

The Influence of Organizational Change Leadership on Strategic Performance: The Mediating Role of Organizational Climate

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ABSTRACT

Managing change is essential to achieving high levels of strategic performance, enabling organizations to effectively adapt to highly dynamic environments by considering new structures, adopting technologies, and implementing new processes. In this context, this research examines the effect of organizational change leadership on strategic performance, mediated by organizational climate, in Jordanian organizations in the service sector. This quantitative, non-experimental study collected cross-sectional data from 433 managers of service-providing organizations, one of the most important sectors of the Jordanian economy, through an online survey comprising a 20-item Likert-based questionnaire with five options for rating each item. The data were processed in SPSS and AMOS, confirmatory factor analysis was applied to test the proposed model and modeled through structural equations, in order to test the veracity of the hypotheses raised. The results revealed that, in service organizations, there is partial mediation of culture, relating organizational change leadership to strategic performance, with a coefficient of 0.093. Furthermore, organizational change leadership has a direct positive effect on strategic performance ($\beta=0.262$, $SE=0.127$, $p<0.05$), as well as on organizational climate ($\beta=0.502$, $SE=0.134$, $p<0.01$). Likewise, organizational climate has a positive impact on strategic performance ($\beta=0.322$, $SE=0.061$, $p<0.01$). This study integrates three variables within the service business environment, provides valuable empirical evidence, and addresses an important gap in the literature, highlighting organizational climate as a key mediator in organizational change processes, enabling organizations to achieve improved performance levels.

Keywords: Organizational Change Leadership Organizational Climate, Strategic Performance

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, organizations have experienced paradigmatic transformations stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic (Grego et al., 2024), the rapid advance of artificial intelligence (Agarwal et al., 2024), the intensification of globalization (Mariotti, 2024), and growing environmental challenges (Kılıç & Atilla, 2024). These driving forces have compelled organizations to implement resilient and innovative strategies aimed at preserving their competitiveness and sustainability in highly volatile contexts (Sancak, 2023). In this context, effective organizational change leadership emerges as a fundamental pillar for organizational adaptation (Jutidharabongse et al., 2024).

The essential purpose of contemporary organizations lies in maximizing their market value, an objective that requires achieving higher levels of strategic performance (Rompho, 2025). Such performance not only

ensures survival in highly competitive contexts but also promotes sustainable growth and the consolidation of long-term strategic advantages. In this scenario, organizational change leadership is a fundamental cornerstone, enabling adaptation and transformation in the face of both external and internal challenges (Guo & Polak, 2023). Organizational competence in successfully managing change determines its resilience to uncertainty, optimizes resource utilization, stimulates innovation, and aligns its strategic objectives with the demands of a dynamic and globalized environment (Jutidharabongse et al., 2024).

In developing nations, organizational change leadership faces significant obstacles arising from the persistence of organizations with rigid structures, limited innovative capacity, and corporate cultures that demonstrate high resistance to profound transformations (Medina-Bueno et al., 2024). These conditions severely limit organizations' ability to adapt to environmental dynamics, perpetuating operational inefficiencies and diminishing their competitiveness in globalized markets. Resistance to change is intensified by financial constraints, technological deficits, and short-term strategic approaches, creating an adverse environment for the execution of transformation initiatives (Bah et al., 2024). Consequently, organizations face serious difficulties not only ensuring their survival but also positioning themselves sustainably in complex economic and social contexts. In this scenario, organizational change leadership in strategic performance takes on critical relevance when analyzed from the perspective of the mediation exercised by organizational climate (Kaur Bagga et al., 2023). In developing economic contexts, where hierarchical structures, highly centralized decision-making, and a weak focus on innovation predominate, cultural dynamics can act as either barriers or enhancers of transformation processes. A strong organizational climate that promotes flexibility, active employee participation, and alignment with strategic objectives emerges as a fundamental mediating factor in counteracting resistance to change (Kafetzopoulos et al., 2025). Consequently, fostering shared values, strengthening internal communication, and promoting leadership are essential to internalizing change as a driver of continuous improvement and sustainable performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws upon several foundational theories to understand the dynamics of organizational transformation. Central to the analysis is organizational change leadership theory, originally introduced by Hammouri et al. (2022), and Kilani et al., (2023), which outlines key stages for implementing change and emphasizes factors such as resilience, communication, and transformational leadership. In addition, the resource-based theory, attributed to Barney (1991) and refined by Barney, Ketchen, and Wright (2021), highlights how internal capabilities—such as organizational climate and managerial competencies—are crucial for sustainability and high performance in complex environments. The study also incorporates Schein's (2004) theory of organizational climate, which addresses the influence of collective values, ideas, and practices, which can influence an organization's adaptability to change, particularly in rigid structures. Finally, it is aligned with the open systems perspective of Katz and Kahn (1966), who emphasized the sustained interdependence between the organization and its surrounding environment, a vital factor for institutional survival in developing countries (Islam, 2023).

Organizational Change Leadership

Kurt Lewin is widely recognized as one of the leading scholars of organizational change leadership, establishing the theoretical and methodological foundations for addressing organizational transformation from a behavioral perspective (Mouazen et al., 2024). His approach, deeply influenced by social psychology, conceptualized change as a dynamic and structured process, composed of interrelated stages that facilitate the analysis, planning, and implementation of sustainable transformations. Through his three-phase model—unfreezing, shifting, and refreezing—Lewin underscored the centrality of human behavior modification in organizational change processes (Endrejat & Burnes, 2024). This theoretical framework not only transformed the understanding of organizational dynamics but also provided analytical tools for exploring the interactions between individuals, groups, and environments in contexts of profound transformation (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015).

The implementation of organizational transformations can be addressed through multiple approaches, which are grouped into systematic methods—characterized by defined structures and rigorous methodological frameworks—and organizational change leadership strategies, focused on facilitating human and organizational adaptation through dynamic and flexible processes (Sartori et al., 2018). Systematic methods comprise various consolidated methodologies, such as strategic planning, participatory action research, the integrative approach,

the six-step model, as well as evaluation, reassessment, and action processes. Tools such as Deming's continuous improvement cycle and the Six Sigma methodology, among others, offer robust frameworks for effectively managing organizational change processes (Al Owad et al., 2023). In contrast, organizational change leadership strategies are more complex, as they focus on training leaders to align transformative processes with the institutional mission and strategy (Kaur Bagga et al., 2023). This approach requires comprehensive strategic planning and the formulation of a shared vision that fosters the active participation and commitment of all employees to achieving organizational objectives (Bratt et al., 2021; Grover, 1999).

Among the most relevant organizational change leadership models, the one developed by Judson stands out. He proposes an approach structured in five essential stages: detailed analysis of the organization, strategic planning of changes, effective communication with organizational members, systematic reinforcement of implemented initiatives, and institutionalization of changes to ensure their long-term sustainability (Todnem, 2005). For its part, the change leader model proposed by Kotter (2012) focuses on generating a sense of urgency by linking organizational change with imminent threats or strategic opportunities. This approach emphasizes the formation of a committed management team, the design of an inspiring vision and organization by a coherent strategy, and the clear communication of that vision. It also contemplates the progressive implementation of the strategy through short-term achievements that reinforce the initial momentum, the consolidation of the progress made and, finally, the institutionalization of the change to permanently integrate it into the organizational climate.

Organizational Climate

This construct is multidimensional and lacks a unified definition in the academic literature. It is determined by shared values, fundamental beliefs and underlying principles that collectively provide identity within an organization and is also characterized by its persistence over time (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). The values, beliefs, and practices that make up organizational climate emerge from a cumulative learning process derived from the organization's historical experiences. These elements are manifested both in daily management practices and in the behaviors and attitudes adopted by its members (Sapta et al., 2021). Organizational climate acts as an integrative bond that unites the various structural, operational, and human elements of the organization, based on shared patterns with collective meaning. Furthermore, it incorporates dual knowledge: one oriented toward specific work practices and another symbolic one, composed of narratives, rituals, and mythologies that reinforce the organization's identity and core values (Ouchi, 1981). A significant contribution to the conceptualization of organizational climate is the proposal of Denison and Mishra (1995), who defined it as a series of values, beliefs and fundamental principles that constitute the basis of the organizational management system. This concept is enriched by managerial actions and behaviors that not only illustrate but also consolidate the fundamental values that shape organizational climate. Likewise, Schein and Night (1993) argue that organizational climate is configured as a pattern of shared primordial assumptions, which arise from the invention, discovery or development by a human group in its process of adaptation to its environment. These assumptions, when proven effective in their application, are validated and collectively adopted, becoming guides for organizational behavior.

Strategic Performance

Market competition for customers, resources, and capital has made strategic performance a critical factor for business survival, consolidating its position as a central construct in the dynamics of contemporary business activities (Qalati et al., 2021). Measuring strategic performance is essential, as it offers researchers a tool to evaluate the strategies and actions implemented by organizations (Mio et al., 2022). Furthermore, it allows managers to exercise strategic and proactive control over competition, fostering sustainable growth and promoting comprehensive organizational development. This approach also optimizes the management of long-term organizational behavior, ensuring adaptability and permanent competitiveness in these highly dynamic environments (Yu et al., 2022). As Singh et al. (2016) highlight, one of the main strategic challenges facing organizations in competitive environments is achieving a balance between increasing profitability and ensuring long-term business sustainability. This approach involves not only optimizing resources and maximizing economic performance, but also adopting responsible practices that ensure the company's future viability in a constantly changing market.

Among the various definitions of strategic performance, Kaplan and Norton (1992) propose that its measurement should include both financial and non-financial index indicators, which lead to an evaluation of how much the objectives have been achieved, as well as the goals that are set. Alchian and Demsetz (1975) define

it as the comparison between the value generated by the company and the owners' return expectations. Combs et al. (2005) suggest a multidimensional approach to addressing strategic performance, differentiating three areas: (a) accounting performance, (b) stock market performance, and (c) growth. Luo et al. (2012) introduce a different perspective, proposing two main dimensions: economic performance and operational performance. Economic performance is evaluated through financial indicators such as return on investments made, as well as return on assets, while operational performance is measured through market-oriented indicators, such as sales growth and market share. The latter is also evaluated by considering factors such as customer loyalty, support for local communities, and customer satisfaction, as well as elements that reflect competitive success, such as innovation, service quality, and productivity. These indicators provide a comprehensive view of strategic performance.

Organizational Change Leadership and Strategic Performance

Several previous studies have attempted to analyze how organizational change leadership and strategic performance relate. Warrilow et al. (2020) argue that, to effectively manage change, it is essential to adopt strategies that facilitate employee acceptance, guiding them toward a positive contribution that boosts strategic performance. In line with this view, Sujová and Šimanová (2021) conclude that organizations that implement change processes experience an improvement in their strategic performance. An empirical study conducted by Thomas (2014) in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, with a sample of 300 employees, showed that changes in technology, customer preferences and management generate significant impacts on the performance of both employees and the organization. Finally, Cho and Shen (2007) demonstrate that dramatic changes in the environment that increase managerial discretion can lead to an improvement in strategic performance by allowing greater flexibility in decision-making. Bah et al. (2024) demonstrated that, in strategic sectors such as telecommunications and refineries, the effective integration of employee participation under a framework of responsible leadership produces significantly positive outcomes in organizational change processes, which in turn lead to substantial improvements in overall strategic performance. Similarly, Atobishi et al. (2024) found that managing change through the application of artificial intelligence in government agencies yields enhanced levels of strategic performance, as it facilitates informed decision-making, increases operational efficiency, and supports structural adaptation within complex and dynamic environments.

Organizational Change Leadership and Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is fundamental to organizational change leadership, as it reflects the values, beliefs, and behaviors that influence employees and organizations as they respond to transformations. The success of change initiatives depends largely on how well these cultural elements align with the goals of change, making integration into the organizational structure more effective (Castiglione & Lavoie-Tremblay, 2021). When a culture supports innovation and continuous improvement, it lays the groundwork for successful and sustainable change. Openness to transformation becomes essential for long-term adaptability and growth (Haffar et al., 2014).

Studies show that organizational climate not only evolves with time but also guides the direction of the organization by shaping cognitive, emotional, and social interactions that impact performance (Aziz & Ali, 2000). In strong cultures, members are more likely to view change positively, seeing it as compatible with shared values (Haffar et al., 2014). In group-oriented environments, individuals often perceive change as personally advantageous, increasing their willingness to participate actively in the process. Castiglione and Lavoie-Tremblay (2021) outline seven critical factors that can either enable or hinder large-scale organizational change, with culture being central among them. Furthermore, Haffar et al. (2014) highlights that clan-oriented and adhocracy cultures—characterized by collaboration, flexibility, and innovation—foster higher readiness for change. Similarly, Abdul Rashid et al. (2004) found that organizational climate significantly influences emotional, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes toward change. These insights demonstrate that culture is not only a background element but a driving force that shapes how individuals perceive, react to, and engage with organizational transformation.

Organizational Climate and Strategic Performance

Organizational climate plays an essential role in the management of any entity, significantly influencing employee behavior and decisions. This relationship extends directly to the organization's overall performance, affecting both operational effectiveness and strategic outcomes (Tarba et al., 2019). Academic literature argues that diverse organizational climates have differentiated impacts on performance, modulating organizational

outcomes according to the shared values, practices, and norms that prevail in each specific cultural context (Zeb et al., 2021). A study conducted by Gordon and DiTomaso (1992) within North American organizations showed that those that prioritize flexibility achieve superior performance compared to those focused on stability. Furthermore, it will be observed that in organizations with market-oriented cultures, these are closely linked to the achievement of objectives, while those with "clan"-type cultures had no significant relationships with strategic performance. On the other hand, Abdullahi et al. (2021) when studying Malaysian universities, using structural equation models, demonstrated that organizational climate has significant impacts on performance, evidencing a direct relationship between the predominant cultural values and the results obtained. In a similar vein, Fey and Denison (2011) conducted a comparative study between Russian and American organizations, concluding that clan and adhocracy cultures are more effective in the Russian context, while in North America, a market culture becomes essential to achieve high levels of organizational effectiveness. These findings highlight how specific cultural characteristics influence management and strategic performance, suggesting that management practices should be adapted to the cultural values of each context.

Mediation of Organizational Climate

Several investigations have highlighted that organizational climate acts as a mediator in the interaction between various management variables, influencing how key factors of organizational dynamics relate to and affect each other. For example, Kaur et al. (2023) stated that culture has a partial mediating effect when associating transformational leadership with organizational change leadership, especially in teams that work virtually, modulating how these variables interact and manifest in that context. Likewise, Luciano et al. (2023) came to demonstrate that culture had a partial mediating effect when relating servant leadership with strategic performance in managers of Jordanian organizations, modulating the influence of this leadership on the results. Furthermore, Chaudhuri et al. (2024) demonstrated that a data-centric culture exerts a significant mediating impact on product innovation and process optimization, improving the business value and performance of organizations.

The study of organizational change leadership, culture and performance at the organizational level highlights the importance of a culture aligned with change processes, facilitating their acceptance and improving performance. The cultural mediation between variables such as organizational change leadership and performance underscores the complexity of the interaction between human and organizational factors. This approach is essential for developing management models that enable organizations to adapt and thus thrive in a dynamic, multi-skill environment, promoting sustainability and continuous improvement in the organizational structure. The objective of this study was to measure how organizational change leadership influences strategic performance, mediated by the culture variable, measured in service-providing organizations.

Fig. 1 presents the conceptual model, which was constructed from insights gathered in the literature review. The related hypotheses were similarly established.

H1: *Organizational change leadership has a significant influence on performance at the organizational level.*

H2: *Organizational change leadership significantly impacts organizational climate.*

H3: *Organizational climate has a significant influence on strategic performance.*

H4: *Organizational climate mediates the influence of organizational change leadership on strategic performance.*

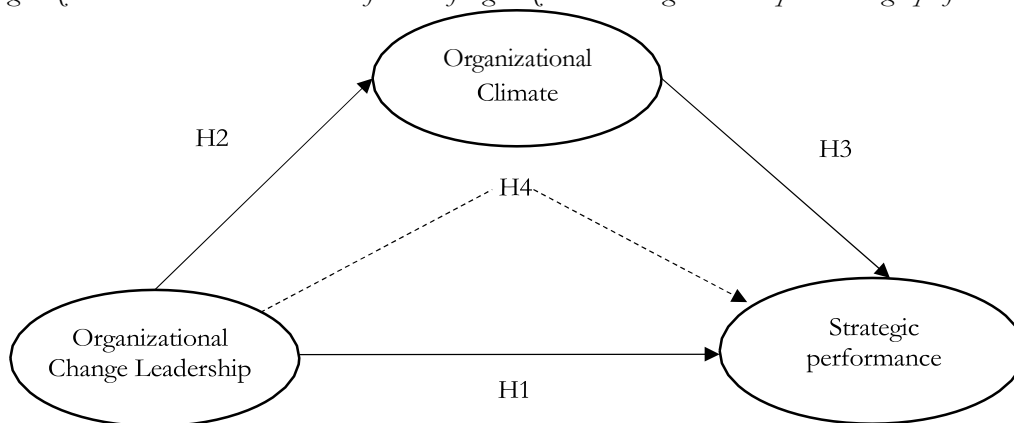


Figure 1. Constructed conceptual representation

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a quantitative approach, characterized by the formulation of hypotheses, some of which were subject to empirical testing. These hypotheses were evaluated through rigorous data analysis, which was collected through surveys. The instrument used consisted of a structured questionnaire with items designed on a Likert-type scale, aimed at managers of Jordanian service organizations. This approach yielded quantifiable results that support the validity of the inferences made.

Measures

Three measurement instruments were used, each designed to assess a specific construct. The three key variables—namely, organizational change leadership, organizational climate, and strategic performance—were assessed using a Likert-type scale with five response options. This scale ranged from “1,” indicating “completely disagree,” to “5,” representing “completely agree.” These variables were measured among managers of Jordanian organizations in the service sector.

Organizational change leadership was assessed using an instrument adapted from the six-item scale proposed by Karnouskos (2015). This scale has shown high factor loadings, demonstrating its robustness and accuracy in measuring dimensions related to organizational change leadership.

The culture scale consists of 6 items, which were derived from Cameron and Quinn (2001). This scale is widely recognized in the business world for its effectiveness in measuring various aspects of organizational climate. Its validity and reliability are supported by the high factor loadings obtained, ensuring accuracy in capturing key cultural dimensions within organizations.

To measure performance, a scale with 9 items was proposed, which were adapted from Luo et al. (2012). Recognized for its comprehensive approach, this scale effectively measures strategic performance from multiple perspectives. Its validity and reliability have been confirmed in various previous studies, making it a robust tool for assessing organizational outcomes.

Control variables such as sex, age, educational level, and work experience were incorporated, given their relevance in previous studies on strategic performance. Its inclusion allows for a more precise and personalized analysis, considering its impact on the main variables, ensuring an element of validity, as well as the reliability of the findings derived from the research (Han, 2020; Hartnell et al., 2020).

Participants and Data Gathering

Data were obtained after obtaining the managers' authorization, using scales adapted from accessible instruments. These instruments underwent a translation process, first into Spanish and then into English, by professional translation experts and validated by five management experts, whose feedback was incorporated to improve their quality. The questionnaires were administered in Spanish via Google Forms and distributed in two rounds, three months apart, using convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. A pilot test was conducted with 65 managers in Lima to assess the reliability and feasibility of the instrument, following the recommendations of Bourque and Fielder (2023). The sampling process consisted of sending respondents a questionnaire consisting of three main variables. In the first round, it was sent to 530 managers and, three months later, to another group of 480 service sector managers. 433 correctly completed forms were returned, resulting in a valid participation rate of 53.86%. Among the participants, 332 (61.03%) were men and 212 (38.97%) were women, with a greater proportion of men. The predominant age group was 47–52 years (24.7%), followed by 42–46 years (22.4%). Regarding education, 58.3% held an undergraduate degree, and 41.7% had postgraduate training. In terms of tenure, 50.2% had over five years in the organization.

Data Review

Once the data were obtained, a rigorous selection was carried out to ensure measurement accuracy and compliance with statistical requirements. First, a missing values analysis was performed using the Little Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test, the results of which confirmed the absence of missing data. No problems were found in the normality tests, neither in linearity, nor in homoscedasticity or in multicollinearity. On the other hand, regarding the kurtosis and skewness of the items, the values ranged from -1 to +1, which indicates an adequate normal distribution. Elliptical scatter plots were found when measuring the normality of the variables, suggesting linearity. Scatter plots of the standardized residuals revealed rectangular patterns, evidencing homoscedasticity. Finally, the highest value of variance inflation (VIF) was obtained at 4.013, which is

below 10, which is the highest accepted value. This implies that there is no multicollinearity on the exogenous variables.

Data Analysis

In the study, several metrics were analyzed for the variables, such as common method variance, construct validity, and reliability. The values of the means, the dispersion through standard deviation and the directionality relationships of the variables were calculated with SPSS 26. A confirmatory factor analysis was applied that allowed the evaluation of the proposed model, thus validating all the measures adopted in the research. In addition, structural equations (SEM) were used to evaluate how the variables were related and the mediating effect of organizational climate. SEM analysis was performed using AMOS software, applying maximum likelihood (ML) to test the hypotheses. For the mediation analysis, a bootstrap with 2000 replacements was implemented.

Determination of Reliability and Associated Biases

Table 1 presents the results corresponding to the reliability level of the measured constructs. Regarding Cronbach's alpha, results greater than 0.80 were obtained, indicating excellent reliability for all the questionnaires administered. The one-factor test, proposed by Harman, was applied to detect possible biases derived from common methods. Applying exploratory factor analysis (EFA), limited to the extraction of a single factor, obtaining variance values below 50% for a single factor. The result suggests that, despite the possible presence of common method bias in the evaluated information, this does not pose a major problem.

Table 1. Results of the reliability of the variables

Variable	items	α
Organizational change leadership	6	0.726
Organizational climate	6	0.705
Strategic performance	9	0.800
4. Results The results obtained from the research have provided	significant information, both from	a descriptive and inferential

Perspective, which has facilitated the fulfillment of the established objective and the validation of the proposed hypotheses. These findings will be detailed and discussed in the following sections.

Results of Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the results corresponding to the average of the variables, as well as the standard deviation of the sample characterization variables, in addition to the latent ones. It is observed that the values obtained are adequate for all the variables analyzed.

Table 2. Descriptive results

Variable	M	SD
Gender	1.48	0.475
Age	23.66	8.301
Education	1.13	0.315
Work experience	9.45	8.243
Organizational change leadership	1.82	0.465
Organizational climate	1.63	0.691
Strategic performance	1.52	0.544

Measurement Model Analysis Results

The CFA was used to measure the independence indicators that the variables have (Hair et al., 2014). The model fit indicators yielded the following results: $\chi^2 = 442,569$; $df = 171$; $p = 0,000$; $\chi^2/df = 2,588$; $GFI = 0,927$; $AGFI = 0,901$; $NFI = 0,923$; $TLI = 0,940$; $IFI = 0,951$; the values for $CFI = 0,951$; for $RMSEA = 0,054$; as well as for $SRMR = 0,0393$. These values indicate that the model presents an acceptable fit. Table 3

shows the composite reliability (CR) results for the main variables, which exceed the threshold of 0.7, with ranges between 0.925 and 0.948, indicating exceptional composite reliability. The evaluation of convergent validity was carried out through the average variance extracted (AVE), obtaining values greater than 0.5, with a minimum of 0.410 and a maximum of 0.573, suggesting adequate indicators of convergent validity. Likewise, it was identified that the values located on the main diagonal of the three latent variables are higher than those located outside of it, which indicates that each variable explains its own items to a greater extent than those of the others. This demonstrates that the model has discriminant validity, as well as convergent validity within acceptable parameters.

Table 3. Model evaluation in terms of validity and reliability

Latent variables	CR	AVE	1	2	3
Organizational change leadership	0.830	0.540	0.735		
Organizational climate	0.925	0.410	0.369**	0.721	
Strategic performance	0.948	0.573	0.296**	0.484**	0.827

Structural Model

A comparison was made between four models, including a three-factor model, two two-factor models and a one-factor model, as the results are shown in Table 4. In the results of the three-factor integrated model, which included the variables of organizational change leadership, organizational climate and strategic performance, highly acceptable fit indices were obtained: $\chi^2 = 207,31$, $df = 158$, with $p < 0,01$; RMSEA = 0,033; SRMR = 0,012; CFI = 0,841; and TLI = 0,830. These results confirm an adequate fit of the proposed model (Hair et al., 2014). Regarding the models consisting of two factors, organizational change leadership and organizational climate were grouped into one factor, while performance was considered a secondary factor. In another approach, organizational change leadership remained as an independent factor, while culture and strategic performance were combined into a single factor. The one-factor model, on the other hand, integrated the three variables into a single construct. Although the results of the two-factor and one-factor models present relevant indicators, their performance is inferior to that obtained with the three-factor model.

Table 4. Most relevant indices of the degree of fit of the model

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Three-factor model (OCL-OC-SP)	207.31	158	0.033	0.841	0.830	0.012
Two-factor model (OCL+OC-SP)	348.63	171	0.045	0.942	0.936	0.025
Two-factor model (OCL-OC+SP)	351.03	173	0.053	0.928	0.921	0.032
One-factor model	361.194	184	0.058	0.913	0.910	0.035

Note: OCL=Organizational change leadership; OC=Organizational climate; SP=Strategic performance.

The structural model supported the proposed hypotheses, confirming the significance for hypothesis H1, hypothesis H2 and hypothesis H3. Results showed that organizational change leadership significantly impacts strategic performance. It was also shown

that the relationship between organizational change leadership and organizational climate was positive and also significant. Additionally, organizational climate was shown to positively influence strategic performance. Standardized effects indicated that organizational change leadership affects organizational climate ($\beta=0.603$, $SE=0.145$, $p<0.01$). In terms of strategic performance, organizational change leadership had an impact of $\beta=0.273$, $SE=0.138$, $p<0.01$, while organizational climate's influence was $\beta=0.433$, $SE=0.071$, $p<0.01$. These results are visually presented in Fig. 2.

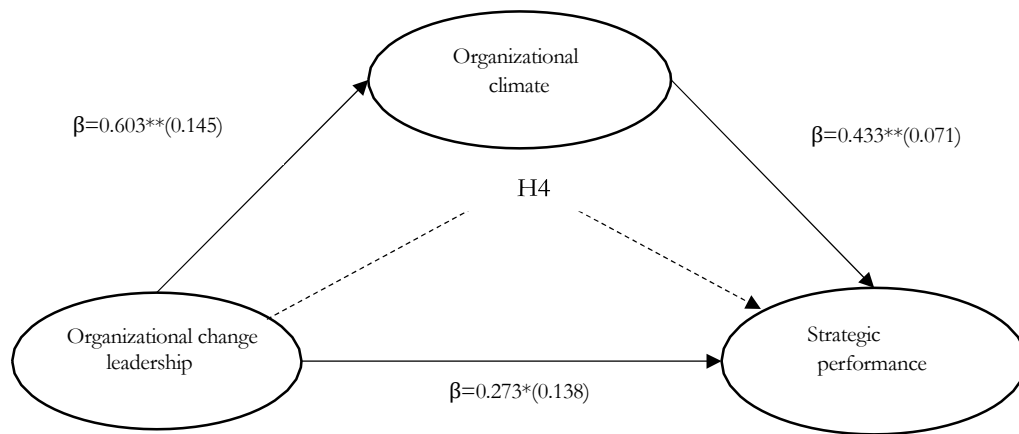


Figure 2. Hypothesis testing through the structural model

Mediating Effect Exerted by Organizational Climate

The analysis of total, direct, and indirect effects was conducted through the Bootstrap technique. Key results are presented in Table 5. A significant direct effect of organizational change leadership on strategic performance was identified. A significant indirect effect of organizational change leadership on strategic performance mediated by organizational climate was also found, indicating that organizational change leadership impacts both organizational climate and, indirectly, strategic performance. This confirms a partial mediation of organizational climate between organizational change leadership and strategic performance, thus validating hypothesis H4.

Table 5. Measuring the mediation of organizational climate using the Bootstrap method

Effects	Route	β	p	Lower	Higher	Supported
Total (without mediator)	OCL $\rightarrow$ SP	0.195	***	0.092	0.298	
Direct effect (with mediator)	OCL $\rightarrow$ SP	0.097	**	0.001	0.193	
Indirect effect of OC	OCL $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.093	***	0.048	0.157	Yes

Note: ***= $p < 0.01$, **= $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained underscore the strategic importance of organizational change leadership for achieving superior strategic performance. In this sense, the development and implementation of effective strategies that facilitate proper organizational change leadership within organizations is crucial. This approach favors the adoption of innovation processes, the integration of new organizational structures, and the incorporation of advanced technologies. In a dynamic and constantly changing global environment, organizations must proactively adapt to these changes to maintain their competitiveness and relevance. As Sujová and Simanová (2021) pointed out, organizations that implement change processes achieve superior strategic performance. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that organizational change leadership had a positive impact on the organization's culture, allowing the change processes to not only consolidate the existing culture but also transform it, adjusting it to the contexts in which the organizations operate. The findings coincide with those determined by Castiglione and Lavoie-Tremblay (2021), who identified elements of organizational climate that can act as facilitators or barriers to successfully implementing large-scale organizational changes.

Empirically, it has been confirmed that the culture of service organizations has a positive impact when compared to the performance of these organizations. Strong cultures tend to generate better results compared to weak ones, while service-oriented cultures promote higher levels of performance toward external customers. These findings support those reported by Abdullahi et al. (2021), who showed that, in the context of university teaching, organizational climate positively influences performance within higher education institutions. Organizations turn to management theories that are operationalized through strategies designed to generate value and ensure long-term sustainability, objectives that can only be achieved with efficient strategic

performance. This study has shown that organizational change leadership, mediated by organizational climate, positively impacts strategic performance, highlighting the importance of implementing well-structured change processes as a key strategy for improving business results. Furthermore, the mediating role of organizational climate in change processes is highlighted, a function supported by research such as that of Kaur Bagga et al. (2023). These authors identified that the culture of an organization acts as a partial mediator in relating transformational leadership and organizational change leadership, especially in virtual teams, strengthening the interactions between these variables and promoting superior strategic performance.

It was found when reviewing previous studies that there is a limited number of studies on the mediation of culture at the organizational level when relating organizational change leadership to performance in organizations. However, the results of this study demonstrate a partial and significant mediation, underscoring the strategic importance of organizational climate. This finding suggests that culture not only interacts with other organizational variables but also facilitates efficient organizational change leadership. This approach is essential for organizations to align with environmental demands and adapt to the changes inherent in their context, improving their performance in a competitive and dynamic environment. The findings of this research reinforce the relevance of organizational change leadership theory, highlighting the need to implement strategic steps to facilitate organizational change. Factors such as resistance to change, communication processes, and effective leadership are essential to ensuring the success of change efforts. Well-executed organizational change leadership not only prevents resource waste but also ensures organizational competitiveness in a dynamic environment. Furthermore, the results support the resources and capabilities theory, which emphasizes that internal capabilities such as organizational climate and management skills are fundamental to achieving sustainability and strategic performance. These capabilities allow organizations not only to adapt to environmental challenges but also to transform them into opportunities for strategic growth and development.

The results of this research contribute significantly to an underexplored area: that is, that organizational climate partially mediates when relating organizational change leadership to performance at the organizational level. It is evident that organizational climate is not only relevant but also a key factor in achieving optimal results in organizations. This finding underscores that a strong culture, aligned with strategic objectives, can enhance the effectiveness of change processes, reducing resistance and maximizing their impact on strategic performance. Furthermore, the research expands the existing literature on organizational change leadership by exploring its links with key variables such as antecedents, consequences, and mediating or moderating roles. Thus, it responds to the call of scholars who have called for a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between organizational change leadership and other organizational variables (Mouazen et al., 2024; Rahaman et al., 2021).

This study demonstrated the existence of a positive and significant relationship between the variables included in the research, validating previous findings and thus enriching the body of knowledge on the subject. The results highlight the key role of organizational change leadership as a strategic component of business management, influencing both the transformation of organizational climate and the improvement of performance at the organizational level. These findings reinforce the need for organizations to implement structured organizational change leadership processes as part of their key strategies, ensuring sustainable benefits in competitiveness and operational effectiveness. Furthermore, they underscore the importance of organizational climate as an essential lever for business sustainability, particularly in contexts of uncertainty and the need for constant innovation. The surveys were administered to managers of organizations in the service sector, who, due to their comprehensive knowledge of organizations, have a deep understanding of the variables studied. The data obtained were analyzed using Bootstrap procedures, which allowed the strengthening of the validity of the proposed theoretical model. The results revealed that organizational change leadership has a significant impact on improving organizational results, benefiting both internal and external customers, as well as other stakeholders. It is concluded that the implementation of well-defined change processes favors the transformation of organizational climate, which, in turn, optimizes business performance. These findings provide a solid basis for decision makers in the implementation of policies, as well as the execution of actions aimed at the continuous improvement of change processes, allowing organizations to adopt efficient technologies and structures to face the current environment, characterized by uncertainty and constant innovation.

The research has several limitations, these should be considered when implementing other research in the future. The first would be that a cross-sectional design was used at the time of data collection, which prevents observing how the relationships between variables evolve over time. Although no significant differences were

found across age groups, discrepancies were observed in perceptions between men and women regarding organizational change leadership. This suggests the need for more specific studies focused on gender analysis. Furthermore, a longitudinal study could provide a more complete view of the behavior of relationships over time, allowing for greater generalization of the results. Second, the model was tested only on the perceptions of service company managers, which limits the applicability of the results to other hierarchical levels or sectors. Therefore, it would be valuable to include workers at different levels in future research and strengthen the design with more items measuring their perceptions. A third limitation is that the data were collected through self-reported analysis, which could benefit from more in-depth methods such as interviews or focus groups to better understand the constructs. Finally, because the participants were service company managers, common method bias may have been introduced, despite efforts to mitigate this limitation through randomized item design and response anonymity. Furthermore, the lack of a "don't know the answer" option in the surveys may have affected the completeness rate.

CONCLUSIONS

This research examines the effect of organizational change leadership on strategic performance, a relationship that was mediated by organizational climate, in Jordanian organizations in the service sector. Results were found that confirm that organizational change leadership is crucial in achieving strategic performance, providing empirical evidence to support this relationship. This study constitutes a pioneering contribution as it is the first to integrate these three variables in the business context, thus addressing a certain gap in the literature on organizational management. The analysis takes on special relevance in the post-pandemic scenario, characterized by high technological levels, which allow information and communication processes to be more agile, as well as by the need for organizations to adapt to highly volatile and competitive environments. Organizational change leadership has been shown to exert a significant influence on organizational climate, highlighting its fundamental role in strengthening or transforming this key dimension within organizations. Similarly, the study confirms that the culture of the organization has a positive impact on the performance of organizations, aligning with the findings of previous research. It is especially important to highlight the mediating role that an organization's culture plays when relating organizational change leadership to the performance achieved by organizations. This finding underlines the importance of culture as a key component in the implementation of change strategies aimed at improving performance at the company level in various economic sectors.

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