

# **Change Management Strategies And Performance Of The National Disease Surveillance And Response Program**

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## **Abstract**

*In dynamic and complex public health environments, change management (CM) has emerged as a strategic necessity to enhance organizational performance. This study assessed the influence of change management strategies on the performance of the National Disease Surveillance and Response Program (NDSRP) in Kenya. A descriptive research design with a census approach was adopted, targeting all 39 staff members of the NDSRP, including top, mid, and lower-level management. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and secondary record reviews covering the 2020–2023 period. The study focused on four key change management strategies: communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including ordinal regression analysis, were conducted using Stata software. Findings revealed that stakeholder engagement strategies recorded high satisfaction levels, while communication, organizational learning, and monitoring and evaluation efforts were rated moderately. Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between the implemented change management strategies and program performance, particularly in enhancing the timeliness and completeness of reporting for priority disease indicators. The study concludes that systematic and well-integrated change management strategies can significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public health programs. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and program managers in optimizing CM practices to achieve sustainable improvements in health surveillance systems.*

**Keywords:** *Change management strategies, organizational performance, public health surveillance, stakeholder engagement, organizational learning, communication, monitoring, and evaluation*

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## **I. Introduction**

In today's complex and dynamic organizational environment, institutions must adopt structured approaches to change management (CM) to ensure performance continuity and growth. Organizational Change Management (OCM) is increasingly recognized as a strategic function that integrates various organizational activities in pursuit of shared goals while responding to external pressures (Palmer et al., 2016). Factors such as technological advancements, shifting consumer demands, cost-effective innovations, and political or economic instability have compelled organizations to continuously adapt to maintain competitiveness and operational efficiency (Banton, 2021). CM offers a disciplined framework to ensure that transformation processes are effectively managed and that the intended benefits are realized (Miranda & Bottorff, 2022). Organizations that execute successful CM strategies enjoy significant advantages, including sustained superior performance (Ishmael, 2014; George, 2023).

Although change management is a critical enabler of performance improvement, its effectiveness relies on the ability to mitigate resistance, address stakeholder concerns, and reconcile internal organizational differences (Kelsey, 2020). The unpredictability of human behavior and environmental factors also makes it necessary for change models to evolve continuously to remain relevant (George, 2023). Scholars have responded by proposing various frameworks for managing organizational change, among them the ADKAR Model (Prosci, 2023), Lewin's Three-Stage Model (Burnes, 2004), the McKinsey 7-S Framework (McKinsey, 2008), and the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle (Taylor et al., 2014). These models have informed strategies for enhancing adaptability and responsiveness in both private and public organizations.

From a global perspective, change management strategies are often shaped by contextual variables such as culture, governance structures, and organizational maturity (Grdošić & Avdić, 2017). In the United States, successful organizations emphasize clear communication and inclusive stakeholder engagement, with frameworks like ADKAR commonly used to operationalize these principles (Hayes, 2022). Leaders like

Microsoft's Satya Nadella have popularized approaches such as "Model, Coach, Care" to promote transformational leadership in change processes (Nadella, 2022). Deutschman (2007) further argued that radical and comprehensive change is often more achievable than incremental transformation, reinforcing the importance of bold strategies in CM.

In Asia, change management is significantly influenced by hierarchical cultural norms and respect for authority, where leadership typically directs change initiatives from the top (Hassard, John, & Reese, 2010). Face-to-face communication, relational trust, and harmony are prioritized to reduce conflict and ensure buy-in. Studies such as Sung and Kim (2021) show that communication, education, and employee participation positively affect innovative behaviors and organizational outcomes in South Korean firms, highlighting the value of context-specific CM strategies.

In Africa, change management approaches often mirror those of more industrialized economies. African firms frequently adopt externally developed frameworks to improve organizational outcomes, although their success depends on localization and internal capacity (Boso et al., 2019). Research by Zoogah and Nkomo (2013) affirms that African organizations, including those in Kenya, link CM with performance improvement, especially in response to volatile markets and reduced product life cycles. However, these externally borrowed strategies often require tailoring to address unique challenges in governance, infrastructure, and human resource capability.

Kenya's health sector has undergone significant reforms since the adoption of devolution in 2010, which gave county governments increased responsibility over public health services (Cheeseman et al., 2016). As part of these reforms, strategic change initiatives have been adopted to improve service delivery. Yet, the effectiveness of these efforts depends heavily on how CM is structured and executed. According to Kibe and Kihara (2022), successful CM in county-level health management involves staff engagement, leadership alignment, and continuous communication. Other studies, such as Kario and Ngugi (2017), found that employee motivation and involvement significantly influence change outcomes in Kenyan commercial banks. Similarly, Njuguna and Owuor (2016) emphasized that understanding employee motivations is critical to successful organizational transformation.

Organizational performance is central to strategic management and reflects how effectively an organization utilizes its resources to achieve its objectives (Bourne et al., 2018). It encompasses not only financial outcomes but also innovation, employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and adaptability. Teece (2020) stressed the need for organizations to adopt dynamic capabilities that enhance responsiveness to changing environments, balancing the exploration of new opportunities with the exploitation of existing competencies. In dynamic sectors such as health, where uncertainty and complexity are prevalent, CM strategies that promote learning, innovation, and performance monitoring are essential for sustainable success.

Within Kenya's public health landscape, the National Disease Surveillance and Response Program (NDSRP) plays a critical role. Operating under the Ministry of Health's Directorate of Public Health, NDSRP is responsible for monitoring priority diseases, coordinating outbreak response, training surveillance officers, and guiding epidemic preparedness (MOH, 2014; Vision 2030). The program's performance is evaluated using indicators such as data completeness, reporting timeliness, and response efficiency. Notably, in 2021, the program recorded a decline in performance, with reporting rates for Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) diseases falling to 77% and timeliness to 73%, both below the national target of 80% (KHIS2, 2023). These shortcomings prompted the implementation of various CM strategies, though the effectiveness of such interventions remains under-examined.

This study sought to address this gap by investigating the influence of selected change management strategies—namely, communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation—on the performance of NDSRP. Unlike prior studies that primarily focused on individual-level change, this research centers the organization as the unit of analysis. The findings generate actionable insights for enhancing CM within public health institutions, thereby supporting national efforts in epidemic preparedness and disease surveillance.

## **II. Literature Review**

This section reviewed relevant theories and empirical evidence related to change management strategies and their effect on organizational performance. The review was guided by four major change management models—ADKAR, Lewin's Change Model, the McKinsey 7-S Framework, and the PDSA cycle—which informed the conceptual underpinnings of the study. The review also examined existing empirical findings regarding the influence of communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation on performance, particularly in public health contexts.

The study drew from the ADKAR Model developed by Prosci in 1998, which focused on managing change at the individual level through five stages: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement. The model was widely used to assess the human side of organizational change and to guide personal transitions

within organizations (Haastrecht et al., 2021). In the context of public health, the model's clarity and structure were beneficial, especially for frontline health workers needing direction during periods of rapid transformation (Chipamaunga et al., 2023). However, its primary limitation was its individual-centric focus, which overlooked organizational culture, leadership dynamics, and the complexities inherent in team-based public health settings (Harrison et al., 2021).

Lewin's Change Management Model offered a foundational three-step approach: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Burnes, 2004). The model proved effective in initiating and anchoring new behaviors within organizations. The "unfreezing" stage was especially relevant to public health environments where ingrained procedures required disruption to create urgency for change. However, criticisms arose regarding its rigidity. Scholars such as Saleem et al. (2019) and Suc et al. (2019) observed that Lewin's linear process did not fully accommodate the iterative and uncertain nature of healthcare systems, where rapid and continuous adaptations are often required. Furthermore, the "refreezing" concept was sometimes viewed as incompatible with dynamic environments like disease surveillance programs, where agility was paramount (Figueroa et al., 2019).

The McKinsey 7-S Framework emphasized organizational alignment through seven interdependent elements: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, staff, and style (McKinsey, 2008). This model provided a comprehensive lens for examining how internal elements interacted to influence organizational outcomes. In public health organizations, it helped align new procedures with strategic goals and supported decision-making and performance tracking (Chmielewska et al., 2022). However, critiques highlighted that the model focused primarily on internal processes, often neglecting patient-centered outcomes and the external regulatory environment (Scerri et al., 2020). Additionally, its static nature was found to be a drawback in fast-evolving sectors such as public health surveillance.

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle, also known as the Deming Cycle, was applied as a tool for continuous improvement. It involved a systematic process of planning interventions, implementing them, studying the outcomes, and acting on lessons learned (Taylor et al., 2014). This framework supported the iterative improvement of health surveillance systems and informed monitoring strategies. Studies by Coury et al. (2017) and Searle et al. (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of the PDSA cycle in infectious disease control and highlighted its role in refining program performance. Nonetheless, translating PDSA insights into long-term strategic change was not always straightforward in bureaucratic or resource-constrained environments (Mayo, 2021).

The study also reviewed empirical literature on the four CM strategies examined: communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation. Organizational learning was found to be a critical driver of adaptability and performance in changing environments. Chuah and Law (2020) identified learning as a process through which organizations built resilience and agility. Studies by D'Adderio (2023) and Gupta et al. (2019) confirmed that structured knowledge management systems enhanced strategic flexibility and innovation, key enablers of improved performance. Training and development initiatives were also shown to be effective; Noe et al. (2014) and Burke & Hutchins (2013) found that continuous learning led to improved staff engagement and organizational outcomes. However, gaps remained in understanding the long-term effects of such programs, particularly in relation to informal learning methods and digital learning platforms (Brown & Jones, 2018). Peer learning was another important element. Crossan et al. (2016) and Fensel & Richter (2019) showed that informal exchanges among colleagues enhanced problem-solving and fostered collaboration, although power dynamics and unequal knowledge distribution posed risks.

Stakeholder involvement was essential for successful change initiatives. Freeman (2010) emphasized the importance of engaging both internal and external stakeholders. Empirical findings supported this view: Cummings et al. (2017) observed that identifying and empowering team leaders within stakeholder groups increased trust and alignment. Kusek et al. (2020) and Kwok et al. (2018) further established that early and sustained involvement across the change cycle reduced resistance and improved adaptability. Saebo et al. (2017) highlighted the significance of clearly defined stakeholder roles to avoid role ambiguity and enhance collaboration. However, research suggested a need for a more nuanced understanding of how power dynamics within stakeholder groups influenced performance outcomes (Bouckenhove et al., 2019).

Communication emerged as a foundational element in organizational change. Effective communication fostered clarity, alignment, and engagement (Beebe, 2013; De Vries, 2020). Grant et al. (2018) found that assertive communication styles enhanced team cohesion and project outcomes, while De Vries et al. (2020) highlighted the role of adaptable communication in fostering inclusivity. Bhattacharya et al. (2019) demonstrated that blending formal and informal communication channels improved knowledge flow and decision-making. Yet, leveraging digital communication tools effectively remained a challenge in many resource-limited settings. Studies by Naranjo-Prieto & León-Pérez (2020) and Yim & Park (2018) emphasized the value of two-way communication in enhancing employee engagement and innovation. However, issues such as psychological safety and fear of reprisal continued to inhibit open dialogue in some organizational cultures.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was found to play a pivotal role in steering change and improving accountability. Al-Hashimi & Coetzee (2018) noted that M&E-informed appraisals contributed to more objective and motivating performance reviews. Sengupta & Banerjee (2017) and Mulugetta et al. (2020) demonstrated how M&E findings could lead to actionable improvements in productivity and quality. KPIs, as highlighted by Chen et al. (2018) and Naylor et al. (2019), were essential in aligning organizational efforts with strategic goals. However, balancing comprehensive metrics with actionable simplicity remained a challenge, especially in high-volume, high-pressure environments such as public health surveillance systems.

While the reviewed studies provided rich insights into the impact of change management strategies, most focused on the private sector or assessed individual rather than organizational outcomes. Further, few studies examined CM within public health surveillance systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. There was also limited research on how multiple CM strategies interact to influence performance holistically. This study addressed these gaps by adopting an organization-level focus and by evaluating the cumulative and individual effects of communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and M&E on the performance of the NDSRP in Kenya.

### **III. Research Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of change management strategies on the performance of the National Disease Surveillance and Response Program (NDSRP) in Kenya. The design was suitable for describing relationships among variables without manipulating them. A census approach was used, targeting all 39 staff members of the NDSRP, including top-level management, unit heads, and surveillance officers. Data were collected using structured self-administered questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, complemented by a review of secondary data from official the Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS). The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale and captured perceptions on four change management strategies: communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation.

Prior to full data collection, a pilot test was conducted to validate and refine the research instrument. Instrument validity was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable. Quantitative data were cleaned and analyzed using Stata software, where descriptive statistics summarized participant characteristics and responses, and ordinal regression analysis determined the relationship between change management strategies and organizational performance. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Qualitative feedback from open-ended questions was analyzed thematically to enrich and triangulate the quantitative findings. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was sought from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and data security throughout the research process.

### **IV. Research Findings And Discussions**

The study sought to examine the influence of change management strategies—namely, communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation—on the performance of the National Disease Surveillance and Response Program (NDSRP). Data were collected from 37 out of 39 targeted respondents, achieving a high response rate of 99%. The majority of the respondents were male (73%), aged between 41–50 years (49%), held a degree (57%), and had worked for between 5–10 years (41%), indicating relevant experience and familiarity with the organization's operations.

Descriptive findings revealed moderate satisfaction levels across all four change management strategies. Communication received a mean score of 3.16, with respondents appreciating tailored communication but indicating gaps in two-way feedback mechanisms. Organizational learning scored an overall mean of 3.14, with training opportunities viewed more favorably than knowledge sharing or peer learning. Stakeholder involvement emerged as the highest-rated strategy, with an average score of 3.55, reflecting strong consultation practices and recognition of team roles. Monitoring and evaluation recorded an average mean score of 3.14, with respondents indicating the existence of performance appraisals and KPIs, though the application of evaluation insights remained inconsistent.

The regression analysis confirmed a strong and statistically significant relationship between change management strategies and organizational performance. The model explained over 99% of the variance in performance, as reflected in the  $R^2$  value.

Table 1 to 3 presents the results of the regression model analysis.

**Table 1: Regression Statistics**

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.999079205
R Square	0.998159258
Adjusted R Square	0.996318516

Standard Error	0.03503086
Observations	3

**Table 2: ANOVA**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	0.665439505	0.665439505	542.2592593	0.027321836
Residual	1	0.001227161	0.001227161		
Total	2	0.666666667			

**Table 3: Coefficients**

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	-7.679438233	0.344689599	-22.27928621	0.028555348	-12.05913485	-3.299741616
3.317567568	2.44177802	0.104858271	23.28646086	0.027321836	1.109427362	3.774128678

These results demonstrate that the combination of communication, organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, and M&E significantly improved the performance of the NDSRP. The high R<sup>2</sup> (0.9982) implies that nearly all performance improvements observed could be attributed to these change management interventions. The significance levels (p < 0.05) confirm the robustness of the findings.

Secondary data from the Kenya Health Information System (KHIS) was also collected to confirm the findings. It shows reporting rates, timeliness, and completeness from 2020 to 2023. Completeness of data entry remained at 100% across all years, due to digitized data entry processes. This system mandates the entry of essential variables before moving to the next stage, ensuring that all required data fields are consistently filled. The reporting rate has shown improvement over the years, increasing from 78% in 2020 to 93% in 2023. This indicates that more health facilities are consistently submitting their reports. Timeliness of reporting has also improved, rising from 75% in 2020 to 92% in 2023. This suggests that reports are being submitted more promptly over time.

**Table 4: NDSRP Performance Indicators, 2020-2023**

Year	Reporting rate (%)	Timeliness (%)	Completeness (%)
2020	78	75	100
2021	77	73	100
2022	90	89	100
2023	93	92	100

The overall improvement in the reporting rates and timeliness, consistent data completeness, suggests that NDSRP over the years has increasingly relied on data-driven decision-making. The improvement in the data quality and availability enabled enhanced informed decision-making, better resource allocation, and overall improved performance.

## V. Conclusions

The study demonstrated that change management strategies are critical in improving program performance. When applied consistently, organizational learning proves to be a valuable tool for driving performance. Stakeholder involvement emerged as a key factor in enhancing performance, highlighting the need for inclusive decision-making and ongoing collaboration. Effective communication depends on strong feedback mechanisms to ensure clarity and engagement. Additionally, integrating monitoring and evaluation of key performance indicators into decision-making processes is essential for continuous improvement. Strengthening data-driven approaches will further enhance the program’s ability to adapt to evolving public health challenges.

## VI. Recommendations

To enhance organizational performance, NDSRP needs to focus on strengthening its organizational learning practices. The current efforts are inconsistent and therefore limit their effectiveness. Aligning training with strategic objectives, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and improving knowledge-sharing will lead to better decision-making and agility, enabling NDSRP to respond more effectively to changes.

Enhancing stakeholder involvement is crucial. By establishing clear leadership roles and encouraging continuous engagement throughout the change management process, NDSRP can better align stakeholder interests with program goals. Consistency in these practices will promote stronger collaboration and improve outcomes.

Addressing communication gaps is equally important. NDSRP should implement more transparent, assertive communication strategies that encourage two-way dialogue and boost employee engagement. Creating opportunities for open discussion and feedback will help strengthen team cohesion and drive innovation.

Finally, refining M&E practices is essential. Utilizing dynamic KPIs and real-time feedback mechanisms will optimize performance, allowing NDSRP to adapt more efficiently and allocate resources more effectively.

Focusing on organizational learning, stakeholder involvement, communication, and M&E practices will significantly enhance the overall impact of NDSRP's change management strategies. Continuously refining and adapting these strategies will ensure they remain aligned with the organization's goals and evolving needs.

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