

# Leadership Strategy, Behavioural Focus and Firm Performance: A Review of Literature

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## Abstract

The strategic management literature has laid emphasis on the role of leadership at several phases of the strategic management process. The literature has however not addressed the construct of leadership strategy as well as integrating it into the mainstream literature on strategic management. Researches already done to link leadership with performance have been biased in terms of the scope of focus on the dimension of performance and at the same time have registered methodological and conceptual challenges affecting the generalization of findings. In this paper, the authors integrate the extant literature on leadership with that on leadership strategy and identify issues that call for an expanded scope on the construct of leadership. The paper reviews extant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature and raises diverse issues that present a case for a new theoretical model suitable to extend the current understanding on leadership and the phenomenon it brings about in organization into new frontiers in management. This paper proposes an integrated theoretical model for linking leadership strategies and firm performance while providing for the role of leadership paradigms, leadership behavioural focus and firm capabilities. The emerging theoretical propositions and implications for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** leadership, leadership strategy, leadership behavioural focus, firm capabilities, leadership paradigms, firm performance

## 1. Introduction

The strategic management literature has laid emphasis on the role played by leadership at several phases of the strategic management process which entail strategy formulation, choice and implementation, (Pearce, Robinson & Mital, 2007). One specific area across these that has been seen to link with leadership is that of change, a key theme in strategic management studies. Operationalization of the change management in an organization is executed through a well thought-out leadership process in a firm. Fitzroy and Hulbert, (2005) support this view and add that leadership is critical in the success of this process. While Thompson and Strickland (1993) hold the view that management devises an organization's strategy towards enhancing an organization's performance, scholars such as Pearce, Robinson and Mital, (2012) on the other hand, iterate that leaders need to spur commitment to embrace change by clarifying the strategic intent, building an organization and shaping its culture.

Whereas crafting and implementing a strategy for the business are management functions, it is clear that among all the things that managers do, few affect the organization's performance in a more lasting way than the manner in which the management team handles the tasks of charting the organization's long-term direction through leadership so as to produce the intended results. There are emerging indications that leadership comes in the process of strategy implementation because it exerts the facilitation needed to drive implementation forward and keep improving on how the strategy is being executed and that strong leadership is always essential for effective strategy execution (Pasmore, 2014). Traditionally, leadership has been discussed in the context of the functions of management and specifically related to the provision of direction towards the achievement of the organizational goals, (Thompson & Strickland, 1993).

There are important aspects of leadership which have been generated from the traditional perspective touching on the use of power, influence, leadership styles, characteristics and behaviours. Whereas in this traditional perspective, these cited aspects have been given some theoretical and conceptual attention, the developments in

strategic management theory and practice are indicating that they portend a higher potential than displayed in the traditional perspective (Pasmore, 2014). Thus, Northouse (2010) argues that leadership has gained the attention of researchers worldwide where different theoretical approaches have been developed to explain the complexities of the leadership process. Some researchers conceptualize leadership as a behaviour or a trait, whereas others view it from an information-processing perspective or relational standpoint. Yukl, (1994) is of the view that leadership has been studied using both qualitative and quantitative methods in many contexts, including small groups, therapeutic groups and large organizations. Collectively, the research findings on leadership from all those areas depict a process that is far more sophisticated and complex than the often-simplistic view presented in most scripts on leadership thus raising the need to study it with a view to highlighting the combined role played by leadership strategies and behaviour in driving a firm's performance (Rowe, 2001).

This is justified by the fact that even though according to Sinding *et al* (2014), leadership has fascinated people for centuries, it was only with the advent of the industrial revolution era that the construct of management and leadership in organizations became a topic in itself. In addition, there are disagreements regarding the construct of leadership stemming from the fact that it involves a complex interaction between the leader, followers and leadership situation which has seen some researchers define leadership in terms of personality and physical traits, while others believe that leadership is a temporary role that can be filled by anyone. There is however a common thread among the different conceptualizations of leadership based on the aspect of social influence. Moreover, Day, Gronn and Salas (2004) posit that even though existing literature on leadership development largely focuses on leadership skill development, and while this body of research examines directly observable behavior of leaders, what has not been adequately explored is the deeper, hidden self-knowledge that motivates people to act as leaders and further develop their leadership skills, which requires a behavioral lens towards its understanding. The outcome of this has attracted the attention of the behavioral scientists from the organization behavior stream that have started to single out strategic leadership as a point of focus in explaining firm strategic behavior. Pasmore, (2014) observes that, even though leaders have demonstrated awareness to the value of a well-defined business strategy, few of the leaders have given attention to aspects of leadership suitable to drive successful strategy implementation in organizations. According to Ali, Elmi and Mohammed, (2013), leadership strategy as a construct has been proven to be among the best remedies for addressing the aspects of success factors in an organization's strategy implementation process.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

The extant literature on leadership has been faulted for a number of reasons. The foremost of these has been that touching on the conceptualization of the leadership as a construct in that there has been lack of consensus in the understanding of the construct, persistent confusion regarding aspects that characterize the leadership process such as effective leadership, distinctions between leaders and those who are not leaders. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of the importance and value of leadership, several researchers agree that it is striking that the concept lacks coherence and agreement, (House & Aditya, 1997; Bennis, 1998; Bergsteiner, 2005). Additionally, there is still much debate as to what is leadership even though considerable theoretical and empirical leadership research efforts have been conducted, (Jens, 2015).

Secondly, in spite of the vast literature on the construct of leadership and its process, there is a scarcity of attention towards extending the same effort to explore an important aspect of leadership that deals with leadership strategy. It is only recently that practitioners have begun to recognize this gap and suggestions are being made towards consolidating these suggestions to form part of the existing rich literature on leadership. The concept of leadership strategy has not been given theoretical attention and details about its nature remain scanty. Only recently have researchers begun to address leadership even though it is yet to be incorporated into the theoretical work in leadership studies so that it can inform practice and empirical work, (Northouse, 2010). There is a need to consider the perspectives brought on board by the practitioners and attempts be made to integrate the experiences from practice into the mainstream set of literature on leadership as an essential construct in strategic management. It is our contention that given the increased attention on the role of leadership in the strategic management process, there is a need for scholars to identify attributes of leadership that should be aligned with the strategic management process both at formulation and implementation of strategies. Exploration of the nature of leadership strategy stands to align the construct of leadership and its phenomenon with the strategic management process in a way that will enhance the possibilities and attempts of linking the strategic management process with firm performance.

Thirdly, there has been limited research that has specifically addressed the relationship between leadership behavior and organizational performance. According to Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater and James (2002), there

has not been clear conceptualization of the outcomes on whether leadership can be categorized as a determinant of an organization's performance. Methodological issues have also emanated from operationalization of the construct of performance as many researchers only refer to financial and non-financial performance measurements while ignoring employee and customer satisfaction as a measure of a firm's performance (Norton, 1999).

In view of the above calls, this paper seeks to extend the current state of knowledge on the construct of leadership by exploring the nature of the construct of leadership strategy and the practical and empirical implications it raises for organizations and the subsequent firm strategic behavior. The paper has three objectives, namely to review the extant theoretical and empirical literature on leadership strategy, behaviour and performance; to identify emerging issues that call for a theoretical model linking the constructs; and to propose a theoretical model linking leadership strategy, behaviour and performance.

The current paper is considered to make a significant contribution to both general and strategic management studies. In undertaking this study, the paper responds to several gaps that require scholarly attention. First, the paper undertakes to fill the existing gap regarding the construct of leadership strategy that has not been given adequate attention in both theoretical and empirical literature. By integrating the work of Pasmore (2014) into the mainstream literature on leadership and strategic management, the paper integrates experiences gained from practice with the extant theoretical literature not only on aspects of leadership but also on strategy implementation where leadership has been suggested to play a critical role (Wehrich & Koontz, 1994).

Secondly, the contents of the paper are significant in integrating the diverse pieces of knowledge on leadership that appear somewhat scattered. Whereas the theoretical literature is relatively old and rich in content, there are more insights on the current developments and academic discoveries on leadership that need to be integrated into this extant work (Burns, 1978; Avery, 2004; Fitzroy & Hulbert, 2005). In this paper, the authors identify the inherent complementarities between the various schools of thought that have characterized the study of leadership and propose a blended set of theoretical literature in leadership studies. Doing so enables scholarship to consolidate the gains that have been made by the diverse scholarship attempts which stand to benefit future scholarship.

Thirdly, there has been a set of issues raised with regard to the link between the construct of leadership and that of performance. From a theoretical standpoint, the paper contributes towards addressing this link by adopting dimensions of leadership strategy as an intangible asset that brings potential to influence firm performance in dimensions that are broader than the narrow perspective that has leaned towards financial measurement. From an empirical point of view, there has been a limitation based on scope arising from the number of constructs that have been used in the leadership performance link thus leading to empirical results that have been inconclusive thus leading to unresolved problems (Fenwick & Gayle, 2008). This paper has comprehensively considered the emerging phenomenon from leadership strategy leading to performance and proposed several constructs that mediate and condition the phenomenon as the basis for the proposed theoretical framework and propositions. The framework and propositions advanced provide a direction for future research in a way that integrates several constructs in a single study.

## **2. Conceptualization of Key Constructs**

The constructs forming the basis of the study include leadership strategies, leadership behavioural focus, and leadership paradigm and how they are interlinked to aid in value creation for enhancing firm performance. This study will endeavour to outline the conceptualization of the outcomes of leadership in organizations through the construct of performance and attempt to give solutions to the methodological issues emanating from the operationalization of performance as a construct.

### *2.1 Leadership*

In order to address the concerns set by this paper, the constructs explaining the phenomenon brought about by leadership when deployed in organizations will be considered. In order to understand the phenomenon itself, it is imperative to start with the construct of leadership. Leadership as a function of management is associated with exerting influence to provide direction. Despite the lack of a conventional definition of the concept of leadership, it is generally agreed that for leadership to occur, there must be an individual having the ability and using that ability to influence others to work towards the achievement of a greater common goal. Leadership has been viewed as a process of social influence where a group of people is organized and guided on how they act towards a set purpose or direction (Chemers, 1997). Yukl (2002) supports this view by defining leadership as the process of influencing others to do what needs to be done and guiding them on how to effectively do it in addition to the process of enhancing individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives. Bratton, Granton and Nelson

(2005) observe that even though Yukl's definition emphasized on the aspects of communication skills which are attributed to successful leaders, it tends to focus on the dynamics and surface features of leadership as a process of social influence.

More critical accounts of leadership tend to focus on the hierarchical forms which give rise to power relationships. In an effort to describe what leadership is, Bruce and Kathleen (2006) defined a leader as one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted and coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives. Leadership has also been defined as the use of power and influence to direct the activities of followers towards goal achievement and direction which can affect followers' interpretation of events, the organization of their work activities, their commitment to key goals, their relationships with other followers and their access to cooperation and support from other work units (Colquitt, Le-Pine & Wesson, 2009).

There is also an additional perspective which indicates that leadership is an interaction between members of a group where leaders act as agents of change and persons who can affect other people's acts. Accordingly, leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. It is this perspective that holds implications for the role of leadership strategy as required in the strategic management processes, (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnely & Konopaske, 2009).

From the various descriptions so far explored, it is observable that (i) The leadership definitions here imply that it involves the use of influence and that all interpersonal relationships can involve leadership; (ii) Leadership involves the importance of being a change agent, being able to affect followers' behaviour and performance; (iii) leadership focuses on the accomplishment of goals. An important concern from the above consensus on what leadership entails is on how the leadership process is able to achieve the expectations arising from these areas of consensus. The goal achievement part of leadership is a critical point of consideration for strategic management in view of the entire processes that characterize strategy formulation, strategic choice and strategy implementation to achieve the vision of a firm. The authors are of the view that meeting these expectations requires leadership strategy. The extant literature however remains silent to a relatively high degree on this construct of leadership strategy.

## *2.2 Leadership Strategy*

So far the authors were able to trace some description of the construct of leadership strategy from the work of Pasmore, (2014) that has responded to the existing gap in knowledge regarding the construct. In this work, there is an acknowledgement of the fact that leadership is critical to the strategic management process which requires a strategy to be able to drive the strategic management process as organizations focus on moving towards their desired future direction. This perspective is in line with the theoretical and practical roots of the concept of leadership in management that classifies it under the broad function of management in providing direction, (Wehrich & Koontz, 1994). The perspective seems to bear resemblance to the stream that has given attention to transformational leadership studies that seeks to align group members' efforts with organizational goals by appealing to their motivational drives as the achievement of the group goals rests upon the contributions of the members (Cavazotte, Moreno & Bernardo, 2013). However, this stream of scholarship has not addressed the aspect of leadership strategies.

According to Pasmore (2014), leadership strategy bears similarity with business strategy in terms of the process that result in the formulation of a strategy. Pearce and Robinson, (1997) argue that the process culminating in strategy formulation entails a situational analysis of both the internal and external conditions together with a projection of organizations desired future, which is in line with the work of Ansoff (1965) that focuses on a strategic planning gap as strategists compare the current vis-a-vis the desired future situations. The strategy comes in place to respond to the identified gap existing between the current situation and the desired future state. In a similar way, a leadership strategy is based on a thorough analysis of the current situation and an informed view of the future of the organization's future performance. The strategy then provides a series of recommendations to close the gap between the current situation and desired future in terms of human resource required capacity for both formulation and implementation of an organizations strategy as it addresses the journey towards its future. Due to this capacity aspect of the strategy, a leadership strategy addresses five dimensions: quantity of leaders, the quality of leaders, skills and behaviour, collective leadership capabilities, and the leadership culture.

The dimension of leadership quantity relies on the organization structure adopted in the firm. The strategic management literature as well as that on organization theory acknowledges the critical role which the

organization structure plays in executing the demands of a strategy as evidenced from the work of Chandler (1962), Child (1972), Miles and Snow (1978). The construct of the structure specifies certain dimensions that distinguish an organization from another as well as breathing life into the abstract chart in terms of organizational processes such as communication, organizational development and change (Robbins, 2004). From the dimensions of the structure, a leadership strategy specifies the number of leaders needed, as indicated by current and projected formal leadership positions depicted on an organization chart in terms of the number, level, location, function, business unit, and reporting relationships.

Arising from the quantity dimension is the need to specify the required qualities that the leaders to occupy positions spelt out in the chart must have, to demonstrate their readiness and preparedness to execute the requirements of the strategy. The Upper Echelon theory points out that attention needs to be given to the attributes of TMT that are considered critical to driving the strategic agenda of the firm as it moves towards its future in terms of selection characterized by demographics, diversity, background, experience level and cognitions, (Ngugi & Kilika, 2018; Oduor & Kilika, 2018)

The third dimension of the leadership strategy deals with the skills and behaviour that are needed to implement the business strategy and create the desired culture in terms of skills, competencies, and knowledge base. The implementation phase of strategy requires compatibility between the demands of a strategy and the prevailing firm culture. Since in most cases this culture demanded by a strategy may not be in existence, it will be incumbent upon the leadership team vested with the responsibility of implementing the strategy to unleash behaviours that create and sustain a culture that is compatible with the demands of the strategy being operationalized.

Consistent with the above three dimensions is the need for collectiveness in the process of executing a strategy. There is also the issue of strategic decisions as one of the identified characteristics brought about by a new strategy that calls for collectivism in the way a strategy is implemented (Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Pearce & Robinson, 1997). One of the purposes of defining a mission is to provide unanimity of purpose and call for commitment and support from all functions and hierarchical levels of the organization. The leadership strategy responds to this by calling for a collective leadership, which is demonstrated by the capability of leaders acting together in groups and across boundaries to implement strategies, solve problems, respond to threats, adapt to change and support innovation in a bid to enhance performance.

The last dimension touches on the need to create the desired leadership culture, including the leadership practices in use, such as collaboration across boundaries, engagement of employees, accepting responsibility for outcomes, creating opportunities for others to lead, developing other leaders and learning how to learn among others. This is necessary as leaders alone cannot get all the work needed to generate results done but have to rely on the efforts of others. Thus leaders have to create a culture by which others are empowered and motivated to participate and contribute their efforts in a way that is directed towards the attainment of organizational goals.

Thus, a good leadership strategy takes these dimensions into account and makes explicit how many leaders are needed, of what kind, where, with what skills, and behaving in what fashion individually and collectively to achieve the total success being sought. The leadership strategy therefore is a construct that allows leadership to permeate all levels and functional areas of an organization such that it is felt in every area of an organization. Due to this, there is hence the need to explore the aspect of how the leadership in place as enabled by the leadership strategy engages in appropriate behaviours that will inspire followers to direct efforts towards the strategic goals of the organization as spelt out in its vision. Even though leadership behaviour has been substantially discussed in the extant literature, we explore aspects of this extant literature with a view to aligning it with the construct of leadership strategy.

### *2.3 Leadership Behavioral Focus*

The construct of leadership behavior is one that historically emerged from some of the early approaches into the construct of leadership. Two perspectives arise from this historical path as observed from the works of Lussier (2010) and Certo (2009). The approach by Lussier, (2010) indicates that the leading research is no longer concerned with the trait theory paradigm but rather the behavioral theory paradigm. It is important to realize that a leader's behavior is based on their traits and skills even though the behavioral theorists focus on behavior. Under this paradigm, the manager's attitudes and leadership personality traits directly affect his or her behavior and how to relate with employees.

Certo (2009) on the other hand, warns that the failure to identify predictive leadership traits led researchers in the area of leadership to turn to other variables to explain leadership success. The behavioural approach looks at what good leaders do rather than looking at the traits leaders should possess. Under the structure behaviour, the

leadership activity delineates the relationship between the leader and the leader's followers or establishes well-defined procedures that followers need to follow so as to perform their tasks. Structure behaviour is helpful to leaders as it enables them minimize follower activities that do not significantly contribute to attainment of the organizational goal. This calls for leaders to exercise care, and not to go overboard and discourage follower activity that will contribute to achievement of the organizational goals. Consideration behaviour on the other hand, entails a leadership behaviour that reflects friendship, respect, mutual trust and warmth in the leader-followers relationship. This type of behaviour encourages a good human relationship between the leader and the followers.

Based on these works, other scholars have undertaken to expound on the two aspects of behavior for practical application. Farris (1988) identified task-oriented behaviors and relations-oriented behaviors which are almost the same as job-centred behaviour and employee-centred behaviour respectively. Leaders guided by task-oriented behaviors are synonymous with reaching goals and help their employees achieve their goals by defining roles, establishing goals in addition to the methods of evaluations, direct followers, setting time and demonstrate how the goals are to be achieved. As a rule, task-oriented leaders use a one-way communication method to clarify what, who and how of doing things so as to achieve an organization's goals. Northouse, (2010) indicated that task-oriented leaders coordinate, plan, and schedule work-related activities. They motivate their employees and provide them with the required equipment, supplies, and technical assistance for completing the task. Task-oriented behaviors are known to clarify roles and objectives, monitoring individual performance and operations, and short-term planning (Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2009). Clarifying behaviors include assigning tasks, defining job responsibilities, and setting performance standards. Monitoring behaviors include checking progress and quality of work. Planning behaviors entail determining what staff require in an effort to reach the organization's goals and objectives. Relations-oriented leaders, on the other hand, are more concerned with developing interpersonal relationships and involve a two-way communication method through social and emotional support while bringing employees' comfort among themselves, their co-workers, and their situations (Northouse, 2010).

Relations-oriented leaders demonstrate an understanding of their employees' problems. They help to develop their employees' careers and provide their employees with enough information to do the job, they allow individual autonomy in work, and they show appreciation. Yukl (2006) explains that relations-oriented leadership behaviors include supporting, developing and recognizing behaviors. On the other hand, it is argued that supporting behaviors include accepting others and developing concerns and confidence for the needs of others. Developing behaviors provide potential benefits to new, inexperienced supervisors, colleagues, peers, or subordinates. Recognizing behaviors show praise and appreciation to others who have contributed to effective performances, significant achievements and important contributions to the organization.

Considering these observations, two issues may be generated from the literature, namely what leadership behaviour is and how the leader undertakes to deploy the respective behaviour in view of the strategic goals that have to be achieved. In response, we note that leadership behaviour has to be considered in terms of what the leader systematically focuses on and repeatedly does to cause others to act in a way that leads to the achievement of desired results. The behavioral theories to leadership suggest that leadership behaviour is a predictor of the leader's leadership influence and the best determinant of the leadership success. The behavioral school of management considers behaviour in terms of what one does and therefore their actions. In view of these, leadership behaviour is considered in this paper as a combination of the (i) leader's belief in what is the optimal action to trigger goal oriented follower behaviors based on a diversity of contingencies, (ii) the set of actions the leader systematically and repeatedly engages in so as to promote the legitimate interest of the organization. The belief part is important as the leader has to consider a wide range of contingencies in the context where leadership is deployed and implies that the leader will need to be alert to as many contingencies as possible.

#### *2.4 Leadership Paradigm*

Leaders are expected to provide direction and make choices that they deem most suitable to optimize results. This is a process that will require a leader to provide the direction and make choices based on important premises that not only offer justification but also optimize on a diversity of contingencies likely to enhance the likelihood of galvanizing follower support for the choices, thus calling for an understanding of the role of the leader's paradigm in leadership processes. Some scholars point that such paradigms evolve from the social, historical, cultural and political contexts the leaders find themselves in. Kuhn (1962) introduced this construct of paradigm in the context of scientific thinking which has been embraced in decision-making processes in management and by business researchers in an attempt to enhance objectivity in decision making. According to Kuhn (1962), a paradigm refers to intellectual perception or view, accepted by an individual or a society as a clear example,

model, or pattern of how things work in the world. A paradigm can be a useful construct for a study to aid interpretation and understanding especially in the context of leadership where the leader faces diverse contingencies inviting the need to understand their perception and interpretation of the context. Embracing the construct of paradigm gives an opportunity to explain how and why in one organization different leadership approaches may prevail due to the behaviours exhibited by the leaders depending on the diversity of contexts and situations that both the leaders and the units in the organization face.

Paradigms of leadership have therefore been embraced from the perspective of theories which have arisen out of studying a particular situation, for example business, public service or education, so as to emphasize different elements and values relevant to the nature and purpose of that organizational sector. Consequently, paradigms differ in their focus depending on where they situate leadership on any of the three areas such as the person, the position or the process. When leadership is located in personhood, the traits, attributes or competencies of a leader and the leader/follower relationship are central. In positional leadership, power, authority, role and hierarchy will feature with the emphasis on the leader within organizational systems. When leadership is seen as a process, interactions and reciprocity of relationships will be the prime focus of attention.

Avery (2004) proposed nine indices that have been used to differentiate among four paradigms: classical, transactional, visionary and organic. The nine indices include decision making, a range of staff's power, power distance between leader and the staff, key player of the organization, source of staff's commitment, staff's responsibility, situation of management and leadership in the organization, situation of diversity in the organization and situation of control in the organization. The classical leadership is considered the oldest paradigm with its origins in antiquity, and is still used in contemporary organizations (Avery, 2004). This paradigm reflected the prevailing view in the business literature until the 1970s when the human relations movement led to more of a focus on followers and their environment. Secondly, a transaction or exchange process is the basis of the commonly employed transactional leadership paradigm, (Evans & Dermer, 1974; House & Mitchell, 1974). It has been argued that the transactional leader recognizes subordinates' needs and desires and then clarifies how those needs and desires will be met in exchange for subordinates' work.

In the last three decades, visionary (transformational, charismatic) leadership has received increasing attention (House, 1977; Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Burns, 1998). It added a new dimension to organizational studies that entails the visionary aspect of leadership and the emotional involvement of employees within an organization. A visionary leader can create an impression that he or she has high competence and a vision to achieve success and in turn, subordinates are expected to respond with enthusiasm and commitment to the leadership objectives and may be recruited because they share the vision. Organic leadership is the fourth leadership paradigm and is relatively new to organizational studies in comparison to the other three, (Drath 2001; Avery 2004). Various scholars have argued that organic leadership is likely to blur the formal distinction between leaders and followers because it relies on reciprocal actions, where team members work together in whatever roles of authority and power they may have, not based on position power (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986; Hirschhorn, 1997; Raelin, 2003).

### *2.5 Firm Performance*

Civelek, Çemberci, Artar, and Uca, (2015) point out that performance is a multidimensional concept that is used to determine the success of a business in terms of the level of achieving the objectives of a business. The short-term goals of firms include improving efficiency, reducing the level of inventories, and shortening the rate of turnover while the long-term objective entails increasing the market share and profitability. To be able to make a comparison between organizations and to assess their behaviors over time, financial measurements and market measurement criteria are used as instruments. When performance dimensions are mentioned in relation to operations, the first concepts that come to mind are sales and firm size. Then, the factors of effectiveness and efficiency are added to these two dimensions. Effectiveness is the degree of achieving the set goals of a firm. Efficiency is the ability of a firm to produce the desired outputs with minimum resources (raw materials, money, human resources).

On the other hand, Koçoğlu, (2010) looks at performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and defines firm performance as the process of achieving firm goals in an efficient and effective way. To measure firm performance, return on investment (ROI), market share, a profit margin of sales, growth rate of ROI, increase in sales, growth in market share, and competitive position is used as measurement criteria in the literature. It can be said that in the 2000s new dimensions such as utilization of inputs, quality, innovation, and quality of working life have been added to these factors and the scope of the concept of performance has broadened. Today, the dimensions of employee behavior, market share, product or market leadership, and public responsibility have

been added to this classification.

Bernardin, Kane, Ross, Spina, and Johnson (1995) offered a different perspective of performance indicating that it should be defined in terms of the outcomes of work because it provides the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of the organization, customer satisfaction, and economic contribution. Other definitions like that offered by Brumbach (1988) considered performance to mean both behaviors and results. Behaviors emanate from the performer and transform performance from abstraction to action, not just the instruments for results, behaviors are also outcomes in their own right as the product of mental and physical effort applied to tasks and can be judged apart from results. There are also psychological and employee-centered views, such as that of Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg (2000) where performance is a function of employee ability, motivation, and opportunity. Rayner and Adam-Smith (2009) assert that it is not only a question of how performance is defined but also of who within the organization is, or are, responsible for defining performance standards. Often, it is the organization itself that determines performance and how it will be measured. Performance requirements are part of a strategic planning process, cascading top-down through the organization from senior management.

Thus, organizational performance refers to the ability of an enterprise to achieve set objectives such as high profit, quality product, large market share, good financial results, and survival at a pre-determined time using relevant strategy for action (Koontz & Donnell, 1993). Organizational performance can also be used to view how an enterprise is doing in terms of the level of profit, market share and product quality in relation to other enterprises in the same industry. Consequently, it is a reflection of the productivity of members of an enterprise measured in terms of revenue, profit, growth, development, and expansion of the organization. Understanding the effects of leadership on performance is also important because leadership is viewed by some researchers as one of the key driving forces for improving a firm's performance. Effective leadership is seen as a powerful source of management development and sustained competitive advantage for organizational performance improvement (Lado, Boyd & Wright, 1992; Avolio, 1999). Huczynski and Buchanani (2013) argue that for change to be successful, the soft human issues need to be integrated with hard structures and systems within an organization. This requires skilled change agents and an organizational culture which welcomes change and appropriate management system.

### *2.6 Issues Arising from the Conceptual Review*

The reviewed literature on the constructs in the study raises several issues that need the attention of scholars in strategic management. The first issue regards the richness of the literature drawn from a diverse multidisciplinary background that has reflected general management, strategic management, organization theory and behavior. Based on this multidisciplinary underpinning, the constructs have been broadly conceptualized such that their defining nature is understandable and the set of operational indicators that display the characteristics of each clearly spelt out.

Secondly arising from the rich literature is a set of dilemmas that scholarship needs to address theoretically and empirically. We raise these dilemmas based on three considerations: scope of understanding of the constructs, the emergent phenomenon, and roles of the constructs in the emergent phenomenon. With regard to the current understanding of the constructs, even though it is noted that the diversity alluded to earlier leading to their descriptions and identification of operational indicators has offered an undisputed description, that state may not extend to all the constructs. We justify this argument based on the construct of performance where most attention has been given to the objective indicators. Considering the nature of the construct of leadership and that of leadership strategy, we argue that deployment of these constructs in a strategically oriented setting ushers into an organization a dispensation that marshals an entire organization into a unified system to solidly focus on a collective organizational vision that should reflect the contribution of all.

In view of this, and while most attempts to measure performance have focused on financial dimensions, there is consistency with arguments generated from Kontoghiorghes *et.al* (2005), Kilika (2012) and Hucznski and Buchanan (2013), which call for the construct of performance to be expanded to link leadership directly to performance and include employees' participation. The deployment of the leadership strategy brings about a collective organizational effort as well as entrenching a performance-oriented culture that reflects on the behaviors of employees. The construct of performance needs thus to be expanded to show how the leadership in place has contributed to the organization in other dimensions besides financial but are of strategic importance to management such as the firm's preparedness for change, adaptation and learning capability.

With regard to the emergent phenomenon arising from the deployment of leadership strategy, it is observable that deployment of the construct of leadership strategy will usher a situation in which the organization will experience both intermediate and ultimate outcomes at both the leadership and employee levels. While at the



leadership level, the intermediate states brought about will touch on the leadership behaviours that the leaders will exhibit in directing workers towards the attainment of the organizational vision, at the employee level, there is a possibility of generating employee capabilities that will act as required competencies that an organization benefits from due to the proper deployment of the leadership strategy. Looking at the dimensions of the leadership strategy, it is possible to isolate a number of attributes that can offer an organization the opportunity to derive employee based competencies: the leadership culture that embraces employee engagement, empowerment and learning to learn and the capabilities aspect that emphasizes among other things, solving problems and supporting innovation (Pasmore, 2014). Therefore based on this logic, the phenomenon that results from the deployment of leadership strategy needs to provide for the role of generated firm based employee capabilities.

In the same breath, while considering the phenomenon, the contextual setting of the deployment of the leadership strategy needs to be given attention. Pasmore (2014) in addressing the origin and role of the leadership strategy underscores the role of analysis of the situation prevailing which an organization responds to through the adopted business strategy. Arguing from the nature of strategic decision making where the role of the external context is considered to play an important role, it is our view that the phenomenon involving deployment of a leadership strategy needs not ignore the role of the external context faced by the firm. We further observe that, if the leadership strategy is considered as a resource, it would be necessary to incorporate aspects of the external context where the firm operates so as to mitigate the limitations that have been associated with the resource-based perspective in failing to integrate environmental considerations (Goeltz, 2014).

### 2.7 Review of Relevant Theories

The conceptual discussion has tried to link leadership strategies, behaviors and firm performance and calls for an examination of relevant theories emanating from this phenomenon. In view of this observation, the paper considers these constructs and explains each as to demonstrate how they fit in a phenomenon that is anchored on the postulates of the relevant theories. The arguments of this paper are anchored on several theories that focus on leadership strategies, behaviour, and firm performance. The theories under this study include Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, Contingency Theory, Transformational Leadership theory and finally the Path-Goal Theory.

#### 2.7.1 Leader-Member- Exchange Theory

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory conceptualizes leadership as a process that involves interactions between leaders and followers and can be well explained within the leadership-making model of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991). The LMX theory works in two ways; first, it describes and secondly, it prescribes. In both instances, the central concept is the dyadic relationship that a leader forms with each of their subordinates. Descriptively, LMX theory suggests that it is important to recognize the existence of in-groups and out-groups within a group or organization. Extant research indicates that employees who have high-quality LMX relationships with their supervisors end up with more positive work attitudes and higher performance than those who do not. However, it is also true that when employees feel like their supervisors are favoring some employees over others; it is likely to undermine the positive effects of LMX even among employees who have high-quality exchanges with their supervisor, (Hsiung & Bolino, 2017). The postulates of this theory are considered relevant in strategic management in that they address an important aspect that regards the how of strategy implementation which is the focus of the leadership strategy. It can, therefore, explain components of leadership behavioral focus.

#### 2.7.2 Contingency Theories

To complement the LMX theory, Fiedler's contingency theory comes in handy to explain that the performance of a leader depends on two interrelated factors: the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence that is the likelihood that the leader can successfully accomplish the job, and the leaders' basic motivation that is whether the leader's self-esteem depends primarily on accomplishing the task or on having close supportive relations with others. With respect to leaders' basic motivation, Fiedler believes that leaders are either task-motivated or relationship-motivated. These basic motivations are similar to initiating structure/concern for production and consideration/concern for people. Fiedler's theory is also based on the premise that leaders have one dominant leadership style that is resistant to change. Fiedler suggests that leaders must learn to manipulate or influence the leadership situation in order to create a 'match' between their leadership style and the amount of control within the situation at hand, (Sinding, *et al.*, 2014).

#### 2.7.3 Transformational Leadership Theory

According to Burns, (1978), transformational leadership involves the engagement of a leader and followers in a

mutual process to higher levels of morality and motivation. Transformational leadership can be defined on the basis of the impact it has on the followers' motivation and performance (Bass, 1985). Bass asserted that transformational leaders garner trust, loyalty, respect and admiration from their followers. Transformational leadership aims at changing the culture of an organization, state or nation with a new and compelling vision for the entity, and it does this by marshaling the appropriate support to make that vision the new reality. Gomez-Mejia (2008) observes that transformational leadership is a type of leadership that inspires organizational success by profoundly affecting followers' beliefs in what an organization should be, as well as their values, such as justice and integrity. This style of leadership creates a sense of duty within an organization, encourages new ways of handling problems and promotes learning for all organization members, (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016; Cheng & Sheu, 2017; Muralidharan & Pathak, 2018).

#### 2.7.4 Path-Goal Theory

Lastly, Path-goal theory is about how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish designated goals. Drawing heavily from research on what motivates employees, the path-goal theory was developed by Evans, (1970) and House, (1971). The theory specifies four leadership behaviors; that is a directive leader, supportive leader, participative leader, and an achievement-oriented leader. A directive leader establishes expectations for followers, determines targets to attain, organizes tasks, sets deadlines and schedules and closely monitors progress. A supportive leader is warm and friendly and shows concern about the problems and needs of the subordinates. A participative leader actively elicits subordinate input and opinions and uses them when making decisions that affect the group. This is similar to a democratic leadership style. An achievement-oriented leader is primarily concerned with motivating people by setting challenging goals, coaching subordinates to perform at the highest level, and rewarding those who meet or exceed their targets, (Gomez-Mejia, 2008; Northouse, 2016).

#### 2.7.5 Model of Leadership Strategy

The model was proposed by Pasmore (2014) due to the role leadership plays in strategic management practices involving adapting to change, implementing strategic plans and preparing for an uncertain future. The model is premised on the observation that even though leaders are aware of the value of a well-defined strategy, few of them, however, give attention to the leadership that will be required to implement strategies that call for changes in the direction or capabilities of the organization. This situation leads to two important concerns that need to be addressed : (i) can the next generation of leaders in an organization be counted upon to step up once in position? (ii) What can organizations do to avoid the risks associated with inadequate leadership and better prepare their current and future leaders for changes that are unforeseen? In view of these concerns, the concept of leadership strategy was proposed in the model for the purpose of identifying an important factor for charting through the turmoil through the quality of the organization's leadership talent. The model attempts to describe what leadership strategy is and does in an organization as well as how it links with an organization's business strategy.

In an attempt to describe what leadership strategy is, Pasmore (2014) pointed out that leadership begins with individuals in leadership but does not end there. There is need to understand leadership culture which is defined by collective actions of formal and informal leaders acting together to influence organizational success, i.e. it is not simply the number and quality of individual leaders that determines organizational success, but the ability of formal and informal leaders to pull together in the support of organizational goals that ultimately makes the difference. Thus leadership is both the leaders themselves and the relationships among them-pointing to collective or connected, distributive, interdependent or boundariless leadership system.

The Model indicates that in describing the leadership of an organization, at a minimum we should consider: (i) quantity of leaders needed as depicted in the organization structure; (ii) the qualities desired in selection (demographics, diversity, background, experience level) the skills and behaviors needed to implement the business strategy and create the desired culture; (iii) the collective leadership capabilities of leaders acting together in groups and across boundaries to implement strategies, solve problems, respond to threats, adapt to change, support innovation; (iv) the desired leadership culture, including the leadership practices in use such and collaboration across boundaries, engagement of employees, accepting opportunities for others to lead, developing other leaders, learning how to learn. Thus a leadership strategy makes explicit how many leaders an organization needs, of what kind, where, with what skills and behaving in what fashion individually and collectively to achieve the total success an organization seeks.

#### 2.7.6 Theoretical Issues

This theoretical literature reviewed raises a number of issues. One of the clearest manifestations of the theories is how several constructs related to leadership are anchored on the postulates of the theories. The constructs are those of leadership behavior, leadership paradigm, and leadership strategy. The LMX theory is clear on how it roots

certain leadership behaviors and so is the path-goal theory. The contingency theory also addresses aspects of leadership styles while transformational leadership theory addresses aspects of the leadership paradigm. The model on leadership strategy by Pasmore has paid attention to the construct of leadership strategy. Secondly, it is also notable that there are complementarities among the theories in their arguments. The LMX theory and the contingency approach can be said to focus on leadership behavior even though they use different terminologies in their descriptions. In the same breath, the contingency theory in its attempt to focus on leadership styles raises implications for leadership paradigms. The transformational leadership theory, even though does not directly mention the aspect of a paradigm yet advances arguments that promote adoption of one the paradigms identified in the work of Avery, (2004).

An important point of observation is that touching on a leadership strategy. Whereas extant literature has for long remained silent on this construct, using the arguments drawn from the model proposed by Pasmore (2014), we trace leadership strategy from the construct of leadership using the perspective adopted by Gibson *et.al* (2009) and link it with the strategic management process through the process of situational analysis. Strategic management emphasizes carrying out a situational analysis so as to generate an appropriate strategy that matches the organization's internal systems with the external context. In the same breadth, once the strategy is developed, an organization needs to carry out a leadership situational analysis to establish the leadership requirements for effectively implementing each strategy which becomes the point of focus of the leadership strategy and an identification of its components.

There has also been an attempt to apply the theories in empirical work with evidence indicating that some constructs have been drawn from these theories. Among the constructs that have been used in empirical studies include innovative behaviour and humorous leadership; leadership styles and organizational performance; leadership behaviours and firm performance; behaviour and leader-follower dyads; leadership behaviours and employee performance; leadership behaviours and managing change; business strategy and firm performance; competitive strategies, performance measurement and firm performance. From the studies, it is worthwhile to note that most of the theories focus more on leadership styles and very few on leadership behaviors. LMX Theory has emphasized the dyadic relationship and in-groups relationships, contingency theory has used leadership situation and motivation basis as the variables, transformational leadership theory has used followers motivation and performance as the key variables while the path-goal theory emphasizes four leadership behaviors: directive leader, supportive leader, participative leader and an achievement-oriented leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1991; Robbins, Judge & Sanghi , 2009; Northouse, 2010).

### 2.8 The Case for a Theoretical Model

In order to extend the extant rich literature on leadership, we identify several points that emerge as issues from the reviewed literature to support a case for the development of a new model putting into consideration leadership strategy, leadership paradigm, behavior and performance. The first of these points arises from the diversity of indicators that both the conceptual and empirical literature proposes for operationalizing the constructs. Whereas the proposed indicators have derived from conceptual and theoretical backgrounds, the exact behavior of the constructs is best understood when examined from practice in which case it becomes imperative for scholars to theorize and model a relationship among the constructs to be empirically investigated using their relevant indicators. From the reviewed literature, it was pointed out that different concepts of leadership have been employed in different studies thus producing findings that make it virtually impossible to make direct comparisons. Further, there are gaps and unanswered questions arising from levels of leadership that have not been distinguished. A new theoretical model offers an opportunity to theorize and put forward propositions at the abstraction level that can be empirically investigated as hypotheses with factual data (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2004).

The second point of consideration arises from the dimension of the scope that has been given to both the conceptualization and empirical focus in the understanding of leadership, the emergent phenomenon, and nature of relationships and contexts of study. In terms of conceptualization, two constructs need attention: leadership strategy and performance. Even though leadership strategy has been traced from some of the leadership perspectives, the version proposed by Pasmore is far more comprehensive and specific for application and calls for consideration in attempts to model relationships that seek to understand the path leading from strategy to implementation of those strategies. Doing so can also offer an impetus towards further explanations on lingering questions touching on strategy implementation- performance link. The construct of performance has varied perspectives and much of the attention has been given to objective measures at the expense of qualitative measures. Some of the outcomes of leadership are qualitative in nature and there is a need to integrate these dimensions in future research to provide a more comprehensive perspective on performance as attempts are

made to link leadership with performance. This is in line with calls that have been made raising the need to re-examine the leadership-performance relationship whereby one of the identified problems is that relating to the quality of performance measurement (Luliya *et al.*, 2013). When selecting the measurements of performance, previous researchers have employed financial measurements or non-financial measurements, rather than employing both kinds of measures in order to enhance the validity of the research.

In terms of the context, the reviewed empirical work has focused more on the advanced economies limiting the scope of generalization of the findings. There are opportunities offered by globalization in the emerging economies. In view of this, there is a need for geographical expansion of the scope so far given to including other contexts which require that new models be suggested to provide for a way of measuring the behavior of the constructs in different contexts (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011; Pundt, 2015; Collette, 2016).

In terms of empirical work, we find that a gap exists in terms of the number of the variables that have been used in a single study. This has a bearing on the direction future research should take in that scholars need to embrace a broad conceptualization of leadership such as that offered by Avery (2004) on the four leadership paradigms. This will broaden the scope of the leadership perspective measures. From the empirical review, we identify several streams that have been adopted in research. The first stream is that attempting to link leadership to firm performance. For example, Awulosi *et al.* (2015), Albert *et al.* (2015), Koech and Namusonge (2012), Obiwuru *et al.* (2011) and Fenwick and Gayle (2008) have tried to link leadership styles and firm performance. Others like Pundt, (2015), Karamat, (2013), Collete, (2016), Julia, (2015), Kisiangani and Emily, (2015), Veronicah, (2011) and Gift and Frans, (2006) have tried to link leadership behavior and performance.

The second stream has focused on leadership behaviours and paradigms where many scholars have critically examined the effectiveness of leadership paradigms and behaviors (Analoui, 1999; Avery, 2004; Drath, 2001; House & Aditya, 1997; Kakabadse & Kakabadse 1999; Shamir *et al.* 1993; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 1999). The state of the findings arrived at indicates that the leadership-performance relationship is full of difficulties and has many unsolved problems, including methodological ones such that conclusions cannot be drawn about the extent to which leadership behaviors and styles facilitate the improvement of organizational performance.

Thirdly is the stream that has implicitly attempted to consider some of the aspects of leadership strategy. Extant studies have explored the strategic role of leadership to investigate how to employ leadership paradigms and use leadership behaviour to improve organizational performance (Judge, Bono, Ilies & Gerhardt, 2002; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Keller, 2006; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Meyer & Heppard, 2000; Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson & Dickson, 2004; Yukl, 2002). This has been premised on the argument that intangible assets such as leadership styles, culture, skill and competence, and motivation are seen increasingly as key sources of strength in those firms that can combine people and processes and organizational performance (Purcell *et al.*, 2004).

Fourth, is the stream focusing on leadership paradigms where much prior research has examined the assumed leadership-performance relationship, but it has examined a restricted number of leadership paradigms (e.g. visionary and transactional paradigms) while ignoring the potential role of other paradigms (e.g. classical and organic paradigms). Bernard Bass' (1985) distinction between transformational and transactional leadership is one such example. Scholars have criticised Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership, finding that there is no one best way of thinking about leadership, rather than different kinds of leadership reflect social and historical roots, depending on the context (Avery, 2004; Bryman, 1992; Drath, 2001; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 1999). This implies that different leadership paradigms could affect performance differently, depending on the context. Thus, when researching the leadership-performance relationship, the context needs to be taken into account and more paradigms need to be considered. Previous studies led to the expectation that leadership paradigms will have direct effects on customer satisfaction, staff satisfaction, and financial performance. In general, however, the effects of leadership on organizational performance have not been well studied, according to House and Aditya's review of 1997, who criticized leadership studies for focusing excessively on superior-subordinate relationships to the exclusion of several other functions that leaders perform, and to the exclusion of organizational and environmental variables that are crucial to mediate the leadership-performance relationship. Another problem with existing studies on leadership is that the results depend on the level of analysis. Other scholars have also suggested that leaders and their leadership style influence both their subordinates and organizational outcomes (Tarabishy, Solomon, Fernald & Sashkin, 2005).

### **3. The Proposed Theoretical Framework**

In view of the above arguments, moving forward with the attempts to integrate leadership with studies in strategic management, the authors are of the view that a new model is required to offer that direction. The required model needs to be premised upon the pillars of leadership strategy, leadership behavioral focus,

leadership paradigm, the context of leadership and firm performance. In theory building, scholars have the challenge of not only identifying the constructs that build a phenomenon, but also the role played by each construct in the phenomenon and the likely impact on the phenomenon. Thus, we propose a new model linking leadership strategy with firm performance in the context of leadership behavioral focus, firm capabilities, leadership paradigm and the firm context. The model is summarised in figure 1.

### *3.1 Leadership Strategy and Firm Performance*

The proposed phenomenon is initiated by the deployment of leadership strategy as the antecedent factor. The leadership strategy as proposed by Pasmore (2014) derives from the business strategy adopted by the firm to optimize on external conditions availed by identified opportunities that must be responded to in order to enhance survival of the firm. The construct has been operationalized in a way that when deployed, it permeates all the facets of an organization in reflecting the role it should play as pointed out by Pasmore (2014) that leadership is greater than an individual leader so as to usher interdependence, networking, collectiveness and connected leadership in the entire organization. Understood from this perspective, the deployment of the leadership strategy will usher a situation in which one of the key defining characteristics of strategic decisions of multifunctional consequences starts to be felt in the organization.

This state will realize a state of an organizational system that solidly pursues its vision and unites to realize its promise in terms of actual performance. Borrowing from the postulates of the RBV, the state of the system created may be regarded as an intangible strategic resource for the organization that bears all the attributes of strategic resources under the VRION Framework so as to deliver superior performance to the organization. The performance construct has been widely measured using objective indicators mostly financial in nature, yet due to the nature of the leadership strategy construct that creates a people based organizational system will deliver results that go beyond the financial results. Such measures will include dimensions of organizational health such as flexibility, adaptability, readiness for change and inbuilt capability to meet competitive challenges (Kontoghiorghes *et.al*, 2005; Kilika, 2012; Hucnszyki & Buchanan, 2013).

Deployment of the leadership strategy is for the purpose of offering direction that focuses on the attainment of the desired level of performance by the management through implementation of the firm's business strategy. Given that the leadership will pervade the entire organization, the leaders at the diverse levels and functions will exercise influence through actions that will select, equip, train, develop abilities and skills that focus on the mission of the organization( Yukl,2002; Bratton *et.al*, 2005; Bruce & Kalliteen, 2006) and by the proper use of power, ensure leadership modifies and motivates the competencies availed towards achievement of the organization mission (Colquitt *et.al*,2009; Gibson *et.al*, 2009). Therefore, we propose that:

***Proposition 1: Deployment of the organization's leadership strategy that is drawn from a firm's business strategy will positively affect the various dimensions of the firm's performance.***

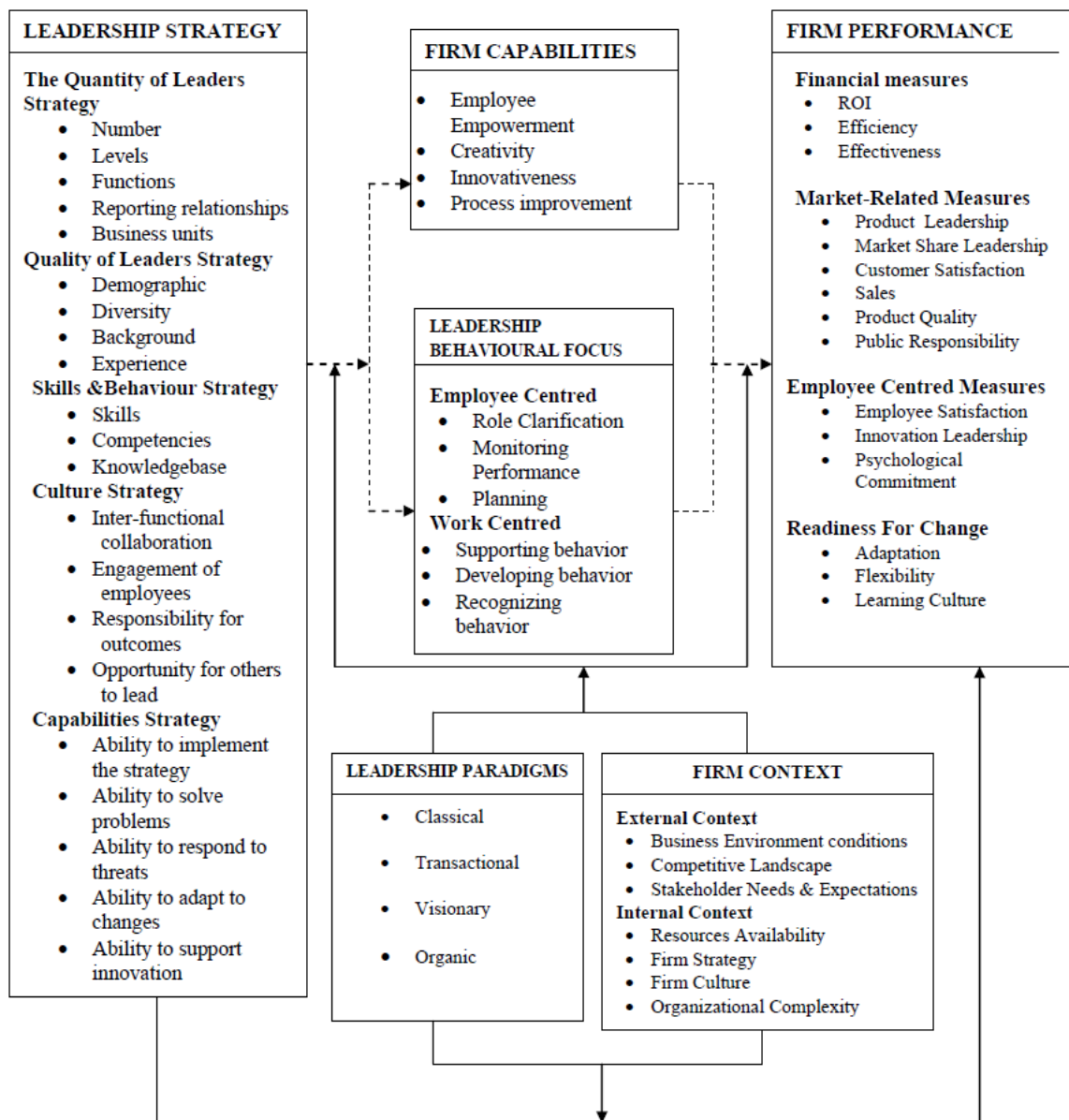


Figure 1. Theoretical Model Linking Leadership Strategy, Behavioural Focus and Firm Performance

### 3.2 The Role of Leadership Behavioral Focus and Firm Capabilities

Deployment of the leadership strategy is a practical process that requires the leadership in place across the levels and functional areas of the organization to display a diversity of leadership behaviors as they focus on the long-term direction espoused in the business strategy. We argue that the deployment of the leadership strategy will give rise to two forms of competencies that an organization requires to sustain its superior performance, namely leadership behavioral focus and firm capabilities. The literature on leadership behavior points out that the leadership behavior exhibited by the leader is based on leadership traits that are linked to the personality of the leaders (Certo 2009; Lussier, 2010). A close association can thus be identified between the leadership behavior and the deployed leadership strategy in the dimensions of leadership capabilities and the quality of leadership.

In both dimensions, the strategy will facilitate identification of the combination of personal attributes as well as the diversity requirements for driving the agenda of the business strategy being implemented. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the leadership behavior derives from the nature of the deployed leadership strategy. In addition, the dimension of the leadership strategy focusing on leadership culture and capabilities strategy has

aspects that have implications on the management of the workforce. The aspect of leadership culture emphasizes engagement, empowerment and that of learning how to learn while that of capability provides for problem-solving and innovation which when deployed will create competencies for the organization through its workforce. Thus the leadership strategy can be argued to be responsible for the emergence of capabilities the organization enjoys through its workforce. Thus, we propose that:

***Proposition 2a: There is a correlation between the deployed leadership strategy and the leadership behavior exhibited by the leaders implementing a firm's strategy.***

***Proposition 2b: The deployed leadership strategy is correlated with the firm's workforce capabilities.***

The leadership behavior regards what the leaders consistently exhibit in their actions so as to win the support of the followers towards attaining the desired performance outcomes by the organization. Given the diversity of contingencies that characterize the managerial situations in and outside the organization, the leader who is conscious about the long-term direction will engage relevant behaviors that can range from focus on the task or the employee and build relationships or networks that will intrinsically motivate the workforce to direct their commitment towards the mission of the organization (Northouse, 2010). The behaviors that the leader will focus on and engage so as to marshal a collective organizational effort towards goal realization are what will enable the leadership strategy to achieve the desired level of superior performance. The deployment of the leadership strategy and emergence of the appropriate leadership behaviors are likely to create an internal state among the workforce that creates an important human resource capability for driving the strategic agenda for the firm.

Due to the permeation of leadership across all levels and functions of the organization and creation of an organizational system that unites behind the achievement of the vision of the firm, the state created is likely to drive a high sense of ownership by the workforce of the organization's journey to executing the work involved in each strategy. In such a situation, high levels of empowerment, creativity, innovativeness, commitment, identity with the strategy and the firm will be experienced. These two aspects of leadership behavioral focus and the firm's capabilities created through the workforce are considered as necessary conditions for sustaining the desired superior performance from the deployed leadership strategy. We argue that even though the leadership strategy impacts on firm performance, the sustainability of the impact is dependent upon the leadership behavioral focus and the workforce-related capabilities created. Thus:

***Proposition 2c: Leadership Behavioural Focus mediates the relationship between deployment of leadership strategy and firm performance***

***Proposition 2d: Workforce developed capabilities derived from the deployment of a leadership strategy will mediate the relationship between the deployed leadership strategy and the emerging firm performance.***

### *3.3 The Role of Leadership Paradigms and Firm Context*

The business strategy adopted by a firm form the basis for the organization's leadership strategy both of which have a common characteristic in that they depend on the external context of the firm for success. The context is of relevance to a strategist at several levels: strategy deployment phase and performance phase. At the deployment phase, the strategist is concerned with the engagement of the right behaviors based on the contingencies within the organization and the external environment. How the leader perceives the external environment in order to draw important cues that should dictate the behaviors to engage in so as to optimize on the opportunities availed becomes important. From a cognitions perspective, the external context becomes relevant in shaping the leader's selection criteria of what cues to select and the relevant paradigm to embrace based on where leadership should be optimally situated in order to respond to the demanding situation faced in the implementation of each strategy and the combination of workforce-related competencies to build among the workforce.

At the performance level, the external context has been seen as a source of constraint to a smooth process of strategy implementation due to the unpredictability and surprises that it may bring (Goeltz, 2014). There is therefore the need for ensuring congruence between the strategy being implemented and the conditions of the external context towards successful implementation of strategies. Managers should be prepared to identify the surprises in the context and adjust the strategy accordingly so as to enhance the level of consonance between the demands of the external context and the strategy being implemented. This has implications for the leadership in that they have to be alert, pick the necessary cues and adjust their strategies accordingly. From these arguments based on the constraints of the external context and the expected role of the leadership in the organization, we propose that:

***Proposition 3a: The relationship between the deployed leadership strategy and behavior and firm competencies will be moderated by the leadership paradigm embraced by the leaders implementing the firm's business strategy.***

***Proposition 3b: The mediated effect of leadership behavior and firm capabilities on the relationship between leadership strategy and firm performance will be moderated by the leadership paradigm embraced by the leaders implementing the firm's business strategy.***

***Proposition 3c: The leaders' perception of the firm's external context will moderate the relationship between the deployed leadership strategy and the leadership behavior and firms capabilities.***

***Proposition 3d: The leaders' perception of the firm's external context will moderate the mediated effect of leadership behavior and firm capabilities on the relationship between the deployed leadership strategy and the Firm's performance.***

***Proposition 3e: The leaders' perception of the firm's external context will moderate the relationship between the deployed firm leadership strategy and the corresponding firm performance.***

***Proposition 3f: The leadership paradigm embraced by the leaders implementing the firm's business strategy will moderate the relationship between the deployed leadership strategy and the corresponding firm performance.***

#### **4. Conclusion**

The purpose of the paper was to explore the nature of the construct of leadership strategy and highlight the features of the phenomenon it brings about in the firm's strategic behavior. The construct was argued to have its place in strategic management through the process of strategy implementation and was argued to play an important role in implementing a firm's business strategy. Both constructs share a common characteristic in that an organization has to perform a situational analysis to identify gaps that need to be responded. On the part of leadership strategy, the identified gaps and the manner in which they are responded to form the substance of the dimensions of the leadership strategy. The leadership strategy when deployed in an organizational setting, it brings about a phenomenon whose intermediate consequences are the leadership behavioral focus by the leadership of the organization and the set of generated employee capabilities that derive from the strategy. The paper argued that, when the leadership strategy is deployed to implement a strategy, it will lead to the performance of an organization which is mediated by the behavioral focus, generated capabilities and conditioned by the leadership paradigm that the leaders embrace and the context the firm finds itself in.

The contents of the paper highlighted the nature of the various constructs that feature in the phenomenon brought about by the deployment of the leadership strategy. The paper presented the conceptual understanding of each construct by identifying the operational indicators as well anchoring each of the constructs on a multidisciplinary based theoretical framework drawn from contingency theory, LMX Theory, Transformational leadership theory, Leadership Strategy Model. The paper demonstrated that the theories that anchor the constructs are complementary in several ways and highlighted those areas along which the complementarities manifest through the constructs that describe the emergent firm strategic behavior. In addition, it was demonstrated that in spite of the clarity of the understanding of the constructs, there are limitations in the scope of understanding of the construct of performance in regard to how it reflects the totality of the nature of the construct of leadership and the need to expand the scope of the indicators to the construct of performance while relating it to leadership strategy. Besides the existing dilemmas in empirical work leading to inconclusive findings owing to limitations in conceptualization and theorizing, the emergent gaps have been captured and relied upon to suggest a theoretical model for addressing the gaps in future scholarship. The proposed framework provides a comprehensive attempt to understand the phenomenon brought about by the deployment of strategic leadership strategy in directing firm strategic behavior so as to show the role of the strategy, its intermediate and ultimate outcome of performance and the factors justified from the literature as conditioning this phenomenon.

In view of the above, the authors suggest that the proposed theoretical model can be a suitable basis for mounting future research based on the constructs, their operational indicators and the direction of relationships through the set of propositions. The future attempts will, however, need to develop suitable measurements and contexts for study as the effort moves from the abstract state arrived at by this study to the empirical state. The authors cite the lack of testable empirical data to validate the claims of the propositions as limitations which future scholarship can overcome by developing measurement instruments, applying them to collect primary data and application of robust statistical techniques to confirm the hypotheses.



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