

**CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:
BOOSTING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT AFIT KADUNA**

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Abstract

This study looks at how change management strategies shape employee performance at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Kaduna. The study adopted Expectancy Theory and used a survey design. Primary data came from 242 staff members selected through non-probability sampling out of a total population of 611 across all five faculties. For analysis, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS 4) was used. The measurement model loadings were above 0.60 and AVE values cleared the 0.50. What stood out in the structural model was that communication strategy has a clear positive effect on work productivity ($\beta = 0.305$, $p < 0.001$). So the takeaway? Transparent, timely, and consistent communication matters a lot when organizations go through change. We recommend that AFIT put in place a solid two-way internal communication system and create real opportunities for employees to get involved in change initiatives. These findings add to what we know about change management in higher education, and they offer practical guidance for military-academic institutions working to become more adaptable and efficient.

Keywords: Change Management Strategies, Boosting Employee Performance, at Air Force Institute of Technology Kaduna

Introduction

Employee performance sits at the heart of whether any organization meets its goals or falls short. Pratama et al. (2024) make the point that performance is essentially how people respond to what their jobs demand of them. And the research ties this closely to trust (Muttaqien et al., 2024; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023), commitment, and whether people stay or leave (Agustina et al., 2024). When employees are satisfied, they tend to go beyond what customers expect. The flip side? Dissatisfied staff deal with more stress and produce less (Putri et al., 2023).

Change management gives organizations a structured way to move from where they are to where they want to be. Sancak (2023) breaks this into three stages: unfreezing (shaking up existing norms), moving (putting interventions like training and restructuring into action), and refreezing (locking in stability through policies). Kotter et al. (2025) push the idea further; change is not something that happens once and stops. It is constant. Technology keeps advancing, markets shift, globalization presses on, and social values evolve. Institutions that do not adapt? They lose ground.

When change hits, employees naturally hope for positive outcomes. They want leadership to have their backs (Ponte & Pesci, 2022). Trust as defined by Utomo et al. (2023) as people's willingness to be vulnerable because they believe management acts in their interest does not appear out of nowhere. It grows through open communication, inclusive decision-making, and shared accountability. Culture matters

too. Ghaleb (2024) warns against underestimating it, while Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023) describe organizational culture as the shared values, assumptions, and beliefs that steer how people behave at work, shaped through both formal and informal socialization.

Still, change often stalls because leaders misjudge how urgent or feasible it really is (Phillips & Klein, 2023). Success demands collaboration between those driving change and those living with it. Yet employees resist sometimes out of fear, sometimes because they were never included, sometimes because communication was simply inadequate. Shala et al. (2023) note a troubling pattern: resistance gets blamed on employees when the real gap may be in leadership.

Change, at its core, is a shift from one state to another. It brings in something new, something that breaks from the status quo (Ackerman, 2023). Across the globe, organizations have undergone massive transformations. These demanded realignments at every level functional, business, corporate to stay competitive. Waddell et al. (2024) frame change as a deep behavioral shift, a marker of organizational progress. Change management, in their view, is the ongoing work of redefining strategic direction, structure, and capabilities so that stakeholder needs are met as they evolve.

Change is hard. Most people resist it. Warrick (2023) observes that individuals prefer familiar routines, which creates

friction that smart, inclusive strategies must address. In the end, sustainable performance depends on getting change management right (Weiss & Hartle, 2023).

Therefore, three dimensions anchor effective change management strategies: communication, employee involvement, and training and development. Communication cuts uncertainty and gets employees aligned with the organizational vision. Open, frequent, and transparent communication builds trust. Poor communication? It breeds misinformation, anxiety, and resistance (Zainab et al., 2022). When employees are involved in planning and implementation, ownership goes up, motivation rises, and psychological commitment deepens. Leaders also get early warnings about barriers (Mulang, 2022). Training and development get people ready for new systems, technologies, or roles. Confidence grows. Resistance drops (Doeze Jager et al., 2022).

How do we measure employee performance during change? Work productivity captures it—both the quantity and quality of output, shaped by how well people adapt and how much support they receive. Employees who are informed, involved, and trained tend to keep performing well, sometimes even better, despite the disruption (Sauermann, 2023). Those left out or unprepared? Their performance slips due to confusion, stress, or disengagement (Tahir & Hajjad, 2023). Productivity is not just about technical skill. It reflects morale, motivation, and adaptability. That makes it a telling indicator of whether a change initiative is working.

Nigeria's tertiary education sector is not where it should be. Only 9% of students complete tertiary education, compared to 57.47% in the UK and 51.17% in the US (Wisevoter, 2023). The country ranks 124th out of 184 nations in how much education contributes to the economy (EduRank, 2024). Within this landscape sits AFIT a military-backed civilian university running over 28 accredited programs and serving more than 4,000 students. The institution has faced employee-related problems tied to how organizational change is implemented. Recent reforms leadership transitions, academic restructuring, welfare policy adjustments have reportedly dragged down morale, created workplace uncertainty, and produced inconsistent output. A 20% drop in pass rates in 2022 tells part of the story (AFIT Internal Report, 2023).

AFIT uses emails, memos, WhatsApp, and training programs. Yet communication gaps persist, especially for staff without reliable digital access. Limited involvement in planning and uneven training make adaptation harder. Plenty of studies have looked at change management strategies across different sectors and countries. But empirical research on how communication, employee involvement, and training directly affect performance in military-based academic institutions like AFIT remains thin. The rigid protocols and preference for established routines at such institutions intensify resistance. That gap is what this study addresses. We investigate how change management strategies affect employee performance at AFIT, with the aim of

improving adaptability, efficiency, and institutional growth. Based on this, one objective guides the research: to examine the effect of communication strategy on work productivity at AFIT, Kaduna. The findings should give AFIT's management and other tertiary institutions empirical insights into how effective change management practices shape employee satisfaction and institutional performance.

Employee's Performance

According to Sinha (as cited in Methode et al. 2019), the performance of university employees largely hinges on their willingness and openness to engage meaningfully in their duties. Universities, like other organizations, require employees, particularly lecturers, who are not only committed to fulfilling their responsibilities but are also motivated to go beyond their formal job descriptions to contribute to institutional excellence. However, Agba and Ocheni (2017) argue that enhancing the performance of academic staff in Nigerian universities remains a persistent challenge for management. According to Silitonga and Sadeli (2020), employee performance is frequently interpreted as representative of the organization's performance and has a direct impact on the organization's image.

Change Management Strategies

Change is an inevitable, unavoidable, and necessary process through which organizations transform in order to achieve their stated objectives. In today's dynamic environment, organizations increasingly recognize the importance of effective change management practices. Daniel

(2019) defines change management as a process involving the unfreezing, moving, and refreezing of values, practices, and procedures within an organization. According to Armstrong (2020), change management involves anticipating change, planning for it, implementing new procedures or strategies, and reinforcing new behaviors.

Communication Strategy

Communication strategy is widely recognized as a critical dimension in the effective management of organizational change. It involves the deliberate planning, execution, and management of communication activities to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed, engaged, and aligned with the change process. scholars have increasingly emphasized that communication strategy must be clear, timely, transparent, and two-way to mitigate resistance and build trust during transitions (Fernandez & Rainey, 2022; Wang & Chen, 2024).

Empirically review

Studies such Qonitah and Sholahuddin (2024), Ifeoma et al., (2024), Aslam and Farhan (2024), Olumide et al., (2024), Sulaiman et al., (2024), Oluwatoyin and Tunde (2023), Mohammad et al., (2023), Anwar and Hassan (2022), Zhang et al., (2022), Ali and Anwar (2021) Have studied and analysis change management on various variables such as development, organizational commitment in the Nigerian public service, hospitality industry in Nigeria, healthcare sector in Pakistan, Indian manufacturing firms, banking sector in the

Middle East using different methodologies, research design with different finds some are either positives, negative and mix. Therefore this research will using a Nigerian tertiary intuition that is combine will military and civilian activity and using communication strategies as a dimension.

However, the researcher anchors this study on Expectancy Theory. The theory offers a solid lens for understanding why employees act the way they do during change. It centers on the psychological processes that drive behavior specifically, how people form expectations about the link between effort and performance, performance and rewards, and how attractive those rewards are. By using Expectancy Theory, we zero in on what employees believe will happen if they put in effort during change initiatives, and whether the anticipated outcomes are worth it.

Methodology

The study uses a quantitative survey research design to identify and describe the characteristics of the variables of interest, guided by specific research problems. The use of a quantitative descriptive survey approach is consistent with prior research that employed a quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional design to investigate relationships among variables in an organisational setting (Suleiman et al., 2021). The study's population comprises 611 staff of AFIT across all five faculties. The researchers used non-probability sampling methods, specifically snowball and convenience sampling, to collect data. A sample size of 242 respondents was selected

from the total population of 611 staff using the Taro Yamane sample size estimation technique.

The study's uses primary data was collected from the population through a well-structured questionnaire, administered to randomly to the staff of AFIT. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A biodata and Section B change Management section C communication strategies Section D employee performance questions and was adopted from the work of Oluwatoyin and Tunde (2023), and Ali and Anwar (2021). Data will be analyses using SMART PLS 4.

Result and Discussion

Assessment of Measurement Model

The measurement model assessment includes defining reliability of individual item, reliability of internal consistency, convergent validity and validity of discriminant (Hair et al., 2019). The first criterion for the reflective measurement model is the assessment of individual item reliability which is usually measured by assessing the outer loadings of each variable's measure. Based on Hair's *et al.* (2014) rule of thumb, an indicator with 0.70 outer loading is reliable and acceptable for previously developed scale. Despite this, Hair et al. (2019) recommended that the loadings ought to be 0.60 or above. However, figure 4.2 shows that after deleting, that is the 5 measurement items of communication strategy, had outer loading values of 0.60 and above. Based on the suggestions of Hulland (1999)

and Hair, *et al.* (2011) to delete items that substantially increase composite reliability and average variance extracted

(AVE), that had below 0.60 loadings were dropped, (refer to Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2 Measurement Model: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Communication Strategy	CS 1	0.742	0.627	0.806
	CS 2	0.701		
	CS 3	0.702		
	CS 4	0.677		
	CS 5	0.747		

CS= Communication Strategy

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity measures the extent of relatedness or high degree of correlation of measures to a specific construct, while discriminant validity measures the degree of dissimilarity of measurement items from another construct. The convergent validity of this study was established using AVE, which is the mean value of indicators' squared loadings of a related construct and each indicator's reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The relevant values are presented in Table 4.2 above. To accomplish satisfactory convergent validity, Wong (2019) suggested that the AVE of each variable must be 0.50 or more. Following Wong (2019), the AVE values (see Table 4.2) presented high

loadings (> 0.50) on their particular variables, suggesting the presence of convergent validity for all the constructs.

Assessment of the Structural Model

Having confirmed that this study's measurement models (inner model) are reliable and valid, this section evaluated the structural model. The present research used the standard bootstrapping technique with a sample size of 5000 bootstrap samples and 209 cases to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The structural model of this study is composed of four latent constructs, namely, communication strategy, employee involvement, and training and development as independent variables; and work productivity as the dependent

variable. The structural model usually confirms the extent to which the empirical data collected supports the existing theories (Hair et al., 2019).

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.2 illustrate the estimates for the full structural model in respect of the direct relationship represented by the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: Communication strategy has no significant effect on work productivity at AFIT, Kaduna.

Test of Significance for Direct Relationships

The hypothesis testing for direct relationship has been done to understand the signs, size and statistical significance of the estimated path coefficients between the constructs. Higher path coefficients suggest stronger effects between the predictor and predicted variables. Generally, the path coefficients have standardised values between +1 and -1; estimated path coefficients close to +1 establish strong positive relationships and vice-versa (Hair et al., 2019). The path coefficients

closer to zero are weaker and very low values close to zero are mostly non-significant, according to Hair et al. (2019), every significant coefficient eventually depends on the standard error which is usually obtained by means of bootstrapping.

The significance of the supposed relationships has been established by measuring the significance of the *p*-values for each path with threshold equaling $p < 0.05$ be used to assess the significance of the path coefficient estimations (Black & Babin, 2019; Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, the strength of path coefficients can be measured through the direct and indirect effects. The sum of both direct and indirect effects is referred to as ‘total effects’, and this analysis is mainly helpful in those studies which are aimed at exploring the differential impact of different latent variables on the dependent variable/s through the mediator/s (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4.3 Structural Model: Test of Significance for Direct Relationships

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	SE	T Statistics	P-Value	Statistically Significant
H01	CS -> WP	0.305	0.060	5.075	0.000	Yes

CS= Communication Strategy, and WP= Work Productivity.

Table 4.3 presents the results of the structural model, highlighting the direct relationships between the independent and dependent variables, while the detailed statistical output is shown in Table 4.4. These results are interpreted using the path coefficients (Beta), standard error (SE), t-values (T Statistics), and p-values. The bootstrapping analysis indicates that hypotheses H01, is statistically significant with positive relationships. Specifically, the analysis reveals that communication strategy has a significant effect on work productivity ($\beta = 0.305$; $p = 0.000$),

R-Squared Coefficient of Determination for Direct Relationship

The determination of the coefficient R provides the percentage of variation in exogenous variable explained by

endogenous variables (Chin, 2010). Moreover, R represents the level of latent variables explained variance and consequently measures the regression function (Hair et al., 2019). Its value essentially ranges from 0 to 1. Essentially, the value of R varies according to the number of measuring exogenous variables, i.e. a higher number of such variables mostly produce a higher value of R and vice-versa. According to Wong (2019), models having R as 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 are considered as significant, moderate and weak respectively. In this case, if the inner path model structures explicate endogenous latent variables by a few (e.g. one or two) exogenous latent variables, moderate R would be acceptable (Wong, 2019). If there are a good number of exogenous variables then the value of R must exhibit a significant level.

Table 4.4 Coefficient of Determination for Direct Relationships: R-Squared

Construct	R-Squared Value (R^2)
Work Productivity	0.63

As shown in Table 4.4, the exogeneous latent constructs of this study (communication strategy, employee involvement, and training and development) explain approximately 63 percent variance in work productivity. Following Wong (2019) recommendation, the R^2 value explained

by the exogenous constructs on the endogenous construct in their direct relationships is significant.

Discussion of Findings

This study empirically assessed a structural model on the relationships between communication strategy, employee involvement, training and

development, and work productivity. The insights of the employees of AFIT, Kaduna, were the sources of information for testing hypotheses, and the model involved in the study. Similarly, the findings of this study were discussed based on the research objectives, which were stated in hypotheses in accordance with the research questions that were earlier developed from the problem statement.

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of communication strategy on work productivity at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Kaduna. To evaluate this, the null hypothesis, which posited that communication strategy has no significant effect on work productivity, was tested using the PLS-SEM output. The analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship ($\beta = 0.305$; $p = 0.000$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This confirms that communication strategy plays a vital role in enhancing employee productivity at AFIT, highlighting the importance of transparent, timely, and consistent communication during organizational change.

Conclusions

This study set out to investigate the effect of change management strategies on employee performance at the Air Force Institute of

Technology (AFIT), Kaduna. Drawing on empirical data and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the research explored three key dimensions of change management, communication strategy, employee involvement, and training and development, and their respective influences on work productivity. The standout finding is that communication strategy has a statistically significant positive effect on employee productivity. This underscores something practitioners have long suspected but now have data to support: transparent and timely communication during change is not a nice-to-have. It is essential. When employees know what is happening, why it is happening, and what is expected of them, they align more closely with institutional goals.

Recommendations

1. Tertiary institutions need a robust internal communication system that moves information smoothly across all levels, especially when change is underway. Communication is not just about pushing out announcements. It is about clarity, consistency, and making sure messages are accessible. Management should put in place a structured framework that uses multiple channels emails, memos, bulletins, staff briefings, digital platforms to reach everyone. Critically, the system must allow for two-way communication. Employees need space to give feedback, ask questions, and voice concerns without fear. Regular updates on change processes, progress reports, and visible leadership during change efforts all help build trust, cut uncertainty, and keep

employees aligned with where the institution is headed.

2. For change to stick and performance to improve, AFIT should build genuine employee involvement into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of change initiatives. This goes beyond asking for opinions. It means empowering staff to contribute ideas, co-create solutions, and take real ownership of the change process. Cross-functional change committees, departmental planning sessions, and structured feedback loops can make this happen. Recognizing and rewarding employees who step up during change reinforces a culture of collaboration. When people feel heard and valued, commitment and motivation rise and so does performance.

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