, provided information, and communicated achievements that needed to be done repeatedly. The respondents thought that it was essential to give participants time to measure change on their own regarding what they have learnt and the support they have received. In their view, enabling structures helped maintain new practices and improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The staff reported that there was no going back in the change process at Moi University Library because reviewing continued, and it was reasonably easy to implement the major changes.

Respondents' perception during the change process

As claimed by the respondents, change leaders need to understand that employees have different reactions to change because they have different personal experiences, motivation levels and socio-demographic characteristics. Some library staff agreed that change in the system had a negative effect on them. According to them, changes resulted in anxiety and fear of the unknown. This study revealed that different factors impacted library staff attitudes towards change, like threats to their work. Those who were receptive to change believed that it would improve service delivery. The respondents expressed evident uncertainty because major changes affected library management software. This study also found that lower satisfaction with the old system would result in a more favourable



perception of the new system. However, the results showed that the dissatisfaction with the old system had no impact on the perception of how well the change to the new system was managed. Staff who were positive about change believed that change would create higher levels of autonomy at work. They had positive feelings about a regular change process, which began with clear communication and necessary training. Other responses indicated that staff seemed ready to accept change if they were convinced of a desired future condition. These sentiments expressed by the respondents show that their attitudes towards the library system change varied depending on the individual stance.

Challenges of implementing change during library system Migration

When asked about any issues with the change process, the employees answered that involving them more could have reduced the challenges in implementing the new library system; they also felt that an improved feedback system would enhance the change process. A summary of these challenges was as follows:

Table 2: Challenges of implementing change

Change challenge	Number of responses (n=26)
Poor communication	9
Resistance to change	14
Inadequate training	10
Fear of change	8
Software/hardware malfunctions	19
Complex user interface	12

Subsequently, the research also revealed that lacking leadership skills, poor communication and lack of stakeholder engagement were barriers to successful change in the case of Moi University library system implementation. Some employees cited a lack of a clear vision and proper assessment of the intended change, which they said was not specific enough. According to the respondents, the insufficient commitment of the change leaders had negatively affected their uptake and a possible explanation for this was that the whole library system change initiative was not considered a priority. Ineffective communication was also considered a barrier to success the respondents stated that the change initiative was affected by rare meetings, which indicated a lack of urgency for change. Furthermore, the employees reported that they were not informed about the progress of the system implementation. Moreover, as explained by several interviewees, the absence of a communication plan that would normally maintain employees' commitment resulted in disinterest and low acceptance.

Strategies to successfully implement change for library system migration in academic libraries

The respondents who answered this question were the library management directly involved in implementing departmental changes.

Leadership: The interviews revealed that leadership had a visible impact on successfully implementing the new library system. Although employees' commitment and change readiness were low at the preparation phase of the change initiative, the majority of the interviewed individuals thought that the strong commitment observed in the execution phase was primarily due to the role of the change



leaders. Therefore, leadership proved to be a success factor in change management when implementing the new library system.

Effective communication: The interviewees answered that regular communication proved helpful in mobilising them and increasing their commitment levels. With a clearly defined communication plan executed by change leaders, the belief that implementing the new system would be beneficial was created among employees. This contributed to overcoming the reluctance and resistance to change observed in the early phases.

Participation and involvement: A common sentiment from the respondents was that implementing the new library system was necessary to improve service delivery and overall performance. They stated that the management actively supported the change team by providing all the necessary resources for successful implementation. Similarly, the study established that other stakeholders demonstrated their commitment to change management activities and made every effort to respect the milestones specified in the change management plan. Moreover, all respondents agreed that implementing the new library system would not have been successful without the commitment of all stakeholders.

Training and motivation: The respondents disclosed that during implementation, various training sessions covering the principles, processes, and procedures of the new system were conducted for the individuals involved in the initiative. The respondents further revealed that training and on-the-job coaching sessions helped them overcome their misconceptions and made them aware of the advantages of the new library system.

Discussion

This study has revealed how academic libraries can improve their system migration with change management practices. This has been achieved by providing a framework that illustrates the key factors, including planning, execution, and sustaining the change, as well as how these factors are managed to facilitate the change process. It was also acknowledged that different models are utilised in managing change. While most existing literature concerning success factors for implementing organisational change initiatives focuses on one or a few models and factors, this study aimed to identify these factors comprehensively. Four models were considered: Lewin's, ADKAR, McKinsey's 7s, and Kotter's change management models.

Notably, these models have different stages through which change is managed. The analysis found that these models progress linearly with phases for change, including planning, implementation and sustaining the change. Even though the phases may differ, the main elements remain the same (Burke, 2008; Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008; Talmaciu, 2014). While many models provide a sound basis for successful change, a comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms that no single model can provide a one-size-fits-all solution to organisational change. Burnes (1996) suggests that an organisation's preferred approach to change depends on its culture. He also contends that many change processes fail precisely because of the change leaders' inability to follow their prescriptions. This study agrees that a clearly defined reason for change is needed to determine the approach to successfully implement change. According to several processual models, creating a clear and shared vision is considered critical because it boosts employees' acceptance of change. Dawson (1996) offers a useful framework for analysing change, viewing change as a function of external forces, internal forces and the nature of change. From preliminary discussions, it would appear that the need for change in the procedures adopted by Moi University Library was driven by the need to improve performance and service delivery. This move could be interpreted as the library adapting to a



changing environment. The change process factor in the study was scrutinised under three stages: initiation, implementation and sustaining the change.

As regards the initiation stage, participants mentioned reasons for change, the process of decision making and planning for change. Change leaders emphasised the importance of planning change and task sharing during decision-making. In the implementation stage, interviews revealed themes such as communication and participation. In this phase, participants mention the importance of communication as leading to a greater acceptance and support for change, resonating with Wanberg and Banas (2000). In the sustaining change phase, the study's findings highlight the theme of stabilising change by owning it. As confirmed by the change models examined in this study, there is a broad consensus that successful change cannot be achieved without implementing a process for sustaining the gains and benefits of the change in the long run. In this study, sustaining change was accomplished by embedding new work processes, integrating procedures, reinforcing the new behaviours, assessing change outcomes against organisational objectives and developing actions for continuous improvement and reinforcement. The interviews highlighted the importance of developing a sustainable strategy that provides a clear roadmap with all the mechanisms and activities for sustaining and reinforcing the change. The interview results showed that respondents initially exhibited negative attitudes towards change due to uncertainty. Despite wide interest in the process of organisational change, studies report negative results, as most of those efforts ended with an unsuccessful implementation of the organisational change process and, ultimately, failure (Hussain et al., 2018). However, this study's findings support previous research that, with time, participants build trust and envision the benefits. From the interviews, it was revealed that different factors impacted employees' reactions to change. The respondents perceived the change initiative as a threat to their work. One of the common reasons why employees reject change, as evidenced in the study, was uncertainty because the changes were affecting the whole system and staff in all the departments. These findings could not be extrapolated to all respondents as some perceived the change initiative as appropriate to the needs of the library. This study supports evidence from previous observations that a successful implementation of a change depends on how individuals interact with organisational change (Oreg et al., 2011; Shura et al., 2017). Participation in the change process was found to be closely related to reactions towards a change because those involved were likely able to effectively diagnose and improve their willingness to change when they understood the need for change, as noted by Albrecht et al. (2020). The reviewed change models in this study stressed the importance of clearly defining change and establishing strategies for change. This study has presented change management strategies found across numerous models and frameworks to try and identify how they are implemented in practice.

Leadership: Several models underline the importance of strong leadership in ensuring successful change initiatives. As defined by Northouse (2004), leadership may be the process whereby an individual influence a group to achieve a common goal. The majority of the interviewed individuals thought that the strong commitment observed in the execution phase was primarily due to the change manager's role. Therefore, leadership proved to be a success factor in change management when implementing the new library system.

Change readiness: Change readiness occurs at organisational and individual levels. Individual readiness focuses on employees' skills, abilities, motivation, perceptions, and behaviours toward change initiatives. On the other hand, organisational readiness focuses on the environment in which change is to be implemented. Change readiness was established to impact change initiatives significantly; it is considered an important prerequisite for increasing the chances of change success.



Individual commitment, prior experience of change, and participation in decision-making influence readiness for change.

Effective communication: Effective and constant communication was seen as a key factor for change success and played a major role in creating change readiness, reducing resistance to change, and in obtaining the buy-in of individuals. Change introduces a high degree of uncertainty (Lines et al., 2005), and the degree of uncertainty is even higher when the change is radical (Buchanan & Boddy 1992). Communication is a significant factor that diminishes uncertainty, decreases resistance, and increases commitment and stakeholder participation (Carter, 2008). The reviewed literature in this study attests to this concern and introduces this as a crucial variable.

Involvement and participation: The study established that change leaders were aware and convinced that implementing a new library system was necessary for the library to improve its overall operations. Therefore, they actively supported the change participants by providing all the necessary resources for successful implementation. Moreover, all respondents agreed that implementing the Moi University library system migration would not have been successful without the commitment of all stakeholders. This study has demonstrated that the common change management practices in the literature are almost identical when merging them into the change initiatives. This has been achieved by providing an elaboration of how change management practices can be used and the role they play in implementing new adjustments.

Conclusion

It is clear from the extant organisational change literature and this study that managing change is complex, and most undertakings do not succeed. This study sought to propose an integrated framework for facilitating and guiding academic libraries to manage technological change. While most existing literature concerning success factors for implementing organisational change initiatives has focused on one or a few models and factors, this study aimed to identify these factors comprehensively. Interview responses revealed that the leadership of the change leaders, change readiness, effective and constant communication during change, engagement of stakeholders, and training of employees and change agents are the most relevant factors for change management success when implementing a new library system. Conversely, the lack of these factors is the main cause of change implementation failure.

Interestingly, this study found that some factors may influence others. This was illustrated in a case where the contribution of the change leader's leadership enhanced other factors such as stakeholder engagement, motivation and communication. The results also imply that change practices are consistent across organisations and should focus on the structure, human factor and technology. These aspects should be balanced to enhance the overall change initiative. This study could be used as a starting point and a framework to be applied as a guideline to comprehend the essential factors for each activity in the change process. This notwithstanding, the study has revealed that there are no similar change processes because every organisation has different needs and scope thus organisations undertake change depending on their needs to achieve the intended results. The recommended framework below shows the empirical findings emerging from the analysis.



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