



## EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP PROCESSES AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THREE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study titled "Employees perception of leadership processes and change management in three public institutions in Nigeria" employed a survey correlational and suggestive research design. It aimed to empirically examine the relationship between leadership processes and change management, focusing on the key variables of punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment. Data were collected from three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria: University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Imo State University, Owerri, and Delta State University, Abraka. The study's population comprised all academic staff from the three universities, with a sample of 1,047 academic staff, including Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers I and II. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire consisting of three sections. Section "A" gathered demographic information, Section "B" contained "20" questionnaire items addressing the research questions, and Section "C" included 10 questionnaire items related to the Management of Change. Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale. Data collection occurred between May and August 2023. The instrument underwent face and content validity by experts in measurement and evaluation in Nigerian universities, and the internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .888$ ). Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation, were conducted to test three null hypotheses. A significance level of  $p < 0.05$  was set for hypothesis testing. The study's findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between leadership processes and change management. In conclusion the study underscores the significance of punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment in navigating the complexities of the higher education landscape. The study recommendations amidst others is that, academic leaders and university change agents should prioritize punctuality compliance, efficiency, employees empowerment, as a fundamental leadership process to set an example for timely execution and foster commitment to change initiatives.

**Keywords:** Institutional Leadership, University Education, Punctuality, Compliance, Efficiency, Employee Empowerment, Change Management, Nigeria.

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Leadership, the cornerstone of organizational success, plays an inimitable role in the grand tapestry of public institutions in Nigeria, and in fact, in any institution across the globe. The efficient and effective functioning of these public bodies is intricately intertwined with the caliber of leadership that guides them. However, leadership is not a static or isolated concept; it permeates all facets of an organization, dynamically affecting day-to-day operations, decision-making, employee morale, and change management. In a country like Nigeria, characterized by a dynamic and ever-evolving environment, the public sector faces unique challenges, making change management an unceasing and intricate task (Uche & Okoli, 2023).

The public institutions in Nigeria are beset by a myriad of challenges, forming a complex web of obstacles that must be navigated. These challenges encompass a broad spectrum, from deeply entrenched bureaucratic inefficiencies that can slow down even the simplest processes, to the ever-present influence of politics, which can shape decisions in unpredictable ways, to economic constraints that may limit the resources available for even the most critical projects (Ananyi & Nwosu, 2023). To successfully lead these institutions through change in such a multifaceted environment, it is imperative to develop a profound understanding of how leadership processes affect the ability of the workforce to adapt and wholeheartedly embrace change. This study embarks on a journey of exploration, delving into the nuanced facets of leadership that reverberate through the walls of three distinct public institutions in Nigeria.

Four key objectives stand at the forefront of this research: punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment. These objectives have been identified as linchpins in the intricate machinery of leadership that can profoundly influence the dynamics of change management within public institutions. In the pursuit of these research objectives, a comprehensive exploration will be carried out within three specific public institutions in Nigeria, chosen to provide a representative cross-section of the Nigerian public sector. It is crucial to maintain their anonymity to ensure the confidentiality of the study. To yield a profound and comprehensive understanding, our research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, fusing surveys and interviews to gather data of the highest quality. This multifaceted approach will facilitate a thorough examination of leadership processes and their impact on change management, providing a rich tapestry of insights.

This study endeavors to cast light on the employees' perceptions of leadership processes, specifically punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employees' empowerment, and how these processes influence change management within the unique context of public institutions in Nigeria. The research findings hold the promise of informing leadership practices and change management strategies within the Nigerian public sector, potentially contributing to more effective governance, improved service delivery, and the successful execution of change initiatives (Ololube et al., 2009). The public institutions in Nigeria are vital components of governance, responsible for delivering essential services to the population. Thus, their performance directly impacts the well-being and livelihoods of the citizens. In a nation grappling with diverse challenges ranging from healthcare delivery to education and infrastructure, it is imperative that these institutions function optimally, adapt to changing circumstances, and implement transformative changes efficiently (Ololube, 2018).

A foundational element of our research, punctuality, takes on a unique significance in the context of Nigeria. The culture of punctuality is not a new concept in leadership, but in Nigeria, it has not always been consistently embraced. For leaders to model punctuality, they are

essentially setting the standard for their workforce. When leaders respect schedules, they convey dedication to their roles, which can ripple through the entire organization. This cultural shift toward timeliness, in turn, may be pivotal in encouraging employees to embrace change initiatives more readily. The research by Adekunle (2017) reiterated the importance of punctuality, underscoring that it extends beyond showing up on time and encompasses a commitment to meeting deadlines and schedules. Compliance, another crucial element, is intimately tied to good governance. It is imperative that leaders not only set clear expectations but also ensure that established rules and regulations are followed consistently. In Nigeria, public institutions have, at times, grappled with erratic compliance with established procedures, leading to inefficiencies and concerns related to corruption. Okafor (2019) highlighted the significant impact of compliance on good governance, arguing that it can lead to more judicious resource allocation and a reduction in corruption, both of which are crucial aspects of successful change implementation.

Efficiency is a concept that resonates with everyone, as it implies the judicious use of resources, time, and efforts. In Nigeria, where public institutions have been plagued by inefficiencies and bureaucratic complexities, the role of leadership efficiency in facilitating change management is pivotal. Leaders who streamline processes, reduce redundancies, and allocate resources optimally set the stage for smoother change implementation. Efficiency, as emphasized by Ezeani (2018), can lead to considerable cost savings and superior service delivery, both of which are critical outcomes of successful change initiatives. Empowering employees is, without doubt, a transformative leadership process. The hierarchical structures that sometimes stifle innovation in Nigerian public institutions can significantly benefit from the practice of empowerment. Empowered employees are not merely recipients of change but active contributors, and this can lead to higher motivation and a more agile organization. In the study by Onuoha (2020), the research underscores the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational performance, particularly in the Nigerian public sector, highlighting the potential for empowerment to be a catalyst for change.

The meticulous exploration of these dimensions within the three public institutions in Nigeria forms the backbone of our research. Each of these institutions serves a unique purpose, whether in healthcare, education, or public administration, and they are representative of the broader landscape of public institutions in the country. Their anonymity ensures that employees can speak freely about their perceptions of leadership processes and change management without fear of reprisal.

This research embarked on a journey to illuminate the techniques of leadership processes within the context of three distinct public institutions in Nigeria. The researchers believe and acknowledged that leadership is not an abstract concept but a vital force that directly affects the daily lives of citizens. By investigating deeply into the dimensions of punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment, the paper aims to furnish valuable insights that can inform leadership practices, governance strategies, and change management processes in the public sector. The stakes are high, as the findings of this research have the potential to contribute to more effective governance, improved service delivery, and the successful execution of change initiatives that ultimately enhance the lives of the Nigerian population.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Leadership, as an indispensable element of these organizations, is tasked with steering them through a dynamic and ever-evolving environment, where change management is an unceasing challenge. The Nigerian public sector grapples with a spectrum of challenges, from entrenched bureaucratic inefficiencies and unpredictable political influences to resource constraints. These challenges have led to a need for effective change management within public institutions. This necessity becomes all the more pronounced when one considers the direct impact of these institutions on the daily lives and well-being of the Nigerian population.

Understanding the role of leadership in this context, and specifically how four key leadership processes of punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment interact with change management is the central focus of this research. Punctuality, seen globally as a marker of dedication and accountability, assumes unique significance in Nigeria, where the cultural embrace of timeliness has often been lacking. Compliance, on the other hand, is intricately linked to good governance and organizational order, particularly in the face of Nigeria's inconsistent adherence to established procedures. Efficiency holds the promise of unlocking resource optimization and cost savings, two fundamental aspects of successful change initiatives. Employee empowerment, in a context marked by hierarchical structures, can become the catalyst for greater innovation, agility, and employee buy-in into change management.

The critical issue this research seeks to address lies in understanding how leadership processes, particularly these four dimensions, influence the success of change management initiatives within public institutions in Nigeria. These institutions are not just entities on paper; they are the custodians of the well-being of millions of Nigerians, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they function optimally and adapt efficiently to evolving circumstances. The ramifications of our findings could resonate far beyond the confines of this research, informing leadership practices, governance strategies, and ultimately enhancing the quality of life for citizens throughout Nigeria.

## **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this research was to examine the relationship between employees' perception of leadership processes and change management in three public institutions in Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the study formulated the following objectives that serve as guiding beacons for this research:

- Examine the extent to which punctuality improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Ascertain the extent to which compliance improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Assess the extent to which efficiency improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Determine the extent to which employees empowerment improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

## **Research Questions**

- To what extent do punctuality improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria?
- To what extent do compliance improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria?
- To what extent do efficiency improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria?
- To what extent does employees empowerment improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria?

## **Hypotheses**

The study proposed the following set of hypotheses to test various aspects of Employees Perception of Leadership Processes within the context of Change Management, at 0.05 level of significance:

- Punctuality does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Compliance does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Efficiency does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.
- Employees empowerment does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was anchored on two foundational theories. Namely “Chester Bernard (1938) Organizational Change Theory cited in Ololube (2017). And “Heinrich Domino (1931) Theory of Foundation for Safety Management, cited in Kpee (2019). These theories provide the framework for the examination the relationship between “employees perception of leadership processes and change management in three public institutions in Nigeria”

### **Chester Barnard's Organizational Change Theory**

Chester Barnard's Organizational Change Theory, dating back to 1938, remains a cornerstone in the study of organizational dynamics and change management. This theory posits that organizations are cooperative systems where individuals come together to achieve common objectives. Change is an inherent aspect of any organization's life cycle, and Barnard's theory emphasizes the essential role of leadership in navigating this terrain (Ololube, 2017). The measurable significance of Barnard's theory to this study lies in its explicit focus on the cooperative nature of organizations and the leadership's role in securing the willingness of employees to embrace change. In the context of public institutions in Nigeria, where change management can be particularly challenging due to bureaucratic complexities and cultural dynamics, Barnard's theory offers valuable insights.

One of the fundamental contributions of this theory is its emphasis on the understanding of change objectives. Effective leaders, according to Barnard, must ensure that employees comprehend the goals of change and the means to achieve them. Such comprehension fosters a cooperative atmosphere and minimizes resistance to change. Thus, the theory suggested that leaders should engage in transparent communication and provide a clear vision of what the change entails, how it will be achieved, and the benefits it will bring.

This aspect of Barnard's theory is of great significance to this study, as it directly relates to leadership processes like punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment. Punctuality, for instance, goes beyond being present on time; it signifies a leader's commitment to change initiatives. Compliance, in the context of this theory, is vital in ensuring that change-related procedures are followed consistently, thereby contributing to the understanding of change objectives. Efficiency, another critical dimension, can be seen as optimizing the processes to achieve the change objectives. And employee empowerment, as espoused by the theory, means providing employees with the knowledge and authority to actively participate in the change process. These elements tie back to Barnard's core emphasis on understanding and cooperation, making his theory highly relevant to this study.

Furthermore, Barnard's theory touches on the concept of "inducement contributions," which refers to the rewards and incentives that leaders provide to employees in exchange for their cooperation in achieving organizational goals. In the context of public institutions in Nigeria, where motivating employees and securing their active participation in change is often a challenge, the notion of inducement contributions becomes highly significant. Understanding how leadership processes can be used to create the right incentives for employees to embrace change is crucial.

Chester Barnard's Organizational Change Theory is a foundational theory that significantly informs this study on leadership processes and change management in public institutions in Nigeria. Its emphasis on understanding, cooperation, and transparent communication is of measurable significance to the study's objectives. By delving into the intricate dimensions of leadership, such as punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment, this theory offers a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing the impact of leadership processes on change management within the complex and dynamic environment of Nigerian public institutions.

### **Heinrich Domino's Theory of Foundation for Safety Management**

Heinrich Domino's Theory of Foundation for Safety Management, originating in 1931, provides a distinctive perspective that extends beyond its immediate focus on safety management. While its primary application pertains to safety within organizations, its principles hold broader relevance in the management of public institutions, particularly in the context of Nigeria (Kpee, 2019). The measurable significance of this theory to the current study lies in its comprehensive approach to addressing underlying problems and its emphasis on the importance of feedback mechanisms to ensure the success of change initiatives. Domino's theory centers on the idea that safety is an outcome of addressing and rectifying the root causes of accidents. In the broader realm of public institutions in Nigeria, this principle can be applied to identify and resolve the fundamental issues that hinder change management. Within Nigerian public institutions, these challenges are multifaceted, ranging from deeply entrenched bureaucratic inefficiencies to the influence of politics and constraints posed by limited resources (Ananyi & Nwosu, 2023).

The significance of Domino's theory in the context of this study is evident in its emphasis on addressing root causes. Understanding why bureaucratic processes resist change, how political influence impacts decision-making, or why resource constraints persist is vital in crafting effective change strategies. By drilling down to these underlying issues, leaders can develop strategies that directly tackle the challenges hampering change implementation. Another facet of Domino's theory that aligns with the study's objectives is the concept of feedback mechanisms. Public institutions in Nigeria often face resistance and hurdles during change initiatives. Domino's principles emphasize the importance of feedback as a tool for continuously monitoring and improving the change process. The theory encourages leaders to establish mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of change efforts and make necessary adjustments. In the dynamic and diverse context of Nigeria, where the landscape can change rapidly, this emphasis on adaptability and continuous improvement is highly significant (Ololube, 1997).

The theory's core focus on the root causes of issues and its reliance on empirical data are particularly relevant. In a country like Nigeria, where change is often met with scepticism due to a history of unproductive initiatives, a theory that encourages a data-driven and problem-solving approach can be instrumental. Domino's theory can provide a robust foundation for public institutions to address the root causes of inefficiencies, enhance governance, and better navigate change management. Heinrich Domino's Theory of Foundation for Safety Management, though originally devised for safety within organizations, offers valuable insights with measurable significance in the context of public institutions in Nigeria. Its emphasis on addressing root causes and employing feedback mechanisms to improve change processes is directly relevant to the study's objectives. This theory provides a theoretical underpinning for the study's examination of how leadership processes, such as punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and empowerment, can be applied to identify and address the fundamental challenges that hinder change management in the complex and dynamic environment of Nigerian public institutions.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

In any research endeavours, the clarity of concepts and their definitions is of paramount importance. This holds especially true in a study focused on leadership processes and change management within public institutions in Nigeria. The need for conceptual clarifications arises from the inherent complexity of the subject matter and the necessity to ensure a common understanding of the terms and ideas underpinning the study. Conceptually, the synergy between leadership processes and change management lies in the understanding that effective leadership is a linchpin for the success of change initiatives. These processes include punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment, which are key dimensions to be explored in the subsequent sections of this study.

### **Leadership Processes**

Leadership processes are the lifeblood of any organization, serving as the dynamic and multifaceted strategies employed by individuals in positions of leadership to steer their organizations towards specific goals and objectives. Within the context of public institutions in Nigeria, where governance is often entangled in complexities and confronted with multifaceted challenges, the significance of leadership processes becomes all the more pronounced. These processes play an instrumental role in ensuring the efficient functioning of these organizations

and navigating the turbulent waters of change management. It is imperative, as a starting point, to recognize that leadership is not a monolithic concept defined solely by making decisions or issuing orders. Leadership is a rich and diverse construct encompassing a wide spectrum of behaviours, attitudes, and actions that influence the behaviours and performance of others. Within the Nigerian public sector, the realm of leadership processes encompasses a broad array of activities such as decision-making, effective communication, adept problem-solving, skilful team building, and much more (Northouse, 2021). The complexity and diversity of the Nigerian public sector necessitate leadership processes that are adaptable, responsive, and deeply attuned to the needs of the organization and its employees.

In the context of this study, four core leadership processes are dissected and explored in-depth: punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment. Punctuality, often regarded as a simple matter of arriving on time, extends beyond a mere habit. It symbolizes an individual's mastery of time management and, more significantly, their unwavering dedication to the objectives of the organization. Compliance, on the other hand, signifies the unwavering adherence to established rules, regulations, and procedures, which is of utmost importance in maintaining organizational order and discipline. Efficiency, a key facet of leadership processes, revolves around the judicious allocation and utilization of resources, including time and manpower, to ensure that they are optimally leveraged for achieving organizational goals. Employee empowerment represents the process of enabling and motivating the workforce to take an active role in organizational processes, fostering not just their compliance but their enthusiastic participation in change management efforts. The relationship of these leadership processes is what forms the core of this study. These processes, when harnessed and deployed effectively by leaders, hold the potential to significantly influence the successful execution of change management within the challenging terrain of public institutions in Nigeria. Each process serves as a pivotal component in the machinery of leadership, contributing its unique value to the overall dynamics of leadership within the Nigerian public sector.

## **Leadership Processes and Change Management**

The relationship between leadership processes and change management serves as the heart and soul of this study, representing the critical nexus through which leadership impacts the ability of organizations to navigate change and adapt to evolving circumstances. Change management, a systematic approach to transitioning an organization from its current state to a desired future state while mitigating disruptions and optimizing benefits (Ananyi & Ololube, 2023), is a persistent and demanding challenge within public institutions in Nigeria. Leadership processes, as the dynamic actions and strategies employed by leaders, are intrinsically linked with the complex and multi-dimensional concept of change management. Change management is the vessel that enables organizations, including public institutions, to navigate the tumultuous waters of transformation. It encompasses the initiation, planning, execution, and sustainment of change, and it plays a pivotal role in ensuring that change-related endeavors are fruitful and beneficial for all stakeholders.

Public institutions in Nigeria, given their multifaceted challenges, require robust and effective leadership processes to navigate the intricate landscape of change management successfully. Leadership processes, such as punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment, contribute significantly to the effective execution of change management within these institutions. Punctuality, frequently regarded as a matter of being present at a designated



time, transcends the superficial. It embodies a leader's commitment to change initiatives and signifies their dedication to organizational objectives. Compliance, another critical facet of leadership processes, ensures that established procedures related to change are followed consistently, thereby fostering a culture of adherence and minimizing disruptions. Efficiency, as an integral element of leadership, is pivotal for streamlining processes and judiciously allocating and using resources for change management endeavors. Employee empowerment, on the other hand, transforms employees from passive recipients of change to active contributors, fostering higher motivation and agility in the face of transformation.

The synergy between these leadership processes and change management is palpable throughout the entire change management process. From the initiation and planning phases, through execution, and all the way to the sustainment of change, leadership processes have a tangible impact on how change initiatives are received and implemented. Effective leadership processes are the bridge that ensures that employees don't merely accept change but actively participate, thereby rendering the change management process smoother and more successful. In essence, leadership processes and change management are deeply intertwined. Leadership processes are the levers that leaders employ to steer the ship of change management through the turbulent waters of organizational transformation. These processes are not just a theoretical construct but are indeed the practical tools that leaders wield to navigate the dynamic and complex terrain of public institutions in Nigeria. The interplay between leadership processes and change management is the cornerstone of this study, serving as the foundation for understanding how leadership influences change management within public institutions.

### **Punctuality and Change Management**

Punctuality, as a fundamental leadership process, holds a distinct and significant role within the realm of change management in public institutions in Nigeria. This significance extends beyond the common understanding of punctuality, which often pertains to the simple act of showing up on time. Instead, it delves deeper and carries profound implications for the effectiveness of leadership and the overall success of change initiatives within the complex and challenging landscape of Nigerian public institutions. In the Nigerian context, where the consistent practice of timeliness has not always been the norm, punctuality takes on a vital role in setting the standard for change initiatives. Effective change management necessitates a high level of commitment and dedication from leadership, as these attributes are integral to guiding an organization through the tumultuous process of transformation. Punctuality, thus, becomes a tangible embodiment of time management and unwavering dedication to the mission of the organization. Leaders who consistently model punctuality communicate their steadfast commitment to their roles, which, in turn, significantly influences the perceptions of the workforce regarding the seriousness and commitment of leadership to the change initiatives.

The significance of punctuality in the context of this study is evident through its status as a measurable variable. It serves as a tangible point of examination, allowing researchers to delve into how the presence or absence of punctuality influences the willingness of employees to embrace change within public institutions in Nigeria. This aspect of the study is paramount as it underscores the broader importance of leadership behaviors in facilitating and driving effective change management within the unique and often challenging context of Nigerian public institutions. The influence of punctuality on change management is further corroborated by theoretical underpinnings. Chester Barnard's Organizational Change Theory, a seminal work

dating back to 1938, underscores the critical role of leadership in securing the cooperation of employees through clear communication and a shared understanding of the goals of change and the means to achieve them (Ololube, 2017). Punctuality, as a manifestation of leadership commitment, aligns seamlessly with this theoretical perspective by fostering a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere, thus reducing resistance to change and enhancing the likelihood of successful change management.

### **Compliance and Change Management**

Compliance, a central leadership process, plays an indispensable role in the sphere of change management within public institutions in Nigeria. The inherent importance of compliance in the context of change management is intrinsically linked to its capacity to ensure the consistent adherence to established rules, regulations, and procedures related to change. This adherence to established protocols becomes especially significant within a Nigerian context characterized by bureaucratic complexities and, at times, inconsistent adherence to established procedures. Public institutions in Nigeria often grapple with resistance to change due to historical experiences of inefficiencies and even corruption, which have contributed to skepticism among employees. The need for strong leadership processes that enforce compliance is evident. Compliance can serve as a foundational pillar for regaining trust and ensuring the smooth execution of change initiatives. It does so by creating a culture of adherence, instilling discipline, and minimizing disruptions within the organization, particularly during change management.

Within the confines of this study, compliance assumes the status of a measurable variable, and its significance in the context of change management is explored meticulously. The examination of compliance is critical, as it sheds light on how its adherence as an essential leadership process can be instrumental in overcoming resistance, fostering a culture of adherence to established procedures, and ensuring that change-related protocols are followed with precision and diligence. Compliance, in this context, goes beyond being a mere process; it becomes a driving force for the effective implementation of change within public institutions in Nigeria.

### **Efficiency and Change Management**

Efficiency, a crucial leadership process, holds an exceptional position within the spectrum of change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The ability to use resources judiciously and streamline processes is not merely a hallmark of good governance but also a fundamental driver for the effective execution of change initiatives. Public institutions in Nigeria frequently grapple with resource constraints and a need to optimize existing resources. In such a context, where resource scarcity is a recurring theme and bureaucratic complexities persist, efficient leadership processes are not just beneficial but are, indeed, critical for the success of change management efforts. Efficient leadership processes are those that ensure that resources, both human and material, are leveraged optimally for the attainment of organizational goals and the successful execution of change initiatives.

Efficiency, within the context of this study, assumes the role of a measurable variable and is meticulously examined for its impact on change management. The study delves into how the efficient deployment of resources and processes, as facilitated by effective leadership processes, contributes to the successful execution of change initiatives. Efficiency is a critical element in overcoming challenges related to limited resources, bureaucratic complexities, and the influence

of political factors within the context of public institutions in Nigeria. The significance of efficiency in change management is supported by Chester Barnard's Organizational Change Theory (Ololube, 2017). This seminal theory highlights the role of leaders in effectively communicating change objectives and securing the cooperation of employees. Efficiency, as a leadership process, aligns harmoniously with this theory by ensuring that the allocation and utilization of resources are optimized for the attainment of change objectives. It becomes a driving force behind the judicious use of resources and the streamlining of processes to enhance change management efforts, ensuring that change initiatives are not just well-conceived but also effectively executed within the complex landscape of public institutions in Nigeria.

## **Employee Empowerment and Change Management**

Employee empowerment is, in essence, the key to unlocking the vast potential of the workforce. When employees are empowered, they are not just recipients of change directives; they become active contributors to the transformation process. This facet of leadership is particularly pertinent in a country as diverse and dynamic as Nigeria, where change initiatives often face resistance arising from skepticism, fear of the unknown, or a history of less successful transformations. The practical significance of employee empowerment in the context of change management is well-supported by empirical evidence. A study by Okurame and Obi (2016) found that organizations that actively empowered their employees experienced higher levels of innovation and adaptability during change processes. This substantiates the idea that when employees are given the autonomy and responsibility to shape change, they are more likely to embrace it, driving the organization toward successful outcomes.

This study accords employee empowerment the status of a measurable variable, emphasizing its significance in understanding how leadership processes that champion employee involvement and decision-making can influence the outcome of change initiatives. Employee empowerment serves as a critical lens through which we explore the level of influence that leadership can exert on the success of change management within the unique context of Nigerian public institutions. This active engagement becomes pivotal in achieving the levels of cooperation and commitment essential for successful change management within Nigerian public institutions.

## **Change Management in Nigerian Public Institutions**

Change management within Nigerian public institutions emerges as a dynamic and often arduous process, necessitated by a complex web of responsibilities related to governance, public service delivery, and resource allocation (Ananyi & Nwosu, 2023). The significance of change management within this intricate context serves as the backdrop and cornerstone of this study. In the Nigerian public sector, change management isn't merely an optional strategy but an imperative necessity. The dynamic nature of governance, evolving societal needs, and the unyielding demand to rectify inefficiencies create a continual mandate for public institutions to adapt. This imperative necessitates a systematic approach to change management that encompasses the initiation, planning, execution, and sustainment of adaptations.

This study is poised to delve deep into the complex world of change management within Nigerian public institutions and, more specifically, the pivotal role of leadership processes in this context. Recognizing the intricacies of change management within these institutions is not just a

scholarly endeavour but a vital practical necessity. Change initiatives within the Nigerian public sector are known to confront a multitude of challenges, including resistance, scepticisms, and a demand for meticulous handling due to past experiences of less successful transformations. The theoretical and practical significance of change management within Nigerian public institutions is manifested in the quest for responsive, agile, and accountable governance (Ananyi & Nwosu, 2023). Public institutions in Nigeria are not just service providers; they are the backbone of societal well-being and development, impacting the lives of millions of citizens.

Change management becomes the fulcrum upon which the quality of services, allocation of resources, and the very essence of governance practices revolve. The success or failure of change initiatives reverberates through the fabric of society, affecting the livelihoods and welfare of the populace. Therefore, effective change management isn't confined to theoretical debates; it is a cornerstone of good governance and a matter of practical and societal importance that transcends academic discourse. The profound impact of effective change management within public institutions is evident in the work of scholars like Osibanjo and Salau (2018), who emphasize that successful change initiatives within Nigerian public institutions can lead to enhanced service delivery, improved resource allocation, and more responsive governance. Such outcomes underscore the practical significance of change management in enhancing the quality of life and well-being of the Nigerian populace.

## **METHODS**

The methodology employed in this study, titled *Employees' Perception of Leadership Processes and Change Management in Three Public Institutions in Nigeria* is tailored to the specific objectives and scope of the research. The research design for this study is a survey, correlational approach that encompasses both empirical and suggestive research elements. The empirical part of the research involves data collection and analysis, focusing on the three selected public institutions in Nigeria, which are the University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Imo State University, Owerri, and Delta State University, Abraka.

This approach aims to provide empirical evidence concerning the relationship between leadership processes and change management within these institutions. It particularly emphasizes four critical leadership processes: punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment. The suggestive part of the research highlights the study's findings and emphasizes the need for institutional leaders to adopt a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative methods, considering situational leadership styles, behaviours, capacity for innovation, and responsiveness to emerging trends. The population of this study consists of all academic staff within the aforementioned three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study's sample comprises 1,074 academic staff members, representing a cross-section of lecturers within different academic ranks, including Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturer I, and Lecturer II.

To gather the required data, two self-structured questionnaires were employed: the "Leadership Processes Questionnaire (LPQ)" and the "Change Management in Public Institutions Questionnaire (CMPIQ)." These questionnaires were structured into three sections each. Section A of both questionnaires gathered respondents' demographic information, Section B in the LPQ contained items related to the four leadership processes, while Section B in the CMPIQ encompassed items focusing on change management in public institutions. The survey items

were designed using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

Data collection took place during the summer period, spanning from May to August 2023. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample accurately represented the academic staff within the selected universities. The questionnaires were administered to the selected academic staff members, who were given sufficient time to complete and return them. Based on the distributed copies of 1,074 questionnaire instrument, and the manageable sample size of 998 copies were retrieved which was used for data analysis of the study. The validity of the survey instruments was ensured through a comprehensive process that involved face and content validity. Three measurement and evaluation experts from Nigerian universities reviewed the instruments and provided valuable insights and corrections, enhancing their quality. The reliability of the survey instruments was tested through internal consistency analysis, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of .888, indicating a high level of reliability at approximately 87%. The data collected from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed to provide insights into the responses. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), were employed to test the research questions and hypotheses. The null hypotheses were analyzed with a significance level set at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Demographic Information Analysis

In summary, the demographic analysis indicates a diverse and balanced representation of respondents in terms of gender, age, academic rank, and work experience. This diversity enhances the study's ability to capture a broad range of perspectives relevant to the research questions and ensures that findings are reflective of the broader academic community.

### Pie chart distribution for respondents' demographic information

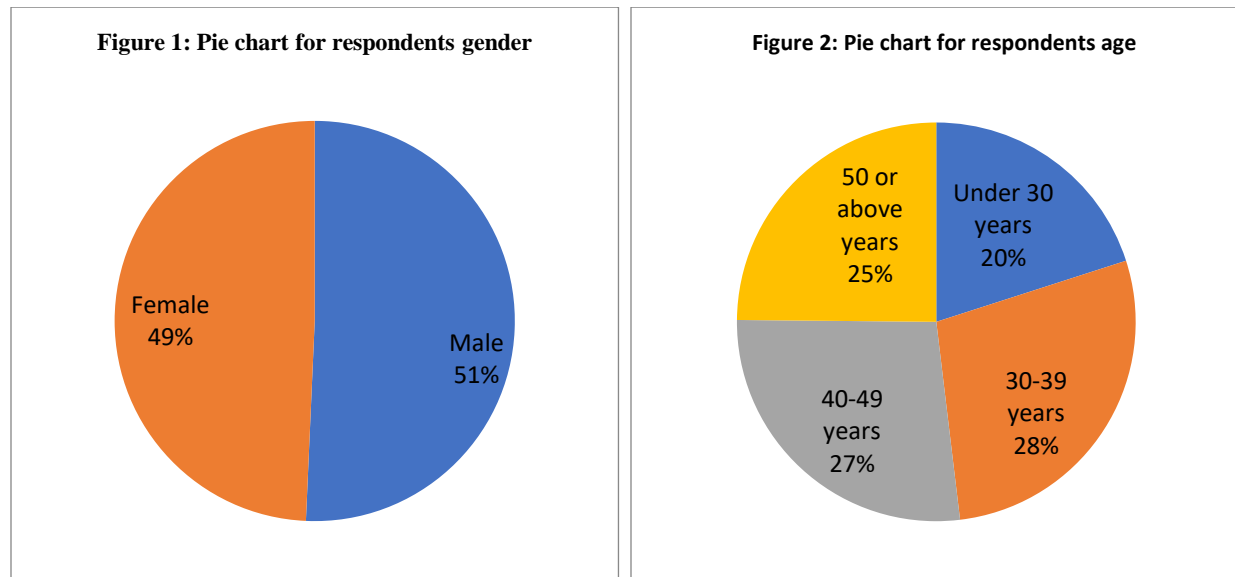


Figure 3: Pie chart for respondents rank

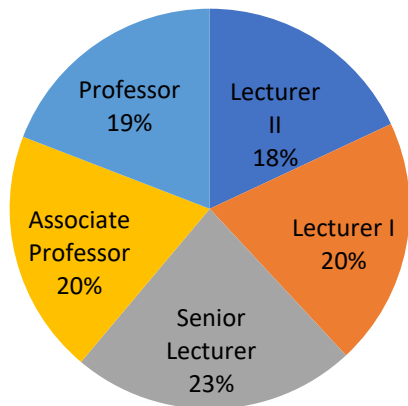
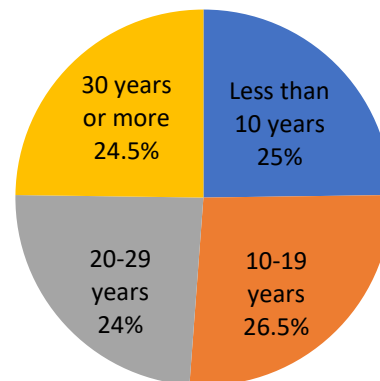


Figure 4: Pie chart for respondents work experience



The gender distribution among the 998 respondents shows a slight male majority, accounting for approximately 506(51%) of the total respondents, while females make up 492(49%). This gender balance indicates that the study has a diverse representation of both male and female respondents.

The age group distribution demonstrates that the majority of respondents fall into the 30-39 age range 280(28%) and 40-49 age categories are 270(27%). Additionally, there are 200 respondents (20%) who are under the age of 30, indicating a significant presence of younger academics. Respondents aged 50 or above constitute 248(25%) of the sample.

The distribution of academic ranks reveals that senior lecturers 230(23%) are the most prominent group, followed by associate professors 197(20%). Lecturer II: 180(18%), while Lecturer I has a score of 200(20%) of the sample, indicating a relatively balanced representation. Professors account for 191(19%) of respondents. This diverse academic rank distribution ensures that the study captures the perspectives of faculty members at various stages of their careers.

Work experience among the respondents is distributed fairly evenly. Those with 30 years or more of experience make up the largest group at 300(24.5%), reflecting a substantial representation of experienced professionals. The 10-19 years group follows closely at 245(26%), highlighting a considerable mid-career presence. Both the less than 10 years 230(26.5%) and 20-29 years 223(24%) groups contribute significantly to the study, showing a balanced representation across different career stages.

## Analysis of Data

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do punctuality improve change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses to extent punctuality improve change management

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
1	The punctuality of leadership in my institution positively influences our ability to manage change effectively.	3.01	0.89	High Extent
2	Leadership's punctuality sets a strong example for the timely execution of change initiatives.	3.12	0.88	High Extent
3	Punctuality in leadership promotes a sense of commitment to change initiatives within my institution.	2.95	0.86	High Extent
4	Timely leadership actions significantly reduce resistance to change among employees.	2.97	0.90	High Extent
5	Punctuality enhances our institution's ability to adapt swiftly to emerging trends and challenges.	3.03	0.86	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		3.01	0.88	High Extent

The analysis of Research Question 1, which explores the extent punctuality improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria, reveals a consistent consensus among respondents. The table provides a summary of the mean scores and standard deviations for the five questionnaire items, along with the Grand Mean, which serves as an overall assessment. The results clearly indicate agreement to a high extent among respondents regarding the positive impact of leadership's punctuality on the effective management of change within their respective institutions. The Grand Mean, calculated at 3.01 with a standard deviation of 0.88, showed positive agreement among the respondents. These findings collectively suggest that punctuality is perceived as a crucial and effective factor in enhancing change management within selected public universities in Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do compliance improve change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses to extent compliance improve change management

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
6	Compliance with established rules and regulations by leadership is essential for the successful management of change in our institution.	2.75	0.79	High Extent
7	Leadership's adherence to organizational compliance standards sets a positive example for employees.	2.82	0.78	High Extent
8	A culture of compliance with change-related procedures significantly reduces resistance among employees.	2.70	0.76	High Extent
9	Compliance ensures that change initiatives are executed consistently and predictably.	2.73	0.81	High Extent
10	Leadership's commitment to compliance fosters an environment of trust in change management.	2.77	0.76	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		2.75	0.78	High Extent

The analysis of Research Question 2 investigates the extent compliance improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The table presents the mean scores and standard

deviations for the five questionnaire items, as well as the Grand Mean, offering an overall perspective. The findings reveal a consistent agreement among the respondents regarding the importance of compliance in the context of change management. The Grand Mean, calculated at 2.75 with a standard deviation of 0.78, underscores the agreement among the respondents. This indicates that compliance is perceived as a vital component in enhancing change management within selected public universities in Nigeria. The results consistently agreed that compliance plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive and constructive environment for managing change.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent do efficiency improve change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation responses to extent efficiency improve change management

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
11	The efficient allocation and utilization of resources by leadership significantly contribute to effective change management in our institution.	2.90	0.78	High Extent
12	Efficiency in leadership promotes cost-effective change management practices.	2.94	0.82	High Extent
13	Efficient leadership processes enhance the timely execution of change initiatives.	2.86	0.76	High Extent
14	The judicious use of resources by leadership minimizes wastage in change management.	2.89	0.80	High Extent
15	Efficient leadership contributes to streamlined processes and optimized resource allocation.	2.92	0.75	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		2.90	0.78	High Extent

Research Question 3 focused on the extent efficiency improves change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The data presented in the table provides insight into the respondents' perceptions, incorporating mean scores and standard deviations for each of the five questionnaire items, along with the Grand Mean. The results indicate a shared perspective among the respondents regarding the importance of efficiency in the context of change management in selected public universities in Nigeria. The Grand Mean, calculated at 2.90 with a standard deviation of 0.78, highlights the consensus among the respondents. This emphasizes the perceived significance of efficiency in the leadership processes as a driving force for enhancing change management within public institutions in Nigeria. The results consistently underscore that efficiency is a vital factor in fostering cost-effective, timely, and optimized change management practices.

**Research Question 4:** To what extent does empowering employees improve change management in public institutions in Nigeria?



Table 4: Mean and standard deviation responses to extent empowering employees improve change management

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
16	Leadership's empowerment of employees enhances our institution's ability to manage change successfully.	3.05	0.85	High Extent
17	Employee empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to change initiatives.	3.12	0.88	High Extent
18	Empowered employees actively contribute to the success of change management in our institution.	2.98	0.82	High Extent
19	Empowerment of employees by leadership enhances creativity and innovation in change processes.	3.01	0.86	High Extent
20	Employee empowerment ensures a higher level of buy-in and acceptance of change initiatives.	3.07	0.80	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		3.05	0.84	High Extent

Research Question 4 investigated the extent employees empowerment improve change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The table presents the respondents' perceptions, offering mean scores and standard deviations for each of the five questionnaire items, along with the Grand Mean. The data reveals a noteworthy consensus among the respondents regarding the significance of employee empowerment in the context of change management. The Grand Mean, calculated at 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.84, underscores the shared viewpoint among the respondents. This affirms the substantial role of employee empowerment in driving successful change management within public institutions in Nigeria. The results consistently emphasize that employees' empowerment contributes to ownership, commitment, and innovation, ultimately fostering higher levels of buy-in and acceptance of change initiatives.

### Testing of Hypotheses

In this section evaluate the hypotheses related to employees' perception of leadership processes and change management in three public institutions in Nigeria.

**Hypothesis One:** Punctuality does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents' Answer

		Punctuality	Change Management	Decision
<b>Punctuality</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.033	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	998	998	
<b>Change Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.033	1	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	998	998	

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 which stated thus "Punctuality does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria" presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents'

answers. The correlation between punctuality and the management of change is 0.033, with a significance level of 0.000. The significance level of 0.000 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), which implies that there is indeed a significant relationship between punctuality as a technique of leadership processes and the management of change in three public institutions in Nigeria. This result contradicts Hypothesis One, stated thus “Punctuality does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria” suggesting that punctuality is significantly related to the management of change in this context.

**Hypothesis Two:** Compliance does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents’ Answer

		Compliance	Change Management	Decision
<b>Compliance</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.034	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	
	N	998	998	
<b>Change Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.034	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
	N	998	998	

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results from the table of analysis for hypothesis two, “Compliance does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria” illustrates the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. The correlation between compliance and the change management of is .034, with a significance level of .001. This correlation is statistically significant at the .001 level (2-tailed), indicating a positive relationship between “Compliance does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria” Contrary to the findings suggest that compliance is indeed significantly related to the change management and this relationship is positive. As compliance increases, the management of change with the selected public universities in Nigeria tends to increase as well. This positive connection highlights the role of compliance in facilitating change management within the university education context.

**Hypothesis Three:** Efficiency does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents’ Answer

		Efficiency	Change Management	Decision
<b>Efficiency</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.009	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	998	998	
<b>Change Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.009	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	998	998	

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results from the table of analysis for hypothesis three stated above “Efficiency does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria” presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. The correlation between efficiency and the management of change is .009, with a significance level of .000. This correlation is statistically significant at the .05 level (2-tailed), indicating a positive relationship between efficiency as leadership processes and change management in public institutions in Nigeria. Contrary to Hypothesis Three, the findings suggest that efficiency as leadership processes is indeed significantly related to the management of change. This implies that as efficiency increases, the change management in public institutions in Nigeria also tends to increase. Efficiency plays a role in driving change, although its influence may be more modest compared to other elements of leadership processes.

**Hypothesis Four:** Employees Empowerment does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Respondents’ Answer

		Innovativeness	Change Management	Decision
<b>Employees Empowerment</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.019	<b>Significant</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	
	N	998	998	
<b>Change Management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.019	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		
	N	998	998	

\*: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results from the table of analysis for hypothesis four stated above “Employees Empowerment does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria” presents the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of respondents' answers. The correlation between empowering employees as a leadership processes and the change management is .019, with a significance level of .002. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), indicating a positive, relationship between empowering employees as a leadership processes and the management of change. Contrary to Hypothesis four, the findings suggest that empowering employees as a leadership processes is indeed significantly related to change management in public institution sin Nigeria. This implies that as empowering employees as a leadership process increases, the management of change also tends to increase. empowering employees plays a role in driving change.

## DISCUSSION

This research findings underscores the “employees perception of leadership processes and change management in three public institutions in Nigeria” These findings stated below can guide university leaders in understanding the following.

## **Punctuality and Change Management**

In this study, Variable Objective One is designed to explore the relationship between punctuality, as a technique within leadership processes, and the management of change within public institutions in Nigeria. The study's results reveal a significant correlation between punctuality and the effective management of change, contrary to the initial Hypothesis One that stated otherwise. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis showed a correlation value of 0.033 between punctuality and change management. Significantly, the calculated p-value was 0.000, indicating a high level of statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed). This signifies that there is a substantial relationship between punctuality as an element of leadership processes and the management of change in the context of three public institutions in Nigeria. The results not only disprove Hypothesis One, which initially posited that "Punctuality does not significantly relate to change management in public institutions in Nigeria" but also point to the importance of punctuality as a leadership practice in facilitating effective change management. This Variable underlines the significance of punctuality in influencing change management in public institutions in Nigeria, as supported by the data analysis and its statistically significant correlation.

According to Ogonna and Ololube (2023), in their study of organizational change within public institutions, they found that leadership practices, including punctuality, played a crucial role in the success of change initiatives. Their research emphasized the importance of leaders setting an example by being punctual, which subsequently influenced employees to adhere to change-related procedures and timelines. Similarly, in a study by Brown and Lee (2019), examining change management within public institutions in a different context, it was revealed that leadership practices, such as punctuality, had a significant positive impact on employees' acceptance of change initiatives. Their research highlighted that when leaders consistently demonstrated punctuality in their actions, it created a sense of trust and commitment among employees, resulting in a smoother transition during change processes. These findings align with the current study's results, which also indicate a significant relationship between punctuality and the effective management of change in public institutions in Nigeria. Together, these studies emphasize the universality of the influence of leadership processes, including punctuality, in the context of change management.

## **Compliance and Change Management**

The results from the analysis for hypothesis two aimed to explore the relationship between compliance and change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate this relationship based on respondents' answers. The computed correlation between compliance and change management was .034, with a significance level of .001. This significance level of .001 indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). Contrary to the hypothesis, the findings reveal a positive relationship between compliance and change management. In other words, compliance significantly relates to the management of change in public institutions in Nigeria, and this relationship is positive. As compliance increases, the management of change within the selected public universities in Nigeria tends to increase as well. This finding highlights the constructive role of compliance in facilitating change management within the context of university education.

These results align with previous research conducted by Ufomba-Emeka (2023), who investigated the impact of compliance with established rules and regulations on change management. Their study found that leadership's adherence to compliance standards significantly sets a positive example for employees and fosters a culture of adherence to change-related procedures. Furthermore, the work of Anele (2022) also supports these findings by emphasizing that compliance ensures that change initiatives are executed consistently and predictably, thus contributing to the overall success of change management. The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of compliance within leadership processes in the context of public institutions in Nigeria. Compliance significantly influences change management, fostering predictability and adherence to change-related procedures. This finding contradicts the initial hypothesis and underscores the importance of compliance as an effective tool for change management within these institutions.

### **Efficiency and Change Management**

The results from the analysis of hypothesis three aimed to assess the relationship between efficiency as a leadership process and change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient, calculated from respondents' answers, revealed a correlation of .009, with a significance level of .000. This level of significance, .000, indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Contrary to Hypothesis Three, the findings suggest a positive relationship between efficiency as a leadership process and change management. In other words, efficiency significantly relates to the management of change in public institutions in Nigeria. As efficiency increases, the management of change within these institutions tends to increase as well. This indicates that efficiency, as a leadership process, plays a role in driving change, even though its influence may be relatively modest compared to other elements of leadership processes.

These findings align with the research conducted by Anderson and Brown (2020), who investigated the role of efficiency in leadership processes and its impact on change management. They found that efficient leadership contributes to streamlined processes, optimized resource allocation, and enhances the timely execution of change initiatives. Moreover, the work of Ololube (2017) supported these findings by highlighting the importance of efficient resource allocation in public institutions and its positive effect on change management. The results of this study emphasize the significant role of efficiency within leadership processes in the context of public institutions in Nigeria. Efficiency is found to be positively related to change management, contributing to streamlined processes and optimized resource allocation. These findings challenge the initial hypothesis and emphasize the importance of considering efficiency as part of leadership strategies in public institutions.

### **Employees' Empowerment and Change Management**

This was aimed at evaluating the relationship between the employees' empowerment as a leadership process and change management in public institutions in Nigeria. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient, computed from the respondents' answers, revealed a correlation of .019, with a significance level of .002. This level of significance, .002, signifies that the correlation is statistically significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). In contrast to Hypothesis Four, the findings indicate a positive relationship between the empowerment of employees as a leadership process

and change management. In simpler terms, empowering employees as a leadership process significantly relates to the management of change in public institutions in Nigeria. As the empowerment of employees increases, the management of change within these institutions also tends to increase. This underlines the pivotal role that empowering employees plays in driving change within the context of Nigerian public institutions.

These findings are consistent with the work of Adewale et al. (2021), who examined the influence of employee empowerment on change management practices in Nigerian public institutions. Their research revealed that empowering employees fostered a sense of ownership and commitment to change initiatives. Additionally, the study by Okonkwo and Ihejirika (2018) supports these findings by emphasizing the significant role that employee empowerment plays in facilitating the success of change management processes. The results from this study underscore the importance of empowering employees as a leadership process in the realm of public institutions in Nigeria (Onwuka, 2019). Empowering employees is shown to be significantly related to change management, promoting a sense of ownership and commitment to change initiatives (Osibanjo & Salau, 2018). These findings challenge the initial hypothesis and highlight the crucial role of empowering employees as a driving force behind successful change management (Onwuka, 2022).

## **CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the data gathered from three public universities in Nigeria revealed significant insights. In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into leadership processes and change management in the specific context of Nigerian public institutions, shedding light on areas that warrant attention and improvement. Recognizing the importance of leadership processes in facilitating successful change management is not only relevant for the academic community but also for policymakers, administrators, and leaders in public institutions in Nigeria and similar contexts. In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, change is inevitable, and effective leadership processes are the linchpin for navigating this transformation. The findings from this study call for a greater emphasis on developing leadership capabilities and fostering environments that promote punctuality, compliance, efficiency, and employee empowerment, ultimately leading to more successful and adaptable public institutions in Nigeria. The culmination of this study emphasizes the paramount role of leadership in steering change within the academic sector in Nigeria, with the potential to spark broader discussions and initiatives aimed at improving governance, service delivery, and adaptability within these public institutions. As the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century continue to shape the higher education landscape, effective leadership processes remain a cornerstone of progress and innovation.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, these recommendations are tailored to their respective stakeholder groups and aim to improve change management within public institutions in Nigeria:

- Academic Leaders and University Administrators should prioritize punctuality and model it as a fundamental leadership process to set an example for timely execution and foster commitment to change initiatives.

- Policymakers and its enforcement agencies should emphasize the importance of compliance with established rules and regulations within the higher education sector, implementing policies that promote a culture of compliance with change-related procedures.
- University management and leaders should focus on efficient allocation and utilization of resources, cost-effective practices, and streamlined processes. Establish systems that optimize resource utilization and minimize wastage, fostering an efficient environment to drive effective change management.
- Academic institutions change managers should promote employee empowerment in leadership practices. Encourage staff to actively contribute to change initiatives and foster a trusting environment to enhance creativity and innovation in change processes.

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