

Leadership Frame Preference of Jordanian Schools Principals' as Perceived by their Teachers: The Bolman and Deal Four Frames Model

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Abstract

The four frames of leadership development by Bolman and Deal (1991) used in this study to identify the leadership frames of schools principals in Jordan as perceived by their teachers. Results of study revealed the preferred leadership frames for the schools principals in order of preference were structural, political, human resource, and symbolic. Related to participants gender; there were significant differences between male and female in the preferred leadership frames of schools principals', the favor was for male participants. There were significant differences among the three groups of experience years (low, medium, and high) in the Structural, Human Resource, and Political leadership frames. Future research on school leadership and leadership frames research were recommended.

Introduction

The school leadership must be prepared to face numerous challenges that will ultimately determine the leaders and possibly the schools fate. The leaders must able to motivate the employees of the school to work towards achieving a vision that will likely result in the success of the organization. The leader must also be willing to place the success of the schools and success of followers above their own success. The leaders will not be faced with an easy task and must carefully determine how to accomplish the desired results.

In the research of Bolman and Deal (1991) four frames are identified to understand leadership: (a) structural; (b) human resource; (c) political; and (d) symbolic. Leadership effectiveness was associated with the political and symbolic frames with a symbolic being the best predictor of an effective leader (Bolman & Deal, 1992). This study examined the leadership frame of Jordanian schools principals' to determine if there is a significant difference in the leadership frame preference based on their gender and experience.

The leadership frame is the way that an individual in a leadership position interprets what is occurring and how they determine the appropriate action for each situation (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The increasing challenges will require a leader with skills that their predecessors might not have possessed. The new leaders must able to build relationships, understand financial accountability, possess excellent communications skills, be adaptable to changing conditions, and transformation skills (Boggs, 2003).

The Four-Frame Theory used by Bolman and Deal is based on the multi-frame view that has been researched by many scholars who have agreed that there are benefits from using multi frame views. Some of the earlier researchers as noted by Bolman and Deal include Allison, 1971; Elmore, 1978; Morgan, 1986; Perrow, 1986; Quinn, 1988; and Scott, 1981 (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 1991). It is noted that many leaders have one preferred, or dominate, frame that they use for evaluating situations but that the more frames that are used the more effective the leader's decision (Bolman & Deal, 1991). In research conducted by Quinn and Cameron (1983) it was shown that as organizations develop the definition of effectiveness and the framing of issues change and if they do not change they may be fatal to the organization. The framing of information and contexting of a particular situation using multiple frames provides the leader with many cues or experiences on which to base a decision.

Bolman and Deal Four-Frame Theory of Leadership:

The Four-Frame Theory uses the perspectives or lens of structural, human resource, political and symbolic when framing decisions (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Each frame —is a coherent set of ideas forming a prism or lens that enables you to see and understand more clearlyl (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 41) the decisions that must be made. Qualitative research was used to determine the frames that were most used by managers. These research projects involved interviews and responses to scenarios to determine the preferred frame or frames that were used by managers in their decision making process (Bolman & Deal, 1991). From these initial qualitative studies a quantitative survey, Leadership Orientations (Self), was developed to determine the preferred frame or frames used by leaders. All four frames are important and each captures a unique and critical slice of organizational reality (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

The Structural Frame

The structural frame is based upon the classic and popular ways of thinking about organizations. This frame is rooted in the belief that organizations should be designed for maximum efficiency and is focused on the early works of Frederick Taylor and the approach he labeled —scientific managementl (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Taylor sought to create change by establishing guidelines for management and workers to improve efficiencies and productivity (Robbins, 2003). This frame is rooted in the work of German economist and sociologist Max Weber (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Weber focused on the concept of bureaucracy as a new phenomenon as organization moved away from patriarchal organizations. The ideal bureaucracy had six major features: job specialization/fixed division of labor, authority hierarchy, formal selection/technical qualifications, formal rules and regulations, impersonality, and career orientation (Robbins, 2003). The work of both Taylor and Weber focused on the relationship within the structure of organizations, effectiveness within the organization and effect of organizational structure on productivity.

The structural frame, as defined by Bolman and Deal (2008), is the frame that focuses on structures within an organization. Those who use the structural frame use the structure of the organization to allocate work according to areas of responsibility which can create problems with coordination and control. The bureaucracy of organization has created areas of vertical coordination that limit the amount of lateral coordination that may be necessary in outside of the normal control of organizations.

Establishing an organizational structure that meets the nature of the environment and the desired outcomes of the organization is essential for a successful organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). It is understood that organizations must establish the structure based on six dimensions: (a) size and age, (b) core process, (c) environment, (d) strategy and goals, (e) information technology, and (f) nature of the workforce (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Each dimension would be analyzed as organizational structures are created. It must be understood that the right mix of vertical and horizontal coordination are necessary in organization.

The Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame evolved around the work of those who questioned the philosophy that employees were motivated and entitled to only a paycheck, Mary Parker Follett and Elton Mayo (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Follett believed that —managers and workers should view themselves as partners (Robbins, 2003) and saw the importance of the social aspects of organizations. Mayo worked with groups to see that group behavior and sentiment had a significant effect on individual behavior. These early pioneers in the human relations movement spurred on other researchers that show the importance of understanding human needs and their impact on organizational effectiveness.

Modern sources of the human resource frame are seen in the works of Greenleaf and Collins. Greenleaf's (1977) theory of servant leadership identified a leader as someone who was willing to serve the needs of their followers. He characterized servant leaders as those who cared for the organization and followers and respected the need to care regardless of the situation. Collins seeks to address the human resource frame of leadership in the first level of his Level 5 leadership, First who...then what (Collins, 2001). Collins states that —the problem of how to motivate and manage people largely goes away.

The human resource frame views the organization from the perspective of the employees and their relationship within and to the organization. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), this frame is built upon four core assumptions: (a) organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse; (b) people and organizations need each other, organizations need ideas, energy and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities; (c) when the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer; and (d) a good fit benefits both. The key principle is that the human resource frame highlights relationships between the organization and the people (employees) but it must be understood that the needs are not always aligned. As stated by Greenwood (2008) -there is less emphasis on default authority and hierarchical positioning, with more emphasis on respect for feelings, attitudes, and the skills and abilities of those being led.

The Political Frame

The third frame, political is associated with the realistic process of making decisions in an environment with divergent interest and limited resources (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This frame has five basic assumptions: (a) organizations are coalitions of assorted individual and interest groups; (b) coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality; (c) most important decisions involve allocating scarce resources; (d) scarce resources and enduring differences put conflict at the center of day-to-day dynamics and make power the most important asset; and (e) goals and decisions emerge from bargaining and negotiation among competing stakeholders jockeying for their own interests.

During period of prosperity the political frame, and the power associated with allocating resources, allows for decision making with little difficulty or conflict. In periods of deprivation, when resources are limited, there is often an increase in conflict and power struggles. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), the concept of scarce resources suggests that politics will be more salient and intense during difficult times than in prosperous times. Two important aspects of the political frame are power and conflict that occur during the decision making process.

Power is an important concept when discussing leadership since it is the capacity or potential to influence the behavior of others. The concept has both a constructive and destructive connotation depending on how power is used (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Bolman and Deal identify nine sources of power that have been identified in the research of social scientists: (a) position or authority, (b) control of rewards, (c) coercive power, (d) information or expertise, (e) reputation, (f) personal, (g) alliance or network, (h) agenda, and (i) framing. The power that one holds must be understood and used correctly to influence others. Having the position may give an individual power but positional power is rarely enough to accomplish the task (Kotter, 1985). As stated by Bolman and Deal (2008), those that get and

use power to their advantage will be winners which make it important for leaders to understand the political frame.

The Symbolic Frame

The symbolic frame explores how sense is made of the chaotic situations that are presented with the use of meanings, beliefs, and faith that is created from our past experiences. Within the symbolic frame the myth, vision and value of organizations provide purpose and resolve to the members of the organization. The values convey a sense of identity and help people feel special about what they do (Bolman & Deal, 2008)..

The symbolic frame is deeply rooted in the human experience and stories are the communication method that conveys the symbolic meaning to members of the organization to build the culture. Culture provides patterns and order found in area of social life and within organizations (Scott, 2003). Schein (1992) defines culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved problems of external adaption and integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relationship to those problems. Peters and Waterman (1982) determined that the influence of value and culture are more important in holding a company together than the procedures and control systems.

Leadership behavior and styles have been the focus of extensive studies since the early 1900s. There have been numerous models created to examine leadership and the effectiveness of leadership. One model, created by Bolman and Deal (1991), focuses on the four methods of framing the environment and challenges that are being faced while making decisions. The preferred frame of a leader can be identified and this model has determined that the most effective leader is one who has the ability to use all four frames to make decisions. The Leadership Orientation (Self) Survey created by Bolman and Deal (n.d.) used to examine the frames used by schools leaders as perceived by their teachers in Jordan.

Statement of the Problem

There has been no literature to determine what process has been used to develop the preferred leadership frame in Jordanian schools leaders. This study sought to determine the preferred leadership frame of the current schools principals as perceived by their teachers.

The purpose of this study was to examine the preferred leadership frame that was used by the schools principals as perceived by their teachers in Jordan. As leaders ascend through the positions of increasing responsibility they should move towards using the political and symbolic frames to improve their effectiveness as leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The four frames of leadership development by Bolman and Deal (1991) used in this study to: (a) identify the leadership frames of schools principals in Jordan as perceived by their teachers and (b) determine the degree to which the leadership frames vary between the participants' gender and experience. This has provided an understanding of the preferred leadership frames and will provide assistance to those who create future leadership development programs.

Building on the work of Bolman and Deal (2008 & 1991), Greenwood (2008), McArdle (2008) and Sypawka (2008), this study is a quantitative one based on the following research questions that generated research into the leadership frames preferred by schools principals' in Jordan as perceived by their teachers.

1. What are the preferred leadership frames of schools principals' in Jordan as perceived by their teachers?
2. Is there a difference in the preferred leadership frames of schools principals' in Jordan among the participants regarding to their gender and experience?

Significance of the Study

In the current environment schools face many challenges as they continue to evolve and the future leaders must be able to lead through an ever changing environment where the school must (Watba & Farmer, 2006). This ever changing environment will require that the leaders of schools have the necessary leadership abilities to lead their schools in the future.

The results of this research may determine if there is a need to improve the current principals development program conducted at Jordanian universities and to determine if further research should be conducted to generalize the results across schools' that use a principals development program. This will help to determine if programs need to be modified to increase exposure to leadership framing and place emphasis on the symbolic and political frames that are desired in future leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1991). This research was driven by the theory developed by Bolman and Deal (1991) that leaders in education will be more likely to use the symbolic and political frames of leadership in making business decisions.

Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the preferred leadership frame or frames that were used by schools principals' in Jordan as perceived by their teachers. The preferred leadership frame or frames were compared to determine if gender and experience of participants had a perceived impact on the leadership frame of the sample. This study used the Leadership Orientation Survey developed by Bolman and Deal (n.d.) and a supplemental demographic survey. The surveys were administered to teachers' at Jordanian schools.

Population and Sample of Study

The population of study consists of all teachers who are working in Zarqa education districts for the academic year 2010/2011 with total number of (5937) teachers (Female=3483; Male=2454). A stratified proportional random sample was selected for the purpose of this study representing (610) teachers (Female=360, male=250).

Research Instrument

The study used one survey instrument to collect data. The instrument was the Leadership Orientation Survey developed by Bolman and Deal (1997). The Leadership Orientation Survey collected information about the schools principals' their own leadership frames as perceived by their teachers.

The Leadership Orientation Survey is 32 questions that had the respondent rate their schools principals on specific leadership behaviors. The responses were collected using a five-point, Likert-type scale. The scale includes: 1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always. The 32 questions were preselected and there were eight questions associated with each of the four frames. Questions 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 were associated with the structural frame; questions 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, and 30 were associated with human resource frame; questions 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, and 31 were associated with the political frame; and questions 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, and 32 were associated with the symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, n.d.).

Instrument Validity

For the purpose of examining the validity of the instrument in this study (face validity evidence) it was presented to six experts in educational administration, research and evaluation and educational measurement. They were asked to check whether the statements in the instrument are clear and linked

appropriately with the problem of study. Based on the experts' comments, some revisions regarding to the language were done to the instrument.

Instrument Reliability

Reliability data is presented on the Bolman (n.d.) website that showed the Cronbach's Alpha for section one of the survey is .920 for the structural frame, .931 for the human resource frame, .913 for the political frame, and .931 for the symbolic frame.

Regarding the reliability of the instrument in this study, an internal consistency procedure (to estimate the consistency across the items) was used. A pilot study of 30 participants had been conducted. Those participants did not participate in the final study. The instructions were clear and all of the items of instrument functioning in appropriate manner. The values of alpha (the internal consistency coefficient) for dimensions of instrument were as follows: .861 for the structural frame, .893 for the human resource frame, .919 for the political frame and .852 for the symbolic frame. The previous values can be considered reasonably satisfactory to achieve the objectives of the current study.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the software SPSS package for educational studies. Statistical treatments involved means, and standard deviation were employed to answer the first question. t-test and a Four-Way ANOVA technique was employed to answer the second question in order to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in means between demographic variables.

In order to understand the results of the current study, it was important to set specific cut points to interpret the participants total scores related to their Leadership preference frame. Regarding the cut points, it should be noted that the researcher used the response scale of each item that ranged from 1 to 5 to determine these cut points according to the following manner: 1-2.33 = *low*, from 2.34 to 3.67 = *moderate*, and 3.68-5.00 = *high* levels.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the Preferred Leadership Frames of Schools Principals' in Jordan as Perceived by their Teachers?

The means and standard deviations for the preferred leadership frames of schools principals as perceived by their teachers were calculated. The preferred leadership frames of schools principals' was presented in Table 1. The preferred leadership frames for the schools principals in order of preference were structural (M=4.01, SD=.53), political (M=3.97, SD=.64), human resource (M=3.94, SD=.52), and symbolic (M=3.71, SD=.75).

Table 1: Leadership Frame Preference – Sample (n = 610)

	Mean	SD
Structural	4.01	.53
Human Resource	3.94	.52
Political	3.97	.64
Symbolic	3.71	.75

Research Question 2: Is there a Difference in the Preferred Leadership Frames of Schools Principals' in Jordan Among the Participants Regarding to their Gender and Experience?

t-tests for independent samples were used to examine the difference in means between male and female participants in each frame of leadership. Related to participants gender; table 2 shows that there were significant differences between male and female participants in the preferred leadership frames of schools principals'. The favor was for male participants.

Table 2: *The difference between male and female participants in each leadership frames of schools principals'*

Preferred Leadership	Gender	n	Means	SD	t	p
Structural	M	250	4.19	0.47	7.995	.000*
	F	360	3.88	0.52		
Human Resource	M	250	4.08	0.48	5.605	.000*
	F	360	3.84	0.53		
Political	M	250	4.18	0.60	7.285	.000*
	F	360	3.82	0.63		
Symbolic	M	250	4.02	0.71	9.137	.000*
	F	360	3.49	0.70		

Related to participants experience; utilizing four-way analysis of variance, as can be observed in Table 3, shows that there were significant differences among the three groups of experience years (low=5 years and less, medium=more than 5 years -15 years, and high=more than 15 years) in each preferred leadership frame except for Symbolic leadership frame. In other words, there were significant differences among the three groups of experience years (low, medium, and high) in the Structural leadership frame ($F = 156.485$, $p = 0.00$), Human Resource leadership frame ($F = 62.135$, $p = 0.00$), Political leadership frame ($F = 24.311$, $p = 0.00$).

Table 3: *The difference among participants response regarding to their experience for schools principals' preferred leadership frames*

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Structural	Between groups	57.532	2	28.766	156.485	.000*
	Within groups	111.582	607	.184		
	Total	169.114	609			
Human Resource	Between groups	29.109	2	14.555	62.135	.000*
	Within groups	142.187	607	.234		
	Total	171.296	609			
Political	Between groups	25.924	2	12.962	24.311	.000*
	Within groups	323.645	607	.533		
	Total	349.570	609			
Symbolic	Between groups	2.240	2	1.120	2.670	.070
	Within groups	254.643	607	.420		
	Total	256.883	609			

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

To assess pairwise differences among the groups of experience years (low, medium, and high), the Fischers LSD procedures ($p = .05$) was performed (Table 4). The results in Table 4 indicate that low experience of participants in Structural leadership frame ($M = 4.30$) differ significantly from medium experience of participants ($M = 3.68$), and high experience ($M = 3.67$), this means that low experience of participants saw that schools principals have more Structural leadership frame than others. Regarding low experience of participants in Human Resource Leadership frame ($M = 4.26$)

differ significantly from medium (M = 3.87), and high (M = 3.78), this means that low experience of participants saw that schools principals have more Human Resource leadership frame than others. Also, regarding low experience of participants in Political leadership frame (M = 3.90) differ significantly from medium (M = 3.41), and high (M = 3.74), this means that low experience of participants saw schools principals have more Political leadership frame than others.

Table 4: Fischers LSD Multiple Comparisons among participants regarding their experience for schools principals preferred leadership frames.

Dependent Variable	(I) YEARS	N	Mean	SD	(J) YEARS	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig
Structural	low	257	4.30	.407	med high	.61861* .62544*	.04160 .04224	.000 .000
	med	181	3.68	.530	low high	-.61861* .00683	.04160 .04565	.000 .881
	high	172	3.67	.328	low med	-.62544* -.00683	.04224 .04565	.000 .881
Human Resource	low	257	4.26	.427	med high	.39499* .48187*	.04696 .04768	.000 .000
	med	181	3.87	.316	low high	-.39499* .08688	.04696 .05154	.000 .092
	high	172	3.78	.672	low med	-.48187* -.08688	.04768 .05154	.000 .092
Political	low	257	3.90	.890	med high	.49165* .15794*	.07086 .07193	.000 .029
	med	181	3.41	.386	low high	-.49165* -.33371*	.07086 .07775	.000 .000
	high	172	3.74	.740	low med	-.15794* .33371*	.07193 .07775	.029 .000

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

This study examined the preferred leadership frames of schools principals at Jordanian schools as perceived by their teachers. The study used the Leadership Orientation Survey developed by Bolman and Deal to determine the preferred leadership frame of the schools principals'. The preferred leadership frames for the schools principals in order of preference were human resource, structural, symbolic, and political. This finding is supported by the previous research. Bolman and Deal (1991) found that when participative or collaborative leadership was needed that the human resource frame was the preferred frame. These were also the finding of Greenwood (2008) who determined that the human resource frame was the preferred frame of both department chairs and academic deans. The findings of Sypawka (2008) also found that the human resource frame was the preferred frame for academic deans. The results of this study are consistent with the previous research and are probably the result of need for the research participants to satisfy the needs of many different groups that they prefer to use the human resource frame when making decisions.

This implies that participants may use a specific frame with less variability and were more likely to use multiple frames in the decision making process. As found in the research of Bolman and Deal (1991) a leader who used more frames in the decision making process will make more effective decisions.

Research on the leadership frame is important since these will be the future senior leaders that will replace the retiring senior leaders who will be retiring at an unprecedented rate. The ability to use an appropriate leadership frame will assist the future senior leaders as they fill the leadership void and

adjust to the ongoing transformation in education. As leaders are forced to adapt with the changes they must have the ability to use leadership frames which will enable them to be effective leaders.

The leadership development process varies. The method of leadership development could be through a leadership institute, internal leadership development programs, external leadership development programs, certification programs, mentoring or experience based (Groves, 2007). There is limited research on the success of the leadership development process in education as a whole and even less for leadership development process for school leaders.

In the past research by Bolman and Deal (1991) the political and symbolic frame of leadership were preferred by those in leadership positions. Their research also showed that as individuals' ascent through levels of leadership they should move towards the political and symbolic frames of leadership and by doing so they would improve their effectiveness as leaders.

Recommendations

Future research on school leadership and leadership frames research can benefit from a number of recommendations.

1. Further research could examine the educational background of participants to determine if preferred leadership frames are impacted by background of the participant. The background of participants may impact the frames that are preferred.
2. This study could be replicated in multiple education directorates to determine if a more diverse sample would provide a significant difference in the preferred leadership frame based on position.

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Leadership Orientations (Self)

From Research with leadership orientations instrument, by L. Bolman, n.d., <http://www.leebolman.com/orientations.htm>. Copyright 1990 by Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal.

You are asked to indicate *how often* each of the items below is true of you. Please use the following scale in answering each item: (Often = 5, Occasionally = 4, Always = 3, Sometimes = 2, and Never = 1). So, you would answer '1' for an item that is never true of you, '2' for one that is occasionally true, '3' for one that is sometimes true of you, and so on.

	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Think very clearly and logically.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Show high levels of support and concern for others.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Have exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Inspire others to do their best.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Strongly emphasize careful planning and clear time lines.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Build trust through open and collaborative relationships.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Am a very skillful and shrewd negotiator.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Am highly charismatic.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Approach problems through logical analysis and careful thinking.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Show high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Am unusually persuasive and influential.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Am able to be an inspiration to others.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Develop and implement clear, logical policies and procedures.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Foster high levels of participation and involvement in decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Anticipate and deal adroitly with organizational conflict.	5	4	3	2	1

(...continued)

16.	Am highly imaginative and creative.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Approach problems with facts and logic.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Am consistently helpful and responsive to others.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Am very effective in getting support from people with influence and power.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and mission.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Set specific, measurable goals and hold people accountable for results.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Listen well and am unusually receptive to other people's ideas and input.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Am politically very sensitive and skillful.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	See beyond current realities to generate exciting new opportunities.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Have extraordinary attention to detail.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	Give personal recognition for work well done.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	Develop alliances to build a strong base of support.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	Generate loyalty and enthusiasm.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	Strongly believe in clear structure and a chain of command.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	Am a highly participative manager.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	Succeed in the face of conflict and opposition.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	Serve as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values.	5	4	3	2	1