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The Effect of Organizational Change in Universities on the Academician's Job Performance in Palestine: Quality Assurance as Mediator and Job Satisfaction and Adaptive Ability as a Moderator

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Abstract

The study aims to identify the extent to which the Organizational Change In universities affects the Academician's Job Performance in Palestine, which includes the University Management Functions Change, The Human Element Change, Academic Change, Physical Change, Technical and Professional Change, and Mental Health Change. This study also examines the mediating role of Quality Assurance, as well as a moderator variable of Job Satisfaction and Adaptive Ability. It is anticipated that Organizational Change across its various dimensions will positively influence Academic's Job Performance, with varying effect of the mediating and moderating variables in order for Academic's Job Performance in Palestinian universities to ensure continuous good performance that keeps pace with the requirements of modern technological and scientific development. which underscores the importance of supporting investment in continuous professional development and mental health resources for academics at Palestinian universities, given the significance of maintaining the quality of education and the sustainability of these institutions amidst ongoing environmental challenges.

Keywords: Academician's Job Performance, Organizational Change , Quality Assurance, Job Satisfaction, Adaptive Ability

Introduction

Palestine's education system provides opportunities for comprehensive learning and development for students at all educational levels, from basic to higher education. However, many complex political, economic and social conditions and challenges, such as lack of educational resources and infrastructure, and the impact of the blockade and restrictions on the movement of students and teachers due to the conditions of Israeli occupation, all of which affect various aspects of the educational process.

Despite these challenges, education in Palestine is characterised by a strong will on the part of students, teachers and educational institutions to improve the educational situation. The Palestinian Government, NGOs and the community are working to enhance the quality of education and provide better educational opportunities for all (Daraghmeh, 2023). Efforts in education in Palestine include improving curricula, developing teachers' skills, providing the necessary educational resources, expanding access to higher and technical education and promoting cultural and educational development (Abu Atta, 2023).

Education in Palestine is an essential tool for youth empowerment and community development. Quality education contributes to building students' capacities and qualifying them to meet future challenges and achieve socioeconomic development in Palestine. Education in Palestine is also developed in terms of basic ingredients (Al-Najjar, 2022.)

At the university level, higher education in Palestine is undergoing various stages of growth and development. After entering the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, many universities were established and numerous specialisations were developed in other universities. Nevertheless, Palestinian universities encounter significant difficulties and problems (Masharqa, 2021). These challenges include: widespread administrative and high bureaucracy and centralised decision-making, weak use of teamwork techniques, weak roles, powers and responsibilities, weak institutional work, low level of authority, lack of attention to human resources development and poor trust for workers, fear of accountability and recurrence in the exercise of powers vested in them by fear of responsibility, and lack of focus on total quality management personnel (Isaac et al., 2019).

Moreover, staff prioritises the obligation to perform their duties solely in accordance with regulations. However, reduced work performance is often attributed to several factors: the level of collaboration between colleagues, poor internal management practices, unclear plans and policies, weak outcomes from ongoing monitoring, and the need to improve performance through the adoption of modern management models and Organizational Change, all of which confirm that reduced work performance is mainly due to the delivery of work in traditional ways. These issues also confirm that traditional work methods contribute significantly to decreased efficiency (AbdelKarim, 2013).

The main objective of the Organizational Change is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the university and enhance its ability to achieve its academic and research objectives. This will be accomplished by reorganising academic programmes, colleges, and departments to promote cooperation and interaction between different departments. Organizational Change aims to enhance academic quality and diversity and to foster communication and collaboration among faculty, students, and administrators in ways that are more productive and compatible with contemporary requirements. A shared educational and research environment encourages interaction while fostering learning and innovation (Al-Habishi, Ali, 2022).

Organizational Change in universities can be a long-term initiative that takes time and great effort to achieve successfully. Its success depends on good planning and strong collaboration among all stakeholders, including faculty, management, students and society. Modernising the university's structure focuses on promoting scientific research and innovation. Support

and resources are provided to researchers and enhanced research cooperation and development of specialised research centers (Al-Faraj, 2021).

The modernisation of the university structure includes the development of information technology infrastructure and the provision of modern technical capabilities and tools, the promotion of e-learning and distance education and the improvement of the experience of students and academic members. The modernisation of the university structure requires strong financial sustainability, while funding and budget systems are assessed and improved to enhance efficiency and financial balance (Al Hayek, 2021). It is a process that requires careful planning and broad cooperation among the concerned members. The process should include listening to the insights and views of academic and administrative members, students and the community, and ensuring transparency and effective communication at all stages of the process (AbdelKarim, 2013).

On the other hand**,** universities are educational institutions that rely heavily on academic staff to achieve their core objectives. This makes academic staff key players in realising these institutional goals. Therefore, it is essential to comprehensively and practically address their well-being and concerns, as this contributes to enhancing their academic performance, which in turn supports the achievement of institutional objectives—primarily the production and dissemination of knowledge and excellence amid constant and multifaceted change. (Okolocha, et al., 2021).

Arab universities face numerous challenges, including the technical gap in different fields that separates them from organizations in the developed world, as well as intense competition across all areas. The concept of quality and excellence has become the only acceptable level of performance in the era of competitiveness, globalisation and knowledge, the rule of the human mind and the control of the power of science and human thought (Al-Dosari, 2022). Quality and excellence is the way for institutions to survive and sustain in today's world so that higher education institutions can compete efficiently in their markets to ensure the satisfaction of its internal and external clients. A strong internal culture that values the organization's clients can help improve staff motivation, foster loyalty, achieve high performance and drive innovation, all of which contribute to gaining institutional competitive advantage (Masharqa, 2021).

Organizational Change can contribute to improving the quality of education by modernising curricula, developing teaching methods and providing modern educational resources. In addition, it emphasises the development of practical skills and critical thinking to enhance the quality of education and prepare students to meet the challenges of society and the labour market. Moreover, if supports the integration of technology into the educational process. Furthermore, Organizational Change seeks to promote equal educational opportunities and access to quality education for all students regardless of their social and economic backgrounds.

Therefore, the process of reforming universities' administrative apparatus, evaluating their services, and developing their activities have become urgent priorities and essential duties for ensuring its effectiveness and stability. This strategic direction contributes to the promotion of institutions' overall development. This includes reviewing the universities'

structure and identifying the units, departments, colleges and centers in which they operate and review and update administrative and academic processes in line with modern practices and international standards. This includes improved registration, evaluation, teaching, scientific research and internal and external communication.

In the same vein, these steps contribute significantly to increasing Academician's Job Performance, which is linked to improving performance through enhancing the role of effective leadership and strong management in bringing about changes and effectively managing the organization. This could include improving strategic guidance and decision-making, developing leaders' and managers' skills, as well as enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems, financial reporting, and providing comprehensive information to students, faculty and society, requiring training and development opportunities for faculty and administrative staff and enhancing skills and competencies. This also includes the development of recruitment, compensation and evaluation systems to ensure attraction and retention of high competencies.

Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine the relationship between Organizational Change (OC) and Academician's Job Performance (AJP) of universities in Palestine. It is summarised as follows:

To examine the relationship between Organizational Change (OC) (The University Management Functions Change, The Human Element Change, Academic Change, Physical Change, Technical and Professional Change, Mental Health Change) and the Academician's Job Performance (AJP) in Palestinian universities.

To examine the relationship between Organizational Change (OC) (The University Management Functions Change, The Human Element Change, Academic Change, Physical Change, Technical and Professional Change, Mental Health Change) and Quality Assurance in Palestinian universities.

To examine the relationship between Quality Assurance and the Academician's Job Performance (AJP) in Palestinian universities.

To examine whether Quality Assurance mediates the relationship between Organizational Change (OC) (The University Management Functions Change, The Human Element Change, Academic Change, Physical Change, Technical and Professional Change, Mental Health Change) and Academician's Job Performance (AJP) in Palestinian universities.

To examine whether Job Satisfaction moderates the relationship between Quality Assurance and Academician's Job Performance (AJP) in Palestinian universities.

To examine whether Adaptive Ability moderates the relationship between Quality Assurance and Academician's Job Performance (AJP) in Palestinian universities.

Research Literature

In recent years, Palestinian higher education institutions have operated within an increasingly volatile socio-political and structural landscape, leading to significant disruptions in academic productivity, instructional continuity, and institutional quality. Empirical literature highlights a notable strain on academic performance across Palestinian universities. According to Abusamra (2023), persistent structural constraints, administrative governance deficits, and severe funding shortages have eroded institutional climate, leading to heightened faculty fatigue, reduced motivation, and declining academic productivity. This internal crisis has been

further aggravated by unprecedented external shocks; reports by UNESCO (2024) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2024) document how widespread infrastructure damage, financial paralysis, and the displacement of academics have severely compromised institutional capacity, leading to the suspension of research initiatives and widespread academic burnout.

In addition to environmental disruptions, rapid structural and technological transformations have exposed critical gaps in quality assurance mechanisms and adaptive readiness among faculty members. An empirical study by Jabali et al. (2024) revealed that despite positive faculty attitudes toward emerging educational technologies and pedagogical trends, significant structural barriers—such as inadequate institutional training, resource deficits, and weak technological infrastructure—severely hinder academic performance and institutional adaptability. Similarly, a nationwide assessment by the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN, 2023) underscored that many Palestinian universities struggle with outdated Quality Assurance (QA) frameworks that lack sufficient administrative autonomy and standardised performance metrics. Consequently, the inability of institutional quality frameworks to cushion the impact of organizational change has resulted in fluctuating academic output, highlighting an urgent need to examine how internal institutional mechanisms and personal adaptive factors can restore academic job performance in Palestine.

Numerous studies have explored the dimensions of change, digital transformation, and the pivotal roles of academic and leadership staff in higher education institutions—particularly within environments undergoing structural reforms or impacted by conflict and instability. In this context, Habib (2023) explored the potential of digital transformation strategies as a mechanism to revitalise and reform higher education systems in war-affected societies, taking Syrian universities as a case study. Utilising a mixed-methods approach combining literature review, semi-structured expert interviews, and case study analysis, the author presented a comprehensive framework centered on five key pillars: developing digital infrastructure, building educator capacity, expanding e-learning platforms, providing digital content, and fostering public-private partnerships. The study confirmed that digital tools and blended learning effectively bridge educational access gaps caused by infrastructure destruction and the displacement of students and faculty, emphasising the necessity of a clear vision and sustainable funding for successful implementation.

In a related context focused on the human and psychological factors associated with academic change initiatives, Motuma and Chekole (2020) conducted a quantitative study in Ethiopian public universities to examine the impact of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on faculty attitudes toward educational reforms. Analysing a sample of 200 academics through regression and correlation analyses, the findings revealed that overall employee attitudes toward change initiatives are positively and significantly influenced by their level of job satisfaction, whereas organizational commitment showed no statistically significant effect. The study concluded that neglecting subjective personal factors and negative employee attitudes during implementation is a primary cause of reform failure, highlighting the need to enhance job satisfaction to mitigate resistance to change.

Taking a deep qualitative perspective, Akkad and Henderson (2021) focused on academics' subjective experiences through a small-scale exploratory study involving in-depth interviews with five higher education teachers in Syria who remained academically active throughout the conflict. The study sought to understand how these educators perceived their role as "change agents" in post-conflict reconstruction. Findings indicated that faculty members act as vital agents of change capable of fostering social cohesion and rebuilding national identity due to their direct engagement with students. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that their motivation to persevere was driven by a sense of national duty and moral obligation toward students despite severe declines in university rankings and harsh economic conditions. The authors recommended that institutions facilitate teachers' roles and offer structural support rather than imposing obstructive bureaucratic constraints.

Returning to the organizational and institutional context, Gebretsadik (2022) examined the role of middle and lower-level academic leaders (such as department heads and faculty deans) in enhancing change readiness among academic staff in Ethiopian public universities. Relying on a quantitative methodology with a stratified random sample of 180 academic staff members, descriptive findings indicated that overall institutional readiness for change was low and accompanied by faculty resistance. However, simple linear regression analysis demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship between change leadership and dimensions of change readiness. Specifically, change leadership correlated positively with the perception of institutional gaps, leadership support, perceived benefits of change, individual self-efficacy, and the appropriateness of the change efforts to the organization's nature. The study recommended that university leadership actively improve faculty perceptions of change by offering psychological support, financial incentives, and continuous professional development.

When comparing these foundational studies with the current research, several clear points of convergence and divergence emerge that highlight the unique contribution of this study. On one hand, the reviewed literature strongly aligns with the theoretical constructs of the proposed model. Specifically, the emphasis of Motuma and Chekole (2020) on job satisfaction as a key determinant of employee attitudes directly supports the integration of Job Satisfaction as a vital moderating variable that shapes academic responses to structural reforms. Similarly, the qualitative insights of Akkad and Henderson (2021) regarding the resilience, professional agency, and personal endurance of faculty members under challenging institutional conditions closely parallel the concept of Adaptive Ability as a moderating factor. Furthermore, the findings of Gebretsadik (2022) concerning the critical role of organizational leadership and systemic readiness validate the focus on institutional mechanisms such as Quality Assurance as essential intervening processes that channel organizational change toward performance outcomes.

On the other hand, the present study distinctively departs from the existing literature in terms of its structural complexity, empirical context, and outcome focus. While previous works primarily examined isolated dual relationships—such as the effect of leadership on change readiness or satisfaction on reform attitudes—this study establishes a comprehensive moderated mediation model that simultaneously tests Quality Assurance as a mediator alongside Job Satisfaction and Adaptive Ability as dual moderators. Geographically and contextually, while prior research focused on post-conflict Syria or public institutions in

Ethiopia, this study provides a novel empirical investigation specifically tailored to the unique socio-political and institutional environment of higher education in Palestine. Finally, unlike studies that treat change readiness or general attitudes as final endpoints, this research directly targets Academician's Job Performance (AJP) as its primary dependent variable, thereby establishing a direct link between macro-level organizational transformations and tangible academic productivity.

Theories related to the Study

This study is grounded in a set of administrative and behavioural theories that explain the relationship between Organizational Change and Academics' Job Performance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of Quality Assurance and the moderating effects of Job Satisfaction and Adaptive Ability. The main theories underpinning this research are Change Theory**,** Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory.

Change Theory provides a conceptual framework that explains how organizational change occurs within institutions and the factors that contribute to its success or failure. The theory emphasizes the dynamic processes that organizations undergo when adopting new policies or strategies aimed at improving efficiency and overall performance (Burnes, 2017). In the context of universities, Change Theory helps to understand how academics respond to administrative and academic transformations, such as the implementation of quality assurance systems or the restructuring of academic programmes (Cameron & Green, 2019). According to Kurt Lewin (1947), organizational change consists of three main stages: Unfreezing, Changing, and Refreezing, which together represent a process for achieving gradual and sustainable adaptation within an institution. Kotter's (1996) model, on the other hand, highlights the importance of leadership and effective communication in enhancing employees' acceptance of change and ensuring its continuity. From the perspective of Palestinian universities, applying these models is essential, given that higher education institutions are influenced by both internal and external factors such as accreditation requirements, funding challenges, and governmental policies. In this study, Change Theory is applied to explain the relationship between organizational change and academics' job performance, with quality assurance acting as a mediating variable that links organizational transformation to improvements in academic and administrative performance. Additionally, job satisfaction and adaptive ability function as moderating variables influencing the nature of this relationship. Academics who exhibit higher job satisfaction and greater adaptability tend to respond to organizational change more positively, which in turn enhances their job performance (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Vakola, 2014). Therefore, Change Theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how academics in Palestinian universities interact with organizational transformations. It underscores the importance of managing change strategically and in ways that consider human and behavioral dimensions to ensure sustainable outcomes at both the individual and institutional levels.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is one of the modern administrative theories that aims to achieve continuous improvement in institutional performance by focusing on quality across all organizational processes. This theory is based on the principle that quality is a collective responsibility shared by all employees within the institution, not merely by top management or control units (Deming, 1986). It also emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement**,** teamwork**,** effective leadership**,** and the satisfaction of both internal and

external stakeholders (Juran, 1992). In the context of higher education, TQM provides an integrated framework for implementing quality assurance systems within universities. Its primary goal is to improve academic and administrative performance while enhancing the satisfaction of both students and staff (Oakland, 2014). Research has shown that the application of TQM principles in universities contributes to improving faculty efficiency, creating a healthier work environment, and increasing the ability to adapt to organizational change (Sallis, 2014). From the perspective of this study, TQM Theory explains the mediating role of quality assurance systems in the relationship between organizational change and academics' job performance. When universities effectively apply TQM principles, change processes become more structured and sustainable, leading to enhanced individual and institutional performance. Moreover, a commitment to quality strengthens job satisfaction and promotes adaptive ability, fostering a positive organizational climate that supports continuous improvement and high performance (Goetsch & Davis, 2014). Therefore, the adoption of TQM in Palestinian universities can be considered a strategic mechanism for achieving integration between change management, quality assurance, and academic performance improvement, in alignment with accreditation requirements and the dynamic challenges of the educational environment.

Expectancy Theory: is a foundational framework in the study of motivation, explaining how individuals' expectations regarding the outcomes of their efforts influence the level of effort they apply in their work. Developed by Victor Vroom (1964), the theory suggests that employees make decisions about their behaviour based on their perceptions of the relationship between effort, performance, and subsequent rewards. This perspective highlights the cognitive processes involved in motivation, emphasising that employees are more likely to exert higher levels of effort when they anticipate that their actions will lead to desirable outcomes. The theory is structured around three central components. Expectancy refers to the individual's belief that increasing effort will lead to improved performance. In other words, employees assess whether their efforts are likely to produce successful results in their tasks. Instrumentality reflects the belief that successful performance will be rewarded with desirable outcomes, such as recognition, promotion, or financial incentives. Finally, valence represents the value or importance that an individual places on these rewards, which determines the level of motivation to engage in a particular behaviour (Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968). By linking effort, performance, and reward, Expectancy Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how motivation operates in organizational settings, including higher education institutions, where faculty members' engagement and performance are influenced by their expectations of professional and institutional outcomes. In the context of Palestinian universities, Expectancy Theory can be applied to understand how organizational change affects academics' job performance through both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When academics perceive those organizational changes will lead to improvements in their work environment, increased promotion opportunities, or enhanced academic quality systems, their motivation to perform tends to rise significantly. Conversely, when there is a lack of trust in the effectiveness of change or in the fairness of rewards, this may lead to reduced job satisfaction and lower performance levels (Isaac et al., 2001). Accordingly, job satisfaction and adaptive ability can be interpreted within the framework of Expectancy Theory. Job satisfaction functions as a factor that enhances the valence of outcomes, while adaptive ability represents a variable influencing expectancy, by improving academics' capacity to cope with change requirements and achieve high performance. Thus, the theory

helps explain how organizational change is linked to job performance levels through mechanisms of motivation and individual perception. Understanding academics' job performance within Palestinian higher education requires a comprehensive approach that bridges macro-institutional transformations, structural quality mechanisms, and individual psychological characteristics. The integration of Lewin's Change Theory, Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory provides the conceptual depth necessary to explain how structural upheavals filter through organizational systems to influence individual academic behaviour (Burnes, 2020; Sallis, 2014; Vroom, 1964). Organizational change in volatile environments is a multi-layered process rather than a uniform event. Applying Lewin's Change Theory clarifies how continuous external disruptions compel higher education institutions to unfreeze traditional practices, undergo structural adaptation, and stabilize new operational modes across six distinct dimensions (Burnes, 2020). First, University Management Functions Change involves shifts in governance models, administrative decision-making, and strategic resource allocation needed to maintain operational viability under crisis. Second, Physical Change encompasses structural adjustments, facility restoration, and infrastructure realignments required to sustain instructional continuity despite physical disruptions. Third, Technical and Professional Change focuses on the adoption of modern educational technologies, digital platforms, and updated pedagogical skills essential for contemporary academic delivery. Fourth, Academic Change addresses modifications to curricula, degree requirements, research priorities, and instructional methodologies in response to shifting societal and market needs. Fifth, The Human Element Change reflects transformations in staff composition, institutional roles, communication channels, and administrative support structures. Finally, Mental Health Change entails shifts in the psychological climate, institutional support systems, and wellness measures designed to mitigate severe faculty fatigue and stress. Together, these six dimensions capture the complete scope of institutional restructuring. Change Theory posits that unless transformations across these structural, technical, and human domains are synchronised, institutional stability remains compromised.

While institutional changes create the necessary conditions for adaptation, they do not automatically yield enhanced performance without effective standardisation. Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory explains the vital function of Quality Assurance as an internal structural bridge (Sallis, 2014). TQM emphasises continuous process improvement, operational consistency, and systematic evaluation. In higher education, quality assurance mechanisms serve to absorb, translate, and standardise the shifts occurring across administrative, physical, technical, and human dimensions. Without autonomous and robust quality frameworks, top-down structural changes risk generating administrative ambiguity and operational friction. Quality Assurance converts raw organizational adjustments into structured academic standards, providing faculty members with clear expectations and institutional stability (Sallis, 2014). At the individual level, the degree to which institutional changes and quality frameworks translate into actual Academician's Job Performance depends heavily on psychological readiness. Vroom's Expectancy Theory provides the cognitive foundation for understanding faculty motivation through three core concepts: *Expectancy* (the belief that personal effort leads to effective performance), *Instrumentality* (the belief that performance leads to institutional stability or recognition), and *Valence* (the value assigned to those outcomes) (Vroom, 1964). In this context, Adaptive Ability acts as a crucial cognitive catalyst. Academics with high adaptive capacity possess the psychological

resilience, technical self-efficacy, and flexibility needed to navigate complex organizational shifts, thereby strengthening their Expectancy beliefs under pressure. Simultaneously, Job Satisfaction shapes the Instrumentality and Valence dimensions. When faculty members experience job satisfaction—stemming from psychological safety, institutional support, and meaningful work—their intrinsic motivation is preserved.

Ultimately, academic job performance in dynamic university environments is the cumulative result of alignment across all three levels. Structural changes across management, infrastructure, technology, academics, human resources, and mental health determine the operational landscape (Burnes, 2020). Quality assurance acts as the processing mechanism that converts these structural shifts into manageable operational standards (Sallis, 2014). Finally, individual factors—specifically adaptive ability and job satisfaction—determine whether academics possess the internal drive and psychological capability to fulfill those standards, ultimately dictating overall academic output and institutional quality (Vroom, 1964).

Factors Contributing to Academician's Job Performance

The current study proposes the impact of organizational change—(University Management Functions Change, The Human Element Change, Academic Change, Physical Change, Technical and Professional Change, Mental Health Change)—on the Academician's Job Performance, while also accounting for the influence of mediating and moderating variables, as follows:

University Management Functions Change

University management functions change refers to planned and systematic modifications in core managerial activities, including planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, in response to environmental, institutional, and strategic demands. Change management theory suggests that effective adjustments in managerial practices enhance organizational effectiveness by improving coordination, communication, and employee motivation. In higher education institutions, such managerial changes are particularly important because they shape the institutional environment in which academic staff operate.

Systems theory views universities as open systems in which changes in management functions influence organizational outcomes through interconnected processes. When university management adopts adaptive planning approaches, participatory leadership styles, and effective monitoring mechanisms, academicians experience clearer institutional goals, improved access to resources, and greater involvement in decision-making. These managerial improvements create a supportive academic environment that enhances motivation and reduces role ambiguity among faculty members.

Archibong and Ibrahim (2021) found that effective change management practices significantly improve staff performance in university settings. Similarly, Shuaibu and Daniel (2023) reported that adaptive management functions positively influence employees' performance in private universities. Collectively, these findings indicate that changes in university management functions directly affect academicians by improving their working conditions, supporting their academic roles, and enabling them to perform more effectively in teaching, research, and community service activities.

The Human Element Change

Human element change refers to planned and systematic modifications related to academicians' skills, competencies, attitudes, motivation, and readiness for change within universities. According to human capital theory, employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities constitute strategic resources that significantly influence organizational performance. In higher education institutions, academicians represent the core human capital; therefore, any positive change in the human element is expected to directly affect their job performance. Organizational initiatives that focus on the human element—such as training and professional development, empowerment, participation in decision-making, and motivational practices—enhance academicians' commitment and psychological readiness for change. When academicians perceive institutional support for their professional growth and well-being, they are more likely to respond positively to organizational initiatives, resulting in improved instructional effectiveness, higher research productivity, and stronger engagement in academic and administrative activities.

Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2018) demonstrated that human resource–related change practices, including employee involvement and leadership support, significantly enhance job performance in universities. Similarly, Obeidat et al. (2019) found that human capital development and change-oriented human resource practices positively influence employee performance. These findings indicate that changes in the human element directly affect academicians by strengthening their capabilities, motivation, and engagement, which ultimately enhances their overall job performance.

Academic Change

Academic change refers to planned and systematic modifications in core academic aspects within universities, including curricula, teaching methods, assessment systems, research requirements, academic policies, and the integration of educational technologies. Organizational change theory suggests that changes affecting core academic activities have a direct impact on job performance, as they shape how academic work is designed, delivered, and evaluated. In higher education institutions, academic change is particularly significant because it directly influences the professional roles and responsibilities of academicians. Academic change aimed at improving teaching and learning processes enhances academicians' instructional effectiveness and professional competence. Curriculum reform, adoption of innovative teaching strategies, and the integration of digital technologies require academicians to update their knowledge and skills, which can improve teaching quality and student learning outcomes. In addition, changes in research policies and evaluation criteria may motivate academicians to increase research productivity and strengthen their academic engagement.

Fullan (2016) emphasised that successful academic change in higher education institutions leads to improved teaching practices and professional performance among academic staff. Similarly, Kezar and Holcombe (2017) found that well-managed academic reforms positively influence faculty engagement and performance. Overall, these findings indicate that academic change directly affects academicians by enhancing their teaching effectiveness, supporting their research activities, and enabling them to perform their academic roles more effectively.

Physical Change

Physical change refers to planned and systematic modifications in the physical and infrastructural environment of universities, including classrooms, laboratories, offices, libraries, and technological facilities that support academic work. Organizational environment theory emphasises that the physical work environment plays a critical role in shaping employees' behavior, motivation, and performance. In higher education institutions, physical change is particularly important because it directly affects the conditions under which academicians carry out their teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Improvements in the physical environment—such as well-equipped classrooms, modern laboratories, reliable technological infrastructure, and comfortable office spaces—enhance academicians' ability to perform their tasks efficiently. A supportive physical environment reduces work-related stress, improves concentration, and facilitates collaboration among academic staff, thereby contributing to higher levels of teaching effectiveness and research productivity.

Chandrasekar (2011) found that improvements in physical workplace conditions significantly enhance employee productivity and performance. Similarly, Earthman (2004) emphasised that adequate physical facilities in educational institutions are essential for improving teaching effectiveness and staff performance. These findings indicate that physical change directly affects academicians by creating a supportive work environment that enables them to perform their academic duties more effectively.

Technical and Professional Change

Technical and professional change refers to planned and systematic modifications related to the adoption of new technologies, digital systems, and continuous professional development practices within universities. This includes the integration of information and communication technologies, learning management systems, digital research tools, and professional training programmes aimed at enhancing academicians' technical and professional competencies. According to the Technology Acceptance Model and human capital theory, effective use of technology and continuous skill development are key drivers of employee performance in knowledge-intensive organizations such as universities.

Technical and professional change enhances academicians' ability to perform their academic duties more efficiently and effectively. The use of advanced educational technologies and research software improves teaching delivery, facilitates research activities, and supports academic collaboration. In addition, ongoing professional development programmes equip academicians with updated pedagogical and research skills, increasing their confidence, motivation, and capacity to meet evolving academic requirements.

Teo (2011) demonstrated that technology acceptance and perceived usefulness significantly influence academicians' instructional effectiveness and performance. Similarly, Alenezi, Karim, and Veloo (2010) found that professional development and technological competencies positively affect academic staff performance in educational institutions. Bond et al. (2020) also highlighted that the integration of digital technologies in higher education contributes to improved teaching practices and professional performance. Overall, these findings indicate that technical and professional change directly affects academicians by

enhancing their skills, efficiency, and effectiveness in performing teaching, research, and academic service roles.

Mental Health Change

Mental health change refers to planned initiatives and interventions aimed at improving the psychological well-being of academic staff, including stress management programmes, counselling services, work-life balance initiatives, and organizational support policies. Organizational psychology theory emphasises that employees' mental health is a crucial determinant of motivation, engagement, and overall performance. In higher education institutions, mental health improvements are particularly important because they directly influence academicians' ability to perform teaching, research, and administrative tasks effectively.

Mental health change fosters positive psychological states such as resilience, job satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation. When universities implement programmes that support mental health and reduce occupational stress, academicians are more likely to remain focused, motivated, and productive. These interventions help mitigate burnout, enhance professional commitment, and increase overall academic performance.

Stokes et al. (2021) reported that mental health support programmes in universities significantly improve faculty performance and engagement. Similarly, Salanova, Llorens, and Schaufeli (2010) found that employees' psychological well-being and mental health initiatives positively affect job performance and work outcomes. These findings suggest that mental health change directly benefits academicians by enhancing their focus, resilience, and effectiveness in teaching, research, and academic service roles.

Quality Assurance as a Mediator

Quality Assurance (QA) refers to systematic procedures and mechanisms implemented by universities to maintain and improve academic and administrative standards. This includes curriculum evaluation, teaching quality monitoring, accreditation compliance, and continuous institutional improvement initiatives. Academicians' Job Performance (AJP) represents the effectiveness and efficiency of faculty members in performing teaching, research, administrative tasks, and engagement in university development activities.

QA mechanisms provide clear standards, expectations, and feedback for staff, which enhance their performance. When QA processes are effectively implemented, academicians gain clarity on performance expectations, understand evaluation criteria, and are motivated to align their work with institutional standards. This leads to improvements in teaching quality, research productivity, and overall professional performance.

Harvey and Green (1993) highlighted that effective QA practices improve institutional outcomes by ensuring teaching and research meet established quality benchmarks. Fullan (2016) emphasised that robust QA frameworks contribute to increased staff accountability and performance excellence. In higher education contexts, the implementation of QA has been linked to enhanced engagement, motivation, and productivity among faculty members.

Job Satisfaction as a Moderator

Quality Assurance (QA) refers to structured processes and mechanisms designed to maintain and improve academic and administrative standards, ensure compliance with institutional and accreditation requirements, and promote continuous improvement. Job Satisfaction represents the degree to which academic staff feel fulfilled, motivated, and content with their job, including recognition, rewards, work environment, and overall organizational support. Academicians' Job Performance (AJP) denotes the effectiveness and efficiency of faculty members in teaching, research, administrative duties, and engagement in university development initiatives.

Job Satisfaction moderates how strongly QA influences AJP. Highly satisfied faculty members are more likely to engage fully with QA processes, implement recommendations effectively, and align their performance with institutional standards. Conversely, lower satisfaction may weaken the positive effects of QA on performance (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2011; Lu et al., 2005).

Lu et al. (2005) found that job satisfaction strengthens the relationship between organizational initiatives and employee performance in higher education. Similarly, Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2018) reported that satisfied staff are more receptive to QA initiatives, amplifying the positive impact of QA on performance. These findings indicate that Job Satisfaction enhances the effectiveness of QA in improving academicians' job performance.

Adaptive Ability as a Moderator

Quality Assurance (QA) involves structured processes and mechanisms that ensure academic and administrative standards are met, institutional goals are achieved, and continuous improvement is maintained. Adaptive Ability refers to the capacity of academic staff to adjust effectively to organizational changes, innovations, and new policies, including flexibility in teaching, research, and administrative practices. Academicians' Job Performance (AJP) represents the effectiveness and efficiency of faculty members in fulfilling teaching, research, administrative, and developmental responsibilities.

Adaptive Ability moderates the relationship between QA and AJP. Academicians with higher adaptive ability can more effectively implement QA guidelines, adopt new practices, and align their work with institutional standards, thereby strengthening the impact of QA on performance. Conversely, those with lower adaptive ability may struggle to apply QA procedures effectively, reducing the positive effect of QA on performance (Teece, 2007; Pulakos et al., 2000).

Pulakos et al. (2000) demonstrated that adaptive performance enhances the effectiveness of organizational interventions on employee outcomes. Similarly, Teece (2007) highlighted that adaptability in knowledge-intensive organizations, such as universities, amplifies the positive effects of institutional processes on individual performance. These findings indicate that Adaptive Ability strengthens the relationship between QA and academicians' job performance, enabling faculty members to translate quality standards into higher professional outcomes.

Research Gaps

Despite the extensive literature on organizational change and employee job performance, important gaps remain, particularly within the higher education sector in developing and conflict-affected contexts. Existing studies often conceptualise organizational change in a fragmented manner, focusing on isolated dimensions such as leadership, structure, or technology. Limited attention has been given to a comprehensive, multidimensional examination of organizational change that simultaneously incorporates managerial, human, academic, physical, technical, and mental health dimensions and their collective influence on academicians' job performance.

Moreover, most empirical studies have been conducted in stable educational environments, resulting in a contextual and geographical gap regarding universities operating under prolonged political, economic, and psychological pressures. Palestinian universities represent a distinctive higher education context characterised by restricted mobility, limited resources, and recurrent crises. However, empirical evidence examining organizational change and its consequences for academic performance within this setting remains scarce, limiting the generalisability of findings from other regions.

In addition, while quality assurance is widely recognized as a key mechanism for institutional improvement, its mediating role between organizational change and academicians' job performance has received insufficient empirical attention. Previous research frequently treats quality assurance as an independent or outcome variable, rather than as an intervening process through which organizational change is translated into improved individual performance.

Furthermore, although job satisfaction and adaptive ability have been linked to both organizational change and performance, their moderating roles within an integrated change–performance framework are underexplored, particularly in higher education institutions.
Finally, there is a theoretical gap in studies that integrate Change Theory, Total Quality Management, and Expectancy Theory within a single empirical model to explain direct, mediating, and moderating relationships. This study addresses these gaps by proposing and empirically testing a comprehensive model tailored to the Palestinian university context.

Conceptual Framework of the Present Study

Based on the review of the literature concerning the study variables on Organizational Change (OC), Academician's Job Performance (AJP), Quality Assurance, and Job Satisfaction, Adaptive Ability, a research framework is developed, and it is shown in Figure.

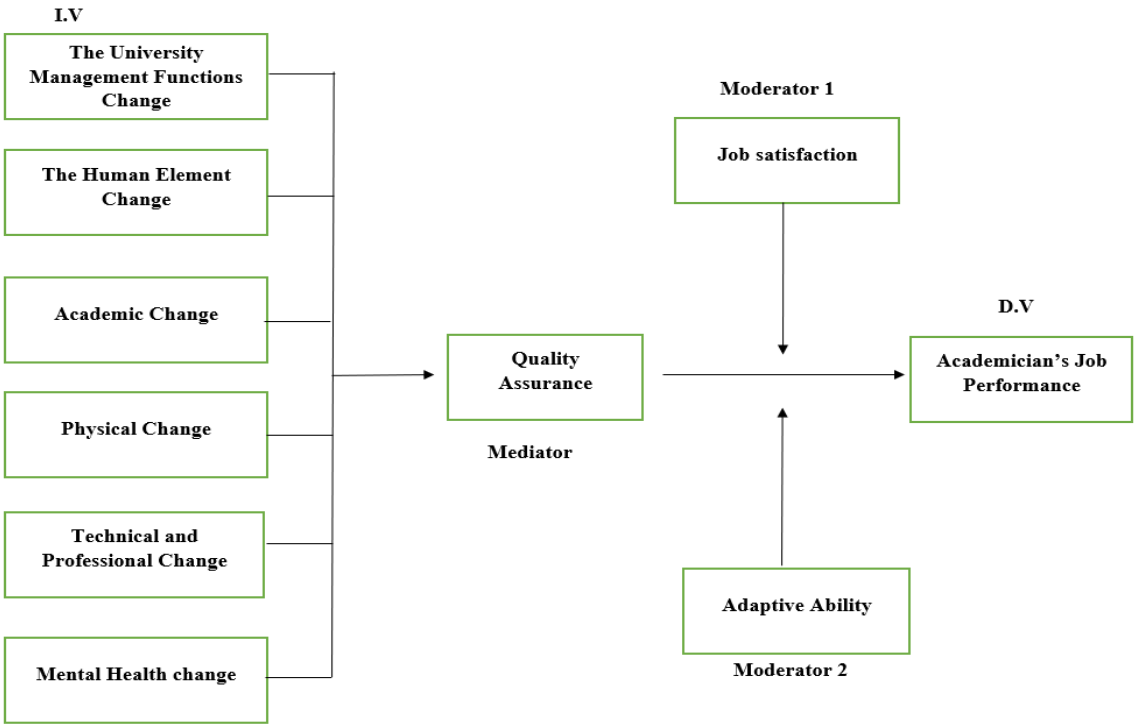

Figure 1: Research Framework

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive explanation of how organizational change—encompassing six key dimensions: university management functions, human element, academic aspects, physical infrastructure, technical and professional dimensions, and mental health support—affects the job performance of academics in Palestinian higher education institutions. Drawing upon three theoretical frameworks—Theory of Change, Total Quality Management (TQM), and Vroom's Expectancy Theory—the findings indicate that structural and operational transformations within higher education institutions require robust institutional mechanisms to effectively influence the individual academic productivity of faculty members. Specifically, "quality assurance" serves as a vital mediating variable, translating organizational adjustments into clear, monitored operational guidelines; this reduces role ambiguity and enhances both the consistency and reliability of performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the pivotal role of faculty characteristics. Both "job satisfaction" and "adaptability" act as moderating factors that amplify the positive impact of quality assurance on academic performance. When academics possess a high capacity for adaptability and feel supported and satisfied within their work environment, they become better equipped to translate structural changes and quality standards into excellence in teaching, superior individual performance, and strong, competitive research outputs. By elucidating the significant interplay among these variables within a higher education context—one characterised by a volatile environment and influenced by political conflict—this research offers valuable guidance to the administrations of Palestinian universities and policymakers within the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education. In practical terms, fostering academic flexibility, investing in continuous professional development, supporting mental well-being, and enhancing quality frameworks are urgent strategic imperatives. Such measures are essential for maintaining educational quality and institutional sustainability amidst ongoing environmental challenges, and for enabling these institutions to compete on a global stage.

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