

Original Article

Change Management Practices of Higher Education Institutions in Southern Leyte, Philippines

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Abstract

Background: Higher education institutions (HEIs) must manage change amid technological developments, quality assurance expectations, institutional accountability, and shifting stakeholder expectations. In a Philippine provincial setting, employees' awareness of these practices reveals how the administration communicates, demonstrates, and implements change management in their institutions.

Methods: This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive-comparative design supplemented by exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Examines change management practices among administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff from five HEIs in Southern Leyte, Philippines. Kotter's Change Model served as the framework. This study was participated in by 392 respondents.

Results: Change management was observed to a moderate extent ($M = 3.14$). Among the factors, increased urgency and creating short-term wins have the highest mean scores ($M = 3.17$ each), while empowering action ($M = 3.08$) has the lowest. Administrators rated more favorably on several factors than the faculty members. Exploratory factor analysis showed three thematic areas: "Establishing the Foundation for Change"; "Driving Momentum through Communication and Early Wins"; "Sustaining and Embedding Change."

Conclusion: Change management evidently was practiced in these HEIs. However, these were not felt uniformly across different organizational roles. Results highlight the need for role-specific communications and meaningful participation in change administration.

Keywords

change management, higher education institutions, Kotter-informed practices, Exploratory factor analysis, organizational change, Southern Leyte, Philippines, UN SDG 4, quality education

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) operate in an environment of continuing change. Digital transformation, new modes of learning delivery, accreditation requirements, budgetary restrictions, student expectations, and pressures for accountability require these institutions to review how their academic and administrative work is organized (Alenezi, 2023; Chugh et al., 2023; Díaz-García et al., 2023; Rasli et al., 2022). In provincial settings,

these pressures are particularly consequential because resource restrictions, organizational histories, and local expectations can shape the pace and form of institutional response. Change, therefore, involves more than the adoption of a new policy, system, or technology. In higher education, such changes can reshape teaching practices, administrative processes, coordination arrangements, and employees' day-to-day responsibilities (Díaz-García et al., 2023; Rieg et al., 2021; Vlachopoulos, 2021). It also involves how employees interpret the purpose of change, understand their responsibilities, and receive the authority and support needed to implement new practices. Such conditions require deliberate, sustained processes that coordinate organizational direction with employee understanding and action (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

The higher education literature consistently shows that organizational change is not a purely technical task. Institutional transformation requires leadership that can align direction and action, create shared meaning, and engage employees across formal roles and organizational levels (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Fullan, 2016; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Recent research in higher education likewise indicates that employees' responses to institutional change are determined by role expectations, professional identity, access to information, participation in decision-making, and perceived organizational support (Counts et al., 2021; Ezzeddine et al., 2023). Academic institutions have professional cultures and distributed authority structures that make participation, trust, and communication especially important. A reform initiative may be formally approved by senior leaders yet be experienced differently by faculty members, who must translate it into teaching and academic work, and by non-teaching staff, who must support its administrative implementation. This difference between formal decision-making and operational experience is central to the study of change in HEIs.

Recent scholarship has examined digital transformation, sustainability-oriented organizational change, employee readiness, resistance, leadership, and stakeholder engagement in higher education (Alenezi, 2023; Deacon et al., 2025; Rieg et al., 2021; Veseli et al., 2025; Vlachopoulos, 2021). These studies show that institutional adaptation depends on more than strategic plans or senior-level commitment. It also requires local sensemaking, credible communication, and employees' capacity to implement change in their own work settings. Employees' readiness, perceptions of support, and opportunities to participate can shape whether institutional changes are understood, resisted, adapted, or sustained in practice (Ezzeddine et al., 2023; Veseli et al., 2025). A positive organizational climate, characterized by fairness, innovativeness, and collegial affiliation, is crucial for fostering beneficial behaviors, suggesting that successful institutional change relies heavily on a supportive work environment (Posadas & Berjes, 2025).

Nevertheless, many studies focus on a single institutional case, a single reform initiative, or the perspective of institutional leadership. Less attention has been given to whether administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff perceive a broad set of change-management practices similarly within the same provincial higher education context.

Employee perceptions are important because they reveal potential gaps between managerial intent and operational experience. This issue is especially relevant in higher education because faculty members, administrators, and non-teaching staff may encounter the same institutional initiative through different responsibilities, with varying workload implications and decision-making environments (Counts et al., 2021; Ezzeddine et al., 2023). Administrators are generally more involved in planning, approving, and monitoring institutional initiatives. Faculty members may encounter change through revised curricula, reporting requirements, workload adjustments, or student-service demands. Non-teaching staff may experience it through process redesign, systems changes, and modifications to administrative workflows. Comparing these perspectives does not determine whether a reform succeeds, but it provides evidence on whether core change-management practices are consistently experienced across institutional roles. Such evidence is useful for institutions attempting to support organizational effectiveness and the institutional conditions associated with quality education (United Nations, 2015).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

To examine these role-based dynamics systematically, this study draws on Kotter's (1996a, 1996b, 2012) eight-step change model as a well-established organizing lens for the survey and interpretation. The

model conceptualizes organizational change as an interconnected set of practices. It begins by establishing urgency and building a guiding coalition, progresses through developing and communicating a change vision, and requires empowering employees, achieving visible short-term wins, maintaining momentum, and institutionalizing new ways of working. In the present study, the eight domains were adapted as survey areas: (1) increasing urgency, (2) building a guiding team, (3) creating a change vision, (4) communicating the change vision, (5) empowering action, (6) creating short-term wins, (7) consolidating gains and producing more change, and (8) institutionalizing change. Although Kotter's model provides a recognizable structure for organizing change activities, the model should not be treated as a strictly linear prescription in higher education. Institutional change may require revisiting earlier activities, adapting strategies to local conditions, and sustaining engagement among academic and administrative employees as implementation unfolds (Kuffuor et al., 2024).

Figure 1 presents the conceptual organizing framework. The figure does not imply that this study tested the strict temporal sequence of the eight steps, nor does it claim that the practices are empirically independent. Rather, it shows the change-management domains that guided item selection and descriptive interpretation. This use of a framework is appropriate for a study concerned with perceived practices because it ensures conceptual coverage while allowing the analysis to focus on whether employees across employment groups report similar or different experiences.

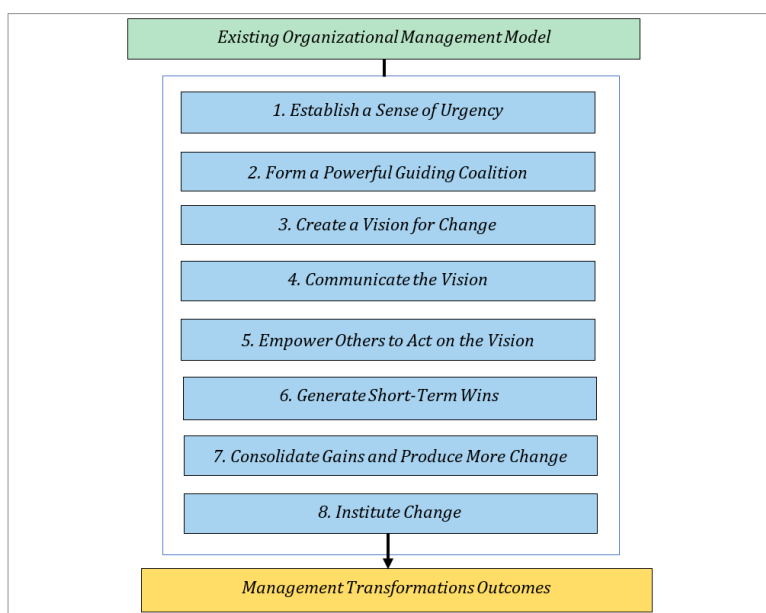


Figure 1. Kotter-Informed Organizing Framework for the Measured Change-Management Practices

The framework is complemented by scholarship that emphasizes the contextual nature of change in HEIs. Institutional transformation is seen as a process of sensemaking, interrelated strategies, and an alignment between leadership and culture (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Educational change is understood to rely on collaborative meaning-making rather than on procedural compliance alone (Fullan, 2016). The influence of organizational culture is shaped by the ways institutional members interpret norms, expectations, and new initiatives (Tierney, 1988). It is suggested that there is a need to align mission, leadership, and stakeholder interests when organizations confront complex change (Bryson, 2018). Contemporary research on higher education change likewise identifies employee perceptions, organizational readiness, and context-sensitive leadership as important conditions affecting implementation (Ezzeddine et al., 2023; Veseli et al., 2025).

Together, these perspectives suggest that the same formally stated change initiative may not be experienced in the same way by administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff. Employment group

may influence access to information, involvement in planning, authority to act, and exposure to implementation demands. Role-related differences in how employees receive information, interpret institutional priorities, and anticipate consequences have also been documented in higher education change settings (Counts et al., 2021; Ezzeddine et al., 2023). Accordingly, the employment group is the central comparison variable in this study. The conceptual expectation is not that one group is inherently more supportive of change. However, that role-based differences can reveal where institutional direction has, or has not, become a shared operational experience.

The model recognizes practices related to urgency, coalition-building, vision, communication, empowerment, short-term wins, continued change, and institutionalization. It is useful in higher education because it provides a common vocabulary for considering both leadership direction and employee engagement. The model was not used as a rigid temporal law of change. Instead, it provided a structured set of practice domains through which employees could assess how change was experienced in their institutions. Recent higher education applications similarly suggest that Kotter-informed change processes should be applied flexibly, with repeated communication, adaptation to local conditions, and continuing engagement across implementation stages (Kuffuor et al., 2024).

Guided by this model, the study addressed three linked questions: (1) What is the perceived extent of each of the eight Kotter-informed practice domains? (2) Do ratings on each domain differ among administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff? and (3) How do the eight domain composite scores group within the study sample? The first question assesses the model's eight measured practice domains; the second examines whether their employee-reported expression differs by role; and the third provides a supplementary, exploratory description of how the domains co-occur.

METHODS

Study design, setting and population

This quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-comparative study examined employees' perceptions of change-management practices in Southern Leyte, Philippines. Southern Leyte provides a useful provincial setting for this inquiry. Five public and private higher education institutions in the province served as study settings for the province-wide employee sample. These institutions served as recruitment settings, while the individual employee was the unit of analysis. The study presents province-wide findings and employment-group comparisons rather than institution-level rankings or inferential comparisons among individual HEIs.

Eligible participants were administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff with at least five years of experience or employment in their institution. Administrators included personnel with formal leadership or administrative designations; faculty members were teaching personnel without administrative designations; and staff were non-teaching employees who supported institutional operations. The five-year criterion was applied to ensure that respondents had sufficient institutional experience to comment on the manifestation of change-management practices.

Purposive sampling was employed to identify and select employees who met the experience criterion and voluntarily consented to participate. Cochran's (1977) formula, using a 95% confidence level and a conservative estimated proportion of .50, indicated a target sample of 385 respondents.

Study variables, instrument and data collection

Data were gathered through a 40-item questionnaire adapted from Richesin (2011) and organized according to Kotter's eight-step change model (Kotter, 2012). Five statements represented each practice domain. Respondents rated the extent to which each practice was noted in their institution using a four-point Likert-type scale: 1 = not practiced, 2 = some extent, 3 = moderate extent, and 4 = great extent. Mean scores of 1.00-1.75 represented not practiced; 1.76-2.50, some extent; 2.51-3.25, moderate extent; and 3.26-4.00, great extent.

Three subject-matter specialists in higher education administration, organizational transformation, and research methodology reviewed the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, and contextual suitability. Their

recommendations include wording refinements before field administration. A pilot test with 12 eligible employees who were not included in the final sample assessed item clarity, comprehensibility, and survey administration procedures. The full instrument showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .963). This coefficient was not interpreted as evidence that the eight domains constituted a validated factor structure. Although Cronbach's alpha provides evidence of internal consistency, it does not by itself establish unidimensionality or validate the factor structure of a multidomain instrument (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data collection began through Google Forms. Because online participation was limited, face-to-face administration was subsequently used to improve response retrieval. Responses from both modes were checked for completeness, encoded, and combined for analysis. The same questionnaire and response format were used in both modes.

Data analysis

To answer the first study question, mean scores and standard deviations were used to summarize the perceived extent of each Kotter-informed practice domain because they describe the central tendency and dispersion of the domain composite ratings. To answer the second question, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine whether mean ratings differed among the three independent employment groups; this technique was appropriate for comparing more than two group means on each domain composite score. When the omnibus ANOVA was statistically significant, pairwise post hoc comparisons were conducted to identify groups with different mean ratings. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

The analysis was limited to employment-group comparisons because the institutions were not treated as comparable analytical units. To answer the third question, a preliminary exploratory factor analysis using minimum residual extraction with oblimin rotation was conducted to describe how the eight Kotter-informed domain composite scores covaried. Because the analysis used eight domain-level composite scores rather than the 40 individual survey items, it was interpreted as a preliminary descriptive grouping rather than a validation of a new latent measurement model. This cautious interpretation is consistent with methodological guidance that exploratory factor analysis should be evaluated in relation to the level of measurement and the adequacy of the variables entered into the analysis (Fabrigar et al., 1999).

Ethical considerations

Ethical protocols were observed. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents provided written informed consent before completing the questionnaire. The survey did not collect personally identifying information for analysis, and the results are reported in aggregate.

RESULTS

Participant Profile

The study included 392 employees beyond the calculated sample of 385 (complete responses were retained for analysis), comprising 95 administrators, 147 faculty members, and 150 non-teaching staff. Non-teaching staff comprised the largest group ($n = 150$, 38.3%), followed closely by faculty members ($n = 147$, 37.5%) and administrators ($n = 95$, 24.2%). Consistent with the employee-level design, the analyses that follow compare these three employment groups and report province-wide ratings for the eight practice domains.

Table 1. *Research Respondent Groups*

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Administrator	95	24.23
Faculty	147	37.50
Staff	150	38.27
TOTAL	392	100.00

Perceived extent of Change-Management Practices

Table 2 presents the province-wide descriptive statistics for the eight measured domains. The overall mean score was 3.14, corresponding to a moderate extent on the study scale. Domain means ranged from 3.08 to 3.17, and none reached the great-extent threshold (3.26 or higher). Increasing urgency and creating short-term wins had the highest ratings ($M = 3.17$ each), while empowering action ($M = 3.08$) and communicating the change vision ($M = 3.11$) had the lowest ratings. Building a guiding team, consolidating gains, and producing more change, and institutionalizing change each had a mean score of 3.16, while creating a change vision had a mean score of 3.14. Standard deviations ranged from 0.09 to 0.24.

All eight domain means fell within the moderate-extent range. The observed ranking is therefore relative rather than categorical: it identifies communicating the change vision and empowering action as the least strongly reported domains within an otherwise moderate profile, while increasing urgency and creating short-term wins were the most strongly reported. These province-wide ratings establish the overall profile. The following employment-group analyses examine whether that profile was experienced similarly across organizational roles.

Table 2. *Summative Data of the Manifestation of Change Management Practices*

Practice domain	Weighted Means	std dev.
1. Increasing Urgency	3.17	0.09
2. Building a Guiding Team	3.16	0.15
3. Creating a Change Vision	3.14	0.20
4. Communicating the Change Vision	3.11	0.12
5. Empowering Action	3.08	0.24
6. Creating Short-Term Wins	3.17	0.15
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	3.16	0.12
8. Institutionalizing Change	3.16	0.18
Change Overall Means	3.14	-

Note. Scale: 1.00-1.75 = not practiced; 1.76-2.50 = some extent; 2.51-3.25 = moderate extent; 3.26-4.00 = great extent.

Differences in Change-Management Practices by Respondent Group

Table 3 disaggregates the domain ratings by employment group. Administrators reported the highest mean ratings across all domains, ranging from 3.26 for empowering action to 3.43 for increasing urgency. Faculty members reported the lowest ratings across all domains, ranging from 2.95 for empowering action to 3.07 for consolidating gains and producing more change. Non-teaching staff reported ratings between those of administrators and faculty members, ranging from 3.08 for empowering action to 3.19 for creating short-term wins and institutionalizing change. The largest administrator-faculty descriptive gaps were observed for increasing urgency (3.43 vs. 2.99), creating a change vision (3.40 vs. 2.99), and building a guiding team (3.37 vs. 3.01). This descriptive pattern provides the basis for the omnibus tests reported in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that employment-group differences were statistically significant across all eight practice domains. Increasing urgency had the largest omnibus difference, $F(2, 389) = 22.33$, $p < .001$, followed by creating a change vision, $F(2, 389) = 18.76$, $p < .001$; building a guiding team, $F(2, 389) = 15.57$, $p < .001$; and communicating the change vision, $F(2, 389) = 13.94$, $p < .001$. Significant differences were also observed for empowering action, $F(2, 389) = 9.55$, $p < .001$; creating short-term wins, $F(2, 389) = 8.05$, $p < .001$; institutionalizing change, $F(2, 389) = 7.48$, $p = .001$; and consolidating gains and producing more change, $F(2, 389) = 5.56$, $p = .004$. Thus, the observed differences in Table 3 were not confined to a single practice domain.

Because the omnibus tests show that at least one employment group differed on every domain, the following post hoc comparisons identify the specific group pairs responsible for those differences.

Table 3. *Employment-Group Descriptive Ratings for Kotter-Informed Practice Domains*

Change Management Practices	Administrators M (SD)	Faculty members M (SD)	Non-teaching staff M (SD)
Increasing Urgency	3.43 (.45)	2.99 (.53)	3.17 (.50)
Building a Guiding Team	3.37 (.46)	3.01 (.49)	3.17 (.50)
Creating a Change Vision	3.40 (.45)	2.99 (.52)	3.13 (.51)
Communicating the Change Vision	3.28 (.47)	2.97 (.50)	3.15 (.44)
Empowering Action	3.26 (.55)	2.95 (.55)	3.08 (.50)
Creating Short-term Wins	3.33 (.53)	3.05 (.55)	3.19 (.49)
Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	3.30 (.54)	3.07 (.56)	3.17 (.49)
Institutionalizing Change	3.31 (.49)	3.04 (.57)	3.19 (.49)

Table 4. *ANOVA on Change Management Practices Among Three Groups of Respondents*

Change Management Practices	F	Sig.
Increasing Urgency	22.33	0.000*
Building a Guiding Team	15.57	0.000*
Creating a Change Vision	18.76	0.000*
Communicating the Change Vision	13.94	0.000*
Empowering Action	9.55	0.000*
Creating Short-term Wins	8.05	0.000*
Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	5.56	0.004*
Institutionalizing Change	7.48	0.001*

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Post hoc Pairwise Comparisons by Employment Group

Table 5 reports the significant post hoc pairwise comparisons. Administrators rated the practices more favorably than faculty members across all eight domains. The largest administrator-faculty mean differences were found for increasing urgency (0.43838, $p < .001$), creating a change vision (0.40259, $p < .001$), and building a guiding team (0.35828, $p < .001$). Administrators also differed significantly from non-teaching staff in their emphasis on increasing urgency, building a guiding team, creating a changed vision, and empowering action. Faculty members and non-teaching staff differed significantly in increasing urgency, building a guiding team, and communicating the changed vision, with negative mean differences indicating higher ratings among non-teaching staff. All confidence intervals shown in Table 5 exclude zero.

Table 5. *Pairwise Differences in Change Management Practices by Respondent Group*

Change Management Practices	Comparison	Mean Difference	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval [LL-UL]
Increasing Urgency	Administration-Faculty	0.43838	.000*	.2861 to .5907
	Administration-Staff	0.25825	.000*	.1103 to .4062
	Faculty-Staff	-0.18014	.008*	-.3233 to -.0370
Building a Guiding Team	Administration-Faculty	0.35828	.000*	.2069 to .5097
	Administration-Staff	0.19986	.006*	.0491 to .3506
	Faculty-Staff	-0.15842	.015*	-.2919 to -.0250

Table 5. continued

Change Management Practices	Comparison	Mean Difference	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval [LL-UL]
Creating a Change Vision	Administration-Faculty	0.40259	.000*	.2504 to .5548
	Administration-Staff	0.19986	.000*	.1132 to .4117
Communicating the Change Vision	Administration-Faculty	0.31822	.000*	.1732 to .4633
	Faculty-Staff	-0.17935	.003*	-.3072 to -.0514
Empowering Action	Administration-Faculty	0.30657	.000*	.1414 to .4718
	Administration-Staff	0.17495	.034*	.0104 to .3395
Creating Short-term Wins	Administration-Faculty	0.27325	.000*	.1115 to .4350
Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	Administration-Faculty	0.23154	.003*	.0676 to .3955
Institutionalizing Change	Administration-Faculty	0.26173	.000*	.0997 to .4237

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Taken together, Tables 3-5 show a consistent descriptive and inferential pattern: administrators reported the most favorable ratings, faculty members the least favorable, and non-teaching staff generally fell between the two groups. These employment-group comparisons constitute the study's primary analysis. The following supplementary exploratory analysis does not compare institutions or employment groups; instead, it examines how the eight employee-reported domain composite scores are grouped within the full study sample.

Preliminary exploratory grouping of employee-reported practice domains

A supplementary exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the eight Kotter-informed domain composite scores derived from all employee responses. Minimum residual extraction with oblimin rotation yielded a three-factor solution. As shown in Table 6, the first factor had reported pattern coefficients of .964 for building a guiding team, .958 for empowering actions, and .871 for creating a change vision. The second factor had reported coefficients of 1.037 for communicating the new vision, .871 for creating wins, and .835 for building on wins and creating more change. The third factor included increasing urgency and institutionalizing changes, each with a reported coefficient of .751. Uniqueness values are shown in Table 6 for transparency.

Table 6. Factor Loadings

	Factor			Uniqueness
	1	2	3	
Building A Guiding Team	0.964			0.00186
Empowering Actions	0.958			0.01418
Creating A Change Vision	0.871			0.00258
Communicating The New Vision		1.037		5.77e-4
Creating Wins		0.871		0.04192
Building On The Wins, Create More Change		0.835		0.00518
Increasing Urgency			0.751	0.00146
Institutionalizing Changes			0.751	0.00146

Note. The 'Minimum residual' extraction method was used in combination with a 'oblimin' rotation

Table 7 summarizes the factor statistics. Factor 1 had an SS loading of 3.44 and accounted for 43.0% of the variance; Factor 2 had an SS loading of 2.68 and accounted for 33.5%; and Factor 3 had an SS loading of 1.82 and accounted for 22.7%. Together, the three factors accounted for 99.1% of the variance in the eight domain composite scores.

Table 8 assigns descriptive thematic labels to the observed groupings: Establishing the Foundation for Change, Driving Momentum through Communication and Early Wins, and Sustaining and Embedding Change. Because the analysis was conducted on eight aggregated domain scores rather than on the original 40 survey items, these findings are reported as a preliminary exploratory grouping rather than as validation of a new latent measurement model or a replacement for Kotter's eight-step framework.

Table 7. Factor Statistics Summary

Factor	SS Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.44	43.0	43.0
2	2.68	33.5	76.4
3	1.82	22.7	99.1

Note. SS = sum of squared loadings

Table 8. Thematic Interpretation of Factors

Factors	Change Dimensions	Thematic Interpretation of Factors
1	Building A Guiding Team Empowering Actions Creating A Change Vision	"Establishing the Foundation for Change"
2	Communicating The New Vision Creating Wins Building on the Wins, Create More Change	"Driving Momentum through Communication and Early Wins"
3	Increasing Urgency Institutionalizing Changes	"Sustaining and Embedding Change"

DISCUSSION

All employee groups (Table 2) observed Kotter-informed change-management practices to a moderate extent ($M = 3.14$). Because no domain reached the "great extent" threshold, the result suggests that the measured practices were visible but not consistently experienced as fully established in everyday work. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that visible institutional change activity does not necessarily translate into shared employee readiness, confidence, or engagement with implementation (Ezzeddine et al., 2023; Veseli et al., 2025). The same table identifies a meaningful priority pattern: increasing urgency and creating short-term wins were the highest-rated domains ($M = 3.17$ each), whereas communicating the change vision ($M = 3.11$) and empowering action ($M = 3.08$) were the lowest. Employees are more likely to recognize that change is being initiated and that early progress is being made than to feel adequately informed, involved, or enabled to act on it.

Within this moderate profile, Table 2 draws particular attention to communicating the change vision and empowering action, the two lowest-rated domains. This does not mean that these practices were absent; both remained within the moderate-extent range. Rather, relative to increasing urgency and creating short-term wins, employees reported less evidence that change was clearly communicated and that they were sufficiently enabled to act on it. This distinction is important because change communication requires credible, repeated, work-relevant explanations of purpose, responsibilities, and implications (Ezzeddine et al., 2023; Shulga, 2021). A positive organizational climate that fosters trust and open communication among colleagues enhances

credibility (Posadas & Berjes, 2025). Empowerment likewise depends on timely information, appropriate discretion, adequate resources, and organizational responses to barriers that employees cannot remove on their own. Research on process improvement in public higher education further identifies leadership support and employee involvement as practices associated with stronger organizational performance and implementation capacity (Klein et al., 2022).

Results show that the change was not uniform across employment groups (Tables 3-5). Table 3 indicates that administrators reported higher ratings than faculty members in every domain, and Table 4 shows that the differences were statistically significant across all eight domains. The largest omnibus differences involved increasing urgency, creating a change vision, building a guiding team, and communicating the change vision. Table 5 shows that administrators rated all domains significantly higher than faculty members and reported higher ratings than non-teaching staff in four domains. These patterns are consistent with differences in role location: administrators tend to participate in planning, approval, and formal correspondence, whereas faculty members may experience institutional change through curriculum revisions, workload adjustments, reporting processes, performance expectations, and additional service responsibilities. The findings signal a difference in the experience of change, not a lack of commitment by any particular group. Comparable research in higher education suggests that faculty reactions to institutional change can be influenced by workload pressures, uncertainty, professional identity, perceived threats to established practices, and differing access to organizational information (Counts et al., 2021; Ezzeddine et al., 2023).

Results show that non-teaching staff rated increasing urgency, building a guiding team, and communicating the change vision more favorably than faculty members (see Table 5). This should not be read as a general hierarchy of support for change. It suggests instead that routine access to administrative processes, office systems, operational meetings, and workflow updates may shape what employees see and understand. Faculty members may be more dispersed across programs, teaching schedules, and academic units, so a single institution-wide message is unlikely to produce a shared operational understanding. Communication and participation mechanisms need to be tailored to the decision environments and implementation responsibilities of different employment groups. This need is particularly important during digital change, where employees' readiness, digital confidence, and access to continuing support may differ across institutional roles and units (Deacon et al., 2025; Veseli et al., 2025).

Findings presented in Tables 6 to 8 provide a supplementary and preliminary perspective on the employee-reported domains. Table 6 presents the reported pattern coefficients and uniqueness values, Table 7 summarizes the variance accounted for by the three factors, and Table 8 provides the author-assigned thematic labels. The first grouping linked guiding-team development, empowerment, and change vision under Establishing the Foundation for Change; the second linked communication, short-term wins, and continued change under Driving Momentum through Communication and Early Wins; and the third linked urgency with institutionalization under Sustaining and Embedding Change (Urgency and Institutionalization). These groupings are useful as an interpretive aid because they show how the reported practices co-occurred in the study sample. One pattern warrants particular caution: the co-occurrence of increasing urgency and institutionalizing change differs from Kotter's sequential presentation, in which urgency typically precedes institutionalization. Rather than denoting a reordered sequence, this pattern may mean that, in a cross-sectional employee-perception dataset, sustained change is associated with both continued reminders of purpose and the embedding of new practices. Because the third grouping contains only two domain composites, this interpretation remains tentative. More generally, the groupings should not be treated as validated constructs because the analysis was based on eight domain composite scores rather than the original set of 40 survey items. The labels, therefore, complement, rather than replace, Kotter's eight-step framework.

Across Tables 2 to 5, the practical implication is not simply to initiate more reforms. It is to make change more intelligible and actionable for the employees who implement it. The relative weakness of communication and empowerment in Table 2, together with the consistently lower faculty ratings in Tables 3-5, points to the

need for mechanisms that reach employees beyond formal leadership channels. Collaborative approaches can strengthen local problem-solving, legitimacy, and ownership when employees have opportunities to question, adapt, and operationalize institutional initiatives (Kezar, 2006, 2012; Klein et al., 2022; Kuffuor et al., 2024). Institutions can support this by providing unit-level explanations of change objectives, identifying distinct points of contact, documenting role-specific responsibilities, and visibly incorporating faculty and staff feedback into adjustment decisions.

Figure 2 offers a practice-oriented synthesis of the findings. It is not a tested causal model; rather, it integrates the employee-reported results in Tables 2 to 5 and the preliminary exploratory groupings in Tables 6 to 8 into three related areas for institutional attention: shared direction and communication, participation and empowerment, and monitoring and institutionalization.

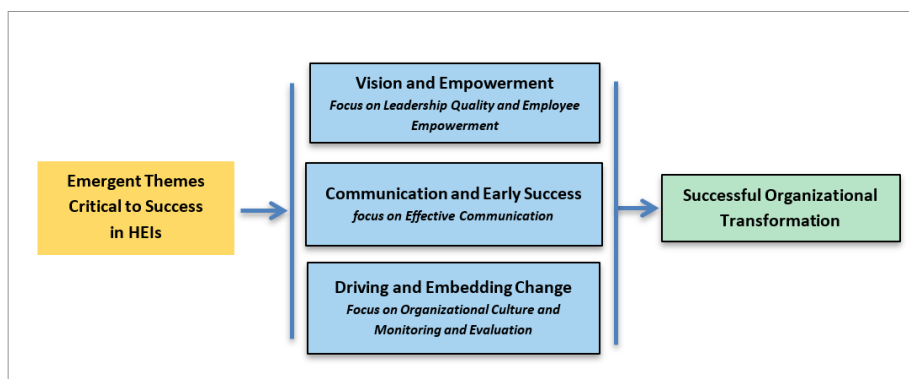


Figure 2. *Practice Implications Synthesized from Employee-Reported Findings*

A practical response could be organized as a recurring cross-role change cycle rather than as a one-time orientation. First, leaders and unit representatives can identify the specific change, its anticipated effects, role-specific responsibilities, and foreseeable implementation barriers. Second, faculty and staff can participate in unit-level planning and problem-solving sessions in which concerns are documented, and decisions are communicated back to participants. Third, institutions can review progress through short implementation reports, feedback loops, and recognition of contributions, then incorporate effective procedures into routine guidelines, orientation, and staff development. These actions directly address the comparatively lower communication and empowerment ratings in Table 2, the employment-group pattern in Tables 3-5, and the preliminary groupings summarized in Tables 6-8. Recurring feedback, adjustment, and institutionalization processes are particularly relevant in higher education, where change must often be implemented across differentiated academic and administrative units rather than through a single standardized workflow (Kuffuor et al., 2024; Rieg et al., 2021).

Limitations

This study has limitations. Its cross-sectional, self-reported design cannot establish whether perceived practices caused particular institutional outcomes. The use of single-source self-report data also creates the potential for common-method bias, although this was not directly tested in the present study (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The purposive, geographically bounded sample of employees with at least five years of institutional experience also limits generalizability to newer employees and other Philippine contexts. Data were collected through both online and face-to-face administration after online participation was limited, potentially introducing mode-related response differences. Participation was not balanced across study settings; accordingly, the article treats the employee as the unit of analysis and does not draw conclusions at the institution level.

The exploratory factor analysis was conducted using eight domain composite scores rather than the original version of 40 survey items. Because the item-level solution could not be re-estimated during this revision, the three-factor grouping should be interpreted as preliminary rather than as a validated measurement model. These limitations do not have equal implications: the cross-sectional, self-reported design and the purposive, geographically bounded sample most strongly affect causal interpretation and generalizability, whereas mode-related response differences and unequal participation are secondary potential sources of variation. The composite-level exploratory analysis chiefly limits claims about factor structure. Future research needs to prioritize longitudinal, multi-site studies with more balanced or probability-based sampling, item-level exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and qualitative inquiry into the ways different employment groups make sense of change.

CONCLUSION

Among participating administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching staff with at least five years of institutional experience in Southern Leyte HEIs, Kotter-informed change-management practices were perceived to be present to a moderate extent. Increasing urgency and creating short-term wins were the most strongly reported practices, whereas communicating the change vision and empowering action were comparatively less evident. Administrators rated all eight domains more favorably than faculty members did, suggesting that visible institutional change activity may not be understood or experienced equally across employment groups. Exploratory analyses also suggested tentative patterns of co-occurrence among the eight practice domains; because these analyses used domain-level composites, they should be interpreted as descriptive rather than as validation of a new model.

For participating provincial HEIs, the central task is to connect institutional direction with employee understanding, participation, and action. Change initiatives should be accompanied by role-specific communication, accessible opportunities for faculty and staff to shape implementation, and follow-through mechanisms that embed effective practices in routine work. These steps can help institutions move from visible change activity toward more inclusive and sustained organizational change.

Author contributions

C. Garcia: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, Investigation, Software, Validation; **T. Inot:** Visualization, Supervision, Writing- Reviewing and Editing; **R. K. Salazar:** Writing- Reviewing and Editing, Data Analysis

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Ethical Approval

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability

Data will be made available by the corresponding author on request.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence Use

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was utilized strictly for language editing and grammatical refinement. AI tools were

not employed for data generation, idea formation, or content creation. All information, concepts, and analyses presented in this work are original contributions from the authors. AI-assisted modifications were limited to improving clarity, coherence, and readability without altering the substantive content of the research.

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