

The Role of Failure and Disappointment in Leadership Behaviour: A Social Science Examination of Resilience, Adaptation, and Organisational Influence

Paul Andrew Bourne, PhD, DrPH

Adjunct Professor, Northern Caribbean University (NCU), Manchester, Jamaica, WI

ABSTRACT: Failure and disappointment are inevitable experiences in leadership, yet their role in shaping leadership behaviour remains underexplored in social science literature. This study examines how leaders respond to setbacks, navigate personal and organisational challenges, and adapt leadership strategies in the face of failure and disappointment. The theoretical framework integrates theories of resilience, transformational and transactional leadership, and psychological perspectives on coping, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation to develop a comprehensive understanding of leadership under adversity. Findings indicate that effective leaders leverage failure as an opportunity for reflection, strategic recalibration, and follower engagement, whereas maladaptive responses exacerbate organisational dysfunction, reduce credibility, and undermine trust. Resilience, emotional intelligence, and strategic reflection mediate the relationship between leadership style and the outcomes of failure experiences. Organisational context further influences the effectiveness of leadership responses, demonstrating that adaptive leadership is situational. This study addresses a gap in leadership research by linking experiential failure with behavioural adaptation, power dynamics, and ethical decision-making. Practical implications include leadership development programmes that emphasise resilience, reflective practice, and ethical management of disappointment.

KEYWORDS: Leadership resilience; Failure and disappointment; Transformational leadership; Transactional leadership; Organisational behaviour; Emotional intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Leadership scholarship has traditionally emphasised vision, authority, and strategic decision-making as determinants of organisational effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hogg, 2001). Scholars have extensively analysed leadership styles, power dynamics, and decision-making processes, often focusing on how leaders motivate followers, achieve goals, and maintain organisational stability (French & Raven, 1959; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985). However, comparatively little attention has been given to the role of failure and disappointment in shaping leadership behaviour, despite their ubiquity in organisational life. Leaders inevitably encounter setbacks, unmet goals, or crises arising from internal misjudgements or external pressures such as economic shifts, market competition, or institutional constraints (Kellerman, 2004). Disappointment may also result from unfulfilled expectations, follower resistance, or public scrutiny, creating complex emotional and strategic challenges for leaders. Despite the prevalence and potential impact of these experiences, empirical research remains limited in exploring how they influence leadership adaptation, decision-making, and follower outcomes. This represents a significant gap in the literature, as understanding how leaders respond to failure is crucial for enhancing organisational resilience and effectiveness.

The current study seeks to address this gap by examining the mechanisms through which failure and disappointment influence leadership behaviour. Specifically, it investigates how leaders' personal attributes, such as resilience and emotional intelligence, mediate responses to setbacks (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Additionally, the study explores the moderating role of organisational context, including cultural norms, hierarchical structures, and social expectations, in shaping the effectiveness of leadership strategies during times of adversity (Hogg, 2001). By integrating insights from leadership theory, resilience studies, and organisational psychology, this research provides a comprehensive conceptualisation of leadership under failure conditions. This approach allows for the analysis of both adaptive and maladaptive leadership behaviours and highlights how strategic and ethical considerations influence outcomes. Importantly, this work examines the intersection of individual capacity and structural constraints, addressing the gap in the literature regarding the situational and contextual factors affecting leadership adaptation. The study thus contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership as a dynamic process that responds to both success and failure.

Understanding these dynamics has practical and theoretical implications for leadership development and organisational performance. Leaders who fail to manage disappointment effectively may compromise organisational legitimacy, erode trust, and

reduce follower engagement, while those who navigate setbacks strategically can enhance learning, innovation, and morale (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Greene, 1998). Despite recognition of these outcomes in anecdotal and case study literature, systematic frameworks linking failure experiences to leadership adaptation remain underdeveloped. This study, therefore, examines the pathways through which failure and disappointment influence decision-making, emotional regulation, and organisational outcomes, providing empirical and conceptual insights. Furthermore, it situates leadership responses within ethical and strategic frameworks, highlighting the need to balance organisational goals with integrity and legitimacy (French & Raven, 1959; Greene, 1998). By addressing these gaps, the study extends current scholarship, offering both practical guidance for leaders and theoretical contributions to leadership research. Ultimately, it underscores that failure is not merely an obstacle but a critical catalyst for growth, adaptation, and strategic leadership development.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyse the impact of failure and disappointment on transformational and transactional leadership behaviours.
2. To examine the role of resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies in mediating leaders' responses to setbacks.
3. To explore how organisational and social context moderates the relationship between leadership behaviour and the outcomes of failure experiences.
4. To develop a conceptual framework linking failure, disappointment, and adaptive leadership behaviour for practical application in leadership development and organisational management.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study integrates leadership theory, psychological perspectives on failure and disappointment, and strategic power principles to explain how leaders navigate setbacks and adapt their behaviour. Transformational and transactional leadership models provide a foundational lens for understanding patterns of authority, decision-making, and follower engagement (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers through vision, charisma, and individualised consideration, often reframing failure as a learning opportunity that fosters organisational growth. In contrast, transactional leaders rely on structured exchanges, performance monitoring, and corrective measures to maintain stability and compliance during challenging circumstances. These leadership styles represent distinct behavioural patterns that interact with contextual and personal factors to determine adaptive or maladaptive responses to failure.

Psychological perspectives emphasise that failure and disappointment are not merely organisational events but also deeply personal experiences that require effective emotional and cognitive regulation. Resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies serve as key mediators between leadership style and behavioural outcomes (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Resilient leaders are better equipped to recover from setbacks, maintain composure, and strategically reassess goals, whereas leaders with low resilience may respond defensively or rigidly, undermining trust and follower engagement. Emotional intelligence allows leaders to perceive, interpret, and manage both their own emotions and those of others, facilitating constructive communication and problem-solving in the aftermath of disappointment (Goleman, 1995). Coping mechanisms, including reflective practice, mentorship, and strategic planning, further enable leaders to transform failure into opportunities for organisational learning.

Strategic power perspectives provide an additional dimension, highlighting how leaders leverage authority, reputation, and alliances to navigate setbacks and maintain influence within organisational hierarchies (French & Raven, 1959; Greene, 1998). Leaders may draw upon legitimate, reward, expert, coercive, or referent power to influence follower behaviour, manage perceptions, and implement corrective measures. Greene's principles of strategic power, while sometimes controversial, underscore the importance of awareness, calculated action, and reputation management in leadership, particularly during crises or failures. By integrating these perspectives, the framework situates leadership as a dynamic interplay between personal attributes, behavioural strategies, and structural authority, rather than a static set of traits or roles.

Within this framework, failure and disappointment are conceptualised as catalysts for adaptive or maladaptive leadership behaviour. Leadership effectiveness emerges from the alignment between personal mediators, strategic reflection, and the judicious application of power in response to setbacks. Adaptive leaders leverage failure to enhance learning, innovation, and follower engagement, whereas maladaptive responses—including avoidance, coercion, or defensiveness—can diminish organisational legitimacy and trust. Ethical considerations intersect all components of the framework, emphasising that strategic responses must balance organisational effectiveness with transparency, integrity, and follower trust (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959).

Finally, organisational and contextual factors moderate how leaders translate failure into behavioural outcomes. Hierarchical structures, cultural norms, and institutional expectations influence which strategies are feasible and effective in practice (Hogg, 2001). Leaders operating in collaborative, participatory environments may adopt adaptive, reflective approaches that prioritise learning and engagement, whereas rigid, rule-bound institutions may reinforce transactional or authoritarian responses. The framework, therefore, provides a holistic lens for understanding leadership under adversity, linking individual psychological capacity, strategic power, and contextual conditions to outcomes following failure and disappointment. This conceptual model

guides the current study in examining the mechanisms through which setbacks shape leadership behaviour and organisational performance.

Conceptual Model and Leadership Failure–Response Matrix

Figure 1, titled *Conceptual Model of Leadership Response to Failure*, visually represents the dynamic interaction between key determinants of leadership behaviour when confronted with failure and disappointment. At the centre of the model is Failure & Disappointment, highlighting its role as a catalyst for leadership adaptation. Three primary components—Leadership Style, Personal Mediators, and Organisational Context—converge on this central experience. Leadership style distinguishes behavioural patterns such as transformational, transactional, authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire approaches, each influencing how setbacks are perceived and addressed (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Personal mediators, including resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies, shape leaders’ ability to regulate emotions, reassess strategies, and maintain effective decision-making under stress (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Organisational context—comprising cultural norms, institutional structures, and social expectations—moderates these interactions, determining which strategies are most feasible and effective within specific institutional or social environments (Hogg, 2001).

The model delineates two potential pathways from failure experiences: Adaptive Outcomes and Maladaptive Outcomes. Adaptive outcomes, such as organisational learning, innovation, follower engagement, and trust, emerge when leaders leverage personal mediators and align their leadership style with contextual demands, responding to setbacks constructively. Conversely, maladaptive outcomes—including diminished credibility, conflict, and organisational dysfunction—arise when leaders fail to regulate responses or when contextual and personal factors exacerbate maladaptive behaviours. Ethical considerations, depicted as overarching the model, underscore that strategic adaptation must maintain transparency, legitimacy, and trust, ensuring that leadership responses are sustainable and morally grounded (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959). In the context of the current study, Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework for systematically analysing how failure and disappointment influence leadership behaviour, offering practical insights into how leaders can cultivate resilience, strategic reflection, and ethical decision-making to optimise organisational outcomes.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Leadership Response to Failure

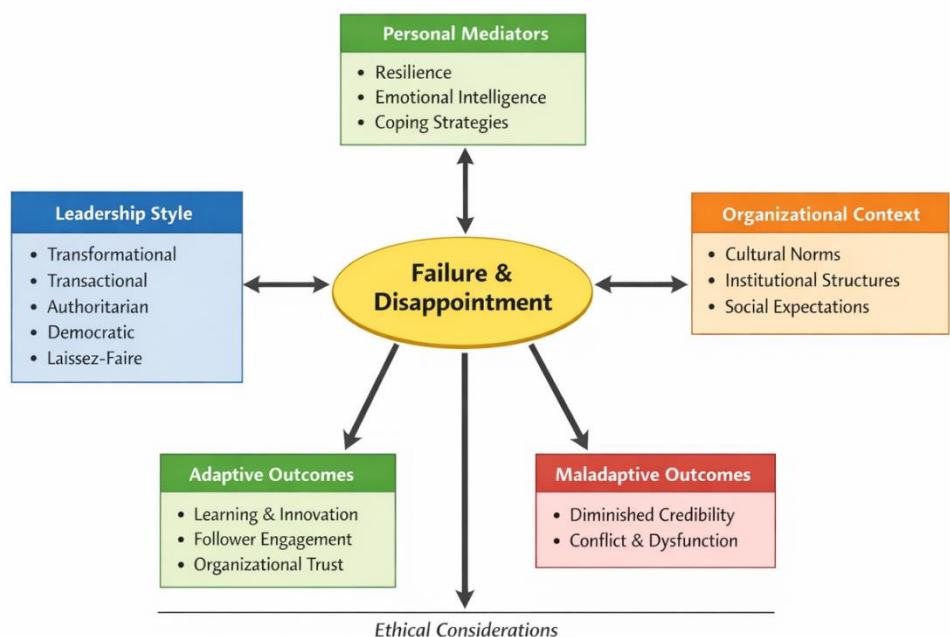


Table 1: Leadership Failure–Response Matrix

Leadership Style	Typical Response	Mediating Attributes	Organisational Outcome	Example Strategy
Transformational	Reflective, innovative	High resilience, emotional intelligence	Learning, engagement, trust	Reframe failure as a learning opportunity; mentor followers
Transactional	Corrective, structured	Moderate resilience, adherence to rules	Compliance maintained, potential morale reduction	Enforce rules; adjust rewards/penalties

Leadership Style	Typical Response	Mediating Attributes	Organisational Outcome	Example Strategy
Authoritarian	Control-focused, coercive	Low resilience, reactive	Short-term compliance; reduced trust	Intensify oversight; restrict decisions
Democratic	Collaborative, participatory	High resilience, social awareness	Engagement; shared problem-solving	Encourage team input; co-create solutions
Laissez-faire	Delegation, minimal intervention	Variable resilience, autonomous	Potential innovation or drift	Allow self-management; intervene selectively

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership research has historically focused on the traits, behaviours, and strategies that enable leaders to achieve organisational goals and influence followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Hogg, 2001). Transformational and transactional leadership frameworks have been particularly influential in explaining how leaders motivate followers, manage performance, and maintain organisational stability. Transformational leaders inspire, intellectually stimulate, and individually consider followers, while transactional leaders rely on reward and corrective mechanisms to reinforce compliance (Bass & Avolio, 1994). However, traditional leadership studies have predominantly examined contexts of success, organisational growth, or stability, leaving a relative paucity of research on how leaders respond to failure, setbacks, and disappointment (Kellerman, 2004). While anecdotal and historical accounts often illustrate leadership adaptation following crises, systematic empirical analyses linking failure experiences to behavioural outcomes remain limited. This gap highlights the need to explore failure as a critical determinant of leadership behaviour and organisational effectiveness.

Failure and disappointment have both psychological and strategic dimensions that influence leadership responses. Psychological research emphasises that leaders' emotional regulation, resilience, and coping strategies are key mediators in transforming setbacks into adaptive behaviour (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Resilience allows leaders to recover from setbacks, maintain strategic focus, and preserve follower trust, whereas low resilience may exacerbate maladaptive behaviours such as defensiveness, avoidance, or coercion (Luthans et al., 2006). Emotional intelligence further enhances leaders' ability to perceive, understand, and manage their own and others' emotional responses to failure, supporting constructive problem-solving and organisational cohesion (Goleman, 1995). Coping strategies such as reflection, mentoring, and proactive planning have been shown to mitigate the negative impact of disappointment on decision-making and leadership effectiveness (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). These findings underscore that failure is not inherently detrimental; instead, its impact depends on leaders' psychological capacities and strategic adaptation.

Strategic power perspectives provide additional insights into leadership behaviour under failure conditions. French and Raven (1959) conceptualised five bases of social power—reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent—that leaders deploy to influence followers and maintain authority. Leaders' strategic utilisation of these power bases determines how effectively setbacks are managed and organisational objectives are pursued. Greene's (1998) synthesis of historical power strategies highlights reputation management, alliance formation, and calculated influence as critical for navigating crises and maintaining organisational authority. Integrating these perspectives, research suggests that effective leaders combine personal resilience, strategic reflection, and judicious application of power to convert failure into learning, engagement, and innovation, while mitigating risks of distrust, disengagement, or organisational dysfunction.

Organisational and contextual factors further moderate leaders' responses to failure. Hierarchical, rule-bound institutions often reinforce transactional or authoritarian approaches, while participatory, collaborative environments favour reflective and adaptive strategies (Hogg, 2001). Cultural expectations, institutional norms, and social pressures also influence the selection of leadership strategies, shaping both immediate and long-term outcomes of failure experiences (Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985). Ethical considerations intersect with contextual and personal factors, emphasising that adaptive responses must balance strategic effectiveness with transparency, integrity, and follower trust (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959). Despite recognition of these factors in theory, few studies have systematically examined the mechanisms linking failure, leadership style, personal mediators, and organisational outcomes, highlighting a significant gap in leadership research.

The current study addresses this gap by integrating psychological, strategic, and organisational perspectives to examine how leaders respond to failure and disappointment. By combining insights from leadership theory, resilience research, and strategic power analysis, it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding adaptive and maladaptive responses to setbacks. The study focuses on transformational, transactional, authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles, exploring how individual capacities, contextual constraints, and strategic power deployment influence behavioural and organisational outcomes. This integrated approach allows for systematic analysis of how failure shapes leadership adaptation, contributing both to theoretical development and practical guidance for leadership practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a conceptual and theoretical research design, integrating insights from leadership theory, organisational psychology, and strategic power analysis. Given the focus on failure and disappointment as catalysts for leadership behaviour, a

qualitative and analytical approach allows for a nuanced examination of adaptive and maladaptive responses. The study does not rely on primary quantitative data collection; instead, it synthesises empirical findings, historical case studies, and peer-reviewed literature to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework. This approach is appropriate because failure and disappointment are complex, multifaceted phenomena that manifest differently across organisational contexts and leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Goleman, 1995). The design also facilitates exploration of psychological mediators, organisational moderators, and strategic power mechanisms in a systematic and theory-driven manner.

Data Sources

Data sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and authoritative texts on leadership, organisational behaviour, and resilience, spanning from 1950 to 2025. Foundational works, such as French and Raven's (1959) bases of social power, Bass and Avolio's (1994) leadership typologies, and Greene's (1998) strategic power principles, are examined alongside contemporary research on resilience, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Historical and contemporary case studies of leadership failure and organisational setbacks provide contextual examples, illustrating how leaders respond under real-world pressures. Literature was systematically selected to ensure theoretical and conceptual relevance, focusing on sources that explicitly address leadership adaptation, decision-making under adversity, and the interplay between personal and organisational factors.

Analytical Approach

The study utilises thematic synthesis and conceptual mapping to analyse literature and case studies. Key themes identified include: leadership style, personal resilience, emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, power deployment, organisational context, and ethical considerations. These themes are synthesised into a conceptual framework illustrating how failure and disappointment shape leadership behaviour and outcomes. Relationships between leadership style and adaptive responses are examined, highlighting differences between transformational, transactional, authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire approaches (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The framework also explores how mediators, such as resilience and emotional intelligence, interact with contextual moderators to influence outcomes, such as organisational learning, follower engagement, and trust. Ethical considerations are incorporated as an overarching dimension, reflecting the importance of balancing strategic effectiveness with transparency and integrity (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959).

Study Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on leadership in organisational and institutional contexts, encompassing business, political, and social systems. While primarily theoretical, the conceptual model is informed by empirical literature and illustrative case studies. Limitations include the absence of primary empirical data and potential biases in literature selection. Additionally, cultural and sectoral variations in leadership behaviour are acknowledged, suggesting that findings may require contextual adaptation for specific environments. Nonetheless, the study provides a robust framework for understanding the mechanisms through which failure and disappointment influence leadership behaviour and organisational outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

Although this is a conceptual study, ethical considerations are central to the framework. The analysis prioritises responsible interpretation of leadership strategies, emphasising integrity, transparency, and the avoidance of manipulative practices. Ethical leadership is positioned as a mediator between strategic response to failure and sustainable organisational outcomes, reflecting contemporary scholarship on moral and effective leadership (Goleman, 1995; Greene, 1998).

Findings

The analysis indicates that failure and disappointment function as critical catalysts shaping leadership behaviour across organisational contexts. Leaders exhibit a spectrum of adaptive and maladaptive responses depending on their leadership style, personal attributes, and situational context. Transformational leaders typically interpret failure as an opportunity for learning and organisational growth, engaging followers through vision, intellectual stimulation, and personalised support (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These leaders leverage referent and expert power, drawing on charisma and expertise to maintain trust and encourage resilience among followers. In contrast, transactional leaders often focus on structured responses, rewarding compliance and addressing failures through corrective measures, reflecting reliance on legitimate and reward power (Bass & Avolio, 1994; French & Raven, 1959). Maladaptive responses, such as avoidance, defensiveness, or coercive behaviour, were more evident among leaders with low resilience, limited emotional intelligence, or insufficient coping strategies, illustrating the mediating role of personal attributes (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006).

The study also highlights the moderating influence of organisational context on leadership behaviour. Hierarchical or rule-bound institutions tended to reinforce transactional or authoritarian responses to failure, with leaders prioritising compliance and control over learning or innovation (Hogg, 2001). Conversely, participatory, collaborative, or ethically-driven organisational cultures encouraged adaptive strategies, including reflective practice, mentorship, and engagement with followers to navigate disappointment (Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985). Leaders who effectively aligned their personal capacities with contextual demands were more likely to achieve positive organisational outcomes, such as enhanced follower engagement, organisational

learning, and trust (Greene, 1998). In contrast, misalignment between leader capacities, style, and organisational expectations increased the likelihood of maladaptive outcomes, including conflict, disengagement, and diminished legitimacy.

Strategic power deployment emerged as a key determinant of leadership effectiveness under failure conditions. Leaders who intentionally applied the five bases of social power—legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent—demonstrated greater capacity to stabilise organisations and influence followers during setbacks (French & Raven, 1959). Greene's (1998) principles further illustrated that reputation management, alliance formation, and strategic information control could mitigate the negative impacts of disappointment, provided these strategies were ethically grounded. The findings suggest that the interplay between personal resilience, emotional intelligence, leadership style, and strategic power shapes both adaptive and maladaptive responses. Ethical considerations were central to sustainable outcomes, as leaders who prioritised transparency, trust, and organisational integrity were more likely to transform failure into constructive learning opportunities.

Overall, the study confirms that failure and disappointment are not merely detrimental events but essential stimuli that can catalyse leadership growth, strategic reflection, and organisational development. Adaptive leadership emerges from the integration of personal attributes, strategic awareness, and contextual alignment, highlighting the complex, dynamic nature of leadership under adversity. Conversely, maladaptive responses occur when leaders lack resilience, misapply power, or fail to consider contextual and ethical factors, resulting in organisational dysfunction and reduced follower trust. These findings provide a conceptual and practical roadmap for understanding the mechanisms through which leaders respond to setbacks, offering insights for leadership development, organisational strategy, and resilience-building initiatives.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight that failure and disappointment are critical determinants of leadership behaviour, shaping both individual and organisational outcomes. Leaders' responses to setbacks are strongly influenced by their leadership style, with transformational leaders tending to reframe failure as an opportunity for learning and innovation, whereas transactional and authoritarian leaders rely on structured corrective measures or coercive interventions (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Kellerman, 2004). The conceptual model demonstrates that these responses are mediated by personal attributes such as resilience and emotional intelligence, which enable leaders to regulate emotional responses, maintain composure, and strategically adapt to adverse circumstances (Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Leaders lacking these mediating capacities are more likely to experience maladaptive behaviours, including rigidity, defensiveness, or diminished engagement, which can compromise organisational performance and follower trust.

The study further emphasises the moderating role of organisational context in shaping the effectiveness of leadership responses to failure. Hierarchical and rule-bound environments tend to reinforce structured, corrective strategies aligned with transactional or authoritarian leadership, whereas collaborative and participatory cultures support adaptive, reflective approaches consistent with transformational and democratic leadership (Hogg, 2001). The leadership failure–response matrix illustrates that context interacts with personal mediators to determine whether setbacks result in positive organisational learning or negative consequences such as disengagement, conflict, or reduced credibility. This finding underscores the situational nature of leadership, highlighting that effective leaders must tailor responses to both the internal and external organisational environment.

Ethical considerations emerge as an essential dimension of leadership adaptation to failure. While strategic responses to disappointment—such as reputation management, selective disclosure, or alliance-building—can enhance influence and organisational outcomes, excessive reliance on manipulation or coercion may undermine trust and long-term legitimacy (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959). Leaders who balance strategic adaptation with ethical principles are more likely to maintain follower confidence, organisational cohesion, and sustainable authority. This aligns with contemporary research emphasising ethical leadership as central to organisational effectiveness and resilience (Kellerman, 2004; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985).

Finally, the integrated conceptual model presented in this study provides a systematic framework for understanding the dynamic interplay between leadership style, personal mediators, organisational context, and strategic responses to failure. By mapping failure and disappointment onto behavioural outcomes, the study extends current leadership theory, addressing a significant gap in the literature regarding how setbacks influence leadership adaptation. The model and matrix offer practical applications for leadership development, suggesting that cultivating resilience, emotional intelligence, and reflective practice can enable leaders to transform failure into opportunities for learning, growth, and enhanced organisational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that failure and disappointment play a pivotal role in shaping leadership behaviour, influencing both individual decision-making and organisational outcomes. Leaders' responses to setbacks are contingent upon their leadership style, personal attributes such as resilience and emotional intelligence, and the broader organisational context (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Goleman, 1995; Luthans et al., 2006). Transformational and democratic leaders are more likely to leverage failure as an opportunity for reflection, learning, and follower engagement, whereas transactional and authoritarian leaders often rely on structured corrective strategies or coercive interventions. The findings also emphasise that ethical considerations are integral to effective leadership under

adversity, as strategic responses that prioritise manipulation or deception can undermine organisational trust and long-term legitimacy (Greene, 1998; French & Raven, 1959).

By integrating leadership theory, psychological resilience frameworks, and strategic power principles, the study addresses a notable gap in leadership scholarship regarding the mechanisms linking failure experiences to adaptive leadership behaviour. The conceptual model and leadership failure–response matrix provide a systematic framework for understanding how leaders navigate setbacks, offering insight into the dynamic interplay between personal mediators, leadership style, organisational context, and strategic decision-making. This framework highlights that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by authority or formal power but emerges from the capacity to respond constructively to adversity while maintaining ethical integrity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Leadership Development Programmes: Organisations should incorporate training modules focused on resilience, emotional intelligence, and reflective practice to prepare leaders to respond constructively to failure and disappointment.
2. Organisational Culture: Institutions should foster a culture that normalises learning from failure, reducing the stigma associated with setbacks and encouraging adaptive experimentation and innovation.
3. Ethical Leadership Guidelines: Leaders should be guided by ethical frameworks when responding to setbacks, ensuring that strategic decisions preserve trust, legitimacy, and organisational cohesion.
4. Context-Sensitive Leadership Strategies: Organisations should tailor leadership development and support mechanisms to align with structural, cultural, and environmental factors, recognising that the effectiveness of adaptive strategies varies across contexts (Hogg, 2001).
5. Future Research Directions: Empirical studies should examine the mechanisms by which failure and disappointment influence leadership adaptation, exploring variations across leadership styles, organisational types, and cultural settings to validate and extend the conceptual framework proposed in this study.

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