LEADERSHIP STYLES OF DENTAL COLLEGE PRINCIPALS IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Leadership has many dimensions. Bolman and Deal synthesized the diverse body of leadership theory into four cognitive perspectives, or frames, which they labeled structural, human resource, political and symbolic. Effective educational leaders use multiple frames according to need, and consistently use the political frame. This study was undertaken to determine leadership styles of dental college principals in Lahore, using Bolman and Deal's leadership frames model, and to relate the leadership style to effectiveness of leadership and management. A questionnaire was administered to 43 faculty members in two dental colleges. Scores for the four leadership frames were calculated and related to effectiveness of leadership and management. Faculty perceived dental college principals to be strongest in the structural frame, followed closely by the human resource and symbolic frames, suggesting a multi-frame leadership orientation. The political frame was perceived as the weakest, but with high variance in ratings. The principals were perceived to be significantly more effective in management compared to leadership. There were no significant relationships between leadership frames and effectiveness of leadership and management.

Key Words: *leadership, management, styles, frames, dental college principals.*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles have fascinated researches and the public through the ages. Many great leaders exhibited distinct styles, like the charismatic leadership of John F. Kennedy, the servant leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi, and the inspirational style of Marther Luther King. Other leaders exhibited a range of leadership styles, like the inspirational and authoritative style of Adolf Hitler, and the charismatic diplomacy of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Research on leadership styles in the late twentieth century suggested that leadership had many dimensions that could be trained, and effective leaders were able to analyze problems and use appropriate leadership styles to deal with issues.[1,2,3,4]

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Bolman and Deal synthesized the diverse body of leadership theory into four cognitive perspectives, or frames, which they labeled structural, human resource, political and symbolic (Table 1). Frames are lenses through which individuals view events, organizations and the world in general. According to the theory, the greater the number of perspectives or frames used by managers and leaders, the better able they are to gather complete information with which to assess situations and organizations, make clear judgments and take effective actions.[1,2,5,6]

Bowman and Deal's leadership frames theory encompassed earlier work on leadership styles by researchers at the Ohio State University,[7] the University of Michigan,[4] and University of Texas.[8] This earlier research had centered on two dimensions of leadership: people-oriented and task-oriented, which correspond to the structural and human resource frames of Bowman and Deal. These two dimensions were respectively labeled by previous researchers as initiating structure vs. consideration,[7] job centered vs. employee-centered[4] and concern for results vs. concern for people.[8] Bolman and Deal added the political and symbolic frames for a comprehensive perspective on leadership styles.

Using Bolman and Deal's four frame model, experienced educational leaders were found to have a multi-frame leadership orientation, and effectiveness as a leader and manager was related to the consistent use of the political frame.[9-13]

This study was undertaken to determine staff perceptions of leadership styles of dental college principals in Lahore using Bolman and Deal's four frame leadership model, and to relate the style of leadership to effectiveness as a manager and as a leader.

METHODOLOGY

This cross sectional descriptive study was undertaken in two dental colleges in Lahore Pakistan, in October 2011. Permission was sought from the principals of both institutions (A and B). Section II and III of the Bolman and Deal's three part questionnaire was used for this study.[14,15] The first part of the questionnaire had 6 questions with 4 options each. Each option related to a frame, e.g. a to structural, b to human resource, and each option had to be rated from 1 to 4. The second part of the questionnaire related to effectiveness of leadership and management, and asked respondents to rate leadership and management into four categories, compared to other leaders and managers in their experience.

The survey questionnaire was administered to all faculty members (teachers and heads of departments) present on the appointed day, and collected later that day. Self assessment questionnaires were also administered to both the principals.

Data was entered in SPSS Statistics v17 for analysis. Scores were totaled for each frame, e.g. adding all the as for the structural frame score. This gave a value ranging from 6 to 24 for each leadership frame. Data was studied for relative use of the frames, and relationship of leadership style with effectiveness of leadership and effectiveness of management. A leadership rating was also calculated by plotting the effectiveness of leadership and management on a four point scale and multiplying the values with each other. This gave a leadership rating ranging between 2 and 16. This rating was also related to leadership styles to see associations. Chi square test was used to test for relations between categorical variables, with a p value of <0.05 considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

A total of 50 questionnaires were collected, 31 from College A (response rate 74%), and 19 from College B (response rate 70%). There were 9 head of departments (HOD) and 41 teachers. Among these, 4 forms, including

TABLE 1: BOLMAN AND DEAL'S THEORY OF FOUR-FRAME LEADERSHIP STYLES.[2]

Structural Frame (the assembly plant)	The structural frame emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness. Structural leaders make the rational decision over the personal, and strive to achieve organizational goals and objectives through coordination and control. They value accountability and critical analyses. Specialization and division of labor are used to increase performance levels. Problems in performance may result in restructuring. **Dangers:** Rigidity and tyranny.
Human Resourc Frame (the clan)	The human resource frame emphasizes the individual. Human resource leaders value camaraderie and harmony within the work environment, and strive to achieve organizational goals through meaningful and satisfying work. They recognize human needs and the importance of congruence between the individual and the organization. **Dangers:** Lack of content or substance.
Political Frame (the coliseum)	The political frame emphasizes competition. Political leaders value practicality and authenticity, and strive to achieve organizational goals through negotiation and compromise. They form alliances, recognize the diversity of individuals and interests, and compete for scarce resources regardless of conflict. Power is an important resource. **Dangers:** Power play for purpose of self-interest.
Symbolic Frame (the shrine)	The symbolic frame emphasizes meaning. Symbolic leaders value the subjective, and strive to achieve organizational goals through interpretative rituals and ceremonies. They recognize that symbols give individuals meaning, and provide vision and direction toward achieving organizational purpose. They recognize unity and a strong culture and mission. **Dangers:** "Messiah" complex.

TABLE 2. LEADERSHIP FRAME SCORES FOR DENTAL COLLEGE PRINCIPALS, AS PERCEIVED BY THE FACULTY. SCORES MAY RANGE FROM 6 TO 24

College		Leadership Frame			
		Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
A	Mean	16.7	14.8	12.9	15.7
N=27	Std. Deviation	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.8
B	Mean	15.5	15.9	13.6	15.2
(N=16)	Std. Deviation	3.1	2.5	5.9	4.6
Total	Mean	16.3	15.2	13.1	15.5
(N=43)	Std. Deviation	3.1	3.1	5.5	4.1

TABLE 3. LEADERSHIP SELF ASSESSMENT, PRINCIPAL B. SCORES FOR EACH FRAME MAY RANGE FROM 6 TO 24

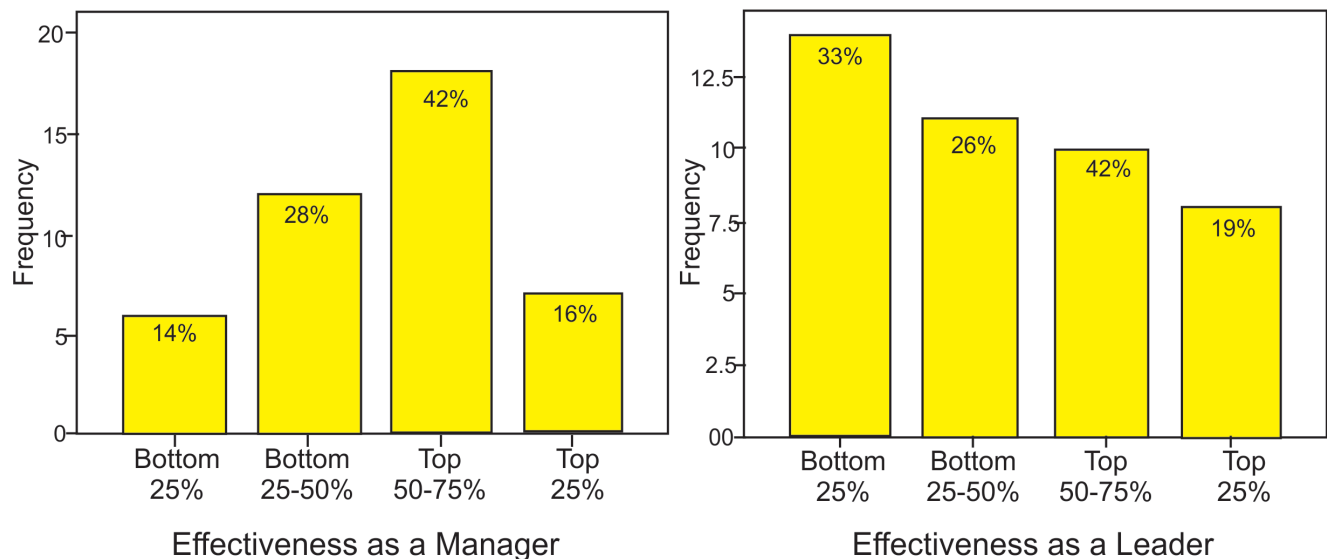| College	Leadership Frames				Effectiveness as	
	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic	Manager	Leader
B	23	15	13	9	Top 50-75%	Top 50-75%

Fig 1: Effectiveness of dental college principal's management and leadership, as perceived by the faculty. Respondents were asked to rate the principals into one of four categories, compared to other leaders and managers in their experience.

1 by an HOD were invalid from College A, and 3 forms, including one by an HOD were invalid from College B. There were thus a total of 43 valid responses, 27 from College A (3 HODs, 24 teachers) and 16 from College B (4 HODs, 12 teachers). A self assessment questionnaire was also collected from the Principal B.

No predominant leadership frame of reference emerged from the data (Table 2). The principals scored highest on the structural frame, closely followed by the human resource and symbolic frames. Principal B rated himself highest in the structural frame, and lowest in the Symbolic (Table 3).

The lowest mean score was in the political frame. There was high variance in scores for the political and symbolic frames, compared to the human resource and structural frames. This was especially apparent in the political frame where respondents marked the principals at both ends of the scale (Table 2, Fig 2.).

Overall no significant differences were found in leadership frames ratings between the colleges, and no significant differences were found in the leadership perceptions of teachers and HODs. In College B, HODs rated their Principal lower in the political frame compared to teachers (11.5 vs. 14.3).
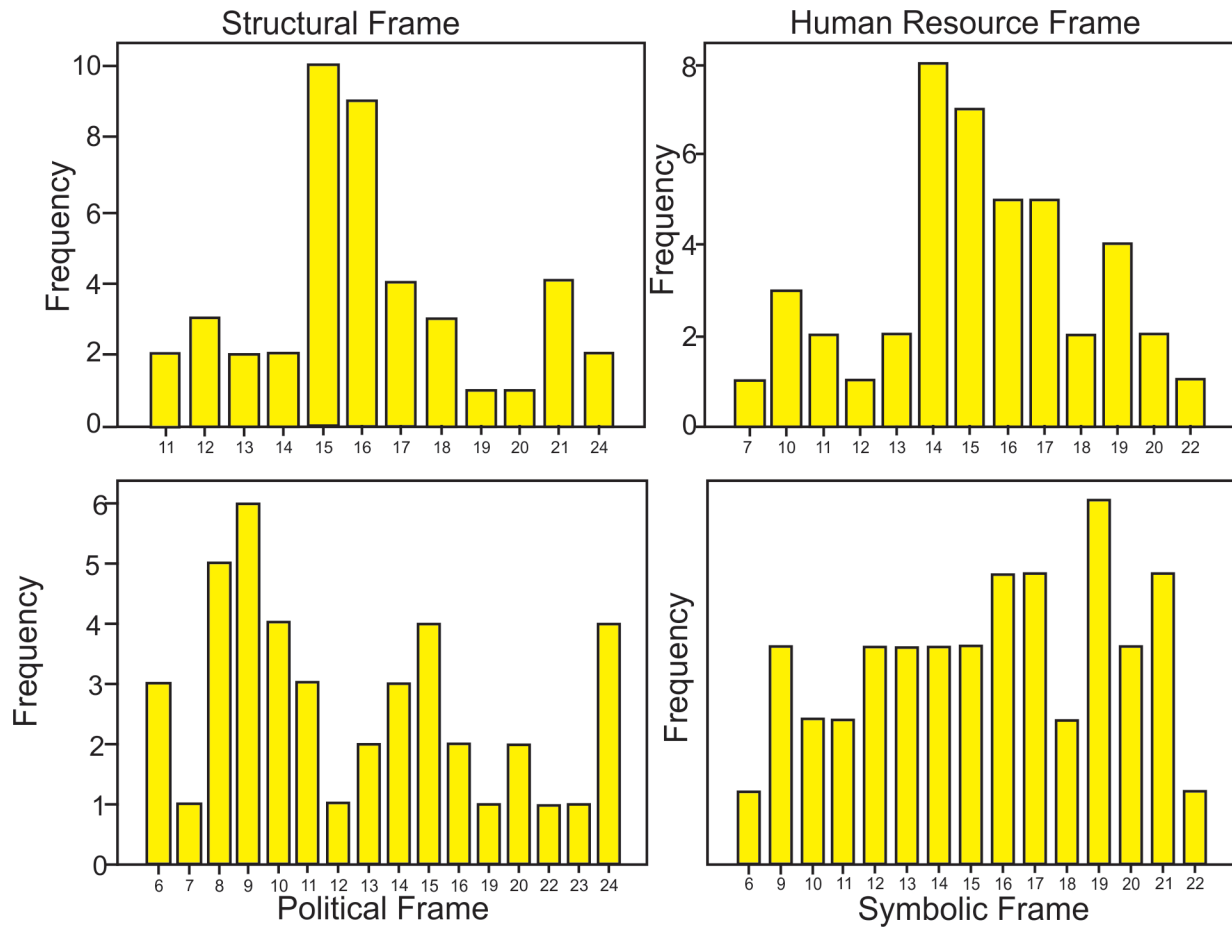
Fig 2: Combined frequency of scores for the four leadership frames, with high variance in the Political and Symbolic frames.

There were no significant differences in the effectiveness of leadership between the two principals (p=0.847). Similarly, no significant differences were seen between the effectiveness of the two principals as managers (p=0.405).

In both colleges, faculty rated the effectiveness of the principals as a manager significantly higher than effectiveness as a leader (p=0.027, Fig. 1).

The mean Leadership rating for the principals was 6.51. There were no significant differences between the ratings for the two principals (p=0.228).

Data was also examined to see if faculty who rated the principals highly related effectiveness to a specific leadership style. No differences were apparent, except in College B where faculty who rated the principal highly gave lower scores to the political frame.

DISCUSSION

Dental college principals in this study were perceived to have multi-frame leadership orientation with the political frame as their weakest. They were perceived as more effective managers and significantly less effective leaders. Effectiveness of educational leadership has been related to the consistent use of the political frame, which may explain the significantly lower leadership rating for dental college principals in Lahore.[5,6]

In a study of college presidents, department chairs, and school administrators, Bolman and Deal reported that leaders in educational institutions mostly used two frames of leadership, and rarely used all four frames.[14,15] The researchers found that more than 60% of the participants had a structural frame orientation, while less than 20% used the symbolic frame, with varied results for the other two frames. Other studies on educational leadership using Bolman and Deal's model have found multi-frame orientations of experienced educational leaders, consistent with the results of this study.[9-13] Women educational leaders rated themselves higher on the human resource frame.[12]

Bolman and Deal's research uncovered a relationship between leadership effectiveness and choice

of frames used, emphasizing the significance of the political and symbolic frames.[5,6] Effective leadership was most frequently associated with consistent use of the political frame and to a lesser degree, the symbolic frame. Leadership effectiveness was also found to be related to the number of frames used. Individuals who employed three or more frames were perceived as being more effective leaders than those who consistently used fewer than three frames.[5]

The structural frame was found to be predictive of effective management, but not effective leadership. Consistent use of the human resource frame was related to both effective management and effective leadership.[3,5,16]

There was high variance in the scores in this study for the political frame, and to a lesser degree the symbolic frame. Faculty marked principals on both ends of the scale for the political frame. Those who rated leadership highly gave lower scores to the symbolic frame, in contract with Bolman and Deal's results.[5] The variance could be partly attributed to negative perception in Pakistan of the words political and politician that appeared in the questionnaire.

The results of this study are limited in scope due to a small sample size, and selection of the survey instrument. The leadership style section of this survey forced respondents to give low marks to one leadership characteristic even if they rated two leadership characteristics equally. Section I (not used for this study) of Bolman and Deal's questionnaire has 32 leadership behaviors that are rated on a 5 point scale, and provides a more valid estimation of the use of frames by leaders. Further research in this field should include more principals, and use all 3 sections of the survey instrument developed by Bolman and Deal.[2,5]

In conclusion, faculty perceived dental college principals to be strongest in the structural frame, followed closely by the human resource and symbolic frames, suggesting a multi-frame leadership orientation. The political frame was perceived as the weakest, but with high variance in ratings. The principals were perceived to be significantly more effective in management compared to leadership. There were no significant relationships between leadership frames and effectiveness of leadership and management.

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