# A Comparative Study of Leadership Effectiveness and Accountability in Public and Private Sector Governance in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study is aimed at comparing the leadership process in the public and private sectors with a view to benchmarking approaches that can enhance performance in the public sector. The study is descriptive and combines secondary data with interview of key personnel in both sectors. Findings indicate that the private sector is guided by rules, aims at compulsory attainment of set goals in line with organization's mission. Failure may attract query, transfer, salary cuts or termination of job which is strange to the public sector since they have no specific set goals, operate under a free rein to produce inefficiency, lack of transparency and accountability marked with high level of corruption. The study affirms these attitudes as responsible for some of the challenges pursuing Nigeria's economic woes and therefore suggests a need for redirection of governance process. The posture of leadership in Nigeria can be more effective if monitoring and controls are instituted to check excesses while rules and standards are enforced.*

**Keywords:**    Governance, Redirection, Accountability, Effectiveness, Monitoring and Control

## INTRODUCTION

Organizations are viewed as collection of individuals whose activities are coordinated towards the attainment of the objectives of instituting such an establishment. This goes for public sector wherein we also have persons coming together as a work force working towards a common goal. There are perceived notions as a result of the interactions between the individuals in this process. Where expected results are not achieved, change is often inevitable either on resources' acquisition and application, human resource activities and other result oriented organization activities. Organization is captured as a process of identifying and grouping the work to be performed, defining and delegating responsibility; establishing relationship for the purpose of attaining set objectives (Lowenthal, 2010).

Organizations are influenced by both internal and external factors such as centralisation or otherwise of operations, divestiture or acquisition of other businesses. The need for change may be generated at any level of the organization; the onus for instituting change however rests on the management. Hence, managers have to monitor and be on the alert to discover early enough a need for change. This phenomenon is paradigm to the situation of management in both public and private organizations, for the chief executives at the helm of affairs to respond to it. Ingram (2011), emphasised that the position of leadership in terms of finance is not about observing safe practice but balancing risks, rights and responsibilities to allow efficiency and effectiveness towards sound judgement and a framework of accountability. This position explains the need for adhering to governance standards as guides through the application of set rules in which stakeholders are necessarily committed.

## GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM (PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS)

A good system of governance is imperative for financial propriety, organization and direction in the work place and it benefits overall efficiency and competitiveness which enhances attainment of organization goals. Governance being a set of processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions guide the ways an organization is directed, administered or controlled. The primary functions of a modern government all over the world, include, but not limited to the protection of lives and properties, through the armed forces and the police, while the law courts protect the rights of the citizens. Second, is the provision of social amenities such as good roads, hospitals, schools, electricity, recreation centres using the income from taxes and other generated revenue. Equally important is the provision of employment opportunities and possibly social welfare packages for the unemployed, maintenance of justice, law and order, regulation of economic activities as well as ensuring neat and peaceful transfer of power as may be required. Unfortunately, physical observation of infrastructures in most states reveals very poor maintenance of most infrastructures. More so, the people's welfare are treated with utter disregard while there is general lack of insecurity in major cities in the country. Life is virtually unsafe. The foregoing constitutes the premises of unrest in many countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Iran, Tunisia and Nigeria among others. Nigeria faced with leadership problems whether military or civilian regime is left crawling on her knees in spite of abundant resources. This is largely due to corruption and its 'twin' poor leadership. One can easily identify these twin in the presence of long queues in public offices, slow movement of files, ghost workers syndrome to mention a few.

Likewise, organizations are established to accomplish the goals or objectives that the owner(s) have in mind, which inform its set up. They bring people of different skills together; place them strategically for the purpose of planning, production of goods or service and recording of the results of the investment activities. These acts are prominently similar to the ways by which leaders or managers carry out governance functions in the public sector and they point to the fact that those leading the nation also account for their stewardship over the citizens and the nation's resources. Thus a question need be asked, where those acting in governance err, where does the power of reckoning lie? How do advanced nations manage this situation? Can such happen in Nigeria?

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Influencing people so that they are willing and committed to work for attaining set goals is an act of good leadership that every organization will appreciate. This is an act that is expected of leaders in running the affairs of government at whatever sector or level. Leaders naturally are deemed managers of the affairs of each of their areas of calling. Hence to deliver their stewardship implies doing what is expected of such a leader at the right time, with the correct approach to obtaining expected result. Governance in Nigeria's public sector however reveals that the act of management or leadership is not effective enough with the present standard and situations economically. This is evidenced in general lack of insecurity, unemployment and other social and economic setbacks. The apex government even though, made hard promises and people seriously fixed their hopes on the promises, the main challenge is the intention to effect change which however has remained unresolved. Hence this study examines the missing link between leadership, effectiveness and accountability in public sector governance. The Transparency International spokesman averred that in most countries today there are increasing expectations from ordinary citizens, business leaders and Civil Society that Governments will establish and deliver higher standards of ethics and integrity in the Civil Service, agencies of government (Ministries and Parastatals), and at the national level. The situation of governance in Nigeria today demands great minds to proffer solutions to the present challenges with a view to suggesting ways out as the status quo reveals various gaps that need be covered.

Probity in the governance process implies honesty in every actions and decision making. The independence of the executors of policies should speak clearly of the commitment of office holders. Fairness in every action will be depicted in a balanced intermediation on issues by stakeholders in

running the organizations. This is enhanced when there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all connected with goal attainment in the organization. Ideally, adherence to high moral code and avoidance of compromised standards and rules will enhance the extent of success in governance. Enforcement of standards, rules and guidelines in Nigeria face a lot of set-backs due to political interference especially from those in government and the powers that bear influence over the affairs of the nation even as the absence of transparency and accountability constitute a major constraint. Going by the IFAC committee pronouncement, world practices require implementing codes of conduct effectively and consistently in order to improve performance throughout the three tiers of government. Consideration of failures in almost all sectors (finance, administration, rules and procedures) has contributed to the general set-back observable in the governance process. In Nigeria especially, several factors including very different styles of management, add to poor leadership delivery across the levels of government. This position is more emphasised when we consider the inability of both the governed and governor to present factual information that can be used effectively for planning. As well, the use of sub-standard labour, conniving with suppliers in the use of low quality systems that end up in unreliable service delivery and the fact that people are not used to obeying rules make it hard to get required result. Where then lies the way out? What are the real causative factors for ineffectiveness of government?

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**
The study's main objective is to compare Leadership, Effectiveness and Accountability in Public and Private Sector- Governance with the following as sub-objectives of the study
1. Examine the relationship between the style of governance and the attainment of objectives?
2. Determine the relationship between leadership functions (planning) and performance?
3. Investigate whether political interference has a relationship with accountability and effectiveness.

**METHODOLOGY**
The study is descriptive and uses content analysis of secondary data, observation of processes and conducting personal interviews of some key personnel of public and private establishments. The study focuses on the public sector between the last 5 years.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessing the effectiveness of a governance process and personalities require having a leader who is honest, creative, positive, confident, committed, focused and has the ability to inspire as a professional. Amoreaux (2012) further suggested that a good leader must have the capacity to lead, and provide necessary direction and guidance for an affective governance process. However, Machiavelli reasoned that the modern state is complex for a single human being to manage; hence there will always be a need for lieutenants such as advisors to assist in governance. The challenge herein is that as humans there will always be a detractor. This is affirmed by Pacek (2010) when he expressed the view that there are always fundamental differences in leadership in organizations. Leadership according to Weihrich et al (2011), requires the ability to exercise power, a fundamental understanding of people; inspiring followers to apply their full capabilities and a leadership style that is conducive for all climate. For effectiveness to be achieved therefore, demands some commitment to achieve expected goals which is usually at a cost. This happens to be the bane for compromises by leaders when the detractors insist on having their corrupt influences entrenched.

Oyedepo (2015), observed that mismanagement is a curse for poverty, a deterrent for development and advancement; conversely, good management is the master key to a world of enlargement, development and an engendered future. Good leaders therefore, in the context of this paper must be able to manage effectively every resource to the organization, which is also expected of managers in government. In order to overcome these crucial challenges in governance, its managers must be able to adhere and practise to the core, the five major functions of management which are planning, co-ordinating, controlling, leading and organising. In line with these is setting corporate objectives aligned with performance standards and controls.

Planning can be described as an act that logically and naturally precedes other managerial functions. Every leader at whatever point of responsibility hence, is regarded as a manager that is expected to live up to expectations in his role as leader or manager. Examining the current impasse on the 2016 budget (a financial plan), one wonders what would have been happening on other planning processes such as issues that have implications on the human, technical, material and other resources, wherein the processes are not opened to the general public. Could this be pointing to why the national managers have not been able to resolve several national issues such as unemployment, oil and gas, the economy

among others? Taking a cue from the entry of the current regime, his entry can be seen as one who had a focus and had plans towards the welfare of the nation unlike previous regimes which happened to get there by chance; hence they had no tangible plans for either improvement or better still looking elsewhere for effective governance.

Weihrich et al (2011), affirmed the needful premises for effective planning, to include clear and unambiguous planning statements that lead to attainment of results, measured by the contributions to the purpose and objectives of the stated plans. When leaders work within the planning framework, what results is a consistent and effective system of executing national objectives. Expectedly this enhances attainment of results such as national development and growth.

## LEADERSHIP IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR COMPARED TO GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

A good system of governance is imperative for financial propriety and it benefits overall efficiency and competitiveness which enhances attainment of set goals. Through governance processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions are instituted to guide the ways an organization is directed, administered or controlled. A measure of the performance of leaders is the effectiveness of attaining the objective in focus. Effective leaders develop a level of self awareness and a capacity to monitor their own learning and development because they know that leadership attribute can be defined, learned, improved and then passed to others (Amoreaux, 2012). It is expected that leaders having this focus will strategically approach their work to transform and develop the organization if they target effectiveness in their carriers.

Pacek (2010), in her analysis of the differences in leadership styles, concluded that it is inevitable to see differences from one area or sector to the other. These differences are considered in terms of leadership styles, decision-making styles and motivation profile, and are said to record prominent changes from one organization to another. According to Cook (1998) in Anderson (2010), the distinctive differences can be traced to the presence of politics at the heart of the enterprise. This forms the basis upon which individual leadership styles are interpreted as different.

The essence of this comparison is to highlight the approach of the private and public sector to duties. Effective leadership implies a committed, creative, productive and impactful management that focuses attainment of result. This will be evident first, in the administration of workers'

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remuneration, noting that payment of poor salaries is tantamount to poor work response of staffs. Irregularity in workers' salary payment is an issue that easily exposes the administration. Experience of the past and present leadership in about 70% of the states in payment of workers' wages and salaries is unhealthy for organization performance, growth and development as well as transparency and accountability in line of financial matters. Payment of salaries is an obligation, which must be carried out as at when due. Where an organization fails this, it is an indictment on the effectiveness of management; a situation which most leaders of the current and immediate past administrations fail to appreciate. A cursory look into the private sector reveals that the issue of salary payment is taken seriously as management realise the importance of motivation towards enhancing productivity, performance and attainment of organization goals. Failure in this wise is the cause of the economic poverty of many, traceable to most public organizations. Secondly, effectiveness bears witness of the fact that leaders in the private sector put organization rules before personal relationships and attitudes. In the private sector, managers are assessed and held responsible for their unit's performance. Public enterprises are also towing some of the prudency lines, however where there is political interference, the story may be different.

To this extent, assessing leadership effectiveness and accountability in Public Sector Governance in Nigeria as essential factors of effective and efficient performance is essential. This can improve the present situation in Nigeria in order to create the needed change that will engender progress, growth, peace and economic development. Notably in the private sector, the practice of employees doing everything to satisfy the customers is directed towards achieving organization goal. This ideology of customer is king could be applicable to the public sector in the way they deal with the masses which will translate to governance directing its effort to focusing and meeting their needs. People are used to obeying laws and so it is expected that they will follow the organization's planned activities effectively. Salaries and wages are very high and are paid as at when due creating an enabling environment for the employees to trust management and be committed to duty. This scenario in the public sector is contradictory, a situation that predicates acts of distrust, non-committed attitude to work and ineffectiveness. The attainment of individual worker and organization objectives is a necessity in the private sector. Controls are instituted to determine where improvement is required, this is a situation which is rare in the public sector, and leaders care less unless there are personal gains.

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The effect of personal relationships and personal attitude is minor in the private sector, however due to the nature of the public set up, there is fraternisation, and the general effect of this can be seen in how people help one another to achieve self goals. Labour is encouraged to innovate and be creative. Information about the market, competitors, labour market, etc is available. Highly qualified labour is available in order to meet up with productivity; these are acts common to the private sector. However, in the public sector, due to political influence and god-fathers, labour is not quite defined. Whereas in the private sector working tools, infrastructures, equipments, accommodation are provided to enable workers to perform, in the public sector, infrastructures such as roads, transportation, to enhance development and productivity are provided after much pressures are laid on government. Very tough environmental requirements for enhancing workers' performance exist. Building trust and long term relationship based on mutual benefit is common behaviour; and laying off is accepted to some extent as it is not usually challenged in the private sector. The reverse is the case with most set up under government from local to national level.

The principle of leadership says people tend to follow those, who, in their view offer them a means of satisfying their personal goals , therefore the more managers understand what motivates their subordinates and how the motivators operate, the more effective such leaders will be. However Yair Re-em (2010) argued that since the act of motivation is an individual phenomenon which pertains to determination, intention or self choice, it implies then, that leaders can only influence workers to act in line with desires. It is thus expected that leaders in the public or private sector can only influence the acts or behaviour of workers to conform to expectation. Nigerian leaders 'murdered' the career/ civil service standards and structure for selfish ends which led to the political sector disrupting the position of ethics, rule of law and standards. This was the beginning; however we keep seeing its evil recourse but cannot imagine its end. What subsists today in every nook and cranny of Nigeria and in most situations is the reverse of what obtains in the private sector.  Arising from the foregoing is corruption, non transparency and non- accountability. What then will be the way(s) out of the quagmire?

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**
**Leadership Theories**
The literatures indicated that leadership schools of thought evolved from the 'Great man' to Trait theory (describes attributes inherent in man from ambition to Zest for life), Behaviourist (what leaders do rather than their qualities), Contingency (variables which best predict the most effective

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leadership style for particular circumstances) and Transformational theories (change leading to transformation of organisational performance). According to Bolden et al (2003), each of these theories considers leaders from their individual perspective. The Fiedler's Contingency model however views leadership and concludes that there is no single best way for managers or leaders to lead; rather it comes in form of a combination of two or more styles. From the theory of Stewardship as stated by Milles (2011), man is essentially trustworthy and capable of acting in good faith in the interest of other people with integrity and honesty. As stewards of the governance process, office holders carry the responsibility of ensuring proper implementation of guidelines, policies, rules and laws of the nation. Thus for the leader and those being led, there has to be accountability. Naturally, those being led, know to whom, where and when to account, the question arises again, to whom are the leaders answerable? Isn't there a missing link in the process? How is this situation addressed?

For the introduction of relevant Codes of Ethics and Conduct, to be effective, it needs to be supported by a range of other mechanisms, such as leadership training for managers and political leaders alike as well as placement of rules that affect all and sundry. In most countries today, there are increasing expectations from ordinary citizens, business leaders and Civil Society that Governments will establish and deliver higher standards of ethicality and integrity in the Civil Service, Ministries and parastatals and Government itself. Part of this expectation is the result of better focused media attention and public scrutiny, and increasing impatience by ordinary citizens and Civil Society, whose members want to see an end to the corrupt practices and systems of the past. In his foreword address, Ingram of the Scotland APS group observed that achieving good outcomes for people and community depend on having confident, competent and valued leaders with effective frontline practitioners delivering personalized support services. He identified complex interdependencies in achieving this; however the framework to enhance clarity on accountability and responsibility, good leadership and effectiveness must exist. The availability of valuable information on the media, Waziri (executive secretary of NEITI) in This Day 2016, April, lamented was largely of no consequence as the masses did not avail themselves of the information. Information, people say, is power. That framework is identified in balancing risks, rights and responsibilities in a way that supports well-informed decision–making, doing things efficiently and effectively. This, to the Nigerian government could be added to the governance framework already existing but which needs to be resuscitated.

Ackerman (2004) equally suggested co-governance rather than using ''exit'' solutions or social protest. Co-governance involves citizens participating in the planning and supervision of public spending, a system which could be highly helpful in Nigeria's governance process. Bearing in mind the need for developing effective Civil Service Ethics, Codes of Conduct, transparency measures, Ethics and Integrity systems, special emphasis is required to concentrate effort on areas that are directly relevant to the problems of internalising integrity and ethics in the public sector. Attention needs to be paid to core public sector ethics, values, as well as commitment to good governance.

Further, strengthening ethical competence of leaders require mechanisms to support "professional ethics" that will influence undertaking new technique to institutionalise ethically competent decision making, professional responsibility, self-discipline, and support for the rule of law.

Finally, administrative practices and processes that will enhance ethical values and integrity should be developed in order to create opportunities for effective performance. Whitton (2001) suggested specific strategies which should be considered to attain the foregoing effective laws which require leaders to give reasons for their official decisions, management approaches which encourage all public officials and civil servants to deal positively with corruption and unethical practice when they encounter it. Whistle-blower protection law to protect appropriate 'public interest disclosures of wrong doing by officials. It is deemed essential that if the room for acts of dishonesty and egoism among others is not created, by public servants, serious attacks on corruption will be enabled, such that resources are effectively applied, policies become more realistic and purposefully executed as can be observed in the private sector.

**EFFECTIVENESS MODELS**
Effectiveness in organizations refers to attainment of results in the management of resources (human, materials, financial, technical) and execution of policies, programmes and other activities. As captured by Mccann (2004), organization effectiveness is the criterion of the organization's successful attainment of their purposes through core strategies. This is the point by which leaders and or managers' effectiveness is considered or measured. Essentially, the attainment of goals in terms of the management of all resources is critical to determining the effectiveness of managers or leaders. Citing Vinitwatanakhun's (1998)concept of organization effectiveness, Ashraf and Abd-Kadir (2012), averred that organization effectiveness should focus on human resources in

organizations towards helping individuals to achieve skills in order to control the new environment and find security and support. By and large, this covers the role of a good leader towards subordinates. The main model on organization effectiveness is the Goal approach which focuses on profit, innovation and product quality. Basic assumptions of the model are agreement on specific goals, people's commitment, limited number of goals and availability of indispensable resources. Even though Altschuld & Zheng (1995) in Ashrah & Abd–Kadir (2012) concluded Goal approach's weakness as inability to accurately evaluate effectiveness especially in research and academic establishments, this may not hold for private organizations as expected results are usually defined or implied by the organization's policy. For the public sector, assessment is based on the actual execution of the plans before the units concerned.

## Model of the Study
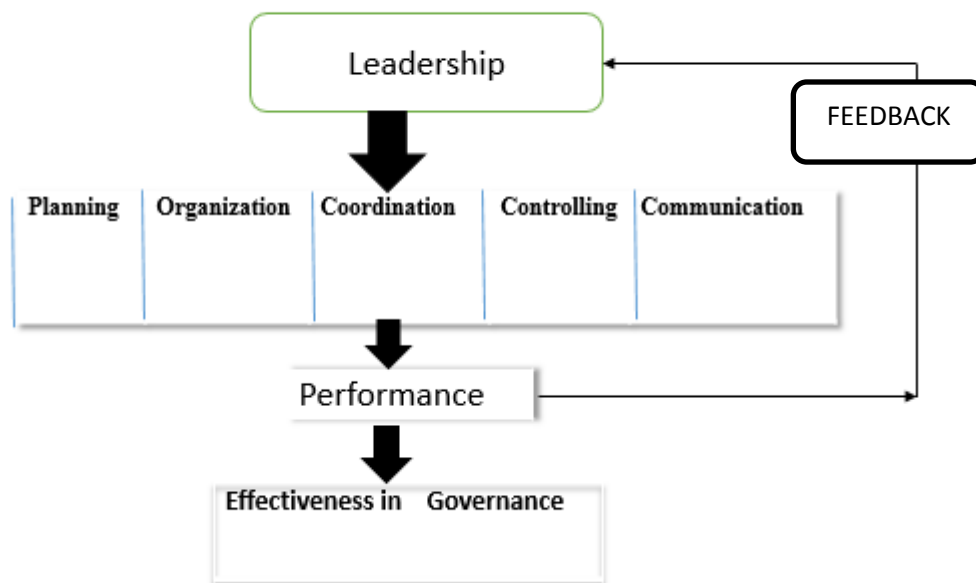


Authors' Proposition (2016)

## DISCUSSION OF THE MODEL

Leadership in this model captures planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and communication as very essential in effective and efficient management process. Even though some authors perceive motivation as equivalent to leadership (Ward, Ordway & Eisenhower, 2009) this model rather perceives (and agree with Kotter, Emerson & Murdoch 2009) motivation as the means by which the leader enhances the commitment of the workers to productivity and attainment of organization goals.

The act of leadership in organizations (public or private) should be goal oriented which implies a need for appraisal of performance. In the private sector, goals or objectives must be set by the employee to agree with overall organization objective. The employee's performance is to be assessed in terms of the set goals. The top executives too are equally assessed. When compared with what obtains in the public sector, performance assessment is dependent in practice, on the personal judgement of the boss. The implication is that if the boss is favourably disposed to the officer being appraised, the result will be favourable. The converse is the case in the private sector.

The model thus proposes that the act of leadership towards achieving effectiveness must proactively plan, organise, coordinate staff functions and set control for accountability and assess performance. It is highly essential that proper communication of each leadership function takes place in order to achieve effectiveness in governance. The process however will be incomplete where there is no feedback on employee and leaders' actions. A distinct gap that needs be resolved especially in the interest of attaining effectiveness in the public sector is who assesses the performance or non-performance of leaders such that there is immediate correction of actions. This is an area in which attention is highly needed for governance to have its right perspective.

In the developed countries, the voice of the people is their power to sensitize and call government to order; a government that is unresponsive, will yield to the people's voice as it becomes louder and louder. Another means of respite is the labour leaders, but unfortunately the story is different in Nigeria, as leaders are unwittingly coerced to renegade, or offered gifts to shift base of action. In placing leaders in authority positions in the public sector, those who are to be so placed should be men of proven quality as can be found in the private sector. These leaders are usually exposed to training and workshop opportunities in order to enhance performance on the job.

## FINDINGS

Management process in the private sector usually record success in attainment of objective, where success is lacking, attempts are made at addressing the issues responsible. Equally, success record is usually progressive, resourceful and transparent. Areas of differences include lack of control, monitoring, the use of motivation, staff training and development as these are means which management use to achieve set goals. Recognition of fraud and dealing decisively with issues of corruption

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is taken seriously as erring officers are disciplined. As well there is effective use and application of laws which make leaders to defend their decisions, encourage self-discipline, and enforce ethical behaviour and adherence to practice of transparency, accountability and application of controls. Due to high level of entrenching corruption in the status quo of the public sector, wrongs are inadvertently passed for right. Discipline hardly subsist, proper management processes as established by Henri Fayol, Max Weber and several management theories are hardly recognised as needful for attainment of organization objectives. Goals are set but not followed by performance standards or instituted controls.

## RECOMMENDATION

Since management in the private sector's success is progressive, resourceful and success filled, its proper adoption becomes a challenge to the public sector as nothing prevents recording same level of success or higher in the public sector. Institution of control and monitoring processes are seriously missing in Nigeria's governance and management process; decisive efforts should be made at instituting each of the identified weak points if administration if the nation is to record success and growth in development. The observed areas of differences between the private and public sectors point to the need for serious change in the approach of the public sector to the use of motivation, staff training and development as these are means which management require for achieving set goals. Recognition of fraud and dealing decisively with issues of corruption when taken seriously should serve as check for erring officers. Lastly, effective use and application of laws which make leaders to defend their decisions, encourage self-discipline, enforce ethical behaviour and adhere to the practice of transparency, accountability and application of controls is highly recommended. There is need to determine the next line of action where leaders err, does the subordinate have any power or right?

## CONCLUSION

Finding solution to the problem of ineffective leadership signified by non–accountability, lack of proper planning, non-institution of control and failure to achieve set goals constitute an urgent need in the governance process in Nigeria. It is evident from the comparison of the governance process in the private sector with what obtains in the public sector that no miracles are performed to arrive at attaining set goals but successes are usually attained with attention being paid to  following laid down guidelines with a focus on attainment of set objectives. The identified leadership functions when effectively applied should lead to effective use of resources as planned and adequately controlled to enhance transparency

and accountability. These are highly required for a change of level in governance and leadership processes to attain effectiveness and accountability. Basically, the aspect of control is missing in the management process. Control is what enables accountability and enhances transparency. The control process is distinctly and effectively embraced in the private sector in attainment of goals whereas in the public sector it is evasively handled.

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