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Mitigating Employees' Resistance to Change Through Internal Marketing Strategies in Edo State Civil Service

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Abstract

The study examined mitigating employees' resistance to change through internal marketing strategies in Edo State civil service. The study specifically focused on the relationship between empowerment, training and development, clear communication, and leadership support and employees' resistance to change. The study was guided by four research questions and four hypotheses. The study employed a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 2,901 civil servants in the 28 ministries in Edo State. Using Krejcie and Morgan table of sample size determination, 352 civil servants were sampled. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by two professionals in the field of measurement and evaluation of the researchers' institution. The reliability of the instrument was determined with test re-test which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.86. Data was collected through physical contact with the respondents. Data collected was analysed with Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r). Analysis of the data collected revealed that empowerment, training and development, clear communication and leadership support have a very strong positive relationship with employees' resistance to change. Based on the findings, it was recommended that organizations should involve employees in the change design process to reduce the loss of control that often sparks resistance; organization should create personalized development plans that specifically address the new skills required by the change; organizations should establish a two-way feedback loop communication strategy to eliminate the fear of the unknown, and leaders or managers of organizations at all levels should be trained to function as change champions.

Keywords: Internal Marketing, Employees' Resistance to Change, Empowerment, Training and Development, Clear Communication, and Leadership Support.

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Introduction

In the words of Heraclitus, 'the only constant in life is change.' This quote is applicable not only to our life but also to the existence of organizations. As our environment is not stable, so do all organizations. Organizational change is the process by which companies alter components like culture, technology, infrastructure, or internal processes to adapt to external or internal pressures. Hubbart (2023) sees organizational change as a process in which an organization alters minor to major structural components to address operational costs, productivity, and service quality deficiencies, identify new growth opportunities, or achieve other organizational goals. It aims to improve effectiveness, competitiveness, and sustainability, often requiring structured management to navigate transitions from old methods to new ones. Organizational change is an inevitable part of business growth and transformation, yet employee resistance to change is becoming a major barrier to success.

Resistance to change is employees' reluctance or opposition to altering existing behaviours, processes, or structures. It can come in various forms, from passive resistance to active opposition. Resistance to change in the workplace can be due to psychological, cultural, and organizational factors. According to Obina and Adenike (2022), one of the most baffling and recalcitrant of the problems which business executives face is employee resistance to change. Such resistance may take different forms such as persistent reduction in output, increase in the number of quits and requests for transfer, chronic quarrels, sullen hostility, slowdown strikes, or the expression of pseudo logical reasons why the change will not work. To avoid employees' resistance to change, utilization of internal marketing strategies is imperative.

Internal marketing is the strategic process of promoting a company's mission, culture, and values to its employees, treating them as "internal customers" to boost engagement, alignment, and retention. By ensuring staff understand and believe in the brand, it fosters better employee advocacy and superior customer experiences. Khan and Rehman (2020) see internal marketing as a comprehensive set of actions that an organization takes to treat employees as internal customers, with the aim of ensuring employees' satisfaction, empowerment, and development. The scholars further highlighted empowerment, training and development, clear communication, and leadership support as key components of internal marketing strategies.

Empowerment as an internal marketing strategy functions as a critical determinant of employee resistance to change, exhibiting an inverse relationship where higher levels of psychological and structural empowerment lead to lower resistance and greater support for change. Saleh et al. (2022) stressed that empowering employees by providing them with decision-making power and involving them in organizational change initiatives fosters a sense of ownership, which improves performance and customer satisfaction. It transforms staff into brand ambassadors, driving customer satisfaction by enabling faster, better-quality service and fostering a culture of ownership. When employees feel empowered, possessing autonomy, competence, and a sense of impact, they are more likely to take ownership of the change rather than viewing themselves as victims of it.

Training and development function as a critical determinant of employee resistance to change by addressing the root causes of fear, uncertainty, and skill gaps that typically fuel opposition. While employee resistance is a natural reaction to disruption, effective training programs transform this resistance into readiness by building confidence and capability. Awan and Khalil (2020) argued that training programs not only enhance the skills of employees but also boost their confidence and job satisfaction, which are key antecedents of internal marketing success. Training equips employees with the skills they need to succeed and align with company objectives. Regular training sessions ensure that everyone stays updated with the latest industry trends and company practices.

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Clear communication is a primary determinant of employee resistance to change, acting as both a significant cause of resistance when managed poorly and a key tool for overcoming it when executed effectively. Studies conducted by Nurmadhani et al (2025) indicate that up to 70% of organizational change efforts fail, frequently due to employee resistance rooted in fear, uncertainty, and lack of information. Communication strategies that keep employees informed about organizational goals, challenges, and changes are integral to creating a transparent and trustworthy work environment. Khan (2023) found that clear and consistent communication not only helps employees understand their roles within the organization but also fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty.

Leadership support, which involves leaders demonstrating commitment to employee well-being and development, is another vital dimension of internal marketing. According to Gao and Tang (2021), leadership that prioritizes employee development, recognizes achievements, and provides constructive feedback is linked to higher levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. Leadership support is a critical organizational function that involves providing strategic, operational, and emotional assistance to team members and executives, enabling them to succeed, grow, and navigate challenges. It involves moving beyond mere delegation to actively coaching and equipping individuals to reach their goals.

There is no doubt that internal marketing plays a critical role in mitigating employee resistance to organizational change by fostering motivation, increasing commitment, and ensuring effective communication. Studies so far conducted within and outside Nigeria revealed that by treating employees as internal customers and applying marketing-like strategies to internal initiatives, organizations can align, motivate, and inter-functionally coordinate employees to accept and implement changes. Considering the changes in most organizational operations in Edo state, there is a need to carry employees along with the transformation of the organizational activities to avoid resistance. It is against this background the study seeks to examine the mitigation of employees' resistance to change through internal marketing strategies in Edo state civil service.

Statement of the Problem

Employee resistance to change is a natural human reaction, stemming from fear of the unknown, discomfort with disruption, or perceived threats to job security and status. It is a major barrier to organizational transformation, often manifesting as a natural, emotional, and practical reaction to disruption. Employees' resistance to change can cause significant problems, as it reduces productivity and efficiency, causes implementation failures or delays, leads to misuse of technology or processes, leads to a toxic work environment, slows growth and innovation, increases stress and anxiety, and it leads to loss of morale and engagement. Just like in other parts of Nigeria, organizational operations in Edo State, have undergone significant transformation since 2021, heavily driven by digital technology, public service reforms, and a focus on efficiency. This has resulted in human capital gaps and operational deficits in the state. Studies have been conducted to address employees' resistance to change particularly in private sectors, and none has been conducted in Edo state public sectors. Hence, the need to examine the mitigation of employees' resistance to change through internal marketing strategies in Edo state civil service.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between internal marketing strategies and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. The specific objectives of the study include the following.

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1. To Examine the extent of the relationship between empowerment and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.
2. To ascertain the extent of the connection between training and development and employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.
3. To assess the extent of the association between clear communication and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.
4. To find out the extent of the link between leadership support and employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions.

1. To what extent is empowerment related to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service?
2. To what extent is training and development connected to employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service?
3. To what extent is clear communication associated with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service?
4. To what extent is leadership support linked to employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service?

Research Hypotheses

H01: Empowerment has no significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

H02: Training and development have no significant connection with employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.

H03: Clear communication has no significant association with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

H04: Leadership support has no significant link with employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is divided into content, geographical, and unit scopes. The content scope is limited to the relationship between empowerment, training and development, clear communication, and leadership support and employees' resistance to change. The geographical scope was limited to Edo state Nigeria. The unit scope was limited to civil servants in the state.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Employees' Resistance to Change

Employees' resistance to change is a natural, often unconscious, human reaction to the disruption of established routines, habits, and comfort zones in the workplace. It refers to the reluctance or opposition employees show toward altering existing behaviours, processes, or structures. Ola (2018) sees employees' resistance to change as a employees' behaviour that opposes the introduction of new forms of operating or thinking in an organization. According to Raghunath and Melanie (2025) resistance to change is a major obstacle to implementing change successfully. Fear of the unknown, job uncertainty, or a desire for the

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status quo are common causes of this resistance, which can take different forms, ranging from passive non-compliance to aggressive opposition.

Internal Marketing Strategies

Internal marketing strategies are structured initiatives aimed at promoting a company's mission, culture, values, and goals directly to its employees. By treating employees as internal customers, these strategies aim to boost engagement, improve retention, and transform staff into brand ambassadors who deliver better customer service. Wambugu (2015) defines internal marketing as a process that creates an environment where every member acts as both a client and customer to create responsibility.

Similarly, Ramya et al (2025) describe internal marketing as a tactical procedure in which the employees are regarded as internal customers and they do their best to make them equate with the mission, values, and the objectives of the organization. Such identification results in a sense of belonging and inspiration which is highly significant in heightening employee engagement. Research shows that effective internal marketing practices such as open communication and appreciation are significant in improving the level of employee satisfaction and commitment. According to Nebo and Okechukwu (2017) internal marketing is based on the notion that employees of an organization should be managed as internal customers and should be presented as internal products that satisfy the needs and desires of external customers.

Empowerment and Employees Resistance to Change

Employees' empowerment as a component of internal marketing is a strategic means of curbing employees' resistance to organizational change. For instance, a study conducted by Al-Asouf and Akhorshaideh (2017) on the impact of employee empowerment on the success of organizational change in privatized enterprises in Jordan revealed a significant impact of employee empowerment on the success of organizational change, also there is significant impact of employee empowerment factors (Talent Management, Leadership Styles, Employee Training, Rewards) on the success of organizational change. Also, the results showed the importance of providing sufficient information about the nature of change and its positive impact to raising the level of readiness for it and reducing the resistance. Similarly, a study conducted by Asli (2017) on the role of psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behaviours on employee resistance to change showed that through psychological empowerment, employees were more involved in the change process, took an active role in decision making and were more committed to the change.

Training and Development and Employees' Resistance to Change

Employee training and development have also played a crucial role in mitigating employee resistance to organizational change by fostering competence, reducing uncertainty, and increasing adaptability. While change often induces fear of skill obsolescence, targeted training provides the skills and confidence necessary to navigate new environments, turning potential resistance into acceptance. A study conducted by Valtonen and Holopainen (2024) on mitigating employee resistance and achieving well-being in digital transformation, factors influencing resistance at the individual, organizational, and technological levels revealed three key components of the resistance mitigation strategy from the case companies which include learning, communication, and participation. In a related development, a study carried out by Andi and Steviani (2025) on change management: an empirical study on managing employee resistance to organizational change identified five primary resistance factors: fear of job security (78%), lack of communication (65%), insufficient training (58%), past negative experiences (52%), and loss of autonomy (47%). Organizations employing comprehensive communication strategies, participative change approaches, and structured training programs showed 40% higher success rates in change implementation.

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Effective resistance management requires a multi-faceted approach combining initiative-taking communication, employee participation, skill development, and emotional support. Organizations that address resistance systematically achieve significantly better change outcomes.

Communication and Employees' Resistance to Change

Communication as a dimension of internal marketing plays a critical role in managing employees' resistance to organizational change by addressing the root causes of resistance, such as fear of the unknown, lack of trust, and uncertainty. A study conducted by Mihaela (2023) on the role of communication in managing resistance to change confirmed that face-to-face meetings are the most effective in communicating organizational changes, emphasizing the importance of direct dialogue. Strategies such as recognizing successes, transparent communication, and continuous feedback are critical to managing this resistance. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of clearly communicating the goals and benefits of change, as well as the development and distribution of detailed explanatory materials to facilitate organizational transitions. Similarly, a study conducted by Samir et al (2022) on effective communication during organizational change: a cross-cultural perspective also confirmed that greater awareness and consideration of cultural values can reduce the likelihood of communication breakdowns and promote greater acceptance of and support for change initiatives. The authors conclude by discussing the implications of their theoretical framework for micro-level perspectives on change.

Leadership Support and Employees' Resistance to Change

Leadership support plays a critical, mediating role in minimizing employee resistance to organizational change. Effective, supportive leadership reduces employee anxiety, fosters trust, and increases commitment to change initiatives, directly lowering resistance levels. A study conducted by Wiatr (2022) on leaders' support in organizational change confirmed that trust in leaders is an important enabler of organizational change. Perceived justice, communication, and psychological empowerment also feature prominently in the recent studies, and, together with trust, play a significant role between leadership and positive employee responses toward change. In a related development, a study conducted by Misheck (2023) on the role of leadership in organizational change confirmed that leadership plays a fundamental role in change management. The leadership roles found include motivating employees, creating a vision for change, communicating change, planning for change, creating a conducive environment for change, getting employees' buy-in and leading staff by example.

Theoretical Review

Change Management Theory

The change management model or theory was propounded by Kurt Lewis in 1947. Lewis, a social psychologist, in 1947, introduced a three stages model of change process: unfreeze, change, refreeze. Lewin argued that change starts first in unfreezing the status quo. In this stage, employees will recognize the new conditions in their work- place environment. Managers in this stage attract their employees' attention to the necessity of change through announcements, meetings, and other communication channels. In the second stage, Lewin suggested that employees will be a part of the change process. At this stage, managers engage employees in the change process effectively so that they can enhance the change process. In the final stage, Lewin introduced that employees will be part of the targeted change. Managers in this stage ensures that the employees are an effective participant and the change achieved is the targeted one (Hussain, et al., 2018).

The theory or model is suitable for the study since resistance is not merely irrational disobedience, but a predictable reaction to uncertainty that can be managed by viewing employees as customers who need to

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be engaged and supported. Internal marketing therefore works by transforming the employee from a passive recipient of change into an active participant. It directly impacts the root causes of resistance by addressing fear of the unknown through communication, lack of capability through training and development, and. perceived lack of value through rewards.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study is made up of 2,901 civil servants across the twenty-eight (28) ministries in Edo State. From the total population of the study, 352 civil servants sampled. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table of sample size determination, and the sample size was taken with the aid of convenience sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation of the researchers' institutions. The reliability of the instrument was determined with test re-test, and a reliability of 0.86 was obtained which justified the reliability of the instrument. Data was collected through physical contact with the respondents. Data collected was analysed with Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r). Mean and Standard Deviation was used to analyse the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test the hypotheses. Decision for the analysis of the research questions was taken by comparing the calculated mean scores with criterion mean score of 2.5. Calculated mean scores above criterion mean were upheld while calculated mean scores below the criterion mean were retracted. However, the results of the tested hypotheses were interpreted based on Dana (2001) correlation decision framework. The decision framework includes: 0.00-0.19 (very weak); 0.20 – 0.39 (weak); 0.40 – 0.59 (moderate); 0.60 – 0.79 (strong); 0.80 – 0.99 (very strong); and 1 (perfect).

Results

Analysis of Research Questions

Research question one.

To what extent is empowerment related to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service?

In response to research question one, items 1 to 4 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Mean. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean analysis of the extent of empowerment related to employees' resistance to change.

S/N	Item	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total Score	Sample Size	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remark
1	Higher empowerment leads to lower resistance and greater willingness to embrace new directions.	83 332	136 680	97 194	36 36	1242	352	3.53	Accepted
2	Empowered employees are more involved in the decision-making								

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	process, which reduces resistance to change.	101 404	142 426	11 22	98 98	950	352	2.70	Accepted
3	Empowered employees feel a greater sense of control and are less susceptible to the fear and instability associated with change	121 484	136 408	66 132	29 29	1053	352	2.99	Accepted
4	Employee that is paired with talent management and training, is a key success factor in organizational change	99 396	161 483	42 84	50 50	1013	352	2.88	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**101** **404**	**144** **432**	**54** **108**	**53** **53**	**997**	**352**	**2.83**	**Accepted**

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table that analysed the extent of empowerment relates to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service revealed a calculated grand mean of 2.83, which is greater than the criteria mean of 2.50 **(2.83 > 2.50).** Since the calculated grand mean is greater than the criteria mean, it is accepted that to an extremely high extent, empowerment relates to employees' resistance to change.

Research question two.

To what extent is training and development connected to employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service?

In response to research question one, items 5 to 8 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Mean. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Analysis of the extent training and development connected to employees' resistance to change.

S/N	Item	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total Score	Sample Size	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remark
5	Training and development boosts confidence and reducing the								

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	perceived threat to job security	110 440	126 378	54 108	62 62	988	352	2.81	Accepted
6	Training legitimizes employee worries and transforms their negative reactions into acceptance and commitment.	96 384	151 453	33 66	72 72	975	352	2.77	Accepted
7	Training helps employees understand the rationale behind changes and how those changes will personally benefit them	102 408	136 408	69 138	45 45	999	352	2.84	Accepted
8	Training and development involve employees in the process, turning them from passive resistors into active agents of change	86 344	166 498	63 126	37 37	1005	352	2.86	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**99** **396**	**145** **435**	**54** **108**	**54** **54**	**993**	**352**	**2.82**	**Accepted**

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table that analysed the extent training and development relate to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service revealed a calculated grand mean of 2.82, which is greater than the criteria mean of 2.50 **(2.82 > 2.50).** Since the calculated grand mean is greater than the criteria mean, it is accepted that to an extremely high extent, training and development relates to employees' resistance to change.

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Research question three.

To what extent is clear communication associated with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service?

In response to research question one, items 9 to 12 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Mean. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Mean analysis of the extent of clear communication associated with employees' resistance to change.

S/N	Item	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total Score	Sample Size	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remark
9	Providing detailed explanations lowers cynicism and the likelihood of employees revolting against management	88 352	106 318	103 206	55 55	931	352	2.65	Accepted
10	When employees feel informed and included in decision-making process, their confidence in leadership increases, making them more likely to accept change	97 388	181 543	38 76	36 36	1043	352	3.96	Accepted
11	Involving employees through open, direct, and two-way dialogue makes them active participants rather than resistant bystanders.	108 432	138 414	66 132	42 42	1020	352	2.88	Accepted
12	Communicating the benefits of change ensures employees understand the rationale, moving them								

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	from apathy to commitment.	86 344	144 432	96 192	26 26	994	352	2.83	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**95** **380**	**142** **426**	**76** **152**	**39** **39**	**997**	**352**	**2.83**	**Accepted**

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table that analysed the extent of clear communication related to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service revealed a calculated grand mean of 2.83, which is greater than the criteria mean of 2.50 **(2.83 > 2.50).** Since the calculated grand mean is greater than the criteria mean, it is accepted that to an extremely high extent, clear communication relates to employees' resistance to change.

Research question four.

To what extent is leadership support linked to employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service?

In response to research question one, items 13 to 16 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Mean. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Mean analysis of the extent leadership support linked to employees' resistance to change.

S/N	Item	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total Score	Sample Size	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Remark
13	Trust in leadership acts as a critical enabler, reducing uncertainty and anxiety that drive resistance	76 304	182 546	33 66	61 61	977	352	2.78	Accepted
14	Leaders who function as mentors and role models reduce resistance by highlighting the personal benefits of change.	76 304	93 279	132 264	51 51	898	352	2.55	Accepted
15	Involving employees in decision-making processes, as supported by engaging leadership,								

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	lowers resistance and increases ownership	121 484	86 258	93 186	52 52	980	352	2.78	Accepted
16	Change leadership significantly impacts employees' readiness to accept new organizational directions.	122 488	168 505	40 80	22 22	1094	352	3.11	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**99** **396**	**132** **396**	**74** **148**	**47** **47**	**987**	**352**	**2.80**	**Accepted**

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table that analysed the extent of leadership support related to employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service revealed a calculated grand mean of 2.80, which is greater than the criteria mean of 2.50 **(2.80 > 2.50).** Since the calculated grand mean is greater than the criteria mean, it is accepted that to an extremely high extent, clear communication relates to employees' resistance to change.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Null Hypothesis (H0): Empowerment has no significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Empowerment has a significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

In response to research hypothesis one, items 1 to 4 and items 17 to 20 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 5 below.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Table for Testing Hypothesis two

Variables	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	N	r	Remark
Empowerment	2.83	1.01	352	0.86	Very Strong Significant Relationship
Employee Resistance to Change	2.74	0.90			

Source: field survey, 2026

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The above table provides the computational outcomes for the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between empowerment and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.86. Going by Dana's correlation decision framework, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Meaning there is a very strong significant relationship between empowerment and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Hypothesis two

Null Hypothesis (H0): Training and development have no significant connection with employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Training and development have a significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

In response to research hypothesis one, items 5 to 8 and items 17 to 20 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 6 below.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Table for Testing Hypothesis two

Variables	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	N	r	Remark
Training and Development	2.82	1.01	352	0.85	Very Strong Significant Relationship
Employees' Resistance to Change	2.74	0.90			

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table provides the computational outcomes for the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between training and development and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.85. Going by Dana's correlation decision framework, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Meaning there is a very strong significant relationship between training and development and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Hypothesis three

Null Hypothesis (H0): Clear communication has no significant association with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Clear communication has a significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

In response to research hypothesis one, items 9 to 12 and items 17 to 20 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 7 below.

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Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Table for Testing Hypothesis two

Variables	Mean (x̄)	Std. Dev.	N	r	Remark
Clear Communication	2.83	0.95	352	0.94	Very Strong Significant Relationship
Employees' Resistance to Change	2.74	0.90			

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table provides the computational outcomes for the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between clear communication and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.94. Going by Dana's correlation decision framework, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Meaning there is a very strong significant relationship between clear communication and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Hypothesis four

Null Hypothesis (H0): Leadership support has no significant link with employees' resistance to change in Edo State civil service.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): Leadership support has a significant relationship with employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

In response to research hypothesis one, items 13 to 16 and items 17 to 20 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 8 below.

Table 8: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Table for Testing Hypothesis two

Variables	Mean (x̄)	Std. Dev.	N	r	Remark
Leadership Support	2.80	0.99	352	0.91	Very Strong Significant Relationship
Employees' Resistance to Change	2.74	0.90			

Source: field survey, 2026

The above table provides the computational outcomes for the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between leadership support and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.91. Going by Dana's correlation decision framework, the

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null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Meaning there is a very strong significant relationship between clear communication and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the first research question and hypothesis revealed a very strong significant relationship between empowerment and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. This finding agrees with that of Al-Asouf and Akhorshaideh (2017) and Asli (2017). A study conducted by Al-Asouf and Akhorshaideh (2017) in Jordan revealed a significant impact of employee empowerment on the success of organizational change. Similarly, a study conducted by Asli (2017) revealed that through psychological empowerment, employees are more involved in the change process, took an active role in decision making and were more committed to the change.

The analysis of the second research question and hypothesis revealed a very strong significant relationship between training and development and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. This finding agrees with Valtonen and Holopainen (2024) and Andi and Steviani (2025). According to Valtonen and Holopainen (2024), there are three key components of resistance mitigation strategy which include learning, communication, and participation. According to Andi and Steviani (2025), effective resistance management requires a multi-faceted approach combining initiative-taking communication, employee participation, skill development, and emotional support.

The analysis of the third research question and hypothesis revealed a very strong significant relationship between clear communication and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. This finding is like that of Mihaela (2023) and Samir et al (2022). According to Mihaela (2023) face-to-face meetings are the most effective in communicating organizational changes, emphasizing the importance of direct dialogue. According to Samir et al (2022), greater awareness and consideration of cultural values can reduce the likelihood of communication breakdowns and promote greater acceptance of and support for change initiatives.

The analysis of the fourth research question and hypothesis revealed a very strong significant relationship between leadership support and employees' resistance to change in Edo state civil service. This finding agrees with that of Wiatr (2022) and Misheck (2023). According to Wiatr (2022) trust in leaders is an important enabler of organizational change. Misheck (2023) concluded in his study that leadership plays a fundamental role in change management. The leadership roles found according to the scholar include motivating employees, creating a vision for change, communicating change, planning for change, creating a conducive environment for change, getting employees' buy-in and leading staff by example.

Conclusion

This study concludes that internal marketing is a critical lever for mitigating employee resistance to change**,** primarily through its influence on psychological and structural readiness. The research revealed an extraordinarily strong relationship between four key internal marketing pillars which include empowerment, training and development, clear communication, and leadership support, and reduced levels of resistance. The evidence indicates that when employees are treated as internal customers and supported through these four dimensions, the psychological barriers to change significantly diminish.

Recommendation

The findings of the study led to the following recommendations.

1. Organizations should involve employees in the change design process to reduce the loss of control

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that often sparks resistance.

2. Organisations should create personalized development plans that specifically address the new skills required by the change.
3. Organizations should establish a two-way feedback loop communication strategy to eliminate the fear of the unknown.
4. Leaders or managers of organizations at all levels should be trained to function as change champions**.**

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