

Reframing Transformational Leadership through Dharma and Justice: A Cross-Civilizational Model for Human Transformation and Organisational Sustainability

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Abstract: The current research on leadership has helped to advance the knowledge on organisational change, performance and transformational leadership. Yet, there has been limited research on the process of human transformation, while the focus of existing scholarship has been largely on behavioural and organisational outcomes. In response to emerging ethical, social and sustainability issues, this paper proposes that transformational leadership is a process of human development, rather than organisational change, through a moral framework.

The paper is based on the Indian and Western philosophies and suggests complementing the ethical principles of Dharma and Justice for leadership. Dharma means duty and responsibility, harmony and welfare of the community, while Justice is about fairness and legitimacy, human dignity and ethical governance. To solve the above limitation of these traditions in leadership scholarship, the paper proposes the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework. Workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence are thus identified as vital mechanisms by which ethical values are internalised and transformed into human transformation, transformational leadership, organisational sustainability and human flourishing.

The study advances the theories of leadership by applying both Eastern and Western ethics into a single leadership model and by further expanding transformational leadership beyond the realm of behaviour to the development of character, the responsibility for ethical behaviour, and meaningful engagement. The proposed framework provides a cross-civilizational view for furthering leadership, sustainability, and responsible management research and a base for future empirical research in a variety of organisational and cultural settings.

Keywords: Dharma; Justice; Transformational Leadership; Human Transformation; Workplace Spirituality; Spiritual Intelligence; Organisational Sustainability; Human Flourishing.

1. Introduction

Organisations are increasingly working in a context of technology disruption, economic uncertainty, environmental challenges, and expectations for ethical accountability. While extensive research has been done into what makes organisations perform well, how to manage change, and how to make them more effective and sustainable, organisations continue to experience constant challenges with ethical issues, employee disengagement, loss of trust, and sustainability.

The challenges indicate that organisational success is not solely attributable to structural changes, technology or behavioural changes. Such interventions have a positive effect on organisational processes and outcomes, but they tend to ignore deeper aspects of values, meaning, character and human development. As a result, researchers have begun to doubt whether the current leadership models are sufficient to meet the leadership challenges of modern organisations.

It's important to note that there is a difference between organisational change and human transformation. When thinking about organisational change, it's important to include changes to organisational structure, systems, policies and behaviours that improve the way the organisation functions (Lewin, 1951; Kotter, 2007; Burnes, 2017). In contrast is the process of human transformation, which is defined as significant shifts

in consciousness, values, identity, purpose and moral orientation (Burns, 1978; Frankl, 1992). Change affects people's behaviours, transformation affects who they are. This distinction is important because sustainable organisational outcomes are a function of the quality, values and ethical capabilities of the members of the organisation.

Recognition of this developmental dimension was important, and transformational leadership was an important step. Based on Burns' (1978) definition, transformational leadership is seen as a process of leaders raising the moral and motivational levels of their followers and followers raising the moral and motivational levels of their leaders. Later research confirmed its benefits regarding commitment, innovation, trust and performance (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, current studies continue to focus more on behavioural results and organisational performance and pay comparatively little attention to the ethical and philosophical underpinnings that underlie transformational processes.

This restriction raises one fundamental question: "Transformation towards what? Transformation is not part of an ethical agenda, and needs to be guided and informed by normative principles that can help shape it for human and social good. In the context of this, the notions of Dharma and Justice are helpful ethical principles. Dharma puts in the spotlight duty, responsibility, righteousness, harmony and collective welfare, while Justice puts in the spotlight fairness, legitimacy, rights, accountability, and human dignity. While there is growing recognition in today's leadership literature of the need for ethics, spirituality, authenticity and responsibility, there is a lack of an integrated construct that combines Dharma and Justice. Such integration is especially important in organisational settings where there is cultural diversity and a high degree of connectedness with the rest of the world. Leadership theories have predominantly evolved within Western intellectual traditions and tend to pay less attention to alternative perspectives that also highlight consciousness, moral development, self-mastery, and collective well-being. In the same way, when it comes to the study of Dharma in management, there are disorganised and incomplete references to Dharma in the management literature, which are not fully linked with the mainstream of management theory.

For this reason, the present study introduces the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework, a cross-civilizational perspective to make Dharma and Justice complementary ethical bases for leadership. The framework also suggests the concepts of workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence as developmental mechanisms by which the ethical principles are internalised and translated into human transformation, transformational leadership, organisational sustainability and human flourishing.

The study has three aims. First, it looks at the difference between organisational change and human transformation. Second, it brings together the Indian and Western philosophical traditions to create a complementary ethical structure of leadership: Dharma and Justice. Third, it creates a holistic conceptual model of how workplace spirituality and spirituality intelligence support transformational leadership and sustainability outcomes.

The study advances a cross-cultural and ethically grounded perspective and enriches the leadership, workplace spirituality, sustainability, and responsible management scholarship. What's even more important, it puts into focus the research on sustaining and transformational organisational and societal development from an organisational change to human transformation.

1.1 Research Gap and Need for the Study

Although there has been much research conducted on transformational leadership, there are still some gaps in theory. First, the existing studies are mainly on organisational outcomes, like engagement, commitment, innovation, job satisfaction and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Wang et al., 2011), leaving a behavioural interpretation of transformation. As a result, the problem of consciousness, character building, ethical responsibility, meaning, and human flourishing is largely underdeveloped.

Second, the modern theories of leadership, such as authentic leadership, servant leadership, responsible leadership and spiritual leadership, have reinforced the ethical aspect of leadership and have been characterised by being disjointed when addressing ethics. Each of these characteristics of authentic leadership, servant leadership and responsible leadership offers little insight into how ethical values internalize and transform into positive action and outcomes for others.

Third, although workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence have garnered growing attention in the scholarly research literature, they are studied separately from the field of leadership and sustainability studies. They are under-theorised as developmental processes which connect ethical bases to transformational leadership.

Fourth, most leadership concepts are based mainly in Western philosophical views that focus on autonomy, fairness, legitimacy, and individual development. These viewpoints are also worthwhile, but they are insufficient to fully include traditions that focus on duty, self-mastery, harmony, the welfare of the community, and moral responsibility.

Lastly, Dharma and Justice, workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, human transformation, transformational leadership, organisational culture, sustainability and human flourishing have yet to be developed in a coherent theoretical framework.

The key missing components from the literature are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Gap Analysis

Existing Literature Stream	Primary Focus	Key Limitation
Transformational Leadership	Motivation, performance, behavioural influence	Limited attention to ethical foundations and human transformation
Authentic Leadership	Self-awareness and transparency	Insufficient philosophical grounding
Servant Leadership	Service and stewardship	Limited integration with sustainability and justice
Responsible Leadership	Stakeholder accountability	Limited focus on inner transformation
Spiritual Leadership	Meaning, purpose, spirituality	Weak integration with justice and ethical governance
Organizational Justice	Fairness and legitimacy	Neglects consciousness and personal development
Workplace Spirituality	Meaningful work and well-being	Limited connection to transformational leadership theory
Present Study (DJTL Framework)	Dharma, Justice, Transformation, Sustainability	Integrates ethical foundations, developmental mechanisms, leadership, and sustainability outcomes

The proposed DJTL Framework is an effort to overcome these problems as it combines Eastern and Western moral traditions and is an explanation of how Dharma and Justice, with the concepts of workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence, can bring about “human transformation”, “transformational leadership”, “organisational sustainability” and “human flourishing”.

1.2 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How can transformational leadership be reconceptualised as a process of human transformation rather than organisational change?

RQ2: How do Dharma and Justice function as complementary ethical foundations for transformational leadership?

RQ3: What roles do workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence play in translating ethical values into transformational leadership outcomes?

RQ4: How does the proposed DJTL Framework contribute to organisational sustainability and human flourishing?

1.3 Contributions and Novelty of the Study

The theoretical contribution of this study is to create a cross-civilizational leadership framework, which systematically brings together the concepts of Dharma, Justice, Workplace Spirituality, Spiritual Intelligence, Human Transformation, Transformational Leadership, Organisational Culture, Organisational Sustainability, and Human Flourishing into one conceptual architecture.

The DJTL Framework is different from other types of leadership models, such as Transformational, Authentic, Servant, Spiritual and Responsible leadership, as it incorporates East and West ethical traditions as well as developmental and sustainability lenses. It goes beyond the behavioural aspect of transformational leadership by focusing on the development of character, conscience, meaning, and ethics as the basis for the practice of leadership.

In particular, the study is a contribution because it:

1. Focusing on transformational leadership as a transformative process of people.
2. Combining Dharma and Justice in the same moral system.
3. Making workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence among the important mediating mechanisms.
4. Creating the DJTL Framework for the ethical underpinning of transformational leadership, organisational sustainability and human flourishing.

The proposed framework is thus a novel contribution to the study of leadership, ethics, sustainability and responsible management and is a basis for future empirical studies in various organisational and cultural contexts.

2. Research Methodology

A conceptual theory-building approach with a structured literature review has been used in this study. This is suitable when addressing the synthesis of fragmented knowledge, theoretical gaps and building integrative frameworks that further the development of knowledge and provide guidance for future empirical research. Recognising the interdisciplinary aspect of the study, which involves leadership, ethics, spirituality, sustainability and human development, a conceptual methodology offers an appropriate foundation for the construction of the framework.

2.1 Literature Identification and Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature review was carried out to locate scholarship related to transformational leadership, ethical leadership, workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, organisational sustainability, human flourishing, Dharma and Justice. The review was conducted according to the principles followed in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, to increase transparency and methodological rigour.

Literature was obtained from the main academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink and Taylor & Francis Online. Combinations of keywords were used to develop search strings, including: *transformational leadership, ethical leadership, responsible leadership, spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, human transformation, human flourishing, Dharma, Justice, organisational sustainability, humanistic management, and conscious leadership*. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to expand and contract the search process.

As the goal was conceptual integration, rather than evidence synthesis, the review focused on breadth, theory and conceptual richness with respect to a variety of disciplinary domains.

2.2 Literature Selection Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to guide literature selection are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Literature Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description
Time Period	1978–2025
Language	English
Databases	Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Emerald, ScienceDirect
Document Types	Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters
Inclusion Criteria	Leadership, ethics, spirituality, justice, sustainability, and human development
Exclusion Criteria	Non-peer-reviewed publications, conference abstracts, duplicate records, and irrelevant disciplines

2.3 Screening and Study Selection

After the first search, duplicate and irrelevant records were deleted. The other studies were identified by screening the titles and abstracts of the potentially relevant articles and then by reading the full text of the potentially relevant articles. Conceptual relevance, theoretical importance, scholarly impact, and development of the framework were all used as criteria for selection.

The review process was iterative and involved the identification and screening of literature, thematic synthesis and framework construction, as shown in Figure 1. About fifty relevant sources were kept for detailed analysis and incorporation into the proposed Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework.

This literature review and framework development process is shown in Figure 1.

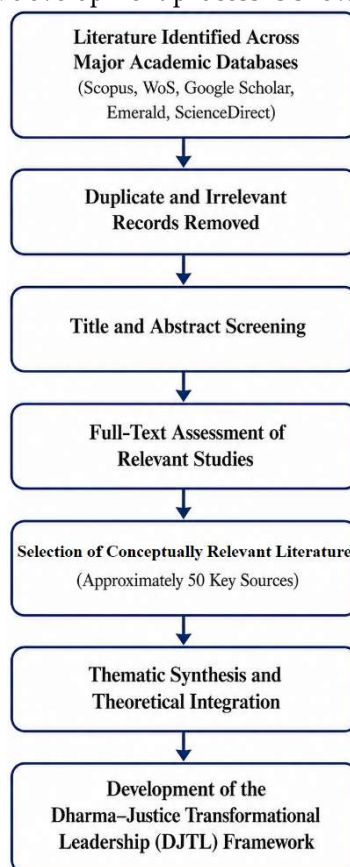


Figure 1. Conceptual Literature Review and Framework Development Process

2.4 Thematic Synthesis and Framework Development

Thematic synthesis was employed to analyse the literature selected. Concepts, theoretical perspectives and explanatory mechanisms were compared, contrasted and clustered into general conceptual categories. These themes were identified as six core themes through analysis and integration: (1) ethical foundations, (2) transformational leadership, (3) workplace spirituality, (4) spiritual intelligence, (5) human transformation, and (6) organisational sustainability.

These themes were used to develop the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework, an ethical, developmental, organisational, and sustainability approach in a cross-civilizational model of leadership. The result is a theoretical structure that can be used to explore the role Dharma and Justice play in transformational leadership, sustainability in the organisation, and human flourishing.

3. Theoretical Foundations of the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership Framework

The Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework is based on a theoretical and multidisciplinary foundation that brings together leadership, ethical, human development, spiritual and sustainability perspectives. The framework does not assume that one single explanatory lens exists, but rather integrates theories that complement each other in explaining the translation of ethical values into human transformation, the development of leaders, and organisational sustainable outcomes.

The framework is based on Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), Virtue Ethics (Aristotle, 2009), Justice Theory (Rawls, 1999), Dharma Philosophy, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Spiritual Leadership Theory (Fry, 2003), and Humanistic Management Theory (Pirson, 2017). These viewpoints offer a comprehensive framework for the concept of leadership as an ethical influence, personal growth, and communal thriving.

3.1 Core Theoretical Perspectives

The proposed framework is enriched with each of the theoretical perspectives, but each one brings its own unique element.

The model has a foundation of Transformational Leadership Theory. Burns (1978) proposed that transformational leadership is a process that raises both followers and leaders to greater levels of motivation and morality, and Bass (1985) established transformational leadership as one that inspires followers' commitment and collective purpose. In the context of the DJTL Framework, transformational leadership is seen as an instrument towards human development instead of simply behavioural change.

The developmental aspect of leadership is provided by Virtue Ethics. Aristotle (2009) suggested that human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) is a product of the development of human virtues, including wisdom, fairness, courage, and temperance. This outlook aligns with the framework's focus on character development and moral judgment as pillars for sustainable leadership.

The institutional and governance aspect is covered by Justice Theory. Rawls' (1999) understanding of justice as fairness is marked by notions of legitimacy, accountability, transparency, equality and respect for human dignity. In organisations, these can be applied to build trust, engagement, and ethical organisational cultures.

Dharma Philosophy is the moral basis in the East for the system. Dharma is the concept of duty, responsibility, stewardship, self-discipline, harmony and collective welfare. It is not a rights-based approach, but rather a moral obligation and responsible action can be its basis, which gives the sense of a normative basis for leadership and human transformation.

The motivation processes that underlie growth and development are described by S.D.T. When people's autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs are met, they thrive, according to Deci and Ryan (2000). This view is useful in understanding the relationship between meaningful work, developmental environments and human transformation.

The meaning-centred aspect of the framework comes from Spiritual Leadership Theory. Fry (2003) suggested that four values of intrinsic motivation, namely vision, hope, faith and altruism, contribute to

organisational commitment. The DJTL Framework broadens this thinking to include a framework of meaning and purpose that is also part of a larger ethical framework.

Last but not least, Humanistic Management Theory focuses on human dignity, human well-being and responsible organisation practice (Pirson, 2017). This sentiment resonates well with the holistic emphasis the framework places on sustainability, human flourishing and value creation for stakeholders over time. To understand the DJTL Framework, Table 3 provides a summary of the main contributions of each theoretical perspective to the formulation of the DJTL Framework.

Table 3. Theoretical Foundations of the DJTL Framework

Theory	Primary Contribution to DJTL Framework
Transformational Leadership Theory	Leadership development and influence
Virtue Ethics Theory	Character formation and moral excellence
Justice Theory	Fairness, legitimacy, and accountability
Dharma Philosophy	Duty, responsibility, and collective welfare
Self-Determination Theory	Human growth and intrinsic motivation
Spiritual Leadership Theory	Meaning, purpose, and transformation
Humanistic Management Theory	Human flourishing and sustainability

3.2 Theoretical Integration

The crux of the DJTL Framework is not the theories themselves, but rather the way they are combined. The framework is a synthesis of ethical, developmental, motivational and sustainability views that culminate in a single model of leadership and human transformation.

Dharma Philosophy offers the moral principles of obligation, stewardship and responsibility. Justice Theory brings fairness, legitimacy and accountability. The motivational conditions that drive personal growth are theorised by Self-Determination Theory, and the conditions that drive commitment and transformation through meaning and purpose are explained by Spiritual Leadership Theory. The concept of human flourishing and sustainable value creation comes from Humanistic Management Theory. Transformational Leadership Theory offers the pathway to bridge those values to the influence of leadership and organisational practice. The connection between the theoretical views and the key concepts in the framework is condensed in Table 4.

Table 4. Mapping Theoretical Perspectives to Framework Constructs

Theory	Principal Construct
Dharma Philosophy	Duty and stewardship
Justice Theory	Fairness and legitimacy
Self-Determination Theory	Human growth and intrinsic motivation
Spiritual Leadership Theory	Meaning and purpose
Humanistic Management Theory	Human flourishing and sustainability
Transformational Leadership Theory	Leadership influence and development

The proposed DJTL Framework is based on the theoretical integration shown in Figure 3. The individual theoretical views converge as a comprehensive ethical and developmental underpinning that provides the underlying components and sustainability-based goals of the framework, as demonstrated.

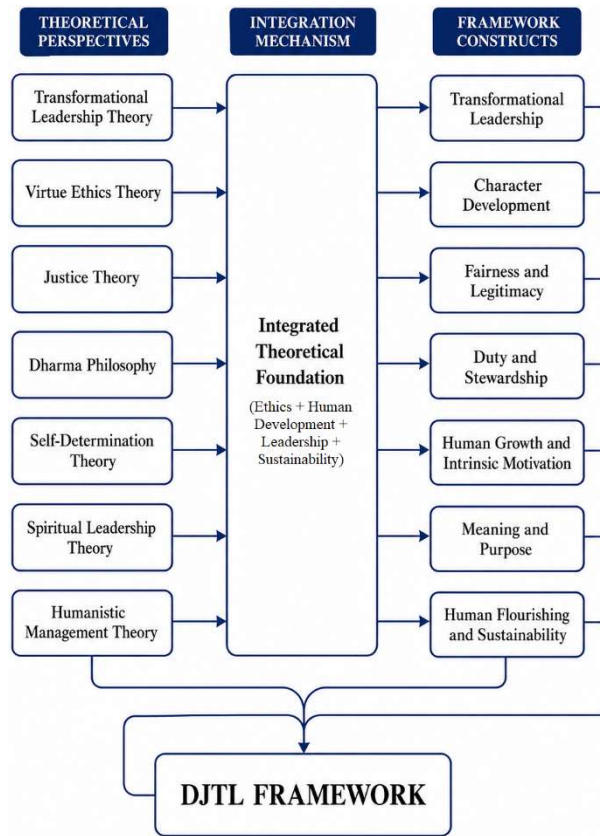


Figure 3. Theoretical Integration Underpinning the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework

4. Leadership Beyond Change: Revisiting the Transformation Debate

Traditionally, leadership scholarship has been linked to changing and adapting in organisations. The classical management literature considers leadership as a process that enables the organisation to make changes in its strategy, structure, technology and behaviours to enhance its effectiveness. The role of this view has helped much in organisational development, there is a tendency to include change management as the main developmental aspect of human transformation and neglecting the other deeper aspects.

4.1 Distinguishing Organisational Change from Human Transformation

The word terms change, and transformation is often used as a synonym, but they are different processes. Organisational change is the process of making changes in the organisation's structures, systems, policies, processes and behaviours to improve organisational functioning (Lewin, 1951; Kotter, 2007; Burnes, 2017). These changes are usually externally imposed and are performance-oriented.

Human transformation, on the other hand, requires more profound changes in values, identity, meaning, consciousness, and moral orientation (Burns 1978; Frankl 1992). Change affects what people do, transformation affects who they are. This is an important distinction because the ethical maturity, purpose and character of the members of an organisation is as important to operational efficacy in achieving long-term sustainability as the efficiency of the operations.

For the sake of clarification, Figure 4 compares the key characteristics and results of organisational change and human transformation.



Figure 4. Organisational Change versus Human Transformation

As shown in Figure 4, organisational change mainly involves structural and behavioural changes aimed at efficiency, while human transformation is concerned with consciousness development, ethical responsibility, self-mastery and purpose. While both forms of development are necessary for sustainable leadership, transformed individuals are the key to enduring organisational success.

4.2 Limitations of Change-Oriented Leadership Perspectives

The models of foundational change have contributed much to the understanding of organisational adaptation. Lewin's three-stage model (1951) and Kotter's eight steps (2007) are both popular models for leading planned change. Nevertheless, the models are not necessarily focused on more fundamental changes in values, character and ethical sensitivity or awareness.

This constraint is based on the prevailing views of traditional business management thinking, which often considers an organisation to be a system that can be optimised through planning, controlling, and measuring performance. These methods are effective, but are not always very meaningful, respectful, purposeful, or growth-promoting for the individual. Drucker (2012) asserted that the development of human capabilities is the key to organisational effectiveness, and Frankl (1992) suggested that finding meaning is a key human motivation.

An ongoing problem of employee disengagement, burnout, resistance to change, and ethical lapses indicates that organisational renewal is not possible solely through structural change. Instead, it demands that attention be paid to the processes of development in which people develop responsibility, purpose and moral commitment.

4.3 Transformational Leadership and the Need for Ethical Direction

These drawbacks led to the development of Transformational Leadership Theory. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a reciprocal process in which a leader and follower transform each other towards greater levels of motivation and morale. Later, Bass (1985) developed the theory, adding idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration as central components of transformational leadership.

There is ample empirical evidence showing the association between transformational leadership and employee commitment, trust, innovation, organisational citizenship behaviour and performance outcome (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Wang et al., 2011). Despite the above, much of the literature still measures transformation in observable behavioural and organisational outcomes rather than on a deeper level of

human development. In addition, Tourish (2013) points out the dangers of charismatic leadership and inadequate moral boundaries, which tend to be understated in transformational leadership studies.

This proves all the more relevant given the following concerns: transformation towards what end? Transformation is neither good nor bad; it can be beneficial or harmful. Transformative processes thus need some form of moral foundations that can give them moral guidance and legitimacy.

This has led to the development of several different leadership perspectives recently, such as authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011), responsible leadership (Maak & Pless, 2006), spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003), or humanistic management (Pirson, 2017), all of which focus on authenticity, service, responsibility, dignity, and human flourishing. However, all these are still dispersed and do not offer a deep integration of more comprehensive philosophical frameworks that could support transformational development.

4.4 From Change Management to Human Transformation

The present study calls for a paradigm shift regarding leadership, from the mere management of change to the facilitation of human transformation in an ethically guided way. This view needs ethical underpinnings that can guide individuals and organizations to achieve the good of the community.

In this context, Dharma and Justice complement each other in a normative manner. While Dharma talks about duty, stewardship, self-discipline, moral responsibility and collective welfare, Justice speaks about fairness, legitimacy, accountability, rights and human dignity. As they work together, they offer a balanced ethical substructure that can be used to sustain the processes of change to ensure the results of the transformation are sustainable in the organisation and for the human being.

Thus, the difference between Change and Transformation is a key tenet of the Dharma-Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework. Although change is crucial for adaptation of the organization, sustainable leadership relies on creating responsible human beings who can help the organization become sustainable and benefit society. The next section deals with the ethical principles of this transformative process – Dharma and Justice.

5. Dharma and Justice as Ethical Foundations of Leadership

Current leadership studies increasingly acknowledge the ethical responsibility, human dignity, and social benefit that are synonymous with an effective leader. While there has been a development of ethical theories, such as ethical, authentic, servant, responsible and spiritual, these theories tend to focus on the behavioural aspects of ethics with limited interest in the philosophical underpinnings (Brown et al., 2005; Bedi et al., 2016). A comprehensive normative structure to facilitate transformational processes is therefore underdeveloped.

This study overcomes this limitation by combining two important ethical traditions, namely Dharma and Justice. Both cultures have comparable standards or principles of behavior that are intended to guide individual actions, the legitimacy of institutions, and the well-being of the community. They hold up one another, providing a strong ethical base for transformational leadership.

5.1 Dharma as a Leadership Ethic

Dharma is central in Indian philosophy and is the duty, responsibility, righteousness, self-discipline, and welfare of society. Dharma is not only about rights or results; it's about duties which bring harmony in the individual, organisation and society.

Leadership is always described as moral stewardship in the classical Indian texts. The Bhagavad Gita defines leadership as the ability to do what is right, to do what is duty, to do what has moral significance, and to transform through awareness and moral action. The Upanishads also stress the importance of self-knowledge and wisdom as a basis for responsible action, as well as higher consciousness (Olivelle, 1996). Likewise, Ramayana depicts Rama as an archetype of Dharma-based leadership which is defined through

honesty, sacrifice, compassion and dedication towards the common good (Goldman & Goldman, 2017). The Mahabharata teaches this lesson in the impact of power without ethics.

Organisational level, Dharma calls for leaders to consider the interests of various stakeholders along with economic goals and their well-being, moral behaviour, ethical practices, and sustainability in the long run. Leadership is then a stewarding process that is oriented towards individual development and collective flourishing.

5.2 Justice and Ethical Leadership

Justice also plays an equal basic role in Western philosophies. Justice has been considered a fundamental principle of moral behaviour, institutional legitimacy and social order since classical times.

In Plato's Republic, justice can be defined as "the harmonious discharge of personal and institutional duties towards the common good" (Plato 2002). Aristotle also connected justice with moral virtue and human flourishing by saying that moral government relies on the development of moral character and practical wisdom (Aristotle, 2009). Kant then focused on human dignity and the moral duty to view people as ends, rather than as means, which has become a lasting moral principle of leadership and organisational practice. These principles are expanded by modern justice theory. In Rawls's (1999) model, justice is understood as fairness, which involves fairness in the distribution of opportunity/burden, fairness in the process of proceeding, and fairness in the form of transparency and legitimacy. In line with this, organisational justice studies show that organisational justice has a significant impact on trust, commitment, engagement, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Therefore, justice is a normative construct that enables organisations to foster accountability, inclusion, legitimacy and respect for human dignity.

5.3 Integrating Dharma and Justice

Dharma and Justice are intellectual concepts that come from different traditions, but both aim to orient the individual's behaviour toward a larger ethical framework that benefits the community. Dharma is about duty, stewardship, harmony, moral responsibility, while Justice is about fairness, legitimacy, accountability and human rights. To bring out these complementary aspects, a comparative overview of Dharma and Justice in the context of leadership is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparative Perspectives on Dharma and Justice

Dimension	Dharma	Justice
Primary Focus	Duty and Responsibility	Rights and Fairness
Ethical Orientation	Harmony and Collective Welfare	Equality and Legitimacy
Moral Foundation	Righteous Conduct	Fair Treatment
Leadership Emphasis	Stewardship and Service	Accountability and Fairness
Social Objective	Social Harmony	Social Justice
Developmental Goal	Self-Mastery and Ethical Responsibility	Human Dignity and Institutional Legitimacy

Table 4 demonstrates that Dharma and Justice are complementary aspects of leadership. Their integration makes it possible to develop a balanced ethical basis that is both personally and institutionally fair. The present study takes, therefore, a Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework as the normative pillars under which human transformation and sustainable leadership can emerge, with an ethical underpinning of Dharma and Justice.

6. Human Transformation as the Core Function of Leadership

Human transformation is a process of permanent changes in human values, identity, consciousness, moral thinking, purpose orientation and accountability to self, to others and to society. Transformation is more than temporary behavioural change; it's a change in the way people think about themselves, the way they

see things, and how they interact with their environment. It is a developmental process that makes ethical awareness, self-mastery, meaning and character increasingly apparent in life and work.

Human transformation should be differentiated from related concepts often employed in the field of organisational research. The main focus of learning is acquiring knowledge and skills. Human development is generally the process of growing abilities and capabilities. Behavioural change is related to observable changes in actions and performance. Organisational Change encompasses changes in Structure, Systems, Processes and Policies. The transformation of humans is different from all these constructs in that it is more profound and more permanent in regard to identity, moral orientation, consciousness and purpose. Learning, development, behavioural change and organisational change can lead to transformation, but do not automatically result in the kind of personal change that is referred to as personal transformation.

6.1 Revisiting the Transformational Leadership Tradition

Burns (1978) best expressed the developmental approach to leadership as leadership that raises followers and leaders up to greater levels of motivation and morality. In this version, the role of leadership is not only to enhance performance but also to promote ethical and personal growth.

Further studies of transformational leadership added idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration as behavioural components. These contributions added to the empirical understanding, but also turned the focus to organisational outcomes and leader behaviours, sometimes blurring Burns' emphasis on human development and moral transformation. The current research takes up this basic framework and places transformation as the main concern of leadership instead of a by-product.

6.2 Meaning, Self-Mastery, and Human Development

Human transformation is not just a shift of values, identity, purpose, consciousness and moral orientation; it is in fact a profound shift. According to Frankl (1992) this search for meaning is a central human drive, and personal development is an important result of when people relate their behaviours to a larger purpose.

This view is very much in accordance with Indian philosophical beliefs. The Upanishad's focus is on self-realisation and ethical awareness as the means to higher development (Olivelle, 1996), while the Yoga Sutras are dedicated to self-mastery through the development of discipline, wisdom, and expanded consciousness (Bryant, 2015). These traditions see leadership development as an internal process before it's a process of influence outside oneself.

Similar notions are present and actually are found within Western thought. Aristotle (2009) pointed out that character development in the context of virtue is essential, and authentic leadership theory has pointed out that the bases of effective leadership are self-awareness, integrity, and internalised moral perspectives (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

In all these traditions, sustainable leadership is not achieved only through skill. In each of these traditions, leadership is not just about skills – it is about character, self-control and purpose.

6.3 Collective Transformation and Organisational Development

Human transformation is not just about the individual; it can impact organisational systems. Senge (1990) asserts that the learning organisation promotes learning and continuous reflection, shared vision, and collective learning, which will promote personal and institutional development.

In terms of Dharma and Justice, organisational cultures of trust, fairness, responsibility and stakeholder concern are needed for collective transformation. Leadership is the means by which these values are worked into the practices and relationships of an organisation.

Therefore, transformation doesn't come at the cost of a mere structural change but it comes through meaning-making, ethical commitment and collective responsibility.

6.4 Human Transformation as the Missing Dimension of Leadership Theory

Although much research has been done on transformational, authentic, servant and spiritual leadership, the process of human transformation has not been sufficiently theorised in organisational studies. There are frameworks that describe the impact that leaders can have on behaviour, but they do not clearly illuminate how individuals will become aware, have purpose, character or higher consciousness.

The present study seeks to fill this gap, putting human transformation at the center of leadership. Leadership is redefined as a developmental process during which one learns to gain meaning, to be self-aware, to take ethical responsibility, to have character. These capacities then help to facilitate transformational leadership, organisational sustainability, and human flourishing.

From this viewpoint, the conceptual link is drawn between the ethical principles of Dharma and Justice and the four developmental mechanisms highlighted in the next part, which is the development of spirituality at work and spiritual intelligence.

7. Workplace Spirituality and Spiritual Intelligence as Mechanisms of Human Transformation

The above sections set up Dharma and Justice as a complementary ethical base of leadership and human transformation as the core mission of leadership. Ethical principles, however, don't always lead to change. These values need to be developed within the individual, processes that lead to meaning, self-awareness and ethical reflection. In this context, workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence can be regarded as important mechanisms that connect the ethical foundations with the transformational outcomes.

7.1 Workplace Spirituality and Meaningful Work

Workplace spirituality is an emerging phenomenon as companies are increasingly seen as communities where people are looking for meaning, purpose and connection. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) posited that workers can be seen as whole individuals, with work experiences that are influenced more by their deeper values and aspirations.

In a workplace context, spiritualism involves a feeling of purpose in the job, a sense of belonging and a congruence between personal and organisational values (Milliman et al., 2003). These dimensions build employee engagement, commitment, and well-being, and promote ethical and responsible actions. Other empirical studies also suggest that the dimensions of employee spirituality are linked to other positive outcomes, such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and personal growth (Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008; Pawar, 2016; Garg, 2017).

As it exists today, workplace spirituality is the organisational lens through which the ethical principles of Dharma and Justice can be realised in their lived experience of meaning, purpose and responsibility.

7.2 Spiritual Leadership and Organisational Development

The Spiritual Leadership Theory has been researched with great depth, and it has been the subject of much study concerning the connection between spirituality and leadership. Fry (2003) suggested that vision, hope, faith and altruistic love are essential for leadership development of intrinsic motivation, which meets the basic human needs for meaning and belonging.

Further research has associated spiritual leadership to organizational sustainability, ethical decision making, stakeholder responsibility and long-term value creation (Fry & Slocum, 2007). In his book, *Sustainable Organisational Transformation*, Benfield (2005) also asserts that it is not only structural change but also a change in values, consciousness and relationship, which is required for sustainable organisational change. Recent research also suggests that spiritual leadership positively affects innovation, employee creativity and organisational flexibility (Fernando, 2020; Hunsaker, 2020).

This is a similar understanding as Dharma and Justice. Responsibility, service and collective well-being are the key points to Dharma, while dignity, fairness and accountability are the points to Justice. Spiritual leadership brings these all to life in the context of organisational cultures that are meaningful, ethical, and purposeful.

7.3 Spiritual Intelligence and Human Transformation

Workplace Spirituality is about the environment and conditions of the workplace, while Spiritual Intelligence is about the individual's ability to make meaning, to reason ethically and to transcend themselves. Spirituality as a type of intelligence aiding problem-solving and personal growth was first conceptualised by Emmons (2000). King (2008) later came up with four dimensions of spiritual intelligence: critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion.

Spiritual Intelligence is not the same as cognitive or emotional intelligence; rather, it can help people to see their experiences in a larger perspective, one rooted in values and meaning. It promotes self-awareness, moral reasoning, and purpose for the future and enables responsible decision-making.

Spiritual intelligence helps in self-control and moral behaviour. For the Justice perspective, it increases awareness of fairness, dignity and social responsibility. So spiritual intelligence becomes a crucial catalyst in personal and moral growth.

7.4 Integrating Workplace Spirituality and Spiritual Intelligence

Knowing what it means to have spiritual intelligence is relevant to and reinforcing of workplace spirituality, yet it is conceptually different. Workplace spirituality offers opportunities for meaning, reflection and value alignment while spiritual intelligence allows the individual to internalise and act on these experiences.

They constitute the developmental process by which Dharma and Justice affect human transformation. Workplace spirituality provides the environment, spiritual intelligence provides the capability, and human transformation is the result. This process then allows for transformational leadership and ethical organisational cultures and outcomes.

Table 5 compares the DJTL Framework to dominant leadership paradigms, first, to identify the unique contribution of the framework, and second, to enable synergic or contrastive analysis. Prior to presenting the proposed framework, Table 5 compares the DJTL Framework to dominant leadership paradigms to shed light on the unique contribution of the DJTL Framework and for synergic or contrastive analysis.

Table 5. Comparative Analysis of Leadership Frameworks

Dimension	Transformational	Authentic	Servant	Spiritual	DJTL
Ethical Foundation	Partial	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Dharma Integration	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Justice Integration	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Yes
Workplace Spirituality	No	No	Partial	Strong	Strong
Spiritual Intelligence	No	No	No	Partial	Yes
Human Transformation	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Organizational Sustainability	Partial	Partial	Partial	Moderate	Strong
Human Flourishing	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Cross-Cultural Foundation	No	No	No	Limited	Yes
Integrated Developmental Process	No	No	No	Partial	Yes

As displayed in Table 5, there are existing theories about the dimensions of ethics, spirituality, service or authenticity in leadership. But none have integrated Dharma, Justice, workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, human transformation, sustainability and human flourishing into a single developmental framework. This gap can be used as a foundation for the proposed DJTL Framework.

Current models of leadership have a number of theoretical gaps that limit their application. Transformational leadership offers insight into how leaders inspire followers and enhance organisational results; however, much of the literature gauges transformation mostly by standards of behaviour, attitudes, and performance. The more complex aspects of consciousness development, moral growth, self-control and

human flourishing are thus given leeways that are relatively underdeveloped. Authentic leadership promotes self-awareness and transparency, but provides little philosophical discussion on the ethics of action. In addition, servant leadership focuses on both service and stewardship but lacks in institutional justice, sustainability, and social impact. While spiritual leadership emphasises meaning, purpose and intrinsic motivation, it is insufficient to be comprehensive in explaining the interaction between ethical legitimacy, fairness, accountability and governance with spiritual leadership in achieving sustainable organisational transformation.

The Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework comes to the rescue of such shortcomings by integrating a cross-civilizational approach. The framework integrates the complementarity of Dharma and Justice as two ethical bases, integrating duty-oriented and rights-oriented approaches to leadership. In addition, it sees workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence as growth processes that enable the internalisation of ethical values and their conversion in human growth. The DJTL Framework systematically connects together previously unseen aspects of leadership - ethics, spirituality, leadership development, organisational culture, sustainability and human flourishing - in one coherent theoretical structure, whereas existing models focus on certain aspects. The framework thus transcends the modern leadership theory that focuses on human behaviour and influence to the ethic-driven human transformation and sustainable development of society.

8. The Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework: A Cross-Civilizational Model of Human Transformation and Organisational Sustainability

This analysis above verified that leadership is not just about organisational change, but it's also about human change in the ethical direction. It also made Dharma and Justice complementary ethical foundations and workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence as key developmental mechanisms. Based on these insights, this study presents the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework as a holistic approach to leadership, human development and sustainability.

8.1 Framework Overview

The DJTL Framework takes into account the study of leadership, spirituality and sustainability from the Indian and Western traditions. This approach is not about behaviour or organisational performance – it is about ethical awareness and transformation of humans in the leadership process.

To show the relationships among the proposed constructs, the conceptual architecture of the DJTL Framework is presented in Figure 5.

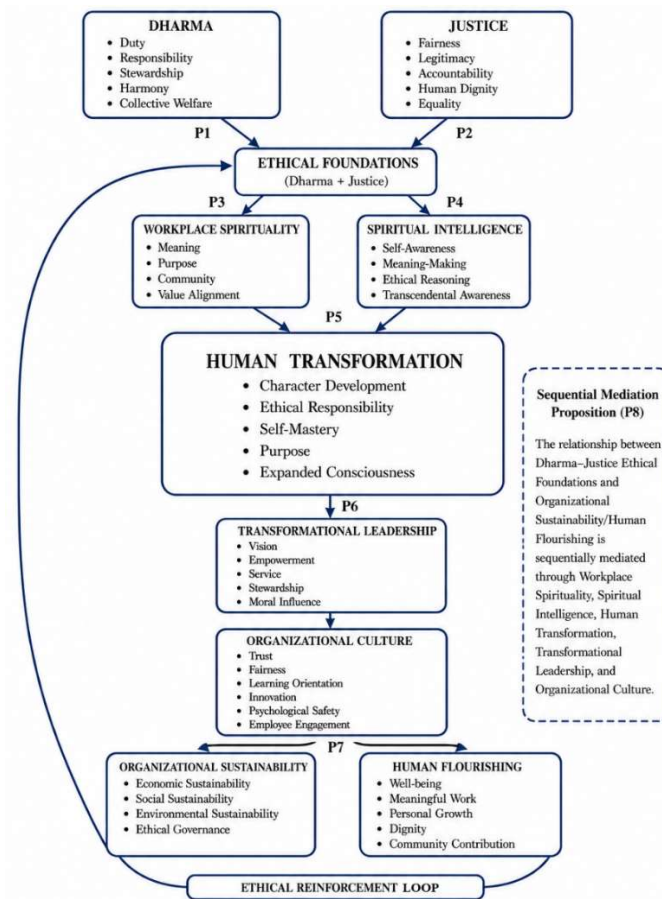


Figure 5. Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework: A Cross-Civilizational Model of Human Transformation, Organisational Sustainability, and Human Flourishing

As shown in Figure 5, Dharma and Justice are basic moral guidelines that affect workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence. These developmental processes lead to human transformation, which in turn, supports the development of transformational leadership, ethical organisational cultures, organisational sustainability and human flourishing. The model also includes an ethical reinforcement loop, which shows that continually better outcomes in sustainability also reinforce ethical commitment and organisational development.

8.2 Ethical Foundations and Developmental Mechanisms

The framework starts with two complementary ethical underpinnings. While Dharma brings in responsibility, stewardship, self-discipline and collective welfare, Justice brings in fairness, dignity, legitimacy, accountability and inclusion. Together, they offer the normative guidance that is essential for positive change and transformation. But ethical values are only put into practice when internalised. Workplace spirituality offers meaning, value alignment and community, and spiritual intelligence offers self-awareness, meaning-making, ethical considerations, and transcendental awareness. These mechanisms establish a link between ethical principles and personal engagement and responsible action.

8.3 Human Transformation and Leadership Development

The central place in the framework is occupied by human transformation. As in Burns' (1978) original conceptualisation of the transformational leader, the four areas of growth in character, ethical responsibility, self-mastery, meaning and expanded consciousness are important.

The development process, in turn, gives rise to transformational leadership, according to the framework. Leadership behaviours are thus considered as a consequence of transformation and not as causes, and they stand for vision, empowerment, stewardship, service and moral influence. Legitimacy of leadership comes from ethical formation and responsible actions, not from charisma.

8.4 Organisational Culture, Sustainability, and Human Flourishing

Transformational leaders build organisational cultures that are built on Trust, Fairness, Learning, Innovation, Psychological Safety and Employee Engagement. These cultures instil ethics and promote individual and organisational growth. Finally, the framework connects leadership to an interconnected set of outcomes: organisational sustainability and human flourishing. Organisational sustainability involves the economic viability, social responsibility, environmental stewardship and ethical governance. This view is in line with integrated value creation strategies, which focus on achieving a balance of outcomes among the various stakeholder groups (Visser & Kymal, 2015). It is also research-proven that ethical and spiritual leadership enhances sustainability through long-term stakeholder orientation and responsible governance (Fernando, 2020).

Human flourishing is the wider developmental outcome of leadership and comprises well-being, meaningful work, personal growth, dignity and contribution to community. This understanding aligns with thriving scholarship which conceptualizes human well-being as a multi-dimensional phenomenon beyond economic success (VanderWeele, 2017). The sustainability literature also highlights leadership as a key factor in creating organisational resilience, innovation, and long-term value creation (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011; McCann & Holt, 2010; Iqbal et al., 2021; Liao, 2022). The DJTL Framework thus posits that sustainable organisations arise from alignment of ethical underpinnings, changed individuals and conducive cultures.

8.5 Research Propositions and Theoretical Contribution

Conceptual relationships within the framework are translated into research propositions, so that they can be tested empirically in the future. Table 6 lists the suggested relationships.

Table 6. Research Propositions of the DJTL Framework

Proposition	Statement
P1	Dharma and Justice positively influence workplace spirituality
P2	Dharma and Justice positively influence spiritual intelligence
P3	Workplace spirituality positively influences human transformation
P4	Spiritual intelligence positively influences human transformation
P5	Human transformation positively influences transformational leadership
P6	Transformational leadership positively influences ethical and learning-oriented organisational culture
P7	Ethical organisational culture positively influences organisational sustainability and human flourishing
P8	The relationship between Dharma–Justice ethical foundations and organisational sustainability is sequentially mediated by workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, human transformation, transformational leadership, and organisational culture

There are four ways in which the DJTL Framework supports leadership scholarship. First, it redefines leadership as a change in a human being, not organisational change. Secondly, it connects Dharma and Justice in a common cross-civilizational approach. Third, it recognises the development mechanisms in the workplace, known as workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence, as the link between ethics and leadership. Fourth, it translates the theory of transformational leadership into organisational sustainability and human flourishing as the ultimate outcomes of leadership. All of these contributions offer a theoretically integrated base for future research in leadership, ethics, spirituality, sustainability and responsible management in various organisational settings.

9. Theoretical Contributions, Practical Implications, and Future Research Directions

The proposed Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework builds upon existing leadership scholarship by capturing the elements of ethics, spirituality, human development, and sustainability in one framework. To build upon the conceptual relationships presented in the previous sections, this section provides a description of the theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research of the framework.

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

The DJTL Framework makes significant contributions to the theory of leadership in a number of important respects.

It makes it clear that transformational leadership is a leadership process that involves the transformation of humans more than it is about organisational change. Previous studies on transformational leadership have focused on the leader's development of motivation, commitment, innovation and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Wang et al., 2011); the present framework emphasises the outcomes of leadership for ethical development, self-mastery, meaning and moral responsibility.

Second, the framework furthers the scholarship of responsible leadership by bringing the ethical foundations into the developmental processes. Responsible leadership perspectives that have been discussed so far focus on accountability, on the relationship with stakeholders, and on value creation (Maak et al., 2014; Voegtlin et al., 2012), but offer little insight into the way that values become ingrained. In response to the demand for more theory integration from the field (Miska et al., 2014), DJTL Framework links ethics, spirituality, human transformation and sustainability in a coherent pathway of development. Third, the framework helps to advance the cross-cultural leadership theory by incorporating Dharma and Justice as two sets of complementary ethical principles. In this synthesis, duty and rights are connected together with responsibility, stewardship and harmony and underpinned with fairness, legitimacy, accountability and human dignity.

Fourth, workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence are integrated into the mainstream leadership scholarship. The framework includes workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence in the mainstream of leadership scholarship. It places these constructs in the middle, thereby providing an understanding of the way in which ethical principles are manifested in transformational leadership behaviour and organisational outcomes.

Lastly, the framework brings to light the idea of human transformation as a precursor to sustainable organisational development and expands the scholarship of sustainability and human flourishing. The framework is not a governance goal in itself, but it is an invitation to the role of individuals who have developed ethically in achieving the well-being of the organisation and society in the long term.

Table 7 lists the key theoretical contributions provided by the DJTL Framework, before summarising them.

Table 7. Major Theoretical Contributions of the DJTL Framework

Existing Leadership Literature	Contribution of the DJTL Framework
Focus on organisational change	Focus on human transformation
Predominantly Western ethical foundations	Integration of Eastern and Western ethical traditions
Behaviour-centred leadership models	Consciousness- and character-centred leadership
Limited treatment of spirituality	Integration of workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence
Performance-focused outcomes	Human flourishing and sustainability outcomes
Fragmented ethical perspectives	Unified Dharma–Justice ethical foundation

The framework also helps scholars of ethics and systems by conceptualising leadership as an interdependent, ethical systems that drive the development of values, behaviour, culture, governance, and sustainability outcomes.

9.2 Implications for Management and Policy

The DJTL Framework has a number of implications for leadership practice, organisational development, and public policy.

Leadership development initiatives should stretch beyond technical abilities and managerial performance to ethical thinking, self-awareness, character building and purposeful leadership. In this context, with uncertainty, complexity of stakeholders and sustainability challenges, these are becoming more and more essential.

Another key aspect of the framework is the emphasis on workplace spirituality. Religions can be integrated in a way that encourages meaningful work, value alignment, employee voice, and authentic relationships without endorsement of a particular religion. These are all practices that reinforce commitment, engagement and ethical behaviour.

In governance terms, principles of stewardship by Dharma and accountability by Justice complement each other in building trust, legitimacy, transparency and responsibility towards stakeholders. Leadership assessment systems can thus take into account soft skills like ethical behaviour, employees' well-being, stakeholder orientation and social contribution as well as traditional performance indicators.

The framework is also relevant to public policy and leadership education. There is a need to include more ethical development, civic responsibility, self-awareness and thinking around sustainability in educational institutions and leadership programmes. These priorities are similar to the broader sustainable development goals and responsible management principles (Lee et al., 2016; Muff et al., 2017).

9.3 Critical Reflection on the DJTL Framework

While the DJTL Framework provides an integrative approach to leadership, some conceptual issues suggest reflection. First of all, the meaning of Dharma varies according to the philosophical, religious and cultural traditions. The interpretation of the term duty that is used in the present study is quite wide, focusing on duty, responsibility, stewardship and collective welfare, but other interpretations could emphasise other aspects. So scholars must refrain from studying Dharma as a single entity and acknowledge its contextual differences.

Second, cultural, institutional and organisational contexts may affect workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence. The meaning of meaningful work or of spiritual awareness or of value alignment can differ from one organisational environment or one society to another. Thus, developmental mechanisms that are proposed under the framework may not be the same in each context.

Thirdly, there is a variety of philosophical traditions in their conceptions of justice. Liberal, communitarian, virtue-based and relational approaches tend to focus on different notions of fairness, rights, responsibilities and legitimacy. While justice is used as a broad ethical term, future research should further explore the impact of various justice lenses on leadership processes and outcomes.

Last but not least, human flourishing is a context-dependent concept. The flourishing concept encompasses the dimensions of well-being, dignity and meaningful work, personal growth and community contribution, though cultural variations can bring their own definition and experience to each one of these. These conceptual difficulties should not detract from the importance of the DJTL Framework. Instead, they emphasise the need to follow an integrative and flexible mode of action that is not only ethnically diverse in its approach but has a solid basis for leadership, sustainability and human development.

9.4 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of caveats.

First, the DJTL Framework is conceptual, and it has not been tested empirically. The relationships that are suggested, therefore, must be validated in different organisational and cultural contexts.

Second, there are multiple dimensions to the concept of Dharma and various philosophies regarding Dharma in Indian traditions. Further study is needed to develop operational definitions appropriate for empirical study.

Third, cultural differences can affect the focus of Dharma and Justice-oriented leadership behaviours. Therefore, the generalizability of the framework needs to be tested cross-culturally.

Lastly, human change is always developmental, and therefore it takes place over time. A cross-sectional study design might then be inadequate to reflect the dynamics of the processes suggested in the framework.

9.5 Future Research Directions

This is only a few, and the proposed framework points to some opportunities for future inquiry.

The first step is for scholars to design and test instruments to measure the Dharma-based leadership orientation and the leadership orientation of Dharma–Justice.

Second, quantitative studies using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) can study the sequential relationships suggested within the framework, that is, the mediating role of workplace spirituality, spiritual intelligence, human transformation and organisational culture.

Third, comparative cross-cultural analyses are required to assess whether there are any barriers to the application of the framework in other institutional and cultural settings.

Fourth, longitudinal research designs would give valuable insights into the development of human transformation and human leadership growth.

Fifth, qualitative research investigations can gain insight into the experience of meaning, ethical responsibility, spirituality and transformation for organisational leaders.

Last, the framework could be explored in new areas like AI governance, digital leadership, sustainability transitions, social entrepreneurship and responsible innovation.

These research opportunities are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8. Future Research Agenda

Research Area	Suggested Direction
Scale Development	Dharma Leadership Scale; Dharma–Justice Leadership Scale
Quantitative Testing	Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)
Cross-Cultural Research	Eastern–Western comparative studies
Longitudinal Studies	Transformation across time
Qualitative Research	Narrative and phenomenological studies
Sustainability Research	Leadership and SDG implementation
Digital Leadership	AI ethics and responsible leadership
Organizational Behaviour	Human transformation as a mediating construct

They are combined to provide a solid starting point for future empirical studies and further development of the DJTL Framework in leadership, sustainability and Organisational studies.

10. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to suggest that leadership is a process of human transformation and not only organisational change. Although behavioural influence, performance enhancement and change management have been the main focus of traditional leadership studies, the moral nurturing, character and consciousness of individuals form the basis for sustainable organisational success.

This paper, which was inspired by the ideas of India and Western philosophy, proposes that Dharma and Justice are complementary moral bases of transformational leadership. Dharma brings in notions of duty, stewardship, responsibility and collective welfare, while Justice implies fairness, dignity, accountability and legitimacy. These traditions form a normative framework that can help guide leadership toward the effectiveness of the organisation and the well-being of society.

The paper also suggests that workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence are both used as effective developmental processes for the internalisation of ethical values and for their transformation into responsible action. These processes lead to an increase in human awareness, human meaning, human ethical responsibility and human purpose, which in turn results in human transformation and transformational leadership.

Using these relationships, the study proposes the Dharma–Justice Transformational Leadership (DJTL) Framework, which brings together ethical foundations, developmental mechanisms, human transformation, transformational leadership, organisational culture, sustainability, and human flourishing across civilisations. The framework builds on transformational leadership theory by focusing on human transformation as the end goal of leadership and organisational sustainability and human flourishing as the ultimate outcomes.

The study adds to the leadership scholarship by bringing together the ethical traditions of the East and West and introducing the concepts of workplace spirituality and spiritual intelligence into the leadership discourse and by developing a coherent framework that links ethics, leadership, sustainability and human development. It also provides suggestions that are applicable to the fields of leadership development, ethical governance, and responsible management in the ever-complex organisational context.

While the DJTL Framework is a conceptual document, it can serve as a basis for more empirical studies in various cultural and organisational contexts. Proposed relationships could be explored using quantitative, qualitative, longitudinal and cross-cultural methods in future studies. Overall, the framework provides an integrated understanding of leadership with a focus on ethical, human development and sustainability aspects of organisational and societal development.

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