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**ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS TO CHANGE AND  
PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA: AN  
EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the study:** The goal of this study was to find out the effect of readiness to change on performance of public universities in Kenya through an empirical lens.

**Statement of the problem:** Public universities in Kenya face enormous challenges due to changing environmental conditions, including low global ranking, weak university-industry partnerships, and low research uptake. In 2016, only 69,000 students qualified for university education in Kenya, less than 20% compared to 170,000 in 2015, following reforms by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) to curb malpractices.

**Research methodology:** The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine 10 Kenyan public universities. The study targeted 220 management staff respondents through proportionate random sampling and analyzed the data using descriptive and inferential statistics with multiple regression analysis.

**Findings:** The study found that readiness to change by university leadership has a significant positive effect on their performance outcomes, with a unit increase in organizational readiness to change associated with an increase of 0.185 units in university performance. The results also indicate a standardized coefficient value of  $\beta = 0.230$ , signifying the strength and direction of the relationship between readiness to change and university performance when all other variables are measured on the same scale. Thus, the study can be 95% confident that the true effect size of organizational readiness to change is between 0.028 and 0.343.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that organizational readiness to change has a significant positive effect on the performance of universities in Kenya. The understanding of the concept of readiness to change by university leadership is found to be a key impetus towards the achievement of greater performance in these institutions.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that top administrators of universities in Kenya should establish clear policy guidelines that encourage staff members to adopt organizational readiness to change by emphasizing aspects like change commitment, efficacy, and implementation effort. To effectively implement these policies, university leaders should engage

in open communication with staff members, soliciting their input and feedback to ensure that the policies are well-understood and supported at all levels of the organization. Furthermore, universities should allocate sufficient resources to support the implementation of these policies, including funding for training programs, technology upgrades, and other initiatives that can facilitate organizational readiness to change.

**Keywords:** *Readiness to change, performance, public universities, Kenya*

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## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Even though there are currently more public universities in Kenya than ever before, the number of students seeking higher education has increased steadily over time. This necessitated the development of private universities. According to Mbijiwe, Pallavi, Kalama, and Member (2014), African nations have long struggled to provide their growing populations with quality higher education. Although East Asia, Latin America, and former Soviet republic nations took the lead in the development and expansion of private universities around the world, African nations, including Kenya, have come to see it as inevitable due to their expanding populations (Sifuna, 2013; Mutahi & Busienei, 2015). Examples of some of the old established fully fledged private universities in Kenya include Daystar (1989), USIU (1989), Strathmore (2002) and Kabarak (2002). These universities have eased the growing desire of education by the citizens. So far as at the year 2022, the government of Kenya had 34 private universities. Out of this, 16 were fully chartered universities, 5 were university component colleges, 13 had letter interim authority, and one was a registered institution.

Universities as organizations are sites of evolving human actions and therefore changes are inevitable to these institutions since they are in a state of continuous change to perform and survive. Various studies have shown that change initiatives and development is a major concern by many organizations all over the world and many struggle to cope with change due to advancement of technology, competition, and changes in global markets accelerated by complexities of the environmental changes. This implies that for an organization to improve on their performance, they ought to rapidly transform themselves to survive. Neka & Fendy (2021) observed that there is still little literature that has examined readiness to change in the university context across the globe.

The university as an institution is in danger of being disrupted due to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) of the changing environment. In addition, changes present a special challenge in these institutions due to the bureaucratic nature and set up of the university culture with rigid policies that may inhibit effective change process. These institutions of higher learning require to apply critical changes and adjustment to their roles in advancing higher education to enhance on their performance. Other studies have shown that a higher level of employee readiness for change predicts a higher successful implementation of change effort. However, this is achieved if the employees play a central role in implementing the change (Waisya & Welb, 2018). In addition, high employee morale, appreciation, trust, university organizational climate and appropriate leadership are good determinants of successful implementation of change. The application of the concept of readiness to change as a measure of organizational agility is key for the public universities in Kenya in responding quickly and successfully to un-anticipated change in the environment.

## **Organizational Agility**

Understanding the causes and motivations for building organizational agility is crucial to comprehending its influence in an organization (Mikalef & Pateli, 2017). Key factors that may force an organization to become agile include changes in the market, technology, customer preferences, and other socioeconomic factors (Rima and Mindaugas, 2018). An organization must determine its readiness to change, establish available resources, assess the type of responsiveness to adopt, and examine appropriate agility practices to achieve the required agility. This paradigm shift is expected to cause a fundamental change in the management of organizations, including universities, to sustain performance during uncertain circumstances while committed to their purpose of existence (Walter, 2020). Four critical indicators of organizational agility are readiness to change, agile enablers, responsiveness, and agility practice (Rima & Mindaugas, 2018). Organizational agility focuses on the organization's future based on its current state and strategic intent in responding to ambiguous environmental change (Harraf & Wanasika, 2015).

It enables quick and efficient change response throughout all levels and regions of an organization by identifying important factors for achieving strategic objectives and long-term sustainability (Varouchas, Sicilia, & Alonzo, 2018), improved by the relationship between organizational agility and strategic business strategy thinking (Ahmadzadeh and Aboumassoudi, 2020). Scholars have defined agility indicators differently, including agility drivers, enablers, capabilities, organization practices (Rene & Mindaugas, 2018), readiness for change, agility providers (Ahmadzadeh & Aboumassoudi, 2020; Menon & Suresh, 2020), agile leadership, strategic alignment, and organizational learning (Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011; Khoshlahn & Ardabili, 2016). Considering the challenges faced by universities in Kenya and their importance to economic and social development, this study adopts readiness to change as a key indicator of organizational agility to address current challenges and assist leaders in achieving goals and responding quickly to unexpected change (Walter, 2020). Various studies conclude that organizations in continuous change must develop the ability to change themselves gradually to survive (Waisya & Welb, 2018).

### **Readiness to change**

Readiness to change, a key dimension of organizational agility, involves an organization's capacity to initiate and handle change for better performance (Miles & Van-Clieaf, 2017). Amis and Aissaouli (2013) and Weiner (2020) suggest assessing university readiness for change using change commitment (shared determination to implement change), change efficacy (shared confidence in implementing complex change), and change implementation effort (desired strategy to implement change). This integrated approach requires coordinated participation from all members. The organization's current operation and focus on exploitation (enhancing efficiency with existing resources) or exploration (developing new offerings) strategies impact its readiness to change approach (Holzmann & Golan, 2016). Researchers identify readiness to change as crucial for organizations going agile due to uncertain external changes (Lu & Ramamurthy 2011; Gunasekaran, 1998) driven by factors like market changes, globalization, technological changes (Gunasekaran et al., 2018), and customer demand or preference changes (Vickery et al., 2010).

Organizations, including higher education institutions, embrace this agility paradigm. How an organization handles change commitment is influenced by its view of change as ongoing adaptation to environmental conditions or as proactive innovation management (Breu et al., 2003; Valentini, 2004). Readiness level may vary based on how members weigh the advantages of

ingrained behavior versus accepting change (Vakola et al., 2013), as readiness is an attitude during change implementation. Oreg et al. (2013) find readiness for change intriguing because employees' responses are crucial in organizational shifts. Kilika (2012) and Muathe (2010) used readiness for change as a measure for university performance and an independent variable indicator, respectively. This study adopts change commitment, change efficacy, and change implementation effort to measure readiness to change in Kenyan universities.

### **Performance of public universities in Kenya**

The performance of public universities in Kenya has been impacted since 2016 due to economic hardships and reduced student enrollment, especially for self-sponsored programs which had been a major source of income. In 2016, only 69,000 students qualified for university education in Kenya, less than 20% compared to 170,000 in 2015, following reforms by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) to curb malpractices. Subsequent years saw further reductions in qualifying candidates, leading to lower student populations. Universities that largely depended on student fees have been struggling to survive. Low growth in government funding and the decline in self-sponsored students have put most universities under severe strain to perform and provide quality education and research compared to competitors (Neka & Fendy, 2021). Kilika (2012) asserted that sustainable university-industry collaboration requires strategic responses like cluster building or strategic alliances. Muraguri (2017) postulates that the closed system nature of universities due to policies makes collaboration with industry narrow. These experts agree that science has significantly contributed to economic and technological change in industries, and institutional changes are needed for development collaboration.

Kenyan universities face challenges of inefficiencies, inadequate research, weak university-industry collaboration, and low global rankings. Older universities tend to rank lower globally than newer ones. Increased research and publications by university academia are needed to improve performance and enhance industrial collaboration. Sifuna (2013) asserted that low research output is due to inadequate government funding, impacting public universities' global rankings. This study adopts four indicators to measure university performance: efficiency (self-sponsored student enrollment, service charter adoption, ISO certification compliance), university-industry collaboration, research work, and global university ranking. The uncertain business environment has led many institutions worldwide to revise business models, priorities, strategic plans, and conventional methods to survive and thrive (Rima & Mindaugas, 2018). Organizational readiness to change is a key strategy adopted by many. Muraguri (2017) notes that university CEOs in Kenya are unsure of their institutions' capacity to realize planned strategies' full potential, despite strong pressure to fulfill strategic mandates. Prompt action plans are needed to capitalize on untapped opportunities and ensure survival and performance. Walter (2020) states that firms must apply readiness to change in tactics to succeed in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Readiness to change is widely agreed to be critical for achieving long-term performance, given the halting economic changes affecting universities in the 21st century (Bundtzen & Hinrichs, 2021; Neka & Fendy, 2021).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In Kenya, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of universities during the past 20 years. It is crucial to remember, nonetheless, that the trend in the number of students placed by Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) is primarily responsible for

the capacity expansion and career advancement at the universities. Prior to the year 2016, the placement trends were increasing every year and the private universities though not part of the placement equation also had a fill, which could be attributed to the capacity growth witnessed hitherto. A greater portion of the difficulties with the performance of the universities in Kenya can be attributed to the decline in the number of students with university entry grades since the year 2016 due to the policy change made by the ministry of education in response to the government directive that affected student intake ratio. This has caused some courses that had few students to be dropped in most universities, which has had a negative impact on their effectiveness and efficiency especially in absorption of self-sponsored students who play a key role in university financial stability.

The KUCCPS (2021) report on students' enrollment to public universities relative to the students qualifying for the university education has been showing a decline trend since the year 2016. For example, in the year 2018, only 61% of the qualified students were enrollment in public universities, 57% in year 2019 and 66% in year 2020 with the private universities taking 14% in year 2018, 14% in 2019 and 19% in 2020. This shows that each year has had surplus of students not absorbed by KUCCPS hence an opportunity for self-students sponsored programs for the public universities in order to be effective and improve on their efficiencies. The other unprecedented challenges facing these universities is the low global ranking of Kenyan public universities, weak university-industry partnerships due to the closed bureaucratic system of governance of public universities that hinder their performance and low research uptake due to lack of adequate capitation and the poor performing income generating activities (Jalaliyoon & Taherdoost, 2012). The question of whether these institutions will or not maintain their performance in unpredictable environment is therefore of great concern unless leadership in these universities respond to the concept of organizational readiness to change (Muraguri, Kimencu & Thuo, 2017; Mbirithi, 2013 and Sifuna, 2012)

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

To evaluate the effect of organizational readiness to change on performance of public universities in Kenya.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

Organizational Readiness to change has no significant relationship with performance of public universities in Kenya.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the research on organizational readiness to change as an indicator of organizational agility and university performance. The review looked at the underlying theories of the research as well as the empirical results of related studies that provided a foundation for the current examination on effect of readiness to change and performance of universities in Kenya. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that show how the study's conceptualization of the study variables are interconnected.

### **Theoretical literature review**

The pertinent theories that supported the study's constructs was covered in this section of the study. These included the Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) and Balanced ScoreCard Model (BCM) . A theory, according to Torraco (2016) and Post, Gatrell, & Prescott (2020), is a set of guiding principles that explains a phenomenon or how it is thought to operate.

### **Dynamic Capability Theory**

The dynamic capability (DC) theory, established by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen in 1997, describes an organization's capacity to combine, develop, and reconfigure internal and external competences to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. It explains the interactions between organizational resources and product markets and how they relate to organizational survival and performance. Dynamic capabilities have grown significantly in prominence in strategic management studies over time (Rashidirad & Salimian, 2020). Though strong DCs are owned by few in the organization and are indicative of organizational exposure, the uncertain change in the environment has necessitated their application to enhance unique business models and rapid innovations (Teece, 2017; Kuuluvainen, 2012). This has made many organizations outperform others (Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018). Dynamic capabilities tend to improve the reasoning of the resource-based view (RBV) by offering a more enriched evolutionary perspective on the organization's resources and capabilities (Wang & Ahmed, 2007). DCs are an organization's capacity to alter or reconfigure its standard capabilities (Arend, 2014, Davis & Bendickson, 2020) and are higher order capabilities that allow an organization to quickly adjust to uncertain, changing environmental conditions (Teece & Pisano, 1994). The DC theory is a key theory due to its connection to the concept of readiness to change and performance, as well as its relevance to the changing environment, justifying the inclusion of readiness to change as a suitable parameter for organizational agility in measuring university performance.

### **Balanced Score Card (BSC) Model**

The Balanced Score Card (BSC) model, introduced by Kaplan and Norton in 1992, has been widely adopted by organizations, including universities, as a performance management tool (Papalexandris, Ioannou, Prastacos, & Sodererquist, 2005). Universities have recognized the value of using the BSC model to convert strategic goals into performance measures (Silvia, 2009; Pietrzak, Paliszkievicz, & Klepacki, 2015). The tool employs four performance aspects: financial perspectives, internal processes perspectives, customer viewpoint, and learning and growth perspectives, to measure both financial and non-financial performance indicators. The BSC model translates the organization's vision, mission, and strategies into these four perspectives, leading to improved financial performance and organizational performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1990). This concept aligns with the current study's objective, as organizations competing in a dynamic environment seek to outpace rivals by creating strategies consistent with their short- and long-term goals, similar to the ultimate goal of agility. The BSC model provides success indicators for firms working in a dynamic and competitive environment. Integrating BSC into this study will help identify and evaluate gaps between the current and intended levels of agility in university organizations, aiding in understanding the business's shortcomings and identifying areas for concentration in the face of uncertain environmental changes (Bottani, 2009; Bottani, 2010). The adoption of BSC will also lessen the risks of implementing ineffective agile enablers. The non-financial and financial indicators provided by the BSC model will be used to measure the performance of public universities, which is the dependent variable in this study, underpinning the study's components assessing efficiency, university-industry collaboration, research work, and global rankings.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

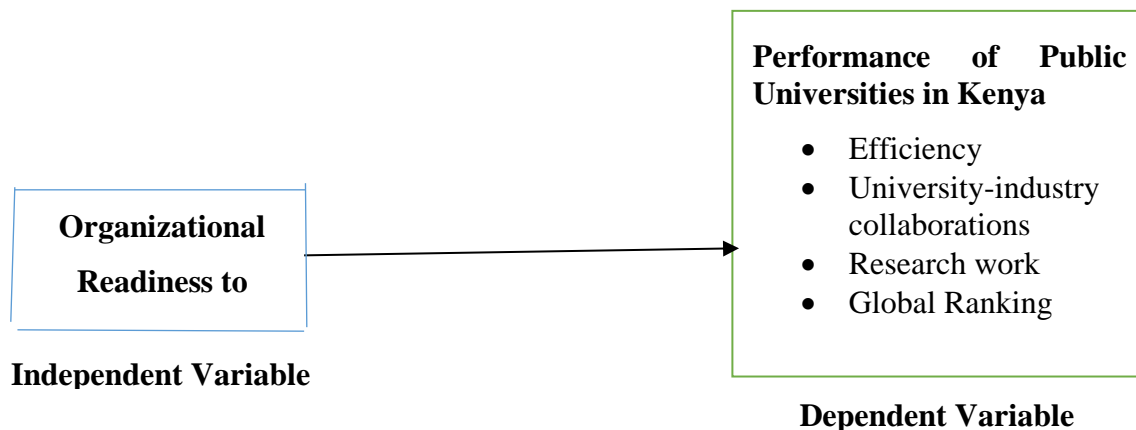
Garden and Mikkelsen (2020) investigated the role of readiness to change in understanding the processes and outcomes of implementing new management concepts and practices in a Norwegian

hospital setting. Using a longitudinal design and semi-structured questionnaires, the study found that strategic translations and practices foster readiness to change through editing practices and translation rules for quality outcomes. The study concluded that strategic translations were suitable tools for fostering readiness to change in a hospital context. Haque, TitiAmayah, and Liu (2016) examined the importance of vision on organizational readiness for change and growth in a higher education institute in California, USA. Using path analysis, the study found that the relationship between organizational growth and attributes of vision was mediated by perceived readiness for change, suggesting that organizations should create effective change initiatives to improve organizational growth and performance by focusing on readiness to change.

Asbari, Hidayat, and Purwanto (2021) investigated the impact of transformational leadership and readiness for change on employee performance in the Indonesian chemistry sector. Using structured questionnaires and structural equation modeling, the study found that readiness for change positively and significantly impacted employee performance through the mediating influence of transformational leadership. Zaman, Novitasari, and Goestjahjanti (2020) examined the impact of readiness to change on transformational leadership style and employee performance in a painting industry in Tangerang, Indonesia. The study found that transformational leadership had a significant positive influence on employees' readiness to change but no significant effect on performance, and that readiness for change fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Vakola (2014) investigated the concept of individual adaptability and the perceived impact of organizational change on its relationships with context and personality traits in a Greek technological firm. Using regression analysis, the study found that the relationship between an individual's readiness to change situations and work attitudes was mediated by the perceived impact of change, suggesting that individuals who are confident in their abilities tend to perceive change positively, resulting in high levels of readiness to change and improved organizational performance.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Conceptual framework describes the relationship between the many variables employed in the study. The conceptual framework below links the organizational agility as independent variable with the performance outcomes of public universities as dependent variable through the mediating effect of leadership style.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive and explanatory research design, utilizing a cross-sectional survey to gather data on the target population of 31 fully chartered public universities in Kenya. The study carefully sampled ten public universities based on the Webometrics World University rating as of January 2023, with a total of 488 respondents comprising DVCs, Senior Administrative Staff, Deans of Schools or Faculties, and Heads of Academic Departments. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of respondents and universities, with the Yamane formula employed to determine the sample size of 220 respondents. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which was piloted to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the research variables, with qualitative data deepening understanding of variable relationships and quantitative analysis confirming hypothesized relationships in the existing conceptual model.

### Response Rate

The study distributed 220 questionnaires in ten universities in Kenya; 207 of them were completed, and 13 were not returned. Table 1 displays the results.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Response	207	94.1%
Non-response	13	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source: Research data (2024)**

A response rate of 94.1% and a non-response rate of 5.9% are displayed in Table 1 above. Bryman and Bell (2011) state that data analysis requires a response rate of greater than 50%. This justification leads one to conclude that the study's 95.1% response rate is sufficient for data analysis and for achieving the study's goals. The extensive nature of the data collection tool, well-



honed data collection strategies that gave respondents enough time to complete the questionnaires, and the availability of the researcher and research assistant to address any questions that arose throughout the course of the research project were all factors in the high response rate.

### Descriptive Analysis

Quantitative data on the study variable of organizational readiness to change, and university performance was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics that summarized major characteristics of the study variables were mean scores and standard deviation.

### Organizational readiness to change and University Performance

The purpose of the study was to determine how university performance in Kenya was impacted by organizational readiness to change. The findings are displayed in Table 2 below

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for organizational readiness to change**

	VARIABLE	MEAN	SD
	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS TO CHANGE</b>		
1	Employees belief that change is necessary to produce desired results	4.00	0.89
2	Management involves employees in decision making about uncertain change in the environment.	3.98	0.86
3	Our employees are able to implement a complex change with ease	3.93	0.82
4	The university leadership has a strategy to effect a desired change	4.27	0.75
5	The university leadership is committed to respond to uncertain change process.	4.13	0.86
6	The university value employees as key resource to drive change.	4.18	0.79
7	University policies are clear on uncertain change process.	3.95	0.94
	<b>Aggregate Mean and Standard deviation</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.844</b>

### Source: Survey Data (2024)

The results in Table 2 show that respondents agreed to a large extent that the university leadership has a strategy to effect desired change during uncertainty and that the employees are valued as key resource to drive the desired change required in the university as indicated by mean scores of 4.27 and 4.18 respectively. The respondents however had varied opinions that the university leadership had a strategy to effect desired change and valued employees as key resource to drive the desired change as indicated by a standard deviation of 0.75, and 0.79 respectively. In addition, the respondents also agreed to a large extent that management in the public universities are committed to responding quickly to uncertain change process and that their employees' belief that change is a necessity for the public universities to produce desired results when faced with uncertainty as shown by the respective mean score of 4.13 and 4.00. However, the high standard deviation of 0.86 and 0.89 respectively showed that there were varied opinions among the respondents concerning the two aspects.

The study also established that the respondents agreed to a large extent that the university management involves employees in decision making about uncertain change in the environment that affect their institutions, the employees are able to implement complex changes with ease and that public universities have clear policies on unexpected change process as shown by the respective mean score of 3.98, 3.93 and 3.95. On the contrary, the high standard deviations of

0.86, 0.82 and 0.94 respectively for these statements indicates that there were high variations in the respondents' opinions concerning the three aspects.

Overall, the respondents agreed to a large extent that organizational readiness to change is an important requirement that need to be practiced by public universities when faced with uncertain change in the environment in which they operate as shown by an aggregate mean of 4.06. However, an aggregate standard deviation of 0.84 indicates that the respondents had varied opinions on the role that organizational readiness to change plays in performance of public universities in Kenya. This finding concurs with work done by Vakola (2014) that employees who are confident in their talents have a higher propensity to view positively any anticipated change leading to high levels of readiness to change and better organization performance. The study finding is also in line with the concepts of dynamic capability theory that organizations should develop and reconfigure both their internal and external competencies to cause an improvement on their performance in unpredictable environment.

### Descriptive statistics for Performance of Selected Universities

The study sought to determine the extent to which each measure of University performance had been achieved as a result of effect of readiness to change in universities in Kenya. The indicators of efficiency, university-industry collaboration, research work and global ranking were used as a measurement of university performance as shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for University Performance**

<b>UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE</b>			
		<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>		
	Enrolment levels for Self-sponsored student is low in our university	4.40	0.84
	Our university has an operational service charter	4.60	0.53
	Our university has adopted new technologies in teaching methods	4.14	0.61
	<b>Aggregate score</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>0.66</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Research work</b>		
	The university management supports research work for staff.	4.19	0.84
	Academic staff are involved in research work in the university	4.22	0.71
	The number of research publications by staff has increased	3.93	0.92
	<b>Aggregate score</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>0.82</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>University - Industry Collaboration</b>		
	University management supports the university-industry partnerships.	4.21	0.74
	Our university-Industry partnerships is still weak to drive change.	3.72	1.08
	We have an established students internship program with industries	3.81	1.03
	<b>Aggregate score</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.95</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Global ranking</b>		
	Our university has been improving on global ranking scale	4.21	0.95
	University ranking is a key parameter of performance	4.18	0.91
	University is ISO (International Organizations for Standards) certified.	4.43	0.67
	<b>Aggregate score</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.84</b>
	<b>Aggregate mean and standard deviation for University performance</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.82</b>

**Source: Survey Data (2024)**

The results in Table 3 indicate that the aggregate mean score and standard deviation for items regarding efficiency was 4.38 and 0.66 respectively. The mean score of 4.38 indicates that the respondents generally felt that public institutions were efficient and successful in the three areas

of performance measurement in adopting readiness to change concept. The respondents' opinions varied little, as evidenced by the standard deviation value of 0.61 on adoption of new technologies in teaching methods. In Kenya's universities, activities related to efficiency were deemed significant by the respondents, as indicated by the average response. For items pertaining to research work, the standard deviation and aggregate mean score were 0.82 and 4.11, respectively. Notably, the study's overall mean score attests to the fact that performance activities in public institutions heavily rely on research uptake. The academic staff at public universities is engaged in research and publishes papers in referred journals, as evidenced by the mean score of 4.11 and standard deviation of 0.82, which indicate low variability in respondents' opinions. This suggests staff commitment and high efficacy towards change initiatives. The results also indicate that the university management supports staff research efforts.

According to the large standard deviation of 0.95 and the aggregate mean of 3.91, the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that university-industry relationships are robust. This is in line with work done by Rossi and Rosili (2015) that contributions by universities to industrial world is enormous through knowledge transfer that has a profound effect on development. However, many respondents believe that despite the support provided by university management for industrial partnerships which is indicated by a mean score of 4.21 and a low standard deviation of 0.74, this partnership is still insufficient to bring about the necessary change, and that the structures supporting students' internship programs in industries are underdeveloped, as indicated by mean scores of 3.72 and 3.81 with varying standard deviations of 1.08 and 1.03, respectively. This narrative is expected to shift positively as university leadership adopt concept of readiness to change in their commitment, efficacy and implementation efforts.

This is consistent with results from Muraguri (2017) that public universities' policies are designed as closed systems, which limits their ability to collaborate with the industrial world hence need for change initiatives. Kilika (2012) also found that a sustainable university-industry partnership program requires a strategic strategy. The aggregate mean score of 4.27 and standard deviation of 0.84 suggest that many respondents agreed, to a substantial extent, that universities in Kenya have improved on the worldwide ranking scale due to serious commitment towards performance and that global ranking was a crucial performance indicator. On overall performance, the total aggregate mean response and standard deviation is 4.17 and 0.82 respectively for all items. Based on the 5-point rating system, the average score which is above 4.00 indicates that most respondents agreed that performance aspects exist in universities in Kenya. Performance of universities in Kenya is viewed as the result of implementing an effective readiness to change strategy, which helps to explain this observation. According to Rima and Mindaugas (2018), numerous organizations, including universities, have had to modify their business models, priorities, and strategic plans in order to survive and perform better as a result of the unpredictable changes in the business environment.

### **Test of Hypothesis**

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of organizational readiness to change on performance of universities in Kenya. The study was based on the assumption that Organizational readiness to change has an effect on the performance of universities in Kenya. The objective of the study tested the null hypothesis that: organizational readiness to change had no effect on performance of universities in Kenya. To test these hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was done and interpreted through adjusted R<sup>2</sup> values and P-values at P<0.05 significance level. The

direct relationship between organization readiness to change on university performance was done as below;

**Test of Direct Relationship Hypothesis**

The test of hypotheses was done using multiple regression analysis. The study tested the relationship between organizational readiness to change and performance of universities in Kenya. The model adopted is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 RC + \epsilon$$

Where; Y= the dependent variable and a composite score for Performance of Universities.

$B_0$  = A constant that defines performance of universities without use of independent variables.

$\beta_1$  is the independent variable beta coefficients (slope).

RC= Readiness to change;  $\epsilon$ = error term

The results for the multiple regression model are as shown in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

**Table 4: Model Summary for Multiple Regression**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.356 <sup>a</sup>	0.127	.0110		3.10214

a. Predictor: (Constant), organizational readiness to change  
**Source: Survey Data (2024)**

Table 4 indicates correlation coefficient (R) is 0.356 which illustrates that the independent variables and university performance are positively correlated. The adjusted R square for the model is 0.110 implying that 11.0 % of the variations in performance of universities in Kenya is explained by the organizational agility components (organizational readiness to change) and the remaining 87.3% of the variations in university performance is predicted by other factors other than those in the model. To confirm if the model is fit, an ANOVA test was run and results are as shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5: Model summary of ANOVA for Multiple Regression**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F		Sig.
Regression	282.509	4	70.627	7.339		.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1943.907	22	9,623			
Total	2226.415	206				

The ANOVA results in Table 5 indicate a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the overall model of the study is fit to predict the relationship between organizational readiness to change and performance of universities in Kenya. The results also show that the F statistic for the model is 7.339 which is greater than the F-critical value of 2.817. This indicates that the model as a whole is significant and has been found to be able to predict the performance of universities in Kenya. To further establish the significance of the model in predicting performance of universities in Kenya, a t-test was conducted and the results are shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Model summary of Coefficients for Multiple Regression**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std Error			
1 (Constant)	31.581	1.967	0.230	16.059	.000
Organizational Readiness to Change	.185	.080	-	2.327	.021

From the results in Table 6 the regression model is summarized as follows.

**Performance of Universities in Kenya = 31.581 + 0.185 Organizational Readiness to change**

Based on the degree of the variable in predicting university performance, the findings show that organizational readiness to change has a positive effect on university performance with a unit value of 0.185. The results in Table 6 show a beta coefficient for the constant of 31.581. This implies that if the predictor factor (organizational readiness to change) is held constant, the performance of universities in Kenya would be equal to 31.581. This value denotes the estimated starting point of university performance. The p-value < 0.001 (reported as 0.000) suggests that the intercept is significantly different from zero at a level far below the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. However, the true population value of the intercept is likely between 27.704 and 35.459 with 95% confidence.

In this objective, the study sought to ascertain the effect of organizational readiness to change on the performance of universities in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated that organizational readiness to change has no significant effect on the performance of universities in Kenya. From the results in table 6, organizational readiness to change has a P-value of 0.021 < 0.05 level of significance, indicating statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. Based on this P-value, the study rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that organizational readiness to change has a significant effect on the performance of selected public universities in Kenya. The results also indicate a beta coefficient of  $\beta = 0.185$ , signifying that when all other factors are held constant, a unit increase in organizational readiness to change is associated with an increase of 0.185 units in university performance. The standardized coefficient value of  $\beta = 0.230$  indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between this variable and the dependent variable when all other variables are measured on the same scale.

However, from the results of the 95% confidence interval, we can be 95% confident that the true effect size of organizational readiness to change is between 0.028 and 0.343. This is in line with work done by Haque, TitiAmayah & Liu (2016), who concluded that focusing on readiness to change had a positive impact on improving organizational growth and performance, and the findings of Asbari, Hidayat & Purwanto (2021) that readiness to change impacted positively on employee performance. The findings on this variable are in line with the postulates of the dynamic capability theory, which stipulates that an organization has the capability to combine, develop, or reconfigure both internal and external competencies in responding to external stimuli. To achieve this, an organization must respond positively to readiness to change.

### **Analysis of Qualitative Data for the study objective.**

The objective of the study was to determine the effect of organizational readiness to change on performance of universities in Kenya. The respondents were required to give their opinion on how the university ensures that employees are committed for readiness to change and how it affects university performance. The respondents believe that the university should emphasize continuous and multifaceted training initiatives to foster commitment to readiness for change among employees. By implementing varied training methods such as seminars and mentorships, the university could nurture a workforce that is adaptable and prepared for evolving challenges and innovations.

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The objective of the study sought to ascertain the effect of organizational readiness to change on the performance of universities in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated that organizational readiness to change had no significant effect on the performance of selected public universities in Kenya. The study found that organizational readiness to change had a significant effect on the performance of universities in Kenya. Theoretically, the findings reached were in line with work done by Hague, TitiAmayah & Liu (2016), who found that focusing on readiness to change had a positive impact on improving organizational performance, and also with the findings of Asbari, Hidayat & Purwanto (2021) that readiness to change impacted positively on employee performance. Additionally, the findings of this variable are in line with the postulates of dynamic capability theory. Therefore, the study rejected the first null hypothesis that organizational readiness to change had no significant effect on the performance of universities in Kenya.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that organizational readiness to change has a significant positive effect on the performance of universities in Kenya. It was perceived that universities in Kenya should emphasize continuous and multifaceted training initiatives to foster commitment to readiness to change among employees, such as seminars, forums, and mentorships. This could nurture a workforce that is adaptable and prepared for evolving challenges and innovations in these universities. The study's conclusions have significant ramifications for practice and policy that can be used to enhance the performance of universities in Kenya. The findings suggest that by promoting organizational readiness to change, universities can improve their overall performance and better navigate the dynamic environment in which they operate. The study highlights the importance of creating a culture that embraces change and supports employees in developing the necessary skills and mindset to adapt to new circumstances. By investing in training and development programs that focus on change management and adaptability, universities can build a resilient and agile workforce that is well-equipped to handle the challenges and opportunities presented by a rapidly changing environment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends that top administrators of universities in Kenya should establish clear policy guidelines that encourage staff members to adopt organizational readiness to change by emphasizing aspects like change commitment, efficacy, and implementation effort. These elements will spur employees' mindset and belief that environmental conditions for the universities are not static, hence the need for new ways of thinking that are applicable to a dynamic environment. To effectively implement these policies, university leaders should engage in open

communication with staff members, soliciting their input and feedback to ensure that the policies are well-understood and supported at all levels of the organization. Additionally, the study recommends that universities allocate sufficient resources to support the implementation of these policies, including funding for training programs, technology upgrades, and other initiatives that can facilitate organizational readiness to change. Furthermore, future research should incorporate findings from other organizations and universities worldwide to enrich the understanding of the relationship between organizational readiness to change and university performance. By expanding the scope of research to include diverse institutional contexts, researchers can identify best practices and develop more comprehensive models for fostering organizational readiness to change in higher education settings.

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