

# Reframing Leadership in The Algerian Higher Education Institutions

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## **Abstract:**

This study was based on the four frames of leadership by Bolman and Deal. These researchers proposed that leaders should look at and approach organizational issues from four perspectives, which they called “frames”. According to them effective leaders were those who were able to access and utilize all the four frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) and who could determine which frame would be most appropriately used depending on the situation and the people involved. Under the permission of professor lee Bolman we used section one from the leadership orientations instrument to investigate which frames do the leaders and the managers from Algerian higher education institutions report as the most dominant and how many frames they use.

**Keywords:** reframing theory; leadership; higher education.

**Jel Classification Code:** A20; C21; C83; C87; I23.

## **Introduction:**

This study was based on the four frames of leadership by Bolman and Deal. These researchers proposed that leaders should look at and approach organizational issues from four perspectives, which they called “frames”. According to them effective leaders were those who were able to access and utilize all the four frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) and who could determine which frame would be most appropriately used depending on the situation and the people involved.

Frames serve multiple functions. They are filters for sorting essence from trivia, maps that aid navigation, and tools for solving problems and getting things done. The structural approach focuses on the architecture of organization, the design of units and subunits, rules and roles, goals and policies. The human resource lens emphasizes understanding people, their strengths and foibles, reason and emotion, desires and fears. The political view sees organizations as competitive arenas of scarce resources, competing interests, and struggles for power and advantage.

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Finally, the symbolic frame focuses on issues of meaning and faith. It puts ritual, ceremony, story, play, and culture at the heart of organizational life.

Each of the frames is both powerful and coherent. Collectively, they make it possible to reframe, looking at the same thing from multiple lenses or points of view. When the world seems hopelessly confusing and nothing is working, reframing is a powerful tool for gaining clarity, regaining balance, generating new options, and finding strategies that make a difference (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 21, 22).

## **1- Methods and Materials:**

### **1.1. Instrument:**

Under the permission of Professor Lee Bolman, I revised, translated and used section one from the leadership orientations instrument (Bolman & Deal) into French (Appendix 1) and Arabic (Appendix 2) for the leaders and the managers who don't understand English.

In this survey respondents rate themselves on leadership behaviors according to a five-point, Likert -type scale: 1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always. The Leadership Orientations Instruments contained eight items associated with each of the four frames for a total number of 32 items on the survey.

The structural frame reflected in items (1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29). The human resource frame reflected in items (2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, and 30). The political frame reflected in items (3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, and 31). Finally, the symbolic frame reflected in items (4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, and 32).

### **1.2. Design of the Study:**

The research design for this study involved a cross-sectional, quantitative survey to determine leadership orientations of leaders and managers from some Algerian higher education institutions (University of Tlemcen, University center of Maghnia, The School of Management-Tlemcen-, University center of Ain Temouchent, , University of Mascara, University center of Relizane , University of Sidi Bel Abbes, University of Mostaganem, University center ElBayadh , University of Adrar, and University of Oran1 and 2).

Quantitative research is a way to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. Quantitative researchers try to identify cause-and-effect relationships that enable them to make probabilistic predictions and generalizations.

The cross-sectional design was chosen to gather data from the chosen population sample at one point in time because this study did not require the researcher to gather data over a period of time. The study followed a non-experimental design, which does not depend on the existence of a control group. The non-experimental design was appropriate because the nature of the data to be collected through surveys was mostly descriptive.

### **1.3. Reliability for this study:**

Extensive research indicates the Bolman and Deal Leadership Orientation Questionnaires meet acceptable standards for reliability and validity.

The overall reliability for the Structural Frame items, the mean of Cronbach's alpha is 0.9085 (N = 1,309 cases). For the human resource the mean alpha is 0.920 (N = 1,331 cases). And the Political Frame mean alpha is 0.09015

(N =1,268 cases). Finally, for the Symbolic Frame the mean alpha is 0.09195 (N = 1,315 cases).

In this study the mean of Cronbach's alpha is 0,886 for all frames. And it was between 0,694(Political Frame) and 0,847(Human Resource Frame) which consider very reliable statically.

*Table 1 : mean of Cronbach's alpha*

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
All frames	0,886	32
Structural Frame	0,747	8
Human Resource Frame	0,847	8
Political Frame	0,694	8
Symbolic Frame	0,749	8

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

## 2. Results and finding:

### 2.1. Data Collection:

139 surveys were distributed in the 12 higher education institutions included in this study (112 printed copy and 27 electronic copy of the survey). From the 139 surveys that were distributed 114 were collected (82%). 7 surveys from the 114 collected were eliminated because either the participants didn't answer correctly, or they didn't finish all 32 questions.

### 2.2. Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis of the data collected from the survey was performed using SPSS to answer two questions.

*Research Question one:* Which frames of Bolman and Deal's do the leaders and the managers from Algerian higher education institutions report as the most dominant frames?

To answer this question, a mean score was obtained from a Likert type scale for each of the 32 items in section one of the survey. This was done by adding together all responses for each individual item and computing the mean score. Based on this data, each item's standard deviation and range was computed.

A mean score was also computed for each frame collectively. This was done by adding all the responses associated with each frame and computing a mean score. From those mean scores, standard deviations and ranges were computed for each frame.

*Research Question two:* How many frames do the leaders and the managers from Algerian higher education institutions use?

To answer this question, each respondent's mean score for each frame was computed from the data collected in section one of the survey. For the frame to count as being used, the respondent's mean score for that frame use needed to be at least 4.0. The use of 4.0 was consistent with previous research using Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientations survey.

### 3.3. Findings:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the organizational leadership of leaders and managers from Algerian higher education institutions using the four-frame perspective developed by Bolman and Deal. This study sought to identify any common orientations among these managers that may contribute to the management and leadership of their institutions as educational organizations. Additional purposes of this study include an analysis of which frames and how many frames are used by these institutions' leaders.

*Research Question one:* Which frames of Bolman and Deal's do the leaders and managers from Algerian higher education institutions report as the most dominant frames?

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Responses to Structural Frame Items**

<i>Structural Frame Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Think very clearly and logically.	107	2	5	4,45	0,69
5. Strongly emphasize careful planning and clear time lines.	107	1	5	4,39	0,855
9. Approach problems through logical analysis and careful thinking.	107	2	5	4,40	0,823
13. Develop and implement clear, logical policies and procedures.	107	2	5	4,35	0,802
17. Approach problems with facts and logic.	107	1	5	4,36	0,838
21. Set specific, measurable goals and hold people accountable for results.	107	2	5	4,40	0,725
25. Have extraordinary attention to detail.	107	2	5	4,29	0,901
29. Strongly believe in clear structure and a chain of command	107	1	5	4,34	0,868

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

Results of the structural frame items indicated that all the eight structural frame questions scored a mean above 4. Question 1 (Think very clearly and logically) scored the highest mean by 4.45. Question 25 (Have extraordinary attention to detail) scored the lowest mean by 4.29. This result reflects a high access and use of the structural frame by the Algerian leaders that participated in this survey.

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Responses to Human Resource Frame Items**

<i>Human Resource Frame Items</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
2. Show high levels of support and concern for others	107	2	5	3,76	0,899
6. Build trust through open and collaborative relationships.	107	1	5	3,82	0,969
10. Show high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings.	107	1	5	3,64	0,975
14. Foster high levels of participation and involvement in decisions.	107	2	5	3,70	1,021
18. Am consistently helpful and responsive to others.	107	1	5	3,70	0,913
22. Listen well and am unusually receptive to other people's ideas and input.	107	1	5	3,79	0,972
26. Give personal recognition for work well done.	107	1	5	3,85	0,95
30. Am a highly participative manager.	107	1	5	3,74	0,975

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

Results of the human resource frame items indicated that none of the eight human resource frame questions scored a mean equal or above 4. Question 26 (Give personal recognition for work well done) scored the highest mean by 3.85. Question 10 (Show high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings) scored the lowest mean by 3.64. This result was disappointing because it reflects that the managers of Algerian higher education institutions don't use the human resource frame to approach organizational issues.

**Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Responses to Political Frame Items**

<i>Political Frame Items</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>3.</b> Have exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done.	107	2	5	3,65	0,766
<b>7.</b> Am a very skillful and shrewd negotiator.	107	1	5	3,38	0,809
<b>11.</b> Am unusually persuasive and influential.	107	1	5	3,22	0,85
<b>15.</b> Anticipate and deal adroitly with organizational conflict.	107	1	5	3,41	0,911
<b>19.</b> Am very effective in getting support from people with influence and power.	107	1	5	3,40	0,889
<b>23.</b> Am politically very sensitive and skillful	107	1	5	3,13	1,158
<b>27.</b> Develop alliances to build a strong base of support	107	1	5	3,54	1,066
<b>31.</b> Succeed in the face of conflict and opposition.	107	1	5	3,38	0,886

**The source:** SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

Results of the political frame items indicated that none of the eight political frame questions scored a mean equal or above 4. Question 23 (Am politically very sensitive and skillful) scored the highest mean by 3.13. Question 3 (Have exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done) scored the lowest mean by 3.65. This result was as disappointing as the human resource frame, it shows that the political frame is not a dominant perspective for the Algerian managers to manage and lead their academic institutions.

**Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Responses to Symbolic Frame Items**

<i>Symbolic Frame Items</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>4.</b> Inspire others to do their best.	107	2	5	3,75	0,902
<b>8.</b> Am highly charismatic.	107	1	5	3,14	1,014
<b>12.</b> Am able to be an inspiration to others.	107	1	5	3,27	0,842
<b>16.</b> Am highly imaginative and creative.	107	1	5	3,29	1,019
<b>20.</b> Communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and mission.	107	1	5	3,44	0,963
<b>24.</b> See beyond current realities to generate exciting new opportunities.	107	1	5	3,27	0,842
<b>28.</b> Generate loyalty and enthusiasm	107	1	5	3,28	1,053
<b>32.</b> Serve as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values.	107	1	5	3,51	0,935

**The source:** SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

Results of the symbolic frame items indicated that none of the eight symbolic frame questions scored a mean equal or above 4. Question 4 (Inspire others to do their best) scored the highest mean by 3.75. Question 8 (Am highly

charismatic) scored the lowest mean by 3.14. This result was also disappointing as the human resource and the political frames, it reflects a poorly access and utilize of the symbolic frame by Algerians academic institutions.

**Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations for All Items by Frame**

frames	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Structural	107	4,3715	0,49
Human resource	107	3,7488	0,668
Political	107	3,3914	0,522
Symbolic	107	3,3692	0,572

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

The frame with the highest mean was the Structural frame with 4.3715 and with the lowest stander deviation 0.49001. Other frames had means less than 4 which consider disappointing. This result shows that the Structural frame is the most dominant among Algerian academic institutions, and the other frames are not used to approach organizational issues.

*Research Question two:* Which frames of Bolman and Deal's do the leaders and managers from Algerian higher education institutions report as the most dominant frames?

**Table 7: Frames Frequency**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Frames	13	12,1	12,1
One Frame	54	50,5	62,6
Two Frames	19	17,8	80,4
Three Frames	10	9,3	89,7
Four Frames	11	10,3	100,0
Total	107	100,0	

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

Of the 107 respondents, 11 (10.3%) managers reported using all four frames. Use of three frames was reported by 10 (9.3%) managers, two frames by 19 (17, 8%), one frame by 54 (50, 5%), and 13 (12, 1%) respondents reported use of no frames at the 4.0 or higher rating. Therefore, only 40 (37.4%) out of a possible 107 respondents indicated multiple frame use. These findings are unusual in previous studies, and they are disappointing according to the reframing theory by Bolman and Deal.

**Table 8: Number of Frames Frequency**

Number of Frames	Frequency
No frames	n=13
Single frame	n=54
Structural	52
Human Resource	2
Political	0

Symbolic	0
<b>Paired-frames</b>	<b>n=19</b>
Structural	17
Human Resource	16
Political	1
Symbolic	4
<b>Multi-frames</b>	<b>n=10</b>
Structural	10
Human Resource	10
Political	4
Symbolic	6
<b>All frames</b>	<b>n=11</b>

The source: SPSS calculations using data from the surveys

54 managers reported using only one frame, 52 managers of those 54 reported using the structural frame and 2 reported using the human resource frame. None of the one-frame oriented respondents reported use of the political or the symbolic frame.

19 managers reported the use of two frames. The structural frame was used by 17 managers, and the human resource frame almost matching the structural with 16 managers. The remaining respondents indicated the use of the political frame one time and 4 time the symbolic frame.

This result suggest that the most likely combination of frames used by managers reporting a two-frame orientation would be a structural and human resource combination. This finding supports previous suggestions by Bolman and Deal, who reported that most educators rely primarily on the human resource or structural lenses.

Using three frames was reported by 10 managers. The structural and the human resource frames were both used 10 time. The political and the symbolic frames were used 4 and 6 time respectively.

### 3. Discussions and limitations:

#### 3.1. Discussions:

The use of the political frame may be confused with being political or playing politics. These terms are often viewed negatively. This why Question 23 (Am politically very sensitive and skillful) in the political frame had the lowest average rating, 3.13. The political frame, however, is not about choosing sides in a political battle. the political frame is about skillfully setting agendas, knowing where alliances and coalitions already exist through mapping the political terrain, making the best of conflict without always trying to resolve it, using negotiation and compromise effectively, and recognizing the numerous sources of power within an organization.

Bolman and Deal indicated that the human resource frame emphasizes on the feelings of others and the basic needs of individuals. Leaders who exhibit the human resource frame lead through facilitation and empowerment of others. The primary method of response is interpersonal and fosters participation and involvement. And the symbolic frame emphasizes finding meaning in facts and interpreting them rather than objectively analyzing situations. Leaders who are symbolic stress enthusiasm, loyalty, and a strong sense of vision. Leaders who display the symbolic frame are transformational leaders; they lead by example and

encourage others to join their vision and purpose. Transformational leadership and the symbolic frame are similar in nature. In Algeria there are a bureaucratic system dominating the public institutions for more than a half of a century. Algerian universities are part of this bureaucratic system. The human resource and the symbolic frames don't have the atmosphere to evolve among Algerian managers in a bureaucratic system. This is why the findings reflect the absence the human resource and the symbolic frames in managing Algerian universities.

Data collected by the surveys revealed important information to address the question concerning the number of frames used by the leaders and managers from Algerian higher education institutions. This result shows the domination of the structural frame, also shows a combination of use between the structural and human resource frame for Algerian higher education managers that have access to more than one frame. This finding supports previous suggestions by Bolman and Deal, who reported that most educators rely primarily on the human resource or structural frames.

13 (12,1%) respondents indicated no frame use, suggesting no dominant frame for those respondents. This finding is unusual in previous studies. It is possible that, to self-report accurately, these 13 managers may have been overly critical of their own orientations. It is also conceivable that the respondents may have misread some of the survey items, leading them to misrepresent themselves. While for the sake of this study frame use required at least a 4.0 mean score for that frame, the 13 leaders all had mean scores between 3.0 (occasional use) and 4.0 (often used) for each of the four frames. This suggests that while no one frame was used often; all four frames were used at least sometimes by these managers.

This study is a part of a larger PhD study, according to finding from that study 68.3 Percent of managers have only 6 years or less of experience as managers. The lack of experience may affect the access and utilize to all four frames. Also, for example the leaders of the faculty of medicine are doctors teaching in that faculty and the leaders of the faculty of engineering are engineers teaching in that faculty also. Those doctors and engineers didn't study management, so they are not professional managers, that's explain why they don't have access to the reframing theory.

The Algerian higher education system is a very centralize, the leaders and the managers of our universities have only a little control on the managerial process. The managers don't have to negotiate the salaries of teachers and workers in the universities because the salaries are fixated by the government. They don't also control amount of student tuitions because education is free in Algeria. They don't have to look for finance resources because dependences are provided by the ministry of higher education. So, the leaders don't have that many managerial tasks, therefore the use of reframing theory is not a real necessity in the current university situation. This why most of them don't have access to all 4 frames.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following suggestions are made:

The minister of higher education should make a multi-frame perspective a critical tool in their mentoring of potential leaders.

Leadership programs should be offered by the Ministry of higher education for current or future managers to develop, appreciate, and integrate a multi-frame perspective to making decisions.

### **3.2. Limitations:**

The limitations of this study are a result of the design. The Algerian university network comprises one hundred and six (106) higher education institutions spread over forty-eight wilayas (48), covering the entire national territory. This network consists of fifty (50) universities, thirteen (13) university centers, twenty (20) national schools and ten (10) higher schools, Eleven (11) higher teacher training colleges and two (02) annexes (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, s.d.). The size of the sample chosen for this



study (12 institutions) is not large enough to generalize the results all over Algerian academic institutions. Also, in those 12 institutions there are more than 500 leaders and managers but only 139 were contacted because of the lack of contact information, and most leaders in our universities don't have the sense of collaboration in scientific activities such as participating in surveys and they lack the professionalism of returning surveys in short periods of time. Therefore, we faced a lot of difficulties collecting data.

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