

# ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: AN IMPERATIVE FOR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>Ifeoma Perpetual Iloka, <sup>2\*</sup>Akeem Adewale Bakare, <sup>3</sup>Nasamu Gambo, <sup>4</sup>Frank Alaba Ogedengbe

<sup>1,2\*,3,4</sup>Department of Business Administration, Nile University of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja, Nigeria

243470019@nileuniversity.edu.ng, nasamu.gambo@nileuniversity.edu.ng;  
frank.ogedengbe@nileuniversity.edu.ng

**Corresponding Author:**

[akeem.bakare@nileuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:akeem.bakare@nileuniversity.edu.ng)

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## ABSTRACT

*This research empirically examines the Environmental Change: An Imperative for Employee Satisfaction in Private Universities in North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, it explores the impact of regulatory changes, market competition, and funding pressures on employee satisfaction. Adopting a descriptive survey research approach, responses were collected from 528 participants drawn from seven private universities using a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed through multiple regression analysis to ascertain the relationship between employee satisfaction and organisational change. The findings reveal that regulatory change significantly contributes positively to employee satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.4000$ ,  $p = 0.0145$ ), implying that effective management of regulatory policies enhances job security and workplace stability. Market competition also significantly and positively affects satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.4961$ ,  $p = 0.0033$ ), indicating that increased competitive pressures compel universities to improve employee welfare, thereby leading to greater satisfaction. Financial pressures negatively and significantly impact employee satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.2759$ ,  $p = 0.0118$ ), suggesting that financial demands result in uncertainty, delayed salaries, and decreased job morale. These results support organisational justice theory by highlighting the importance of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice in organisational change management. The following recommendations are proposed for private universities based on these results: sustaining transparency in regulatory changes, maintaining competitive and fair reward systems, and involving employees in financial decision-making to enhance job satisfaction despite environmental pressures.*

**Keywords:** Environmental Organisational Change, Employee Satisfaction, Regulatory Changes, Market Competition, Funding Pressures, Private Universities, North-Central Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Environment means the ambience and surroundings that have a potential impact on the endeavours of human beings (Bakare et al., 2020). In a highly competitive world, organisations must continually adapt to environmental dynamics to remain relevant and perform. Mgbemena et al. (2022) argue that external environmental pressures, such as shifts in market demands, regulatory shifts, and socioeconomic shifts, are greatly responsible for impacting organisational sustainability. The inability to adequately respond to these changes has contributed to many institutions being marred by or failing. The Nigerian private university sector is a case in point, where new universities flooding into the market, changing government policies, and shifts in population have heightened competition. These necessitate strategic readjustments, and therefore there is a need to look back at how organizational change in the environment affects worker satisfaction in the market.

Environmental organizational changes are alterations that are precipitated by external forces that force institutions to alter their policy, culture, and human resource planning (Akunne & Ibrahim, 2021). Within the private university system, regulatory reform, competition and pressure for funding, and workforce diversity and demographic changes are the leading determinants of driving institutional dynamics. Regulatory policies involving accreditation, format of course curricula, and hiring of faculty tend to change, impacting employment security, bureaucratic processes, and institutional compliance measurements (Azeem et al., 2021). These changes generate uncertainty for employees, as they must make frequent adjustments to new demands, expectations, and performance standards.

Market competition and pressure for funding add to the complexity of issues in the workplace (Mitra, 2024). Expansion in private universities enhances competition among funding, students, and staff, resulting in restructuring of tuition, cost-cutting, and strategic alliances. Fiscal pressure can also affect employees. Changes to how a university operates, as a result of a struggle to stay financially healthy, can have either a positive or negative impact on employee morale, depending on how they're implemented (Watermeyer et al., 2021).

Demographic changes, and workforce diversity, also have an impact on shaping employees' experience in the private universities. Students' demographic change, professors' demographic change, and international standards of education press institutions to adopt new pedagogies, work cultures, and diversity initiatives (Kern & Zapf, 2021). Diverse opinions enrich intellectual discourse but also need structural changes in recruitment, professional development, and institutional leadership. Workers have to make such transitions while staying productive, professionally satisfied, and in sync with changing institutional objectives (Olu-Ogunleye et al., 2023).

While these environmental developments are intended to support institutional expansion, they will probably bring in role confusion, workload expansion, and a set of issues regarding career progression. Employees' own work setting attitudes—e.g., leadership responsiveness, organizational support, and career security—are probably likely to impact their job satisfaction and long-term commitment. Environmental organizational change is apt to generate resistance through the threat of job loss, loss of autonomy, or interference with ingrained work patterns. In colleges and universities, where employees strongly commit to academic values, sudden finance, governance, and institutional policy changes can likely result in dissatisfaction and disengagement. Unless there is effective change management and effective communication, employees and teachers can be unable to adjust, and this can hamper overall institutional performance.

Adaptability, emotional resilience, and organisational change strategies also influence the relationship between organisational change and employee satisfaction. The most adaptable workers can react positively to novel situations, while less adaptable workers are most likely to undergo higher stress and dissatisfaction (Akintunde-Adeyi et al., 2023). Theoretical frameworks such as the Burke-Litwin Model and Kurt Lewin's Three-Step Change Model explain how workers' morale, commitment, and organisational performance are affected by the change in external conditions. This is particularly relevant in North-Central Nigerian private universities, where fluctuations in government control, financial constraints, and labour diversification guarantee incessant institutional change.

This study aims to empirically examine the impact of environmental organisational changes on employee satisfaction at selected private universities in North-Central Nigeria. These universities are undergoing reorganisations to enhance governance and administrative efficiency, leading to shifts in staff roles, authority structures, and institutional culture (Bakare et al., 2025). The focus lies on the influence of regulatory reforms, competition, and funding pressures on employees' perceptions of job security. This research highlights how private universities can navigate environmental uncertainties to foster a motivated and satisfied workforce by addressing these aspects. In addition to this introduction, the study is structured into key sections: a literature review presenting empirical studies and theoretical frameworks; a methodology section detailing the data collection and

research design; results and discussions that offer analysis and findings; and a conclusion with recommendations for managing environmental organizational change in private universities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Bakare et al. (2025) argue that changes in an organisation's structure or other aspects are vital for improving institutional effectiveness, enhancing employee performance, and increasing satisfaction in workshops. The literature presents several theories on organisational change as a reaction to environmental shifts, highlighting the complexity and variability inherent in this phenomenon. Widiyanto et al. (2021) characterise organisational change as an adaptive process prompted by environmental pressures, suggesting that institutions must cultivate dynamic managerial competencies to navigate these changes effectively. Likewise, Klein, Ramos, and Deutz (2022) maintain that organisations encountering changes driven by sustainability demands should adopt systematic change management strategies to sustain operational effectiveness. Wijethilake et al. (2023) and Agbana et al. (2023) further emphasise the significance of organisational culture in facilitating or hindering adaptation to environmental changes, pointing out the necessity for cultural alignment to achieve successful transformation. These perspectives suggest that environmental factors act as external motivators prompting organisations to reevaluate their structures, strategies, and workforce.

Another field of research focuses on the human aspect of organisational change, i.e., the employee's role in adjusting to change driven by environmental forces. Nielsen et al. (2021) analyse the impact of person-role fit in organisational change on job satisfaction, suggesting that the adaptability of employees is crucial in reducing resistance to change. Boulagouas et al. (2021) contribute by investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and working conditions amidst change and the implication that disconnection equals increased resistance and decreased morale. Archibong and Ibrahim (2021) argue that change management practices should incorporate employee engagement approaches to enable smoother transitions, substantiating the argument that environmental transformation requires organisations to balance workforce stability as much as reconfiguring operations.

Another view views organisational change as planning and not a response. Musa and Bello (2023) recommend that change can be controlled positively through strategic foresight to anticipate environmental disturbances and prepare organisations for unavoidable changes. Akunne and Ibrahim (2021) argue that regulatory and policy changes tend to call for corresponding changes in organisational arrangements, and institutions must include change management in long-term plans. In the same way, Daniel (2019) stresses the importance of aligning organisational goals with environmental trends to continue enjoying competitive advantage, observing that organisations that neglect external pressures will fall behind.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Environmental change has also been conceptualised as a continuous process, not episodic, and therefore not easy to incorporate into traditional change management models. Ojogiwa and Qwabe (2021) fault linear change models because organisational change is an iterative process determined by ongoing political, economic, and social change. This position is supported by Shuaibu and Daniel (2023), who opine that private universities, just like all institutions, will have to keep evolving following the regulatory, technological, and demographic changes. This position is further supported by Aregawi and Vijaya (2023), who consider restructuring under environmental imperatives and note that gradual change would be more worthwhile than extreme revamping to guarantee organisational balance.

Another significant addition to the literature is the leadership element in managing environment-driven change. Kumolu-Johnson and Okewale (2021) point to the importance of transformational leadership in guiding organisations through multifaceted change, assuming that visionary leadership breeds employee resilience and commitment. Oladimeji, Hassan, and Eze (2020) further elucidate this by examining how the leadership style impacts employees' attitudes to change, wherein participatory leadership creates higher acceptability and reduced resistance. All these studies complement the view that environmental change entails structural change and leadership styles to drive changes successfully.

Additionally, other researchers have linked change with sustainability in organizations, emphasising that initiatives for change should target broader sustainability goals. Mgbemena et al. (2022) argue that organizations in sectors such as education and healthcare need to implement sustainability-focused changes to ensure long-term viability. This perspective is echoed by Oyebanji et al. (2023), who highlight the significant role employees play in sustaining organizational changes triggered by long-term environmental pressures. By incorporating sustainability concerns, such studies suggest that organizational transformation should be viewed not as a one-time event but as a strategic adjustment to evolving environmental conditions. Organizational change is often driven by external forces demanding strategic realignments. Among these, shifts in regulatory environments are

a primary factor, pushing companies to reconfigure their structures and operations to achieve compliance and maintain competitiveness (Archibong & Ibrahim, 2021).

Governments and international organisations are implementing new policy initiatives that impose stricter scrutiny on businesses, with changes to reporting processes and evolving sector norms. Widiyanto et al. (2021) state that these regulatory reforms necessitate management's adaptability to sustain organisational performance, particularly within public service sectors. Similarly, Klein et al. (2022) argue that regulatory pressures are crucial in sparking sustainability-driven changes that demand a flexible corporate culture. The extent to which organisations can realign their internal structures with external influences often affects their ability to maintain performance and staff morale amid transitions.

In addition to regulatory pressures, market competition is another critical catalyst for organisational change. The increasing intensity of competitive forces compels businesses to continually innovate, restructure, and rationalise their business models to thrive in the marketplace. As Wijethilake et al. (2023) noted, heightened competition requires modifications to organisational strategies, especially in survival-driven sectors. These changes necessitate an agile organisational culture that can respond to market dynamics without undermining employee motivation. Furthermore, Boulagouas et al. (2021) indicate that competitive forces can negatively influence job satisfaction, as employees often face disruptions in workflow, expectations, and performance metrics during strategic overhauls. Consequently, organisations that adeptly manage competitive change are likely to cultivate a more dedicated and engaged workforce.

Pressure due to fiscal and funding realities is the second major driving force behind organisational change. Financial pressure (funding deficit), public or private, determines working viability, investment in innovation, and employee stability. Archibong and Ibrahim (2021) describe how budget uncertainty increases the need for in-house restructuring, which can indirectly affect employee morale and job security. Similarly, Nielsen et al. (2021) operationalise the relationship between budget constraint and employees' flexibility during change, with the prime emphasis being that effective change management carried out by firms allows them to avoid a negative effect on job satisfaction. Financing constraints not only affect strategic-level choices but also influence the attitudes of employees towards stability and long-term career prospects within an enterprise.

The convergence of these external pressures— regulatory shifts, competitive market dynamics, and financial pressures—indicates the complexity of organisational change. These forces impose unique but interrelated pressures on strategic decision-making, requiring an integrated response to change management. Ojogiwa and Qwabe (2021) posit that organisations need to utilise cultural flexibility to meet these pressures successfully, sustaining employee commitment and alignment with overall goals. Therefore, an organisation's capacity to react equally to environmental changes decides its structural resilience and employee satisfaction and retention in a more unstable environment.

## EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

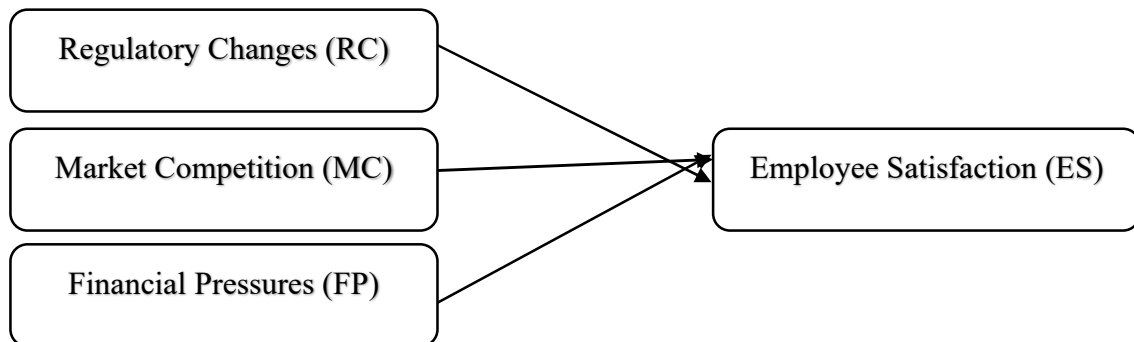
Rabiu et al. (2024) defined employee job satisfaction as an organisation's initiative to foster a supportive environment that caters to employees' overall well-being in relation to their internal or external role needs. Understanding the factors that affect satisfaction and enacting improvement strategies can enhance motivation, achievement, and productivity. Employee satisfaction has been widely researched in organisational studies, with various scholars presenting differing yet complementary interpretations of its definition and significance. A leading view characterises employee satisfaction as an emotional reaction to job elements, work environment, and organisational policies that influence motivation and performance (Boulagouas et al., 2021). Researchers such as Okolocha et al. (2021) emphasise the multidimensional nature of employee satisfaction, linking it to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors like compensation, work-life balance, and recognition. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which suggests that job satisfaction stems from motivators such as achievement and growth, while dissatisfaction results from hygiene elements like insufficient supervision or low pay. However, this theory faces criticism for overlooking the complexities of satisfaction and disregarding personal values and contextual factors (Mgbemena et al., 2022).

A different perspective views worker satisfaction as a fluid, ever-evolving concept rather than a fixed state. According to Shuaibu and Daniel (2023), worker satisfaction is both adaptable and dynamic, adjusting to organisational changes, leadership behaviour, and economic circumstances, emphasising the need for flexibility to maintain satisfaction levels. This view contrasts with dominant theories that suggest satisfaction remains relatively constant over time. Similarly, Oyebanji et al. (2023) discuss psychological contract theory, positing that employee satisfaction stems from how employees perceive their expectations being met or violated. This theory highlights the individual nature of satisfaction, reinforcing that companies should align their policies with employee expectations to enhance engagement and productivity.

In contrast, some researchers adopt a broader perspective, linking organizational culture and structure to employee satisfaction. Wijethilake et al. (2023) note that satisfaction is deeply rooted in organizational culture, shaped by company values, leadership practices, and communication styles. Likewise, Nielsen et al. (2021) suggest that employees with a strong sense of person-role fit within a company tend to be more satisfied because congruence between organisational and individual values is crucial. However, Archibong and Ibrahim (2021) argue that organisational design, rather than culture, plays a more significant role in influencing satisfaction, particularly in bureaucratic organisations where hierarchical structures can undermine employee autonomy and morale.

Recent research has also examined how technological advancements and job restructuring influence employee satisfaction. Klein et al. (2022) assert that technological change in the workplace has created new facets of satisfaction, with employees valuing flexibility, remote work, and access to advanced machinery. However, Musa and Bello (2023) caution that rapid technological changes can lead to job insecurity, stress, and resistance to change, which can diminish satisfaction. This dilemma emphasises the need for organisations to balance innovation with employee well-being. Furthermore, Aregawi and Vijaya (2023) highlight the importance of job design and work engagement, arguing that employees who experience greater autonomy, meaningful work, and career growth opportunities report higher satisfaction levels. Bakare et al. (2025) further stress that universities should conduct impact analyses prior to reorganisation to ensure that changes promote collaboration, efficiency, and specialisation without inflicting undue stress or job insecurity on staff at all levels. Thus, the evolving nature of work compels organisations to take an integrated approach to enhance employee satisfaction during times of change.

**Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Framework**



Source: Researcher's concept, 2025

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organisational Justice Theory, first introduced by Greenberg in 1987, examines how employees perceive fairness within the workplace and how these perceptions affect their behaviour and attitudes. The theory comprises three main dimensions: the fairness of outcomes, such as pay, promotions, and workload distribution; the perceived fairness in decision-making processes, measured by openness, equity, and the inclusion of employee input; and Interactional Justice, which refers to the personal sense of fairness in how supervisors and coworkers treat one another, including respect, honesty, and communication. Research has shown that employees who view organisational changes as unjust, such as biased promotion practices, unequal pay systems, or lack of transparency in restructuring experience decreased job satisfaction, higher disengagement levels, increased turnover intentions, and more workplace conflicts (Colquitt et al., 2013). In contrast, equitable treatment during organisational changes fosters trust, commitment, and job satisfaction even in challenging situations (Cropanzano et al., 2015).

Although excellent in so many ways, Organisational Justice Theory has also faced criticism for its narrow focus on perceived justice without being such an extensive measurement of employees' emotional and psychological response to change (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Moreover, though the theory is excellent at describing responses to individual injustice at a specific level, it does equally poorly to sum up larger-scale structural and system disparities that could potentially dominate employees' lives in the workplace. But the theory is still applicable in discussing how workers react to policy change, finance reforms, and competition pressures, especially within private universities, where budgeting and decision-making are usually contentious.

Organisational Justice Theory best fits this study. Since this study analyses how environmental organisational change—regulatory change, competition in the marketplace, and funding pressure—affects the satisfaction of employees of private universities, the employees' belief in the fairness to such changes is the area of concern. Organisational Justice Theory offers a structural mechanism for the analysis of employees' attitudes toward the decision-making procedure as just or unjust (procedural justice), resource and opportunity distribution



(distributive justice), and the type of interaction with the administration (interactional justice) in reaction to environmental changes. When employees perceive that such reforms are given transparently and fairly, job satisfaction will be firm; however, fairness perceptions can induce dissatisfaction, lower motivation, and increased turnover intentions.

The interactional, procedural, and distributive justice dimensions explain how university staff perceive the outcome of regulatory reforms, market forces, and austerity measures. For example, regulatory reforms in private universities, such as new accreditation procedures, curricular reforms, or policies on staff, could change roles and expectations at work. If changes are seen as unfair or imposed discriminatively, staff may feel threatened with job loss and become disaffected. Likewise, competition in the marketplace can force universities to embark on radical cost-cutting, load extra work, or change performance targets, which can be seen as unfair if staff have not been consulted or if judgments seem to be capricious. Funding shortfalls, a universal problem in private universities, tend to have the consequences of budget reductions, pay delays, and lower benefits, which profoundly affect the perception of employees regarding the fairness of compensation and career development opportunities.

Thus, by employing Organisational Justice Theory, through this research, it is possible to examine systematically the impact of perceived justice on reactions to such external pressures for employees. It permits differential testing of whether perceived injustices in policy enforcement, resource distribution, and communication by managers enhance perceptions of job security and dissatisfaction. This theory also emphasises transparency in decision-making, employee participation, and equity to mitigate the negative effects of organisational change on employee satisfaction. Finally, the use of Organisational Justice Theory in this study offers a holistic explanation of the impact of environmental changes on employees' welfare in private universities. It delivers lessons on organisational change management best practices.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Oladimeji et al. (2020) examined the influence of change management on employee satisfaction in Nigeria's banking sector, namely its influence on change implementation and change communication. Through the survey research approach and regression analysis through SPSS version 23, the authors established that both aspects significantly influenced employee satisfaction. The joint influence of the said change components explained 47.6% variance in employee satisfaction, with a clear assertion of the significance of properly managed change processes for organizational stability. However, Kumolu-Johnson et al. (2021) compared the influence of technological and structural change on the performance of employees in selected banks in Lagos. Descriptive survey research design was employed with 161 employees, and results indicated that there were significant effects exerted by technological ( $\beta = 0.654$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and structural change ( $\beta = 0.673$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) on performance. The research concluded that effective change management behaviour, such as communication and participatory leadership, is important for employee performance and flexibility.

Also, Mgbemena et al. (2022) researched structural, policy, and leadership changes among hotels in Awka, Nigeria. In a multiple regression analysis, the results showed that leadership, structure, and policy changes positively impacted employee performance. The research suggested enhancing leadership transitions, structural realignments, and policy reforms to motivate and increase employee productivity. Shuaibu and Daniel (2023) studied change management among private universities in the Federal Capital Territory and Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The research found that organizational structural changes, leadership changes, operational alterations, and environmental changes significantly contributed to employee satisfaction. Variations in the change outcomes among academic and non-academic staff highlighted the need for individualized change management plans. Recommendations included investing in leadership capacity, utilising technology, and implementing effective administrative procedures to boost employee satisfaction and efficiency institutions.

Bakare et al. (2025) study how changes in organisational structure affect employee satisfaction in private universities in North-Central Nigeria. They focus on hierarchical restructuring, departmental alignment, and workflow redesign. Using a descriptive survey, data were collected from 569 participants at seven universities through a structured questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis assessed the link between structural changes and employee satisfaction. Results show that hierarchical restructuring increases satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.274$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) by clarifying leadership roles and enhancing communication. Departmental realignment improves satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.362$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ) by promoting efficiency and clarity in job roles. Furthermore, workflow redesign significantly influences satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) by optimising processes and reducing redundancies. The structural change model explains 68.3% of the variance in satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.683$ ,  $F = 25.205$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), highlighting the importance of these factors. Findings support Psychological Contract Theory, indicating that employee satisfaction and retention depend on fairness, trust, and meeting expectations. Effective restructuring promotes stability, career advancement, and trust, while poorly managed changes can cause uncertainty and disengagement. To improve satisfaction, commitment, and organisational performance, private universities should adopt structural reforms that enhance confidence and capability.

The preceding empirical reviews affirm the existence of empirical studies on organizational change in Nigeria. However, no published works on environmental organizational change exist. Consequently, this leaves an empirical gap and a void in knowledge that this study is poised to address.

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design based on the pragmatist philosophy of research to explore organizational change and satisfaction of employees from private universities in North-Central Nigeria. The population was comprised of 3,315 workers from seven private universities, in which 1,411 were academic staff and 1,904 were non-academic staff. Cochran's (1997) formula was employed in calculating the sample of 600 respondents, and Browler's proportional allocation formula was employed in proportionate representation. Simple random and convenience sampling were applied in administering research instruments in distribution. A Likert scale questionnaire was administered in collecting primary data, with its cost-effectiveness for use at large scale data collection. Piloting (e.g., at a Nasarawa State university) as a test for validity and reliability, and Pearson correlation analysis test affirming construct validity and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (0.951) revealing high internal consistency. Multiple regression estimation was employed to evaluate the influence of changes in regulations, market competition, and funding pressures on employee satisfaction, with pre-estimation testing (e.g., correlation analysis) employed to confirm variable associations. Hypothesis testing was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance to ensure statistical adequacy in determining the influence of organizational change on private university employee well-being.

## MODEL SPECIFICATION

A multiple regression model was utilized in a study of the effects of organizational environmental change on worker satisfaction at private universities within North-Central Nigeria. According to the model, there exists the connection of worker satisfaction (dependent variable) and the substantive environmental change factors: regulatory modifications, market forces, and demands for funds (independent variables). The following represents the model:

$$ES_i = \alpha + \beta_1 RC_i + \beta_2 MC_i + \beta_3 FP_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

ES=Employees Satisfaction, RC= Regulatory Change MC= Marketing Competition, FP=Funding Pressures,  $\beta_0$  = Intercept (Constant Term),  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$  = Regression Coefficients

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev
ES	527	3.43	7.58	5.46	0.68
RC	527	0.26	7.35	3.49	0.98
MC	527	0.03	5.90	3.08	1.07
FP	527	-0.67	5.92	2.87	1.22

**Source: Author, 2025**

The descriptive statistics give a summary of the main variables in the research. Employee Satisfaction has a mean of 5.46 and a standard deviation of 0.68, meaning that the majority of respondents were moderately to highly satisfied with some deviations. Regulatory Changes have a mean of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 0.98, showing moderate levels of exposure to regulatory changes. Market Competition has a smaller mean of 3.08 and standard deviation of 1.07, indicating that various respondents face diverse competitive pressures. Funding Pressures have the lowest mean (2.87) but largest standard deviation (1.22), indicating large variations in financial constraints as viewed by respondents. Interestingly, the negative minimum value of Funding Pressures indicates that financial conditions are viewed as less burdensome or even favorable by some respondents.

**Table 2: Correlation**

Variable	Employee Satisfaction	Regulatory Changes	Market Competition	Funding Pressures
ES	1.000			
RC	0.716	1.000		
MC	0.685	0.523	1.000	
FP	0.768	0.513	0.429	1.000

**Source: Author, 2025**

The correlation matrix shows high and positive correlations between Employee Satisfaction and the independent variables. Regulatory Changes correlate highly (0.716) with Employee Satisfaction, an indication that policy and legislative changes play a significant role in employees' perceptions of their working environment. Market Competition correlates highly positively (0.685) with Employee Satisfaction, an indication that competitive forces have an effect on employees' perceptions of job security and working environment. Funding Pressures show the strongest relationship (0.768) with Employee Satisfaction, which suggests that budget cut or lack of resources have a significant effect on the overall satisfaction of employees. The correlation matrix shows strong, positive relationships between Employee Satisfaction and the independent variables.

## REGRESSION ANALYSIS

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.770	0.663	0.661	0.801

**Predictors:** (Constant), RC, MC, FP

**Dependent Variable:** ES

ANOVA findings determine the overall significance of the regression model. F-statistic value 344.2 at p-value 0.000 confirms that the model is significant. This suggests that combined effect of Regulatory Changes, Market Competition, and Funding Pressures explains Employee Satisfaction differences significantly. The vast difference in Sum of Squares for the regression model (152.717) versus residual (104.663) also confirms the explanatory power of the model. With the low Mean Square Error of 0.199, the model is highly predictive for Employee Satisfaction.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	752.717	3	250.907	21.89	.000
Residual	5994.663	523	11.462		
Total	6747.38	526			

**Dependent Variable:** ES

**Predictors:** (Constant), RC, MC, FP

The ANOVA results determine the overall significance of the regression model. With the F-statistic value of 21.89 and p-value of 0.000, the model is highly significant. This means that the joint influence of Regulatory Changes, Market Competition, and Funding Pressures explains changes in Employee Satisfaction significantly. The model possesses high capability in predicting Employee Satisfaction, with the Sig. value of less than 5%.

**Table 4.5: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.1121	0.134		7.112	0.005
RC	0.4000	0.022	0.357	4.995	0.015
MC	0.4961	0.022	0.453	5.003	0.003
FP	0.2759	0.021	0.235	5.102	0.011

**Dependent Variable:** ES



Regression coefficients depict how predictors independently contribute to Employee Satisfaction. The constant (2.1121) is Employee Satisfaction at a baseline when predictors are all equal to zero.

Regulatory Changes (RC) is positively and significantly related to Employee Satisfaction at 0.4000 ( $p = 0.015$ ). The outcome is that as Regulatory Changes increase by one unit, Employee Satisfaction is also likely to increase by 0.4000, all else being equal. The null hypothesis thus that there is no regulatory change effect on employee satisfaction in selected private universities in North-Central Nigeria is rejected.

Market Competition (MC) is most influential, with a coefficient of 0.4961 ( $p = 0.003$ ). It implies that with increased competition, Employee Satisfaction increases, maybe because of greater strategic responses, job involvement, or organizational resilience. The null hypothesis that market competition does not significantly affect employee satisfaction in selected private universities in North-Central Nigeria is, therefore, rejected.

Funding Pressures (FP) also contribute significantly, with a coefficient of 0.2759 ( $p = 0.011$ ). This means that although money pressures can lead to uncertainty, their contribution to satisfaction is significantly lower than that of regulatory and market pressures. The null hypothesis therefore that Funding pressures do not significantly contribute to employee satisfaction in selected private universities in North-Central Nigeria cannot be accepted.

All the predictors are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), validating their ability to forecast Employee Satisfaction. Market Competition exerts the largest impact ( $\beta = 0.453$ ), followed by Regulatory Changes ( $\beta = 0.357$ ) and Funding Pressures ( $\beta = 0.235$ ). This order of impacts indicates the overriding influence of competitive forces on employee attitudes with fiscal pressures exerting relatively a lesser influence. Hence, the null hypotheses are rejected

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research investigated the effect of environmental organizational changes on employee satisfaction among a sample of private universities in North-Central Nigeria. The results showed that there were significant relationships between regulatory changes, market competitiveness, and funding pressure and employee satisfaction. From these findings, the following conclusions are made:

Consistent with the finding made based on the evidence that regulatory reform has a very positive effect on employee satisfaction, it is fitting to say that regulatory policy reforms, if well managed, enhance employee satisfaction in the sense that they offer some rules, employment security, and organizational stability. But poorly executed regulatory reforms can create uncertainty and dissatisfaction among employees.

Given that the result that competition in the market has a notable effect on the satisfaction of employees, it becomes rational that increased competition in the private university market compels universities to improved working conditions, invest in employee development, and maintain welfare for the employees to remain competitive. However, very highly competitive pressure with less support from the institution may raise the workload and pressure, affecting employee satisfaction negatively.

Given the discovery that employee satisfaction is largely influenced by pressures to fund, it is logical to conclude that pressures from private university funding have the potential to result in delayed payment, few career development opportunities, and insufficient means, all of which contribute to reducing employee satisfaction. Those universities with the ability to combat funding pressures through creative financial measures and compensation rewards are likely to have a more effective and contented workforce.

The findings of the present research support the Organizational Justice Theory under which justice plays a significant role in influencing employees' attitudes and job satisfaction. The finding that changes in the rules enhance the job satisfaction of the employees can be supported by procedural justice since the employees feel satisfied when the rules are open and are enforced fairly. In the same manner, the effect of market competition on employee satisfaction is also linked with distributive justice since competing institutions can distribute resources, benefits, and career opportunities more equitably to keep the employees. Finally, the effect of budget pressures on employee satisfaction is also linked with interactional justice since budget pressures can influence perceptions of fair treatment by employees, especially in compensation distribution and job security. When universities practice equity in decision-making and resource allocation even in the event of regulatory reforms, market forces, and budget constraints, staff satisfaction is bound to be ensured.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative that private organizations in North-Central Nigeria implement interventions that increase organizational procedures' equity because, as the findings of this study indicate, employee satisfaction is influenced significantly by regulation changes, market competition, and financing pressures. Based on

Organizational Justice Theory, the following recommendations focus on procedural, distributive, and interactional justice to address employee satisfaction:

1. Universities must make regulatory changes transparent and implemented through procedurally legitimate avenues. Employees must be involved in policy modification discussions, and institutions must have fair and consistent decision-making structures so employees' sense of security and trust within the institution is boosted.
2. Due to competition in the market, the universities have to implement distributive justice practices by way of implementing competitive pay plans, performance incentives, and career development opportunities. Fair distribution of monetary and non-monetary rewards will serve to counteract employee dissatisfaction and enhance retention.
3. Since the effect of funding pressures is negative on workers' job satisfaction, universities are to adopt interactional justice through transparent communication of financial needs and employee input in decision making regarding the allocation of resources. The participative style will experience a higher level of employees' perceived fairness and job security and career worry.

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