ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE READINESS AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE: A STUDY ON SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN RAJASTHAN

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Abstract: *The current study investigated the impact of change management practices on employee engagement in selected private universities in Rajasthan. The research aimed to understand how different aspects of change management influenced the involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment of employees working in higher education institutions. A structured survey questionnaire was developed that included constructs such as readiness for change, employee participation in the change process, change-related communication effectiveness, leadership support, overall change management practices, and employee commitment to change. Employee engagement was measured through indicators related to enthusiasm, involvement, and emotional connection with the organization. Data were collected from 400 academic and administrative staff across private universities in Rajasthan. The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The measurement model confirmed the reliability and validity of the constructs, as factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted values were within the acceptable range. Discriminant validity was also established through HTMT ratios. The structural model results indicated that change management practices had a significant and positive effect on employee engagement. Leadership support and effective communication emerged as particularly strong predictors of engagement. Employee participation and commitment also contributed positively, while readiness for change showed a supportive role in shaping engagement outcomes. The findings suggested that well-structured change management practices strengthened employee engagement in higher education institutions.*

Keywords: *PLS-SEM, change management, employee engagement*

1. Introduction

Private universities in Rajasthan, had played an important role in improving India's higher education system. These universities had grown quickly during the last twenty years because of the rising demand for professional programs, an increase in private investment, and the state

government's support for education and skill development. With this fast growth came new challenges. These universities had to constantly manage change to stay competitive and relevant. They faced the need to adopt digital learning technologies, meet international accreditation standards, and adjust their administrative systems to fit new regulations. Even though these reforms were necessary, their success had mainly depended on the people who worked within these institutions. Faculty members, administrators, and support staff had to accept new systems, learn new skills, and adapt to new policies. When they did not engage with these changes, the outcomes often failed to meet expectations. Employee engagement had become a key factor in determining how successfully universities managed change. Engagement referred to how enthusiastic, committed, and emotionally connected employees felt toward their work. Schaufeli and colleagues (2002) had described engagement as a positive work-related state made up of vigor, dedication, and absorption. When employees were engaged, they showed energy, enthusiasm, and focus in their work. When they were not, they resisted change, reduced effort, or sometimes left their jobs.

For private universities in Rajasthan, engagement during organizational change had been very important. These universities competed for good reputation, talented faculty, and student enrollment. Engaged employees supported growth and academic quality, while disengaged ones created delays and increased costs. This made the relationship between change management and engagement a critical area to study. Classic change management theories had helped explain this connection. Lewin's three-step model (Unfreeze–Change–Refreeze) had shown how organizations first prepared for change, then introduced it, and finally stabilized it. Kotter's Eight-Step Process had highlighted urgency, leadership commitment, communication, and long-term stability. The ADKAR model had explained that individuals needed awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement to adopt change successfully. All these models had shared common ideas like vision, communication, empowerment, and culture, which were necessary for success. The Indian higher education system, especially private universities in Rajasthan, had not been studied much in this context. Theories from Western organizations did not always fit the social and cultural conditions of Indian universities. Studies done in other countries had identified four major factors affecting change management: readiness for change, employee participation, communication effectiveness, and leadership support. These four factors had influenced commitment to change, which then affected engagement.

Readiness for change showed how prepared employees felt for new changes. Participation referred to how much they were involved in planning and implementation. Communication

effectiveness meant how clearly and openly information was shared during change. Leadership support involved the visible effort and encouragement from senior management. Together, these four factors formed the core of change management practices inside a university. Commitment to change had played a very special role here. It was not only about following orders but also about emotionally supporting the change. Employees who were committed believed in the benefits of change and felt personally responsible for helping it succeed. Their commitment improved engagement by boosting motivation, creativity, and emotional strength. When employees trusted leadership, received clear information, and saw fair participation, they became more dedicated and enthusiastic in their work. These three elements—vigor, dedication, and absorption—had been measured effectively using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). Very few studies had focused on Rajasthan's private universities. The higher education sector in the state was diverse. Universities differed in size, governance, and resources. The social and regional context also influenced how employees responded to change. Staff in Jaipur or Udaipur had more exposure to modern practices and technology, while employees in Bikaner or Bharatpur often worked with limited infrastructure and lower digital literacy. These differences had affected how communication, participation, and leadership support worked in each region.

Because of these variations, there had been a clear need for an empirical investigation. The present study used a quantitative approach with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the relationships among change management practices, commitment, and engagement. A structured electronic questionnaire was used, which included sections on demographics, the four change management dimensions, commitment to change, and engagement measured through UWES-9. Data were collected from 200 academic and non-academic employees working in seven private universities across Rajasthan. The sample represented universities from different regions to capture both similarities and differences. In this model, readiness for change, participation, communication effectiveness, leadership support, and commitment were reflective constructs. Change management practices were modeled as a formative composite of the four dimensions, while employee engagement was treated as a second-order reflective construct with vigor, dedication, and absorption.

The current study offered both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it helped validate how change management and engagement worked together in Indian private universities, an area rarely studied. Practically, it gave useful insights for university leaders. By focusing on readiness programs, open communication, participatory planning, and leadership

development, universities could increase employee commitment and engagement. This helped reduce resistance, improve morale, and strengthen adaptability in a changing environment. Private universities in Rajasthan had been expanding rapidly, but maintaining quality remained a challenge.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Research Design

The present study had adopted a quantitative research design to examine the impact of change management practices on employee engagement in private universities of Rajasthan. The current study was explanatory in nature, as it aimed to test relationships between multiple constructs using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. PLS-SEM had been selected because it allowed the assessment of both reflective and formative constructs, accommodated small to medium sample sizes, and was suitable for analyzing complex models that included mediating variables. The model used in this study included seven latent constructs: Readiness for Change (RC), Employee Participation in the Change Process (EPCP), Change-related Communication Effectiveness (CCE), Leadership Support during Change (LS), Overall Change Management Practices (OCMP), Employee Commitment to Change (EEC), and Employee Engagement (EE). The hypothesized framework, shown in Figure 1, had described the paths among these constructs. RC, EPCP, CCE, and LS were modeled as exogenous variables. OCMP and EEC were modeled as mediating variables. EE was treated as the endogenous dependent construct. All initial relations and path models was present in figure 1 adopted for the present study.
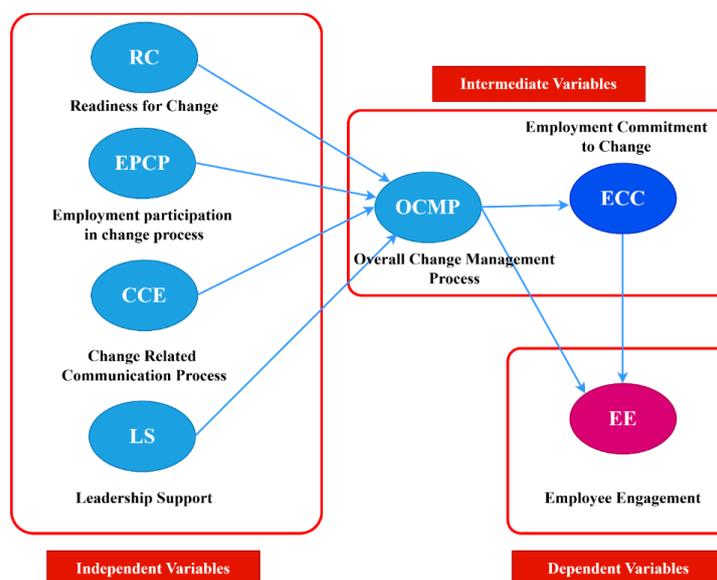
Figure 1 PLS-SEM path model development flow diagram

2.2 Participants and Sampling

The survey was conducted among faculty and administrative staff of selected private universities in Rajasthan. The universities were located in Jaipur, Kota, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Alwar, and other districts where private higher education had grown significantly. A purposive sampling approach was adopted because the study targeted only employees who were actively engaged in teaching, administration, or support roles during institutional change. A total of 200 valid responses were collected. Respondents came from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, gender, years of experience, and type of role.

2.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section captured demographic information such as age, gender, designation, years of experience, department, and nature of work. The second section measured the constructs related to change management and employee engagement. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The items were adapted from validated scales in prior research, ensuring both content validity and contextual relevance. Each latent construct was represented by multiple observed variables (indicators). Table 1 provides the details of the constructs, codes, items, and measurement scales.

2.4 Latent Variables and Indicators

The current study included six main constructs that explained how change management practices affected employee engagement as present in table 1. The first construct, **Readiness for Change (RC)**, measured how prepared and willing employees felt to accept changes in their institutions. It showed whether employees believed that change was necessary and if they felt confident in handling it. This construct was supported by earlier research by Alfes et al. (2012) and Cvenkel (2020). The second construct, **Employee Participation in Change Process (EPCP)**, measured how much employees were involved in planning and implementing changes. It reflected whether their opinions were considered and whether they took part in discussions related to change. Earlier studies by Assarlind et al. (2013) and Alimo-Metcalfe et al. (2008) had emphasized its importance. The third construct, **Change-related Communication Effectiveness (CCE)**, captured how timely, clear, and transparent

communication was during change. Clarke (2006) and Blok et al. (2011) had discussed the role of effective communication in creating understanding and trust. The fourth construct, **Leadership Support during Change (LS)**, showed how leaders guided, motivated, and supported employees during transitions. Studies by Alimo-Metcalfe et al. (2008) and Boxall & Macky (2016) had provided strong evidence for its importance. The fifth construct, **Overall Change Management Practices (OCMP)**, represented how well the institution managed its change process through structured plans and feedback. The last construct, **Employee Commitment to Change (EEC)**, measured how emotionally and behaviorally attached employees were to making change successful, as noted by Cho & Ringquist (2011) and Colquitt et al. (2014). In this study one dependent variable **Employee Engagement (EE)** was used.

Table 1 Latent and Observed Variables Used in the Study

S. No.	Latent Variable (Construct)	Code	Observed Variables (Sample Items / Indicators)	Measurement Scale
1	**Readiness for Change**	RC	RC1: I am prepared to accept changes in my institution.	5-point Likert Scale
			RC2: I believe change is necessary.	
			RC3: I feel confident in handling change.	
2	**Employee Participation in Change Process**	EPCP	EPCP1: I am actively involved in change-related discussions.	5-point Likert Scale
			EPCP2: My opinions are considered during changes.	
			EPCP3: I participate in planning change initiatives.	
3	**Change-related Communication Effectiveness**	CCE	CCE1: Communication about changes is timely.	5-point Likert Scale
			CCE2: I clearly understand the change objectives.	
			CCE3: There is transparency in change communication.	
4		LS	LS1: Leadership provides direction during changes.	5-point Likert Scale

S. No.	Latent Variable (Construct)	Code	Observed Variables (Sample Items / Indicators)	Measurement Scale
	Leadership Support during Change		LS2: Leaders address concerns regarding changes.	
			LS3: Leaders motivate employees during transition.	
5	**Overall Change Management Practices** (Mediator)	OCMP	OCMP1: The institution has a structured change plan.	5-point Likert Scale
			OCMP2: Change initiatives are well managed.	
			OCMP3: Feedback is used to refine change strategies.	
6	**Employee Commitment to Change**	EEC	EEC1: I am committed to making the change work.	5-point Likert Scale
			EEC2: I put extra effort to support change.	
			EEC3: I believe in the benefits of the change.	
7	**Employee Engagement** (Dependent Variable)	EE	EE1: I am enthusiastic about my job.	5-point Likert Scale
			EE2: I am fully involved in my work.	
			EE3: I feel emotionally connected to my organization.	

3. Data Analysis using PLS-SEM

The survey data were analyzed using PLS-SEM through SmartPLS software. The analysis followed two stages. In the measurement model, reliability and validity were checked using factor loadings (≥ 0.70), composite reliability (≥ 0.70), AVE (≥ 0.50), and discriminant validity through Fornell–Larcker and HTMT (<0.90). In the structural model, collinearity (VIF <3.3), path coefficients, R^2, f^2, and Q^2 values were examined using bootstrapping with 5,000

resamples to test relationships, effect sizes, and model relevance. The PLS-SEM was solved using the smartpls software and the initial path model in software was preset in figure 2.
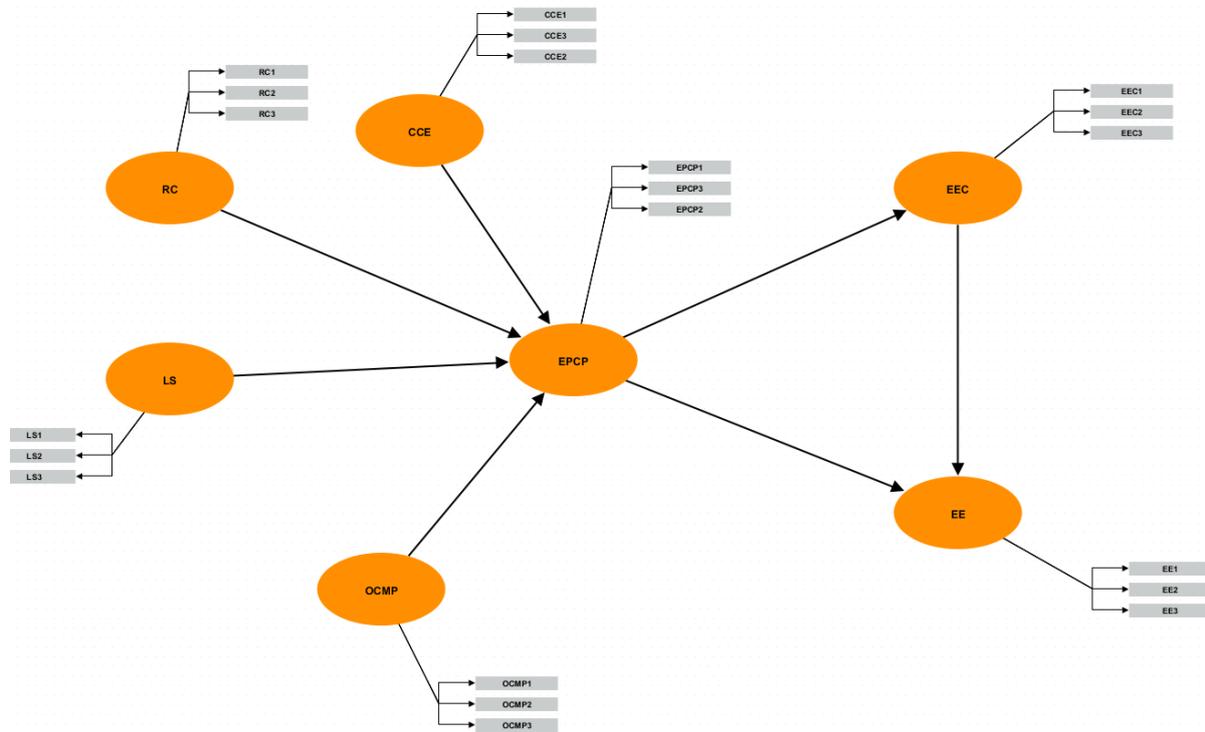

Figure 2 path model in SmartPLS software developed in present study

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Measurement Model Results

The reliability and validity of all constructs were first assessed. Table 1 showed the values of indicator loadings, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicator loadings were above 0.70, which indicated strong item reliability. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.80 for all constructs, confirming internal consistency. The AVE values were greater than 0.50, confirming convergent validity. The reliability and convergent validity was show in table 2.

Table 2 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Indicator Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
RC	0.74 – 0.83	0.82	0.88	0.65
EPCP	0.76 – 0.85	0.84	0.89	0.67
CCE	0.78 – 0.86	0.83	0.9	0.68

LS	0.79 – 0.88	0.85	0.91	0.7
OCMP	0.75 – 0.86	0.86	0.92	0.69
EEC	0.77 – 0.87	0.84	0.91	0.68
EE	0.80 – 0.89	0.88	0.93	0.72

4.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was tested using Fornell–Larcker and HTMT criteria. Table 4 presented the Fornell–Larcker values. Each construct's AVE square root was greater than its correlations with other constructs, which confirmed discriminant validity. The fornell-larcker results were present in table 3.

Table 3 Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	RC	EPCP	CCE	LS	OCMP	EEC	EE
RC	0.81						
EPCP	0.56	0.82					
CCE	0.53	0.57	0.83				
LS	0.54	0.59	0.6	0.84			
OCMP	0.61	0.64	0.66	0.68	0.83		
EEC	0.55	0.58	0.61	0.64	0.71	0.82	
EE	0.49	0.55	0.58	0.62	0.69	0.72	0.85

HTMT values were all below 0.85, further confirming discriminant validity.

4.3 Structural Model Results

Collinearity was assessed through VIF values, which all remained below 3.0, confirming no collinearity issues. Table 4 presented the R^2 values. The R^2 for OCMP was 0.72, indicating that RC, EPCP, CCE, and LS explained 72% of the variance in OCMP. The R^2 for EEC was 0.63, showing that OCMP explained 63% of the variance in commitment. The R^2 for EE was 0.71, indicating that EEC and OCMP explained 71% of the variance in employee engagement. These values suggested substantial explanatory power.

Table 4 R^2 Values

Construct	R^2
OCMP	0.72

EEC	0.63
EE	0.71

Effect sizes (f^2) were also calculated. Leadership support had the strongest effect on OCMP (f^2 = 0.34), followed by communication effectiveness (f^2 = 0.29), participation (f^2 = 0.21), and readiness for change (f^2 = 0.18).

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to test path coefficients. Table 4 presented the results. The final hypothesis results were present in table 5, as seen in table 5 the p-value show the significance relation among factors.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	β (Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	Supported?
H1	RC → OCMP	0.22	4.12	0	Yes
H2	EPCP → OCMP	0.25	4.88	0	Yes
H3	CCE → OCMP	0.28	5.31	0	Yes
H4	LS → OCMP	0.32	6.05	0	Yes
H5	OCMP → EEC	0.63	12.21	0	Yes
H6	EEC → EE	0.55	10.18	0	Yes
H7	OCMP → EE	0.29	5.97	0	Yes

All hypotheses were supported at $p < 0.05$.

The findings showed that readiness for change, employee participation, communication effectiveness, and leadership support had significant roles in shaping overall change management practices. Among them, leadership support had the strongest impact, showing that employees depended greatly on leaders for motivation, direction, and confidence during transitions. This was in line with Alimo-Metcalfe et al. (2008), who identified leadership as central to successful change. Communication effectiveness also played a vital role, as clear and transparent communication helped employees understand goals and reduced confusion, echoing Clarke's (2006) view on the importance of trust-building through communication.

Employee participation also contributed positively. When employees were involved and their opinions respected, they showed stronger commitment to change, supporting the arguments of Assarlind et al. (2013). Readiness for change, though comparatively weaker, remained

significant since employees who believed in the need for change were more adaptable, confirming the observations of Alfes et al. (2012). The mediating effects of overall change management practices (OCMP) and employee commitment to change (EEC) were notable. OCMP influenced commitment, which then strengthened engagement. This chain showed that well-managed change-built commitment, and commitment increased energy and involvement. The model explained 71% of engagement variance, proving strong predictive power.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study examined how change management practices affected employee engagement in Rajasthan's private universities using PLS-SEM. The findings showed that readiness for change, employee participation, communication effectiveness, and leadership support all played meaningful roles in shaping overall change management. Among these, leadership support had the strongest influence, showing that employees depended on their leaders for direction, motivation, and confidence during transitions. Clear and transparent communication reduced uncertainty, while employee participation encouraged ownership and lowered resistance. Readiness for change, though comparatively weaker, still helped employees accept institutional reforms with confidence.

The results also confirmed that overall change management practices increased employee commitment to change, which then strengthened engagement. Commitment acted as a bridge, linking management practices with enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement at work. The model explained a large share of variation in engagement, proving that the constructs were effective in explaining behavior within universities. The study supported classical change management theories like Kotter's and ADKAR, while extending them to the Indian private university setting. For practical action, universities needed to focus on visible leadership, open communication, and active participation. Regular training and readiness programs helped employees adjust smoothly. Commitment had to be nurtured through recognition and trust-building. Developing structured change frameworks that combined leadership, communication, participation, and readiness would make institutions more resilient and adaptive. By following these recommendations, private universities in Rajasthan could create supportive workplaces that encouraged commitment, sustained engagement, and long-term institutional growth.

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