

"A man is
great by
deeds, not by
birth"

-Chanakya

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**Personal Strategy as Driver of Leader Behaviour:
An Exploratory Conceptual Framework**

Rameshan Pallikara¹

¹ Professor, Strategic Management
Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode
Kozhikode – 673 570
Kerala

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** Your scholarly comments are invited on the ideas, arguments, methodology, implications and shortcomings, if any, of this paper. Comments could be e-mailed to: rameshan@iimk.ac.in.*

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Personal Strategy as Driver of Leader Behaviour: An Exploratory Conceptual Framework

Abstract

This paper develops a novel concept, viz., ‘personal strategy’, to explain the leadership behaviour and its impact on organizations more effectively. *Personal strategy* is defined in the paper as a leader’s personal action framework to achieve his personal goals in the leadership role through organizational actions. Using exploratory observations of certain organizations and by reviewing relevant literature, the paper builds the case for this concept. Further, it develops a conceptual model of personal strategic process. The paper also states certain propositions based on the discussions. The paper explains how a leader’s personal setting contributes to his personal goals and how personal strategy is evolving with reference to the personal goals. The paper also examines the impact of organizational contextual factors, hierarchical structure and leader-follower interactions in determining the success of personal strategy. Besides, it considers how leadership style may have a role in the success. Moreover, the paper refers to certain elements of an effective execution plan of personal strategy and the personal strategy outcomes occurring at organizational, leader and other stakeholder levels. Further work on this last aspect has been suggested for future research.

Keywords: Personal strategy; leader behaviour; personal settings; personal goal; organizational settings; organizational action; leader-follower interaction; personal strategy execution; personal strategy outcome

Personal Strategy as Driver of Leader Behaviour: An Exploratory Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and develop a novel concept, *personal strategy*, in explaining the source of *leader behaviour*. The fact that leadership behaviour is multi-faceted is well researched. For instance, Burns (1978) discusses the leader-follower relation and how transactional and transformational leaders differ in their approach to integrating followers' self-interests, ideals and values into leadership actions. See also Stogdill (1974) and Drucker (1996). Further, Weber (1947) and several others (e.g., Flynn and Staw 2004; Pillai 1996; Pillai and Meindl 1998; Yukl 1999; Waldman et al. 2004) recognized how charisma provides for effective leadership. Besides, there are insights into how despotic leadership plays a destructive role (Kiazad et al., 2010; Martinko et al., 2013). Major studies exist explaining the attributes of leadership (Fisher et al, 1988; Bensimon and Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1992; Ehrle and Bennett, 1988; Ferren and Stanton, 2004; Filan and Seagren, 2003; Green and McDade, 1991; Hoppe, 2003; Kouzes and Posner, 2003; Land, 2003; Padilla, 2005; Smith and Wolverton, 2010; Wolverton and Gmelch, 2002), the dimensions of leadership behaviour (Arnold et al, 2000; Avolio, 2007; Avolio et al, 1999; Avolio et al, 2003; Bass, 1985, 1998; Bass and Bass, 2008; McDaniel, 2002; Northouse, 1997; Tichy and Devanna, 1986) and its impact on leadership effectiveness (see Eagly et al, 1995; Judge and Bono, 2000; Judge et al, 2002; Judge, Colbert and Illies, 2004; Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Judge, Piccolo and Illies, 2004; Mumford et al, 2007). Another stream of research evaluated leader-follower distance and its impact on leader outcomes (Antonakis and Atwater, 2002).

Yet, *leader behaviour* has been difficult to model and predict. Bennis (1959, 2007) and Avolio (2007), in fact, bemoan the lack of integration of leadership theories as they continue to proliferate. As many leadership styles have been found as there were leaders, although there are broad characterizations of styles available in literature, such as transactional leadership, defined as conventional, emphasizing on rewards and punishments, and transformational leadership, described as motivating and empowering (Bass, 1998). Further, Fleishman (1991) identifies 65 distinct classifications of leadership behaviour. Pearce et al (2003) subsequently underlined this diversity. Also, Bass (1990), Yukl (1989) and Yukl et al (2002) provide a review of leadership behaviours.

A crucial side effect of this lacuna of diversity was that leaders themselves have been unable to benefit from the leadership literature as much as it was intended. An evidence to this is available in the argument of DeRue et al (2011) that despite prior research establishing the influence of leader traits and behaviours on leadership effectiveness, it is not clear from this research how leader traits and behaviours complement or supplement each other, and how they can be incorporated into a more integrative model of leadership effectiveness. Pfeffer (1977) too highlight the complexity and ambiguity of leadership contexts. See also Bennis (1959) and Avolio (2007).

Probably, a large gap in the leadership literature is its inability to connect leader's own strategy to his behaviour. There are many studies on the motives, attributes and qualities of a good leader and their impact on leader's behaviour. For instance, Popper et al (2000) discover that attachment security is associated with transformational leadership style whereas transactional leaders are deficient on this aspect. See also DeRue et al (2011). Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad (2007) and several others highlight the influence of the destructive traits of a leader on his behaviour. However, those studies seem to focus more on the spontaneous effect of these characteristics on the leadership behaviour. Those studies also evaluate the interaction of those characteristics with the organizational setting, goals and strategy. But, how does a leader consciously choose his *personal strategy* to follow while discharging his formal functions? How does this *personal strategy* affect his leadership characteristics and behaviour? What is the impact of the premeditated actions of a leader emanating from his *personal strategy* on his organizational actions? How do those actions affect the organizational outcomes?

A leader's *personal strategy* can be traced as an outcome of his *personal goals*, which, on the other hand, are generally derived from his *personal setting* (or personal circumstances, which evolve over time); indeed, when personal goals are translated into *personal strategy*, the *organizational settings* a leader interacted or interacts with (or organizational circumstances, which change (e.g., on job-shifting) or evolve as time passes) may exert some influence. To illustrate, Rosenbusch and Townsend (2004) posit that "leaders will have to adapt and adjust to the continual changes in organizations and the world". Nonetheless, *personal strategy* has a more dominant role than the organizational setting itself. Egan, Sarros, and Santora (1995) confirm this when they conclude that the methods leaders adopted to operationalize leadership were not dependent on the organizational type; Rosenbusch and Townsend (2004) also corroborate this.

Very little attention has been paid in the past research to directly link *personal strategy* of a leader (or member) to his organizational behaviour.

In this study, which is exploratory in nature, an attempt is made to relate how a leader's personal strategy affects the leader behaviour in the organization. Further, the paper discusses how the leader's behaviour and the followers' behaviour are interconnected and how the organizational outcome is consequently determined. The paper also outlines a conceptual model of personal strategic process covering personal strategy formation, associated leader behaviour, personal strategy execution and the resultant outcomes at organizational and individual levels. In the process, the paper discusses the hierarchical effect on leadership in the personal strategy context and the organizational and individual contextual factors of personal strategy, while it relates personal strategy effectiveness to the elements of personal strategy execution plan.

Wherever primary information has been used in the paper as source of its analytical inputs, the study uses the background of certain academic organizations in the cultural setting of an emerging economy. In addition, while analyzing the aspects of personal strategy, the focus of the paper is on the top leadership of organizations (or groups or teams). Furthermore, the paper uses pronouns indicating male gender in only a neutral sense.

The rest of the paper has been organized as follows. The next section discusses the concept of personal strategy. The section analyzes the relation among personal setting, personal goals

and personal strategy. It also evaluates the effect of personal strategy on leader behaviour. Further, the section elaborates on the selection and implementation of personal strategy. Personal strategy outcomes at the organizational, leader and others' levels too are briefly examined in the section. The third section discusses some key arguments of the previous sections and suggests certain implications. The last section presents conclusions.

PERSONAL STRATEGY

The Concept

The interplay of personality (or leader traits) and leader behaviour has been a subject of research for long (Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Lord, DeVader and Alliger 1986; McGregor (1960). But, past literature was silent in explaining a distinct medium through which personality translated to leader behaviour (this is not the only limitation of leadership literature though; Avolio (2007) laments its lack of theoretical integration; there are also many studies suggesting how past literature is inadequate in grasping leaders' destructive behaviour (e.g., Burke, 2006; Kellerman 2004; Kelloway et al, 2005)). The treatment was as if personality (or leader traits) intrinsically affected the leader behaviour without a full-bodied medium. This appears to have led to a gap disconnecting the two sides. DeRue et al (2011) drives this point home by referring to the lack of clarity on how leader traits and behaviour complement or supplement each other. However, it is plausible that a leader uses his personality traits, along with other influencing factors, to strategize his behaviour (in terms of focus, expectations, styles, philosophy, actions and reactions) according to his personal preferences as reflected in his personal goals. This strategizing process may be culminating in a 'personal strategy', which may act as a framework for self-regulating the leader behaviour. While personal strategy can provide an action medium for the interplay of a leader's personality (or traits) and behaviour, there has been no work studying the *role of personal strategy in leader behaviour*. Therefore, this paper strives to build the concept of personal strategy and examine its impact on leader behaviour.

Personal strategy as a concept has been used in this paper in the context of one's personal goals as a group member and as a leader. Personal strategy can be defined as a person's underlying approach with respect to one's personal goals while dealing with the professional, social and personal activities having a bearing on others. In other words, personal strategy refers to a group member's or a leader's personal framework for influencing the group or organizational plans and, where relevant, executing them in one's preferred way. More precisely, a leader's *personal strategy* in his organizational leadership role is the leader's personal (private) action framework to achieve his personal (private) goals (or private agenda) in the leadership role through organizational leadership actions. All leaders are expected to have their personal strategy (or its multiple variants). A leader executing his personal strategy will try to shape or reshape the organizational plans, strategies and actions according to his own personal strategy so that the consequent organizational results can satisfy the leader's personal goals underlying the personal strategy (in doing so, he needs to make use of his self-awareness, including the role-awareness and the organizational awareness. See Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Bass and Yammarino (1991) and Church (1997) on the role of self-awareness in leadership). In this sense, personal strategy contributes, to the extent it succeeds, to substantially redirecting the group or organizational plans and their execution as intended in the personal goals of the leader. Past studies have already shown how a CEO, as the top leader of an organization, influences the strategic decisions (e.g., Agle et al (1999), Chin et al

(2013)) while there was hardly an appropriate concept to capture what framework the leader uses for it.

Personal strategy consists of a person's operating philosophy, associated operating methodology, and commensurate operational actions against a long-term horizon. To illustrate, a manager's philosophy may be rooted in certain lofty ideas of human values or it may be one driven by self-interests. One with a lofty value system, such as a transformational leader, may operate with a long-run orientation and a desire to ensure the good of both the organization and its stakeholders. On the other hand, one driven by one's own or others' self-interests, such as a self-oriented transactional leader, may focus on one's own returns and a short-run horizon (for quick results). The first type of approach entails actions most desirable for the common good while the second type of approach, on its flip side, may involve temporary results, sub-group patronage, window-dressing, etc.

Even a leader's most spontaneous thinking and subtle actions may be shaped by his personal strategy. For instance, his organizational vision, while appearing to be fully spontaneous, may be nuanced by the contours of his personal strategy – because, for the leader, where the organization should reach needs to be consistent with what personal goals the leader has set for himself and what the organization should achieve in the long run needs to be consistent with the viability of his personal strategy. Kellerman (2004) seems to confirm this by acknowledging the precedence of leader's self-interest over organizational interests. See also Vrendenburgh and Brender (1998).

Personal strategy may have two components - one related to a leader's career achievement actions (which he may play irrespective of which organization he is currently associated with) and the other related to his organizational execution actions (which he may employ depending on the organizational contexts and organizational execution requirements).

Every individual member of a group or organization is likely to have a personal strategy. Higher a person's realm of operation, greater may be the impact of one's personal strategy. For instance, a CEO's personal strategy may have a more powerful influence on the organization than a unit manager's. Similarly, a village or family head's personal strategy is more powerful than a village or family member's. But, in both the social and organizational contexts, every member's personal strategy is certain to affect the group outcome by some degree. How strongly it affects is determined by various factors including the position of authority of the member and the institutional contexts. In turn, how focused one is in using one's personal strategy to shape the group or organizational outcome is dependent on the person's personal setting and personal goals.

Personal Setting, Personal Goals & Personal Strategy

Personal setting refers to the background (family, social, professional etc) which an individual evolves against as he develops both as a human being and as a functionary or professional. Key human elements of personal setting are family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours, relatives, classmates, teachers, other interacting public, etc. Human aspects of personal setting are complemented by such other factors as family background, childhood experiences, type of neighbourhood, type of schools and colleges attended, financial background, degree of influence of parents, siblings, relatives and friends, and so on.

The human and other forces of personal setting give rise to personal goals. For example, Avolio and Gibbons (1988) find how transformational leaders among CEOs have been influenced by their parents; the works of Hofstede (1980, 1991) and Trompenaars (1993) illuminate the cultural context of leadership. In leadership literature, the concept of personal goals is closely resembled in the concept of personal motives, but the former is more formal while the latter is more subtle; there are many studies dealing with personal motives (Fodor, 2010; Kirkpatrick, Wofford and Baum, 2002; McClelland and Burnham, 1976, 2003; Spangler and House, 1991). Personal goals are basically what an individual wants to become, achieve or be known for. To some, a personal goal may be to lead a comfortable life; to some it may be to do their tasks well; to yet some others it may be to achieve extraordinary things in life. Some may want to be a scientist, who invents; some may want to be a doctor, who serves the society; some an administrator, who provides governance; and some a leader, who leads people in respective walks of life.

Let us now follow a few examples of personal goals of leaders. In one organization, the leader, CEO, was too keen for visibility and fame for himself. He could go to any length to get media coverage and public appreciation. Using his superior communication skills, he will comment even on issues and subjects where he had least expertise. He was eager to implement those activities and initiatives that can give him applause. He hardly tolerated anyone else in the organization from coming to limelight. From this point of view, he exhibited certain destructive leader traits (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007). Given this, normally, he should have faced some serious backlashes in his organization. This did not happen because he had a pre-meditated personal strategy. He was careful to pass material benefits to everyone around so that they will be content and, hence, silent while he hogged full external attention.

Another leader, again a CEO, had a point to prove - that he is equally competent and he can do the same thing as his rival did. This CEO (let us call him Ditter) was earlier pipped by his rival for another CEO position. He was bitter about it. He took it a mission to prove that what his rival does, he can do even better; to what height his rival can take his organization, he can take his own to greater heights; and so on. Such hard rivalry even drove this CEO to launch a campaign to prove to his rival that Ditter is better than his rival. He also went on to discredit his rival in many unpleasant ways. His rival also tried to match Ditter's 'efforts' because the rival on an earlier occasion had lost a COO bid in another organization to Ditter's competition. Both Ditter's and his rival's actions had a bearing on their respective organizations. However, they tried to cover it up using their personal strategies that included firing their action guns on the shoulders of committed, but susceptible senior executives.

A third leader, another CEO, was in great hurry to get results and had no patience for long run as if John Maynard Keynes (1923) was right when he said: "In the long run we are all dead" (p.80). In his quest for results, he had no time to think about the consequences of his results to the long run interests of the organization. He promoted people who did not deserve, but were willing to toe to his line; he oppressed others who carried the organization's quality and value standards, but did not find his short-run based actions palatable. This underscores this leader's ability to behave differently with different stakeholder segments (Skogstad, 1997). Further, he developed gift transactions to an art form in both granting and receiving favours. However, since his personal strategy encompassed running his plan with people who supported him, he

could get away for a long time with his actions; it was only his retirement age that shielded the organization from his further advances.

Exhibit 1 lists out a sample of personal goals. Exhibit 1 and other subsequent exhibits using data from Exhibit 1 have been derived by distantly or internally observing (and informally discussing with a randomly-selected specimen of other stakeholders) the leadership dynamics of certain group of leading academic organizations of higher education in one BRICS country over a period of more than two decades. Effectively, the source of qualitative information consists of 30 leaders (mostly CEOs) spread over 17 organizations. Identity of these organizations, leaders and stakeholders is not revealed due to high sensitivity of such information.

Exhibit 1

Sample of Personal Goals*

S No.	Personal Goal	Focus
1	High visibility and fame	Self
2	Quick results	Self, organization
3	Urge to do something significant	Self
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Self
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Self
6	Own material gains	Self
7	To prove a point to somebody	Self
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Self
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Self
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Self
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Self
12	To defend the repute	Self
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Self
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Self
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Self
16	Underlying driver: Greed, jealousy, ego	Self
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Self, organization
18	To be a system builder	Self, organization

* Source: Prepared based on author's observations over a 20-year period and the clues available in literature. The following works have been useful in this respect: Aquilera & Vadera (2008); Atkinson (1958); Bosse and Phillips, 2015; Conger (1990); De Hoogh et al (2005); Heyns, Veroff, and Atkinson (1958); House, Spangler and Woycke (1991); Judge and Bono (2000); Kobayashi and Brown (2003); McClelland (1975, 1985a, 1985b); McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell (1958); McClelland and Burnham (1976, 2003); Murray (1938); Sankowsky (1995); Spangler et al (2014); Winter (1992).

In Exhibit 1, 'self' is appearing to be the dominant force in the personal goals. To illustrate, in Exhibit 1, out of the 18 personal goals mentioned, only in three 'organization' appears alongside 'self', as a focal point, while 'self' is in focus in every personal goal.

Each personal goal has its own desirable attributes. An inventor needs to be highly focused; a social service provider needs to be very accommodative; the one providing governance needs to be proactive; and a leader needs to be inspiring and reassuring. But, not all personal goals are matched by desirable qualities. Sometimes mismatches can occur. When a mismatch occurs, a scientist may get distracted and may fail to succeed; a social worker may get irritated at the one who seeks his service; an administrator may neglect people's needs; and a leader may turn biased and repressive (see Lipman-Blumen, 2005; McCall and Lombardo, 1983; Schackleton, 1995).

Whether there is alignment between one's personal goals and his associated attributes or not, everyone may have a personal approach (or a set of approaches) to fulfill his personal goals. This personal approach is his personal strategy - the means to achieve his personal goals. In the three examples of CEOs above, personal strategy was what safeguarded them despite their self-oriented personal goals.

Personal strategy is as crucial to a scientist as to a doctor or an administrator. Yet, it's most critical for a leader - be it an organizational or a public leader. While public leaders have a looser set of norms controlling their behaviours, an organizational leader such as a manager or a CEO has to face a more clearly defined set of norms. This provides a firmer organizational setting to the personal strategy of organizational leaders: scope for discretion is narrower; hence, the personal strategy needs to have more sophistication. (To draw a parallel on this as an illustration, the agency theory recognizes the role of self-interest of leaders and managers; but, even this self-interest is said to be bounded by the elements of perceived fairness and reciprocity thereon (Bosse and Phillips, 2015; Eisenhardt, 1989), thereby signifying the sophistication required of an 'agent'). However, the higher the hierarchical level of the leader, greater is the scope of the personal strategy. Thus, CEOs have the maximum use of personal strategy in an organization. This is assisted by the fact of the CEO being the most influential leader in the organization (Finkelstein et al, 2009). However, how a leader deploys his personal strategy may be closely linked to the leadership styles followed (such as transformational, which may be relevant with respect to the last goal listed in Exhibit 1, charismatic, which may have a touch of political action (Mumford, 2006) and transactional, which may be applicable in the context of several personal goals listed in the exhibit).

Based on the above arguments, the following propositions are made.

Proposition 1: The firmer an organization's internal setting in terms of defined norms and interrelationships, the lesser is the scope for personal strategy discretion; hence, personal strategy requires more sophistication to be successful.

Proposition 2: How a leader deploys his personal strategy in an organization is closely related to the particular leadership style he follows.

Chemers (2000), Hogg (2001) and Messick and Kramer (2005) suggest that leaders play a big role in setting collective goals of the team or organization and in transforming the group members to achieve those goals. Further, studies also show that by over emphasizing the importance of the goals thus set, the leader has an ability to influence the behaviour of the group members (Hoyt et al, 2013). Still, the state of hierarchy in the team or organization has a large role in the interplay of personal strategy with the functioning of an organization. In organizations with stronger hierarchies, generally, the hierarchical relations are well defined. While leaders at the higher level will have greater discretion, personal strategy is of lower relative significance due to clearly defined interrelationships. Most corporate enterprises are of this type. However, the situation is vitiated if there is competition among different organizational units or within a hierarchical level for the attention and appreciation of leader. In this case, the leader may be able to use his personal strategy to sustain, or even accentuate, the inter-organ and intra-hierarchical competition for supporting his goals. Whereas, in a flatter organization where either hierarchy is limited or it is inadequately defined, a leader's ability to direct the behaviour of the subordinates is largely dependent on the personal strategy of the leader. Some corporate entities and most academic organizations fall in this category. However, irrespective of whether an organization is hierarchical or flat, following Lowe et al's (1996) evidence and Wowak et al's (2016) assertion on charismatic leaders, it may be possible for a charismatic leader to integrate his personal strategy into the organization more effectively and skillfully to gain the support of followers.

The following propositions are derived from the above discussion.

Proposition 3: The higher the hierarchical status of a leader, the greater will be the impact of the leader's personal strategy on the organization.

Proposition 4: The more hierarchical an organization is, the greater the scope for a leader's personal strategy.

Proposition 5: The flatter an organization in terms of hierarchy, the lesser the scope for a leader's personal strategy.

Proposition 6: Irrespective of the organizational hierarchy, a charismatic leader may be able to integrate his personal strategy into the organization more effectively and skillfully to gain the support of followers.

The relevance of personal strategy of a leader is dependent on the culture of the organization, in addition to its hierarchy. Traditions and practices of an organization play a key role in the culture. Traditions and practices, on the other hand, are influenced by the society and the local culture. Depending on whether it's a western society or an oriental one, some cultural traits automatically enter. In oriental cultures, where there is greater tolerance for inefficiency and an expectation of a more accommodative and paternal outlook, mere application of rules and neatly laid out processes may not be adequate. A leader has to weigh various factors and take the right course of action. Existence of a clear personal strategy helps the leader to clearly anticipate expectations and do the maneuver necessary for acceptance as leader with both empathy and firmness.

An academic organization in an oriental cultural setting is a peculiar combination, of a flatter hierarchical structure and the more socialistic expectations. While having a strong personal strategy helps the leader, a strong personal strategy with a repressive and biased outlook of the leader can be a fearsome phenomenon for an organization. Exhibit 2 provides a quick view of the personal strategy emanating from the personal goals given in Exhibit 1. The fourth and fifth columns of the exhibit also propose the likely negative and positive fallouts corresponding to each item of personal strategy; here fallouts are defined as outcomes of the leader's each personal strategy action to the organization and its stakeholders.

In Exhibit 2, in more than half of the personal goals, the personal strategy is anchored directly in 'self', 'own' or 'person' while in four other cases, the 'leader' is the fulcrum of intended success. Of the 18 listed personal goals, only in 4 cases the personal strategies sound more impersonal. And, in these cases the personal strategies are largely implementation-oriented: (1) implementing in great hurry, (2) implementing by all means, (3) all-out efforts at implementation and (4) building systems and processes (this last one can be consistent with a conscientious leader (Humphrey et al, 2007) or a transformational leader). One thing is, however, clear from Exhibit 1: the execution of personal strategy may be substantially dependent on leader's own expertise and experience. The studies by Andrews and Farris (1967), Barnowe (1975) and Goodall and Pogrebna (2015) confirm that these two attributes of the leader have a big influence on the team or organizational performance.

Further, with respect to most of the personal goals, the positive fallout of personal strategy is linked to leader's 'potential', 'experience', 'competence', 'interest', 'control' or 'initiatives'. Such nobler positive outcomes as rapid growth, implementation of tested ideas, very successful target activity, success on good ideas, productive guidance to employees, and stable and transparent progress are mostly associated with personal strategies that are described above as impersonal. Similarly, in nearly half each of the personal goals, personal strategy has negative fallouts in the realms of organizational/ human relations and the long-run interests of the organization respectively.

In general, Exhibit 2 reveals that leader's personal strategies have both positive and negative fallouts, their positive fallouts in most cases are more leader-focused, and that the negative fallouts have profound long-run consequences from both the organizational and human perspectives.

We make the following proposition based on the above.

Proposition 7: The positive organizational fallouts of leader's personal strategy are more leader-focused whereas the negative fallouts are more organization-oriented.

Exhibit 2
Personal Strategy & Its Fallouts

S No.	Personal Goal	Personal Strategy	Positive Fallout	Negative Fallout
1	High visibility and fame	Self-centred organizational initiatives	Full leverage of leadership potential	Inhibition of secondary leadership
2	Quick results	All options of self-comfort	Rapid growth	Compromise on long run interests
3	To do something significant	Focus on own understanding	Full leverage of leader's experience	Conflict with other stakeholders
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Implementing in great hurry	Success matching leader's competence	Conflict with other stakeholders
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Implementing in great hurry	Implementation of tested ideas	Neglect of new ideas, & heartburns
6	Own material gains	Person-centric decision making	Success in leader's interest areas	Neglect of common or long run interests
7	To prove a point to somebody	Implementing by all means	Very successful target activity	Neglect or delay of many other activities
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Personalized implementation	Success in activities relevant to reward	Neglect of other long run interests
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Implementing in own ways	Success matching leader's competence	Failures or problems in implementation
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Competitive discrediting	Strong focus on leader's initiatives	Politicking & bickering
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Focus on own ideas & beliefs	Success in leader's own initiatives	Neglect of others, leading to conflicts
12	To defend the repute	All-out efforts at implementation	Success on good ideas	Cover-up or neglect of blind-spots
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Personalized actions	Success in glorifying initiatives	Neglect of other activities
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Personal control on everything	Success in control-oriented initiatives	Neglect of other crucial activities
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Imitation of initiatives	Success matching leader's competence	Likely failure of many initiatives
16	Greed, jealousy, ego	Control, subordination	Success of person-specific activities	Vested interests, sycophancy, fear
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Personal touch in everything	Productive guidance to employees	Weakening of employee skills
18	To be a system builder	Building systems & processes	Stable & transparent progress	Slower process of implementation

Source: As in Exhibit 1

We now turn to understand the intricacies of personal strategy as it relates to leader's behaviour.

Personal Strategy & Leader's Behaviour

A leader may have a set (or, variants) of personal strategies just as he may have a set of personal goals. Not every personal goal need to be equally crucial in every context. Accordingly, not every occasion warrants the same (variant of) personal strategy. The choice of (a variant of) personal strategy (or strategies) of a leader may be dependent on his personal goals preferred for the given context or organization.

To illustrate, a particular leader may crave for high visibility and fame. He may deal with this goal through a strategy of self-centred organizational initiatives, some of which may need others' willing collaboration. Yet, it is possible that this leader has a long or short horizon for outcomes. If the leader actually has a shorter horizon, he may seek quick results, to achieve which he may have to resort to a personal strategy of executing options of his comfort that relies less on others' willing collaboration, irrespective of the fact that such personal strategy may conflict with the established organizational practices or the existing culture of seeking collaborative initiatives. Depending on the leader's ability to push his way forward, the leader may still achieve his results, but in the process possibly polarizing the organization. In this context, it may be useful to remember the assertion of Hamstra et al (2014) that the perceived leadership effectiveness should be contingent on the extent to which the leader is able to instill in followers a sense of support for their preferred approach to goal pursuit; Galinsky *et al.* (2006) and Gruenfeld *et al.* (2008) also discuss the pernicious effects of leadership. On the other hand, if this organization's existing culture and/or systems and processes are too strong for the leader to sweep aside, his personal strategy might encompass coopting powerful organizational members who would be willing to go with the leader based on their own motives or goals. This leads to the following proposition.

Proposition 8: When a leader has difficulties in executing his personal strategy due to organizational factors, he may coopt other powerful organizational members.

A leader's ability to move forward with his personal strategy in lieu of or within the organizational strategy is related to various factors. The leader's personality, his beliefs or convictions, his past success and the general tolerance in the organization are the more apparent ones (Bass (1967), Eagly and Johnson (1990), Helgesen (1990), Kanter (1977) and Giovanonni (2001) postulate even significant gender differences in leadership styles and actions). In reality, whether the leader will be able to or wants to use his personal strategy as an overwhelming force is dependent on his assessment of the scope for discretionary behaviour in the organization when the leader, by virtue of his formal position, has an expected set of role behaviours (Biddle, 1979). Often, leader's traits manifest into the expected set of behaviours only when the situation makes the need for that trait behaviour salient (DeRue et al, 2011). Otherwise, the leader has incentives to exercise discretion. From this emerge two related propositions.

Proposition 9.a: A leader's active use of personal strategy is based on his assessment of the scope for discretionary behaviour in the organization.

Proposition 9.b: A leader's active use of personal strategy is influenced by the compulsions for manifesting the leader traits into an expected set of behaviour.

Scope for discretionary behaviour may be linked to multiple attributes. These are systemic ambiguities (on rules and processes), in-built (managerial) discretion in the system, organizational forgetfulness (or memory), lack of awareness (among stakeholders), discretion-seeking behaviour (due to culture), oppression skills (of the leader) and the fear of repression (of followers). Of these, only two factors, oppression skills and fear of repression (by leader), are directly emanating from the leader. All other factors are traced to the organization and its culture. Three of the factors, organizational forgetfulness, lack of awareness and discretion-seeking behaviour, are related to the stakeholders who may be targets of leader's personal strategy. Since these factors can predate the leader's association with the organization, the leader may not be at fault for their presence; he may be at fault at worst for leveraging them. However, the leader may adjust his personal strategy from time to time based on his past experience and outcomes in the current organization and his experience in the previous organizations.

It was indicated earlier that in organizations with clearly defined hierarchies, systems and processes, the scope of personal strategy may be more subtle. This is an ideal situation if organizational strategy and culture take precedence over the unstated personal strategy of the leader.

There is, of course, a contradiction here. In organizations with clear hierarchies, the leader being the boss, he is stronger. On the other hand, in organizations characterized by flat hierarchical structure, leader is just one of the many almost equals and, hence, the leader effect is expected to be weaker.

However, since the leader effect is strong by design or incidence in hierarchical organizations, the leader's personal strategy is less crucial as he is able to achieve his goals even without a stronger personal strategy (here, 'stronger' stands for a sophisticated and well-planned one). Whereas, in organizations with flatter hierarchies, since the leader is not inherently strong among many close equals, he needs to devise a stronger personal strategy to ensure that his personal goals are implemented. However, if a leader desires to have a greater influence in a flatter organization, he needs to have a strong personal strategy, which will help him overcome the limitations of a weak or flat hierarchy and a strong empowerment. Thus, we have the following propositions.

Proposition 10: The flatter an organization in terms of hierarchy, the greater will be the need for a leader to have a stronger personal strategy.

Proposition 11: The more hierarchical an organization is, the lesser the need for complexity in the leader's personal strategy.

The hierarchical aspect of leader effect finds expression in our conceptual model when we relate leader behaviour to personal strategy outcomes.

The above analysis does not mean that a leader's personal strategy automatically leads to results fully commensurate with his personal goals. The leader's actions are conditioned by the organizational setting. An organization is also not a one-man entity. Hence, others' response matters. E.g., Kuhnert and Lewis (1987), Rafferty and Griffin (2004) and Sosik and Dionne (1997) hint at how followers adjust to expectations of transactions leaders. Thus, an interactive atmosphere decides the outcomes.

When a leader implements his personal goals through his personal strategy by duly adjusting to the organizational intricacies, others respond or adapt to his actions (see Kelloway and Barling (2000) for some evidence on this). Some may follow leader's actions while some may resist. For instance, if the leader values time and efficiency, followers learn to do the same; if the leader promotes sycophancy, some followers may use it as their tool, while for some others it may be a reason to dislike the leader; if the leader shows empathy, the followers may give true respect; and so on. These together form the followers' behaviour. This is also consistent with the arguments of Higgins (1997) and Hamstra et al (2011; 2014) related to the leader-follower connect. But, the followers may expect the leader, as per their awareness, to engage in behaviours consistent with his role behaviours.

It is also said that it is in the leader's own interest to guide the followers in their goal attainment (House, 1971). When leaders do not actively do this, the inaction is noticed (Pfeffer, 1981) and it likely renders the person a non-leader in the eyes of followers. In fact, even the leader's inability to show physical maturity may affect the followers' attitude to a leader (Cherulnik et al, 1990). Further, the leader may also adjust his behaviour to the hierarchical structure and relations in the organization. In general, the leader's actual behaviour (emanating from his personal goals and personal strategy, with due accommodation of the organizational setting), the followers' behaviour against the organizational setting and the leader's successive actions, and the execution of leader's personal strategy through organizational actions together determine the final organizational and individual outcomes of personal strategy. Therefore, for the leader, implementing his personal strategy effectively is as important as carefully choosing his personal strategy. This gives rise to proposition 12.

Proposition 12: The impact of a leader's personal strategy on the organization is also dependent on the interactive effect of personal strategies and reactions of the followers (i.e., other subordinate employees).

Selecting Personal Strategy

An essential presumption while discussing the selection of personal strategy is that the leader is aware of the various personal strategic options. Another crucial condition in deciding the personal strategy is that the leader is capable of adopting and practicing any of the personal strategies available to him and, hence, he can select any of the available personal strategies.

These two conditions, however, give an impression that the personal strategy is external to the leader and he chooses one or more based on his contextual calculations. The truth is that the leader does not choose an entirely new personal strategy. He does not just evaluate a set of available personal strategies that are external to him before he selects one and implements it. He already has his personal strategy developed over a long period of time, as discussed in the earlier sections.

Indeed, his decision of what shape of personal strategy he will practice and how he will practice the shape he has chosen is dependent on the external factors present in the organization against his leadership backdrop. Thus, what he does is that he just figures out the necessary smoothening required in his personal strategy to fit the organization's context and the adaptation required in the implementation of personal strategy to fit the organizational environment. In doing this, he needs to identify and analyze the relevant contextual factors.

Several factors may play a role in the strategic maneuverability of a leader in the organization when it comes to implementation of his personal strategy. The most important of the contextual factors of personal strategy are: (1) The nature of organization, (2) structure of internal stakeholders, (3) role of external stakeholders, (4) power of the board and (5) leader's own competence. These factors are briefly explained below.

(1) *The nature of organization*: There is no unique relation between personal strategy and the nature of organization with respect to any of the characterizations of the nature of organization. For instance, a small organization in a traditional sector can be hierarchical and, hence, favourable for an effective personal strategy while another small organization in a high technology activity may be flat in structure and unfavourable for a high role for personal strategy in the normal course. At the same time, there may be flatter organizations in traditional sectors where a leader's personal strategy may play a crucial role in his ability to forge ahead with his plans that may be at variance with the team plans. Therefore, how personal strategy works in a particular type of organization may be dependent on the combination of other factors with which the particular factor plays out. One such factor is leader's own ability to build relationships with various stakeholders. This is especially true when the organizational environment is politicized (for related discussion, see Filan and Seagren, 2003; Gilley et al, 1986; Julius et al, 1999; Rosenzweig, 2001).

(2) *The structure of internal stakeholders*: It consists of such factors as the intellectual and hierarchical level of the leader, the levels of hierarchy, layers at the same, above or below levels and the employee decision role in the organization. Higher intellectual and hierarchical level of a leader is favourable for a higher role of his personal strategy. Larger number of hierarchical levels also acts similarly. But, greater employee decision role sometimes reduces the role of leaders, as employees may be able to act without too much of leader's guidance, thereby leading to a reduced role for his personal strategy. Such an instance is common in academic organizations, particularly of higher education, where academic hierarchy is weak. Hilton and Jacobson (2012) report a leadership situation that a college President faced when she approached execution at her own terms and pace when the college was facing a serious financial crisis: A small minority of the faculty, focused less on the larger economic issues than on idealistic ones specific to their own status, remained difficult and obstructive. It is useful to remember here about the political theories highlighting the conflict in organizations among interest groups for influence and scarce resources and its effect on leader behaviour (Baldrige, 1971; Kezar, 2008). On the other hand, the bigger decisional role of employees may also require greater strategic efforts from the leader if he wants to lead the decision-making process as per his wishes despite the bigger employee role.

(3) *The role of external stakeholders*: External stakeholders include the public auditors, the public, the media, investment community and the society at large. Where external

stakeholders are critical in their approach and could distinguish the leader's role in the organization more clearly, the leader may have only a limited scope for applying discretionary personal strategy. For instance, CEO of a publicly-listed company having a quarterly result to report may be under a tighter regime in his organizational actions. On the other hand, if the organizational context or other factors make the role of external stakeholders less relevant (for instance, in protected industries or in a privately-held firm), leader's personal strategy can play a much stronger role.

(4) *The power of board* (or any other supervisory entity playing the role of a board): The Board may be the final authority in an organization (subject to shareholder-approval requirements) to vet organizational plans, strategies and performance results. Board can review and critique both what the senior management, as leaders, is proposing to do and what outcome they are producing consequent to execution. A more activist board, in turn, causes senior management to be more alert to what managers below them do. CEO being the topmost manager and directly under the influence (or supervision) of the board, CEO's actions and outcomes get scrutinized in the board most. Hence, CEO's ability to use personal strategy in his organizational actions is subject to the board scrutiny of his actions and outcomes. Such constraint is particularly heavy on the CEO in cases where the board takes a proactive or activist role either because of its own philosophies or due to the personal strategies of its chairman or members. However, board scrutiny of CEO's (or senior management's) actions and outcomes is not always guaranteed on account of various factors. One, not all boards are adequately alert or energetic to pursue desirable governance goals. Two, in many cases, the CEO himself (or herself) may be chairman of the board. Three, chairman and board may be so pleased with the positive aspects of CEO's results that they may not be perturbed by his or her (less visible) discretionary influence (until some setbacks occur).

(5) *The leader's own competence*: Mumford et al (2017) acknowledge that leadership functioning is a complex phenomenon. Even when a leader has a personal strategy, it is not necessary that he is always able to deploy it. While leadership development helps (DeRue, Ashford and Cotton, 2009), not all leaders may have been trained in leadership. Some are thrust into leadership due to circumstantial factors; some may achieve leadership due to certain value systems that tolerate deficiencies in competence. Whatever it is, a leader's ability to use his personal strategy in his organizational (or social) actions is strongly dependent on his personal competence as a leader, which refers to the fineness of one's leadership traits and one's proficiency in leadership skills. Intelligence, of course, would be a major ingredient of leader's personal competence (Judge, Colbert and Illies (2004) confirms the positive impact of intelligence on leadership effectiveness). Personal competence of a leader leads to his wide-spread organizational acceptance. This acceptance gives him extra freedom as well as subtle opportunities to do things his way. The more sophisticated a leader's style and actions are, the more may be his capacity not only to mix his personal strategy with organizational strategy, but also to influence the organizational goals with his personal goals.

In conclusion, the leader's ability to use his personal strategy in the organizational (or social) context is not unlimited. It is conditioned by various factors as outlined above. Therefore, the leader's efforts at implementing his personal strategy in the course of his organizational actions should duly integrate the limiting factors.

Together, the above discussion yields the following propositions.

Proposition 13: There is no unique relation between the size, ownership or product nature of an organization and the leader's personal strategy effect.

Proposition 14: The greater the employee empowerment (or lower the hierarchical effect), the lower will be the scope for leader's personal strategy in the organization (or team).

Proposition 15: The higher the role external stakeholders play in the organizational affairs, the lower will be the scope for leader's personal strategy.

Proposition 16.a: The greater the exercise of power by Board in scrutinizing top leadership, the lesser will be the scope for leader's personal strategy in the organization.

Proposition 16.b: The adverse effect of the greater exercise of power by Board in scrutinizing top leadership on the scope of leader's personal strategy may be diluted if the established organizational plans (or policies and practices) and the personal strategy have a high common ground.

Proposition 17: The greater a leader's personal competence, the greater will be the scope for his personal strategy in the organization.

Implementing Personal Strategy

In view of the foregoing discussion, it may follow that there is nothing that guarantees assured expected outcomes of personal strategy. Outcomes may be dependent on the leader skills in careful execution. Needless to say, personal strategy execution may vary from one leadership style to another and from one leader to another, reflecting his competence (see Avolio et al, 2003; Bass, 1990; Bass and Bass 2008; Judge et al, 2002; Yukl, 1989). For example, in both transactional and transformational styles, scope of personal strategy is likely to be greater as they both involve more of leader discretion, but, of course, with two different orientations. Again, personal strategy of a transformational leader may by and large be a positive tool, whereas it could be a positive or negative one for a charismatic leader depending upon his orientations (Nelson Mandela vs. Adolf Hitler). To explain, a charismatic leader is effectively a transformational leader; but, while transformational leaders inspire the followers to work for results beyond the normal, charismatic leaders tend to mesmerize the followers and carry them to a direction and destination of the leader's vision or choice. From this angle, while a transformational leader acts as a positive force, a charismatic leader can cause undesirable consequences if his vision is not a noble one from a normative perspective.

Obviously, therefore, execution of personal strategy needs to be given special attention. For the leader, personal strategy implementation requires a planned approach. The planning part is concerned with schematizing the execution of personal strategy by fitting one's personal strategy into the organizational nuances and determining when to deploy what part and how much of it. This latter aspect is important in view of Lord and Maher (1993), Meindl (1995)

and van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg's (2005) hint that the followers' perception of leader's effectiveness affects the leader's actual effectiveness. Since personal strategy is private to the leader and its explicit manifestation can affect his credibility in the organization and among his peers, the personal strategy plan needs to be confined to oneself or, at most, restricted to the leader's confidante or inner-circle (if it exists and it is fully trusted by the leader). Hence, an intelligent approach is warranted at planning and execution. Some leaders may even use charisma as a tool for better results. The possible effect of leader's charisma on organizational performance and other related aspects finds echo in Conger and Kanungo (1987; 1994; 2000) and Waldman and Yammarino (1999). Whatever is the approach, it will be clouded by the reality that the employees might see the leader's behaviour as representative of the entire organization (Tyler and Blader, 2003).

Personal strategy requires executing actions at one's own level and, then, at the organizational level. Actions required at personal level have already been discussed in Exhibit 2. The type of actions required at organization level under different personal strategy approaches can be understood by revisiting Exhibit 2 and modifying the columns appropriately. The result is presented in Exhibit 3.

The fourth column of Exhibit 3 amply reveals how the leader assumes the central role in the organizational actions associated with his personal strategy. It also shows how the followers' role is clearly subdued to serve the leaders' interest under most variants of the personal strategy of the leader.

Like all practical plans, personal strategy plan also needs continuous review and periodic revision based on ground realities. This is because organizational undercurrents keep changing as organizational dynamics change – with entry and exit of people and with emerging business circumstances. Personal strategy in the same form and details may not work when such changes happen. For instance, when distracting forces are absent in the organization, personal strategy of the leader can work as per his script. However, if distracting or opposing groups or individuals emerge, leader's personal strategy effect may be blunted due to the opposing views, ideas or actions in the organization. A realistic personal strategy plan may be flexible to incorporate changing characteristics of the organization.

An effective personal strategy execution plan may have several elements and they need to be carefully identified. To keep the focus of this paper restricted just to developing the personal strategy concept, the task of evaluating the execution plan elements has been reserved for future work. Nonetheless, in a nutshell, these elements can be understood as (1) execution philosophy of leader's personal strategy (following van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013, transformational leadership underscores enlightenment while transactional may underline self-interest; leader's charisma has an appealing effect on the external stakeholders of the organization (Bastedo et al., 2014; Fanelli and Misangyi, 2006)), (2) clear targets of personal strategy, (3) leader's people approach underlying the personal strategy, (4) leader's (mental) benefit-sharing formula for other stakeholders (this may include the board) (a transactional leader may be more reward-oriented than other types (Jung, 2001)), (5) informal mechanisms for feedback-integration, (6) leader's adversity strategy to tackle resistance to his personal strategy, and (7) leader's alternate plan against backlashes and personal strategy failures (lest, negative developments can have a disproportionate impact on the leader (Baumeister et al, 2001)).

Exhibit 3
Organizational Actions of Personal Strategy Execution*

S No.	Personal Goal	Personal Strategy	Organizational Actions
1	High visibility and fame	Self-centred organizational initiatives	Initiatives in leader's comfort areas; curtailment in other areas; priority of loyalty over merit; large resources on image promotion;
2	Quick results	All options of self-comfort	Expansion in leader's comfort areas; focus on short-run; hasty actions;
3	To do something significant	Focus on own understanding	Initiatives based on leader's own ideas; hasty actions;
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Implementing in great hurry	Imitated initiatives; hasty actions;
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Implementing in great hurry	Initiatives based on leader's own ideas & imitation; hasty actions;
6	Own material gains	Person-centric decision making	Initiatives benefiting the leader & his supporters; priority of loyalty over merit; preference of short-run outcomes
7	To prove a point to somebody	Implementing by all means	Initiatives based on leader's own ideas & imitation; hasty actions;
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Personalized implementation	Initiatives benefiting the leader; preference for leader's comfort areas; focus on leader's own control or close oversight;
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Implementing in own ways	Initiatives strengthening the leader's reputation; preference for initiatives of greater visibility; focus on leader's own oversight; preference for shorter horizon
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Competitive discrediting	Initiatives of imitation; preference for initiatives of greater visibility & assured results; competitive image building of leader; emphasis on loyalty;
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Focus on own ideas & beliefs	Initiatives based on leader's own ideas; curtailment in other areas; focus on quick results;
12	To defend the repute	All-out efforts at implementation	Focus on execution mechanisms; preference for competence; actions highlighting achievements
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Personalized actions	Initiatives of greater visibility & assured results; focus on quick results; focus on leader's own oversight; discouraging critical views;
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Personal control on everything	Initiatives giving limelight to the leader; focus on closer control by leader; preference for loyalty; focus on quicker results; suppression of critical views;
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Imitation of initiatives	Initiatives of imitation; preference for initiatives of greater visibility & assured results; focus on quicker results; discouraging critical views;
16	Greed, jealousy, ego	Control, subordination	Focus on control; preference for loyalty over merit; fuzzy managerial approach; Initiatives based on leader's own ideas; suppression of critical views;
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Personal touch in everything	Focus on leader's oversight; preference for longer run; initiatives based on organizational needs; focus on competence;
18	To be a system builder	Building systems & processes	Focus on empowerment; preference for systems & process-based execution; focus on leader's own involvement; preference for competence & compliance

* Source: As in Exhibit 2

The purpose of personal strategy, as already explained, is to achieve personal goals. Executing personal strategy with a plan as outlined above is important for this. The outcomes

of personal strategy might vary depending on the effectiveness of execution. In general, personal strategy results in outcomes at various levels. This is examined in the next section.

Personal Strategy Outcomes

Leader traits, and the consequent leader behaviour, cause leader effectiveness (Eagly, Karau and Makhijani, 1995; Judge et al 2002; Mumford, Campion and Morgeson, 2007), which, on the other hand, manifest in organizational outcomes. Given that personal strategy is a medium between leader traits and leader behaviour, executing personal strategy too is followed by outcomes that show leader effectiveness; of course, the definition of leader effectiveness is not undisputed (see Avolio et al., 2003; Kaiser, Hogan and Craig, 2008; Yukl, 2006).

The outcomes of personal strategy (arising due to leader behaviour) occur mainly at two levels: organizational and individual. Organizational outcomes refer to the performance-related, operational or reputational consequences to the organization as a whole emanating from the personal strategy actions of the leader. Individual outcomes occur at two levels: self (i.e., the leader using the personal strategy) and others (i.e., the employees or team members, as relevant, who are subject to the effects of leader's personal strategy). In the past studies linking leadership behaviour with outcomes (DeRue et al, 2011; Kaiser et al, 2008), outcomes (or performance) have been analyzed at organizational, individual (leader) or group levels. But, while those studies have not explicitly recognized the role of personal strategy, some interpretations are indeed possible with respect to the argument that certain leader traits will be more predictive of leadership effectiveness than other traits (DeRue et al, 2011; de Vries et al, 2002). This implies that the utility of personal strategy to the leader and its outcomes to the organization and others may be strongly conditioned by the leadership traits as well as the leadership style.

Personal strategy outcomes may be positive or negative as determined by the impact of the personal strategy actions of the leader. No doubt, the leader's personal strategy is not the only force determining organizational outcomes even when the leader is the CEO; Hambrick and Quigley (2014), Hannan and Freeman (1977) and Lieberman and O'Connor (1972) have noted how firm performance can be an outcome of several factors, many of which may be outside the control of CEO. Plausibly, the impact of personal strategy on organizational outcomes is affected by the leadership style, such as transactional or transformational. Bastedo et al (2014) finds that charismatic leadership is associated with favourable organizational outcomes in higher education institutions; this may be an incentive for leaders to integrate charisma into their personal strategy for better outcomes – notwithstanding the innate aspects of charisma. Also, the ability to bring about major organizational changes and associated outcomes, through personal strategies, may differ between charismatic and non-charismatic leaders (Wowak et al, 2016). Yet, personal strategy can lead to crucial favourable or unfavourable outcomes at both organizational and individual levels. Individual outcomes occur at such levels as self (i.e., leader) and others (i.e., followers). On the failure side, in particular the failures taking ethical overtones have been attributed either to leader's self-interests or to the social expectations on the leadership role (Hoyt et al, 2013).

Personal strategy outcomes can be multiple. These may cover superior or inferior financial results (to organization) or benefits (to the leader and others), product or process changes, consequences related to market leadership, market value, brand value, and reputation or goodwill, prestige of association (e.g., of followers with leader's initiatives), implications for

job security (for both leader and followers), self-satisfaction or sense of achievement, and other possible outcomes.

A word of concern is required here regarding personal strategy outcomes of ‘others’. Outcomes of leader’s personal strategy to others (i.e., to the subordinate employees or team members) are largely by-products of organizational and leader’s individual outcomes. The outcomes of those who support leader’s personal strategy actions and of those who do not support may vary (this is consistent with the early arguments of leader-member exchange theory on the leader’s approach to in-groups and out-groups). In fact, Those who are unsupportive of leader’s personal strategy initiatives may get negatively affected even when the general outcomes to the organization and/or leader are favourable. As a matter of fact, conspiracy theories may argue that when others (i.e., the followers) face adverse circumstances such as the above, they may start suspecting conspiracies at the top level (van Prooijen and de Vries, 2016; Whitson and Galinsky, 2008).

Further, each organizational member may have his own personal strategy. So, others may be executing their own personal strategy commensurate with the leader’s personal strategy (actions) and the organization’s response to or accommodation of it. Therefore, there is always a continuous underlying interaction between the leader’s and others’ personal strategies. Several studies such as Kuhnert and Lewis (1987), Rafferty and Griffin (2004) and Sosik and Dionne (1997) have shed light on the follower adjustments and response to the leader behaviour. The leader-member exchange theory too essentially argues the same (see Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Liden, Wayne and Stilwell, 1993; Dulebohn et al, 2012; Whittington and Bell, 2016). Hence, the outcomes of others from the leader’s personal strategy actions as well as the organizational outcomes are a result of such an interaction of personal strategies (research on the leader-member exchange theory provides a lot of insight into this fact (see Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Markham et al, 2010; Illies, Nahrang and Morgeson, 2007; Scott and Bruce, 1998).

Revisiting Exhibit 3, we may be interested in checking what organizational and/or individual outcomes are associated with different personal strategic actions at organizational level. In Exhibit 4 we attempt to present the outcomes of different personal strategic approaches. Exhibit 4 will have three parts (A, B and C) corresponding to the levels of organization, individual (self) and individual (others).

It is clear from Exhibit 4.A that the main organizational outcomes associated with the organizational actions emanating from leader’s personal strategy on the favourable side fall in the areas of performance or results, execution, growth, direction and control, and organizational focus and on the unfavourable side it arises largely in terms of performance failures, and weakening of organizational systems and capacities. Exhibit 4.B indicates that the favourable personal outcomes of leader’s personal strategy actions manifest as credit for results, rewards, reputation, control on people, sense of achievement, mental happiness, and goodwill, among others. Similarly, the exhibit also suggests the unfavourable outcomes to the leader as the burden of failures, lost opportunities, employee resistance or backlashes, peer pressures or scrutiny, disrepute, and personal anxieties. As per Exhibit 4.C, the possibilities of rewards, better roles, appreciation and prestige of association with the boss’s initiatives are the important favourable outcomes for ‘others’ arising from leader’s personal strategy actions; setbacks of failures form the most common unfavourable outcome to them; and neglect,

indignity and fear are the general unfavourable outcomes for those others who are either unsupportive of leader's personal strategy actions or not competent to contribute substantially to the personal strategy initiatives.

Exhibit 4.A
Organizational Outcomes of Personal Strategy

S No.	Personal Goal	Personal Strategy	Favourable Outcomes	Unfavourable Outcomes
1	High visibility and fame	Self-centred organizational initiatives	Better performance if leader competent; better direction & control; quicker decisions	Failure if leader incompetent; concentration of control; weakening of secondary leadership
2	Quick results	All options of self-comfort	Better performance in areas of choice; better organizational focus	Failure in chosen areas; loss of other good opportunities
3	To do something significant	Focus on own understanding	Better performance in leader's strong areas	Failure in chosen activities; weakening of teamwork
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Implementing in great hurry	New growth opportunities; quick build-up of execution skills	Failure of projects/ investments; weakening of organizational processes
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Implementing in great hurry	Execution of proven ideas; better current growth; better build-up of execution skills	Failure of projects/ investments due to hurried execution; weakening of organizational processes
6	Own material gains	Person-centric decision making	Better direction & control; faster execution of ideas; better results if leader competent	Authoritarian style; weakening of organizational processes; weakening of secondary leadership
7	To prove a point to somebody	Implementing by all means	Better short-run results; better current resource mobilization	Long-run uncertainties due to internal conflicts; weakening of systems & processes
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Personalized implementation	As in serial No.1	As in serial No.1
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Implementing in own ways	As in serial No.3	As in serial No.3
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Competitive discrediting	Faster execution of ideas approved by leader; patronage of good ideas & skills	Unproductive one-upmanship; failures due to hurried execution; decline in organizational culture
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Focus on own ideas & beliefs	As in serial No.3	As in serial No.3
12	To defend the repute	All-out efforts at implementation	As in serial No.7	As in serial No.7
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Personalized actions	As in serial No.8/1	As in serial No.8/1
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Personal control on everything	As in serial No.6	As in serial No.6
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Imitation of initiatives	As in serial No.5	As in serial No.5
16	Greed, jealousy, ego	Control, subordination	Better results in activities where carrot & stick works & where loyalists are competent	Loss of internal motivation; creation of fear psychosis; decline in organizational culture
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Personal touch in everything	Better results consistent with leader's competence; greater solution focus; signs of organizational empathy	Unhealthy leader-dependence of people; setbacks on leadership change; mass disaffection if leader fails
18	To be a system builder	Building systems & processes	Strengthening of organizational systems & processes; better focus on organizational priorities; long-run orientation	Relatively slower progress in execution; lower reception to people's demands

* Source: As in Exhibit 1. See also DeRue et al (2011); he discusses four criteria for leadership effectiveness: leader effectiveness. group performance. follower job satisfaction. satisfaction with leader

Exhibit 4.B
Self (Leader) Outcomes of Personal Strategy

S No.	Personal Goal	Personal Strategy	Favourable Outcomes for Leader	Unfavourable Outcomes for Leader
1	High visibility and fame	Self-centred organizational initiatives	Credit for good results; better visibility & reputation; better control on people; apparent loyalty	Greater risk of alienation on failures; own responsibility for setbacks; unreliability of apparent loyalty
2	Quick results	All options of self-comfort	Credit for good results; better visibility & reputation; higher financial rewards	Burden of failed actions; lost opportunity for rewards; criticisms for neglect of other better opportunities; disaffection of people with other ideas
3	To do something significant	Focus on own understanding	Credit for good results; rewards; better visibility & reputation; sense of achievement	Burden of failed actions; lost opportunity for rewards; disaffection of people with other views
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Implementing in great hurry	Credit for quick results; rewards; visibility & reputation; sense of achievement	Pressure of intense peer scrutiny; burden of failed actions; lost opportunity for rewards;
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Implementing in great hurry	Credit for results; rewards; enhanced reputation; sense of achievement	Pressure of expectations; burden of failed actions; lost opportunity for rewards
6	Own material gains	Person-centric decision making	Financial benefits; greater authority; credit for achievements; sycophant-following	Pressure of criticisms; burden of failed actions; allegations on style & approach; future-curtailment or loss of authority due to backlashes
7	To prove a point to somebody	Implementing by all means	Credit for achievements; rewards; enhanced reputation; sense of achievement	Pressure of criticisms; burden of failed actions
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Personalized implementation	Credit for results; rewards; enhanced reputation; future professional returns; goodwill of supporters	Pressure of criticisms; burden of failed actions; allegations on style & approach; mental pressures
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Implementing in own ways	Credit for achievements; rewards; enhanced reputation; sense of achievement	Pressure of expectations; burden of failed actions; allegations on style & approach; future-curtailment or loss of authority due to backlashes
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Competitive discrediting	Mental happiness; sycophancy of supporting groups	Pressures of unhealthy competition; pressure of criticisms; allegations on style & approach
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Focus on own ideas & beliefs	Credit for good results; rewards; sense of achievement	Pressure of peer scrutiny; burden of failed actions; allegations on style & approach; mental pressures
12	To defend the repute	All-out efforts at implementation	Credit for results; rewards; sense of achievement	Pressure of peer scrutiny; burden of failed actions; mental pressures
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Personalized actions	Enhanced reputation; sense of fulfilment	Pressure of peer scrutiny; disrepute of failed actions; mental pressures
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Personal control on everything	Enjoyment of authority; claim of credit for results; mental happiness	Stress of resistance or backlashes; burden of failed or botched actions; anxiety on employee compliance
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Imitation of initiatives	Credit for good results; sense of achievement	Pressure of peer scrutiny; burden of failed actions
16	Greed, jealousy, ego	Control, subordination	Mental happiness; enjoyment of authority; control of resources	Ill-will of employees; stress of resistance or backlashes; anxiety on employee compliance
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Personal touch in everything	Mental happiness; peer appreciation; sense of achievement; credit for results; rewards	Stress of personal limits; time pressure; pressure of employee dependence; burden of failed or botched actions
18	To be a system builder	Building systems & processes	Reputation as system-builder; peer appreciation; credit for results; rewards; sense of achievement	Stress of resistance from vested interests; pressure of slow execution; branding as rigid; burden of misjudgments

* Source: As in Exhibit 4.A

Exhibit 4.C
Others' Outcomes of Leader's Personal Strategy*

S No.	Personal Goal	Personal Strategy	Others' Favourable Outcomes	Others' Unfavourable Outcomes
1	High visibility and fame	Self-centred organizational initiatives	Rewards; better roles; appreciation; prestige of association; satisfying own goals	Setbacks of failures**. For un-supporting or poorly-performing staff: Neglect; indignity; fear
2	Quick results	All options of self-comfort	As above	As above
3	To do something significant	Focus on own understanding	As above	As above
4	Implementing ideas that could not be implemented elsewhere	Implementing in great hurry	As above	As above
5	Implementing all past ideas freely in the current leadership opportunity	Implementing in great hurry	As above	As above
6	Own material gains	Person-centric decision making	Possibilities as above, if leader is benevolent	As above
7	To prove a point to somebody	Implementing by all means	As in item 1 above	As above
8	To earn some big reward subsequently	Personalized implementation	As above	As above
9	To prove as the only one competent to do something	Implementing in own ways	Possibilities as above, if leader is benevolent	As above
10	To disprove somebody's worth	Competitive discrediting	As in item 1 for employees supporting the leader	As above
11	To manifest self-beliefs & self-confidence	Focus on own ideas & beliefs	As above	As above
12	To defend the reputé	All-out efforts at implementation	As in item 1 above	As above
13	To glorify oneself in front of friends, relatives & acquaintances	Personalized actions	As above	As above
14	To enjoy the power, status & authority	Personal control on everything	As in item 10 above	As above
15	If someone can be, I can also be	Imitation of initiatives	As in item 9 above	As above
16	Greed, jealousy, ego	Control, subordination	Limited scope for benefits to others	Setbacks of failures; indignity; fear
17	To be an organizational problem solver	Personal touch in everything	As in item 1 above	Setbacks of failures. For non-cooperating: Neglect; stress; job-threat
18	To be a system builder	Building systems & processes	As above	As above

* Source: As in Exhibit 4.A ** As in p.22, para 2

We can suggest the following from the above analysis of personal strategy outcomes.

Proposition 19: The utility of personal strategy to the leader and its outcomes to the organization and others may be strongly conditioned by leadership traits and leadership style.

Proposition 20: The outcomes of leader's personal strategy to others (or the followers) are dependent, among other things, on the interaction between the personal strategy of leader and that of followers.

Proposition 21: The outcomes from a leader's personal strategy to others may vary between those (or, in-group) who support the execution of leader's personal strategy and those (or, out-group) who do not support.

Proposition 22: The unfavourable outcomes from a leader's personal strategy to those others (or, out-group) who do not support the execution of leader's personal strategy may be more negative than the unfavourable outcomes to those others (or, in-group) who support.

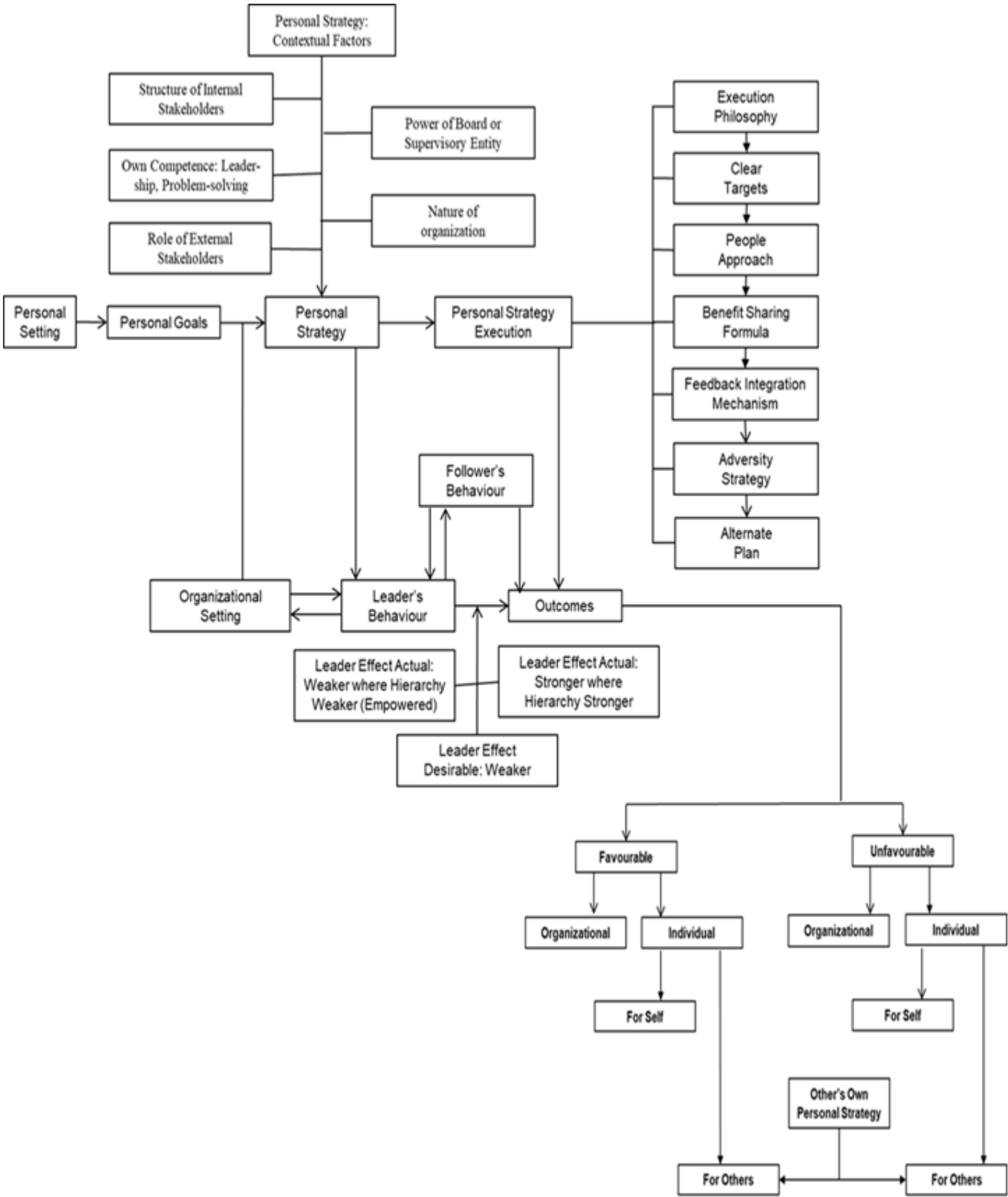
Conceptual Model of Personal Strategy

Based on analysis of the preceding sections of the paper, we now propose a conceptual model of personal strategy. It is presented in Exhibit 5.

As evident in the model, the personal setting (of the leader) provides ground for (leader's) personal goals, which, as conditioned by the organization setting (past and current) on the one side and the (organizational and personal) contextual factors on the other, gives rise to (leader's) personal strategy. Personal strategy will, then, be (indirectly) executed through (disguised) organizational actions, based on a multi-component execution plan; this yields the corresponding organizational and individual outcomes. Concurrently, leader's personal strategy and the organizational setting jointly shape the leader behaviour. At this stage, there may be an interaction of leader behaviour with the hierarchical forces in the organization. At the same time, the leader behaviour induces leader's organizational actions (for intended outcomes). Also, successive leader actions and the followers' own personal strategy generate follower responses. The leader behaviour, the follower behaviour as captured in their responses, and the personal strategy execution through organizational actions together form the joint force that determines the organizational and individual (i.e., self and other) outcomes emanating from leader's personal strategy. In summary, the conceptual model of personal strategy help us understand the personal strategic process and its impact on an organization in a flawless way.

At this juncture, it may be useful to consider defining, as an extension of our preceding analyses, some functional constructs for quantitatively predicting the personal strategy outcomes at the organizational, individual-self and individual-other levels. This task, too, is, however, reserved for future research.

**Exhibit 5
Conceptual Model of Personal Strategy**



DISCUSSION

This paper attempts to fill a gap in the leadership literature explaining the relation between leader behaviour and organizational performance, by introducing a novel concept called 'personal strategy'. The paper defines personal strategy as a leader's personal action framework to achieve his personal goals in the leadership role, through organizational actions. By proposing personal strategy as a medium between leader's personality traits and his behaviour, the paper seems to address a lacunae indicated by DeRue et al (2011) in his observation that between leader traits and leadership behaviour, the latter explains more of variations in leader effectiveness. This mediating role of personal strategy suggested in this paper goes beyond DeRue et al's positioning of leader behaviour between leader traits and leader effectiveness (see also Barrick and Mount, 1993), by adding a necessary layer in the leader's trait-behaviour-effectiveness link suggested by DeRue et al.

The analysis of the paper underscores that every group member or leader has a personal strategy (or strategies) in his group or organizational role. In this respect, even the difference among task-oriented, relational-oriented, change-oriented and passive leadership behaviours may be traced to personal strategy (whose precursor is the underlying personality traits). It is also construed that the existence of personal strategy precedes a leader's (or group member's) role commencement in an organization (or new position); but, this pre-developed personal strategy is adapted to the new role and the organizational conditions. This suggests a mental framework as a strong element of personal strategy; this is consistent with Prestwood and Schumann's (2002) characterization of leadership as a mental state. The mental aspect may prompt us to pose a question on the role of leader's emotional state too. As leaders manage people's emotions, won't their own emotional skills be as important? The debate on emotional intelligence-leadership connection has yes and no sides (Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough, 2009). The 'no' side relies on an argument that 'action scripts' do the job (Antonakis, 2003; 2004). Interpreting this argument, it may be logical to posit that it is personal strategy of the leader that helps him write his action scripts for channelizing people's emotions (as well as their skills and energies).

While leaders might have been using personal strategy in a subtle way for ages, from leadership literature point of view, its characterization as a key concept of leadership behaviour, as done in this paper, is a highly important step. Further, it is intended to be a leadership tool for planning and executing innovative approaches to realizing leadership vision (see Bass, 1990).

The paper continues to argue that a leader's personal strategy is an evolution from his personal goals intended for the leadership role. Following Mintzberg (1994), this evolution process may signify a culmination of personal strategic thinking. Further, personal goals are expected to precede the commencement of leader's role in the organization. Personal goals are derived from a leader's (or a person's) professional expectations and the assessment of his career possibilities. It is equally dependent on his past influences – both social and professional. In this sense, personal goals of a leader (or a person) are evolved with reference to his personal setting in the private and public realm. Personal goals may be normally implied in the leader behaviour just as leader motives are (Brown, 2003). It is also found that the personal goals of a leader are more likely to be self-oriented. This focus on self helps the

leader transform his personal goals into personal strategy. Birnbaum (2004) recognizes the role of focus in being strategic.

A leader's personal strategy affects the leader behaviour in an organization. A leader's position is usually associated with an expected role behaviour (Biddle, 1979). But, in reality, all actions in his role are likely to be coloured by his own personal strategy plan, except, of course, where organizational systems or norms clearly inhibit its manifestation. In this sense, leader's personal strategy may cause to dilute Senge's (1990) philosophical engagement of a learning organization. Further, it is surmised that the successful execution of personal strategy may be substantially dependent on the leader's own expertise and experience. An ambitious personal strategy may not be much helpful if the leader lacks necessary competence or leadership style to execute it. Besides, a leader may not blindly execute his personal strategy; rather, a leader uses his discretion to decide the applicability of the personal strategy (or its planned variant) in the current role or organization. A leader also adjusts his personal strategy based on past experience and outcomes in the current organization and the past experience in previous organizations. The paper infers that the leader's ability to adapt his personal strategy to his current organization is conditioned by the organizational contextual factors. This may also encompass the organizational inter-relationships as Stumpf (1996) argued. But, since the two sides interact, whether personal strategy will be a trust-building or a trust-diluting factor (see Fairholm and Fairholm, 2000) may be dependent on the leadership style.

Focusing on the leader, it is seen that a leader's personal strategy (or strategies) is adapted to his current role or organization. This is done to the extent such adaptation is warranted by the leader's inability to influence certain elements of his current role or organization. In the ideal case, he may like to execute his personal strategy without such adaptation because adaptation may mean some dilution in the contents of the personal strategy. On the other hand, a leader will try to use his personal strategy (or strategies) to re-shape the organizational goals, plans and execution actions. He is normally successful in this. However, the impact of a leader's personal strategy on the organization is dependent on the organizational context. Hierarchical structure, organizational culture etc play their role in this. Considering the past research showing that different leader traits may induce specific behaviours as per their perceived utility (see Tett and Burnett, 2003; Tett and Guterman, 2000; Mischel and Shoda, 1995), it should be construed that personal strategy adaptations reflect the varied requirements of the organization as interpreted by the leader.

Personal strategy is conceived and executed with expectation of specific outcomes although the actual outcomes may also have many surprises. The organizational outcomes associated with personal strategy are, however, more a result of its execution than of the personal strategy itself. In addition, the positive fallouts of personal strategy are more leader-focused while negative fallouts are more organization-oriented. This implies that while favourable outcomes may be achieved with reference to the competence of a leader executing the personal strategy, the unfavourable consequences to the organization from the personal strategy may be more enduring and, hence, challenging. This conclusion has grave implications from any organization's point of view, in particular an academic organization's. For example, the leader-focus of positive fallouts foretells serious possible disruptions in performance consequent to changes in leadership. Along with the HR and strategic consequences of negative fallouts, such disruptions may render the organizational atmosphere

continuously fluid and uncertain. Thus, the crucial role of leader in organizational success (Bass, 1990; McGuire, 2003) is further complicated by the dynamics of personal strategy.

Another argument of the paper is that the success of personal strategy execution is dependent on the elements of the leader's execution plan. A clear execution philosophy will be contributing to the successful implementation of a leader's personal strategy. Fixing clear prior targets (specific goals) of execution is another facilitating factor. Further, an appropriate people approach, to win over support and to prevent possible erosion of support, will be as important; past studies clearly establish that follower identification is crucial to create a favourable image of leader effectiveness (Engle and Lord, 1997; Liden, Wayne and Stilwell, 1993; Turban and Jones, 1988). A benefit-sharing formula figure out as part of the personal strategy execution plan is another crucial factor to ensure successful execution of personal strategy. Successful execution of a leader's personal strategy also derives from a feedback integration mechanism included in the execution. Its vitality is arising from the fact that the personal strategy is a private agenda of the leader that is not allowed to emerge in the public view. Besides, the success of personal strategy execution is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of an adversity strategy in the execution plan which will help in tackling mid-course resistance or backlash. Finally, for preventing the failure of personal strategy, preparing an alternate (or fallback) plan of execution along with the primary plan is recommended in the paper.

Following the analysis in the paper, the utility of personal strategy to a leader and its outcomes to the organization and the followers are strongly influenced by the leadership traits and leadership style. This should be understood in the light of recent researches indicating that the effect of leader traits and behaviours vary from context to context (Aime et al, 2010; Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson, 2007; Morgeson and Humphrey, 2008; Wu, Tsui and Kinicki, 2010).

Further, the execution of a leader' personal strategy may result in either favourable or unfavourable outcomes or both to an organization. Curiously, execution of personal strategy may lead to favourable or unfavourable outcomes for the leader himself. To others (or the followers) too, the execution of leader' personal strategy yields favourable or unfavourable outcomes.

Implications

The analysis of the paper has very important implications for our understanding of leader behaviour and its relation with organizational performance. Past literature sounded as if leaders (or group members) are driven by a set of common attributes and behavioural characteristics possessed in various combinations thereby giving rise to a certain set of leadership styles that ultimately induced the follower behaviour and organizational performance. However, arguments of this paper suggest that the visible characteristics, styles and organizational actions of each leader are outcomes of his conscious personal strategy developed with reference to his own personal goals; personal goals depended, on the other hand, on his own historical circumstances that included even his past organizational roles. Given this background, the option sets used by a particular leader in successive organizations and circumstances might be highly predictable, but the details of execution could be varying.

Further, since a leader developed his personal strategy based on his personal goals, when he uses this personal strategy to reshape organizational plans, all changes he causes in the organization are likely to be those consistent with his personal strategy, unless some organizational mechanisms limit his ability to do so. Therefore, especially where leader has a strong will-power and/or distinct competence, organizations with weaker internal systems and culture are likely to be moved into a new direction, which may or may not be desirable or sustainable, to the extent the leader's personal strategy is incompatible with the organization's existing framework. In this sense, it is useful to ponder how the US company General Electric (GE) had charted a new course under Jack Welch and how differently it progressed under his successor. Besides, ambitious personal strategy without matching competence or leadership style may cause organizational failures, disruptions or performance losses (for instance, consider the collapse of Enron and the roles of Kenneth Lay and Jeff Skilling); hence, it is important to understand a prospective leader's personal strategy, on the one hand, and his leadership competence and style, on the other, and ascertain their mutual compatibility for entrusting him with the organizational leadership. Alternatively, institutional mechanisms need to be strengthened to safeguard the organization from undesirable intrusion of leader's personal strategy.

CONCLUSION

The discussion about personal strategy from concept to execution and its outcomes presented in this paper draws heavily from nearly two decade of the author's professional observations on leadership of certain set of academic (and other) organizations as well as the literature reviewed in the paper. Although the analysis used academic organizational context for primary inputs, it can be observed that the framework is applicable to any type of organizations. Further, the analysis of this paper is an exploratory one. It needs to be elaborated and strengthened with further theoretical insights and a deeper conceptualization. Besides, the paper makes several arguments related to personal strategy. It also suggests several propositions based on the exploratory analysis. These require corroboration with the help of field data obtained from a variety of contexts and types of organizations. Moreover, it will be important to develop functional models to predict personal strategy outcomes based on relevant explanatory factors. These additional tasks are left for future work. The author intends to continue to work in this area while other scholars may also be inspired.

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For any enquiries kindly contact

Research Office

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode

IIMK Campus P. O.,

Kozhikode, Kerala, India,

PIN - 673 570

Phone: +91-495-2809237/238

Email: research@iimk.ac.in

Web: <https://iimk.ac.in/faculty/publicationmenu.php>

