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## EXPLORING LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ORGANISATIONAL DYNAMICS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study explores the relationship between leadership excellence and accountability within organisations in Plateau State, Nigeria, and their combined impact on organisational culture and success. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire, revealing moderately positive perceptions of leadership practices, with a particular emphasis on fostering continuous learning and responsibility among leaders. Qualitative data, obtained through thematic analysis of open-ended responses, highlight effective leadership practices such as transparent communication and collaboration, as well as challenges in implementing accountability measures, including resistance to change and resource limitations. The Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings underscores the significant influence of leadership on accountability and, consequently, on organisational culture. The study also addresses social desirability bias by assuring participants of their anonymity and encouraging honest feedback. The findings contribute to academic discourse by providing localized Insights into leadership and accountability within the specific context of Plateau State, Nigeria. Practical recommendations include investing in leadership development programs, enhancing clarity in accountability measures, promoting continuous learning, addressing communication gaps, and prioritizing employee engagement. This research offers a roadmap for organisational leaders aiming to foster a culture of accountable leadership and drive organisational success in dynamic business environments.*

**KEYWORDS:** Leadership Excellence, Accountability, Organisational Culture, Mixed-Methods, Plateau State, Nigeria, Qualitative Analysis, Quantitative Analysis, Continuous Learning, Communication Strategies.



## INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of today's business world, the importance of effective leadership cannot be overstated. As organisations confront swift technological advancements, shifting global markets, and heightened societal expectations, leadership emerges as a central pillar in navigating these complexities. The capacity to steer an organisation through uncertainty while fostering innovation and adaptability underscores the critical nature of leadership excellence (Northouse, 2018). This increasing complexity has also highlighted accountability as a cornerstone of leadership, ensuring that strategic objectives align with ethical, transparent, and responsible decision-making processes. Historically, leadership theories have evolved in response to societal, economic, and cultural shifts. Early models, such as trait-based leadership theory, focused on inherent characteristics that define great leaders—qualities like charisma, decisiveness, and intelligence (Stogdill, 1948). However, these early theories were limited in scope, failing to account for the environmental and contextual factors that influence leadership success. As business structures and organisational dynamics transformed, leadership theories adapted. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, paradigms like transformational and servant leadership emerged, emphasizing leaders' abilities to inspire, empower, and serve their teams (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977). These models underscored the importance of leaders fostering collaborative and inclusive environments where organisational success is intertwined with the development and well-being of team members.

Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leaders are presented with a broader spectrum of challenges, from navigating digital transformation and globalization to addressing pressing social issues such as diversity, equity, and sustainability (Yukl, 2012). Thus, leadership excellence demands a multifaceted approach that is adaptable, forward-thinking, and fundamentally accountable. Accountability transcends traditional notions of responsibility; it encompasses a leader's commitment to transparency, ethical decision-making, and a willingness to be answerable for the impacts of their actions on both internal and external stakeholders. Effective leadership involves not just management but a deeper responsibility to inspire, motivate, and strategically guide teams toward shared organisational goals. The dynamic interplay between leadership and accountability forms the foundation of organisational success. Leadership devoid of accountability risks detachment from the very outcomes it seeks to influence. Leaders must not only set the direction but also take ownership of the results of their decisions, ensuring that their leadership reflects integrity, honesty, and dedication to the organisation's mission. At its essence, accountability bridges the gap between leadership aspirations and actionable results. It involves more than merely acknowledging responsibility; it reflects a profound commitment to owning, rectifying, and learning from one's actions and decisions (Brown et al., 2009). In leadership contexts, accountability ensures that leaders not only articulate a vision but also navigate the organisation toward that vision ethically and effectively. Leaders who embody accountability are more likely to cultivate trust within their teams, foster a culture of transparency, and create an environment where innovation and collaboration can flourish. Moreover, accountability plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining trust within organisations. Trust is a fundamental component of any successful leadership model, underpinning relationships between leaders, employees, and other stakeholders. When leaders demonstrate accountability through transparent decision-making and openness to feedback, they nurture an environment of psychological safety. In such settings, employees feel empowered to contribute ideas, voice concerns, and take initiatives without fear of criticism or retribution, thereby promoting a culture of collaboration and innovation.



According to Brown and Harvey (2011), accountability within leadership creates a symbiotic relationship between leaders and their teams, facilitating open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to organisational success. In today's fast-paced and competitive business landscape, cultivating a corporate culture characterised by trust, integrity, and transparency has become a strategic advantage. Organisations led by accountable leaders are better positioned for long-term growth, innovation, and performance. Accountability fosters a culture where both leaders and team members take ownership of their contributions, driving continuous improvement and aligning efforts with the company's strategic goals. This culture acts as a catalyst for competitive advantages, encouraging individuals to push their limits while ensuring that decisions resonate with the broader organisational mission. Despite the growing recognition of accountability's role in leadership, its implementation remains a challenge for many organisations. Leaders often encounter internal resistance to accountability measures, arising from fears of failure, unclear roles, or organisational cultures that do not prioritize transparency. Additionally, the increasing complexity of global business operations, regulatory environments, and stakeholder expectations amplifies the demand for accountable leadership. Leaders must be equipped not only with effective leadership skills but also with a commitment to be answerable to those they lead. This comprehensive analysis aims to explore the intricate relationship between accountability and leadership excellence, particularly in its role as a driver of business success. By delving into the evolution of leadership theories and examining contemporary challenges, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how accountability shapes leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, the research will investigate practical strategies that organisations can adopt to enhance accountability at all levels of leadership, ensuring that business objectives are met with both efficiency and ethical rigour. The findings from this study are expected to contribute to academic discourse and practical leadership strategies. By offering insights into the impact of accountability on leadership, this research will provide valuable recommendations for leaders seeking to enhance their practices and for organisations aiming to cultivate more accountable, transparent, and successful corporate cultures.

### **Research aim, questions, and objectives.**

The primary aim of this research is to investigate how leadership practices and accountability measures impact organisational culture and performance in Plateau State. This study seeks to provide localized insights that resonate with the unique dynamics of the regional business landscape.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the prevalent leadership practices in organisations within Plateau State?
2. How are accountability measures integrated into these leadership practices?
3. What is the perceived impact of accountable leadership on organisational culture and business success?



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## Research Objectives

1. To identify effective leadership practices tailored to the Plateau State business environment.
2. To assess the challenges and opportunities in integrating accountability measures.
3. To provide actionable recommendations for enhancing leadership and accountability in organisations.

## Significance of the Study

This study contributes significantly to both academic discourse and practical leadership practices by exploring the intricate relationship between leadership and accountability within the specific context of Plateau State. In an era where organisations are increasingly confronted with complexities stemming from technological advancements, globalization, and socio-economic challenges, understanding the dynamics of leadership and accountability is paramount. By focusing on Plateau State, this research provides valuable insights into how these elements interact within a diverse and dynamic environment, characterised by unique cultural, economic, and political factors. One of the key contributions of this study is its potential to inform organisational leaders about effective strategies for fostering a culture of accountability. In today's competitive landscape, where transparency and ethical behaviour are critical for sustaining organisational success, the findings will serve as a guide for leaders aiming to enhance overall performance. The study will delineate best practices in accountability that can be integrated into leadership approaches, thereby promoting an environment where individuals at all levels feel empowered to take ownership of their roles and contributions. This culture of accountability is expected to lead to improved decision-making, enhanced team collaboration, and increased employee engagement, ultimately translating into superior organisational outcomes.

Moreover, this research addresses a notable gap in the existing literature by providing a localized perspective on leadership and accountability. While much of the current scholarship tends to focus on generalized contexts, often drawing from case studies in Western settings, this study's emphasis on Plateau State helps to bridge that gap. By examining the specific cultural and socio-economic characteristics of this region, the research offers a nuanced understanding of how leadership and accountability manifest in a local context. This localized perspective is vital for developing relevant theories and frameworks that can be applied in similar settings, thereby enhancing the applicability of the research findings. In addition, the study contributes to the understanding of leadership effectiveness in environments marked by diversity and complexity. By investigating how leaders navigate challenges unique to Plateau State, the research provides insights that can be extrapolated to other regions with similar socio-cultural dynamics. This is particularly important for organisational leaders who are navigating the complexities of contemporary business environments, as the findings will highlight the need for adaptive leadership styles that resonate with local contexts. Furthermore, the implications of this study extend beyond academic contributions. The practical recommendations derived from the research will be beneficial for organisations aiming to implement accountability frameworks and enhance leadership practices. By providing actionable strategies, the study equips leaders with the tools necessary to cultivate a culture of accountability that fosters trust, collaboration, and innovation within their organisations. This





not only contributes to improved organisational performance but also enhances the overall workplace environment, making it more conducive to employee satisfaction and retention.

Therefore, this study's significance lies in its potential to bridge theoretical gaps, provide localized insights, and offer practical strategies for enhancing leadership effectiveness through accountability. By focusing on Plateau State, the research not only enriches academic discourse but also serves as a valuable resource for leaders and organisations striving to succeed in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The findings are expected to resonate with scholars, practitioners, and organisational leaders, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of leadership and accountability.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Leadership and Leadership Excellence

Leadership is a multifaceted construct that fundamentally involves the intentional act of motivating and directing individuals or groups toward the attainment of shared objectives. Crosby (1997) defines leadership as the ability to inspire and mobilize others, transcending mere authority to include the relational dynamics that foster collaboration and trust. This perspective is further elaborated by Thomas (2011), who asserts that effective leadership operates through non-coercive methods, emphasizing the importance of inspiring commitment rather than merely exerting control. At its core, leadership is a value-laden endeavour. Peters and Waterman (1982) argue that a crucial function of leadership lies in managing an organisation's values. This ethical dimension is further explored by Hollander (1978), who characterises leadership as an ongoing transaction between leaders and followers, where mutual influence fosters a collaborative atmosphere conducive to achieving common goals (Nanus, 1989). This relational aspect of leadership challenges traditional hierarchical models, positioning leaders as facilitators of dialogue and collaboration. Rost (1993) underscores the transformative nature of leadership, defining it as a process occurring within groups that seek to enact meaningful change. This contrasts with management, which often focuses on maintaining the status quo. Leaders are not merely administrators; they are agents of innovation and improvement. In this vein, Nanus (1989) highlights the educational role of leaders, advocating for a collective sense of responsibility and purpose among team members. Such leadership practices facilitate personal and organisational growth, as they engage the hearts and minds of followers.

Tate (2003) adds another layer by emphasizing that leadership transcends technical expertise; it taps into the leader's personal beliefs and values. Effective leaders engage deeply with the emotional and psychological dimensions of leadership, balancing visionary aspirations with pragmatic actions. They must navigate the complexities of their roles, aligning their vision with the present realities of their organisations while remaining adaptable to change. Leadership excellence, therefore, is not a static achievement but a dynamic process characterised by a blend of personal traits, strategic insight, and the ability to inspire and mobilize others. This excellence requires resilience, as leaders must adeptly manage routine challenges and extraordinary crises while maintaining the trust and commitment of their teams. Furthermore, leadership is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour; it adapts to the unique needs of different sectors and organisations, making it a critical determinant of organisational success. Various scholars



have contributed to the understanding of leadership through distinct definitional lenses. Mullins (2001) describes leadership as the moral and intellectual ability to envision and act in the best interests of an organisation and its employees, highlighting the ethical dimensions of effective leadership. This notion is echoed by Rue and Byars (1995), who frame leadership as the capacity to influence others willingly. John et al. (1987) further refine this perspective, framing leadership as the ability to persuade others to pursue shared objectives with enthusiasm. The evolution of leadership studies has been informed by both scientific and social scientific principles. Ordway Tead (1935) emphasizes leadership as a collaborative process aimed at guiding collective efforts toward shared goals. Stoner (1982) focuses on the necessity of directing and influencing group members, while Gibson et al. (1997) explore how different leadership styles impact team motivation. Schein (1992) introduces the idea of leadership as a capacity for initiating evolutionary change outside cultural norms, underscoring the need for adaptability in leadership roles.

In synthesizing these perspectives, leadership emerges as a complex orchestration involving influence, guidance, motivation, and inspiration to achieve group goals. It encompasses seven key elements: the leader, influence, followers, intention, shared purpose, change, and personal responsibility. Consequently, leadership excellence represents the art of skillfully guiding and motivating teams or organisations to achieve their objectives.

### **The Role of Leaders**

The role of leaders in organisational contexts is pivotal, as they are responsible for mobilizing others to fulfil the organisation's goals amidst often unclear and evolving circumstances. Cohen and Fink (2001) highlight that leadership is multifaceted, with leaders influencing their organisations both vertically and horizontally. They fulfil critical roles that extend beyond traditional expectations, including serving as troubleshooters, conflict managers, and coaches. As troubleshooters, leaders assist teams in problem-solving by facilitating discussions and posing insightful questions. This role necessitates strong analytical skills, enabling leaders to identify core issues and develop effective strategies for resolution. When conflicts arise, leaders must act as conflict managers, guiding teams through the resolution process by exploring underlying issues and evaluating potential solutions. This mediation fosters a collaborative culture and open communication, essential for maintaining team cohesion. Furthermore, leaders assume the role of coaches, clarifying expectations, defining roles, and providing support to ensure that team members maintain high performance levels. This coaching approach emphasizes leading through support rather than coercion, cultivating an engaged and motivated workforce. Leaders who prioritize coaching contribute to an environment where individuals feel valued, enhancing job satisfaction and retention rates. In the intricate landscape of leadership, the personal and organisational agendas of a leader must coexist. Crosby (1997) notes that followers respond to personal characteristics such as character, charisma, mindset versatility, and expertise. Character is a fundamental trait, encompassing innate talents and experiences that inspire trust and loyalty among followers. Charismatic leaders possess a magnetic presence that attracts and motivates others, articulating compelling visions that align team efforts with organisational objectives (Bennis, 1989). Effective leadership also requires the ability to switch mindsets and create new realities. Leaders must possess "business literacy," a comprehensive understanding of industry dynamics and organisational behaviour (Bennis, 1989). This knowledge equips them to navigate challenges and guide their teams effectively. Ultimately, the multifaceted role of leaders encompasses troubleshooting, conflict



resolution, and coaching, fostering a culture of collaboration and high performance that drives organisational success.

### **Leadership Excellence and Accountability in Business**

The intersection of leadership excellence and accountability is a crucial nexus that shapes organisational success. Leadership excellence involves guiding, inspiring, and managing resources effectively to achieve strategic goals. This form of leadership is characterised by visionary approaches that align organisational objectives with clear agendas communicated to all stakeholders. Leaders must cultivate attributes such as character, charisma, and mindset versatility to navigate challenges while inspiring their teams. Accountability, in contrast, establishes a framework of responsibility for actions and outcomes within the organisation. It extends beyond mere compliance, embodying a transparent approach to fulfilling responsibilities. Peters and Waterman (1982) argue that leaders shape organisational values, fostering a culture of accountability that permeates all levels. The relationship between leadership and accountability is intricate, with leaders serving as troubleshooters, conflict managers, and coaches. Their ability to adapt mindsets aligns closely with the demands of fostering accountability in a dynamic business landscape. Scholarly literature emphasizes the critical role of leadership in establishing accountability frameworks that enhance organisational effectiveness and ethical conduct.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

There is a dearth of research focused specifically on the context of Plateau State, Nigeria. While general principles of leadership and accountability are well-documented, localized studies can provide deeper insights into how these concepts play out in specific socio-economic and cultural settings. Many studies tend to focus on either quantitative or qualitative approaches, but there is a need for research that integrates both to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership and accountability. This study addresses this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach. Additionally, while the importance of accountability is well-recognised, there is limited research on the specific challenges organisations face in implementing accountability measures. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring these challenges in the context of Plateau State and providing actionable recommendations.

### **Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Models**

In exploring the dynamics of leadership excellence and accountability within organisational contexts, various theoretical frameworks and conceptual models provide valuable lenses for understanding their interplay. These frameworks offer conceptual scaffolding to comprehend the complexities inherent in leadership dynamics and the establishment of accountability structures within organisations.

**1. Transformational Leadership Theory:** At the core of transformational leadership theory, articulated by Bass and Avolio (1985), is the notion of leaders who transcend routine exchanges with followers. These leaders inspire transformative change by nurturing a shared vision, stimulating intellectual growth, and demonstrating genuine care for individual needs. Transformational leadership lays the foundation for fostering a culture of accountability, wherein accountability becomes not just a duty but a shared commitment to organisational success.





**2. Situational Leadership Theory:** Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1969) emphasizes the contextual nature of effective leadership. Leaders must adapt their approach based on the readiness and maturity of their followers. This nuanced understanding underscores the importance of tailoring accountability measures to specific organisational contexts and the capabilities of team members.

**3. Agency Theory:** Jensen and Meckling's Agency Theory (1976) delves into the principal-agent relationship within organisations, highlighting challenges in aligning the interests of leaders (principals) and followers (agents). This theory underscores the importance of establishing accountability mechanisms that promote transparency and ensure that followers act in the organisation's best interest.

**4. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory:** Graen and Uhl-Bien's LMX Theory (1995) expands our understanding of leadership by emphasizing individualized exchanges between leaders and followers. By forming unique relationships with each follower, leaders can influence trust, commitment, and accountability, thereby enhancing organisational effectiveness.

**5. Social Identity Theory:** Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (1979) broadens our view of leadership and accountability by exploring how individuals categorise themselves and others into social groups. Leaders, as influencers of social identities within an organisation, shape the collective sense of belonging and responsibility, thereby influencing accountability dynamics.

### Integration of Conceptual Model

In addition to theoretical frameworks, a conceptual model (see Figure 1) is presented to visually represent the relationships between key variables in our study. This model serves as a theoretical foundation for understanding how leadership excellence, accountability, organisational culture, and organisational success interact within the organisational context.

### Conceptual Model:

**1. Independent Variables: Leadership Excellence:** Represents the quality of leadership within the organisation, encompassing traits such as visionary leadership, effective communication, and the ability to inspire and motivate.

**Accountability:** Refers to the extent to which individuals within the organisation are held responsible for their actions, decisions, and outcomes.

### 2. Mediating Variable

**Organisational Culture:** Acts as a mediator between leadership excellence and accountability. A positive organisational culture characterised by trust, collaboration, and shared values can enhance the effectiveness of leadership practices and facilitate the implementation of accountability measures

### 3. Dependent Variable

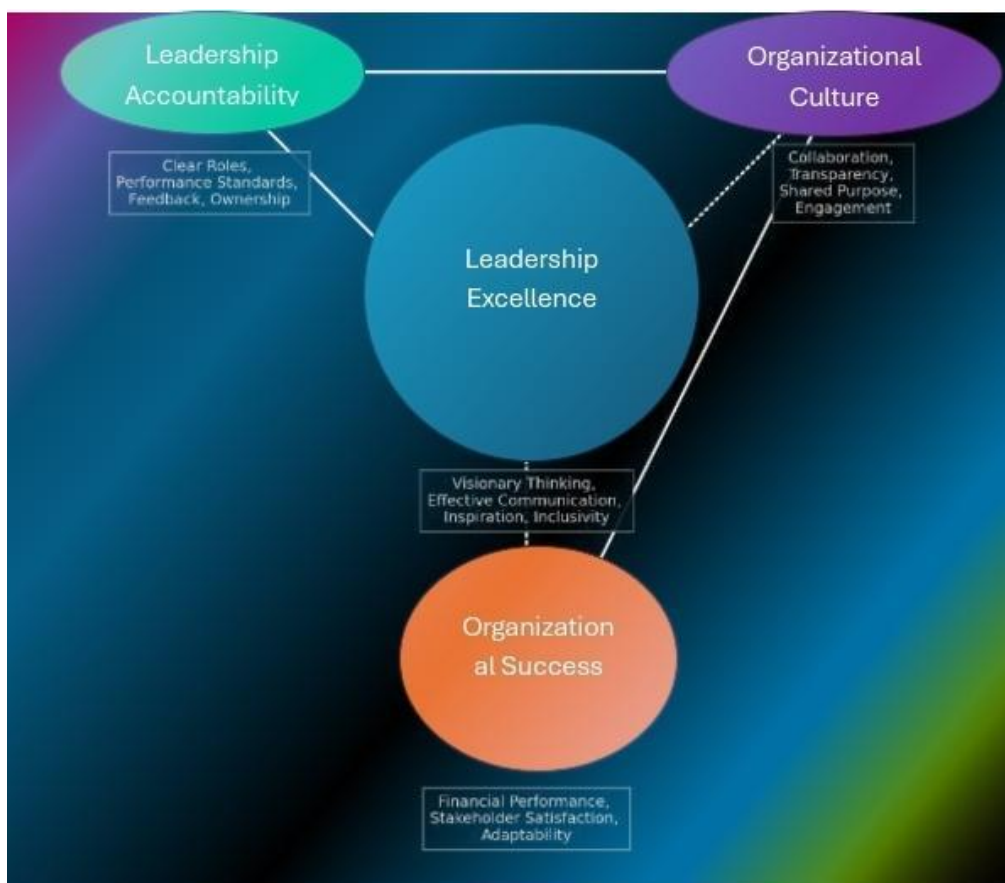
**Organisational Success:** Reflects the overall performance and achievements of the organisation, including financial performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and employee engagement.

#### Associations

**Leadership Excellence >>> Accountability:** Strong leadership excellence is expected to positively influence the establishment and enforcement of accountability measures within the organisation.

**Leadership Excellence >>>> Organisational Culture:** Effective leadership practices contribute to the development of a positive organisational culture, fostering trust, collaboration, and a sense of shared purpose.

**Accountability >>>>> Organisational Success:** A culture of accountability is hypothesized to lead to improved organisational outcomes by ensuring that individuals are held responsible for their contributions to organisational goals.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**

**Source:** *writer's elaboration*



### Explanation of Conceptual Model

The conceptual model in Figure 1 above presents a systematic framework that outlines the interconnections between leadership excellence, accountability, organisational culture, and organisational success, emphasizing the causal relationships that influence organisational outcomes. At the core of the model is **Leadership Excellence**, which signifies the quality and effectiveness of leadership practices within an organisation. This encompasses various leadership traits, including visionary thinking, effective communication, the ability to inspire and motivate employees, and fostering an inclusive environment. Leaders who demonstrate excellence create a strong foundation for the organisation's functioning, as they articulate clear goals and expectations, which align the workforce toward achieving the organisation's objectives. These leaders are not only responsible for guiding their teams but also play a crucial role in establishing a culture of accountability. Moving to **Accountability**, this variable reflects the extent to which individuals and teams within the organisation are held responsible for their actions and performance outcomes. Effective leaders promote accountability by clearly defining roles, setting performance standards, and providing feedback. In organisations where accountability is emphasized, employees are more likely to take ownership of their responsibilities, leading to enhanced performance and commitment. This culture of accountability fosters trust among employees, as they recognise that their contributions are valued and that they play an integral role in the organisation's success. The model posits that **Organisational Culture** serves as a mediating variable, influencing how leadership excellence and accountability interact. Organisational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the social and psychological environment within the organisation. A strong culture of accountability, cultivated by effective leadership, leads to increased collaboration, transparency, and a sense of shared purpose among employees. When employees perceive that their leaders are committed to accountability, it enhances their engagement and satisfaction. Finally, at the apex of the model is **Organisational Success**, which reflects the overall performance and achievements of the organisation. This includes financial performance, stakeholder satisfaction, employee engagement, and adaptability to changing environments. The model asserts that a positive organisational culture, strengthened by strong leadership and accountability, is a key determinant of organisational success. When employees feel empowered, valued, and part of a responsible organisation, their motivation and commitment are likely to increase, resulting in improved performance outcomes.

In essence, this conceptual model illustrates a dynamic interplay between leadership excellence, accountability, organisational culture, and organisational success. It highlights that effective leadership fosters a culture of accountability, which in turn nurtures a positive organisational culture, ultimately driving organisational success. This framework underscores the importance of leaders in shaping an environment conducive to performance, engagement, and long-term sustainability. By recognizing these interrelationships, organisations can strategically enhance their leadership practices and accountability measures to achieve greater success.



## METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive exploration of the relationship between leadership excellence and accountability in organisations within Plateau State, Nigeria. The decision to use a mixed-methods design is rooted in its capacity to yield a more thorough understanding of the research problem by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This methodological approach ensures a balanced exploration of the study's objectives, capturing both measurable trends and the contextual depth necessary for a nuanced analysis. The quantitative component of the research involved administering a structured survey aimed at capturing respondents' perceptions of leadership practices, accountability measures, and organisational culture. This aspect of the study allows for the application of statistical techniques to identify patterns, trends, and correlations between key variables. On the other hand, the qualitative component consists of in-depth interviews with organisational leaders and employees, offering rich, contextualized insights into the lived experiences of leadership and accountability within their organisations. By triangulating these two data sources, the study achieves a holistic view, wherein the qualitative data help to contextualize and elaborate on the statistical findings from the quantitative survey. The survey was carefully designed and developed based on established scales from the existing literature on leadership, accountability, and organisational culture. These scales were adapted to ensure cultural relevance, taking into consideration the specific context of Plateau State. The survey includes multiple sections designed to capture demographic information, leadership practices, accountability mechanisms, and respondents' perceptions of the organisational culture in their respective organisations. To ensure a representative sample, a stratified random sampling method was used, targeting organisational leaders, managers, and employees across various industries in Plateau State. Both public and private sector participants were included in the study. A total of 300 participants were invited to complete the survey, with a final response rate of 75%. This diverse respondent pool allowed the study to capture a wide range of perspectives, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Data collection was conducted through a combination of electronic surveys and face-to-face administration, particularly for respondents with limited internet access. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the purpose of the research, and informed consent was obtained to ensure ethical compliance throughout the process. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise responses and identify trends. Additionally, a correlation matrix was employed to examine relationships between leadership practices, accountability measures, and organisational culture. Statistical software, such as SPSS, was used to perform these analyses, ensuring precision and accuracy in the data analysis process. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were designed to delve deeper into the leadership practices and accountability measures observed in organisations. These interviews were guided by themes identified in the literature review and preliminary survey results. Topics explored during the interviews included leadership strategies, challenges in enforcing accountability, and the broader impact of leadership and accountability on organisational culture.

The sampling method for the Interviews was purposive, ensuring that the participants selected could provide in-depth insights aligned with the research questions. The interview sample consisted of 15 organisational leaders, managers, and employees from various industries in Plateau State. This purposive sampling method ensured a diversity of perspectives, enriching the qualitative analysis.



Interviews were conducted either in person or via telephone, based on participant preference and availability. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent. Detailed notes were also taken to supplement the recorded content. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis, a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the data were coded to identify recurring themes and insights. NVivo software was employed to aid in the organisation and analysis of the qualitative data, allowing for a structured synthesis of the findings. By cross-referencing these qualitative insights with the quantitative results, the study offers a well-rounded and thorough analysis of the relationship between leadership excellence, accountability, and organisational culture.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in the study. To maintain confidentiality, participants' identities were anonymized in all data records and reports. Data were securely stored on password-protected devices, and access was limited to the research team. Personal information was kept separate from the data to prevent any risk of identification.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While efforts were made to ensure a representative sample, the use of purposive sampling for qualitative interviews may introduce bias. Survey responses may be influenced by social desirability, where participants provide answers, they believe are expected rather than their true perceptions. The study's findings are specific to Plateau State, Nigeria, and may not be generalizable to other regions or contexts.

### **Addressing Social Desirability Bias**

To mitigate social desirability bias in the responses, the study employed several strategies. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured to make respondents feel comfortable providing honest answers without fear of identification. The questions were neutrally worded to avoid leading respondents toward socially acceptable answers. A mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, allowed for cross-verification of data to identify potential biases. Participation was voluntary, reducing pressure on respondents to provide favourable answers. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted to refine the questionnaire and ensure clarity. Balanced response options on the Likert scale provided a full range of choices, allowing respondents to express genuine opinions. These measures collectively helped to create an environment conducive to obtaining accurate and unbiased data.





## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Introduction

In this pivotal section, we delve into the heart of our study's empirical insights, presenting a comprehensive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered through our meticulously designed survey. Through a combination of quantitative metrics and qualitative narratives, we aim to unearth patterns and interconnections that contribute to a holistic understanding of the study's focal points.

### Data Presentation

Our survey design laid the foundation for systematically capturing the perceptions of individuals within the organisational context. In this subsection, we elucidate the intricacies of our questionnaire development, providing insights into the characteristics of the surveyed population. Moving beyond data collection, we engage in a rigorous analysis of the quantitative and Qualitative data by assigning numerical values and calculating means, we unveil the perceived strengths and areas for improvement in leadership practices and the integration of accountability measures through quantitative analysis. Diving deeper, we present a qualitative narrative that brings respondents' voices to the forefront. The exploration encompasses leadership practices, integration of accountability measures, positive impacts on organisational culture, challenges in implementation, and recommendations for integration.

**Table 1: Respondents inputs**

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----------|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1         | 15             | 20    | 3         | 1        | 1                 |
| 2         | 18             | 16    | 4         | 1        | 1                 |
| 3         | 12             | 22    | 4         | 1        | 1                 |
| 4         | 17             | 18    | 3         | 1        | 1                 |
| 5         | 16             | 19    | 3         | 1        | 1                 |
| 6         | 14             | 20    | 5         | 1        | 0                 |
| 7         | 19             | 17    | 2         | 1        | 1                 |
| 8         | 14             | 20    | 5         | 1        | 0                 |

**Source:** *Writer's elaboration*

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution:**

| Statement % | Strongly Agree % | Agree % | Undecided % | Disagree % | Strongly Disagree % |
|-------------|------------------|---------|-------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1           | 37.5             | 50      | 7.5         | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 2           | 45               | 40      | 10          | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 3           | 30               | 55      | 10          | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 4           | 42.5             | 45      | 7.5         | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 5           | 40               | 47.5    | 7.5         | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 6           | 35               | 50      | 12.5        | 2.5        | 0                   |
| 7           | 47.5             | 42.5    | 5           | 2.5        | 2.5                 |
| 8           | 35               | 50      | 12.5        | 2.5        | 0                   |

**Source:** *Writer's own elaboration*



These percentages provide a clearer understanding of the distribution of responses for each statement in our questionnaire.

### Analysis of Quantitative Results

The descriptive statistics in Table 3 provide a foundational understanding of the data collected from the respondents. By analyzing these statistics, we can gain insights into the central tendencies, variations, and overall patterns within the dataset. This analysis focuses on understanding the perceptions of leadership excellence, accountability, and organisational culture among the surveyed population.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics**

| Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----------|------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| 1         | 3.35 | 0.83               | 1       | 5       |
| 2         | 3.45 | 0.89               | 1       | 5       |
| 3         | 3.55 | 0.82               | 1       | 5       |
| 4         | 3.5  | 0.86               | 1       | 5       |
| 5         | 3.55 | 0.81               | 1       | 5       |
| 6         | 3.75 | 0.75               | 1       | 5       |
| 7         | 3.65 | 0.78               | 1       | 5       |
| 8         | 3.75 | 0.75               | 1       | 5       |

**Source:** *Survey*

### Central Tendencies

**Mean Values:** The mean values for each statement range from 3.35 to 3.75, indicating moderately positive perceptions overall. The highest mean scores are for statements 6 and 8 (both 3.75), suggesting that respondents perceive leadership as strongly fostering continuous learning and taking responsibility for outcomes. **Standard Deviations:** The standard deviations range from 0.75 to 0.89, showing moderate variability in responses. The relatively low standard deviations indicate that while there are differing opinions, most responses cluster around the mean, reflecting a general consensus among respondents.

The analysis of Individual statements reveals varied perceptions of leadership and accountability within the organisation. Statement 1, with a mean score of 3.35, has the lowest rating, indicating that while leadership communication is generally viewed positively, there is significant room for improvement in effectively conveying vision and goals. Statement 2, which has a mean score of 3.45, suggests that accountability is emphasized within the organisation, but there remains potential to enhance this aspect further. The mean score of 3.55 for Statement 3 reflects a positive perception of the transformative influence of accountable leadership on organisational culture. Statement 4, with a mean score of 3.50, indicates that



leadership positively impacts employee engagement, though there is still room for improvement. Similarly, Statement 5, also scoring 3.55, suggests that respondents perceive leadership as having a positive effect on the broader spectrum of organisational success. Statement 6, with a high mean score of 3.75, reflects a strong positive perception of leadership's role in fostering continuous learning and development. Statement 7, which has a mean score of 3.65, indicates that while accountability measures are clear, there is a need for improved communication throughout the organisational hierarchy. Lastly, Statement 8, also with a mean score of 3.75, highlights a strong positive perception of leaders taking responsibility for both successes and failures, contributing positively to the organisational culture.

In summary, the analysis of the descriptive statistics highlights the strengths and areas for improvement in leadership practices within the organisation. By focusing on enhancing communication strategies, reinforcing accountability measures, and fostering a culture of continuous learning, organisational leaders can build on these insights to drive further success and growth. The moderately positive perceptions indicate a solid foundation, with specific recommendations for refining leadership practices to achieve excellence.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

In any organisation, leadership practices, accountability measures, and organisational culture play pivotal roles in shaping the overall work environment and employee performance. The following qualitative analysis delves into these aspects based on open-ended responses from employees. The aim is to uncover key themes that reflect their experiences and perceptions, offering a deeper understanding of how these factors influence the effectiveness of leadership and the health of an organisation. Leadership practices emerged as a central theme, with employees emphasizing the significance of effective communication. Leaders who clearly communicate the organisation's vision, goals, and expectations are seen as instrumental in aligning employee efforts with organisational objectives. Beyond merely sharing information, leaders who actively listen to their teams, foster transparency, and encourage collaboration cultivate an atmosphere of trust and engagement. Employees value leaders who acknowledge their contributions through recognition, which strengthens their motivation and dedication to the organisation. Another critical quality is adaptability, particularly in environments that demand agility in responding to challenges. Resilient leaders, who promote continuous learning and personal development, foster innovation and growth, benefiting both employees and the organisation. Accountability measures are equally vital, as they ensure that employees and leaders alike are held responsible for their actions. Clarity and transparency in accountability structures are highlighted as essential in creating a culture of fairness and integrity. Employees expect accountability to be integrated into daily processes and reinforced through leadership responsibility. When leaders model accountability, it encourages similar behaviour across the organisation, building a culture where standards are maintained. Mechanisms for addressing breaches in accountability, such as corrective actions or disciplinary procedures, are also considered necessary to uphold ethical standards. Respondents further stressed the importance of providing adequate support and resources to meet accountability expectations, as these tools enable individuals to perform their roles effectively. A strong organisational culture, centred on trust, collaboration, and empowerment, emerged as another key theme. Trust forms the foundation of a healthy organisational culture, as employees who feel confident in their leaders and colleagues are more likely to engage productively and contribute to collective goals. Collaboration is another crucial aspect, with



employees valuing environments where teamwork is promoted, and individual efforts are recognised as part of a larger success. Empowering employees through shared responsibility and decision-making not only fosters ownership but also enhances their commitment to the organisation's mission. Diversity and inclusion further contribute to a vibrant culture by allowing various perspectives to enrich discussions and drive innovation. Moreover, employees expressed the importance of having a clear understanding of the organisation's mission, noting that when they align with the organisation's goals, their sense of purpose and motivation is amplified. The interconnectedness of leadership, accountability, and culture is evident in the qualitative data. Effective communication, clear accountability measures, and a trust-based, inclusive culture form the backbone of leadership excellence. However, certain challenges remain, such as the need to enhance clarity and consistency in accountability practices and improve communication at all levels of the organisation. Addressing these issues can create a more cohesive and supportive environment, leading to increased employee satisfaction, productivity, and organisational success. This analysis offers valuable insights for organisational leaders seeking to enhance their practices. Transparent communication, fostering collaboration, and establishing a robust accountability framework are crucial steps in driving leadership effectiveness. Additionally, nurturing a culture of trust, diversity, and inclusion can not only enhance employee morale but also spur innovation and growth. By focusing on these areas, organisations can achieve sustained success through effective leadership and a positive organisational culture that supports employee development and operational excellence.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study align closely with a wealth of existing literature on leadership practices and the role of accountability within organisations. The quantitative results, which reveal a moderately positive perception of leadership effectiveness, are consistent with theoretical frameworks emphasizing open communication and transparency as critical factors in building trust among team members. For instance, Men (2014) asserts that leaders who communicate effectively foster a trusting, collaborative environment, which, in turn, enhances organisational performance. The mean score of 3.35 related to the communication of vision and goals in this study suggests that, although effective practices are in place, there is room for improvement. This finding mirrors the broader literature, such as Zhang et al. (2020), which advocates for the continuous refinement of communication strategies in leadership roles to enhance effectiveness. Qualitative insights from the study further underscore the positive impact of accountable leadership on organisational culture, corroborating Hsieh and Wang (2018), who highlight that leaders embracing accountability not only foster responsibility but also boost employee engagement and motivation. Respondents in the study noted how leaders' acknowledgement of mistakes created an environment where others felt safe to do the same, reinforcing the transformative power of accountable leadership, a concept echoed by Brown and Treviño (2006). Moreover, the study identified challenges in implementing accountability measures, which resonate with prior research on organisational change. Resistance to these measures reflects the work of Armenakis and Bedeian (1999), who emphasize that introducing accountability can face opposition, particularly when it disrupts established practices. The call for training leaders to implement accountability effectively aligns with McCauley and van Velsor's (2004) recommendations for targeted leadership development programs to enhance



these practices. Similarly, the recommendation for clearer communication regarding accountability measures echoes Kahn (1990), who found that role clarity is crucial for employee engagement and performance. This underscores that aligning accountability efforts with established leadership literature can deepen understanding and improve implementation within organisations. The Integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings with existing literature not only validates the study's results but also underscores the importance of addressing the identified gaps. Situating the study within broader academic discourse highlights the significant role of leadership practices and accountability in shaping organisational culture and performance. These insights contribute to the evolving conversation on organisational leadership, offering valuable guidance for both scholars and practitioners. Further, the study's revelation of moderately positive perceptions of leadership, particularly in fostering continuous learning and leaders taking responsibility, is supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. This consistency underscores the importance of effective communication, active listening, and promoting a culture of continuous learning in leadership. The correlation between leadership excellence and accountability aligns with transformational leadership theory, which suggests that leaders who inspire and motivate employees through a clear vision and inclusive practices are more effective (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Accountability frameworks, as highlighted in the study, emphasize the significance of clear roles, responsibilities, and transparency (Sinclair, 1995). Both data sets identified challenges in accountability implementation, including communication gaps, resistance to change, and resource limitations, reflecting similar challenges noted in the literature on organisational change and accountability integration (Kotter, 1996; Bovens, 2007). Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving targeted training, transparent communication, and robust support for employees.

### **Practical Implications for Organisational Leaders**

The findings of this research carry substantial practical implications for organisational leaders operating within Plateau State, Nigeria, and beyond. The study unravels actionable insights that leaders can leverage to enhance their leadership practices and navigate the challenges associated with accountability integration. One key practical implication emerges in the form of identified attributes of effective leadership specific to the Plateau State business landscape. Organisational leaders can utilize this information as a guide to tailor their leadership approaches, ensuring alignment with the regional context. Recognizing the significance of continuous learning and the willingness to take responsibility, leaders can foster an environment conducive to growth and adaptability. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of transparent communication and collaboration in the integration of accountability measures. Practical recommendations, rooted in the challenges faced by leaders in Plateau State, equip organisational leaders with strategies to overcome hurdles related to clarity and communication gaps. By addressing these challenges head-on, leaders can create a more conducive environment for the successful implementation of accountability measures. The insights into challenges faced during accountability integration offer practical lessons for leaders in managing resistance, overcoming resource limitations, and implementing comprehensive training programs. These lessons provide actionable strategies for leaders to navigate obstacles effectively, fostering a culture of accountability within their organisations. Overall, the research provides a practical roadmap for organisational leaders to enhance their leadership practices, integrate accountability measures successfully, and foster a thriving





organisational culture. The localized insights ensure the relevance and applicability of these practical implications to the unique business landscape of Plateau State.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study significantly advances the academic discourse by offering empirical insights into the relationship between leadership excellence, accountability, and organisational culture within the specific context of Plateau State, Nigeria. By exploring these concepts in a localized setting, the research addresses a critical gap in the literature, particularly in understanding how these elements interact within developing regions. Existing studies on leadership and organisational culture often focus on broader, global contexts or developed nations, leaving a gap in knowledge regarding the unique challenges and dynamics that influence these factors in developing regions like Nigeria. This study contributes to filling that void by presenting evidence that reflects the realities of Plateau State, highlighting the importance of adapting leadership and accountability frameworks to fit local contexts. The findings also expand on theoretical frameworks of leadership and organisational culture by illustrating how cultural, economic, and political factors specific to developing regions shape leadership practices and organisational dynamics. These localized insights add depth to existing theories by revealing that effective leadership and accountability measures are not universally applicable in all regions but must be tailored to the socio-political and cultural landscape of the environment. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that leadership excellence in developing regions often hinges on adaptability, clear communication, and an inclusive approach to accountability. This offers a more nuanced understanding of leadership theories by emphasizing the importance of context-specific strategies for fostering a positive organisational culture. By providing these empirical contributions, the study not only enriches existing theories but also sets the stage for future research to explore leadership and organisational dynamics in other developing regions, contributing to a more comprehensive and globally relevant body of knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The exploration of leadership excellence and accountability within Plateau State's organisational landscape has yielded significant insights that advance our understanding of effective leadership practices. The conclusions drawn from this research underscore the critical interdependence of leadership attributes and accountability mechanisms in fostering organisational success. Firstly, this study confirms that effective leadership is characterised by a set of key attributes that resonate with the specific cultural and economic context of Plateau State. Attributes such as integrity, vision, adaptability, and emotional intelligence have emerged as fundamental qualities of leaders who can effectively motivate and engage their teams. These attributes not only facilitate a clear articulation of goals and strategies but also help in building a culture of trust and respect within organisations. Leaders who exemplify these qualities inspire their teams to commit to organisational objectives, thereby enhancing overall performance. Secondly, the integration of accountability within leadership practices is paramount for achieving desired outcomes. The research highlights that accountability is not merely a set of rules or regulations but a dynamic process that requires continuous engagement and commitment from leaders. The successful implementation of accountability measures is



closely tied to how well leaders communicate expectations and foster an environment where team members feel responsible for their contributions. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of transparent communication in building a culture of accountability. Moreover, the study identifies several challenges that leaders face when attempting to integrate accountability into their practices. Resistance to accountability measures, often stemming from a lack of understanding or fear of repercussions among employees, poses significant barriers to effective leadership. It is crucial for leaders to address these challenges through ongoing training and development programs that emphasize the importance of accountability as a shared value rather than a punitive measure. By reframing accountability as an opportunity for growth and learning, leaders can cultivate an organisational culture that embraces responsibility and collective success. Furthermore, the research reveals a strong link between accountable leadership and enhanced employee engagement. Leaders who prioritize accountability not only foster a sense of ownership among their teams but also promote higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction. This relationship suggests that organisations can achieve greater success by focusing on the development of leadership practices that encourage accountability. Consequently, leaders who engage in self-reflection and seek feedback from their teams can continually improve their effectiveness and adapt to the evolving needs of their organisations.

Therefore, this research reinforces the notion that leadership excellence is fundamentally intertwined with accountability. The findings provide a robust framework for understanding how effective leaders can leverage accountability to drive organisational success. As organisations in Plateau State and beyond seek to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape, the insights gained from this study offer a valuable roadmap for enhancing leadership practices and fostering a culture of accountability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The insights garnered from this study offer valuable guidance for organisational leaders seeking to enhance leadership excellence and accountability in their respective domains. The following recommendations emerge as pivotal:

- 1. Invest in Leadership Development Programs:** Organisations should prioritize continuous leadership development programs that equip leaders with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of the contemporary business environment. Emphasis should be placed on fostering visionary leadership, effective communication, and adaptability.
- 2. Enhance Clarity in Accountability Measures:** Leaders should work towards establishing clear and transparent accountability measures within their organisations. This involves clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations, ensuring that every team member understands their contribution towards organisational goals.
- 3. Promote a Culture of Continuous Learning:** Leaders play a crucial role in fostering a culture of continuous learning. Encouraging employees to engage in ongoing skill development and remaining abreast of industry trends contributes to organisational agility and adaptability.



4. **Address Communication Gaps:** Recognizing the challenges identified in this study related to communication, leaders should proactively address communication gaps within their teams. Implementing regular feedback mechanisms and open communication channels can mitigate misunderstandings and enhance overall collaboration.
5. **Prioritize Employee Engagement:** Organisations should prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing employee engagement. This involves creating a positive work environment, recognizing and rewarding contributions, and fostering a sense of belonging among team members.
6. **Explore Technology for Accountability:** Leaders should explore the integration of technology to streamline accountability processes. Leveraging project management tools, communication platforms, and data analytics can facilitate efficient tracking and reporting of accountability measures.
7. **Encourage Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Breaking down silos and encouraging cross-functional collaboration is essential for holistic organisational success. Leaders should facilitate interactions between different departments, promoting a collaborative environment that aligns with organisational objectives.

By embracing a comprehensive and integrated approach to leadership excellence and accountability integration, organisational leaders can navigate complexities with confidence and drive organisational success in the dynamic business environment of Plateau State, Nigeria.

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