

EVALUATING THE EFFECT OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT RESISTANCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic and ever-evolving business landscape, organizations in developed and developing countries are constantly faced with the need to adapt and implement changes to remain competitive and relevant. However, the successful implementation of these changes is often hindered by the resistance of employees, which can have a significant impact on their overall performance. Understanding the influence of change management resistance on employee performance is crucial for organizations seeking to navigate the challenges of organizational transformation effectively. The study aimed at evaluating the effect of change management resistance on employee performance in selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The research used survey methods of data collection. The population of the study was 1408 staff of the selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The sample size of 312 was determined using the Taro Yamani formula. The research adopted stratified random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, while the Pearson's product – moment correlation coefficient and chi-square were used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that Change Management Resistance has effect on Employee Performance in Selected Construction Industries in South East, Nigeria. It was concluded that by viewing resistance not merely as a hurdle but as an opportunity for growth and development, construction industries can transform challenges into avenues for improvement, thereby enhancing their competitive edge in a rapidly changing environment. Furthermore, it was recommended that construction industries should establish communication channels of regular briefings and updates that can mitigate information deficiency and ensure that employees understand the rationale behind changes, cultivating an open and supportive organizational culture can reduce resistance to change in construction industries, providing transparent insights into the change process and investing in tailored training programs that equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Key words: Change management resistance, Information deficiency, Organizational culture, Construction industries

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is paramount for the realization of organizational goals and objectives, as the output of personnel directly affects overall performance, which can yield both positive and negative outcomes (Oyenuga *et al.*, 2023). In recognition of the unavoidable nature of change, organizations frequently undertake initiatives designed to enhance employee performance. However, it is imperative for management to meticulously consider the various factors that influence employee performance when advocating for such modifications. As posited by Wanza and Nkuraru (2016), stakeholders including customers and employees exhibit responses to organizational change that can be classified as either affirmative or adverse, manifesting as acceptance or

resistance. This resistance is often rooted in negative perceptions of the change and its anticipated consequences, thereby underscoring the critical necessity for effective change management strategies to navigate and mitigate these challenges (Nduji, 2020).

In the dynamic and ever-evolving business landscape, organizations in developed and developing countries are constantly faced with the need to adapt and implement changes to remain competitive and relevant (Orji, Ahmad and Nduji, 2024). However, the successful implementation of these changes is often hindered by the resistance of employees, which can have a significant impact on their overall performance. Understanding the influence of change

management resistance on employee performance is crucial for organizations seeking to navigate the challenges of organizational transformation effectively. As articulated by Manei *et al.* (2018), resistance to change is conceptualized as any opposition or pushback from employees when they are faced with organizational changes. This resistance can manifest in various forms, including overt opposition, passive disengagement, or active sabotage. Understanding the root causes of resistance is crucial for effective change management (Nduji, 2024).

Armenakis and Harris (2009) posit that when employees resist change, they are less likely to engage in the change process, which can lead to a decrease in productivity, a decline in job satisfaction, and a deterioration of the overall work environment. Furthermore, Rafferty and Restubog (2010) found that change management resistance can result in increased absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and a general lack of commitment to the organization's goals and objectives. One of the primary ways in which change management resistance can influence employee performance is through the erosion of trust in the organization and its leadership. Oreg and Sverdluk (2011) assert that when employees perceive the change process as being imposed upon them, rather than being a collaborative effort, they are more likely to develop a sense of distrust and resentment towards the organization. This, in turn, can lead to a decline in employee engagement, a decrease in job satisfaction, and an overall reduction in performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002).

Additionally, Bareil (2013) suggests that as employees are resistant to change, they become disinterested in sharing information, seeking feedback, or engaging in constructive dialogue with their colleagues and supervisors. This can result in a fragmented work environment, where employees are focused on protecting their own interests rather than working towards the organization's collective goals (Aiken and Keller, 2009). To mitigate the negative impact of change management resistance on employee performance, organizations must adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to change management. Kotter (1996) emphasizes the importance of creating a sense of urgency, building a guiding coalition, and effectively communicating the vision for change. By engaging employees in the change process and addressing their concerns and fears, organizations can foster a greater sense of ownership and commitment, ultimately enhancing employee performance (Armenakis and Harris, 2009).

As noted by Du Plessis and Mabunda (2016), a significant majority of individuals exhibit a resistance to change, with only a minority willing to deviate from the status quo and explore new alternatives. This prevailing resistance often stems from negative perceptions of the change and its implications. Ultimately, the long-term viability of any organization cannot be assured unless it is adept at managing change and can effectively adapt and respond to transformations within both its internal and external environments (Wachira and Anyieni, 2015). Thus, addressing

resistance through robust change management strategies is essential for facilitating successful transitions and ensuring organizational resilience. A significant proportion of employees demonstrate a preference for the comfort of their established routines, which frequently engenders resistance when organizational leaders attempt to implement change initiatives. Kute and Upadhyay (2014) and Al-Jaradat *et al.* (2013) identify a positive correlation between change management resistance factors and employee performance. In contrast, Dauda and Akingbade (2011) contend that no significant relationship exists between technological change resistance and employee performance. Although organizational change is a ubiquitous occurrence, there is often a notable deficiency in the knowledge and awareness of critical issues related to change management among those responsible for its execution (Samuel, 2013). This lack of understanding underscores the necessity for effective change management strategies to mitigate employee resistance and optimize overall performance.

In the construction industry, where change is constant and the need for adaptability is paramount, the influence of change management resistance on employee performance is particularly salient. Jiang and Men (2017) found that in the construction industry, where projects are often complex, dynamic, and subject to constant changes, employee resistance to change can lead to significant delays, cost overruns, and quality issues. This, in turn, can have a detrimental impact on the overall performance and profitability of the organization. Bareil (2013) suggests that organizations should focus on developing a strong change management strategy that is tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of the industry. This may involve the adoption of agile project management methodologies, the implementation of robust communication and training programs, and the fostering of a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. Previous studies have examined the impact of change management resistance in UK, USA, Germany, South Africa. However, the researcher found a notable absence of similar investigations in the south east region of Nigeria. This study aims to analyze the effect of change management resistance on employee performance within the context of construction industries, utilizing information deficiency, organizational culture, insufficient training, fear of the unknown and emotional responses as metrics of change management resistance. Consequently, this research seeks to evaluate the effect of change management resistance on employee performance in construction industries in the south East, Nigeria, thereby addressing a critical gap in the existing literature. The aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of change management resistance on employee performance in selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Given the nature of the study, the researcher used both the survey methods of data collection so that the required objectives can be achieved. Similarly, the choice of the survey

method was suitable for the study, because it served as the convenient approach for accurate data collection.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of staff of the selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The industries have a total staff-strength of 1408. This is made of senior staff 788 (seven hundred and eighty-eight) and the Junior, 620 (six hundred and twenty) as captured below:

Table 1: Population distribution of the study area

Selected Construction industries	Manag ement	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	Total
Cappa and D'Alberto Plc,Enugu State	20	57	84	161
Setraco Nigeria Ltd, Anambra State	5	59	108	178
Costain West Africa Plc,Abia State	6	72	107	159
FCE Construction Company Ltd, Enugu State	6	78	83	167
T. A. S. Construction Ltd, Ebonyi State	6	81	98	185
Eagle Heights Construction Ltd, Imo State	5	76	97	178
R. D. A. Construction Ltd, Anambra State	5	74	103	182
Megastar Technical and Construction Company Ltd,Imo State	5	76	117	198
Total	58	573	797	1,408

Source: SE Newline, Official Journal of South East Constructions. Vol. 2 April-June, 2025.

Determination of Sample Size

However, to determine the sample size, the Taro Yamani formula was adopted, thus:

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

Where: n = Sample size, 1 = A constant value, N = Population size, e = Error limit

$1 + 1,408(0.05)^2$ n = 311.5044, approximately 312 sample size distributed amongst the respondents.

Determination of Sampling Techniques

The research adopted stratified random sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique is important in social science research for several reasons. Firstly, It allows the researcher to target specific groups of individuals in a location that were most relevant to research questions, which can help to ensure that the study provides useful and actionable insights. Stratified random sampling can help to increase the efficiency of the research process by allowing researchers to selected a small sample size without the compromising the validity of the study. This is because stratified sampling allows researchers to select participant which can help to ensure that the study is generalizable to similar population.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The designing of questionnaire, is made in such a way as to cover two sections (A and B). A well-structured questionnaire was distributed to respondents who were part of the sample size. The advantage in this system is that it consumes less time, permits wider coverage, the respondent has more time

and can even consult references. However, the disadvantages that must be considered include the problem of non-return of questionnaires.

Method of Data Analysis

The research employed the use of simple percentage to present and analyse data collected through the questionnaire, while the Pearson’s product – moment correlation coefficient and chi-square were used to test the hypotheses.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypotheses raised in the study are tested:

Hypothesis i: *Information deficiency has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria.*

Decision Criterion

Reject Ho if the calculated value of the test statistic exceeds the tabulated value, that is, if the p-value is less than the level of significance.

As shown in Table 2, correlation coefficient of 0.959 is very high and significant. Hence, Information deficiency has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Correlation matrix between Information deficiency and employee performance

Variable	Details of Correlation	Information Deficiency	Employee Performance
Information Deficiency	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 5	.959* 0.10 5
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.959* 0.10 5	1 5

Source: Field Survey 2008. 5

**Correlation is significant at the (1.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis ii: *Organizational culture has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria*

As presented in Table 3, the correlation coefficient of 0.755 is high but not significant since the p value = 0.14 is greater than the level of significance. Hence, Organizational culture does not have effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Correlation matrix between Organization Culture and employee performance

Variable	Details of Correlation	Organizational Culture	Employee Performance
Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	1 5	.755 .140 5

	Sig. (2-tailed) N		
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.755 .140 5	1 5

Source: Field Survey 2008. 5

Hypothesis iii: *Fear of the unknown has a positive effect the employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria.*

Decision Criterion

Reject Ho if the calculated value of the test statistic exceeds the tabulated of if the p-value of the Chi-Square statistic is less than the level of significance.

Fear of the unknown has a positive effect the employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlation matrix between Fear of Unknown and Staff Category

Responses	Fear of Unknown	Senior Staff	Junior Staff	Total
SD	Count	49	32	81
	Expected count	37.6	43.4	81.0
D	Count	143	181	324
	Expected count	150.2	173.8	324.0
U	Count	7	26	33
	Expected count	15.3	17.7	33.0
A	Count	69	82	151
	Expected count	70.0	81.0	151.0
SA	Count	44	40	84
	Expected count	38.9	45.1	84.0
Total	Count	312	361	673
	Expected count	312.0	361.0	673.0

Hypothesis iv: *Insufficient training has effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria.*

Decision Criterion

Reject H0 if the calculated value of the t-test statistic exceeds the tabulated of if the p-value is less than the level of significance

Since the p-value = 0.943 is greater than the level of significance (0.05), we accept H0. Hence, we conclude that Insufficient training has no effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria as given in Table 5

Table 5: Equality of Means between Insufficient training and Employee Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Insufficient training	5	65.00	88.958	39.783
Employee Performance	5	69.60	106.824	47.773

Source: Field Survey 2025.

DISCUSSION

In this study, four hypotheses were raised. They were aimed at evaluating the effect of change management resistance on employee performance in selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria.

Hypothesis i: Information deficiency has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria

On the first hypothesis, which sought to determine the effect of Information deficiency on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The study reported that Information deficiency has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis on this. The positive effect was found to be high and significant which present the Information deficiency and employee performance along the Likert Scale. The result confirms the report of Rafferty and Restubog (2010) who carried out a study on effect of Change management resistance and employee performance in some manufacturing industries in Georgia, USA. Findings from the study reveal that Change management resistance in the recent years has really affected the employee performance and productivity of selected Manufacturing Industries. It was recommended that to overcome resistance related to Change management, organizations should develop a comprehensive communication strategy that includes clear, concise explanations of the change purpose, messages should be tailored for different departments or roles based on how the change will specifically affect them. This study covered only some manufacturing industries in Georgia, USA which is not the case in the construction industries in the south – East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis ii: To determine the effect of organizational culture on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria

The hypothesis tested the effect of organizational culture on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient of 0.755 is high but not significant, since the p value – 0.14 is greater than the level of significance, hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, which concludes that there is no evidence of the fact that organizational culture has effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. This result aligns with Wendy and Zippa (2019) who investigated the Influence of Change Management Resistance on Employee Performance, Germany. It was discovered in this study that employee performance was not positively impacted by organizational culture as a proxy of change management resistance.

Hypothesis iii: To assess the effect of fear of the unknown on employee performance of selected construction industries in the South East, Nigeria

The hypothesis tested the effect fear of the unknown on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The study reported that fear of the unknown has a positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis on this. This result aligns with Jiang and Men (2017) who examined the influence of Change Management Resistance on the employee performance of production firms in South Africa. The study revealed that Change Management Resistance has influence on the employee performance of production firms in South Africa and concluded that managers of organizations all over the world, particularly in the production industry, must adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to change management, involving the implementation of effective training and development programs, the creation of dedicated communication channels, and the fostering of a culture of transparency and open dialogue to cage and arrest the fear of unknown.

Hypothesis iv: To evaluate the effect of insufficient training on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria.

On the first hypothesis, which sought to evaluate the effect of insufficient training on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria. The study reported that insufficient training has no positive effect on employee performance of selected construction industries in the south east, Nigeria leading to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis on this. This is in line with Bareil (2013) who took a study on the impact of Change Management Resistance on the performance of employees in California. However, it was submitted that there was no positive relationship existing between Change Management Resistance and employee performance. It recommended that to address the Change Management Resistance on performance of employees in California, employees must prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive training and development programs in California. .

CONCLUSION

From the study of selected construction industries in the South East Nigeria, it was concluded that employee performance was affected by information deficiency and fear of the unknown. However, organizational culture and insufficient training had no effect on employee performance. Here, construction industries should establish communication channels and encourage participation from employees at all levels. These would promote a sense of ownership and inclusive decision-making processes that can enhance trust and remove fear of unknown.

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Source: Researchers Computation Using SPSS Version 25, 2022