

The Antecedent of Change Management for Operational Excellence: A Review of Nigeria Service Sector

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Abstract:- The goal of this research is to examine the relationships between change management and operational excellence (OPX) which has long been understudied in Nigeria service sector. Drawing upon Resource-based view (RBV) and Kurt Lewin three-stage model theories, we hypothesized causal links between change management and operational excellence (OPX). Survey design was employed and the data were collected through an electronic questionnaire distributed to 130 respondents. The questionnaire survey received 93 responses from 10 organizations. Both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS. The Chi-Square test was used to examine the three (3) hypotheses with SPSS used to generate the results.

The research discovered strong, favourable links between adoption of technology, organic structure and operational strategy and operational excellence accomplishment. The results were equivocal, but they did support the idea that commitment to change had a moderating influence on the link between change management and operational excellence. Benchmarking, best practices, quality processes, and human resource policies are some of the infrastructure decision areas of service strategy where change management may help. As a result, it has implications for organizational and change management efforts.

Keywords:- Change Management, Operational Excellence (OPX), Resource-based view (RBV), Technology, Organic Structure, Operations Strategy, Service Sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

In research on change management and operational excellence, Nigeria's service sector has long been understudied. The emphasis is on increasing customer value and ensuring long-term viability (Chiawah, 2019). This is in accordance with Owie (2019, p.3), who stated that the failure to attain operational excellence by organisations is due to a lack of attention to change management. Contemporary operational excellence research has concentrated more on industries such as manufacturing, oil and gas, and education (Ahmad, Nafi, & Ma'aji, 2018,

p.153).As a result, the most recent advancements in change management and operational excellence have emerged.

Bellantuono, Nuzzi, Pontrandolfo, & Scozzi (2021) defined change management as “the transition from the status quo to a desirable state in terms of the problems and possibilities that businesses encounter. Furthermore, alignment with the firm's plan is required in both the hard and soft components of change management.

One of the most pressing issues in the field of business performance is how organizations create and sustain competitive advantages while pursuing business excellence (Bag, Wood, Xu, Dhamija, and Kayikci, 2020). Most firms that have not achieved excellence levels may have been unable to do so due to management that lacks a thorough knowledge of what it takes to be exceptional.

Research have mostly focused on the identification of crucial factors that can better explain how organizational transformation can be handled to the best of its ability to assist businesses on their road to excellence.

As a result, this research will aid in comprehending the current change management parameters that influence organisation excellence, particularly excellence in service operations. The metrics might be used as pre-conditions for any establishment before commencing on organizational change management.

Mohamed Khalifa, Nusari, Ameen, Al-Shibami, & Abu-Elhassan (2018, p. 6211) recognized the importance of the soft dimensions in terms of talents, personnel, style, system, and common values, in addition to the hard dimension's technology, structure and strategy; which is the focus of this research.

Furthermore, change implementation may necessitate the employee's own dedication. According to Pellegrini, Rizzi, and Frey (2018), p.1223, employee attitudinal commitment, such as affective commitment to change, is linked to employees' ability to deal with organizational changes.

When looking at the current state of the global business market, such as issues of globalization, harsh rivalry, and technological breakthroughs, Nwinyokpugi, (2018, p.11) suggests that service companies in Nigeria must be able to modify and evolve in order to thrive in this difficult climate to secure their survival and growth in the market, businesses must develop a new set of competencies.

The service sector contributes significantly to Nigeria's economy in terms of service output, exports, and employment. The service sector is currently the world's fastest growing sector (Adetokunbo & Edioye, 2020, p.11). As a result, Nigeria's service companies will need to develop or adopt a new set of change management dimensions such as technology, organisational structure and operational strategies to attain operational excellence.

B. Statement of the problem

The focus of the research is on how to handle change in organizations to achieve operational excellence. Nonetheless, no acknowledged evaluation of Nigeria's service industry has been conducted, necessitating this study. The bulk of the studies have focused on identifying essential characteristics that may help to better understand how organizational change may be handled to the best of its ability to aid organizations on their journey to greatness.

This research will help to improve our understanding of the current change management elements that influence business performance, particularly in service operations in Nigeria. This study's broad objective is to examine the considerable influence of change management on operational excellence in selected service sector organizations domiciled in Lagos State

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are four sections to this review. The theoretical framework examines the underlying theories for this research in the domains of operational excellence and change management in the first section. The second section places an emphasis on the concepts and definitions of key independent variables and dependent variables based on previous research works; the third section concentrates on an empirical review of existing research, focusing on the main thrust of their work, sampling techniques, and the results and conclusions reached the researchers; and the fourth section fixates on hypothesis development given the variables being considered.

A. Theoretical Framework

➤ Operational Excellence

- *Resource-based view (RBV)*

From a strategic standpoint, the Resource-based view (RBV) is one method of looking at the business structure from the inside out. As a source of competitive advantage, the RBV theory stresses the utilization of internal resources and creating competence inside the organization. Many of the capabilities and resources that give it a competitive

advantage are completely contained within its operational function (Pérez-Pérez, Serrano-Bedia, & López-Fernández, 2021.).The RBV examines the competitive environment in which the organization operates, but from the inside out. Its starting point is the internal environment of the company. As a result, the strategic decisions it makes when competing in its external environment are influenced by its internal capabilities. For example, an organization stay competitive and achieve long-term success in both economic and social dimensions by forming a high-performance team.

On the subject of operational excellence, RBV is determined to be suitable, presenting internal resources as a critical component in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance, which is what operational excellence is all about (Lukovszki, Rideg, & Sipos, 2020). The current research focuses on the hard aspects of service organizations that contribute to operational excellence. Based on their abilities, the core competencies explain the firms' competitive performance. In addition, RBV identifies internal resources as the primary drivers of long-term performance disparities across organizations. In truth, internal assets are those that are rare, specialized, and difficult to sell, copy, or usurp (Roundy & Bayer 2019, p.553).. As a result, this research focuses on the management of a firm's resources as a predictor of operational success.

The overall performance of a company is a statistic that measures how successfully it achieves its objectives. The four most prevalent parameters used to assess performance are quality, speed or time, cost, and adaptability, which encompass both economic and non-economic metrics (Fok-Yew, O. O. N., & Hamid, N. A. A. 2021). The competitive environment, as well as corporate strategy, are important influences on a company's operational excellence (Carvalho, Sampaio, Rebentisch, Carvalho, & Saraiva, 2019.p.1497).

➤ Change Management

- *Kurt Lewin three-stage model*

The social psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed his three-stage model of change in 1947: unfreeze, change, and refreeze (Lewin, 1947, p.144). Change, according to Lewin, begins with unfreezing the status quo. Employees will identify the new conditions in their work environment at this point (Hussain et al., 2018). Kurt Lewin's theory of change is considered by many to be the cornerstone for all other theories of change, earning him the moniker "Father of Change Management". The force field theory has been widely regarded as the theoretical underpinning of change management since the 1950s. (Hassan, 2018, p.3).

Managers at this point should use announcements, meetings, and other forms of communication to draw their employees' attention to the need for change. According to Lewin (1947, p.145), employees will be part of the transformation process in the second stage. Managers should successfully involve employees in the change process at this stage in order to improve the change process Managers at this stage must guarantee that staff are active participants in

the change process and that the change accomplished is the desired one (Hussain et al., 2018).

The cornerstone of Lewin's change management model is still relevant in today's global service sector (Hassan 2018, p.4). Businesses must make fundamental adjustments as a result of competitive services environment. Emerging service-technologies are needed to help cut time and deliver effectively than rivals faster in order to achieve operational excellence (Ahmad, Alekam, Shaharruddin, Marchalina, & Fok-Yew, 2018, p.514).

B. Conceptual Framework

➤ Operational Excellence

Excellence is defined by the European Foundation for Quality Management (1999) as "excellent practice in managing the organization and delivering outcomes." Gabriela-Livia, C. (2021, May). SARIGÜL & Oralhan (2016, p.95) emphasized that "operational excellence entails not just cost-cutting and quality-improvement, but also knowing how to manage people and resources effectively". To achieve operational excellence, there is need strong change management competence and strong leadership. Employee empowerment, ownership, and a culture of continual improvement are also critical to operational excellence. Its adoption and implementation typically require a corporation to change the way its workers think and act.

➤ Change Management

The future and success of an organization are dependent on how successfully managers handle change. The focus of this research is to determine the link between change management and operational excellence (Galli, 2018, p.127).

Many organizations have exclusively focused their efforts on soft variables in the past when undergoing organizational change. On the other hand, Mann, Adebajo, and Tickle (2011, p.605) suggest that "most successful organizations put a great deal of effort into the soft elements." Indeed, soft variables may make or break a successful change process since we can't impose hard systems on an organization without taking into account their impact on people (Fok-Yew, 2018, p. 27). The researcher uses this method to try to incorporate "hard" variables into change management. Three hard elements were found in this study based on a literature review: technology, organic structure, and operations strategy.

➤ Technology

Technology is a key component of successful change (Lewis, 2019). Microelectronics-based or computer-controlled equipment used in the design, or handling of a service is referred to as "service technology," and it is most usually used to refer to advanced service technology.

➤ Organic Structure

Organic structure is another key component of successful change. Organic structure is made up of explicit norms and processes that, to the greatest extent possible, promote creativity, autonomy, learning, and decentralization of decision-making, which works well in changing environments (Stojanović-Aleksić, Nielsen, & Bošković ,2019).

➤ Operations Strategy

The perspective of how a business unit serves many operational goals, such as quality, prices, delivery, flexibility, and sustainability, is characterized as an "operations strategy". This is another key driver of change management (Badri, Davis & Davis, 2000, p.156).

➤ Nigerian service sector

The Nigerian service sector consists of several industries such as banking, retail and wholesale trade, tourism, real estate, telecommunications, motion pictures, information and communication technology, entertainment, and education (Adetokunbo, & Edioye, 2020, p.11)

C. Empirical Review

In this review, we have selected two of the studies previously conducted on change management and operation excellence for review of their methodology, theories and findings.

The first paper reviewed concentrates on the usage of business excellence in Asian enterprises as it was investigated by researchers (Mann et al, 2011, p.605). Manufacturing companies made up more than 40% of the total number of respondents in the study. Despite the fact that businesses think that deploying business excellence is critical to achieving major objectives, the Asian area continues to face challenges, including a lack of a business excellence culture, a lack of resources, and a failure to adequately train personnel in business excellence. The study looked at how business excellence is implemented in five Asian nations (Japan, India, China, Thailand, and Singapore). "There is a need for more research into additional Asian countries that may be at varying levels of business excellence maturity, the study concludes" the researched concluded.

In another study, de Waal (2013, p.263) explored whether characteristics that lead to sustained greatness are "evergreen" or stay the same over time. Organizational design, process, strategy, technology, leadership, people and roles, culture, and external orientation were among the eight elements. According to the finding, nearly 90% of the elements that promote greatness reported in research conducted before 1995 are also evident in studies conducted after 1995, which means, although the features of determinants may change over time, those considered to qualify as "evergreens of excellence" that are always important for establishing and maintaining a high-performing establishments have been identified. In this regard, study on the characteristics that lead to brilliance, whether discovered in older or more modern literature, has remained consistent across time.

D. Hypotheses and the Research Model

Based on the existing literature, three primary hypotheses are presented. The link between the many aspects described in this research is shown in the framework in Figure. 1 below. This research makes a relationship based on the literature, stating that the change management elements are only likely to have an influence on the organization's operational excellence in scenarios when change management procedures are adopted. The moderating effect of Commitment to Change on the connection between change management and Operational Excellence is not being investigated.

The importance of technology in today's corporate climate cannot be overstated. For everyone, including businesses, technology has become a way of life. Technology is a must-have tool to reach consumers, workers, and suppliers faster and perform more fluidly, which leads to the first hypothesis:

- *H₁:1 The adoption of service technology will lead to operational excellence, according to the hypothesis.*
- *H₀:1: The adoption of technology will not lead to operational excellence*

The peculiarities of the corporate structure are also essential factors that influence the company's success and come in a variety of shapes and sizes. In order to promote operational excellence, the company's change management must be linked to a structural transformation. Although the impact of structural dimensions on performance is unknown, it is widely assumed that some structural dimensions, such

as the mechanistic and organic structure, influence performance in some way Michela & Burke (2000,p.241).. As a result, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

- *H₁: 2: The implementation of an organic structure will lead to the operational excellence.*
- *H₀: 2: There is no significant relationship between the implementation of an organic structure and operational excellence.*

Mokhtar and Yusoff (2009, p.85) offer intriguing insights on corporate strategy alignment and operational excellence. As a result, existing research piques interest and points to areas where further research into the link between operations strategy and company success may be conducted. The operations plan must be consistent across all decisions influencing corporate strategy, competitive priorities, and infrastructures in order to be effective.

There are gaps in the literature on the specific linkages between change capability and operations strategy, as well as the links between these two entities and service excellence measures. A new focus was placed on change capability in order to anticipate operational excellence in quality, time, cost, flexibility, and sustainability. (Akaegbu & Usoro, 2017, p.44). As a consequence, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study:

- *H₁: 3: A well-defined operations strategy will lead to operational excellence.*
- *H₀: 3: A well-defined operations strategy will not lead to operational excellence.*

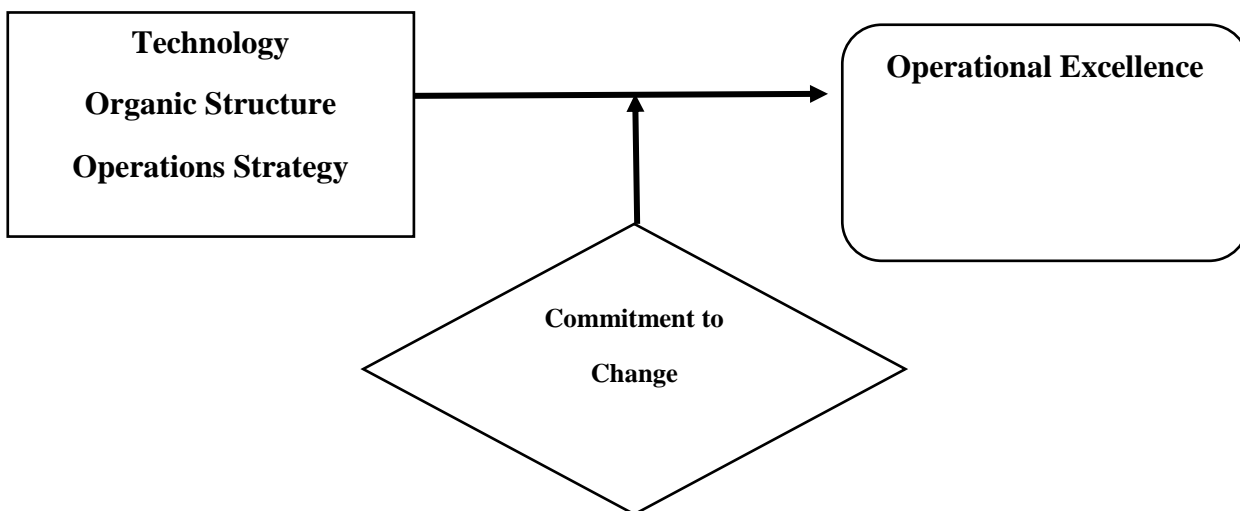


Fig. 1: Theoretical framework

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research looked at the relationship between change management and operational excellence using a causal analysis. Banking, retail and wholesale commerce, tourism, real estate, telecommunications, motion pictures, information and communication technology, entertainment, and education were among the service sector organizations in Lagos State that provided demographic samples. To guarantee that every component of the population is

considered and has an equal chance of being chosen as a subject, the systematic random sampling technique was adopted (Cr, 2020). Research conducted using selected service organizations in Lagos State. The selected organizations are: Zenith Bank Plc, Airtel Nigeria PLC, Price Waterhouse Coopers (Chartered Accountants), Prestige Assurance Plc Oando Plc among others.

According to Macionis & Sparks (2009, p.97), the population of study refers to the individuals who are the focus of the research. It might alternatively be interpreted as the total number of objects in which the researcher is interested. The population for this study includes the customers, personnel and management of selected service organizations in Lagos State.

This researcher used a total of (130) participants spread proportionally amongst the selected companies. The sample size was designed to guarantee that all respondents in selected organisations were adequately represented. The firms chosen represent a cross-section of Nigeria's key service sectors.

The data was gathered through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions on the study's research topics and aims. Questionnaires are used in a variety of situations to acquire information about people's attitudes and behaviours (Williams, 2003, p.245). In this study, a closed-ended questionnaire with a Likert Scale was engaged and administered proportionally to the four selected companies. Online survey was utilised to post the online

questionnaire link on Google Docs and also e-mailed it to the executives, customers and employees of various selected service organisations.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for this study in analysing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were derived by the researcher based on the research objectives and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics include frequency counts and simple percentages. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize, classify, and explain the aspects of data distribution. Meanwhile for inferential statistic, the Chi-Square(X^2) was utilized. The Chi-Square test was used to examine the three (3) hypotheses with SPSS used to generate the results.

A. Demographic Profiles of Respondent

The table below summarizes the descriptive statistics of the demographic profiles of the respondents (n=93). The subsequent parts provided a detailed analysis of the findings statistically.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles

Variable	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	60	65%
	Female	33	35%
Age	18-25	14	15%
	26-30	15	16%
	31-35	15	16%
	36-40	22	24%
	Above 40	27	29%
Work Experience	Less than a Year	12	13%
	1-3 Years	13	14%
	3-5 Years	18	19%
	5-10 Years	19	20%
	Above 10 Years	31	33%
Educational Level	High School Cert	6	10%
	Diploma	21	31%
	First Degree	60	50%
	Masters	6	10%
	Ph.D.	0	0%
Employment Level	Management Staff	19	20%
	Senior Staff	46	49%
	Junior Staff	28	30%

An overview of the distribution statistics; shows that ninety-three (93) respondents participated in the survey. Figures obtained indicates sixty-five per cent (65%) were males, while thirty-five per cent (35%) were females. Further analysis shows that twenty-nine-per cent of the respondents were above 40years. On the Educational Level of the respondents, fifty per cent were reported to have a first degree, while ten percent have Master Degrees. The remaining forty per cent have lesser qualifications. Thirty three percent of the respondents have 10 years and above work experience while the remaining sixty-seven percent have lesser experience.

B. Testing of Hypotheses

➤ Hypothesis One

- **Ho: 1.** the adoption of technology will not lead to operational excellence

$$X^2C = (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i = 169.37$$

$$X^2t = 0.01 \text{ d.f. } 1 = 26. 217$$

$$X^2c > X^2t (169.37 > 26. 217). \text{ So, reject } H_0$$

- **Results:** The result obtained from the chi-square (X^2) test shows that the calculated chi-square (169.37) is greater than the tabulated chi-square (26. 217) at (0.01) significant level

- **Decision:** We shall reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

- **Findings:** This reveals to us that the adoption of technology will lead to operational excellence

➤ *Hypothesis Two:*

- **Ho:** 2. there is no significant relationship between the implementation of an organic structure and operational excellence.

Table 4.3.3 shows the responses of the respondents on the questions that are related to the hypothesis.

$$X^2C = (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i = 149.58$$

$$X^2t = 0.01 \text{ d.f. } 1 = 20.09$$

$X^2c > X^2t$ (149.58 > 20.09). So, reject H_0

- **Results:** The result obtained from the chi-square (X^2) test shows that the calculated chi-square (149.58) is greater than the tabulated chi-square (20.09) at (0.01) significant level

- **Decision:** we shall reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

- **Findings:** This reveals that there is significant relationship between the implementation of an organic structure and operational excellence.

➤ *Hypothesis Three*

- **Ho:** 3. a well-defined operations strategy will not lead to operational excellence

Table 4.3.6 shows the responses of the respondents on the questions that are related to the hypothesis.

$$X^2C = (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i = 164.65$$

$$X^2t = 0.01 \text{ d.f. } 1 = 26. 217$$

$X^2c > X^2t$ (164.65 > 26. 217). So, reject H_0

- **Results:** The result obtained from the chi-square (X^2) test shows that the calculated chi-square (164.65) is greater than the tabulated chi-square (26. 217) at (0.01) significant level.

- **Decision:** We shall reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

- **Implications:** This reveals that a well-defined operations strategy will lead to operational excellence.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focuses on the relationship between change management and operational excellence. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant and positive association between operational excellence and technology adoption, organic structure, and operational strategy. This study takes a resource-based approach and the Lewin model to the application of theory in operational excellence and change management respectively. The study was able to demonstrate the following:

- This study demonstrated that technology adoption leads to operational excellence.
- The finding suggests that the implementation of an organic structure and operational excellence have a substantial link.
- The research also found that having a well-defined operations strategy leads to operational excellence.
- Adoption of technology, the implementation of an organic structure, and a well-defined operations strategy, among other elements, will lead to operational excellence.

A. Recommendations

- Organizations, particularly those in the service sector, should find the right mix of technology adoption, organic structure, and operational strategy, among other elements, in order to succeed in change projects and achieve operational excellence.
- To achieve operational excellence, managers should develop policies, procedures, and processes that combine three hard elements of change management, among others, into their strategic planning and direction. The findings, on the other hand, are expected to provide managers with insight into the most appropriate operational excellence model based on organizational needs.
- It is also suggested that organizations balance both the soft and hard elements of the change management process in order to improve stakeholder management as they strive for operational excellence.

B. Contribution to knowledge

- This study has made significant contributions to practice, technique, and theory, as evidenced by the data analysis findings above. Success in change projects requires the correct combination of adoption of technology, organic structure, and operational strategy for service organizations, among others. On the other hand, understanding all three components, among others, and commitment to change, may assist a company in guaranteeing operational excellence.
- The outcome of the study has provided empirical evidence of the relationship between change management and operational excellence, taking into consideration the hard elements of adoption of technology, implementation of organic structure, and a well-defined operations strategy that will lead to operational excellence, among others.
- The study provided empirical evidence that change management affects operational excellence.
- This research has added to the literatures on change management and operational excellence management.

C. Suggestion for further study

- The variables should be expanded to include other enablers of both soft and hard elements of change management.
- This study recommends that more research be done, including moderating variables such as commitment to change in future studies.

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