LEADERSHIP ROLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK LEADER ROLES AND THE CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

Brent H. Kinghorn
New Mexico State University, Department of Management, Las Cruces, NM, 88003, kinghorn@nmsu.edu, 505-646-2641

Janice A. Black
New Mexico State University, Department of Management, Las Cruces, NM, 88003, janblack@nmsu.edu, 505-646-2374

Richard Oliver
New Mexico State University, Department of Accounting and Business Computer Systems, Las Cruces, NM, 88003, roliver@nmsu.edu, 505-646-2641

ABSTRACT

As managerial development continues to take a significant portion of the human resources budget, researchers seek to find effective methods of improving the quality of that training. The purpose of this paper is to show a correlation between certain managerial skills and the organizational environment in which they are developed. Correlations are found between the Competing Values Framework (Quinn, 1988) and the Context-for-learning (Black & Boal, 1997). These correlations allude to the effectiveness of managerial development in certain organizational environments. Another theme is the transfer of academic expert opinion to the practical application in the human resource realm. A comparison of expert opinions to the actual correlations found from field data reveals quite a bit of difference between the experts and field data.

Introduction

Rapidly changing economic changes in the global environment require organizations to maintain their competitiveness and to capitalize on the effectiveness of their own management (Fiedler, 1996). A central tenet in the resource-based view theory of the firm is creation and maintenance of management capabilities (Mueller, 1996) and some empirical research provides a glimpse of how influential people policies are over time (Patterson, West, Lawthom, & Nickell, 1997). Organizations recognize the importance of these capabilities and seek methods to develop these skills. Therefore, organizations devote a sizeable portion of their human resources budget on management development procedures (Saari, Johnson, McLaughlin, & Zimmerly, 1988).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate an organizational environment in which managerial development skills can be undertaken. The adoption of a particular measure of leadership/managerial skills takes place as well as a particular measure of learning organizational environment. Relationships are established between the leadership/managerial skills and the
organizational learning environment. Further, correlations between expert opinions and the field are gathered.

**Leadership/Managerial Skills**

A critical strategic intangible resource of an organization is the leadership found within that organization. These leadership skills can provide a means for an organization to remain competitive. These skills can further be a distinctive advantage in a particular industry, or with particular boundary conditions. In fact, there is an ongoing debate about what constitutes leadership skills and what constitutes managerial skills (Howell & Costley, 2001). Generally, managers value stability, order, and efficiency, and leaders’ value flexibility, innovation, and adaptability (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Managers concern themselves with the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leaders, on the other hand, concern themselves with the future direction, goal setting, and strategies necessary to meet the goals (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2003).

Organizations are most interested in pragmatic solutions to the ongoing needs of the organization rather than the theories of the leadership debate. Combining both of these sets, Quinn and associates viewed a balanced approach to these skills with the “master” manager (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 2003). The competing values framework (CVF) offers a method to analyze the master managers’ skills (Quinn & Cameron, 1983; Quinn, 1984, 1988; Quinn, Sendelbach & Spreitzer, 1991; Quinn, Spreitzer & Hart, 1992). Their model incorporates four historical models of efficient organizations to provide quadrants to the CVF (Quinn, et al., 2003). Those four models are open systems model, human relations model, internal process model, rational goal model.

![Figure 1: Quinn’s Competing Values & Roles](image)

Utilizing the relationships between these historical models provides a framework for the construct organizational effectiveness. The horizontal axis contains control systems competing
with flexible systems, while the vertical axis contains internally focused systems competing with externally focused systems. In each quadrant, two defined roles describe the behaviors that a leader in those roles might exhibit. Each role has an opposite or competing role from the exact opposite quadrant. Effective use of these behaviors suggests individual leader competencies and perception of the effectiveness of the leader (Hart and Quinn, 1993; Hooijberg, 1996). A leader should be aware of the unseen (competing) values at the other end of the pursuant values. This is the key to the competing values framework.

The complementary roles of Mentor and Facilitator fall in the internal-flexible quadrant. The Mentor role behaviors consist of understanding others, communicating effectively, and developing followers. The Facilitator role behaviors consist of building effective teams, facilitating participative decision-making and managing conflict.

Competing roles appear in the external-control quadrant. The complementary roles of Producer and Director fall into this quadrant. The Producer role behaviors consist of working productively, managing time and stress, and fostering a productive work environment. The Director role behaviors consist of designing and organizing work including delegation and envisioning the future, and setting goals.

Encompassed in the internal-control quadrant are the complementary roles of Monitor and Coordinator. The Monitor role behaviors consist of monitoring collective and organizational performance while monitoring individual performance. The Coordinator role behaviors consist of managing projects and design work processes across functional areas.

Competing roles of the internal-control quadrant exist in the external-flexible quadrant. The complementary roles in this quadrant are the Innovator and Broker. The Innovator role behaviors consist of fostering a creative environment and creating creative change. The Broker role behaviors consist of building and maintaining a power base, presenting ideas, and negotiating agreement and commitment.

Quinn (1988) detailed leader profiles and designated some effective and others ineffective. Effective leader profiles were the Master Manager (balanced in all skills), the Conceptual Producer (weak in monitoring and coordinating, strong in production and innovation), the Peaceful Team Builder (weak in producing and brokering, strong in facilitating), and the Aggressive Achiever (slightly weak in facilitating, strong in producing). Ineffective leader profiles include the Drowning Workaholic (weak everywhere but strong in producing), the Chaotic Adaptive (strong in facilitating, mentoring, innovating and weak elsewhere), the Abrasive Coordinator (strong in monitoring and coordinating but weak elsewhere), and the Extreme Unproductive (weak everywhere, but stronger in mentoring and weakest in producing). The Master Manager role is the leader that utilizes all behaviors within the correct context (Quinn, 1988; Hooijberg & Quinn, 1992; Hooijberg, 1996).
Organizational Learning Environment

Through a detailed case study, Ghoshal & Bartlett (1994) identified four attributes of a collective learning environment. Table 1 contains a summary of each attribute found during their study. They also concluded that although there were four attributes that they believed distinguishable there was also a gestalt effect that required the presence of all four attributes. These attributes require the leader to model certain behaviors or even encourage other behaviors from those that they lead. Discipline requires setting clear performance standards and rapid feedback as responses to follower actions. Stretch requires a measure of organizational commitment on the part of followers to “go the extra mile.” Trust establishes fairness in decision-making or the follower must feel a sense of control over their own destiny. Support indicates a follower access to all necessary resources to complete the tasks and goals before them.

Black & Boal (1997) operationalized the four attributes in developing the framework context for learning (CFL). By obtaining individual responses from leaders and follower, CFL captured organizational environment. The empirical evidence of a dependent variable composed of four resources had adequate Cronbach’s Alpha and goodness of fit indicators.

Correlations between these two models have never been tested. Utilizing data from Black & Boal (1997) for CVF and Black, Oliver, Howell & King (2006) for CFL, the correlations between models can be established. These correlations may prove to be a link between organizational environment and leadership roles. The organizational environment may be complementary to development of leadership roles or may not. The determinants for continued training efforts may be thwarted by individual organization findings. If an organization does not
have the environment correlated for the particular leadership skills then the organization is spending money on training ineffectively.

**Hypotheses**

Recall that the Mentor role behaviors consist of understanding others, communicating effectively, and developing others. These set of behaviors foster an environment with feedback from open communication and guidance in terms of support. The competing role behaviors exist in the Director role. These role behaviors would involve fostering an environment of identification with the company’s goals within the limits of clear performance standards. Such findings would lead to the hypotheses:

**Hypothesis #1:** The Mentor role will have higher correlations with the discipline, support, and stretch attributes than the trust attribute.

**Hypothesis #2:** The Director role will have high correlations with the discipline, stretch, and support attributes than the trust attributes.

The Facilitator role behaviors consist of building teams, using participative decision making, and managing conflict. These set of behaviors foster an environment of collective identify and of equity in affectivity. The competing role behaviors exist in the Producer role. These role behaviors encourage an environment of clear performance standards with complete access to organizational resources. Thus the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis #3:** The Facilitator role will have higher correlations with the discipline, stretch, and trust attributes than the support attributes.

**Hypothesis #4:** The Producer role will have higher correlations with the discipline, stretch, and support attributes than the trust attributes.

The Monitor role behaviors consist of managing collective and organizational performance as well as individual performance. These behaviors cultivate an environment of clear performance feedback with an ambition to complete the organizational goals. The competing role behaviors reside in the Broker role. These role behaviors include building and maintaining a power base, presenting ideas, and negotiating agreement and commitment. These role behaviors encourage an environment of equity and understanding between individuals and coordinating resources from all levels of the organization. Thus the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis #5:** The Monitor role will have higher correlations with the discipline, stretch, and support attributes than the trust attributes.

**Hypothesis #6:** The Broker role will have higher correlations with the trust, support attributes than the discipline, stretch attributes.

The Innovator role behaviors consist of creating creativity and fostering such an environment. The competing role is the Coordinator role. These role behaviors involve managing work designs and processes across functional areas. These behaviors advance an environment of performance standards and available organizational resources. Thus the following hypotheses:
Hypothesis #7: The Innovator role will have higher correlations with the trust, stretch, and support attributes than the discipline attributes.

Hypothesis #8: The Coordinator role will have higher correlations with the discipline, stretch, and support attributes than the trust attributes.

Cascio & Wynn (2004) suggested that expert opinion, particularly in the realm of human resource, did not always correspond to empirical or practical application. Their supposition is that more case studies of specific organizations will aid in understanding the practical applications of human resource research. The organizational environment concerning training is an under studied phenomenon. Expert opinions hold a variety of outlooks on the managerial development within these environments. Thus the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis #9: Experts will theorize higher correlations for all profiles to organizational attributes.

Methodology

Black & Boal (1997) administered questionnaires to 455 workers at three work sites from two different Fortune 500 organizations found in the Midwestern portion of the United States. There was an average response rate from these sites was 90%. Firm 1 was a consumer products organization operates in a 100,000 population sized small city. Two offices of the large complex were surveyed. The two sites were physically separated, but did share a common corporate cafeteria. Firm 2 operated in the chemical industry, plastics to be specific, on the outskirts of a large city. These two firms were part of a large research program but provided a optimal research venue by relieving context-specific and cross-context issues.

Black, Oliver, Howell & King (2006) generated synthetic data in characterizing CVF. The synthetic data was generated based on parameters and not from respondents. The parameters represented boundary in a similar way that information from a sample describes boundary conditions for statistical inference. The synthetic data mirrored questionnaires.

Following the practice of using a panel of experts to evaluate questionnaire items and constructs and a matrix of theoretical influence was developed (Baron & Ward, 2004; Langfred, 2004). Black, et al. (2006) used nine leadership researchers selected from a group of academics who had authored leadership articles and who were responsible for teaching leadership course in institutions of higher learning.

Results

Table 2 displays the results of the correlations calculated between the profiles of CVF and the attributes of CFL.
Discipline Stretch Trust Support
Mentor 8% 30% -3% 6%
Innovator 9% 31% -2% 9%
Broker 8% 0% -1% 7%
Producer 15% 33% 1% 11%
Director 13% 32% 3% 18%
Coordinator 16% 28% 4% 21%
Monitor 13% 29% 1% 17%
Facilitator 10% 29% -2% 13%

Table 2

Hypotheses #1, #2, #4, #5, and #8 found support from the analysis. Each one of these hypotheses found significantly higher levels for the three hypothesized attributes. Each of these roles found little correlation to the trust attribute. In fact, the Mentor role found a negative correlation.

Hypotheses #3, #6, and #7 found partial support. The hypothesis suggested that the trust attribute would have a higher correlation but it had a negative correlation. The implication here is that in each role that equity in decision-making, involving people in decision affecting work actually detracted from these roles. The remaining attributes correlated highly for each role except for broker where each component was relatively lowly coordinated.

Interestingly, each role of CVF contained a low correlation or negative correlation with the trust attribute of CFL, which may indicate some possible empirical evidence that the gestalt influence first suggested by Ghoshal & Bartlett is not present. Perhaps this may indicate that the trust attribute can actually be found within the other attributes.

The results of the expert panel can be found in Table 3.

It is obvious the amount of difference between the correlations theorized from the expert panel and the correlations found from hypotheses #1 - #8. Hypothesis #9 found support when comparing expert opinions to data generated from the field. Even without sophisticated statistical tools, the correlations are much higher from the theorized expert panel than the field data.
Conclusion

As organizations seek to reduce employee turnover and develop managers in house, manager development will receive growing importance. This paper sought to enlighten such training with correlation of proposed managerial skills and organizational environment. The empirical conclusions are that generally the organizational environment fosters most managerial skills. One attribute, however, found little correlation. That attribute, trust, needs to be studied further.

Further, the disconnect between academic experts and practical application continues to be an issue. The secondary theme of this paper was this disconnect. The difference between the correlations of the experts and the field data shows that theories of managerial development need careful scrutiny.

REFERENCES


