Individual psychological distance: a leadership task to assess and cope with invisible change

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Abstract

Purpose – The current research review aims to provide a conceptual framework for future research on individual psychological distance in leadership tasks.

Design/methodology/approach – Through literature review, the authors developed an intended research framework.

Findings – The need of intended framework from theoretical perspective, meta-analysis and situational analysis is presented in this paper. The discussion on a present study about the various aspects of individual perspective, strategic leadership and its link with organizational outcomes are hypothetically aligned in the framework.

Originality/value – Strategic change management is the process of managing change in an organization. Change is critical to measure existing structures in the thoughtful way. Mapping individual behavior change is a difficult task, and organizational goals, objectives and missions are an important element of the learning process. Through this framework, the authors attempt to reach the model.

Keywords Strategic planning, Individuals, Psychological distance and well-being, Organizational outcome, Strategy

Paper type Literature review

Introduction and background of the study

Strategic change management is the process of managing change in an organization. Change is critical to measure existing structures in the thoughtful way. Change in organizational goals, objectives and missions is an important element of the learning process. The process of change determines the cause of organizational success and failure. The studies discussed that change is essential for organizational growth to meet industrial competition. Barney (2016) discussed ways to achieve competitive advantages and stated that nonsubstitutable resources including a firm's attributes, information and knowledge make its success certain among its competitors. These resources require to be controlled to improve the firm's efficiency and effectiveness. Thereafter, organizational success has been considered to lend a competitive advantage for sustainable development. There are many ways to gain

sustainable competitive advantage; Schmidt and Keil (2013) stated that sustainable development requires resource value creation in managerial judgment. Value creation gives a sustainable competitive advantage to the firm, distinguishing it from its competitors to further establish success. Factors influencing the success of an organization are both internal and external: *economic, political, social, cultural and technical* are the external ones, while *human resources (HR), finances, cost, marketing* and *product differentiation* are internal factors. External factors are more likely influential factors that cannot be controlled easily. Thus, organizations are vulnerable to these inevitable factors. Internal factors are diverse but can be controlled through effective strategic HR management, that is, adopting and implementing best HR practices and development plans beneficial for individuals as well as organizations. This can also be called strategic effort for a positive impact on the workforce. Consequently, the reflection of positive strategic effort on the workforce can be seen in achieving organizational goal support, which helps in improving the organization's performance.

Porter and Millar (1985) described the importance of strategy to gain competitive advantage, i.e. *through attractive services that are vital for standing out among its competitors*. Strategic efforts in distinguishing the environment and workforce can be achieved through systematic learning. Labor market, demographic and environmental factors and change in the labor market affect HR capabilities. Managers are important operators in managing HR capabilities and operations in an organization. Valued HR (*as one of the prime organizational resources with their importance for the dynamic capability of the firm*) are essential for gaining competitive advantage and success (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Dynamic capabilities and resource optimization help managers create value, acquire and shed resources, integrate and disparate resources and generate new strategies through learning. Dynamic capabilities help create new competitive advantages.

Strategies can be formed through the evaluation of performance-level discrepancies (*current and desired*), increasing dissatisfaction (*with the status quo*), setting new objectives and vision through future objectives and fostering confidence. Organizational readiness for change is the topic of many empirical studies, but individual readiness for change is crucial and limited (Weiner *et al.*, 2008). Organizational change readiness is a multilevel concept including individuals, groups, units, departments and the whole organization; a due process is required to recognize and establish a strategic management plan (Weiner, 2009). Analysis of any of these levels can address change readiness in an organization. Readiness for change is a process that can be learned through leadership only. Leaders through their messages, actions, social interaction, sharing information and experiences promote readiness for change among organization members. Broadly, organizational processes such as socialization, attraction and attrition are also key factors (Klein *et al.*, 1994; Sathe, 1985; Schneider *et al.*, 1995). Bandura's (1997) concept which suggests collective efficacy through social learning refers to shared beliefs of organizational members. Individual capabilities once organized can help in the change management process collectively and can support the implementation of shared learning for change. The conceptual definition of organizational readiness for change can be attained through an individual's psychology. There are various strategies by which readiness for change can be achieved; these are discussed below:

Strategic leadership is one of the foremost and vital topics in management studies so far, yet it has not developed a fixed definition (Chaffee, 1991). To create a competitive advantage, we need to effectively manage the strategic management process, which can be achieved through strategic leadership (Hill *et al.*, 2014). Northouse (2007) defined a leader as the one who influences an individual or group for achieving common goals. A total of three basic theories explain the process of leadership, namely (1) the trait leadership theory, (2) the great event theory and the (3) process leadership theory (Bass and Stogdill, 1990). According to the trait theory, persons emerge by circumstances and people naturally recognize their

leadership qualities and accept their leadership role. The great event theory describes the emergence of crises which cause a person to deal with it positively. The situation allows a person of extraordinary qualities to emerge from a crisis in such a way that people recognize their leadership role. The third and most common theory of leadership describes that leadership skills can be learned. The debate whether a leader is born or made was taken up by Burns (1978); he talked about the two-way leadership process, i.e. transformation or transactional.

The topic of transformation and transactional leadership gained attention after that, particularly in organizational studies. The transformation style of leadership required strategies to build the technical skills to empower the followers, build their self-efficacy for changing their values (*social, cultural*), norms (*religious*) and attitudes (*psychology*) which are consistent with the leader's vision. Transformational leaders are concerned with the vision and mission of the organizations. They do not lead for themselves but to achieve organizational objectives through formulating and implementing organizational policies and procedures by means of strategic management. Transformational leaders are always concerned about followers' conditions and try to find an effective and efficient way(s) of improving their condition to achieve organizational goals. Scholars categorized transformational behaviors in four way(s): (1) inspire and motivate others, (2) influence others from individual character, (3) follow an ideology and (4) intellectually motivate others.

Organizational leaders should encourage employees by leading by an example; they have the responsibility to define organizational norms and values, live up to expectations and encourage their followers to adopt the same. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) described the immoral behaviors of leaders (*disparities between personal and professional ethics*) as "cancer" for the organization. Crane and Matten (2004) concluded that if the perceived behavior of the leader is uncaring and unethical in business dealings, employees may be likely to get the same message. The relationship between employees and managers or managers and leaders is based on honesty and credibility which can be gained by fair and respectful behavior only (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). An employee can get drawn and remain longer in the service when they experience responsible and ethical employers (*leader and managers as the boss*), which is beneficial for the organization (Bower, 2003; Collins, 2010; Upadhyay and Singh, 2010). Unethical conduct fails to establish good leadership practices, which further lead to an increase in high turnover and decrease probabilities of attracting newcomers for employment. High turnover is associated with increased cost and long process of indicting new employee, training and supervision and thus leads to job dissatisfaction, loss of commitment and productivity.

Aims and objectives of the study

The sustainable development of an organization is related to its success. Some companies succeed, while some fall, and some remain struggling between success and failure and cannot determine their strategic position ever. Some of them remain at the top for years, and some never reach the top ever. Yet, not a single organization has faced success or failure alone; thus, we can assume that *change is inevitable and organizations are vulnerable* to it, so there is no escape from change and no option but to cope and manage strategic response before it is too late. In the process of change, readiness for change strategies requires careful planning to be implemented for sustainable/profitable growth through strategic management (Hill *et al.*, 2014). Strategic management is a top-down process; thus, it can be realized by setting the direction by top leadership to downward. Organizational leadership is associated with both positive and negative outcomes. In a particular sense, stress-related issues are linked with leadership to individual and organizational well-being (Kelloway and Barling, 2010). It is not yet confirmed which style is better for which organization; hence, scholarly debate has continued for long and so has the process of determining concrete and definite outcomes.

The current study aims to intervene in two purpose-driven leadership styles, *self, others and organizations* (Cardona *et al.*, 2019), as a strategic choice of leadership for individual well-being and organizational outcome. The study aims to propose a hypothetical yet literature-driven model for employees' psychological distance resulting in invisible behavioral change and negative influence on well-being (*emotional health, exhaustion, burnout, disengagement, Machiavellianism, silence and low self-esteem*). The role of exogenous and endogenous variables and research gaps has been identified and discussed for the hypothetical model for qualitative, quantitative or mix-method future research.

Model review
Organizational change and individuals
Organizational change describes the shared psychological state of its members regarding the need for change. It requires planning, measuring and implementing processes through collective abilities. Change is important to generate the ability to gain a durable competitive advantage and to bring innovation in existing strategies. Innovation is a complex phenomenon but vital in the change process. Change may come through internal (*such as leadership, new policies and procedures, human resource or strategic business change*) and external (*economic, technological, political or global*) factors. The external factors are mostly inevitable, and organizations cannot resist them for too long. These factors may cause radical change which can be quite apparent. Internal changes are referred to as structural changes within the organizational design and rearranging of hierarchical processes and styles of management. The human factor refers to people working within the organization or stakeholders who are most crucial in terms of who is affected by change. Human willingness (*commitment to change*) is very difficult to understand, and its repercussions are not limited to one dimension only due to individual differences. Every person possesses unique characteristics depending upon their gender, knowledge, experience, strategic style of learning and use of technology. It further extends to their type of distinctions and significant psychological traits and cognitive and emotional capabilities with natural inheritance. Personal characteristics and the personality or temperaments of an individual are complex terms in everyday discourse (Stivers, 2004), which may affect their learning abilities differently; thus, individual differences are often understood as the difference between their learning and outcomes such as performance.

The demographic and psychological characteristics of people distinguish them from each other and cause them to behave differently. These behaviors can be further explained by considering their attitudes and personality or temperamental differences. These idiosyncratic differences between individuals (*different impressions*) are known as distinguished characteristics. These characteristics refer to exhibiting their skills, acquiring knowledge and using advanced technology environments differently. These differences manipulate their behavioral patterns and tendencies to predict their behavior in learning and working as an interdependent member of a team. Different personality types such as neurotic, open, extroverted, conscientious or agreeable or temperaments including sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic have different behavioral and psychological abilities in both cognitive and psychosocial ways, which can vary tremendously from one individual to another. In addition to this, the educational background and professional proficiency/career level also have an implicit or explicit impact on behavior. Their cognitive, social, physical, emotional and psychological interests may also be different, which similarly induces different behaviors. Researchers assume that there are three kinds of components in the attitude of an individual: cognition, affects and behavior (Judge and Robbins, 2018). These three components may help us understand the complexity of a person and the probable relation between their attitude and behaviors.

Invisible change in behavior

Psychological distance is a self-centered tendency with consulting yourself in a situation from past to present and future, i.e. "then and now," in one way or the other resulting in distance in collective and personal behaviors, for instance, an increase in weight (Liberman and Trope, 2008, 2014; Trope and Liberman, 2010). It is about forming a belief about some particular event, person, time and space through self-consultation which is related to stress and emotional health. The psychological distance is an invisible emotional state of individuals which results in psychological divergence from past experience including various dimensions such as time, space, social distance and hypothetical assumptions about oneself. The concept itself is emerging in different studies in a limited way and has research potential in the behavioral and ecological situation (Yudkin *et al.*, 2019). Psychological distance may affect (1) emotional health, (2) cause emotional exhaustion or burnouts, (3) engagement/disengagement, (4) silence, (5) Machiavellianism and (6) low self-esteem. We will further discuss and establish a theoretical link with these dimensions in details.

Emotional health

There can be a variety of differences in attitudes and behaviors of individuals. Independent and self-generated behavior through dependence is one of the phenomena (Andrews-Hanna *et al.*, 2013). The situational complexity emerges when a personal past experience (*good or bad/beneficial or harmful*) influences their behavior, which can be referred to as independent self-generated through processing (Smallwood and Andrews-Hanna, 2013). The mode is the internal cognitive capacity to overcome the external environmental factors by navigating, confronting or problem-solving strategies. Poor emotional health and well-being are associated, and stress is a common syndrome with various names like emotional exhaustion and burnouts. Maslach (1982) referred to it as depersonalization resulting in decreased chances of personal success. Burnout or emotional exhaustion is often characterized by tiredness (*fatigue*) and a feeling of dilapidation (*worn out*) which is a social, personal and organizational point of concern (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). It may emerge in a dominant way in the life of an individual (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Maslach, 1982; Wright and Bonett, 1997; Zohar, 1997), which can be harmful to individual's life and through the individual to society and organizations. The model reviewed in the present study depicted that weaker emotional health could cause psychological distance in a person.

Emotional health and exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from excessive work and/or personal demands and continuous stress. It describes the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. It is manifested by both physical fatigue and a psychological and emotional drain (Zohar, 1997). Mode's influence and information processing are correlated. Individual differences and complexity required cognitive development (Lane and Schwartz, 1987). People experiencing a bad mode may have weaker arguments. Hence, they may instruct themselves the same way. The emotionally intense person may not know exactly what they are feeling (Gohm and Clore, 2000). Self-conscious and emotional exhaustion can predict behavioral complexity (Kang and Shaver, 2004). Emotional experience and cognitive developments work in the same way. Weaker emotional health triggers emotional exhaustion and produces weaker commitment to the workplace, job or other individuals.

Furthermore, several studies have reported combating with emotional health and individual differences with emotional regulation, emotional awareness (Van Beveren *et al.*, 2019), mindfulness, individual difference (Arpaci *et al.*, 2019), religiosity, forgiveness, moral superiority and social pressure (Belicki *et al.*, 2020), which are also topics of scholarly interest; thus, we may assume that emotional health, exhaustion and burnouts are linked.

Emotional health and engagement/disengagement. In the past decade, the concept of employee engagement has gained research interest, particularly due to the role of communication and its increased importance in modern-day organizations. A survey conducted by Corporate Communication International (CCI), the USA, found employee engagement is the global trend in organizations and is listed in top priorities (Goodman, 2015). Various previous studies (Berger, 2014; Harter *et al.*, 2002; Saks, 2006) discussed its application and impact on the growth of individuals and organizations, productivity, profit, citizenship behavior, customer, satisfaction and employee retention. Kahn (1990) discussed several views about engagement and its benefits. For instance, conceptual and theoretical studies describe engagement as the binding of the workforce of organizational members to their jobs (p. 694). It further elaborates that employees can be engaged in three ways: (1) cognitive engagement, (2) emotional engagement and (3) physical engagement. Cognitive engagement refers to self-awareness and attentiveness of employee absorbed into the workplace environment and aligned with the job by their personal vision and mission. By their own will and presence, they create an impact in the workplace. Emotional engagement refers to a sense of belongingness, deep and meaningful connection. This connection can be based on their experience or empathy by which they show their dedication to their role. Physical engagement explains employees' energy in performing a job. Rothbard (2001) explains job engagement as a psychological and psychical state of attention and absorption. While cognitive ability is the presence of mind in performing a job role, absorption is being absorbed in the role physically with intense focus. Together, both work for the mind and body to be engaged in the workplace. Saks (2006) specified engagement as energy, dedication, efficacy, involvement as a positive state as against sarcasm and inefficacy. From a behavioral point of view, Haven (2007) defined it as the level of involvement of a person, which can be in the form of an interaction, intimate or influenced by some individual or brand over time. Kahn (1990) and Macey and Schneider (2008) defined different levels of engagement, i.e. trait engagement (*cognitive and disposition*), physiological engagement (*emotion and affection*) and behavioral (*based on the learned behavior of a person*) engagement. However, the literature from all disciplines lacks a concrete foundation toward one definition of engagement, yet many discussed several dimensions of engagement that could possibly be looked into. Some of them are absorption, attention, positive energy, dedication, involvement, positive affect and participation. The drivers of engagement in all disciplines from past literature were found to be consistent. Leadership, supervisory relationship, communication and workplace environment are common and noted by various scholars, i.e. (Parsley, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004; Saks, 2006). It is vital to report that leaders' ability to motivate and empower employees through participative means in communication and decision-making is claimed to be an important factor in employee engagement (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010; Tims *et al.*, 2011). Kahn (1990), who had conceptualized and theoretically derived the dimensions of employee engagement in organizational studies, defines engagement as "the harnessing of organizational members to their work roles." The topic is diverse, and there is a need for personalized learning because developing emotional well-being through engagement is a part of social policy (Ecclestone, 2007). The discussion on emotional health and engagement falls under behavioral phenomena: weak emotional health can cause disengagement.

Emotional health and silence. According to Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008), workplace silence refers to the intention or unintentional behavior of an employee in which they withhold information that can be useful for the organization in many ways, particularly in decision-making, feedback, ideas or some concerns. It may occur between employee and management in conflicting situations in changing organizations. It is extremely detrimental and generates negative behaviors and emotional exhaustion, resulting in increased absenteeism and high turnover (Whitman *et al.*, 2014). Employee silence through

leadership empowerment (Hassan *et al.*, 2019), abusive leadership, organizational politics, power distance (Lam and Xu, 2019), burnout and emotional intelligence (Srivastava *et al.*, 2019) are topics that have generated interest recently.

Emotional health and Machiavellianism. Machiavellianism is the dark personality side of an employee, according to Oliver James, the original concept of Christie and Geis (1970). Richard Christie and Florence Geis refer to dark personality traits and behavior, cold and duplicitous manners/unethical behavior in an individual as Machiavellianism (Greenbaum *et al.*, 2017). It is modern syndrome at the workplace, and the concept is gaining increasing scholarly attention. Machiavellianism is linked with both positive and negative leadership behavior (Gkorezis *et al.*, 2015) and foster employee exhaustion, which results in counterproductive workplace behavior (Zheng *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, employees with these traits have low self-esteem and poorer emotional health.

As explained in above literature review, we may conclude that

(1) There are some internal and external factors of change.

(2) Every individual has a unique subset of psychological or emotional health.

(3) Emotional health agenda to subset.

Figure 1 presented reaching model A about individual psychological and invisible change factors.

Emotional health and empowerment. The term empowerment has a variety of meanings and applications. Self-empowerment refers to becoming stronger by gaining confidence. It is linked with controlling one's own life in the right way (*a conscious choice*). Empowerment can be achieved through internal or external processes. Internal processes refer to personal psychology, while external process refers to the role of others as a person or group. In the literature, it is defined as an act of empowering others (Bannister, 1986; Menon, 2001), the internal process of individuals empowered by themselves (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Psychological empowerment hence can be given several definitions. Conger *et al.* (2000) considered "psychological empowerment" as motivation and called it the process of gaining self-efficiency among members of the team or organization in formal and informal ways. Short *et al.* (1994) defined psychological empowerment as a process of education by developing competencies to take charge of one's own problems. Psychological empowerment is thinking about one's own growth and the problem-solving attitude of individuals. Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) defined psychological empowerment as a sense of control over "meaning," "competence," "self-determination" and "impact" of the employee at the workplace. Meaning is defined as the employee's perception of their value at the workplace. Professional respect and appreciation can be viewed as core meanings for
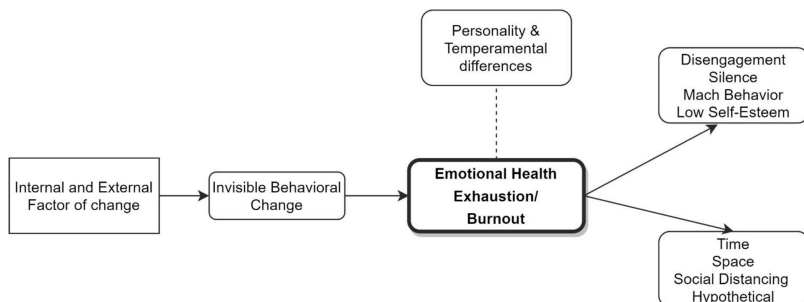

Figure 1.
Invisible change factors

the workforce in an organization. Competence refers to the beliefs of an employee through the process and gained set skills for success in performing the job. It can be viewed as helping behavior and a positive attitude toward learning and doing tasks. Self-determination is a sense of freedom and mannerism of a person adopted for practice. Control, plan and participation in organizational events with steadiness can be viewed as the core of self-determination. The impact is a degree of sense of achievements of a person which makes them distinguished among peers. It also refers to the influence of individuals over team members in an organization. Positive psychology produces positive organizational behavior (Avey *et al.*, 2008; Abbas *et al.*, 2020a), which is positive psychological capital, containing hope, resilience, efficacy and optimism as subcomponents. Positive psychological capital encounters hopelessness for the organizational and social well-being of individuals and society. Uncivil behavior is harmful to society and organizations and results in poorer job performance, psychological health and attendance on the job (Roberts *et al.*, 2011). Pierre Bourdieu introduced the concept of cultural capital, which refers to the accumulative exchange process of individual cognition, knowledge and information; it is now known as cognitive capital which has become a key factor in organizational studies. His work was related to social dynamics, believing the power of society to be the primary concern in diverse and subtle ways; thus, it works for the transfer and maintenance of social power. His framework was the corporeal nature of social life and practice with the embodiment of social dynamics. In present times, with the emergence of new technologies, frameworks, social transformation, natural sciences aim to shed more light over complex mechanisms to gauge the governing models of the human mind in perceiving their environment. Finding operational quantification for such phenomena is yet challenging. HR development, social capital and emotional intelligence are interconnected in an organizational setting and integrated with productivity with internal and external environmental factors (Brooks and Muyia Nafukho, 2006). Emotional intelligence is an important intangible asset defined (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) as an intellectual process involving recognition, understanding and use of management skills of one's own and others' emotional states. This is also the ability to use these feelings for motivation, planning and achieving goals, which become operative in organizational management where all employees, managers and management executives want to achieve their goals and objectives. The growth of individualism poses serious threats to an organic unit of society. People spending more time in social activities are most trusted; it happens when they have autonomy and self-control with maturity and a sense of responsibility. The discussion on the presented model assessed that social, psychological, emotional, cultural and religious empowerment represents the overall empowerment of an individual. Factors that contribute to the emotional empowerment considering the literature cited above, we may conclude that

(1) Self-determination and positive psychology worked as healing agent for the empowerment for individuals.

(2) Employees may need social, psychological, cultural, emotional or religious empowerment as support role during transition phase.

Strategic leadership
Leaders and managers need to possess physical attributes like measurable skills and intangible such as soft skills in the future. Knowledge of concepts, theories, financial procedures and styles are real skills, while adaptability, commitment, vision, flexibility and comprise assurance are intangible skill sets. To sustain a competitive environment for every organization, the learning of their employees in terms of different management and leadership development programs would be a source of productivity and an increase in

analytical capabilities, which facilitates self-awareness. With the help of these leadership development programs, managers will be educated to start management processes for the improvement of workplace efficacy (Jones *et al.*, 1972). Planning of HR is a process of assuming and determining the organization to get suitably qualified persons to perform the job for the required time so that individuals can get involved according to the needs of the enterprise (Leap and Crino, 1993). The recent era of globalization has fostered communication processes for smarter HR, which requires planning to encourage the organizations to keep long-term plans to hunt talent. The right people having the right skills at the right time can be ensured to meet strategic goals and operational procedures of the diversified international organizations. For managing diversity, social, economic, legislative and technological trends became essential and have had an impact on modern strategic HR management.

Scholars like Javidan (1995) and Goleman (1998) suggested two leadership roles important for communication: (1) instrumental and (2) charismatic. Socially responsible leaders are instrumental because they provide emotional and informational support (Kelloway *et al.*, 2004). Especially in the time of peril, effective leadership is required for success and avoids stagnancy. The definition of a good leader is one who can transform a weak business into a successful one, and likewise, the best plans can be devastated by poor leadership. Thus, the leader builds or destroys the company (Mills, 2005). Hence, one can say that a leader motivates peers and stimulates their behavior at the workplace. Leaders work for useful implementations while there is organizational emphasis on correctness and completion of work according to the timeline. Steve Jobs' leadership traits are broadly acknowledged around the globe, especially during his medical leave while fighting cancer; he gave strategic advice to the top-level management of the company. This kind of attitude of senior leadership (transformational leadership) became a source of inspiration for employees. He believed in transforming others to help each other, look after each other. As a source of motivation, knowledge and vision, he attracted talent to change the work by using computer technology differently. Millennium era businesses required extensive observation and concentration to identify abilities, skills, competencies and acknowledge the leaders of the 21st century (Dimitrijevic and Engel, 2002; Greenberg, 1998; Kacena, 2002; Higgs and Rowland, 2000). One common phenomenon everyone agrees about a leader is that they are someone who leads while communicating effectively.

Burns (1978) defined leaders as those who mobilize persons through certain motives and values in competition or conflict to achieve goals independently. Since a lot of interaction in everyday life is involved between leader and followers, communication style, communication tools and communication strategies are quite important for affecting the mind of a group or individual. Sohmen (2013) defined organizational influencing processes as those that affect the actions of the follower as a choice of objectives important for an organization or a group. These organizations work to accomplish objectives to maintain a cooperative relationship among teams. Motivation (*support and cooperation and employee mobilization*) is required for employees to achieve these objectives. Whetten and Cameron (2011) described transformational, transactional, organic, contemporary and ethical as comprising a five-dimensional leadership model for organizational studies. All these traits are interchangeable, so leaders may use a combination of any of these dimensions to build their style.

Leadership influence
As every person has a different personality, they may also have different coping styles because it is derived directly from the personality (Hayes and Joseph, 2003), which refers to different cognition, affect and behavioral response to their styles. These styles can be choosing or adopting leadership components, communication and coping strategies in day-to-day matters. The role of leadership has been discussed in the literature with qualitative and

quantitative significance throughout the history of the management science domain, and perhaps that is why organizational success, particularly in a time of stress and crisis, is dependent on a certain level of leadership qualities in a person as a team and organization leader. In particular, when we discuss individual differences, policy implementations and other behavioral issues, leadership provides the lens by which we can cope with the issue. Certain leadership traits are required in teachers as essential characteristics as well as the employee.

Yukl (2006) discussed the role of leadership in an organization and its critical factors that cause influence. Internal communication practice is one of the vital factors in a leadership role in an organization. Similarly, leaders create, build and maintain the organizational structure, culture and communication patterns. Their influence over infrastructure and individuals cannot be denied. These communication patterns require the preferred source of information and flow of information (*through messages and body language*) at many levels. The information flow plays an important role in sharing employee grievances with top management as lower-level employees rely on the communication process. Bass and Stogdill (1990) found (*inclusive*) transformational and transactional and Aldoory and Toth (2004) found shared as authentic leadership styles using understandable communication strategies. The current study undertakes responsible and ethical leadership styles (*shared, the authentic, strategic choice of person and transformational*) to expect positive outcomes from employees' attitude and conduct. This positive influence leads to understanding and decreases the psychological distance in times of change, and once the change process is communicated well, organizational outcomes can be achieved easily. Building a positive organizational culture in which the employees feel happy in terms of well-being (Lee and Miller, 1999) and see culture as a co-specialized resource (Chan *et al.*, 2004) positively affect a firm's performance to gain a competitive advantage (Abbas *et al.*, 2020b).

Responsible vs ethical leadership

Transformational leaders, according to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), are of two types: (1) authentic and (2) pseudo. The pseudo is a self style of leadership with self-centeredness due to which they become manipulative for the hunger of power. The pseudo style of leaders is self-motivated due to their personal objectives, so they are unreliable. Authentic leaders are the ones who are driven by values and moral character. They have a strong concern for self-growth and that of others, but they are reliable for their high ethical values. Ethical values are deeply embedded in the leaders' vision. Conversely, transactional leaders believe in rewards, punishments and want to hold the formal authority to produce compliance behavior in their followers. Their leadership concern remains resource allocation, directing followers and strict monitoring to achieve tasks. Transactional leaders believe each relation, *employee to leader or leader to the employee and employee to job performance* is a matter of rewards, the *motivation* they receive in the form of payments. Transactional leaders' style is not so effective since their consideration toward employee motivation, loyalties and selflessness toward a person or organization is with the aim of gaining economic benefits only.

The construct of responsible leaders is based on *self-consciousness, congruence, commitment, common purpose, collaboration, citizenship* and *change* deployed and tested in many studies (Dugan, 2006; HERI, 1996; Tyree, 1998). Swanson and Kent (2014) highlighted the importance of the credibility of leaders in the communication process of an organization since leaders are one of the most important sources of information for employees; there is a considerable link between the conduct of a leader, their credibility and integrity. The current study aims to provide empirical insight into transformational leadership styles: (1) ethical and (2) responsible leadership previewed in terms of strategic credibility to influence individuals' readiness for change. The results will provide empirical insight about organizational leaders

to establish and implement strategies for better adoption of change management. Ethical leadership's essential characteristics have been discussed in the literature since the theory of justice was proposed by John Rawls (1971). The term gained popularity in academia due to its long-term consequences. Kohlberg (1975) called it a golden rule for social practice and a framework for evolved decision-making (Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981). Simola (2003), however, disagreed stating that it can help in decision-making but considered the importance of ethical leadership (*justice and care*) in times of turbulence. Avolio *et al.* (1999) distinguished ethical leadership dimensions as a primal source of inspiration and its application to stimulate and empower others.

May *et al.* (2003) stated leadership authenticity integrates positive morality, which guides decision-making. Positive moral behaviors further include accountability, fairness, altruism, honesty and optimism (Yukl, 2006). Brown *et al.* (2005) found all these elements "come together to characterize ethical leadership," but none of these components of ethical leadership are demanded alone. Brown *et al.* (2005) realized the conceptual gap and anticipated that ethical leadership is distinguished from other leadership styles and called it the normative approach of a person through actions. These actions include interpersonal relations and influence over followers' conduct through reciprocal reinforcements and decision-making (p. 120). Brown *et al.* (2005) also contributed to ethical leaders' scale development single-dimension conduct, i.e. ethical rewards of allowing followers' voice (*head*) to act (*fairly and honestly*). This measure was one-dimensional and was not able to cover the different elements essential to the construct of ethical leadership in the existing literature. Later, Kalshoven *et al.* (2011) redefined its various dimensions such as power-sharing, clarification role, fair treatment of others, personal integrity, people orientation, ethical guidance and sustainability concerns. Power-sharing, clarification and fair treatment are three dimensions that reflect the early concept of ethical leadership developed by Brown *et al.* (2005). Fair treatment refers to the action of ethical leaders toward others. They do not practice favoritism and assume responsibilities for their own actions. Sharing of power implies that ethical leaders allow others to contribute to decision-making while they pay attention to details in listening and taking opinions and understanding others' concerns. Clarification of role by ethical leaders helps make their actions transparent and open ways of communication to define responsibilities. Thus, they meet the followers' expectations and achieve performance outcomes.

Later, Kalshoven *et al.* (2011) discovered additional behaviors, including people orientation in genuine leaders. Ethical leaders exhibit care, respect and provide support to followers to meet their needs. Integrity refers to the fulfillment of their promises and standing by their words as a role model. It refers to consistent behaviors as well. Ethical guidance means the manner of communication. They choose loud and clear ways to explain rules and announce ethical rewards they want to see in the conduct of employees. An ethical leader's main concern that distinguishes them from others is their concern for sustainability. Ethical leaders pay attention to environmental factors to ensure sustainability issues and develop a sustainable environment for organizational members. They are aware of the effects of sustainability concerns for self-interest and its effects on followers as workgroups and concerns for social welfare.

Intervening responsible and ethical leadership
Ethical leadership (Plinio *et al.*, 2010) and responsible leadership's (Waldman, 2011) a clarion call for strategic choice for organizational readiness is change through individuals. Key principles of ethical leadership are "honesty," "integrity," "fairness" and "care/concern for others." Ethical leaders are situation-based leaders, as Ofori (2009) referred to refrain behavior (*to avoid harming others*), so their prime concern is providing benefits to their followers. Business leaders have been seen maintaining a distance between personal and

professional lives, yet ethics are a top concern for them. They cannot set different moral standards for themselves and their followers. It is quite less often observed that leaders with different ethical codes (*for self and others*) become successful. Synchronization between moral behavior (*personal and professional*) is key for the success of business leaders, so they can be consistent in teaching (*others what they want from them*) and practice (*what they do in their own lives*). The leadership's role is key to determining the success or failure of the organization because they set goals and ways to achieve them, by managing the behavior of followers (*employees*) and implementing strategies (*rewards, promotions and appraisals*) (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). There is a debate about leadership's common role and the prevailing influence of leading by example. Leaders take responsibility to exhibit norms and values by practicing as a role model to encourage followers.

Responsible leadership offers vision, imagination, responsibility and action through awareness. They are more participative in problem-solving, possess the moral courage to inspire positive change, communicate openly and effectively and can make long-term thinking strategies to impact their followers' psychology. Wootton and Horne (2010) discussed the importance of the strategic intelligence of leaders by escaping the past, taking an idea from the present and rethinking the future. They think strategically by creating direction and communicating it to an individual or a group. Communication as personal attributes allows responsible leaders to communicate a vision of the organization and lead their followers in a focused manner. Following their vision in a predictive way, responsible leaders can design strategic thinking, reflective thinking and systemic thinking according to the vision of the organization. Particularly in changing organizations, it is difficult to prepare the individual for change at the same pace due to individual differences. Aligning them to the mission and vision of the organization provides the platform to be organized and follow the direction in a certain way. In this way, at least a target can be achieved in a limited time. Above cited literature helped in concluding model Figure 2 about leadership role, dimensions and its effectiveness to cope with invisible individual behaviors.

A meta-analysis of the intended framework

Charness *et al.* (2007) presented an insightful review indicates precisely how group identity naturally affects prevailing attitudes regarding possible outcomes or the moral acceptability of the group influences or their mutual understanding toward a system. Notable individuals who really are part of a functional group or who (*categorized with that as well*) act differently than other people from the group as independent actors. Charness further concluded that unlike the small-group model, individuals alone will not influence actions in situational
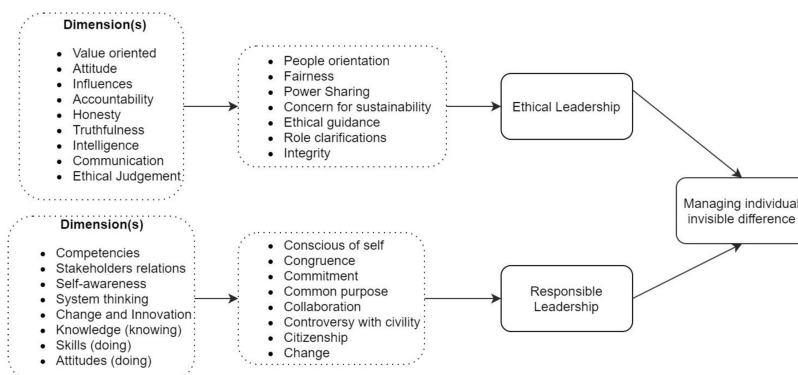

Figure 2.
Leadership model

contexts. However, influential representation significantly raises the hostile attitude (*people who have their community leaders*) and does not minimize that of the organization. In organizational studies, employee's social and psychological features differentiate them from each other and lead them to behave otherwise. Such habits can better explain by keeping their personalities and nuances in behavior in mind. Such idiosyncratic variations between persons (distinct impressions) considered distinguishing chief characteristics. Such traits are distinctive in terms of proving their abilities, gaining information and using digital development settings. Such variations exploit their behavioral habits and the ability to predict their actions in studying and functioning as an interdependent team leader. Specific types, like the neurotic, the relaxed, the extraversion, the cautious or the accommodating, support various behavioral and psychological abilities, both cognitively and psychosocially, and may be extremely far from individual to individual. In addition to this, the educational background and professional proficiency/career level also have an implicit or explicit impact on behavior. Their cognitive, social, physical, emotional and psychological interests may also be diverse from each other which similarly ignites different behaviors. Researchers assume there are three kinds of components in the attitude of an individual, namely cognition, affects and behavior. These three components may help us to understand the complexity of the person and the probable relation between their attitude and behaviors.

Situational challenges
There are five major types of personality traits that psychologists agreed and resolved that any individual can have at least one of these traits in their personalities. These five traits are a topic of scholarly attention since (Fiske, 1949) coined the concept of many decades. Later, many researchers extended the historical notion including Goldberg (1981); McCrae and Costa (1987); Norman (1967); Smith (1967) known as the "big five" factors model. The quest is ongoing among researchers, yet a unique or exact label of these dimensions remains to be decided even concluding a variety of positive outcomes in different situations and individual differences (Paunonen, 2003; Schermer *et al.*, 2020). The research about big-five has no time, gender, society or continental limitations in the literature. Due to its universal acceptance and application, the big-five factor has been measured in every situation and produces different outcomes and rectifying and opening a new branch of understanding individual differences. Big Five personality traits have a wide range of applicability in organizational research such as job performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991), health behavior (Jerram and Coleman, 1999), leadership (Judge and Bono, 2000), education (Noftle and Robins, 2007), the Internet (Kayiş *et al.*, 2016) and satisfaction in the relationship (O'Meara and South, 2019). The holistic appeal of big-five in individual behavior studies thus cannot be negated in any situation. Individual personality is shaped by two main characteristics: (1) inherited and (2) learned. Inherited characteristics are nature-gifted qualities including genetic qualities and appearance. These qualities cannot be changed, but learned characteristics that are based on beliefs *(perception)*, attitude and values are part of experiential learning of every individual. Learned characteristics are situational factors including skills and knowledge that influence individuals in shaping behavior. These experiential learnings, norms, act like control agents that help humans in decision-making.

Exogenous and endogenous factors
The dynamic interplay of evaluating exogenous and endogenous influences in human activities are tough difficult to access accurately but definitive in its basic existence. In the presented model, exogenous and endogenous factors influencing individual behavior include technology (Lee *et al.*, 2006), political, legal, sociocultural and microeconomics (Isik *et al.*, 2010), biomedical change-effective behaviors (Wagels *et al.*, 2017), health issues with adaptive/moral behavioral change

Figure 3.
Proposed framework of
the study
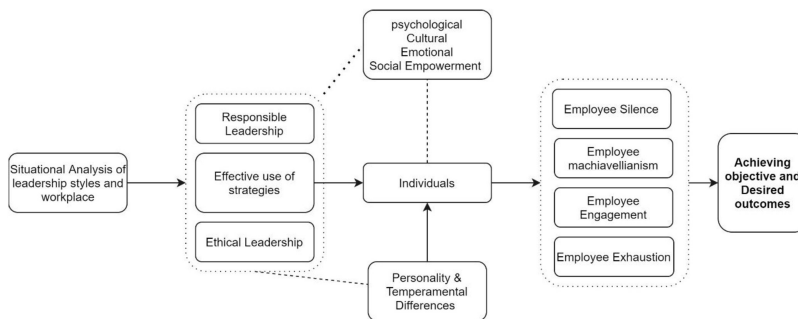
(Arnocky *et al.*, 2017), macropolitical change and unrealistic human assumptions (Baumgartner, 2017), institutional innovation and change agents (DellaPosta *et al.*, 2017) inducing a continuous change in individual behaviors. These changes may cause compulsive psychological interventions that could remain invisible until they appear in the transformed action of individuals depending upon their unique nature and other endogenous factors of shaping individual character. Preiser (2019) identified general trend in complex systems research and explained that the concept is gaining a greater understanding of human differences and dynamics of complex structures. Researchers are required to obtain a clearer understanding of the functional implications of these characteristics for the development of more suitable approaches and approaches to dealing with the complexities of the real world.

Situational analysis of workplace
There is a need for situational analysis of the modern workplace in contemporary research. The intended framework postulates to opt for situational analysis (Clarke, 2005) at modern workplaces. Researcher may amply supplies three critical cartographic methods to read a situation from cognitive maps, which are meant as complementary alternatives to conventional theoretical and objective analyzes based on the action-centric "simple social cycle". The situational analysis offers these complex diagrams with a favorable view to shifting focus to the social condition of the philosophical inquiry. By carefully plotting the empirical data, the academic researcher builds the investigation scenario. The framework is intended to design to formulate the empirical toolkit (from available dimensions) and incorporate methods to investigate the phenomena. It also allows researchers to independently amply explain theories for designing toolkit. For instance, invisible behavioral changes (through psychological distancing), which is a self-centered *introspection* tendency with consulting yourself in a situation from past to present and future, i.e. "then and now" in one way or another resulting separable distance found in collective and personal behaviors including hypothetical increase weight (Liberman and Trope, 2008, 2014; Trope and Liberman, 2010). Another factor called situational complexity emerges when a personal experience (*good or bad/beneficial or harmful*) influences their behavior that can be referred to as independent self-generated through processing (Smallwood and Andrews-Hanna, 2013). Or emotional exhaustion is a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from the excessive job and/or personal demands and continuous stress. It describes the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. It is manifested by both physical fatigue and a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally "drained" (Zohar, 1997). Job engagement is ability and presence of mind of an individual have naturally which may cause by intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The psychological and physical state of attention, absorption capacity are key

factors to perform a job role (Rothbard, 2001) and some dark sides of shaping individual behaviors include but are not limited to employee silence and Mach behavior (Christie and Geis, 1970; Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008).

Conclusion

The implication of strategic leadership is diverse and its applications are found in the dialogue of HR (Hitt and Duane, 2002), individual characteristics (Davies and Davies, 2004) and organizational learning (Vera and Crossan, 2004) in the literature. The study conducted by Viitala *et al.* (2017) found leadership development to be a tool to maintain ongoing organizational development and support strategic implementation for better HR management. However, developments are a significant issue in determining success, competitive advantage and sustainability in the training and development of leadership. Additionally, organizational change comes under sustainability development, which is a lifelong process in the leadership discourse. The present model proposed a responsible and ethical leadership study to access and cope with the psychological (invisible) change in HR to manage a sustainable change process. Moreover, ethical and responsible leadership styles equip the employee to deal with effective strategic management and change processes through moral learnings and thus address the overall well-being of individuals. These leadership styles are not only for top management but for all individuals in an organization to abide by and adopt. The model also proposed moral and responsible rules which lend the leadership authority to influence followers positively and help them in growing in organizations. Furthermore, changing environmental concerns can affect employees' psychological distance, leading to serious concerns about emotional health; thus, they may feel less proactive and committed to the job and workplace. It is concluded that ethical and responsible leadership through empowerment can help boost performance and commitment.

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