

## Dharmic Ethics and Contemporary Leadership Models: A Comparative Analysis of Indian Philosophical Thought and Western Scientific Perspectives

Ashutosh Sharma<sup>1\*</sup>, Niharika Bhardwaj<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This study compares Indian philosophical ideas with Western scientific viewpoints to investigate the applicability of Dharmic ethical principles to modern leadership theory. Scholarly interest in value-based leadership frameworks has increased in recent decades due to growing concerns about ethical failings in corporate, institutional, and political leadership. The vast ethical worldview of classical Indian philosophical traditions is completely based on ideas like lokasangraha (collective wellbeing), nishkama karma (selfless activity), and dharma (moral obligation). These values place a strong importance on moral obligation, self-control, and social connectivity. Simultaneously, advancements in current research, particularly in relation to physics and systems thinking have initiated new philosophical discussions regarding levels of awareness, the way systems are organised and what the correlation between an observer and the reality of things is. Significant scientific figures including David Bohm, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, and Erwin Schrödinger have gravitated towards those similar philosophical concepts that are found within Eastern Philosophy. Using a qualitative comparative research method, this research examines the connections between modern literature on leadership, science, and classic philosophy. As a result of the previous analysis, this study will also propose the Dharmic Leadership Matrix, which is a hypothetical model containing four important aspects of leadership; ethics, relationships with others, purposefulness, and transcendency.

**Keywords:** Vedic Knowledge, Indian Knowledge Systems, Dharmic Ethics, Intercultural Management, Leadership Philosophy, Organisational Leadership

The importance of ethical responsibility in commercial and public decision-making is becoming more widely acknowledged in leadership studies. Corporate scandals, governance inadequacies, and social injustices have heightened requests for leadership models that go outside management effectiveness or technical expertise in recent decades. Thus, the prototype that contains social responsibility, ethical reflection, and long-term communal welfare into leadership practice has been examined by leadership studies scholars.

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts, Uttarakhand University, Dehradun, India

<sup>2</sup>BA Psychology, School of Liberal Arts, Uttarakhand University, Dehradun, India

\*Corresponding Author

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Philosophical traditions offer acumen viewpoints on the moral foundation of leadership in this situation. A particularly rich intellectual heritage can be found in classical Indian philosophy, which is centred on ideas like *lokasangraha* (the stability & welfare of society), *nishkama karma* (activity without attachment to results), and *dharma* (moral responsibility and ethical order). These concepts, which are expressed in writings like the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, highlight the combination of self-control, ethical duty, and an understanding of how human behaviour is interrelated.

The emergence of modern science has led to new philosophical discussions regarding consciousness, perception, and the nature of reality through modern advancements within scientific disciplines such as quantum physics and systems theory. Many well-known scientists (e.g., David Bohm, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, and Erwin Schrödinger) presented philosophical discussions addressing questions that relate to components of Eastern metaphysics. Scientific findings show that an increased degree of interrelatedness between scientific and philosophical discourse is creating new opportunities for exploring diverse philosophical perspectives about realism and knowledge.

The study examines contemporary leadership works, scholarly publications and philosophical resources using a qualitative comparative methodology. Based on this analysis the study suggests **the Dharmic Leadership Matrix (DLM)**, a conceptual framework. The framework's integration of four dimensions—transcendent vision, relational harmony, ethical foundation and purposeful action—offers a thorough understanding of leadership practice in contemporary businesses.

The Dharmic Leadership Matrix shows significant conceptual similarities with a number of modern leadership theories despite its foundation in Dharmic philosophy.

First and foremost, the ethical grounding feature is consistent with authentic leadership, which prioritises moral perspective, self-awareness, and decision-making transparency. According to research based on authentic leadership, trust between leaders and followers is supported by ethical consistency.

Second, the ideas of servant leadership—a framework developed by Robert K. Greenleaf—are demonstrated in relationship harmony. Servant leadership highlights the growth and well-being of followers, suggesting that leaders should put the needs of their groups ahead of their own ambitions for power.

Third, transformational leadership, which inspires leaders to motivate followers toward common objectives via dedication, discipline, and vision, aligns with focused action. By tying individual work to a significant organisational goal, transformational leaders motivate their teams.

Lastly, transcendent vision is similar to new studies on accountable leadership that focus on long-term societal impact, sustainability, and stakeholder responsibility.

The Dharmic Leadership Matrix enlarges the conversation by placing leadership inside a more inclusive, ethical and philosophical framework, while these Western leadership models highlight critical behavioural competencies. In this way, by suggesting a more thoughtful

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ethical foundation and cultural perspective, the DLM enhances rather than replaces modern leadership styles.

Many stories and intellectual debates that prove this idea of leadership may be found in classical Indian scriptures. Leadership is represented in texts like the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and the Ramayana as the achievement of moral obligations rather than the Hunger for power. For Example, in the discussion between Krishna and Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, the idea of acting with righteousness and detachment from self-interest becomes important for making moral decisions. Similarly, the Ramayana presents the ideal ruler through the personality of Rama, whose dedication to duty, fairness, Equality and compassion serves as an example of the moral responsibilities of leadership.

One of the front-runners of quantum mechanics, **Erwin Schrödinger**, for Instance, observed Vedantic ideas of unity and awareness in his philosophical writings, calling them **"the most beautiful philosophical song existing in any known tongue"**. In a similar manner, **Werner Heisenberg** acknowledged that conversations on Indian philosophy (Vedanta/Gita) with Rabindranath Tagore helped him understand the "crazy" ideas of quantum mechanics and shaped his thoughts on the philosophical consequences of contemporary physics. When considering the existential and ethical consequences of technological advancement, **J. Robert Oppenheimer**, the Manhattan Project scientific director, famously quoted the Bhagavad Gita after the first successful atomic bomb test on July 16, 1945, stating: **"Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds"**. These intellectual exchanges serve as an example of a larger conversation about the nature of reality, knowledge, and ethical responsibility that takes place between contemporary scientific research and traditional philosophical societies.

This study explores the relationship between contemporary leadership styles and Dharmic ethical principles by analyzing these connections. The study aims to find conceptual unions that could support in the creation of more comprehensive leadership frameworks by comparing Western scientific viewpoints with Indian philosophical literature. The research seeks to show how ethical concepts derived from obsolete intellectual systems might enhance modern approaches to leadership in a world increasingly interconnected by combining ideas from both traditions.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Organisational theory, management studies, psychology, philosophy, and other academic fields have all made substantial advancements in the study of leadership. There is growing scholarly interest in integrating ideas from non-Western philosophical frameworks, even though a significant portion of present leadership scholarship comes from Western intellectual societies. Indian philosophical societies, especially those based on Dharmic ethics, offer a rich conceptual framework for inspecting societal responsibility, self-awareness, and ethical leadership. Western leadership theory, Dharmic philosophical ethics, and interdisciplinary talks connecting science, consciousness, and philosophical thought are the three Major areas of scholarship observed in this literature review.

#### **Leadership Theory in Western Scholarship**

Western academic research carried out in the 20th century is significantly responsible for the development of modern leadership studies. Early theories of leadership concentrated on pinpointing particular characteristics that set successful leaders from others. These early

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studies promoted trait theory, which emphasised personal qualities such as intelligence, self-confidence, and decisiveness as essential to effective leadership. However, later research shifted attention towards situational and behavioural factors influencing leadership success.

The creation of transformational leadership theory, which was first presented by James MacGregor Burns and later advanced by Bernard M. Bass, was one of the most significant advances in leadership studies. According to Burns, leadership is a process that uplifts followers and leaders to greater moral and motivational heights. Later, Bass developed this theory by highlighting the significance of intellectual inspiration, individualised consideration, idealised impact, and inspiring motivation in transformational leadership methods.

Robert K. Greenleaf's servant leadership theory is another substantial viewpoint. The impression that leaders should put their followers' needs and growth first is highlighted by this model. According to Greenleaf, a commitment to service, humility, and ethical responsibility are the foundations of good leadership. Due to its focus on moral governance and human-centred management techniques, servant leadership has drawn a lot of curiosity in modern organisational research.

Modern leadership studies place a strong importance on ethical and responsible leadership in addition to transformational and servant leadership models. Academics like Joanne B. Ciulla argue that moral issues are fundamental to good leadership. Integrity, accountability, transparency, and fairness in decision-making processes are among the top values that ethical leadership research emphasises. In a similar manner, studies on responsible leadership emphasise the importance of sustainability, social responsibility, and stakeholder involvement in contemporary organisational surroundings.

### ***Dharmic Ethical Traditions and Leadership***

Deep concepts about leadership, responsibility, and moral behaviour are stated in classic writings like the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita frames leadership in terms of *nishkama karma*, or actions carried out without favour for one's own benefits. This idea needs people to carry out their duties with honesty and discipline while avoiding selfish motives. This method places more focus on moral dedication than on individual ambitions as the keystone of leadership. Offered as a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna, the Bhagavad Gita tackles important issues of duty, morality, and the moral dilemmas that those in positions of authority must deal with. Arjuna's moral dilemma on the battlefield serves as a metaphor for the larger ethical battles that occur when social duties and personal feelings strike.

The idea of Dharma, a broad expression that comprises duty, morality, moral order, and social responsibility, is at the centre of this ethical system. In traditional Indian philosophy, dharma serves as a compass that guides both individual behaviour and the welfare of the community. It stands for the protection of cosmic equilibrium and social harmony in addition to individual morality. Many Indian scriptures, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, and Ramayana, contain philosophical thoughts of dharma. When taken as a whole, these pieces present ethical decision-making as a dynamic process that calls for judgment, self-awareness, and context understanding.

Ethical behaviour is seen as an image of a person's inner state of consciousness rather than just an issue of external compliance. Many Indian philosophical societies highlight the need

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of self-awareness, mental discipline, and control over one's impulses and wants, especially those associated to Vedanta and Yoga.

In these discussions, the idea of Atman—which stands for the inner consciousness or deeper self—is important. People are encouraged to develop awareness of their motivations, attachments, and ethical duties through philosophical inquiry into the nature of the self. People try to match their personal behaviour with universal moral principles through disciplined activity, meditation, and introspection.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and various other Indian philosophers have highlighted that Dharmic ethics support a style of leadership built on moral self-discipline and spiritual awareness. This viewpoint holds that command over one's impulses, emotions, and ego is essential for effective leadership. Leaders that possess this kind of self-mastery are able to act with kindness, wisdom, and clarity.

### ***Science, Consciousness, and Philosophical Inquiry***

Philosophical issues that line up with Eastern metaphysical concepts were also examined by other significant scientists. The observer has a vital role in quantum phenomena, according to Werner Heisenberg, who is credited with developing the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. He discovered networks between quantum theory and some elements of Asian philosophical thought, especially the idea that reality and observation are inseparably linked, as a result of his conversations with philosophers and academics of Eastern traditions.

According to this theory, emerging followers' vision, trust, and motivation are the key to actual leadership. Transformational leaders set inspirational objectives, promote critical thinking, and support employees' personal growth. Four important components of transformative leadership are often recognised by academics: **intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, customised consideration, and inspirational drive**. These components highlight the leader's role as a catalyst for both organisational and individual change, as well as their role as a decision-maker.

Robert K. Greenleaf was the first Theorist to articulate servant leadership, which is considered to be another significant concept in today's leadership discussion. By arguing that good leaders should put others' needs ahead of their own, this model advocates a major shift in the conservative conception of leadership. According to Greenleaf's viewpoint, a leader's key duty is to promote the growth, welfare, and empowerment of individuals working within the company.

Erwin Schrödinger, a famous physicist, showed interest in the philosophical results of identity and consciousness. Schrödinger proposed in his study that the seeming diversity of individual consciousness might eventually be an expression of a combined universal consciousness. This viewpoint theoretically resembles **Advaita Vedanta's non-dualistic philosophy**, which highlights the unity of existence.

Werner Heisenberg also considered the philosophical consequences of quantum mechanics. The Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty development called into enquiry long-held beliefs about determinism and objective observation. Heisenberg self-confessed that these advancements brought up philosophical issues regarding the observer's link to the material world.

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The Danish physicist Niels Bohr presented the principle of Complementarity, which proposes that apparently contradictory descriptions of phenomena may be extremely necessary for a complete understanding of reality. This epistemological viewpoint highlights the importance of integrating numerous interpretive frameworks.

These various scientific reflections exemplify how modern scientific inquiry has increasingly involved philosophical questions concerning consciousness, observation, and systemic complexity. Such discussions provide an intellectual link between Western scientific thought and Eastern philosophical societies.

### ***Toward a Combined Framework for Leadership***

The amalgamation of these traditions forms the theoretical foundation for the **Dharmic Leadership Matrix (DLM)** projected in this study. By combining ethical grounding, relational harmony, purposeful action, and transcendent vision, the DLM framework seeks to link ancient philosophical wisdom with contemporary leadership capabilities. This integrative approach highlights the potential for cross-cultural philosophical discourse to improve modern leadership studies.

Within this setting, integrating Dharmic ethical principles with modern leadership theory offers a capable direction for research. Dharmic philosophy provides a prescriptive framework focusing on ethical duty, self-awareness, and social responsibility, while Western leadership research contributes experimental understandings into organisational behaviour and management practices.

***Table 1 Leadership Philosophies***

<b>WESTERN LEADERSHIP MODELS</b>	<b>DHARMIC LEADERSHIP ETHICS</b>
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	→ <b>Ethical Duty (Dharma),</b>
<b>Servant Leadership</b>	→ <b>Compassion &amp; Service</b>
<b>Ethical Leadership</b>	→ <b>Moral Self-Discipline</b>
<b>Responsible Leadership</b>	→ <b>Lokasangraha (Collective Welfare)</b>
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>	→ <b>Transcendent Vision</b>

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study accepts a qualitative comparative research design to explore the relationship between Dharmic ethical principles and contemporary leadership models through the connection of Indian philosophical traditions and Western scientific thought. Given the explanatory and theoretical nature of the subject, qualitative methodology provides a suitable framework for examining philosophical writings, historical reflections of scientists, and modern leadership theories. The research aims to identify theoretical matches, ethical understandings, and philosophical junctions that may contribute to a more all-inclusive understanding of leadership in contemporary organisational and societal settings.

The methodological approach integrates textual examination, comparative philosophy, and interdisciplinary amalgamation. By exploring both classical Indian philosophical sources and modern scientific reflections, the study seeks to reveal underlying ethical frameworks that inform leadership behaviour, decision-making, and responsibility in complex and complicated environments.

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### ***Data Sources***

In order to guarantee both philosophical depth and contemporary significance, the research draws upon multiple categories of documented and scholarly sources.

### **Classical Indian Philosophical Texts**

Primary sources from the Indian philosophical tradition constitute an introductory component of the study. These texts deliver the ethical and metaphysical frameworks that inform the Dharmic origins of duty, leadership, and moral responsibility. Key sources include the Bhagavad Gita, which speaks of the concept of *dharma*, ethical action, and leadership under situations of moral conflict. In addition, philosophical understandings from the Upanishads are studied for their reflections on consciousness, self-knowledge, and the connection between individual responsibility and universal order. Relevant deliberations from the Mahabharata are also considered, mainly in relation to governance, ethical problems, and the duties of leaders within complex socio-political settings.

### **Scientific Writings and Autobiographical Reflections**

The study incorporates writings, lectures, and autobiographical reflections of influential 20th-century scientists who engaged with philosophical questions associated with consciousness, ethics, and the nature of realism. Special attention is given to the works and reflections of theorists such as Erwin Schrödinger, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and David Bohm. These sources are inspected to understand how scientific thinkers understood philosophical concepts such as unity, observer participation, and ethical responsibility in a scientific environment.

### **Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Articles (2000–2024)**

To position the research within contemporary academic discourse, the study analyses peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2000 and 2024. These articles are drawn from interdisciplinary arenas including philosophy of science, consciousness studies, leadership studies, and comparative philosophy. The literature review emphasises recent scholarly debates that explore connections between Eastern philosophical traditions, modern scientific thought, and evolving models of ethical leadership.

### **Secondary Literature on Leadership Theory and Organisational Behaviour**

The research also draws upon recognised theoretical frameworks in leadership studies and organisational behaviour. This includes scholarly debates on ethical leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and principled leadership models. Secondary sources benefit from contextualising Dharmic ethical thoughts within modern organisational settings and provide a link between philosophical understandings and practical leadership frameworks.

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

### **Indian Intellectual Tradition**

Unlike the rigid separation that sometimes characterises modern disciplinary frameworks, classical Indian thought often treated knowledge (*jnana*), ethical duty (*dharma*), and spiritual insight as interconnected dimensions of human understanding. The Indian intellectual tradition has historically integrated scientific inquiry with philosophical reflection and ethical considerations. Scientific exploration was not merely an empirical endeavour but also a pathway toward deeper insight into the nature of reality, consciousness, and universal order. Within this intellectual context, Talking of many contributors One of

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the most prominent examples is Srinivasa Ramanujan, whose extraordinary contributions to number theory and mathematical analysis remain widely studied. Ramanujan frequently described his mathematical understandings as coming from intuitive or spiritual inspiration. He believed that many of his formulas were revealed to him through the guidance of the supreme Hindu goddess Namagiri Thayar, whom he always regarded as a source of divine vision. Ramanujan often relied on deep intuition and symbolic understanding, rather than relying solely on formal proofs during the initial stages of discovery. In the creative process of scientific and mathematical discovery, His work often illustrates how intuitive cognition and spiritual reflection can complement rigorous analytical reasoning.

Another very influential figure in the Indian Context is C. V. Raman, whose discovery of the Raman Effect made him earn the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. Raman highlighted the levels of intellectual curiosity and thinking independently as essential elements of scientific progress. In nurturing a culture of inquiry and philosophical reflection He frequently acknowledged the role of India's intellectual heritage. Raman argued that scientific investigation should be driven by curiosity about the natural world, a perspective that resonates with the broader Indian philosophical tradition in which the exploration of nature is closely tied to the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

Similarly, Satyendra Nath Bose made groundbreaking contributions to quantum mechanics through his work on statistical mechanics, which later became known as Bose–Einstein statistics. His collaboration with Albert Einstein led to the theoretical prediction of the Bose–Einstein condensate. Bose worked within an intellectual environment influenced by philosophical traditions such as Vedanta, which highlights the unity and interconnectedness of existence. Although his work remained firmly grounded in rigorous scientific methodology, the broader cultural context in which he operated reflected a worldview that recognised a deeper conceptual unity underlying physical phenomena.

Collectively, if we see and understand these examples, we can see how Indian scientific thinking has often evolved within a broader intellectual framework that integrates empirical investigation with metaphysical reflection and ethical awareness. Indian thinkers approached knowledge as a unified pursuit involving rational inquiry, intuitive insight, and philosophical contemplation. Rather than viewing science and philosophy as separate domains. This integrative orientation provides an important foundation for examining how Dharmic ethical principles may inform contemporary leadership models, particularly those emphasising holistic understanding, responsibility toward society, and alignment between knowledge and ethical action.

### **Western Scientific Perspectives**

The development of modern Western science has historically been grounded in empirical observation, experimentation, and rational analysis. From Francis Bacon to Isaac Newton, the Western scientific tradition emphasised systematic experimentation and the formulation of universal laws governing physical phenomena.

One of the most influential figures in this philosophical turn was Erwin Schrödinger, a central contributor to quantum theory. Beyond his technical contributions to physics, Schrödinger explored the philosophical implications of scientific knowledge. In his reflections on consciousness, he proposed that the multiplicity of individual minds may represent manifestations of a single universal consciousness. This perspective bears

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conceptual similarity to the non-dual metaphysics of Advaita Vedanta, which posits that the apparent separation between individual selves is ultimately illusory. Schrödinger's engagement with these ideas illustrates how developments in physics encouraged scientists to reconsider the philosophical foundations of individuality, perception, and reality.

Another prominent physicist who reflected on the philosophical dimensions of quantum theory was Werner Heisenberg, known for formulating the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. This principle demonstrated that certain pairs of physical properties—such as position and momentum—cannot be simultaneously measured with absolute precision. The implications of this discovery challenged classical assumptions about determinism and objective observation. Heisenberg later acknowledged that these conceptual shifts led him to recognize philosophical parallels between quantum mechanics and certain Eastern intellectual traditions, particularly those emphasizing the relational and dynamic nature of reality.

Similarly, Niels Bohr made significant contributions to the philosophical interpretation of quantum mechanics through his formulation of the Complementarity principle. According to this concept, seemingly contradictory descriptions of physical phenomena—such as wave and particle models of light—are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary aspects of a more comprehensive understanding. Bohr argued that different observational frameworks may reveal distinct but equally valid aspects of reality. This idea introduced a more nuanced epistemological perspective within scientific discourse, recognizing that multiple interpretive frameworks may be necessary to understand complex phenomena.

Collectively, these developments illustrate a gradual broadening within Western scientific thought. While the methodological foundations of science remain rooted in empirical observation and experimental verification, many scientists have acknowledged that the implications of modern physics extend into philosophical domains. Questions concerning consciousness, observation, and the structure of reality increasingly invite interdisciplinary dialogue between science and philosophy.

This growing openness toward philosophical reflection provides an important foundation for comparative studies such as the present research. By examining the convergence between Western scientific insights and philosophical traditions—including those rooted in Dharmic thought—it becomes possible to explore new conceptual frameworks that may inform contemporary discussions of ethics, responsibility, and leadership in a rapidly evolving scientific and technological world.

### ***Comparative Perspective: Dharmic Leadership and Contemporary Western Leadership Models***

Many of these approaches focus mainly on behavioural capabilities and organisational outcomes, often without clearly grounding leadership within a larger philosophical or ethical worldview. However, Leadership research in modern management studies has shaped several influential frameworks that explain how leaders influence organisational performance and follower behaviour. These models—including transformational leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership—have contributed meaningfully to understanding leadership effectiveness within contemporary organisations.

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In contrast, the ethical and metaphysical principles fixed in classical Indian thought are drawn upon in the perspective of Dharmic leadership. To conceptualise leadership as a moral responsibility related to social harmony and cosmic order Texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and other components of Indian Knowledge Systems are taken into consideration. Dharmic leadership integrates self-discipline, ethical responsibility, and collective Social welfare rather than emphasising individual achievement alone.

The table below highlights various key differences and areas of junction between dominant Western leadership models and the Dharmic Leadership Matrix that are projected in this study.

**Table: 2 Comparative Table based on Dharmic vs Western Leadership Models**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Dharmic Leadership (Indian Philosophical Perspective)</b>	<b>Western Leadership Models</b>
<b>Philosophical Foundation</b>	Rooted in <i>dharma</i> (ethical duty), spiritual awareness, and cosmic order.	Rooted in organizational theory, behavioral psychology, and empirical management research.
<b>Purpose of Leadership</b>	Welfare of society ( <i>Lokasangraha</i> ), ethical stewardship, and harmony.	Organizational performance, productivity, and strategic outcomes.
<b>Nature of Authority</b>	Moral legitimacy derived from righteous conduct and self-mastery.	Institutional authority derived from position, expertise, or influence.
<b>Decision-Making Framework</b>	Guided by ethical duty and long-term societal impact.	Often guided by efficiency, performance metrics, and stakeholder interests.
<b>Motivation Philosophy</b>	<i>Nishkama karma</i> — acting without attachment to personal gain.	Motivation through incentives, rewards, and organizational goals.
<b>Leadership Style</b>	Self-discipline, humility, ethical responsibility.	Transformational, transactional, charismatic, or servant leadership models.
<b>View of the Individual</b>	Individual as part of a larger moral and cosmic order.	Individual as a rational actor within an organizational system.
<b>Relationship with Followers</b>	Emphasis on compassion, harmony, and collective welfare.	Focus on influence, motivation, and performance alignment.
<b>Time Orientation</b>	Long-term, intergenerational responsibility.	Often short-to-medium-term strategic planning.
<b>View of Knowledge</b>	Integration of spiritual insight, ethics, and experiential wisdom.	Empirical research, behavioral studies, and management science.

### **Dharmic Leadership Matrix (DLM)**

Within Dharmic societies, leadership is not defined merely by positional authority or managerial capability. Rather, it is understood as an alignment with *dharma*, the principle that bears moral order, ethical duty, and responsibility toward collective welfare. Classical

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sources such as the Bhagavad Gita describe leadership as a disciplined practice grounded in self-mastery, purpose clarity, and service to society. Leaders are expected to control their own desires, act with integrity, and guide others through example rather than forced power. The Dharmic Leadership Matrix translates these philosophical understandings into a structured framework that can be applied within contemporary organizational and institutional contexts.

The DLM is organised around four unified dimensions: **ethical grounding, relational harmony, purposeful action, and transcendent vision**. Together, these dimensions form a combined leadership orientation. Ethical grounding provides the normative foundation for decision-making by attaching leadership behaviour in principles of integrity, responsibility, and moral duty. Relational harmony highlights interpersonal responsibility within organisations, encouraging leaders to promote trust, empathy, and cooperation among stakeholders. Purposeful action shows the principle of disciplined engagement inspired by the Dharmic idea of *nishkama karma*, where leaders perform their responsibilities with commitment while avoiding excessive attachment to personal benefits or outcomes. Finally, transcendent vision situates leadership within a broader social and ecological situation by encouraging leaders to align organisational goals with long-term societal welfare and sustainability.

Rather than functioning as inaccessible traits, these four dimensions interact vigorously to shape leadership behaviour. Ethical grounding confirms that decisions remain morally attached, relational harmony strengthens collective unity within institutions, purposeful action promotes resilience and disciplined effort in undefined environments, and transcendent vision expands the scope of leadership beyond immediate organisational benefits. When combined, these dimensions create a leadership orientation that balances internal self-discipline with external responsibility toward society.

In this way, the Dharmic Leadership Matrix provides a theoretical connection between ancient ethical wisdom and modern leadership challenges. The framework highlights how visions from Indian philosophical societies can contribute to modern debates on responsible leadership, sustainability, and organisational integrity. By placing leadership within an ethical and socially conscious worldview, the DLM offers a model capable of guiding leaders operating in complex institutional and global circumstances.

### ***Scriptural Foundations of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix***

The four dimensions of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix draw theoretical support from classical Indian philosophical texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. These texts present leadership as a moral discipline grounded in self-regulation, ethical responsibility, and Societal Welfare.

A central principle informing the dimension of **purposeful action** is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita:

#### **Bhagavad Gita 2.47**

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

#### **Translation**

You have the right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits of your actions.

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This verse establishes the principle of *nishkama karma*, which encourages leaders to perform their responsibilities with commitment while remaining detached from personal rewards. In organizational contexts, this perspective encourages disciplined effort and ethical consistency rather than short-term opportunism.

Another verse from the Bhagavad Gita highlights the social influence of leaders:

### **Bhagavad Gita 3.21**

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

#### **Translation**

Whatever a great person does, others follow.

This insight supports the dimension of **ethical grounding**, emphasizing that leadership behaviour establishes moral standards within organizations. Ethical conduct demonstrated by leaders shapes institutional culture and influences collective behaviour.

The principle of **self-mastery**, which underlies transcendent vision in the DLM, is reflected in the teachings of the Katha Upanishad:

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु

बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च

#### **Translation**

Know the self as the master of the chariot, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins.

The metaphor illustrates that effective leadership begins with internal discipline and clarity of intellect. Leaders who master their own impulses and emotions are better equipped to guide others and maintain ethical direction in complex environments.

Together, these teachings provide philosophical support for the Dharmic Leadership Matrix by linking leadership with duty, ethical conduct, and self-awareness.

### ***Operational Dimensions of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix***

For analytical clarity, the four components of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix can be defined as follows.

***Table 3: Dimensions of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix***

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Conceptual Basis</b>	<b>Leadership Implication</b>
<b>Ethical Grounding</b>	Dharma and moral responsibility	Leaders make decisions guided by integrity, fairness, and accountability
<b>Relational Harmony</b>	Compassion, cooperation, and collective welfare	Leaders build trust and promote collaboration among stakeholders
<b>Purposeful Action</b>	Nishkama Karma (disciplined action without attachment)	Leaders act with commitment while avoiding ego-driven decision-making
<b>Transcendent Vision</b>	Self-realization and social responsibility	Leaders align organizational goals with long-term societal and ecological welfare

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Figure: 1 Conceptual Diagram: Dharmic Leadership Matrix



These dimensions interact dynamically rather than functioning as isolated leadership traits. Ethical grounding establishes moral orientation, relational harmony sustains social cohesion within institutions, purposeful action promotes disciplined engagement with organizational objectives, and transcendent vision broadens the scope of leadership beyond immediate organizational outcomes.

Together, these dimensions create a leadership model that integrates **ethical awareness, emotional intelligence, and strategic foresight.**

### Ethical Grounding

The first dimension of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix is **Ethical Grounding**, which emphasizes the central role of moral responsibility in leadership decision-making. In Dharmic philosophy, ethical conduct is not considered optional but rather foundational to legitimate authority and social stability. The concept of *dharma* implies that leaders must act in accordance with moral principles that uphold justice, fairness, and social order.

Within the DLM framework, ethical grounding encourages leaders to evaluate decisions not only through pragmatic or economic considerations but also through ethical reflection. This perspective resonates with modern discussions of ethical leadership and corporate responsibility, where leaders are increasingly expected to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and integrity. By grounding leadership in ethical principles, organizations can cultivate trust, legitimacy, and long-term institutional stability.

### Relational Harmony

The second dimension, **Relational Harmony**, reflects the Dharmic emphasis on interconnectedness and social responsibility. Many Indian philosophical traditions highlight the importance of harmonious relationships within society, recognizing that individual actions inevitably influence the broader social environment. Leadership, therefore, involves maintaining balance among diverse stakeholders and fostering cooperative relationships within organizations and communities.

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In practical terms, relational harmony encourages leaders to prioritize empathy, dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving. This approach aligns with contemporary leadership theories that emphasize emotional intelligence, team cohesion, and inclusive decision-making. By cultivating mutual respect and shared understanding, leaders can create organizational cultures characterized by cooperation, trust, and collective engagement.

### Purposeful Action

The third dimension of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix is **Purposeful Action**, inspired by the philosophical principle of *nishkama karma* articulated in the Bhagavad Gita. This principle advocates disciplined action performed without attachment to personal rewards or outcomes. Rather than focusing solely on short-term results, individuals are encouraged to concentrate on the integrity and dedication with which they perform their duties.

Within the context of leadership, purposeful action encourages leaders to maintain commitment to ethical goals even in uncertain or challenging circumstances. It promotes resilience, consistency, and intrinsic motivation, enabling leaders to act responsibly regardless of external recognition or immediate success. This dimension also resonates with contemporary perspectives on purpose-driven leadership, which emphasize meaningful engagement, organizational mission, and commitment to broader societal objectives.

### Transcendent Vision

The fourth dimension, **Transcendent Vision**, highlights the importance of long-term thinking and alignment with collective welfare. Dharmic traditions frequently emphasize that leadership should extend beyond short-term gains and consider the broader consequences of decisions for society, future generations, and the natural environment.

A transcendent vision encourages leaders to adopt a holistic perspective that integrates ethical reflection, social responsibility, and sustainable development. Rather than focusing exclusively on immediate organizational performance, leaders guided by this principle strive to create enduring value and social stability. This perspective aligns with emerging models of responsible and sustainable leadership that seek to balance economic progress with ethical and ecological considerations.

### Implications for Leadership Practice

The integration of Dharmic ethical principles into contemporary leadership practice offers significant implications for leadership development, organizational culture, and strategic decision-making. As modern organizations operate in increasingly complex and globalized environments, leaders are required not only to demonstrate technical competence but also to navigate ethical dilemmas, cultural diversity, and long-term societal responsibilities. Dharmic philosophy provides a framework that emphasizes ethical awareness, self-discipline, and responsibility toward collective welfare, thereby offering valuable insights for leadership practice.

Within classical Indian thought, leadership is closely associated with the concept of *dharma*, which signifies moral duty, ethical responsibility, and alignment with the broader order of society. Philosophical texts such as the Bhagavad Gita emphasize that effective action arises from clarity of purpose and moral commitment rather than purely instrumental objectives. When applied to modern organizational contexts, these principles can enhance leadership effectiveness by encouraging ethical reflection, resilience, and long-term thinking.

### **Reducing Leadership Burnout through Detachment from Outcomes**

Another practical implication arises from the philosophical principle of *nishkama karma*, articulated in the Bhagavad Gita. This principle advocates disciplined action performed without excessive attachment to personal rewards or immediate outcomes. In leadership contexts, such an orientation encourages individuals to focus on the quality and sincerity of their actions rather than becoming overly preoccupied with success or failure.

This perspective can play a constructive role in addressing leadership burnout and decision fatigue, which are increasingly recognized challenges in modern organizational environments. By cultivating psychological detachment from outcomes while maintaining commitment to ethical action, leaders may sustain resilience, clarity of judgment, and emotional balance even in high-pressure situations.

### **Enhancing Cultural Inclusivity in Multinational Organizations**

The incorporation of Dharmic ethical principles can also contribute to greater cultural inclusivity within multinational organizations. As global institutions bring together individuals from diverse cultural, philosophical, and religious backgrounds, leadership frameworks that acknowledge multiple ethical traditions can foster mutual respect and understanding.

Dharmic philosophy emphasizes interconnectedness, social harmony, and the recognition of diversity within a broader ethical order. These principles resonate with contemporary organizational goals of inclusivity and intercultural dialogue. By integrating perspectives drawn from both Eastern and Western intellectual traditions, leadership development programs can encourage culturally sensitive approaches to management and decision-making.

### **Encouraging Sustainability and Long-Term Value Creation**

Dharmic ethics also place considerable emphasis on long-term responsibility and collective welfare. In many classical texts, ethical action is framed in terms of its impact on the stability and well-being of society. This orientation encourages leaders to consider the broader consequences of their decisions, including environmental sustainability and intergenerational responsibility.

Such a perspective aligns closely with emerging approaches to responsible leadership and sustainable business practices. Organizations increasingly recognize that long-term value creation depends on balancing economic performance with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The Dharmic emphasis on duty and social welfare therefore offers a philosophical foundation for leadership models that prioritize sustainable development and ethical accountability.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal a notable conceptual convergence between Dharmic ethical philosophy and contemporary leadership scholarship. By examining Indian philosophical traditions alongside developments in modern scientific thought and Western leadership theories, the analysis suggests that leadership can be understood not merely as a managerial function but as a multidimensional practice grounded in ethical responsibility, self-awareness, and social stewardship. Rather than treating leadership solely as a tool for organizational performance, the Dharmic perspective emphasizes the moral and societal

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responsibilities that accompany positions of authority. The Dharmic Leadership Matrix (DLM) proposed in this study therefore provides a conceptual framework through which these ethical and philosophical insights can be integrated into contemporary leadership discourse.

### **Convergence Between Dharmic Philosophy and Modern Leadership Theory**

One of the central findings of the study is the strong alignment between Dharmic ethical principles and several influential leadership theories developed within Western management scholarship. Although modern leadership models such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and ethical leadership emerged within different intellectual contexts, many of their core values resonate closely with the ethical ideas articulated in classical Indian philosophical texts.

Servant leadership theory also demonstrates significant conceptual overlap with Dharmic ethics. Robert K. Greenleaf's formulation of servant leadership emphasizes humility, service to others, and the moral responsibility of leaders to nurture the growth and well-being of followers. These principles closely resemble Dharmic teachings concerning compassion, selflessness, and responsibility toward society. The concept of *nishkama karma* encourages individuals to perform their responsibilities without attachment to personal rewards, thereby prioritizing collective welfare over individual ambition. In this sense, Dharmic philosophy provides a deeper ethical foundation for leadership approaches that emphasize service, responsibility, and the development of others.

Ethical leadership scholarship further reinforces this convergence. Scholars such as Joanne B. Ciulla argue that ethical reasoning and moral judgment are essential components of effective leadership. The Dharmic concept of *dharma* similarly emphasizes that leadership authority must be exercised in accordance with moral duty and justice. From this perspective, leadership legitimacy arises not merely from institutional authority or hierarchical position but from adherence to ethical principles that promote fairness, accountability, and social harmony. By situating leadership within a broader ethical framework, Dharmic philosophy reinforces contemporary calls for responsible and values-based leadership practices.

### **Scientific Perspectives and the Philosophy of Interconnectedness**

Another important insight emerging from this study concerns the philosophical implications of modern scientific thought. Twentieth-century developments in physics introduced new discussions about the nature of reality, observation, and systemic complexity. These discussions prompted several scientists to engage with philosophical questions that resonate with themes found in Eastern intellectual traditions.

The reflections of Erwin Schrödinger on the unity of consciousness illustrate this convergence particularly well. Schrödinger proposed that individual consciousness may represent manifestations of a deeper underlying unity. This perspective parallels philosophical ideas articulated in the Upanishads, which emphasize the fundamental unity of the self (*Atman*) and ultimate reality (*Brahman*). Although these perspectives originate from different intellectual traditions, both challenge strictly reductionist views of reality and encourage broader philosophical reflection on the nature of existence.

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Similarly, the work of Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr introduced epistemological insights that question purely deterministic interpretations of reality. Concepts such as the uncertainty principle and the principle of complementarity highlight the role of observation and interpretation in shaping scientific knowledge. These ideas suggest that understanding complex systems often requires multiple perspectives rather than rigid analytical reductionism.

David Bohm's concept of the implicate order further develops this holistic approach by proposing that observable phenomena emerge from deeper levels of interconnected reality. Bohm argued that the universe cannot be fully understood by analyzing isolated components alone; instead, it must be viewed as an interconnected whole. Such perspectives resonate strongly with philosophical ideas found in Dharmic traditions, where reality is often understood in terms of underlying unity and interdependence.

These scientific reflections have important implications for leadership studies. Modern organizations increasingly operate within complex, dynamic, and interconnected environments where simple linear models of decision-making may be insufficient. Systems thinking, interdisciplinary awareness, and holistic perspectives therefore become essential competencies for effective leadership. The philosophical emphasis on interconnectedness found in both modern scientific thought and Dharmic philosophy provides a valuable conceptual foundation for understanding leadership in such complex contexts.

### ***Limitations and Directions for Future Research***

Despite these contributions, the study has several limitations. The analysis is primarily conceptual and relies on comparative interpretation of philosophical and theoretical literature rather than empirical data. As a result, the Dharmic Leadership Matrix has not yet been empirically tested within organizational contexts.

Further research may also explore the relationship between Dharmic leadership principles and emerging areas of scholarship such as sustainable leadership, conscious leadership, and ethical governance. Such investigations could provide additional evidence regarding how philosophical traditions can contribute to the development of leadership models that are both effective and ethically grounded.

## **CONCLUSION**

The comparative analysis presented in this study highlights a meaningful convergence between Dharmic philosophical traditions and modern scientific thought, particularly in their reflections on consciousness, responsibility, and the interconnectedness of reality. Although these intellectual traditions originate from different historical and cultural contexts, both offer valuable insights that can inform contemporary discussions in leadership studies.

Indian philosophical traditions have long emphasized ethical responsibility, self-awareness, and the recognition of interconnectedness as essential elements of human conduct. Concepts such as *dharma*, *nishkama karma*, and the pursuit of self-knowledge articulated in texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads provide a framework in which leadership is viewed not merely as authority or power but as a form of moral stewardship. Within this perspective, leaders are expected to act with integrity, discipline, and awareness of their responsibilities toward the broader social order.

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At the same time, developments in twentieth-century science—particularly within quantum physics and the philosophy of science—have prompted scholars to reconsider traditional assumptions about objectivity, determinism, and the nature of reality. Scientists such as Erwin Schrödinger, Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and David Bohm explored philosophical questions concerning consciousness, observation, and systemic interconnectedness. Their reflections suggest that modern scientific inquiry increasingly acknowledges conceptual themes—such as unity, relationality, and complexity—that resonate with certain insights found in Eastern philosophical traditions.

Within this context, the **Dharmic Leadership Matrix (DLM)** proposed in this study offers a conceptual model that synthesizes insights from ancient wisdom traditions and modern organizational theory. By emphasizing ethical grounding, relational harmony, purposeful action, and transcendent vision, the DLM framework seeks to demonstrate how Dharmic philosophical principles can inform contemporary leadership competencies. This integrative approach highlights the possibility of leadership models that balance practical effectiveness with ethical and social responsibility.

The implications of this framework extend beyond theoretical discussion. As organizations increasingly confront complex global challenges—including technological disruption, environmental sustainability, and cultural diversity—there is a growing need for leadership paradigms that integrate ethical reflection with strategic decision-making. Dharmic ethics, with its emphasis on duty, balance, and long-term welfare, offers a valuable philosophical foundation for addressing these challenges.

Future research may further explore the practical application of the Dharmic Leadership Matrix within real-world organizational settings. Empirical studies could examine how Dharmic ethical principles influence leadership behavior, organizational culture, and decision-making processes within corporate institutions, educational organizations, and public sector governance. Leadership development programs and management training initiatives may also provide opportunities to test and refine this framework through interdisciplinary curricula that combine ethical philosophy with leadership practice.

In conclusion, the dialogue between Dharmic philosophy and modern scientific thought underscores the potential of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives in enriching contemporary leadership studies. By drawing upon both ancient philosophical wisdom and modern intellectual developments, scholars and practitioners can develop leadership models that are not only effective in organizational contexts but also aligned with broader ethical and societal values.

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