

# Organizational Change Management: Perceptions, Attitude, Application, and Change Management Practices in Nigerian Universities

Nwachukwu Prince Ololube, Department of Educational Management and Planning, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Dennis Ogutun Ololube, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.

## ABSTRACT

Change management is a continuous method used in transitioning individual employee, groups, and organizations to an anticipated future change. It focuses on the change management processes that addresses individual employee, groups and organizational factors that acts as catalyst for possible changes in organization. The purpose of change management is ultimately to make use of initiatives and ensure that every employee in an organization is willing and ready to switchover to an anticipated new role in the proposed business environment. This current study evaluated the relationship between leadership perception, attitudes and application towards organizational change. Using a structured questionnaire, principal officers, their deputies and faculty perceptions were analyzed and the results revealed that though change matrix are often painful and chaotic, however, significant relationship was found between employee perception, attitude, application and organizational change. The study recommends that Nigerian universities should be proactive in the implementation of changes to improve their employees' perception, attitude and application towards organizational change.

## KEYWORDS

Application, Attitude, Change Management, Matrix, Models, Nigeria, Organizational Change, Perceptions, Universities

## INTRODUCTION

Administration implies organization influence through a number of persons efforts geared towards achieving certain lay down objectives. It is certain that those involved must be well organized to be able to satisfy and achieve the expected goal. All their efforts must be channeled towards actualizing the same goal through cooperative energy. This can only be possible if there is an organizational structure to channel their effort for organizational development. Therefore, for any administrative action, there must be an organization because no administrative action can be implemented without an organization (Vishoo & Vidya, 2007).

Organizational change is as old as organizational development, what this implies in this context is that organizations find ways to improve and change its current status to a better-developed status. The universities just like any other organization change as they grow. The study of organizational change, its application, effect and management practices in goal attainment in Nigerian universities is a means aimed at higher education reform. If educational reform/change or development was to become effective and yield measurable output, element of quality management needs to be present in the improvement efforts (Detert & Jenni, 2000).

DOI: 10.4018/IJAMSE.2017010103

Stakeholders in education and university administrators are responsible for developing a vision and strategy for the understanding and development of university education. Universities as public sector agencies should identify the significance of leadership and management as instrument of quality improvement and sustainability in university system (Julius, 2005). We may have leadership, or in other words leaders (university administrators) either because they do not have what to offer which may be as a result of the means they attain or got to the level they are in the field of academics, professorship is the apex level in academic profession, surprisingly, there may be some who are professors, yet do not have anything to offer in a particular academic domain, this sometimes pose challenges in the process of change since most people believe that once you are a professor, you know it all.

For so many decades, there has been vociferation for improvement in university education, especially in south-south Nigerian. This implies a severe and ever challenging but of vital importance for university management/administrators to ensure that there is organizational change from its current state to a better developed state. It is an established fact that since the year 2000, perceptions on the standard of university education in Nigeria has declined, resulting in universities producing low quality or half-baked graduates that are not generally accepted by both private and public organizations globally (Ololube, Kpolovie, Egbezor, & Ekpenyong, 2009).

University administrators and lecturers no longer adhere to lay down rules, and innovation to enhance goal attainment. Similarly, it would appear that the problem of organizational change, its application, and the effects of management practices in organizational development remains crucial for management to contend with. Therefore, a decline in organizational change in Nigerian universities especially in the south-south has posed a very serious problem in the achievement of the set goals of the universities, such as quality of program, conducting researches, to widen the frontiers of knowledge available to humanities and producing different categories particularly high level human resources for the economy and political system. The notable deficiencies and the need for organizational change are no longer in doubt, what appears uncertain is the effective application, attitude/reaction, effect and management practices. The study identifies the major components of organizational change perception, attitude and application towards goal attainment. This article is written to inform higher education administrators, managers, lecturers, policy makers, and university students of the relationship and advantage of organizational change and goals attainment. The purpose of this study is to relate the findings from research studies to the current situation facing university administration in Nigeria. The zeal to write this research paper was born out of the desire to examine how organizational change perceptions, attitudes and application affect university as an organization.

This brings to mind the touching question of how effectively can organizational change be achieved in Nigerian universities. Specifically, the study addressed three basic objectives:

- Examine leadership perceptions toward organizational change;
- Examine the attitudes of principal officers of the universities and faculty members towards organizational change;
- Examine the application of organizational change and how effective it can be put into practice.

The under listed research questions were used to guide the study:

- To what extent does leadership perception influence change?
- To what extent does attitude of principal officers of the universities and faculty members influence change?
- To what extent does the application of change influence change in universities?

To address the above objectives and further our analytical information, three hypotheses were formulated:

- There are no significant relationships between leadership perceptions and organizational change.
- There are no significant relationships between the attitudes of principal officers of the universities and faculty members towards change.
- There are no significant relationships between the applications of change and how effective can it be put into practice to influence change in universities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept Organizational Change

Every organization, be it private or owned by government is established for a particular purpose. Organizations are being managed by group of people to achieve the set goals through their day-to-day activities. Julius (2005) states that the administrative system of every Nigerian tertiary institution is design to facilitate efficient attainment of the goals of the institution. Organizational change is an irreversible adaptation of any feature of its structure, personnel, products or processes (Naylor, 1999). Every organization is established to provide solution(s) to certain problems identified in the environment. The expressed solutions constitute the goals of the organization.

Organizational change is a concept rather than a specific technique. Behavior is strongly influenced by context: factors such as culture, rewards, recognition, incentives and established norms play a vital role in organizational change. Therefore, managing the context of organizational change is critical as much as it is crucial where change initiatives are concerned (Terry & Dinsinore, 2006). Behavioral change involves people doing things differently, therefore particular attention need to be directed at projects specifically aimed at stakeholder engagement, employee involvement and communication (Julius, 2005; Ololube, Agbor & Kpolovie, 2016a). Also, in the management of the organizational context, Terry and Dinsinore (2006) argued that specialist in the field of industrial and organizational psychology and organizational development should be an inclusive right at the beginning of the initiative so as to develop change management programs integrated into the initiative. Organizational change is inevitable and organizations that manage change effectively will pull ahead of their competitors.

In ensuring successful organizational change, the leading responsibilities of the administrative sponsor is to communicate and lead, followed by clarifying direction and target. The broad goals of Nigerian universities are first to widen the frontiers of knowledge, followed by impartation of knowledge (Julius, 2005). He went further to state that the first is done through research whereas the second is done through lecturing, teaching and supervising students. Three key features according to Ahiauzu and Ololube (2016), goals, people and influence are necessary when we talk about leadership. Since leadership is a process of influencing people towards achievement of organizational goals, it implies that leadership is a social process that involves interaction with others to achieve goals (Naylor, 1999; Ololube, Agbor & Agabi, 2017).

University administrators (leaders) play vital role in the performance of their institutions. Their major role is to lay down the infrastructure, policies and guidelines for the sub-system of the institution to function at its best. University administrators can help achieve organizational change by being creative, innovative, inspiring and visionary to enhance the institution to work together with their sub-systems to provide a very best service to students and the economy (Julius, 2005). Administrators who understood the importance of working together with their sub-system would develop a cooperative culture for working with their sub-system (Wong, 2001).

Efficient management strengthens success in a university's core business of teaching and researching. In higher institutions, administrators are closely identified with the fortunes of the institution because they adapt styles, approaches that can enhance change to the circumstances facing the university. Modification of their leadership styles and approaches to enhance appropriateness to the organizational context should not be overlooked (Wong, 2001).

University administrators are responsible for the day to day running of the universities, determining academic activities in conjunction with academic board and senate, and managing the budget, resource and proper use of funds. Administrators find themselves under great pressures. They are responsible for setting the key values and direction of the universities with regards to its position in higher education and the wider economy. Strategic planning are key functions of the administrators (Bargh, Boccock & Smith, 2000; Ololube et al., 2016a). The size of an institution, resource generation and allocation, institutional acquisition, investment and disposal, the recruitment and reward of academic and other staff, the creation, closure and merger of department, and external roles and relationship are vital decision to be considered in the change process (Henkel, 2002).

Organizational change is an approach to transformation, which encompasses the organization as a whole when compared to other localized efforts or means to promote change. Organizational change is basically a strategic activity that is founded on a system-concept of organization. This implies that change is seen as a function of (1) the external environment and (2) the internal environment among the sub-system within their organization (Ololube, Aiya, Uriah & Ololube, 2016b).

### **Leadership Perceptions Towards Organizational Change**

Leaders, managers and employees perceptions shape the climate and effectiveness of organizational change. Perception can be viewed as the ways leaders, managers and employees interpret their experiences. It is the most difficult part of human behavior; consequently, organizational leaders should realize that individuals have divergent perceptions (Otaru, 2011).

According to Elsbach (2003), perception simply means the way in which we see a particular situation. Our perception is our reality because humans interpret things the very way they see them. When humans see things as they are made to see them, instead of the way they really are, it constitute a barrier to communication. This is due to the fact that our previous experiences, current moods, peers, among other similar factors, obviously influence how humans interpret a given message (Otaru, 2011). Credibility gaps are common between management and employees in organizations, which poses communication barrier especially when people have made up their minds and processing information objectively will be very difficult. As such, all sub-system of any organization should be properly communicated on the needs for change (Ololube et al., 2016a; Xie, 2013).

One thing is to initiate change and another is to the extent to which such change can be perceived, applied and sustained. Terry and Dinsmore (2006) argued that delivering strategic change is only half of the story, the other half is all about sustaining the change permanently in order to deliver the strategic benefits in which an organization make case for the initiative. Even though change is inevitable in organization, does it usually have to be so injurious and so badly managed? (Barling & Cooper, 2008). Good communication should not be overlooked because people-related issues constitute the basic reasons for the failure of organizational change efforts (Atkinson, 2005; Smith, 2005; Ololube et al., 2016a). People related issues are not to be viewed as occurring only among the lower-level employees if change must be implemented by management. The fact remains that gaps in the understanding of organizational change and responses occurs among different levels of management (Bartunek, et al., 2006). Employee related issues involve in organizational change may result from organizational culture and the negative impact that changes often have on employees because people are considered the critical factor in the success of organizational change efforts (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

In university administration, human resources management is a strategic and more coherent approach to the management of the sub-system which includes the academic staff (lecturers), and students work individually and cooperatively to contribute to the attainment of the university set objectives especially during and after organizational change process. The academic staff of a university is the pivot of the system. Akpotu (2000) states that the type and quality of lecturers that a university has is used to measure the development of the university, therefore just like every other organization, university system depends heavily on the administrators and lecturers (faculty) to effect

change to enable the attainment of its goals. This implies that improving university standard is possible through administrators and faculty. However, Akpotu (2000) further observed that lecturers are the major focus of change as well as the anchor and determinant of quality in the university system. According to Smith (2005), managing organizational change is a huge task besides managing the people in the processes of change. This in particular impacts the psychological and physical aspects of organizational change. Most employees are not detached from their work but experience a range of emotional involvements through membership of their organization (Adeyemi, 2004). Putting into considering the business side of change, the human side is not entirely rational. It involves emotions like fear, uncertainty and doubt. However, in spite of this, management practices are still grounded in the theory of the rational man (Karp, 2004).

Organizations' failure to address the human side of change often results in detrimental psychological impact on employees (van Dijk & Van Dick, 2009). The study of Paruk and Singh (2012) revealed that as soon as an organization embark on major change efforts, employees find themselves stressed up and confused. It is obvious that stress is one of the major primary psychological consequences of organizational change that employee are subjected to. Stress in the context of the article involves the challenge to a person capacity to adapt to inner and outer demand, which may be physiologically arousing, emotionally tasking and cognitively and behaviorally activating (Okafor & Bode-Okunade, 2005; Gabriel & Oburu, Aduba, 2013). Therefore, stress is as a result of the impact of job demands on employees due to the existence of a stressor, or organizational condition that may require an adaptive response from employees (Ekundayo, 2014; Yaacob & Long, 2015). According to Woodall and Winstanley, a study in 1997 indicated that for most Americans, their jobs are the greatest stressor in their lives. Research further indicated that the most contributors to job stress are time pressures (60%), work overload (54%), threat of job loss (52%), lack of consultation and communication (51%) and understaffing (46%) (Woodall & Winstanley, 2001). It is therefore consequent on this logical review that we are obliged to hypothesize that:

- There are no significant relationships between leadership perceptions and organizational change.

### **Attitudes Towards Organizational Change**

Globally, universities are progressively improving their ability to enhance their staff backing and acceptance of their change initiatives. However, there are fundamental conditions for an intended change to be supported by employees. Most researchers focus on various forms of attitudinal paradigms of employees' attitudes toward change such as employee sincerity towards change, readiness for change, commitment to change, and skepticism about organizational change, which are valuable means to measure employee's assessment and/or concerns about any change move (Choi, 2011). Employees come into organizations with certain needs, skills and expectations. They come into the organization with the hope that they will find the work environment where they can use their abilities and equally satisfy their wants. With these expectations in mind, and if the organization can provide them with the opportunities they desire, there is likelihood that the employees will increase commitment to an intended organizational change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Employee commitment is characterized into three related factors: strong acceptance of the organization's values and goals, willingness to put forth considerable effort on behalf of the organization and strong desire to sustain membership of the organization. As a result, commitment is determined by a range of individual factors such as personal attitude, characteristics, experience and role related features (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005).

According to Orobor et al. (2006), attitude is the predisposition to act or not to act in a certain way. It is a mental position regarding a situation that is closely related to perception. Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) defined attitude as certain consistencies in someone's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act toward aspects of his environment. It reflects someone's propensity to feel, think or conduct him or herself in a positive or negative manner towards change. Attitude toward change consist of an

individual's perceptions about change, emotional reactions to change, and behavioral predisposition toward change. To Wittig, employees' reactions to organizational change may be influenced by a number of factors. And it is practically reasonable to see employees react because the process of organizational change involves going from the known to the unknown (Wittig, 2012).

Attitude may be positive or negative. Positive attitude to organizational change means that change is essential for the organization to succeed, while negative attitude to organizational change means that an individual or group believes that change might ruin the organization. For this reasons, change can be received with excitement and happiness or anger and fear while employees' response to it may range from a positive intention to support the change to a negative intention to oppose it. Positive attitudes to change were found to be vital in achieving organizational change (Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000).

According to Oparanma and Zeb-Obipi (2012), Gabriel, Oburu and Aduba (2013) and Elrod and Tippet (2002), organizational change efforts tends to be stressful. Specifically, they are of the opinion that emotional conditions and factors like denial, anger, bargaining, chaos, depression, resignation, openness, readiness and re-emergence will emerge for organizational change to take place. To Eby et al. (2000), employee attitude toward change impact their morale, organizational productivity and turnover. Attitude is strongly influenced by contextual factors such as culture, reward, recognition, incentive and organizational norms. To this end, several factors influence university leadership, lecturers and students, and they see change differently within the context of their operational environment (Orobor et al., 2006).

The conditions that favor the change process is determined by financial viabilities secured by the employees, significant room for change, awareness of the value of change, considerable amount of trust between management and employees, degree of commitment by the leaders and the employees, deficiencies in conditions of service and employment, the way university leaders, lecturers and students see change influences their attitude towards change (Barling & Cooper, 2008). It is therefore consequent on this logical review that we are obliged to hypothesize that:

- There are no significant relationships between the attitudes of principal officers of the universities and faculty members towards change.

### **Applications of Organizational Change**

Change is an alteration in an employee, group and organizations production and service processes and the way organizations do business (Oparanma & Zeb-Obipi, 2012). An alteration or initiative in the way organizations do business can be time consuming and costly, especially when it tends to impact and drive organizations towards success. Globally, nearly half of the organizations fail, as a result, change is inescapable and organizations need to resolve how to successfully adapt and sustain change. Completely, strategic change in organization is driven through programs, activities and projects. Unsurprisingly, effective programs, activities and projects by their nature create change that will successfully implement organizational change. For example, in universities, programs, activities and projects managers like top university Administrators, Deans, Heads of Departments and Lecturers with requisite skill drive and navigate change. They are saddled with the responsibilities of making sure that the intended drives towards change are strategically planned and are aligned to the goal(s) in which the change is targeted.

The success or failure of a change initiative is not just about initiating, planning, monitoring, executing and evaluating the projects that will drive the change (Oyebanji, 2009). It also involves preparing organizations for transformation, ensuring the sub-system (stakeholders) buy into it, and engaging administrative sponsors to champion and support the change before, during and after its implementation. Like every organization the success or failure of a university in the change process

is determined by the relevant skills, abilities and knowledge of the academic staff (Deans, HODs, Lecturers), non-academic staff and students.

Successful organizational change is dependent upon the need for change, little resistance to change and readiness for change. According to Ramakrishnan (2014), organizational change is only possible when employees display little resistance and readiness for change, accept the need to change and display willingness to engage in the processes of change, which may be difficult and challenging. Factors such as divergence in opinions, the effectiveness of the intended change, appropriateness and the timing of change and employees support are all fundamental components for transformational change aimed at creating readiness for change (Armenakis, Harris & Feild, 2002).

Organizations, universities inclusive are comprised of people with different perceptions, attitudes, abilities, knowledge and skills when properly channeled and managed determine the success of the university (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2012). Motivation and training of lecturers enhances improvement of educational standard, quality is sure especially during the process of change (Emechebe, 2009). Appropriately trained and motivated teaching staff are important in the university system and their roles cannot be substituted. If university education is to grow and make progress in consonance with organizational change, it will require greater allocation of competent and qualified humans including adequate material resources. However, the most valuable resources required for change within the university system are its human resources base (Akpotu, 2000; Oyebode, Ajayi & Oyeyipo, 2007). Human resources are fundamental and indispensable agent in the improvement of the potentialities for organizational change.

The effective management of Nigerian universities depends on the availability of competent and adequate staff seems to be critical and possess difficulty in the change processes especially for the academic staff. Abiodun-Oyebanji (2012) suggests that in many Nigerian universities the situation seem to be clear as academic staff appears to be in limited supply. Okebukola (2002) argued that the huge expansion of university education sectors worldwide, added with the increasing diversity of the student base and the very need for university to engage and compete in the global academic arena has made many institutions to re-evaluate how they manage and support their staff. However, employees (academic and non-academic staff) tend to resist change especially when it is not attractive. Worldwide, the growth of universities in the last decade alone has substantially increased the number of academic and administrative staff required to meet the challenges of expansion. Institutions adopt diverse ways to do research, teaching and learning and the delivery of university business. University systems have come virtually to recognize that success is dependent on effective administration and planning for their future staffing needs for organizational change to take place (Daysh & Kubler, 2008). Therefore, it beholds on us to expect that university's administrative capacity, research, teaching and learning are the actual or predictable stimuli in its environment that can drive change. It is therefore consequent on this logical review that we are obliged to hypothesize that:

- There are no significant relationships between the applications of change and how effective can it be put into practice to influence change in universities.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

Most educational management and planning research methods are descriptive. Descriptive research in this context is the conditions or connections that exist; the practices that exist; opinions and attitudes that are held. The descriptive research method applied in this study is primarily concerned with portraying the prevailing conditions and connections that exist. In fact, the descriptive research method applied here is exactly a method because many approaches of data analysis were grouped together. However, the analyses have one thing in common—individually and collectively they endeavor to

represent the present position of organizational change situation in Nigerian universities. Nonetheless, the main difference between various forms of descriptive research method is not in the process of describing the situation that prevails; it goes beyond just the collection and tabulation of data; but attempts to obtain facts and faculty members opinions about the current condition of organizational change in Nigeria higher education.

The fundamental purpose of this study is to expose to view new knowledge about organizational change. More precisely, the purpose of this study is to evaluate leadership perceptions, attitudes and applications of organizational change in Nigerian universities.

## **Research Population**

The population of this study defines the limits within which the research findings are applicable. In other words, it is defined in such a way that the results of the study are generalizable unto it. The target population of this study are all the academic and non-academic staff of all the universities in Nigeria, whereas the accessible population are the academic and non-academic staff within the reach of the researchers.

The research population for this study is drawn from faculty members of some selected universities in the south-south geo-political zone (accessible) of Nigeria (target). The population comprised of academic and non-academic staff of Nigerian universities: principal officers of universities, senior lecturers and heads of departments (HODs), readers (associate professors) and professors.

The reasons for choosing principal officers of universities, senior lecturers, readers (associate professors) and professors is that they are directly involved in organizational change matrix of universities, therefore, they stand better chance of measuring change in Nigerian universities.

## **Sampling/Sample Size**

The researchers' of this study made a choice of using purposeful sampling procedure for senior lecturers, principal officers and their deputies and simple random sampling was employed in the case of readers and professors because it is by far the easiest and simplest sampling method in terms of conceptualization and application. Simple random sampling does not require knowledge of the exact composition of the population.

Universities in the south-south geo-political zone are many from which ten (10) were randomly selected. The names of all the public universities in the zone were written and selected randomly. The ten (10) selected universities are different in types and in sizes. The researchers considered them representatives of the different universities. A total number of four hundred and fifty questionnaires (450) were distributed, out of which three hundred and twenty-five (325) were returned, from which three hundred and eleven (311) questionnaires were selected. Fourteen of the questionnaires were discarded because of errors in the ways they were completed. The ages of the respondents were between 41-69 years. Responses were limited to three faculties and management staff of the ten selected universities (see Table 1 for further details).

## **Data Collection**

### *Questionnaire*

The researchers structured a suitable design (questionnaire) along a four-point Likert-type scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1), which has approximately equal "value" for all the items on leadership perceptions toward organizational change, attitudes towards organizational change, and applications of organizational change. The respondents responded with the degree of agreement or disagreement. The questions were made simple and direct. The questionnaire comprised two sections:

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of respondents demographic information

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
35-44 years	45	14.5
45-54 years	180	57.9
55-64 years	51	16.4
65-70 years	35	11.2
Total Number	311	100
Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Male	182	58.5
Female	129	41.5
Total Number	311	100
Respondents Status	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Principal Officers and their Deputies	40	12.9
Senior Lecturers and (HODs)	140	45.0
Readers (Assoc. Prof.)	86	27.6
Professors	45	14.5
Total Number	311	100
Units/Faculty of Domicile	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Management Staff	40	12.9
Arts and Humanities	80	25.7
Education	108	34.7
Management Sciences	83	26.7
Total Number	311	100

### Section A of the Questionnaire (Contents)

Section “A” of the questionnaire focuses on items such as age, gender, respondents’ status and units/faculty of domicile.

### Section B of the Questionnaire (Contents)

Section “B” focuses on possible factors that may or may not be perceived as being capable of influencing organizational change, such as:

- Leadership perceptions towards organizational change
- Attitudes towards organizational change
- Applications of organizational change

### Validity of the Study

The instrument used for this study was validated. First, the research instrument was valid because the researchers took time to act in accordance with the principles and processes of designing an academic questionnaire (see Ololube, 2006). Second, the questionnaire was given to professional colleagues that are experts in instruments evaluation; they read through and made necessary corrections. Third, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a population (20 persons) outside the sample size and their responses were used to improve on the items.

## Reliability of the Instrument

The quality of this research depended on the consistency with which the research was carried. And its consistency in turn is depended on the precision with which description is quantified. Therefore, the strength of the instrument we used in this study was reliable because it elicited the required information on leadership perception towards organizational change, attitudes and application of organizational change in Nigerian universities. However, an accurate measure of reliability was based on the statistical data obtained. To statistically test the reliability of the instrument to provide non-random results, a quantitative measurement to assess the reliability was seen as proper in this study since the respondents were directly affected because the study focused on them with regards to their perception, attitude and application of organizational change. A quantitative analysis of the respondents' answers was performed using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to statistically test the reliability of the instrument because in research when a research instrument's reliability has been secured it builds the foundation for further inquiry (See Ololube, 2006).

The result from the reliability estimates showed a cumulative reliability of .842, which showed a strong reliability of the questionnaire. According to Bryman and Cramer (2012), reliability estimate should be termed to be sufficient if it varied between 0–1, and preferably at 0.8-.

## Data Analysis

The first step in the data analysis process was to present the results of the study in its raw form, which is followed by the analyses of the data using SPSS version 23. The analyses involved the use of multiple statistical procedures: Cross tabulation and Regression, cross tabulation was used to answer the research questions, while regression was used to test the hypotheses for relationships. The second step is the discussion of the results from the respondents and making use of evidence from literature to support them. The clear value of this section in the researchers' opinion is that the results are connected to the information in the literature review.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSES

### Research Question 1

Research question one was aimed at determining the extent to which university leaders perceive change in the university system. The research question states “To what extent does leadership perceptions influence organizational change”? Data were tallied along agree and disagree, and they revealed (see Table 2) that 299(96.1%) agree that employees perceive good and effective communication as great tool for organizational change, as against 12(3.9%) who disagree. On credibility gaps between management and employees, 217(69.9%) are of the opinion that communication barriers stands against organizational change. Likewise, respondents 275(88.4%) against 36(11.6%) agree that employees related issues may result from negative impact because employees are considered the critical factor in the success of organizational change efforts. Overwhelming majority of the respondents: 307(98.7%) equally agree that the quality of lecturers that a university has is used to measure the development and change in the university; and 303(97.4%) are of the opinion that managing change is a huge task besides managing the employees in the processes of initiating change. Same is true when respondents 305(98.1%) against 6(1.9%) agree that employees associate emotions like fear, uncertainty and doubt influences organizational change. And 309(99.4%) contrary 2(0.6%) are of the view that organizations' failure to address the human side of change often results in detrimental psychological impact on employees.

### Research Question 2

Research question two was intended to examine the extent to which attitudes influence change in the university systems. Research question two states “To what extent does attitude of principal officers

of the universities and faculty members influence change”? The Cross tabulation analysis in Table 3 were matched along agree and disagree, and the responses depicted that 214(68.8%) against 97(31.2%) agree that Nigerian universities are progressively improving their ability to enhance their staff backing and acceptance of their change initiatives. Surprisingly, 224(72.1%) disagree that employee are sincere towards organizational change and are ready for it at all cost. Contrary, 208(66.9%) against 103(33.1%) agree that employees are committed to organizational change, while 236(75.9%) believe that employees are skeptical about organizational change. 212(68.1%) agree, while 99(31.8%) disagree that employees are willing to put considerable efforts on behalf of the university. Correspondingly, 209(67.2%) agree that employees come into organizations with certain needs, skills and expectations, and when these are absent they tend not to support change. 304(97.8%) of the respondents agree that employees attitude towards change consist of an individual’s perceptions about change, emotional reactions to change, and behavioral predisposition toward change. Approximately 156(50.1%) agree and almost half 155(49.9%) disagree that employees anger, fear and frustration are determinants of change. 209(67.2%) agree, while 102(32.8%) disagree that organizational change efforts tend to be stressful, as a result, employees tend not to support with all sincerity, and majority, 300(96.5%) of the respondents agree that employee attitudes towards change are influenced by contextual factors such as culture, reward, recognition, incentive and organizational norms and values.

### Research Question 3

Research question three was projected to survey respondents’ opinion on application of organizational change. The research question states that “To what extent does the applications of change influence change in universities”? To provide answers to the items raised, data from the Cross tabulation analysis conducted (see Table 4) showed that 275(88.4%) of the respondents agree that the application of change is an alteration in production and service processes and the way organizations do business, this is in contrast to 36(26.6%) who disagree. 302(97.1%) agree, against 9(2.9%) who disagree that changes are intended to impact and drive organizations toward success. 300(96.5%) of the respondents were of the view that strategic change in organization by their nature create change that will successfully implement change. 246(79.1%) agree, against 65(20.9%) who disagree that principal officers, deans, heads of departments, readers and professors have requisite knowledge and skills to navigate change. However, 295(98.1%) of the respondents agree that applying change involves preparing organizations for transformation, and ensuring that the sub-system buy into it. In the same vein, 292(93.9%) agree against 19(6.1%) who disagree that engaging administrators is vital in championing and supporting change before, during and after its implementation. Equally, majority of the respondents, 270(86.8%) agree, against 41(13.2%) who disagree that the success or failure of a university in the change process is determined by the relevant skills, abilities and knowledge of its academic staff. Correspondently, 272(87.5%) agree, while 39(12.5%) disagree that university systems should virtually recognize that success is dependent on effective administration and planning of its future staffing needs for organizational change to take place.

### Hypotheses Testing

The need to triangulate data was necessary to further verify our analytical information. The regression analysis conducted as depicted in Table 5 showed that most of the relationships were significant and positive with an R square of .638 and an adjusted R square of .630 of the entire variables entered.

The ANOVA analysis depicted the sum of square for the regression to be 34.272 and that of the residual is 19.419, and a degree of freedom (df) = 7, with an F-value of 76.393 and a significance of .000. This implies that perceptions, attitudes and applications have significant relationships between change management practices within the university systems in Nigeria.

The estimated Coefficient analysis for organizational change is positive. This implies that perceptions towards organizational change with a significance level of .000 and a calculated t-value of 4.159; attitudes towards organizational change were significant at .000 with a calculated t-value of

11.052; and application of organizational change were significant at .001 with a calculated t-value of 3.617. Thus, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were rejected because there are significant relationships between leadership perceptions and change; there are significant relationships between the attitudes of principal officers of the universities and faculty members towards change; and there are significant relationships between the applications of change and how effective it can be put into practice.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The three research questions were answered and the three hypotheses were tested and verified with respect to their significant relationships. The research questions were aimed at determining the influences of the sub-variables of perceptions, attitudes and applications on organizational change as applied to the university environment in Nigeria. The extent to which university leaders perceive change in the university system was determined with respect to good and effective communication as a tool for organizational change, and the role of communication barriers to organizational change. This study’s findings support that of Otara (2011), Ololube et al. (2016a), Xie (2013), Atkinson (2005) and Smith (2005). This could be due to the importance of effective communication on the overall good of the university system because poor or good communication constitutes the basic reasons for the failure or success of organizational change efforts. The study revealed that the quality of staff in a university determine its organizational change efforts. This is in line with Akpotu (2000) findings that the type and the quality of lecturers that a university has are used as yardstick to measure the development and changes in the university. The perceptions remain that 99.4% of the respondents agree that an organization failure to tackle the human aspects of change often results to negative psychological influence on employees. This finding is in line with that of van Dijk and van Dick (2009) and Paruk and Singh (2012). Their respective studies revealed that organization change efforts get employees stressed up and confused.

The findings that employee attitudes influence organizational change did not depart from the findings of the studies of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), Vakola and Nikolaou (2005), Orobor et al. (2006), Eby et al. (2000) and Wittig (2012). Their studies revealed that positive attitude towards organizational changes depict that the desirable changes are essential for organizations to succeed, whereas negative attitudes to organizational changes show that employees do not welcome the intended

**Table 2. Cross tabulation analysis of respondents demographic information on perceptions towards organizational change**

S/N	Perceptions towards Organizational Change	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1	Employees perceive good and effective communication as great tool for organizational change	4 (1.3%)	8 (2.6%)	112 (36.0%)	187 (60.1%)	311 (100.0%)
2	Credibility gaps between management and employees / communication barriers stands against organizational change	3 (1.0%)	91 (29.3%)	137 (44.1%)	80 (25.7%)	311 (100.0%)
3	Employees related issues may result from negative impact because employees are considered the critical factor in the success of organizational change efforts	5 (1.6%)	31 (10.0%)	169 (54.3%)	106 (34.1%)	311 (100.0%)
4	To what extent do you believe that the quality of lecturers that a university has is used to measure the development and change in the university	4 (1.3%)	- -	228 (73.3%)	79 (25.4%)	311 (100.0%)
5	Managing organizational change is a huge task besides managing the employees in the processes of initiating organizational change	5 (1.6%)	3 (1.0%)	134 (43.1%)	169 (54.3%)	311 (100.0%)
6	Employees associate emotions like fear, uncertainty and doubt influences organizational change	6 (1.9%)	- -	230 (74.0%)	75 (24.1%)	311 (100.0%)
7	Organizations’ failure to address the human side of change often results in detrimental psychological impact on employees	- -	2 (0.6%)	161 (51.8%)	148 (47.6%)	311 (100.0%)

**Table 3. Cross tabulation analysis of demographic information on attitude towards organizational change**

S/N	Attitudes towards Organizational Change	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
8	Universities are progressively improving their ability to enhance their staff backing and acceptance of their change initiatives	5 (1.6%)	92 (29.6%)	183 (58.8%)	31 (10.0%)	311 (100.0%)
9	Employee are sincere towards organizational change and are ready for it at all cost	12 (3.9%)	212 (68.2%)	81 (26.0%)	6 (1.9%)	311 (100.0%)
10	Employees are committed to organizational change	6 (1.9%)	97 (31.2%)	202 (65.0%)	6 (1.9%)	311 (100.0%)
11	Employees are skeptical about organizational change	8 (2.6%)	67 (21.5%)	170 (54.7%)	66 (21.2%)	311 (100.0%)
12	Employees are willing to put considerable efforts on behalf of the university	39 (12.5%)	60 (19.3%)	150 (48.2%)	62 (19.9%)	311 (100.0%)
13	Employees come into organizations with certain needs, skills and expectations, and when these are absent they tend not to support change	11 (3.5%)	91 (29.3%)	41 (13.2%)	168 (54.0%)	311 (100.0%)
14	Attitude towards change consist of an individual's perceptions about change, emotional reactions to change, and behavioral predisposition toward change	7 (2.3%)	- -	190 (61.1%)	114 (36.7%)	311 (100.0%)
15	Employees anger, fear and frustration are determinants of change	31 (10.0%)	124 (39.9%)	132 (42.4%)	24 (7.7%)	311 (100.0%)
16	Organizational change efforts tend to be stressful, as a result, employees tend not to support with all sincerity	4 (1.3%)	98 (31.5%)	147 (47.3%)	62 (19.9%)	311 (100.0%)
17	Attitudes towards change are influenced by contextual factors such as culture, reward, recognition, incentive and organizational norms and values	5 (1.6%)	6 (1.9%)	208 (66.9%)	92 (29.6%)	311 (100.0%)

**Table 4. Cross tabulation analysis of demographic information on application of organizational change**

S/N	Application of Organizational Change	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
18	Application of change is an alteration in production and service processes and the way organizations do business	5 (1.6%)	31 (10.0%)	209 (67.2%)	66 (21.2%)	311 (100.0%)
19	Changes are intended to impact and drive organizations toward success	- -	9 (2.9%)	129 (41.5%)	173 (55.6%)	311 (100.0%)
20	Strategic change in organization by their nature create change that will successfully implement change	11 (3.5%)	- -	156 (50.2%)	144 (46.3%)	311 (100.0%)
21	Principal officers, deans, heads of departments, readers and professors have requisite knowledge and skills to navigate change	34 (10.9%)	31 (10.0%)	68 (21.9%)	178 (57.2%)	311 (100.0%)
22	Applying change involves preparing organizations for transformation, ensuring that the sub-system buy into it.	6 (1.9%)	- -	170 (54.7%)	135 (43.4%)	311 (100.0%)
23	Engaging administrators is vital in championing and supporting change before, during and after its implementation	19 (6.1%)	- -	127 (40.8%)	165 (53.1%)	311 (100.0%)
24	The success or failure of a university in the change process is determined by the relevant skills, abilities and knowledge of its academic staff	14 (4.5%)	27 (8.7%)	161 (51.8%)	109 (35.0%)	311 (100.0%)
25	University systems should virtually recognize that success is dependent on effective administration and planning of its future staffing needs for organizational change to take place	9 (2.9%)	30 (9.6%)	78 (25.1%)	194 (62.4%)	311 (100.0%)

changes, which they believe might ruin the organization. Surprisingly, 72.1% disagreed that employee are sincere towards organizational change and are ready for it at all cost.

Significant influence was observed in the respondents' answers that the application of change impacts change in the universities. The evidences were strong and they support the study of Oparanma

Table 5. Regression analysis of the relationships between perceptions, attitudes and application of organizational change

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error		
1	.799 <sup>a</sup>	.638	.630	.25316		
ANOVA Analysis						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34.272	7	4.896	76.393	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	19.419	303	.064		
	Total	53.691	310			
Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-1.118	.189		-5.927	.000
	Perception towards Organizational Change	.107	.026	.158	4.159	.000
	Attitudes towards Organizational Change	.329	.030	.605	11.052	.000
	Application of Organizational Change	.115	.032	.140	3.617	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational change  
 b. All requested variables entered

and Zeb-Obipi (2012), Ramakrishnan (2014) and Abiodun-Oyebanji (2012). Their views are that universities are comprised of staff that have abilities, knowledge and skills and if properly directed and managed will determine the success of the university. Applying change involves preparing organizations for transformation, and ensuring that the sub-system embraces such change.

The triangulated analyses for this research investigation, revealed the extent to which significant relationships existed between leadership perceptions, attitudes, and applications of organizational change. These relationships are functions of the principal officers of the universities and faculty members. For the three hypotheses, significant results were present for the regression analysis at .000, .000 and .001 respectively. As such, the results from this empirical investigation were in agreement with previous investigation (e.g., Daysh & Kubler, 2008; Okebukola, 2002). Thus, Nigerian university systems need to practically recognize that success is dependent on effective administration and planning, and the quality of the future staffing requirements necessitates organizational change.

## CONCLUSION

This study has clearly shown that relationships exist between leadership perceptions, employees' attitudes, applications and organizational change. The study holds the view that change management are continuous method used in transforming employees and organizations to an anticipated future change. Perceptions, attitudes and effective application of organizational factors act as catalyst for

possible changes in organization applicable to the university systems. The drive for change management will eventually make use of initiatives and ensure that employees are willing and ready to embrace the anticipated change. University principal officers, their deputies and faculty members have a lot to do, because change management is often painful and chaotic. The study recommends that Nigerian universities should be proactive in the implementation of changes to improve their employees' perceptions, attitudes and applications towards organizational change.

This study has expanded the scope of the knowledge and practice of organizational change by informing university leadership, professionals, researchers and scholars about the theme of this study, and those who are considering related studies about the needs to integrate other variables to boost the intellectual base of organizational change.

The future research direction of this study should be to facilitate studies that will extend the findings of this study, and the number of variables that equally represent a large proportion of the disagreement in this study.

## REFERENCES

- Abiodun-Oyebanji, O. (2012). Human resource situation in Nigerian universities: A case study of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 2(2), 152–157. doi:10.5539/jedp.v2n2p152
- Adeyemi, B. (2004, November 25). *Banks' consolidation and the human capital behavior. The Guardian*, p. 63.
- Ahiauazu, L. U., & Ololube, N. P. (2016). The mediating effect of organizational culture, size and structure on the relationship between innovations and resilience in selected Nigerian universities. In N. P. Ololube (Ed.), *Handbook of research on organizational justice and culture in higher education institutions* (pp. 324–364). Hershey, PA, USA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-9850-5.ch013
- Akpotu, N. E. (2000). An analysis of academic staff turnover in Nigerian universities (1990-1997) [Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis]. University of Benin.
- Armenakis, A., Harris, S., & Feild, H. (2002). Paradigms in organizational change: change agent and change target perspectives. In R. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behaviour*. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Barling, J., & Cooper, C. L. (2008). *The SAGE handbook of organizational behavior: volume one: micro approaches*. London: Sage.
- Belias, D., & Koustelios, A. (2014). The impact of leadership and change management strategy on organizational culture. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(7), 45–470.
- Bryman, A., & Cramer, D. (2012). *Quantitative data analysis with IBM SPSS 17, 18 & 19: a guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge.
- Choi, M. (2011). Employees attitudes toward organizational change: A literature review. *Human Resource Management*, 50(4), 479–500. doi:10.1002/hrm.20434
- Daysh, S., & Kubler, J. (2008). *Human resources management common wealth universities*. Trinidad & Tobago: ACU.
- Eby, L., Adams, D., Russell, J., & Gaby, S. (2000). Perceptions of organizational readiness for change: Factors related to employees reactions to the implementation of team-based selling. *Human Relations*, 53(3), 419–428. doi:10.1177/0018726700533006
- Ekundayo, J. A. (2014). Occupational stress and employees productivity in the workplace. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 7(2), 157–165.
- Elrod, D. II, & Tippett, D. (2002). The death valley of change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 15(3), 273–291. doi:10.1108/09534810210429309
- Elsbach, K. D. (2003). Organizational perception management. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 25, 297–332. doi:10.1016/S0191-3085(03)25007-3
- Emechebe, S. N. (2009). *Human resources management in education. education management: theories and tasks*. Lagos: MacMillan.
- Gabriel, J. M. O., Oburu, C. E., & Aduba, O. (2013). Managing change in Nigerian business organizations. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(18), 138–143.
- Henkel, M. (2002). Emerging concepts of academic leadership and their implications for intra-institutional roles and relationship in higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 37(1), 29–41. doi:10.1111/1467-3435.00089
- Herscovitch, L., & Meyer, J. P. (2002). Commitment to organizational change: Extension of a three-component model. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(3), 474–487. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.87.3.474 PMID:12090605
- Julius, A. (2005). *Administration of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions*. Benin City, Nigeria: Ever-Blessed Publishers.
- Naylor, J. (1999). *Management*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Okafor, E. E., & Bode Okunade, A. S. (2005). *Introduction to industrial and labour relations*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Mubak Press.

Okebukola, P. A. (2002). *Report on the performance of federal university system in 2002*. Abuja: National University Commission.

Ololube, N. P. (2006). *Teacher education, school effectiveness and improvement: a study of academic and professional qualification on teachers' job effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools* [Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Helsinki.

Ololube, N. P., Agbor, C. N., & Agabi, C. O. (2017). Effective leadership and management in universities through quality management models. In N. J. Baporikar (Ed.), *Innovation and Shifting Perspectives in Management Education* (pp. 224–245). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference; doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-1019-2.ch010

Ololube, N. P., Agbor, C. N., & Kpolovie, P. J. (2016a). Effective communication process: the responsibility of university management for enhanced organizational justice. In N. P. Ololube (Ed.), *Handbook of research on organizational justice and culture in higher education institutions* (pp. 34–56). Hershey, PA, USA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-9850-5.ch002

Ololube, N. P., Aiya, F., Uriah, O. A., & Ololube, D. O. (2016b). Strategic planning: A universal remedy for the successful management of 21<sup>st</sup> century university education (UE). *Management*, 6(3), 76–88. doi:10.5923/j.mm.20160603.03

Ololube, N. P., Kpolovie, P. J., Egbezor, D. E., & Ekpenyong, N. S. (2009, May 5-8). Universities in Africa cannot wait: faculty perception of leadership, quality management for sustainable development. *Proceedings of 7th International JTEFS/BBCC Conference "Sustainable Development, Culture and Education"*, Daugavpils University, Latvia (pp. 132-149).

Oparanma, A. O., & Zeb-Obipi, I. (2012). Organizational development: The management of change in industrial organizations in Nigeria. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2(5), 577–582.

Orobor, E. M., Ogieva, W., & Abali, O. E. (2006). *Theory and practice of public administration*. Abuja, Nigeria: Adema Communication and Publishers.

Otara, A. (2011). Perception: A guide for managers and leaders. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 2(3), 21–24. doi:10.5430/jms.v2n3p21

Oyebanji, O. (2009). Resource situation and academic staff job performance in South-West Nigerian universities [unpublished Ph.D. thesis]. University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Oyebode, E. F., Ajayi, M. O., & Oyeyipo, D. O. (2007). *Administration of university education: A Professional Perspective*. Akure, Nigeria: Flocel.

Paruk, N., & Singh, A. M. (2012). Managing bank employee stress in a South African bank. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(15), 5369–5375.

Ramakrishnan, S. (2014). Change management models. Retrieved from <https://www.scrumalliance.org/community/articles/2014/march/change-management-models>

Terry, C. D., & Dinsmore, P. C. (2006). *The right projects, done right*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Vakola, M., & Nikolaou, I. (2005). Attitudes towards organizational change: What is the role of employees stress and commitment? *Employee Relations*, 27(2), 160–174. doi:10.1108/01425450510572685

van Dijk, R., & van Dick, R. (2009). Navigating organizational change: Change leaders, employee resistance and work-based identities. *Journal of Change Management*, 9(2), 143–163. doi:10.1080/14697010902879087

Vishnoo, B., & Vidya, B. (2007). *Public administration: organization and its principles*. Ram Nagar. New Delhi, India: Rajendra Ravindra Printers & S. Chand & Company.

Wittig, C. (2012). Employees' Reactions to Organizational Change. *OD PRACTITIONER*, 44(2), 23–28.

Wong, A. (2001). Leadership for effective supply chain partnership. *Total Quality Management*, 12(7 & 8), 913–919. doi:10.1080/09544120100000015

Xie, Y. (2013). Cross-cultural communication barriers between staff in overseas-funded enterprises and management strategies for overcoming them. *Journal of Languages and Culture*, 4(4), 44–48.

Yaacob, M., & Long, C. S. (2015). Role of occupational stress on job satisfaction. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 81–87. doi:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n2s1p81

*Nwachukwu Prince Ololube, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Management and Planning, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. He holds a PhD in Education and Teacher Education with a focus in Educational Management and Planning/Curriculum Studies from the University of Helsinki, Finland. In addition, he holds a postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources Management, Masters of Education in Educational Management and Planning, and a Bachelors of Science Education in Political Science. His research focuses on school business administration/management, curriculum studies/design, early childhood education, institutional management and leadership in higher education, sociology of education, education effectiveness, instructional effectiveness and quality improvement, ICT in education, adult and non-formal education, and research methodologies. Wherever Dr. Ololube finds himself, he always displays the same enthusiasm and dynamism toward inspiring and motivating his students. He challenges them to think critically and independently. He enjoys teaching as much as he is motivated to do research. Dr. Ololube has published over 60 articles in referred journals, 7 books, edited 5 books, presented at various international conferences, and contributed chapters to a number of books and encyclopedias. In all, Ololube has authored and/or co-authored more than one hundred and twenty (120) publications. Ololube's professional contributions to the academic community include: Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Scientific Research in Education (IJSRE); Editor, Online Journal of Education Research (OJER); Editorial Board Member, International Journal of Economics, Education and Development (IJEED); Review Board Member, International Editorial Review Board Member, International Journal of Management in Education (IJMIE); International Journal of Information and Communications Technology Education (IJICTE); Editorial Board Member Journal of Information Systems Education (JISE) and more. A selection of Dr. Ololube's publications and profile are available online at [www.ololube.com](http://www.ololube.com) .*

*Dennis Ogotum Ololube is a postgraduate student in the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ambros Ali University Ekpoma, Edo state, Nigeria. He has published a number of articles in local and international journals, and has presented papers at conferences.*