

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE STRATEGIES AND STAFF PERFORMANCE IN BANKING FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between organizational change strategies and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria, focusing on three dimensions of change: incremental, proactive, and reactive. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 25 employees through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation. The results revealed significant positive relationships between all three types of change and Staff Performance, with incremental change showing the strongest correlation ($\rho = 0.973, p < 0.01$), followed by proactive change ($\rho = 0.718, p < 0.01$), and reactive change ($\rho = 0.675, p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that well-managed change processes, whether planned or responsive, can enhance Staff Performance in the banking sector. The study concludes that a strategic and inclusive approach to change management is critical for improving performance outcomes. Based on the results, practical recommendations were made for banking firms to adopt gradual implementation strategies, engage in proactive planning, and strengthen communication during reactive change.

Introduction

The banking industry in Nigeria has been undergoing rapid and multifaceted changes over recent years. These include regulatory reforms, digital transformation, competition from fintech, customer service expectations, and macroeconomic shocks. Banks are increasingly required to adapt not only structurally and technologically, but also in terms of strategy, human resources, and culture. How banks manage change that is, their Organizational Change Strategies can significantly influence Staff Performance, which in turn impacts service delivery, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and overall competitiveness. Organizational Change Strategies are often classified into different types: incremental change, proactive change, and reactive change. Incremental change refers to gradual, continuous improvements; proactive change is anticipatory, involving actions taken in advance of external pressures, while reactive change is in response to external shocks or crises. Recent empirical work in Nigeria shows that all three of these change management strategies have significant associations with bank performance (including Staff Performance as a component), especially when moderated by technology (Otalor, Edema, Igwebe, Kankpang, Pepple, Ashu, & Enya, 2025).

Several studies have explored organizational change in Nigerian banks. Kumolu-Johnson and Okewale (2021) found that technological and structural changes significantly affect Staff Performance in selected banks in Lagos. However, their study was localized to Lagos, thereby limiting regional generalizability. Another study, Organizational Change Management and Employees' Performance of Some Selected Money Deposit Banks in Nigeria (2024), examined more broadly across Nigerian banks but did not disaggregate the types of change into incremental, proactive, and reactive forms, nor did it focus specifically on the South-South region.

There is also research focused at more localized levels; for example, a study in Ughelli (Delta State, part of the South-South) looked at the relationship between general change management strategies and employee productivity, finding positive effects of structured practices like communication and employee involvement (International Journal of Research & Innovation in Social Science, 2021). Nonetheless, that study did not explicitly separate out incremental vs proactive vs reactive dimensions of change.

Given contextual differences such as in culture, infrastructure, customer base, regulatory oversight, and even access to technology the South-South zone of Nigeria may experience change management and its effects on Staff Performance differently from other regions. For instance, the nature of technological adoption, employee readiness, and management capacity might vary in the South-South compared to Lagos or other parts of Nigeria.

From the literature, the following gaps / points of departure are identified, which justify the current proposed study: Many studies are either nationwide or focus on major urban centres (e.g., Lagos), with fewer empirical investigations specific to the South-South region. This is important because the South-South has distinct socio-economic and infrastructural characteristics which may moderate how change is managed and how employees respond. While Otalor et al. (2025) include reactive, proactive, and incremental change, many other studies treat change as a monolithic construct (e.g., technological, structural, leadership change) without clearly distinguishing between these types. Distinguishing among incremental, reactive, and proactive change allows for more precise understanding of which types most strongly relate to Staff Performance in different contexts. The banking sector is not static; shocks (e.g., economic downturns, currency instability, regulatory shocks, pandemics) may force reactive changes, while banks that anticipate changes may engage in proactive changes. It is less clear from the literature how the timing and sequencing of change (incremental vs reactive vs proactive) relate to Staff Performance over time in South-South banks. Thus, this study aims to examine the effects of incremental, proactive, and reactive Organizational Change Strategies on Staff Performance in banking firms located in the South-South region of Nigeria. It will differentiate among the change types, use employee-centred performance measures, and consider contextual moderators such as leadership style, communication, and readiness. By doing so, it will provide more regionally specific insights, and help inform bank managers in the South-South on which change strategies are likely to yield better outcomes under their particular conditions.

Statement of the problem

The banking sector in Nigeria, particularly in the South-South region, is facing increasing pressure to adapt to dynamic economic, technological, and regulatory changes. This fast-paced environment necessitates effective change management strategies to sustain performance and competitiveness. However, despite various organizational reforms and technological investments, many banks in the region continue to struggle with issues related to Staff Performance such as low productivity, resistance to change, high turnover, poor service delivery, and decreased morale (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021; Otalor et al., 2025). While change is inevitable, the manner in which change is managed whether incremental, proactive, or reactive can have profound implications for how employees perform in their roles. Incremental change may improve performance by reducing disruption, while proactive change may enhance preparedness and innovation. Conversely, reactive change, often abrupt and crisis-driven, may lead to confusion, resistance, and reduced productivity (Cameron & Green, 2019). Yet, there is limited empirical evidence on how each of these distinct change management approaches affects Staff Performance specifically in the banking sector within the South-South zone of Nigeria.

Moreover, many prior studies on change management and Staff Performance in Nigeria are either concentrated in regions like Lagos or treat change management as a uniform process without disaggregating it into different forms (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021). This lack of contextual and conceptual specificity leaves a gap in understanding the nuanced effects of various change types on employee outcomes. For example, Otalor et al. (2025) noted that the strategic management of change significantly influences organizational performance, but there is insufficient data on how these changes translate into individual Staff Performance, especially in under-researched regions like the South-South.

Additionally, organizational and cultural factors in the South-South such as communication flow, leadership practices, technological readiness, and employee involvement may influence how different types of change are perceived and managed. Yet, existing literature rarely explores these contextual variables. This oversight limits the practical relevance of broader national findings when applied to banks operating within the unique dynamics of the South-South. Therefore, the central problem this study seeks to address is the limited understanding of how incremental, proactive, and reactive Organizational Change Strategies impact Staff Performance in banking firms in the South-South region of Nigeria. Without such understanding, bank leaders in the region may continue to adopt generic or mismatched change strategies, thereby undermining employee effectiveness and organizational sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

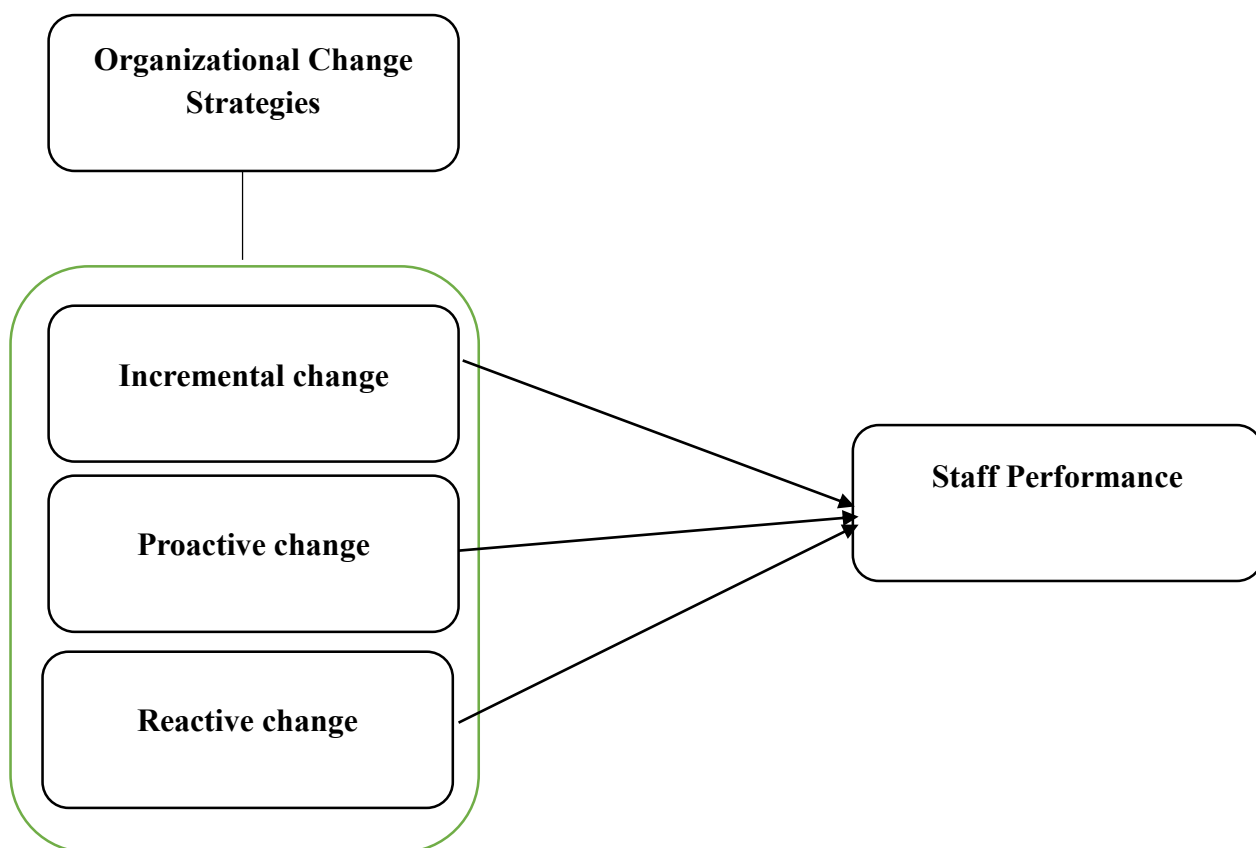


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Otalor, et al., (2025); Cameron, & Green, (2019).

Aim & Objectives

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Organizational Change Strategies and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- 1) determine the relationship between Incremental change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.
- 2) determine the relationship between Proactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.
- 3) determine the relationship between Reactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- 1) What is the relationship between Incremental change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria?
- 2) What is the relationship between Proactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria?
- 3) What is the relationship between Reactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a significant level of 0.05.

H01: There is no significant relationship between Incremental change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

H02: There is no significant relationship between Proactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

H03: There is no significant relationship between Reactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on organizational change by examining the differentiated impacts of incremental, proactive, and reactive Organizational Change Strategies on Staff Performance—an area that has received limited attention, particularly in the Nigerian context. Most existing studies in Nigeria tend to view change management as a uniform construct without disaggregating the various forms of change (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021). By distinguishing between these three types of change, the study enhances conceptual clarity and provides a more nuanced understanding of how specific change strategies influence employee behavior and productivity. This will enrich academic discourse in organizational behavior, human resource management, and change leadership, especially within developing economies.

Practically, the study will benefit banking executives and managers in the South-South region of Nigeria by offering evidence-based insights into which Organizational Change Strategies are most effective for enhancing Staff Performance in their unique operational environment. Understanding how incremental, proactive, or reactive changes affect employee outcomes will enable decision-makers to design and implement change strategies that minimize resistance, maintain morale, and improve overall workforce productivity.

The study is also significant for human resource professionals, as it will provide guidance on how best to prepare, support, and involve employees during organizational transitions. This is especially critical in the banking sector, where staff performance is directly linked to service delivery, customer satisfaction, and organizational reputation.

In addition, policy makers and regulators in the financial sector may find the findings useful for shaping policies that support effective change management and human capital development in banks, particularly in regions that are often underrepresented in national data and decision-making. By focusing on the South-South zone, which has unique socio-economic and infrastructural characteristics, the study ensures that its findings are not only academically valuable but also contextually relevant. Finally, the study will serve as a useful reference for future researchers, offering a framework for analyzing the relationship between specific Organizational Change Strategies and Staff Performance in similar or different sectors and regions.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Organizational Change Strategies

Change management refers to the structured approach and processes used by organizations to transition from a current state to a desired future state in order to achieve organizational goals. It encompasses the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reinforcement of changes within an organization, particularly in response to external pressures, technological advancement, or strategic realignment (Cameron & Green, 2019; Al-Ali et al., 2021). Change management is vital for sustaining competitiveness, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing employee and organizational performance. Several scholars have classified Organizational Change Strategies into different categories to reflect how organizations approach and respond to change. Among the most recognized dimensions are incremental change, proactive change, and reactive change.

A key challenge in managing change lies in balancing the speed and scope of change with the capacity of employees and the organization to absorb and sustain it. Effective Organizational Change Strategies require clear communication, leadership support, employee engagement, and training (Al-Ali et al., 2021). Without these elements, even well-intentioned changes can lead to employee disengagement, reduced productivity, and increased resistance. In the Nigerian banking context, especially in under-researched regions such as the South-South, there is a growing need to understand how different types of change practices are applied and how they influence Staff Performance. Otor et al. (2025) note that the success of change initiatives in Nigerian banks is heavily influenced by how well the change process is aligned with internal structures and employee readiness. Thus, a nuanced understanding of change management types particularly incremental, proactive, and reactive is essential for both theory and practice.

Dimensions of Organizational Change Strategies

Incremental Change

Incremental change refers to small-scale, gradual adjustments made over time, usually as part of continuous improvement efforts. It allows organizations to fine-tune their systems, structures, or behaviors without disrupting core operations (Cameron & Green, 2019). This form of change is often easier for employees to accept and adapt to, as it tends to be less threatening and more participatory in nature (Smith & Lewis, 2020). In banking, examples of incremental change may include updates to internal processes, gradual automation, or staff training programs.

Proactive Change

Proactive change involves taking initiative to implement changes in anticipation of future opportunities or threats. It reflects a forward-looking mindset where organizations try to shape their environment rather than merely respond to it (Otor et al., 2025). This form of change is often strategic, driven by long-term goals, and typically associated with innovation and transformation. Proactive change may involve investing in digital banking platforms or restructuring operations ahead of anticipated regulatory reforms.

Reactive Change

Reactive change, in contrast, occurs in response to unforeseen external events or crises. It is unplanned and often urgent, requiring rapid decisions to address threats such as economic shocks, technological disruption, or regulatory mandates (Al-Alawi, 2021). While necessary in some situations, reactive change can lead to stress, confusion, and employee resistance if not well managed (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021). In banking, reactive changes might include emergency layoffs, policy shifts due to sudden inflationary trends, or compliance with new central bank regulations.

Staff Performance

Staff Performance refers to the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality with which employees carry out their job responsibilities to achieve organizational goals. It is a critical determinant of organizational success, especially in sectors like banking, where customer service, accuracy, compliance, and innovation are central to competitive advantage (Adeoye & Torubelli, 2021). Performance is often evaluated through various dimensions, including productivity, work quality, punctuality, problem-solving, adaptability, and customer satisfaction. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), Staff Performance encompasses both task performance the core duties assigned to an employee and contextual performance, which includes behaviors that support the broader organizational environment, such as teamwork, initiative, and compliance with policies. In dynamic environments, such as the Nigerian banking sector, adaptive performance the ability to respond effectively to change is increasingly considered a vital component (Al-Ali et al., 2021).

In the context of change management, Staff Performance can be influenced by how well employees understand and engage with the change process. Resistance to change, lack of communication, poor leadership, and inadequate training can negatively affect employee motivation and performance during periods of transformation (Otalor et al., 2025). Conversely, involving employees in decision-making and providing adequate support can enhance their commitment and performance outcomes (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021). In banking firms, high performance among employees translates into better customer service, error-free transactions, regulatory compliance, innovation in service delivery, and improved organizational image. Poor performance, on the other hand, can lead to increased operational risk, customer dissatisfaction, and financial loss (Eze & Chijioke, 2020). Despite the growing body of literature, the determinants of Staff Performance in response to specific types of change such as incremental, proactive, and reactive are still underexplored, particularly in the South-South region of Nigeria. This gap necessitates further empirical investigation into how various change management approaches affect Staff Performance across different roles and levels in banking institutions.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on two key theories that offer a solid foundation for understanding the relationship between Organizational Change Strategies and Staff Performance : Lewin's Change Management Theory and Expectancy Theory of Motivation. Both theories provide complementary perspectives one focusing on how change is implemented and managed, and the other on how individuals respond to change in terms of performance and motivation.

Lewin's Change Management Theory

Kurt Lewin's Change Management Theory, developed in the 1940s, remains one of the foundational models for understanding organizational change. It proposes a three-stage process of change: Unfreeze, Change (Transition), and Refreeze (Burnes, 2020). Unfreezing: This stage involves creating awareness about the need for change. It entails breaking down the existing status quo by addressing resistance and motivating employees to accept the need for transformation. Change (Transition): At this point, the organization implements the planned changes be they structural, technological, or cultural. Communication, training, and support are essential to facilitate employee adaptation. Refreezing: In this final stage, the new changes are reinforced and stabilized so that they become part of the organizational culture and routine. Reinforcement may come through revised policies, performance metrics, or reward systems.

Relevance to the Study:

Lewin's theory is particularly relevant in understanding how incremental, proactive, and reactive changes are introduced and embedded within organizations. For instance, incremental change aligns with continuous unfreezing and refreezing cycles, while reactive change may compress the unfreeze-change-refreeze process, often leading to confusion if not well managed. Proactive change, ideally,

leverages a more strategic and well-structured unfreezing phase to prepare employees ahead of disruptions. In banking firms within Nigeria's South-South region, where resistance to sudden organizational reforms can be high due to factors such as limited training or poor communication channels, Lewin's model provides a lens to examine why some change efforts fail to improve Staff Performance while others succeed (Kumolu-Johnson & Okewale, 2021).

Expectancy Theory of Motivation (Vroom, 1964)

Expectancy Theory, proposed by Victor Vroom, focuses on how individuals make decisions regarding behavioral alternatives, particularly in work-related situations. The theory suggests that employee motivation and by extension, performance is a function of three key elements: Expectancy ($E \rightarrow P$): The belief that one's effort will result in desired performance. Instrumentality ($P \rightarrow O$): The belief that successful performance will lead to certain outcomes or rewards. Valence: The value an individual places on the rewards of an outcome. These elements combine into the formula: $Motivation = Expectancy \times Instrumentality \times Valence$

Relevance to the Study: This theory is instrumental in explaining how Organizational Change Strategies influence Staff Performance. If employees perceive that adapting to change (incremental, proactive, or reactive) will lead to improved outcomes—such as recognition, promotion, or job security they are more likely to engage positively with the change process and perform better (Al-Ali et al., 2021). In contrast, if the change is poorly communicated (e.g., in reactive change scenarios), employees may not see the connection between their efforts and performance outcomes, thereby reducing motivation. This is particularly true in the South-South banking context, where abrupt or unclear changes may lower employees' expectations about fairness and reward, ultimately reducing their performance.

Expectancy theory also emphasizes the importance of employee perception, which aligns with the need for inclusive, transparent, and well-structured change processes. For proactive change to succeed, leaders must ensure that employees believe their efforts to embrace change will be rewarded. Both Lewin's Change Management Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory provide critical frameworks for analyzing how change is managed and how it affects Staff Performance. While Lewin's theory focuses on the process of change and organizational dynamics, Expectancy Theory highlights the individual cognitive and motivational processes that influence how employees respond to change. Together, they offer a robust theoretical lens for investigating the impacts of incremental, proactive, and reactive change on Staff Performance in the Nigerian banking sector, especially in the under-researched South-South region.

Empirical Review

Kumolu-Johnson and Okewale (2021) conducted a study titled "Change Management and Employees' Performance of Selected Nigerian Banks". The researchers employed a descriptive survey research design, sampling 270 employees across selected commercial banks in Lagos State. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, and results were analyzed using regression analysis. Their findings indicated that both **technological change** ($\beta = 0.654, p < .05$) and **structural change** ($\beta = 0.673, p < .05$) had significant positive effects on Staff Performance. The study concluded that effective management of organizational change especially in areas involving technology and structure can improve Staff Performance. The authors recommended that banks adopt participatory leadership styles and involve employees in change processes to reduce resistance and improve engagement.

Similarly, Olamilekan and Salam (2022), in their study titled "Relationship Between Change Readiness and Organizational Performance of Selected Organizations in Nigeria", adopted a descriptive survey design involving 150 respondents from various sectors. They used questionnaires to assess variables such as managerial style, work environment, technological innovation, and employee involvement. The study found a strong positive relationship between change readiness

and organizational performance. The conclusion emphasized the need for organizations to proactively prepare employees for change. The researchers recommended building internal capacity through leadership development, communication, and inclusion in decision-making to enhance performance outcomes.

In a related study by Otalor et al. (2025), titled "Change Management Strategies and Performance of Commercial Banks in Nigeria: The Moderating Role of Technology", the authors examined the impact of different change management strategies on bank performance. The study used a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from 326 employees of five commercial banks. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used for data analysis. The study revealed that **proactive change strategies** were more effective than reactive ones in driving employee productivity and organizational adaptability. It concluded that aligning technological infrastructure with proactive change strategies leads to improved performance. The study recommended that bank managers adopt foresight-driven (proactive) change planning and leverage digital tools to support the change process.

Furthermore, Ojenike (2022) investigated "Change Management and Employees' Performance in the New Normal: A Study of a Manufacturing Firm in Nigeria". Using a quantitative research design and a sample of 110 employees, the study applied correlation analysis to assess the relationship between change implementation, communication methods, and Staff Performance. The findings showed a strong positive correlation between change implementation and performance ($r = 0.682$), and between change communication and performance ($r = 0.698$). The conclusion emphasized that timely and transparent communication enhances employee engagement during change. The study recommended that organizations implement clear change strategies and consistently communicate with staff to mitigate resistance.

In one of her notable studies, Amah and Onugha (2021) explored the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between planned change and organizational effectiveness. Their findings highlighted that a strong organizational culture enhances the positive outcomes of planned change, suggesting that cultural alignment is essential for sustainable organizational growth.

Further, Amah and Gborogbosi (2022) evaluated the effectiveness of different change management models across various industries, emphasizing the necessity of customizing change strategies to suit the unique dynamics of each sector. This research underscores the importance of contextualizing Organizational Change Strategies to improve employee engagement and overall performance.

Additionally, Amah's work on leadership and employee engagement (Amah, 2020) revealed that leadership styles significantly influence employee engagement levels, which in turn affect Staff Performance during periods of organizational change. This insight points to the need for leadership approaches that foster open communication and support employee involvement to maximize the benefits of change efforts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between Organizational Change Strategies (incremental, proactive, and reactive changes) and Staff Performance in deposit money banks located in the South-South region of Nigeria. This design is suitable for studies seeking to determine the degree of association between variables without manipulating them.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all 27 Deposit Money Banks operating in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This information was retrieved from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) list of licensed deposit money banks as of central bank of Nigeria report, 2024.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A 50% sample of the total population was selected, which amounted to 14 banks (i.e., 50% of 27 banks = 13.5 \approx 14). Using a purposive sampling technique, two (2) employees were selected from each of the 14 banks based on their involvement in or experience with change management processes. This resulted in a total of: 14 banks \times 2 respondents per bank=28 respondents. The purposive selection was guided by the need to obtain responses from staff members knowledgeable in organizational change and Staff Performance issues.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed. A pilot test was conducted, and the results confirmed that the instrument met the acceptable reliability threshold ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). For validity, both face validity and content validity were employed. The questionnaire items were reviewed by experts in organizational behavior and human resource management to ensure that the instrument accurately captured the constructs under investigation. Necessary revisions were made based on expert feedback to enhance clarity and relevance.

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered electronically using online survey tools (e.g., Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, or similar platforms). Links to the questionnaire were distributed to the selected respondents via official email and WhatsApp platforms, ensuring convenience and wider reach. Follow-up messages were sent to encourage timely responses.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Specifically: Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used for univariate analysis to describe respondents' perceptions of each variable. For bivariate analysis, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the nature and strength of the relationships between Organizational Change Strategies (incremental, proactive, reactive) and Staff Performance. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or a similar statistical software.

Results

28 copies of the questionnaire were issue out pf which 25 were retrieved hence form the basis of the analysis.

H01: There is no significant relationship between Incremental change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlations on Incremental change and Staff Performance

			Incremental change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Incremental change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.973**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.973**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis (H01) stated that there is no significant relationship between incremental change and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria. However, the findings from the correlation analysis reveal a very strong positive relationship between incremental change and Staff Performance, with a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of 0.973 and a p-value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that as incremental changes are implemented within the banking firms, Staff Performance tends to improve significantly. Given the strength and significance of this relationship, the null hypothesis (H01) is rejected, confirming that incremental change has a significant positive impact on Staff Performance in the studied region.

H02: There is no significant relationship between Proactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

Table 6: Correlations on Proactive change and Staff Performance

			Proactive change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Proactive change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second hypothesis (H02) proposed that there is no significant relationship between proactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria. The results from the correlation analysis show a moderately strong positive relationship, with a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of 0.718 and a p-value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that increased proactive change efforts are associated with improved Staff Performance. Based on this statistically significant result, the null hypothesis (H02) is rejected, affirming that proactive change has a meaningful and positive impact on Staff Performance within the banking sector in the region.

H03: There is no significant relationship between Reactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in south-south, Nigeria.

Table 7: Correlations on Reactive change and Staff Performance

			Reactive change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Reactive change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.675**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.675**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The third hypothesis (H03) stated that there is no significant relationship between reactive change and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria. The correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship, with a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of 0.675 and a p-value of 0.000, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that reactive changes those made in response to external or internal pressures are positively associated with improvements in Staff Performance. Given the significance of this result, the null hypothesis (H03) is rejected,

confirming that reactive change has a significant and positive influence on Staff Performance in the banking sector within the region.

Discussion of Findings

The current study explored the relationship between different types of organizational change (incremental, proactive, and reactive) and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria. The findings revealed statistically significant and positive relationships across all three change types, with incremental change showing the strongest correlation ($\rho = 0.973$), followed by proactive change ($\rho = 0.718$), and reactive change ($\rho = 0.675$). These results underscore the importance of well-managed change processes in enhancing Staff Performance within the banking sector.

These findings are consistent with those of Kumolu-Johnson and Okewale (2021), who found that both technological ($\beta = 0.654$) and structural changes ($\beta = 0.673$) had significant positive effects on Staff Performance in selected Nigerian banks. Like the current study, their research supports the idea that deliberate and well-structured change initiatives can drive performance improvement. Both studies highlight the role of change as a performance lever, especially when effectively communicated and implemented.

Similarly, Olamilekan and Salam (2022) reported a strong positive relationship between change readiness and organizational performance across various sectors. Their emphasis on leadership development, employee inclusion, and communication aligns with the current study's implication that proactive and incremental changes are more effective when employees are actively engaged in the process. This supports the current finding that proactive change positively impacts Staff Performance ($\rho = 0.718$), suggesting that readiness and anticipation of change contribute to better performance outcomes.

In line with this, Otalor et al. (2025) emphasized the superiority of proactive over reactive change strategies in enhancing employee productivity. Their findings resonate with the current study's result, where proactive change had a stronger correlation with Staff Performance than reactive change (0.718 vs. 0.675). Moreover, Otalor et al.'s emphasis on aligning technology with change strategy complements the current study's implication that structured and foresight-driven change, like incremental or proactive change, yields better performance outcomes.

Furthermore, Ojenike (2022) found strong positive correlations between change implementation ($r = 0.682$) and communication methods ($r = 0.698$) with Staff Performance in a manufacturing setting. These findings reinforce the importance of how change is executed and communicated. Similarly, the current study implies that when change is implemented incrementally and communicated effectively, it significantly boosts employee engagement and performance. In summary, the current study aligns closely with existing literature, reinforcing the consensus that well-managed, participatory, and proactive change efforts are critical for improving Staff Performance. The consistent theme across these studies is the centrality of leadership, communication, and employee involvement in navigating change effectively within organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between different types of organizational change (incremental, proactive, and reactive) and Staff Performance in banking firms in South-South Nigeria. The findings revealed that all three types of change are significantly and positively related to Staff Performance, with incremental change showing the strongest effect, followed by proactive change and reactive change. These results underscore the importance of strategic change management in enhancing employee productivity and organizational effectiveness. The evidence suggests that when change is thoughtfully planned, well-communicated, and aligned with organizational goals, it contributes meaningfully to Staff Performance improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Banking firms should adopt an incremental approach to change implementation, where improvements are made in small, manageable steps. This reduces resistance, allows for continuous feedback, and helps employees adapt over time, ultimately boosting performance.
2. Management should prioritize proactive change by anticipating future challenges and opportunities. This includes investing in change forecasting tools, engaging in scenario planning, and involving employees early in the change process to foster preparedness and alignment with strategic goals.
3. Since reactive change also impacts performance, banks must enhance their internal communication and support mechanisms during sudden changes (e.g., regulatory shifts or market disruptions). Clear, transparent communication and quick leadership response help maintain employee morale and performance during unexpected transitions.

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**Appendix A
Questionnaire**

Statement	SA	A	N	SD
My organization implements small changes regularly to improve processes.				
Incremental changes in my workplace make it easier to adapt to new policies.				
Gradual changes are preferred in my organization over sudden large changes.				
My organization plans and implements changes before problems arise.				
Management involves employees early when planning changes.				

Clear communication about upcoming changes is provided in advance.				
Changes in my organization often happen suddenly due to unforeseen circumstances.				
Reactive changes usually disrupt my work performance temporarily.				
The organization responds quickly to external crises with immediate changes.				
I maintain high levels of productivity during organizational changes.				
Organizational Change Strategies motivate me to improve my job performance.				
Communication during change helps me perform my duties effectively.				

Likert Scale: SA = Strongly Agree | A = Agree | N = Neutral | D = Disagree | SD = Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B
LIST OF DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN SOUTH-SOUTH REGION OF NIGERIA

1	Access Bank Plc
2	Ecobank Nigeria Plc
3	First Bank Plc
4	FCMB Plc
5	Guaranty Trust Bank Plc
6	Jaiz Bank Plc
7	Keystone Bank Ltd.
8	Polaris Bank Plc
9	Stanbic IBTC Bank Ltd.
10	Sterling Bank Nigeria Ltd.
11	Union Bank of Nigeria Plc
12	Unity Bank Nigeria Ltd.
13	UBA Plc
14	Wema Bank Plc
15	Zenith Bank Plc
16	Fidelity Bank Plc
17	Globus Bank Ltd
18	Premium Trust Bank Ltd

19	Providus Bank Ltd
20	Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Ltd
21	Titan trust bank
22	Lotus bank
23	Standard chartered bank
24	TAJ
25	SunTrust bank
26	Globus bank
27	Provide bank

**APPENDIX C
SPSS OUTPUT**

Correlations

			Incremental change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Incremental change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.973**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.973**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

NONPAR CORR

/VARIABLES=VAR00001 VAR00002
/PRINT=SPEARMAN TWOTAIL NOSIG
/MISSING=PAIRWISE.

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

			Proactive change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Proactive change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

NONPAR CORR
/VARIABLES=VAR00001 VAR00002
/PRINT=SPEARMAN TWOTAIL NOSIG
/MISSING=PAIRWISE.

Correlations			Reactive change	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho	Reactive change	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.675**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	25	25
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.675**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).