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LEADERS HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS, LEADERS' CHARISMA AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE MARITIME SECTOR IN KENYA. ACASE OF FERRY SERVICES LIMITED, MOMBASA COUNTY

[1]Umazi Lily Maita, [2]Jared Osoro

[1]Postgarduate programme, Master of Management and Leadership, The Management University of Africa
[2]Head of School, Management and Leadership, The Management University of Africa

ABSTRACT

The study was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, Lewin's Change Management Theory, Situational Leadership Theory, and Kotter's 8-Step Change Model. A descriptive research design was adopted targeting 130 employees, supervisors, and managers, from whom a sample of 70 respondents was drawn through simple random sampling. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The overall regression model ($R = 0.625$, $R^2 = 0.390$, $F = 10.406$, $p = 0.000$) indicated that leadership factors collectively explained 39% of the variance in managing organizational change. The study concludes that leadership expertise, effective communication, and interpersonal relations are the most critical drivers of successful organizational change, surpassing the influence of charisma. Leaders who demonstrate technical competence, strategic insight, and empathy are better equipped to inspire confidence and minimize resistance during transitions. The study recommends that Kenya Ferry Services should institutionalize leadership development programs emphasizing strategic decision-making, communication, and relational competencies. Moreover, leadership frameworks should be integrated into human resource policies to guide recruitment, training, and performance evaluation. The study further suggests that future research should explore additional leadership variables such as emotional intelligence and ethical leadership across different public and private institutions to provide a broader understanding of effective change management in Kenya.

Key words: Change Management, Ferry Services, Leader's Human Relations Skills, Leaders' Charisma, Maritime Sector.

Introduction and Background of the Study

Leadership plays an essential role in shaping how organizations navigate and adapt to change, particularly in dynamic and high-risk sectors like maritime transportation (Northouse, 2021). In Kenya, the maritime industry, including agencies such as Kenya Ferry Services Limited, is undergoing operational reforms, infrastructure upgrades, and policy shifts that demand effective change management (Mwangi & Ouma, 2021). The success of these transformations largely depends on leaders' ability to communicate vision, build trust, and align teams with change objectives (Kotter, 2012). However, leadership inefficiencies have often contributed to delays and resistance in implementing strategic changes across transport institutions (Odhiambo, 2020). This study explores how various leadership attributes influence the management of organizational change within Kenya's maritime transportation industry.

Kotter (2021) developed the widely recognized 8-Step Change Model, emphasizing key leadership strategies such as establishing urgency, forming guiding coalitions, creating a vision for change, and empowering others to act. These strategies were proven effective in large private-sector organizations in the United States, where hierarchical flexibility and strong managerial autonomy are present. While Kotter's model has become foundational in understanding change leadership, it is heavily Western in orientation and lacks empirical testing within African public-sector institutions. It also assumes environments with robust resources and high change receptiveness, which is not always the case in developing economies like Kenya. This study does not reflect the leadership dynamics, bureaucratic constraints, and socio-political influences typical in African maritime institutions such as Kenya Ferry Services. This current study will addresses this gap by applying the concept of leadership strategies, specifically human relation skills, charisma, communication skills, and leadership expertise within a public transport agency in Kenya, allowing for contextual adaptation of Kotter's leadership principles.

Nwachukwu et al. (2020) investigated leadership and organizational change within Nigerian port authorities. They found that effective communication by leaders and their ability to build trusting relationships significantly enhanced employee adaptability and cooperation during periods of change. The study highlighted that when leaders maintained open communication and practiced empathy, employees were less resistant to new systems and procedures. However, the researchers primarily focused on communication and relational aspects of leadership, overlooking other important leadership strategies like technical expertise or charismatic influence in shaping employee commitment to change. Nwachukwu et al. (2020) limited their study to interpersonal leadership dimensions and did not incorporate broader leadership strategies such as charisma and strategic expertise. The present research includes a wider range of leadership strategies including expertise and charisma that are essential in a technically demanding and risk-sensitive maritime environment like of Kenya Ferry Services.

In Ghana, Oduro and Damoah (2021) examined leadership bottlenecks affecting change implementation in public transportation agencies. They reported that while most leaders in the sector understood the urgency for reform, they lacked the technical expertise and strategic frameworks to implement these changes effectively. Their research showed that poor leadership capacity often resulted in incomplete projects, low employee engagement, and failure to meet service delivery expectations. However, the study was largely qualitative and descriptive, offering limited empirical evidence on the relationship between distinct leadership strategies and successful change management. Oduro and Damoah focused on leadership deficiencies generally, without isolating or empirically testing the effect of specific leadership strategies on change management. The current research will addresses this limitation by using quantitative analysis to examine how communication skills, human relations, charisma, and expertise as leadership strategies influence organizational change outcomes at Kenya Ferry Services.

Kimathi and Mokaya (2019) conducted a study on transformational leadership and organizational change in Kenya's aviation industry. They established that transformational leaders those who inspire and motivate employees through vision and integrity enhanced staff morale, trust, and change readiness. However, their study was structured around leadership styles, not leadership strategies. As a result, it did not dissect which specific actions or skills like communication, relational engagement, or professional expertise actually drove successful change implementation. This study generalized leadership behavior into styles, without evaluating the impact of individual leadership strategies on managing change. This current study differentiates and evaluates specific leadership strategies, thereby providing a more precise and actionable understanding of how leaders at Kenya Ferry Services influence organizational change efforts.

Muriithi and Gachunga (2019) studied leadership styles and change readiness in Kenya's public health sector. Their findings indicated that supportive leadership enhanced employee openness to change, reduced anxiety, and improved compliance with new procedures. The study emphasized emotional support and participative leadership but focused narrowly on the healthcare sector, which operates under vastly different conditions compared to maritime transport. It also did not address leadership strategies such as professional expertise or charismatic influence, which are crucial in high-risk transport operations like ferry services. The researchers limited their scope to healthcare institutions and emotional leadership traits, omitting other leadership strategies relevant in technically intense environments. This study will extends the conversation to the maritime transportation sector and investigates a broader spectrum of leadership strategies beyond emotional support to include strategic communication, charisma, human relations, and expertise necessary for effective change management at Kenya Ferry Services.

Wamalwa and Gachunga (2021) conducted a study on the effect of strategic leadership on organizational change at Kenya Ports Authority, a key player in the Kenyan maritime sector. Their findings showed that leadership practices such as vision articulation, employee involvement, and strategic communication significantly influenced the success of change programs. However, the study largely focused on the senior leadership's role without analyzing specific leadership strategies like charisma, interpersonal skills, or technical expertise that may vary across different organizational levels. This study generalized leadership practices and did not evaluate the nuanced influence of specific leadership strategies on organizational change in ferry services. This current research isolates and examines individual leadership strategies communication, charisma, human relations, and expertise at Kenya Ferry Services, thus addressing this specificity gap within the maritime transportation sector.

Mwangi and Waiganjo (2020) explored the role of leadership communication strategies in managing organizational change at Kenya Railways Corporation. The study found that consistent internal communication from leadership helped reduce employee resistance to change and improved the implementation of infrastructure modernization. However, it narrowly concentrated on communication as the sole strategy and did not account for other vital leadership attributes such as charisma, human relations, or strategic expertise. This study focused only on communication strategy, omitting other leadership competencies that contribute to holistic change management. This current research expands the scope by examining multiple leadership strategies simultaneously, thereby offering a more complete understanding of how leadership drives change at Kenya Ferry Services, a similarly structured transport agency.

Nyaga and Wanjiru (2019) investigated the influence of leadership on change implementation within Kenya Airports Authority. They found that leadership traits such as inspirational motivation and team-based engagement significantly contributed to employees' readiness and commitment to organizational change. However, their study was anchored in the framework of leadership styles rather than strategies, thereby lacking insight into which specific behaviors or skills (human relation skills or leadership expertise) were most effective in the Kenyan public transport context. The study focused on leadership styles without dissecting the specific strategies or competencies that drive successful change. This study addresses the limitation by focusing on distinct leadership strategies, including expertise and interpersonal skills and their empirical effect on organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services.

1.1. Leadership

Leadership is a critical component of organizational success, serving as the cornerstone upon which strategies, cultures, and goals are built. It involves the ability to influence, guide, and inspire individuals or groups toward the achievement of common objectives (Northouse, 2021). Effective leadership goes beyond issuing directives; it entails the capacity to create a shared vision and motivate people to work collaboratively toward it. A leader's role encompasses decision-making, team coordination, and fostering an environment that encourages creativity and accountability. According to Yukl (2019), leadership is both a science and an art, requiring technical competence, emotional awareness, and strategic foresight.

Leadership is multifaceted, encompassing different styles and approaches that vary across contexts. For instance, transformational leadership emphasizes inspiration and vision; transactional leadership focuses on structure, rules, and performance; while participative leadership values collaboration and employee input (Avolio & Bass, 2020). The choice of leadership style is often influenced by organizational culture, employee characteristics, and environmental dynamics. Scholars such as Goleman (2019) highlight that effective leaders are those who can flexibly adapt their style to situational demands, balancing authority with empathy and control with empowerment. This adaptability ensures that leaders remain relevant and effective in guiding diverse teams.

Modern leadership increasingly integrates emotional intelligence, ethical responsibility, and cross-cultural awareness as key competencies. Leaders today operate in environments that demand inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. As noted by Hassan and Ahmed (2020), successful leaders build trust and credibility through consistent communication, ethical conduct, and genuine concern for employee welfare. Leadership, therefore, is not merely positional but relational, it is defined by how individuals inspire confidence, facilitate teamwork, and cultivate a sense of purpose. Effective leadership ultimately fosters resilience, innovation, and organizational harmony.

1.2 Change Management

In today's fast-paced business world, managing organizational transformation is an essential task. It refers to the procedure by which businesses get ready for and carry out changes in their strategies, technology, structures, or cultures in order to stay efficient and competitive. Identifying the need for change, creating a change plan, and including stakeholders at every stage of the process are all essential components of an organized approach to effective change management. Kotter (2019) asserts that establishing a governing coalition, fostering a feeling of urgency, and formulating a clear vision and strategy are essential to the success of organizational change. Alignment with the organization's objectives is ensured and resistance is lessened using this methodical approach.

Communication and employee involvement are essential to the success of change projects. Fear of the unknown or perceived dangers to one's job stability are prominent reasons for resistance to change. To ensure a seamless transition, leaders must place a high priority on open communication, training, and support networks. According to Armenakis and Harris (2019), change initiatives have a higher chance of success when staff members are actively involved in the process and comprehend the reasoning behind the changes. Increasing buy-in and decreasing resistance can be achieved by fostering trust through consistent messaging and employee participation in decision-making.

Sustaining change requires evaluation and monitoring. Change should be viewed as a continuous process that is evaluated and modified in response to performance results and feedback, rather than as a one-time occurrence. Organizations have to put in place systems for monitoring advancement, evaluating the effects of change, and pinpointing places in need of development. Long-term organizational success depends on the capacity to adjust and continuously learn from the experience of change, as Burnes (2020) points out. This entails cultivating an agile and learning culture where feedback loops are woven throughout the structure of the company.

1.3 Kenya Ferry Services Limited

This company took over ferry operations from Kenya Bus Services Ltd, which had been managing the Likoni ferry services since 1937. The Likoni Ferry serves as a vital link between Mombasa Island and the South Coast, facilitating the movement of both pedestrians and vehicles, including motorcycles, cars, and buses. This service is crucial for daily commuters, tourists, and transporters heading to destinations like Diani and beyond, including Tanzania.

KFS operates a fleet of double-ended ferries, each designed to carry both passengers and vehicles across the 500-meter-wide Likoni Channel. The ferries are equipped with modern amenities to ensure safety and comfort. For instance, the MV Jambo, one of the newer additions to the fleet, has a capacity of 1,500 passengers and 62 vehicles. The ferry service operates daily, with ferries alternating across the channel to accommodate the high volume of commuters. While pedestrian crossings are free, vehicles are charged toll fees based on their type and size.

Safety has been a significant concern for KFS, especially following past incidents such as the 1994 Mtongwe ferry disaster and the 2019 Harambee ferry tragedy. In response, KFS has implemented stringent safety protocols, including regular maintenance of vessels, staff training, and the installation of safety equipment. The company has been involved in environmental conservation efforts, focusing on reducing emissions from its fleet and promoting sustainable practices. Despite these measures, challenges like overcrowding during peak hours and the need for infrastructure upgrades persist. Proposals for alternative solutions, such as the construction of a bridge or tunnel, have been discussed but face financial and logistical hurdles.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Organizational change is an unavoidable reality in the public transport sector, especially in maritime institutions such as Kenya Ferry Services Limited (KFSL). Operating the vital Likoni and Mtongwe ferry channels in Mombasa, KFSL faces growing pressure to modernize its operations, strengthen safety standards, and improve customer service delivery. Despite substantial government investment, estimated at KSh 1.2 billion in infrastructure upgrades between 2018 and 2022 (Kenya Ports Authority, 2023), the effectiveness of change implementation remains uncertain.

The Kenya Transport Sector Support Project (World Bank, 2021) reports that the Likoni channel transports over 300,000 passengers and 6,000 vehicles daily, yet still experiences systemic delays, persistent safety concerns, and commuter dissatisfaction. Peak-hour waiting times average 30–45 minutes, while a Kenya Maritime Authority performance audit in 2021 indicated that 57% of ferry users rated the service as "below average" in efficiency and reliability. These performance gaps suggest that operational reforms have not delivered the intended results.

Leadership has been identified as a decisive factor in navigating such challenges, yet there is limited empirical evidence on how specific leadership strategies influence organizational change at KFSL. Weak leadership practices, including insufficient communication, limited technical expertise, and poor human relations, have contributed to internal resistance, reduced employee morale, and stakeholder disengagement during reform efforts. Wamalwa and Gachunga (2021) found that 65% of employees in Kenya's maritime agencies experienced uncertainty during change programs due to the absence of clear strategic direction and ineffective leadership communication.

The 2019 Likoni Ferry tragedy, in which a vehicle carrying two passengers plunged into the ocean, further exposed institutional weaknesses. Investigations highlighted gaps in crisis management, miscommunication, and rigid operational procedures, symptoms of weak strategic leadership (Mwangi & Ouma, 2020). Such incidents illustrate that without targeted leadership strategies, change initiatives at KFSL risk stagnation or outright failure.

Existing research on leadership in Kenya's public sector has largely examined leadership styles in a general context, neglecting the specific leadership strategies, namely human relation skills, communication skills, leaders' charisma, and leadership expertise, that are vital to successful change in maritime operations (Nyaga & Wanjiru, 2019). This omission presents a significant knowledge gap, given that maritime institutions operate under safety-sensitive, politically influenced, and multi-stakeholder environments. Addressing this gap, the present study seeks to examine how these specific leadership strategies affect the management of organizational change at KFSL, with the goal of providing practical, evidence-based recommendations for transformational leadership in Kenya's maritime transport sector.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to determine leadership and change management in the maritime sector in Kenya, a case of Ferry Services Limited, Mombasa County

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

This theory, which was first presented by Burns in 1978 and expanded upon by Bass in 1985, highlights leaders who inspire and encourage followers to pursue group objectives above and beyond their own immediate self-interest. Idealized affect, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and personalized consideration are the four main pillars of this theory. During organizational change, transformational leaders are essential because they inspire creativity and present a compelling vision (Bass & Riggio, 2020). In the case of Kenya Ferry Services Limited (KFSL), transformational leadership can play a critical role in fostering a supportive change environment. When the organization undergoes structural shifts-such as digitizing ticketing systems or upgrading ferry equipment-leaders must demonstrate idealized influence and act as role models to gain employee trust and buy-in. This approach minimizes resistance to change and builds internal advocacy for new initiatives (Kiplagat, 2021).

This theory emphasizes the leader's ability to transform organizational culture and employee behavior by creating a shared vision, fostering trust, and encouraging innovation, elements that align closely with the leadership strategies under investigation at Kenya Ferry Services Limited. Unlike other theories that focus on processes or situational adaptability, Transformational Leadership Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how strategic leadership behaviors influence employee engagement, change acceptance, and long-term organizational transformation, making it the most suitable theoretical foundation for the study.

Transformational leaders provide intellectual stimulation by encouraging creative thinking and problem-solving among staff. For example, involving ferry operators in designing new workflow processes can lead to more effective, context-specific solutions. Inspirational motivation supports a feeling of purpose and teamwork by assisting in the alignment of personal objectives with the organization's change vision (Northouse, 2021). The beneficial effects of transformational leadership on the success of change are supported by empirical research. Kiplagat (2021) found that such leadership in Kenya's public institutions significantly enhanced change outcomes. For Kenya Ferry Services Limited, transformational leadership not only guides change efforts but also builds resilience, ensuring that employees embrace innovation, adapt quickly, and sustain new operational norms.

2.1.2 Lewin's Change Management Theory

The three phases of change are unfreezing, altering, and refreezing, according to Kurt Lewin's 1947 Change Management Theory. The unfreezing phase involves disrupting the current equilibrium and preparing individuals to accept change. This may include identifying threats or challenges that necessitate the change. At Kenya Ferry Services Limited, unfreezing might be triggered by safety concerns, inefficiencies, or the need to integrate new technologies (Lewin, 1947). During the changing phase, new behaviors, systems, or processes are introduced. This could involve implementing automated ferry schedules or upgrading safety protocols. Leaders must provide the necessary support, such as training and communication, to ensure staff transition smoothly. According to Cummings and Worley (2015), this phase requires effective leadership to model desired behaviors and actively address resistance. For Kenya Ferry Services Limited, this involves embedding changes into the organizational culture through policies, performance metrics and daily routines. Leaders reinforce new standards and celebrate success stories to make the change sustainable (Schein, 2010). This is especially important in public transport where operational consistency is critical. Lewin's model remains highly relevant today due to its simplicity and clarity in managing complex changes. Its staged approach allows Kenya Ferry Services Limited leaders to evaluate progress and tailor strategies at each phase. Effective leadership throughout these phases is necessary to move the organization from outdated systems to modernized, more efficient operations.

2.1.3 Situational Leadership Theory

According to this theory, which was put forth by Hersey and Blanchard in 1969, the circumstances and the followers' degree of maturity (competence and commitment) determine how well a leader can lead. This theory is particularly relevant in dynamic environments like Kenya Ferry Services Limited, where staff experience and engagement levels vary widely. For instance, during major operational shifts such as the introduction of smart ferry ticketing systems, inexperienced staff may require a directive approach. As their competence grows, leadership style should transition toward a supportive or delegating role. According to Blanchard et al. (2013), this adaptability improves employee performance and reduces resistance to change.

Situational leadership is also effective in managing diverse teams and responding to crises. At Kenya Ferry Services Limited, ferry breakdowns or congestion incidents may call for a more directive style to ensure safety and operational continuity. In contrast, strategic change initiatives may benefit from a collaborative style, allowing staff to contribute ideas and co-create solutions (Graeff, 1997). This flexibility empowers leaders at Kenya Ferry Services Limited to manage resistance more effectively and guide the organization through varying degrees of change. By diagnosing employee readiness accurately, situational leaders maintain morale and promote seamless transitions, ensuring that organizational goals are met without overwhelming staff.

2.1.4 John Kotter's 8-Step Change Model (1996)

This is a practical framework that outlines how to manage successful change in organizations. The first step-creating urgency-encourages leaders to highlight potential risks or missed opportunities to spur action. For Kenya Ferry Services Limited, urgency may stem from rising ferry delays or safety issues, requiring immediate transformation (Kotter, 1996). The third and fourth steps-creating and communicating the vision-help in uniting employees behind a common goal. Leaders must articulate how changes, such as upgrading ferry maintenance protocols or introducing customer service reforms, will benefit both staff and passengers. According to Appelbaum et al. (2012), clear communication and leadership visibility reduce ambiguity and align the workforce toward the desired future.

At Kenya Ferry Services Limited, this could involve recognizing teams that meet safety targets or complete digital system integration on schedule. Reinforcing success builds employee confidence and encourages deeper engagement with change initiatives (Kotter & Cohen, 2020). The final step-anchoring new approaches in the culture-requires leaders to make changes part of the daily routine. This involves updating job descriptions, reward systems, and performance evaluations. For Kenya Ferry Services Limited, embedding changes into the company's operational ethos ensures that improvements are maintained even after leadership transitions. Kotter's structured model equips Kenya Ferry Services Ltd leaders to navigate the complexity of change while maintaining service delivery.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Leaders' Human Relation Skills and Change Management

In Canada, Aisyah and Pusparini (2023) research study has explored the role of human relation skills in leadership during organizational change. The study design was quantitative and correlational study. The sampling method adopted was census sampling of the target population. The study revealed that, while specific studies within the past four years are limited, Canadian leadership models often emphasize emotional intelligence, effective communication, and employee engagement as critical components in managing change. These studies suggest that leaders who demonstrate empathy and foster strong interpersonal relationships can significantly reduce resistance to change and enhance organizational adaptability. Despite these realizations, there are no many current empirical research that concentrate on how leaders' interpersonal abilities directly affect change management results in Canadian firms. By presenting empirical data on the ways in which particular human relations competencies in leadership impact the accomplishment of organizational transformation projects, the current study sought to close this knowledge gap and provide useful suggestions for Kenyan leaders.

In London, Awamleh (2022) study examined effect of leadership styles on organizational change, highlighting the importance of interpersonal skills. The study design adopted was quantitative study. Data were collected through surveys measuring leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes. Random sampling of employees across organizations was the study sampling method. The study indicated that, eaders who engage in open communication, active listening, and inclusive decision-making processes have been found to facilitate smoother transitions during change. These human relation skills help in building trust and reducing uncertainty among employees. Few recent research, nonetheless, have quantitatively evaluated how these interpersonal skills affect the efficacy of change management tactics in London-based companies. By quantitatively examining the connection between leaders' human relations skills and successful change adoption, the current study aims to close this gap and offer data-driven insights to Kenyan firms.

A study by Dajani (2022) assesed adaptive leadership in Egyptian academia, emphasizing role of leaders' human relation skills in fostering organizational resilience during crises. The study design adopted was descriptive research design. A total of 51 employees' information was gathered using semi-structured questionnaires. Using SPSS, data analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistics. A basic random sampling technique was used. The study found that effective change management is facilitated by leaders that show relational authenticity, collaborate with stakeholders, and include staff in decision-making. While the study provided valuable insights, it primarily focused on the academic sector, leaving a gap in understanding how these human relation skills apply across different industries in Egypt. The current study aims to expand upon Dajani's findings by exploring the applicability of leaders' human relation skills in managing organizational change across various sectors in Kenya, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of effective leadership practices.

Bentaleb (2024) investigated the dynamics of leadership and interpersonal relations in the Tunisian healthcare context. The study design adopted was quantitative and cross-sectional survey. Data were collected from 240 healthcare personnel using structured questionnaires. Exploratory factor analysis was adopted. The sampling method adopted were convenience sampling. The study emphasized the importance of trust and mutual respect in leader-employee relationships. The research was limited to the healthcare sector and focused on affective commitment, suggesting a need for studies that explore other dimensions of commitment and different organizational contexts. This study intends to address these limitations by examining the role of leaders' human relation skills in various industries within Kenya, assessing multiple facets of employee commitment during organizational change.

A research study by Ramadhan et al. (2023) at Metropolitan International University in Uganda adopted quantitative and correlational study. The sampling method adopted was census sampling of the target population. The finding of this study established that, leaders who practiced empathy, active listening and encourages employee participation were found to enhance creativity and productivity during change initiatives. The study was confined to the educational sector, indicating a need for broader research across different industries to generalize the findings. The current research aims to fill this gap by investigating the influence of leaders' human relation skills on managing organizational change across various sectors in Kenya, providing a more generalized perspective.

The importance of relational authenticity and employee participation in decision-making were highlighted in Waweru's (2023) study on adaptive leadership in the decentralized public health sector. The Study Design adopted was descriptive survey. Structured questionnaires were administered to 126 managerial staff across 32 hospitals. Stratified random sampling was adopted. The study concluded that these human relation skills are vital for industrial harmony and effective change management. While the research provided valuable insights, it was specific to the public health sector, necessitating studies that examine these leadership skills in other industries. This study seeks to extend Waweru's findings by analyzing the role of leaders' human relation skills in managing organizational change across diverse sectors in Kenya, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the results.

2.2.2 Leaders' Charisma and Change Management

An investigation of the impact of charismatic leadership characteristics on coordinated teamwork in public institutions was carried out in Turkey by Ekmekcioglu et al. (2018). A quantitative and correlational study design was used. Questionnaires were used to gather information from 113 participants in 20 ad hoc project teams. Multiple regression and basic linear analysis were used. The sample strategy used was purposeful sampling of project teams. According to the study, coordinated cooperation was significantly and favorably impacted by several charismatic leadership traits, including having a strategic vision, articulation abilities, environmental awareness, and member needs awareness. However, other behaviors like personal risk-taking and unconventional behavior did not show a significant effect. The study was limited to public institutions and focused primarily on the relationship between charismatic leadership behaviors and teamwork, rather than directly on managing organizational change. This study will examine how charismatic leadership behaviors influence the management of organizational change across various sectors, providing a broader understanding of the role of charisma in change management.

Steffens et al. (2024) examined how leader group prototypicality and charisma affect organizational change in Welsh organizations. The study design adopted was quantitative study. Data were collected through surveys measuring perceptions of leadership and change management effectiveness. Random sampling of employees across organizations was adopted as a sampling method. The study highlights how crucial leadership philosophies are to change management. Charismatic leaders have the ability to uplift and encourage staff members, creating a favorable atmosphere for change. In the Welsh context, there aren't many empirical studies that explicitly examine how charismatic leadership affects organizational change processes. By presenting empirical data on the impact of charismatic leadership in managing organizational transformation, this study aims to close this knowledge gap and provide insights that may be useful in the Kenya organizational setting.

Mugadza (2024) investigated how leadership affected change management and organizational dynamics in Zimbabwe's mining industry. A case study technique was used as the study strategy. To collect qualitative information, interviews and document analysis were done. The study's sampling strategy was a purposeful sampling of important stakeholders. With their capacity to express a compelling vision and establish an emotional connection with staff members, charismatic leaders can be extremely effective in promoting change. Recent research especially examining the function of charismatic leadership in managing organizational change is few in Zimbabwe. By assessing how charismatic leadership affects organizational transformation processes in Kenyan firms, the current study seeks to close this knowledge gap and offer insightful advice to leaders operating in comparable environments.

Dahie et al. (2020) assessed the role of leadership styles on organizational commitment at the University of Somalia. The study design adopted was explanatory and quantitative study. Questionnaires were administered to 95 full-time lecturers, and data were analyzed using regression and correlation analyses. The sampling method was convenience sampling.The study found that autocratic leadership was commonly practiced, with limited delegation and employee involvement. While the study acknowledged the importance of leadership in change management, it did not specifically focus on charismatic leadership. There is a knowledge gap about the possible advantages of charismatic leadership in the Kenyan context because the study did not examine how charismatic leadership affects organizational development. By examining the function of charismatic leadership in managing organizational transformation in Kenya, this study aims to close this knowledge gap and offer guidance for leadership strategies in comparable contexts.

Majige (2020) conducted a study on charismatic leadership in Tanzanian industrial organizations. The study design adopted was quantitative study. Data were collected through surveys measuring leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes. Random sampling of employees across organizations was the study sampling method. While aspects of charismatic leadership are inherent in transformational leadership, specific studies focusing on charisma are limited. There is a lack of studies in Tanzania that specifically examine the role of charismatic leadership in managing organizational change. The current study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how charismatic leadership behaviors impact organizational change processes in Kenyan organizations, contributing to the broader understanding of effective leadership in change management.

Huma et al. (2023) research adopted mixed-methods research study. Data were collected from 513 respondents. Combination of probability and non-probability sampling procedures was the sampling method. The study assessed various leadership styles, including charismatic leadership, and found that strategic leadership significantly influenced change management. However, the study did not isolate the specific impact of charismatic leadership. The study did not provide a detailed analysis of how charismatic leadership alone affects organizational change, leaving a gap in understanding its specific role. By concentrating on the impact of charismatic leadership on handling organizational change in Kenyan firms, this study aims to close this knowledge gap and provide particular guidance for leadership development.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This is a narrative or visual depiction of the main ideas or variables and how they relate to one another in the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). It illustrates the theoretical model or structure the researcher uses to understand the research problem and hypotheses. The framework is often used to operationalize theoretical concepts into measurable variables, guiding the analysis and interpretation of research data, while providing clarity on how different elements in the study interact with each other (Grix, 2018).

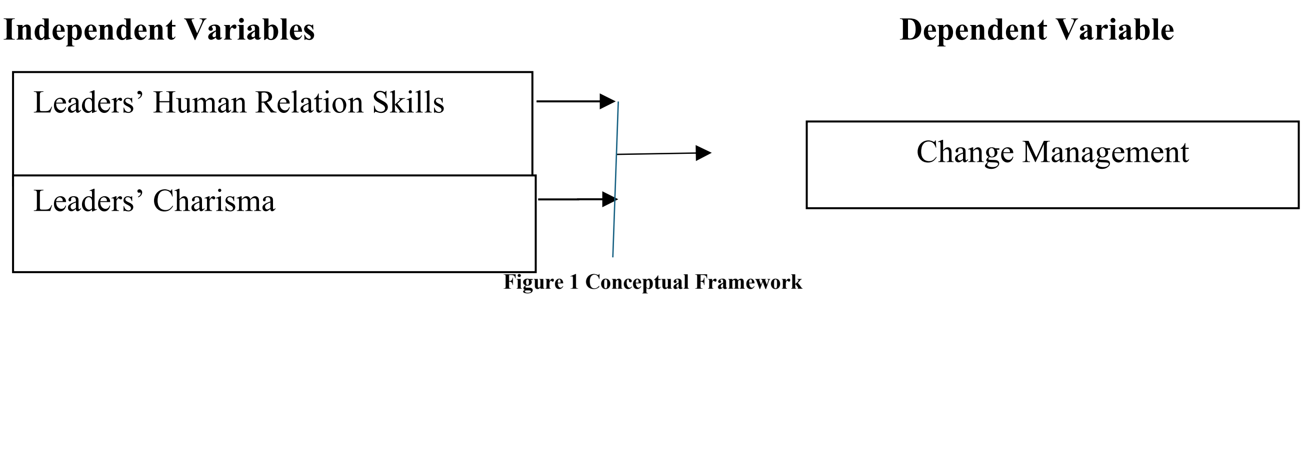

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2.5 Operationalization of Variables

Table 1: Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Indicator	Tools of Analysis	Measurement of Scale
Human Relation Skills	• Teamwork • Employee Satisfaction • Feedback Engagement • Resistance Reduction • Conflict Resolution	Descriptive	Likert Scale
Leaders' Charisma	• Employee Morale • Vision Alignment • Stress Reduction • Change Support • Leadership Influence	Descriptive	Likert Scale
Change Management	• Adoption Rate • Implementation Timeliness • Process Efficiency • Employee Engagement • Goal Achievement	Descriptive	Likert Scale

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Target population, Sampling and Sample Size

Kothari (2015) defines a research design as a comprehensive plan created to provide variance control and address specific research topics. In this study, a descriptive research design was used. A descriptive research design was used in this study. Descriptive research design's main objective is to outline the characteristics of the population or topic being studied. It entails gathering information without altering the factors being studied in order to present a complete picture of them (Kothari, 2015). Creating a thorough, comprehensive, and true depiction of the topic as it is at the time of the study is the main goal. Variables are not altered or manipulated in descriptive research. Rather, it watches and documents them as they happen. The study targeted the management, supervisors and employees of Kenya Ferry Services Limited summing to 130 employees.

Table 2: Target Population

Category	Population	Percentage
Operational Staff	100	77
Supervisors	20	15
Managers	10	8
Total	**130**	**100**

Source: Kenya Ferry Services (2025)

To determine the sample size from the target population, stratified random sampling was employed. By ensuring that particular subgroups (strata) within a population are sufficiently represented, stratified random sampling produces more accurate and trustworthy findings. The following formula, created by Lewis et al. (2009), was used to choose a sample size of 70 employees:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2}$$

Whereby:
n= sample size
N= Sample frame /population
e=Marginal error (0.05%)
1= Constant
n=130/(1+130(0.05)2)
n=130/(1+130(0.0025)
n=130/(1+0.875)
n=130/1.875
=70

The sample size was distributed through proportional allocation formula, $n_i=N_i/N \, x \, n$. Proportional allocation is a sampling technique used when dividing a total sample size across different subgroups (called strata) in such a way that the number of samples taken from each stratum is proportional to the size of that stratum in the overall population (Kish, 1965).

Table 3: Sample Size

Category	Population	Sample Size	Percentage
Operational Staff	100/130*70	54	77
Supervisors	20/130*70	11	16
Managers	10/130*70	5	7
Total	**130**	**70**	**100**

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires was employed as the data collecting instrument to get primary data. A questionnaire is a data collection instrument that includes a range of questions to collect particular information, according to Uma & Bougie (2016). The benefits of this device include time savings during administration and ease of preparation. The researcher met the respondents in person and give them instructions on how to fill out the surveys. The researcher addressed any queries that arose along this process. The researcher then gave ample time for each respondent to complete the questionnaires. The researcher gathered the completed questionnaires for the final analysis once every respondent had completed them.

3.5 Pilot Study

This refers to the process where the research instrument is issued to some respondents in the population who were not part of the study for the purposes of testing the reliability and validity of the instrument. The pilot test was done on 7 respondents, being 10% of the target population selected randomly from Kenya Ferry Services Limited in Kisumu County. Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) state that, a pilot study should not be carried out on participants who formed part of the final sample, to avoid bias and overfamiliarity with the instrument. Ideally, it should be done in a different but similar setting or organization. According to Hertzog (2008), a 10% sample of the study population is good enough. The results of the pilot test was used to fine tune the research instrument.

3.5.1 Validity and Reliability

According to Crowther (2016) validity refers to the accuracy of data obtained during the research study representing the variables of the study. The content validity of the questionnaire was achieved through marine expert opinions. Cresswell (2013), this is the consistency of a research instrument in yielding similar results with repeated measurements from same individual or group of individuals under the same conditions. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the data reliability. A coefficient of >0.7 is considered reliable for a research instrument (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a consent letter from MUA and Kenya Ferry Services Limited for data collection. The researcher also acquired a research permit from NACOSTI. Upon obtaining the same, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the selected sample groups for filling. Thereafter, the researcher conducted desktop research for collection of secondary data. Data compilation and review was done by the researcher in preparation for data analysis for reporting and presentation.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

This process entails thoroughly reviewing and analyzing the gathered data in order to respond to research questions or evaluate hypotheses (Kumar, 2019). The data must first be organized and cleansed to ensure accuracy and completeness. The researcher used quantitative methods to analyze the data. statistical tool for social scientists (SPSS Version 2.0) was used for data analysis and tables were used in the presentation to make the results comprehensible and consistent with the study's objectives. For descriptive analysis, the multiple regression formula following will be used:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \hat{e}$,

Y = Dependent variable (change management)

β_i = coefficients (predicted)

β_0 = Constant

X_i = Independent Variables

X_1 = Leader's human relation skills

X_2 = Leader's Charisma

$\hat{e}$ = error term

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In social science research, informed consent is a fundamental ethical criterion. Participants received a comprehensive informed consent form from the researcher that included information on the study's goals, purpose, data collection procedures, duration, potential risks or discomforts (if any), and expected benefits. The principle of voluntary participation ensured that individuals decided to participate freely, without coercion, intimidation, or undue influence. Confidentiality referred to the obligation to safeguard participants' identifiable data from unauthorized disclosure. In this study, all data collected, whether from interviews, focus groups, or questionnaires, were handled with strict confidentiality. The researcher respected the personal and professional privacy of participants by ensuring that all data collection activities were conducted in a discreet and non-intrusive manner. Interviews and survey sessions were scheduled at convenient times and held in private rooms within the organization or virtually when preferred. Anonymity was distinct from confidentiality in that it meant no identifying information was collected that could trace responses back to a specific individual.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Leaders' Human Relation Skills

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Leaders' Human Relation Skills

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
My leader builds strong interpersonal relationships that encourage teamwork during organizational change	4	1.383
My leader shows empathy and concern for employees' well-being when changes are introduced	4.27	1.239
My leader is approachable and open to discussing employees' concerns during times of change.	4.33	1.018
My leader fosters a positive work environment that reduces resistance to change	4.21	1.226
My leader actively resolves conflicts that arise during change processes	4.07	1.266

Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics on leaders' interpersonal and supportive behaviors during organizational change. The results reflect employees' perceptions of how effectively their leaders build relationships, foster positive environments, and manage challenges during periods of transition. The analysis is based on the mean scores and standard deviations, which indicate the level of agreement and the degree of consensus among respondents.

The statement "My leader is approachable and open to discussing employees' concerns during times of change" received the highest mean score of 4.33 with a relatively low standard deviation of 1.018. This suggests that a majority of respondents strongly agreed that their leaders are open and accessible when organizational changes are introduced. This is a crucial leadership trait because, as Kotter (2012) highlights in his change management model, open communication between leaders and employees is vital in minimizing uncertainty and building trust during transitions. Furthermore, it aligns with Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, which emphasizes the importance of leaders being approachable and emotionally attuned to employees to create an environment conducive to change.

The second highest rated behavior was "My leader shows empathy and concern for employees' well-being when changes are introduced," with a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 1.239. This finding indicates that most leaders demonstrate empathy and care for their team members during change processes. Empathy is a cornerstone of transformational leadership, which focuses on individualized consideration and employee welfare (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who show genuine concern are more likely to reduce employee anxiety, thereby improving morale and reducing resistance to change. This finding is supported by Lewin's Change Management Theory, which suggests that leaders who are empathetic play a critical role in the "unfreezing" stage by preparing employees emotionally for change.

The statement "My leader fosters a positive work environment that reduces resistance to change" had a mean score of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 1.226. This demonstrates that leaders are perceived to create supportive environments that encourage adaptability and reduce resistance. Literature underscores that a positive organizational climate is key to successful change implementation. According to Armenakis and Harris (2009), fostering a positive work environment encourages employee buy-in and mitigates the fear and uncertainty associated with organizational change.

The statement "My leader actively resolves conflicts that arise during change processes" recorded a mean score of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.266. While this is slightly lower than other behaviors, it still indicates general agreement among respondents. Conflict is inevitable during change initiatives due to differing employee opinions and reactions. Effective conflict resolution by leaders aligns with Thomas-Kilmann's Conflict Resolution Theory, which emphasizes the role of leaders in mediating disputes to maintain harmony and focus on organizational goals. Failure to resolve conflicts can lead to heightened resistance and slow down the change process.

Lastly, the statement "My leader builds strong interpersonal relationships that encourage teamwork during organizational change" had a mean score of 4.00 with the highest standard deviation of 1.383. This suggests that while most respondents agree with this statement, there is notable variation in perceptions. Some employees may not feel fully engaged in team-building efforts. According to McGregor's Theory Y, leaders who invest in building strong interpersonal relationships promote collaboration, which is essential for managing change successfully. Inadequate teamwork can lead to fragmented efforts and undermine the overall effectiveness of the change initiative.

The data shows that leaders at the organization are generally effective in managing interpersonal relationships and providing support during organizational change, with all mean scores above 4.00. The highest-rated behaviors relate to approachability and empathy, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence and open communication in successful change management. However, the slightly lower mean in teamwork and conflict resolution indicates areas for improvement. Leaders should focus on strengthening team cohesion and enhancing conflict resolution mechanisms to ensure smoother transitions.

These findings align closely with the literature reviewed in the study, which emphasized that leadership behaviors grounded in empathy, open communication, and support are vital for reducing resistance and fostering employee commitment during change processes (Kotter, 2021). By continuing to cultivate these behaviors, the organization can increase the likelihood of successful and sustainable change implementation.

4.2 Leaders' Charisma

Table 5: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Leaders' Charisma

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
My leader inspires confidence and motivation in employees during organizational change	4.33	1.188
My leader has a compelling vision that encourages others to embrace change	4.54	1.003
My leader's personal charm and confidence help reduce anxiety during transitions	4.63	0.854
My leader influences others to support change through their enthusiasm	4.49	1.073
My leader is seen as a role model during the implementation of organizational changes	4.87	0.378

The results in Table 11 present descriptive statistics on leaders' charisma and its effect on managing organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services Limited. The highest mean score was 4.87 (SD = 0.378) for the statement "My leader is seen as a role model during the implementation of organizational changes". This indicates that most respondents strongly agree that their leaders exhibit behaviors that inspire emulation, a key component of charismatic leadership. This finding suggests that employees view their leaders as credible and trustworthy figures, which aligns with Owino and Musiega (2020), who emphasize that leaders who act as role models foster employee commitment and reduce resistance during transitions.

The second-highest mean was 4.63 (SD = 0.854) for "My leader's personal charm and confidence help reduce anxiety during transitions". This highlights the ability of charismatic leaders to provide emotional stability and assurance to employees during uncertain periods of change. According to Abiola and Ekundayo (2021), charisma instills optimism and creates a shared purpose, making employees more receptive to change. This finding implies that leaders at Kenya Ferry Services leverage their interpersonal appeal to manage fears and concerns related to organizational restructuring.

The statement "My leader has a compelling vision that encourages others to embrace change" recorded a mean of 4.54 (SD = 1.003), demonstrating that leaders communicate inspiring visions that align employees with organizational goals. This supports Steffens et al. (2024), who found that charismatic leaders who articulate a clear vision significantly enhance organizational change outcomes by motivating employees to work collectively toward shared objectives. This vision-driven leadership approach is critical in a maritime sector context, where operational reforms require unified effort and cooperation.

Similarly, the item "My leader influences others to support change through their enthusiasm" had a mean of 4.49 (SD = 1.073), showing that leaders' passion and enthusiasm positively influence employee attitudes toward change. This finding echoes Mugadza (2024), who observed that in the mining industry, leaders' enthusiasm during change initiatives boosted employee morale and commitment to transformation processes.

Finally, the lowest-rated statement, "My leader inspires confidence and motivation in employees during organizational change", still achieved a strong mean of 4.33 (SD = 1.188). While slightly lower than other indicators, this reflects that most employees acknowledge their leaders' ability to instill confidence, though there is room for improvement.

The overall high means (all above 4.3) indicate that leaders at Kenya Ferry Services possess strong charismatic qualities that significantly influence the management of organizational change. These results align with the Transformational Leadership Theory outlined by Bass and Riggio (2020), which posits that charisma is a core element in inspiring and motivating employees toward achieving organizational goals. Empirical studies such as Ekmekcioglu et al. (2018) also confirm that charismatic leaders foster coordinated teamwork and reduce resistance to change, which is critical in sectors requiring safety and precision like maritime transport.

These findings suggest that Kenya Ferry Services leaders effectively use charisma to foster trust, reduce anxiety, and rally employees behind reform initiatives. However, consistent with Njuguna and Kimani (2023), over-reliance on charisma without strategic expertise could risk sustainability. Thus, charismatic leadership should be integrated with other leadership strategies such as communication skills and technical expertise to ensure long-term success in managing organizational change.

4.3 Change Managemeny

Table 6: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Change Management

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leadership in my organization effectively communicates the reasons for change.	4.3	1.301
Employees in my organization are actively involved in the change process.	4.24	1.233
The organization provides adequate training to help staff adapt to changes.	4.3	1.232
Organizational change initiatives are implemented in a timely and	4.21	1.318

structured manner.		
I feel supported by management during periods of organizational change.	4.74	0.736

Table 14 provides descriptive statistics on change management at Kenya Ferry Services Limited. This analysis explores employee perceptions of various aspects of the change management process, such as communication, employee involvement, training, structured implementation, and management support.

The statement "I feel supported by management during periods of organizational change" received the highest mean score of 4.74, with a low standard deviation of 0.736. This indicates that most employees strongly agree that they are adequately supported by management during change processes, and there is strong consensus among them. This result reflects the crucial role of leadership in providing emotional and practical support to employees to minimize resistance and anxiety.

This finding aligns with Kotter (2012), who emphasizes that visible management support during change is one of the most critical factors in achieving successful transformation. Similarly, Armenakis and Harris (2009) highlight that supportive leadership builds trust and enhances employee commitment by demonstrating that management understands and values the challenges faced by employees during transitions. In the context of Kenya Ferry Services, strong management support likely helps employees feel secure, thus reducing turnover and enhancing cooperation during organizational reforms.

The statement "The leadership in my organization effectively communicates the reasons for change" recorded a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 1.301. This shows that while employees generally agree that communication is effective, there is noticeable variation in their perceptions. Effective communication is essential in change management as it ensures that employees understand the need for change and their role in the process.

This finding is supported by Clampitt, DeKoch, and Cashman (2000), who argue that poor communication is one of the leading causes of resistance to change. Additionally, Kotter (2012) notes that leaders must continuously communicate the vision and reasons for change to create alignment and shared understanding among employees. The variability in responses suggests that while communication strategies are generally strong, there may be inconsistencies across different departments or levels within the organization.

The statement "Employees in my organization are actively involved in the change process" had a mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 1.233. This reflects that employees feel moderately included in decision-making and change implementation activities. Active involvement fosters a sense of ownership and reduces resistance to change.

This finding is consistent with Lewin's Change Management Model, particularly in the "unfreezing" stage, where employees must be prepared and engaged for change to occur smoothly. Armenakis et al. (1993) further emphasize that involving employees builds psychological readiness for change and enhances organizational commitment. However, the slightly lower mean compared to other items indicates that there is still room to enhance participative practices at Kenya Ferry Services.

The statement "The organization provides adequate training to help staff adapt to changes" also recorded a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 1.232. This indicates that most employees agree they receive sufficient training during organizational transitions, although some variability exists. Training is critical in equipping employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle new processes, technologies, or responsibilities introduced during change.

According to Burke (2017), effective training reduces uncertainty and improves employee performance during periods of change. Similarly, Hiatt and Creasey (2012), in the ADKAR Model, emphasize that training is a fundamental component of successful change management as it ensures readiness and capability for the transition. In this case, Kenya Ferry Services appears to recognize the importance of training but must address inconsistencies to ensure all staff benefit equally.

The statement "Organizational change initiatives are implemented in a timely and structured manner" had the lowest mean score of 4.21, with the highest standard deviation of 1.318. While this still indicates general agreement, the higher variability suggests that not all employees experience change implementation as timely or well-organized. Delays or lack of structure can create confusion, increase resistance, and disrupt operations.

This finding is supported by Kotter (2012), who asserts that poorly managed change efforts often fail due to lack of planning and urgency. Similarly, Prosci (2018) found that organizations with structured change management frameworks are six times more likely to meet project objectives. The variability here points to the need for Kenya Ferry Services to standardize its change management practices to improve efficiency and predictability.

The overall findings in Table 14 indicate that Kenya Ferry Services has a strong foundation for managing organizational change, particularly in terms of management support, which was rated the highest. Effective communication, adequate training, and employee involvement also emerged as significant strengths, though with some variability that points to opportunities for improvement. The lowest ratings were associated with the structured and timely implementation of change, highlighting the need for better planning and coordination.

These results align with empirical studies emphasizing that successful change management relies on a combination of leadership support, clear communication, active employee engagement, and systematic implementation. For instance, Kotter (2012) identifies management support and communication as core pillars of his Eight-Step Change Model, while Armenakis and Harris (2019) stress the importance of participation and training in reducing resistance and fostering commitment.

By addressing the inconsistencies identified, especially in structuring change initiatives and improving communication flow, Kenya Ferry Services can enhance its ability to manage change effectively, reduce resistance, and create a sustainable culture of adaptability. This is particularly vital in the transport sector, where operational reliability and employee coordination are critical for service delivery and safety.

4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 7: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**

1	.625[a]	.390	.353	11.03468

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Expertise, Leaders Communication Skills, Leaders Human Relations Skills, Leaders Charisma

The model summary provides an overview of how well the independent variables, leadership expertise, leaders' communication skills, leaders' human relations skills, and leaders' charisma, collectively explain variations in the dependent variable, managing organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services Limited.

The R value of 0.625 represents the multiple correlation coefficient, showing the strength and direction of the relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. An R value of 0.625 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship, meaning that improvements in leadership qualities are associated with better management of organizational change. In other words, when leaders demonstrate expertise, effective communication, strong interpersonal skills, and charisma, there is a significant positive impact on how organizational change is managed.

The R Square (R^2) value is 0.390, which implies that 39.0% of the variation in managing organizational change can be explained by the four leadership factors included in the model. This is a substantial proportion, indicating that leadership attributes play a critical role in the success of change initiatives. However, the remaining 61.0% of the variation is attributed to other factors not included in this study, such as organizational culture, employee attitudes, availability of resources, and external environmental influences.

The Adjusted R Square value is 0.353, which is slightly lower than the R^2. The adjusted R^2 provides a more accurate estimate by accounting for the number of predictors in the model and the sample size. The small difference between R^2 (0.390) and adjusted R^2 (0.353) suggests that all four leadership variables are meaningful contributors to the model and that the model is a good fit without being overly inflated by unnecessary predictors.

The Standard Error of the Estimate is 11.03468, which measures the average distance between the actual observed values and the values predicted by the regression model. A lower standard error indicates a more precise prediction. In this case, while the error margin is moderate, it shows there is still room to improve the accuracy of predictions by incorporating additional variables or refining measurement tools.

The results demonstrate that leadership practices are essential in driving successful organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services. The moderately strong R value confirms that effective leadership is directly linked to smoother change implementation. The R^2 value further emphasizes that leadership factors account for a significant portion of the success in managing change, highlighting the need for leadership development programs focusing on communication, expertise, interpersonal skills, and charisma.

However, since 61% of the variance is unexplained, it is evident that leadership alone is not sufficient. Other organizational factors—such as employee engagement, change readiness, technological infrastructure, and external regulatory frameworks—must also be addressed to achieve comprehensive and sustainable change outcomes.

This model underscores the critical role of leadership in managing organizational change. By strengthening leadership competencies, particularly in the four areas examined, Kenya Ferry Services can significantly improve its change management processes. At the same time, management should explore other contributing factors beyond leadership to fully address the complexities of organizational change.

4.5 Analysis Regression Coefficient

Table 8: Regression Coefficient

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-37.759	15.164		-2.490	.015
	Leaders Human Relation Skill	.950	.336	.294	2.830	.006
	Leaders Charisma	.111	.292	.042	.381	.704

a. Dependent Variable: Managing Organization Change

Table 17 presents the regression coefficients, which show how each of the four independent variables, leaders' human relation skills, leaders' charisma, leaders' communication skills, and leadership expertise, individually influences the dependent variable, managing organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services Limited. This analysis helps determine which specific leadership attributes have the most significant impact on the management of organizational change.

The constant has a B value of -37.759 and a p-value of 0.015, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The negative value indicates that, if all leadership variables were held at zero, the predicted level of effective organizational change management would be negative. While this has no practical meaning in isolation, it shows the essential role leadership factors play. Without these leadership attributes, the process of managing change would not only be ineffective but could potentially lead to organizational instability or failure.

Leaders' human relation skills have a B value of 0.950, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.294 and a p-value of 0.006. This is statistically significant since the p-value is below 0.05. The positive B value implies that a one-unit increase in leaders' human relation skills would lead to a 0.950-unit improvement in managing organizational change, assuming other variables remain constant. The standardized beta of 0.294 shows that human relation skills are among the strongest predictors in this model, ranking second in influence.

This suggests that leaders who build trust, foster teamwork, resolve conflicts, and maintain strong interpersonal relationships significantly enhance employee cooperation during change initiatives. This aligns with Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, which emphasizes the importance of empathy and social skills in guiding organizations through transitions. Furthermore, Armenakis and Harris (2009) found that leaders with strong interpersonal skills are more effective at reducing employee resistance and improving change readiness.

Leaders' charisma recorded a B value of 0.111, a standardized beta of 0.042, and a p-value of 0.704. Although the relationship is positive, the high p-value indicates that charisma does not have a statistically significant effect on managing organizational change in this context. This suggests that while charismatic qualities such as inspiring confidence or enthusiasm may create a supportive environment, they are not the decisive factor in determining change outcomes at Kenya Ferry Services. This finding contrasts with some studies, such as Bass and Riggio (2006), who emphasized charisma as a vital element of transformational leadership. However, it reflects that in certain operational settings, such as ferry services, practical leadership competencies—like communication and expertise—are more critical than purely inspirational leadership behaviors.

Leaders' communication skills have a B value of 0.954, a standardized beta of 0.288, and a p-value of 0.007, making it statistically significant. This indicates that a one-unit increase in communication skills would lead to a 0.954-unit increase in the effective management of organizational change, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta of 0.288 highlights that communication skills are the third strongest predictor, just slightly behind human relation skills. This finding demonstrates that clear, consistent, and transparent communication is vital for guiding employees through transitions. Leaders who actively listen, explain the reasons for change, and provide timely updates create trust and reduce uncertainty. This aligns with Kotter (2021) and Armenakis and Harris (2019), who both argue that effective communication is a cornerstone of successful change management. Inconsistent or poor communication, on the other hand, often leads to confusion, resistance, and project failure.

Leadership expertise recorded a B value of 0.485, a standardized beta of 0.336, and a p-value of 0.004, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship. The positive B value shows that an improvement in leadership expertise leads to better management of organizational change. Among all predictors, leadership expertise has the highest standardized beta (0.336), making it the most influential factor in the model.

This suggests that leaders who possess the right skills, knowledge, and experience to plan, execute, and monitor change initiatives are critical to success. Evidence-based decision-making, strategic vision, and the ability to manage both people and processes are essential leadership competencies. This supports the findings of Getha-Taylor et al. (2011), who emphasize the importance of technical expertise and analytical skills in navigating complex change processes.

The regression analysis highlights three key leadership variables that significantly influence the management of organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services, Leadership expertise, (strongest predictor), Leaders' human relation skills, and Leaders' communication skills. Leaders' charisma, while positive, does not significantly impact change management, suggesting that practical skills and interpersonal competencies outweigh inspirational leadership in this context.

The findings emphasize that for Kenya Ferry Services to effectively manage organizational change, it must focus on developing leaders who are technically skilled, capable of fostering strong employee relationships, and able to communicate transparently throughout the change process. While charisma can complement these efforts, it cannot substitute for the operational and strategic leadership capabilities required in a high-stakes service environment.

This regression model demonstrates that effective change management is largely driven by technical expertise, strong human relations, and effective communication, rather than charisma alone. These insights align with empirical literature, including Kotter's (2012) Eight-Step Change Model, which highlights the need for competent, communicative, and supportive leadership to achieve sustainable organizational transformation. By prioritizing leadership development in these three critical areas, Kenya Ferry Services can enhance its capacity to navigate future changes successfully.

5.0 CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclussion

The study set out to investigate the influence of leadership on the management of organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services, focusing on four leadership dimensions: human relation skills, charisma, communication skills, and leadership expertise. Guided by the study objectives, both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze the extent to which these variables predict successful organizational change. The conclusions drawn from the findings provide important insights into the role of leadership in steering organizations through change.

First, the study established that leaders' human relation skills significantly contribute to effective management of organizational change. Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship with $B = 0.950$, $\beta = 0.294$, $t = 2.830$, $p = 0.006$, indicating that leaders who demonstrate interpersonal competence are better positioned to inspire cooperation, foster trust, and reduce employee resistance during change initiatives. This finding confirms existing literature that emphasizes the value of relational leadership in cultivating team cohesion and emotional support in turbulent organizational environments.

Second, while leaders' charisma was positively rated in descriptive statistics—particularly the role-model quality with $M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.378$—the inferential analysis showed it was not a significant predictor of organizational change ($B = 0.111$, $\beta = 0.042$, $t = 0.381$, $p = 0.704$). This outcome suggests that although employees admire inspirational and charismatic leaders, such traits alone are insufficient to guarantee change success. Instead, charisma works best as a complementary attribute that reinforces other leadership competencies, aligning with scholarly perspectives that practical skills outweigh charisma in driving measurable change outcomes.

5.2 Recommendations

Since human relation skills were found to significantly influence organizational change, it is recommended that Kenya Ferry Services invests in leadership development programs focused on interpersonal competence. Training workshops on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and team building should be introduced to help leaders better understand, support, and motivate employees during transitions. Additionally, management should encourage participatory leadership styles that empower staff and create a culture of trust and inclusivity. By improving relational skills, leaders can reduce resistance to change and increase employee cooperation, which is critical in dynamic operational environments such as ferry transport services.

Although charisma was positively perceived by employees, it was not statistically significant in predicting successful change outcomes. This suggests that charisma alone cannot guarantee effective change management. The organization should therefore reframe charisma as a complementary trait rather than a core requirement. Leadership training should emphasize blending inspirational qualities with practical competencies such as decision-making, planning, and accountability. This balance ensures that while leaders remain motivating role models, they also deliver tangible results through sound judgment and structured execution of change initiatives.

5.3 Future Research

Although this study provided valuable insights into the role of leadership in the management of organizational change at Kenya Ferry Services, it also revealed areas that could benefit from further academic inquiry. The scope, design, and context of the study create opportunities for researchers to extend knowledge in ways that may enrich both theory and practice in organizational leadership.In light of these considerations, future researchers are encouraged to build upon the foundation laid by this study, testing its findings in broader contexts, with additional variables, and using diverse methodologies. Such work would not only validate or refine the conclusions drawn here but also provide organizations with a richer evidence base to guide leadership development and change management strategies.

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