

## Perceived Leadership Style of Government Primary School Principals in Bole Sub-city

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*Received: 20 May 2014; Accepted: 16 December 2015*

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to explore government primary school principals' leadership style at Bole sub-city of Addis Ababa as perceived by principals and teachers. A survey design was used to conduct the study. To this effect, standardized Leadership Orientation Questionnaire developed by Bolman and Deal (1990) was used to collect data from 32 principals and 216 sample teachers selected with the help of availability sampling for principals and proportionate stratified random and simple random sampling techniques for teachers. Using the standardized questionnaire, both groups of respondents rated principals' leadership characteristics. Data were first edited, coded and fed in to a computer using SPSS 20 for analysis. The data collected were also categorized based on the four leadership styles - Structural, Human Resource, Political and Symbolic styles. Finally, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine statistically significant mean differences between principals' and teachers' perceptions; Pearson's (r) correlation coefficient was employed to show the relationship between the perceptions of both groups of respondents. The results indicated that human and structural styles were used modestly higher than political and symbolic styles by primary school principals. This was corroborated by both the principals' and teachers' responses. It was concluded that school principals were confident with their human resource and structural skills and less sure of the political and symbolic skills; so, their orientation made them average effective managers rather than leaders.

**Key terms:** *leadership style, leadership behavior, principal behavior, effective leader, effective manager.*

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## **Background**

There was great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the twenty first century due to the widespread belief that the quality of leadership made a significant difference to schools' and students' outcomes. Effective leadership and management were increasingly regarded as essential if schools and colleges were to achieve the wide-ranging objectives set for them by many stakeholders, notably to provide the best possible education for their students and learners (Bush, 2008).

According to Harris and Muij (2005), effective principals should communicate with parents, teachers and students and be team builders by creating coalitions between these stakeholders. Furthermore, effective principals are well aware that there is a turbulent environment and they should address the needs of the outside groups that are numerous. They should also encourage a risk taking environment by urging their employees to assume responsibility for a task. Besides, effective principals should possess certain skills in conflict management, active listening, problem solving and consensus building. Head-teachers should consult teachers and parents in case of conflict. Moreover, they should adopt norms and attitudes that are in harmony with the schools' culture. Most importantly they should establish credibility and prove that they are people of integrity.

In 1991, Bolman and Deal categorized leadership into four frames: the structural, human resource, political and symbolic frame. These are lenses or frames that leaders use to understand the behavior of the organization and define their roles. Firstly, the structural frame focuses on the importance of formal roles and relationships. The main issue is how to divide the work, and how to assign people to different works and units. Secondly, the human resource frame suggests that organizations are made up of people who have different needs, feelings and interests. The main issue is to make the organization fit its people. Thirdly, the political frame views organizations as political

arenas in which resources are scarce and people compete for power. The main issue is to form coalitions and build negotiation. Lastly, the symbolic frame treats organizations as unique cultures which have rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths. The main issue is to focus on meaning, belief, and faith.

Bolman and Deal (1991) also conducted a cross-cultural study to identify which frames principals use in the United States and Singapore using Leadership Orientations Questionnaire to gather information. The results showed that Singapore principals were highest on the structural frame, whereas the dominant frame for the Americans was the human resource. Both groups were rated lowest on the political frame, but administrators in Singapore were rated much higher on symbolic than on politics, whereas the Americans were almost equally low on both. While the importance of effective leadership and management is increasingly recognized, much less is still known about which leadership behaviors are most likely to promote successful schooling (Bush & Coleman, 2000).

A large number of studies spanning the last decade revealed that the practice of democratic, autocratic leadership and instructional styles was mainly reported earlier in Ethiopian schools (Abreham, 2011; Alemu, 2011; Gonfa, 2011).

Looking at the Ethiopian practice, the 1994 Education and Training Policy emphasizes principals' leadership style that calls for promoting decision-making at school level focusing on advocacy, mobilization and partnership comprising stakeholders (MoE, 2002). Subsequently, there is little doubt that school leaders matter for school success. This recognition of the importance of principals has led to increased policy attention on attracting and preparing school leaders (MoE, 2002). Unfortunately, existing research does not tell us enough about the leadership styles other than the aforementioned styles. Particularly, the dominance of instructional leadership as the primary frame for understanding the job of the principal has to some extent crowded the

study of other aspects of school leadership. This study contributes to this ongoing stream of inquiry by using comprehensive data to identify and articulate categories of leadership style. The study was approached with the idea that our understanding of principal effectiveness might be expanded by examining those pieces of principals' style that fall outside what traditionally has been understood to be instructional leadership.

To sum up, the aforementioned literature gap reflects that there is a need to further expand the body of leadership style knowledge of principals. Therefore, leadership styles of government primary school principals by using Bolman and Deal's (1990) "four" frames was explored through this survey research. The study further assessed whether the school principals were managers or leaders or both based on the type of leadership behaviors they manifested.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The key for improving the quality of primary education is effective principalship, which is a function of adopting the appropriate leader behavior contingent on the school condition (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Cognizant of this fact, the Education and Training Policy (1994) in Ethiopia gives a major consideration for professionalization of educational management; particularly, this has led to great emphasis on the practice of educational leadership and management aimed at enhancing educational quality (MoE, 2002). However, the review of Ethiopian Education and Training Policy implementation report disclosed that the ideals of meeting the standard quality education was below average (MoE, 2008). According to the report, one of the reasons was that leadership in education at each level was found to be less than satisfactory for various reasons (MoE, 2008).

Among these reasons for the inadequacy of school leadership was related to the preparation of school principals before or after their assignment. Tekleselassie (2002) reported that most principals

attended only a limited in-service course on school leadership and management that would enhance their managerial and leadership capacity. These trainings were provided as unique short duration events and they were not linked to a professional development plan or career promotion opportunities (Alemayehu et al, 2005). Furthermore, the principals did not have adequate materials and financial resources to carry out their activities. Poor leadership capacities in such an environment which is surrounded by manifold problems resulted in the loss of scarce resources as well as the deterioration of pupils' learning outcomes (AACEB, 2011). This diminished the benefits that schools could have obtained from effective school leadership.

Previous unpublished research on educational leadership investigated the leadership style of Ethiopian secondary and primary schools' principals. Abraham (2011), Temesgen (2011), Chalew (2011), Alemu (2011) and Gonfa (2011) carried out studies on perceived leadership style or behavior of government secondary school principals in West Wellega Zone, Western Zone of Tigray Region, Jimma Zone, Illubabur Administrative Zone and Bishoftu Zone. The target respondents were commonly principals themselves, department heads, teachers and sometimes students. Abraham (2011) and Alemu (2011) used standardized questionnaires developed by Clark (2007) with emphasize on articulating autocratic and bureaucratic leadership styles, and conveying transformational school leadership style. The remaining three researchers employed self-prepared questionnaires focusing on leadership roles and responsibilities. To supplement the data collected through questionnaires, interview, document analysis and focus group discussions were conducted.

The study made by Abraham (2011) indicated that the autocratic and democratic leadership styles were the most common styles used by West Wellega Zone government secondary school principals without showing statistically significant differences among the three groups of respondents. Despite the fact that this study found out both initiating structure and considerations were used by principals, it did not clearly

elaborate the proportion of these leadership styles i.e., the possible differences between the two. Another study conducted by Temesgen (2011) reported that the prevalent leadership style manifested by the sample school principals were democratic and bureaucratic styles. From this, it was concluded that teachers' initiation, creativity, participation and enthusiasm to work willingly were affected by the determinant effect of bureaucratic type of leadership practiced by the principals.

Chalew (2011) further confirmed the autocratic leadership style was exercised by the principals. He found out that teachers' perception of leaders' behavior was often favored and applied on autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles and gave little attention to the changes in the situation of leadership. Democratic leadership style was found out to be the least favored. Besides, principals were perceived that they were not able to lead by manifesting dynamism/ flexibility in using various leadership styles based on the situation due to lack of confidence and commitment. Hence, their overall leadership effectiveness was found out to be ineffective.

The findings of Alemu (2011) on principals of government high schools in Illubabur Administrative Zone indicated that the leadership was not effective specially in transformational leadership dimensions such as in building vision, mission, school goals; they lacked a clear view of roles in the areas of instruction support, monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Despite the focus on autocratic and bureaucratic leadership style, a comparative study made by Gonfa (2011) in Bishoftu Administrative town between government and private secondary schools principals' leadership effectiveness revealed the reverse. It was reported that government secondary school principals practiced more of participatory decision making process, goal setting and design strategies and building team than their counterparts despite the impediments posed by the low economic status of teachers.

One of the limitations of these studies on leadership style was that they did not differentiate the degree of exercise of the identified leadership styles. Another limitation in the designs employed was that most of them used survey questionnaire emphasizing on similar dimensions of leadership (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire; task and people orientation).

Thus, all the above mentioned facts imply that there is a need to conduct a research on how school leaders behave. This would enable us to develop respective leadership development program that would help achieve better learning outcomes for all children.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to unveil the leadership styles of government primary school principals in Bole Sub-city based on the four leadership frames developed by Bolman & Deal (1991).

The present study differs from earlier studies in its use of a new questionnaire that comprises a comprehensive concept or dimensions of both leadership and management designed in a way that addresses limitations mentioned in the previous research. The critical role of framing leadership dimensions and which dimension should be applied where and when were examined, as were the way these different factors cluster together in describing principals' effectiveness as managers or leaders taking into account the prevalent educational working environment.

Hence, this study attempted to examine the following basic issues:

- the dominant leadership styles adopted by the principals in government primary schools of Bole Sub-city as perceived by teachers and principals themselves;
- the relationship between principals' years of work experience and their leadership style;
- any difference between the teachers' ratings of leadership style of principals as a function of years of work experience; and

- How principals rate themselves and how teachers rate principals on effectiveness as a leader and manager.

## **Review of the Related Literature**

### *An Overview of Leadership Theories*

Throughout history, theoretical explanations for leadership have been proffered. The Trait Approach up to the late 1940s claimed that leadership ability is inborn (Bryman, 1993). People become leaders for the traits that they own such as intelligence, appearance, language ability, etc. (Bolman, 1991). In the late 1940s to the late 1960s, the Behavioral Approach became dominant advocating that effectiveness in leadership has to do with how a leader behaves. The Contingency Approach, on the other hand, suggests that effective leadership is dependent upon the situation. This was popular in the late 1960s to the early 1980s. It proposes that a particular style is appropriate in some situations whereas not in others. However, recent approaches to leadership focus on vision and charisma, a term used by sociologist Max Weber to describe leaders who can lead, but who do not hold “a sanctioned office” (Adair, 2004).

In the late 1970's, the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership were emerged. Transactional leadership claims that the relationship between managers and employees is based on bargaining whereas transformational leadership supposes that the relationship between the managers and the employees is of mutual trust and characterized by four factors: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Harris & Muij, 2005).

As one can see from the above review of leadership theories, there is a strong bond that relates the leaders and their followers, which is the power of influence. In other words, power of influence is the essence of leadership (Lunburge, 1991). Power is defined by House (1984) in Curphy et al (2006) as the capacity to produce effects on others or the



potential to influence others. Leadership can be 'specific to the particular situation' and its 'authority' can be derived from three sources or bases of power as classified by French and Raven (1959) in Curphy et al (2006): position (as in job title, rank or appointment), what we call Legitimate, Reward and Coercive power in the view of Lunburge (1991); personality - Referent Power (Lunburge, 1991), and technical knowledge and professional skills - Expert Power (Lunburge, 1991 and Adair, 2004). While we usually think of power belonging to the leader, it is usually a function of the leader, the follower and the situation. This statement is common among several researchers.

Adair (2004) and the plethora of other studies claimed that in leadership, there are always three elements or variables in determining leadership behavior: the leader - qualities of personality and character in addition to his/her knowledge and skills; the situation - partly constant, partly varying; and the group - the followers' needs and values. As leaders have potential to influence their followers' behaviors and attitudes, followers and even the situations can also affect the leader's behaviors and attitudes (Curphy et al., 2006).

Leadership functions in relation to the needs of work groups can be seen as three overlapping needs as Adair (2004) described: task need - to achieve the common task; team maintenance needs - to be held together or to maintain themselves as a team, and individual needs - the needs which individuals bring with them into the group. These three needs (the task, team and individual) are the watchwords of leadership as they are overlapping and can be evident in achieving the task – builds the team and satisfies the individuals. If team maintenance fails (the team lacks cohesiveness), performance on the task is impaired and individual satisfaction is reduced. Finally, if individual needs are not met, the team will lack cohesiveness and performance of the task will be impaired. The same notion is clearly noted by Bell (2006) stating in different but highly comparable terminologies that the leader must consistently focus in the practice of operational, organizational and people leadership harmoniously.

*Leadership in Educational Institutions*

The significance of effective leadership and management for the successful operation of schools and colleges is widely acknowledged in the twenty-first century. There is a growing recognition that the quality of leaders and leadership is critical if schools are to produce the best possible outcomes for their learners and their stakeholders. The longstanding appreciation of the vital role of teachers is belatedly being matched by an understanding that skilled leadership is also required if schools and colleges are to thrive (Bush, 2008).

The traditional view in many countries is that school principals and senior staff need only to be qualified and experienced teachers. However, there is now an emerging recognition that leadership is a parallel, if not separate, profession and requires specific preparation.

Almost two decades ago, Beare, et al. (1992) in Bush (2008) stressed the importance of leadership: outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools. There can no longer be doubt that those seeking quality in education must ensure its presence and that the development of potential leaders must be given high priority. This normative statement is echoed by many other researchers, and by policy-makers.

Harris and Muij (2005) reinforce this view by saying that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students. Bush (2008) addresses the significance of leadership development in education. He points out and emphasizes that the need for effective leadership development is highly demanded and based on the emergence of four imperatives; the expanded role of school leaders, the increasing complexity of school contexts, the moral case for leadership preparation and the growing evidence that effective development makes a difference.

Though researchers have consistently reported that school leadership, principal leadership in particular, is critical in developing and sustaining those school-level conditions believed essential for instructional improvement, it is worth noting that the widespread belief that leadership and management are significant factors in determining school outcomes is not well supported by hard evidence of the extent and nature of school leadership effects. In other words, the empirical evidence for such assumptions is modest as the discussion of this issue in the literature and those few sources is limited (Bush, 2008).

Nonetheless, the review of several papers on effects of leadership in all types of schools has been made by researchers as reported in Bush (2008). It is concluded that the combined direct and indirect effects of school leadership on pupil outcomes are small but educationally significant. While the importance of leadership and management is increasingly recognized, much less is known about which leadership set of behaviors are most likely to promote successful schooling.

#### *Educational Leadership Models*

While there is an emerging consensus about the main constituents of leadership, there is much less clarity about which behaviors are most likely to produce the most favorable outcomes. Awareness of alternative approaches to leadership is essential in order to inform the design and development of programs for aspiring and practicing leaders (Bush & Glover, 2003).

There is no single all-embracing theory of educational leadership. In part this reflects the astonishing diversity of educational institutions, ranging from small rural primary schools to very large universities and colleges, and across widely different international contexts. It relates also to the varied nature of the problems encountered in schools and colleges, which require different approaches and solutions. Above all, it reflects the multifaceted nature of theory in educational leadership and

management. As a result, several perspectives may be valid simultaneously (Harris & Muij, 2005; Bush, 2008).

The various theories of educational leadership and management reflect very different ways of understanding and interpreting events and behaviors in schools and colleges. They also represent what are often ideologically based, and certainly divergent views about how educational institutions ought to be managed. Walker & Dimmock (2006) refer to 'paradigm wars' in describing disagreements between academics holding different positions on theory and research in educational administration.

### *Leadership Frames*

Bolman & Deal (1990) explored an entirely different concept of leadership through synthesizing leadership theory into four cognitive perspectives and organized them into frames that assist leaders in decision-making with regard to each particular situation. The use of frames can assist leaders in viewing events in new ways and shift perspective. The authors presented windows to help the leader visualize and understand more broadly the challenges of the organization and potentially available solutions.

This concept has high similarity with contingent leadership models in that it tends to focus on the variety of leadership perspectives for various situations but it differs from contingent leadership as it clearly determines the number and kind of perspectives along with a set of similar situations for each categorized perspective.

The four-frame leadership model was created by melding a variety of organizational theories mentioned previously such as trait theory, behavioral theory, situational and contingency theory and power and influence theory. These theories have been developed over the past several decades and are encompassed in Bolman and Deal's comprehensive theory. Bolman and Deal refer to multiple perspectives,

or frames through which to view an organization. The windows and lenses that help bring the organization into focus serve as filters which give leaders order and aid in decision-making.

Bolman & Deal's (1990) research on school leadership with administrators in higher education and public school administration suggested four different metaphors of a school as an organization. They suggested that a person who sees a school as a *factory* makes decisions and judgments under the structural leadership orientation. These individuals view schooling as a process and that the process should produce the same results for each individual at the end. The individuals who see the school as a *family* view the leadership of a school division as humanistic. These individuals' primary concern is to care for the children, teachers and administrators. Some individuals view the school as a *jungle* where everyone has to fight for their part to the resources. These individuals view leadership through the political orientation. The final metaphor is the *cathedral*. The people who view the school in this manner see leadership through the symbolic orientation. These individuals believe in conserving tradition and faith in the system. These four metaphors of the factory, family, jungle and cathedral are the structures around which Bolman & Deal (1990) built their leadership orientations of structural, humanistic, political and symbolic discussed briefly as follows.

### *Structural Leadership*

Structural orientation dealt with the two dimensions of analytic behaviors. One dimension was thinking clearly and logically and approaching problems with facts. Attending to detail was important to this type of leader. The other dimension was the leader who was organized by developing clear goal and policies which held people accountable for results (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Structural leadership is based on a variety of core assumptions. Firstly, organizations exist primarily to achieve established goals. For any

organization, a structural form can be designed and utilized to fit its particular set of circumstances such as goals, strategies, environment, technology and people. Secondly, organizations work most effectively when organizational choices and individual preferences are restricted by norms of rationality. Structure stipulates that people focus on getting the job done rather than doing what they please. Thirdly, specialization entails higher levels of individual expertise and performance. Fourthly, coordination and control are of prime importance for organizational effectiveness. Based on the task and environment, coordination may be achieved through authority, rules, policies, standard operating procedures, information systems, meetings or a variety of informal techniques (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

Lastly, organizational problems that typically stem from inappropriate structures or inadequate systems can be solved through restructuring or devising new systems. There are two main issues in structural design: how to divide the work (differentiation) and how to coordinate the work of different people and units after it has been divided (integration). Organizations try to achieve formal coordination and control in two primary ways: vertically - by means of commands, supervision, policies, rules, planning or control systems; and laterally - through meetings, task forces, committees, special coordinating roles or matrix structures.

Thus, this orientation emphasized productivity and assumed that classrooms, school and districts work best when the efforts of individual and groups are organized through authority, policies and rules. Structural leaders value analysis and data, focus on the lower levels, set clear directions, hold people responsible for results, and attempt to solve organizational problems with new policies and rules or through restructuring (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

### *Human Resource Leadership*

Human Resource Leadership maintains that an organization's most critical resources are people's skills, insights, ideas, energy and commitment. The orientation dealt with two dimensions - supportive behavior, where the leader's concern was about the feelings of subordinates and his or her responsiveness to them; and, participative behavior, where the leader fostered participation and involvement, listened and was open to new ideas.

The human resource frame is based on the following set of assumptions. Firstly, organizations serve human needs such as physiological, social, self-esteem and self-actualization. Secondly, organizations and people need each other; organizations need skill, energy and ideas. Similarly, people need work opportunities, salaries and careers. Thirdly, either the organization or the people will suffer when the fit between the people and the organization is poor. As a result, organizations will exploit people or people will find ways to exploit the organizations. Fourthly, parties will benefit from a good fit between people and the organization, people will find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the human skill and energy that they need. Human resource leaders value relationships, feelings of individuals and try to lead through facilitation and empowerment (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

### *Political Leadership*

Political Leadership views organizations as political arenas that accommodate a complex variety of individual and group interests. It deals with two dimensions of powerful leader behaviors; *persuasive*, where the leader has the ability to mobilize people and resources; *adroit behavior*, the other dimension, is a behavior of a leader that is political, sensitive and skillful. The leader is especially skilled as a negotiator in the face of conflict and opposition.

The political frame is based on the following set of assumptions. Firstly, organizations are coalitions made up of different individuals and interest groups, for example, hierarchical levels, departments, professional groups, and gender and ethnic subgroups. Secondly, there are deeply rooted differences among individuals and groups in their values, preferences, beliefs, information and perceptions of reality. Such differences change slowly, if at all. Thirdly, allocations of scarce resources, which constitute decisions about who gets what, are vital decisions in organizations. Fourthly, power is the most important resource and conflict is inevitable for resources are scarce and there are enduring differences between people. Lastly, organizational goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation and competition for position among members of different coalitions. Different interests and conflict over scarce resources are an indispensable fact of organizational life. Politically, conflict is not necessarily a bad component. The focus here is not on the resolution of it as is often the case in both structural and human resource frames but on their strategy and tactics used to resolve it. Political leaders are advocates and negotiators who focus on processes such as networking, building coalitions and power bases and negotiating compromises (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

### *Symbolic Leadership*

It centered attention on symbols, beliefs and faith. Symbolic Leadership aims to interpret and elaborate on the basic issue of meaning and faith that make symbols very powerful in every aspect of the human experience, including organizations. The symbolic orientation consisted of two dimensions: inspirational behavior where the leader inspired others to loyalty and enthusiasm and communicated a strong sense of vision, and charismatic behavior which emphasizes cultures and values.



It is based on the following set of assumptions. Firstly, the importance of any event lies in its meaning. The same events can be interpreted differently by different people for they have a variety of schemas and point of views that they use so as to give meaning to their experiences. Secondly, many of the most significant events and processes in organizations are difficult to interpret. Thirdly, it makes it harder to use rational approaches to analysis, problem solving, and decision making when the ambiguity and uncertainty is greater. Fourthly, human beings create symbols to overcome confusion, cultivate commitments, predict events, and provide direction when attempting to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity. Symbols governed behavior through informal rules, agreements, and understandings. Lastly, many organizational events are processes which are more important for what they represent than for what they cause: they are myths, rituals and ceremonies that aid people find meaning and order in their experiences. Rituals and ceremonies serve four major roles: to socialize, to stabilize, to reduce worries and uncertainties, and to communicate messages to external and internal constituencies (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

In general, a structural frame will be helpful in organizations with clear goals, strong technologies and stable authority whereas a human resource frame will work in an organization where employee morale and motivation is low. A political frame will be prominent where resources are scarce, conflict and diversity are high. A symbolic frame will be of particular importance where goals are unclear and ambiguity is high. With regard to leadership and management effectiveness, the symbolic image was the best predictor of leadership effectiveness, but the structural image was the best predictor of a managerial efficiency. Human resources and political images were moderately associated with effectiveness as both manager and leader.

Bolman and Deal's researches did not outline specific characteristics of effective individuals, but found that examining issues from a number of different perspectives was the key to effectiveness. As a result, it

appeared that principals led schools more effectively using these multiple viewpoints.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The general objective of this study was to reveal the leadership style exhibited by principals and vice principals in government primary schools found in Bole sub city. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- identify the major leadership style adopted by school principals.
- check whether leadership style varied in relation to principals' and teachers' work experiences.
- identify principals' and teachers' perspectives about effectiveness of school leaders and managers.

This study attempts to show the leadership styles employed in government primary schools in Bole sub city, in Addis Ababa. Hence, it is believed to have the following significance for the School Principals, the Ministry of Education and other researchers:

- It could provide valuable and contextualized inputs that could be used in leadership training and development programs. This in turn can be much more cost-effective as the limited fund will be targeted to specific contextual intervention;
- It is believed to induce self-awareness and reflection for principals concerning their principalship practices; and
- Lastly, the findings from this study can serve as a basis for other researchers and thereby serve as a springboard, at least, for further study on leadership styles of school principals at different ladders of schools in other sub cities in Addis Ababa or countrywide.

Apparently, the study was delimited to government primary schools of Addis Ababa city Administration with particular reference to Bole sub city to make the study manageable and all the findings and conclusions reflected the state and real situation of these schools within this sub city. Besides, the leadership frames were Structural, Human Resource, Political and Symbolic frames as developed by Bolman and Deal (1991).

Furthermore, it is difficult to get data from previous assessments on leadership style of these schools' principals from Addis Ababa City Government Education Bureau (AACGEB) as it has been unusual to conduct such kind of study. Moreover, failure to include qualitative data using interviews and focus group discussions in the study may underplay a dimension of the issue such as the role and subjective views of the respondents.

The numbers of principals with long years of working experience, and female principals were very few. Hence, the generalization of findings between leadership style and years of work experience and gender may be affected as the proportion may not be representative of the whole population. The forced-choice measure on questionnaire produced sharper differentiation among the frames since it did not permit rating someone higher on everything and this may lead to some differences concerning the scores in Section I and II of the questionnaire. Despite these limitations, it should be noted that an educational study of this nature would hopefully contribute to the generation of new ideas and perspectives about educational administration and leadership practices.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

*Government School:* Schools which are under financial and administrative control of the Ministry of Education.

*Leadership:* A process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values of both the leader and the led (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

*Management:* The process of running an organization or getting things done through planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and leading (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

*Managerial effectiveness:* in this study it is related to an emphasis the school principals offer on rationality and organizational structure than to symbols and culture (Bolman and Deal, 1991).

*Primary Schools:* A school classified primary/elementary by state and local practice and composed of grades 1-8 (Singh, 2004).

*School Principals:* instructional leaders appointed at the top position in the schools to manage, operate and lead the whole activities of their schools.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership styles of government primary school principals. This study bears the characteristics of a survey design as it attempts to unveil the leadership styles of government primary school principals based on Bolman and Deal's theory of leadership frames to elicit their opinions, attitudes and sentiments. This design was preferred on the ground that it is mainly perceived and can be evaluated from the opinion survey of the principals themselves and teachers (Anderson, 1990).

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*Sources of Data*

The study accounts of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data, involved 13 government primary school principals (1-8<sup>th</sup> grade) found in Bole sub city and sample teachers of same schools as it is believed that they have a better sense of judgment as they work closely with the principals. As secondary sources of data for this study, reports on school performance produced by AACEB, guidelines produced from MoE, and schools themselves, published and unpublished documents as well as educational abstracts were used. Unpublished postgraduate MA theses in the Department of Educational Planning and Management (EDPM) were also consulted.

*Sampling Techniques*

The total population of school principals and teachers from which the sample was drawn were 39 and 745, respectively from 13 government primary schools. Availability sampling was used for head teachers since they were the main target of this study. All were included as they were small in number so that it would be better to include all to have the targeted responses.

Proportional stratified random and simple random sampling were employed for school teachers from each school as they were working for different schools in order to ensure that adequate numbers of samples were selected from each school and was reduced sampling error (Anderson, 1990). From each subgroup (schools), teachers were selected using simple random sampling as every teacher of the subgroup had an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The sample size was 35% of the total number of teachers (745) in government primary schools of the Bole Sub city, which were 261 teachers as it enabled the researchers to have a 95% level of certainty and believed to be a representative. In other words, there was only a 5% chance of the sample results differing from the true population average (Anderson, 1990). And then the number of

teachers selected from each school was based on the percentage of subject in the population.

### *Data Gathering Tools*

Quantitative data for rating leadership orientation were obtained from a standardized questionnaire - a Leadership Orientations Questionnaire developed by Bolman and Deal (1990). It was used to gather information related to the perceived leadership styles of government primary (1-8<sup>th</sup> grade) school principals. It was well constructed and it permitted the collection of reliable and reasonably valid opinions relatively simply, cheaply and in a short space of time from a large number of respondents (Anderson, 1990).

The instrument has two parallel forms - one for the principals to rate themselves and another in which teachers can rate the principals. Both forms contained 40 items that were divided into three sections referred to hereafter as behaviors (Section I), style (Section II), and effectiveness (Section III). The behavior and style sections represented two approaches to assess the four leadership orientations (Structural, Humanistic, Political and Symbolic). The effectiveness section was used to assess the perceived effectiveness of principals as a manager and as a leader. The behavior scale used a list of 32 statements representing leadership behaviors to which the respondents indicated how often the principals engaged in these behaviors. A five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1=never to 5=always was used to rate how often the described behavior occurred. The 32 statements were grouped into four leadership orientations, which were structural, humanistic, political and symbolic. This section contained rating scales and the items were represented in a consistent frame sequence. Specific items were aligned with the four orientation categories.

The style section consisted of six forced-choice questions with four choices for each question. The options for each question were aligned with four leadership orientations. In this section, respondents were

asked to rank the four choices or leadership styles using a rating scale from 4, the phrase that best described the principal to 1, the phrase that was least like or described. The effectiveness section consisted of two items used to rate the principals' effectiveness as a leader and as a manager. A four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 4 being in top 25% of all individuals they have known with comparable experiences and responsibility to 1 being the bottom 25% was used. The internal consistency reliability of this instrument was reported very high. Coefficient alpha for all groups studied by Bolman and Deal ranged between .91 and .93 for section one and ranged between .80 and .84 for section two (Bolman & Deal, 1990).

### *Data Analysis*

Respondents were mainly categorized into two groups i.e., principals and teachers to make comparisons of response from each group of respondents on the style of leadership. The raw data were organized, analyzed and interpreted by grouping similar items in one table, for set of leadership frames. Hence, in descriptive statistics, frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze various characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, and years of work experience, academic qualifications and any training taken in frequency table.

Depending on the nature of the research questions and data collected, the mean scores for each leadership orientation were determined by adding together all responses related to each specific orientation and dividing by the number of questions sub grouped herein. This was done for section I, II and III part of questionnaires; and then for individuals. Using the mean scores of individuals, a mean score was computed for each group of principals and teachers. Response categories on leadership frame scales having five levels (5 to 1) were merged to three levels below low mean score ( $1 \leq X < 3$ ), average mean score ( $3 \leq X < 4$ ) and high mean score ( $4 \leq X \leq 5$ ). This was to make the interpretation easier based on a few response categories. Comparison

then was made so as to identify the perceived dominant leadership style and then to make inferences.

To show the statistical significant difference of perceptions of the two groups, Paired sample t-test was employed as the dependent variable (Leadership Style) has interval levels of measurement at 0.05 significance levels or 95 percent confidence level. Using the mean scores for each leadership frame computed in a way that accommodate the work experience, Pearson's (r) correlation coefficient was employed to show the relationship between the perception of both principals' and teachers' have towards leadership style and their service years.

### *Results and Discussions*

In order to obtain pertinent data, a total of 300 leadership orientation questionnaires were distributed to 37 government primary school principals and vice principals and 261 teachers. From these questionnaires, 32 (87%) from principals and 216 (83%) from teachers were filled out and returned and used for interpretation.

Out of the total of 248 respondents of the two groups, 60% were males and 40% were females. The proportion of female principals was 23% while male number was 77%. This shows that there was less proportion of females to that of males in both school principalship and teaching career. With regard to age distribution of respondents, more than half of them 61% were between 20 to 30 years, 19%, 11% and 9% were found in the age groups of 31-40, 41-50 and above 51 years, respectively. As the educational status of respondents was concerned, 52% and 46% of the two groups of respondents were found to have Diploma and Bachelor Degrees, respectively. Specifically, the leader group, 56% and 46% of them were found having Bachelor Degrees and Diploma, respectively. The data also reveals that there was a negligible number of teachers having certificates (only 2%), which is the minimum requirement for the first cycle primary schools. Therefore,



most of the primary school teachers were beyond the minimum national standard for teaching at primary schools. While comparing the respondents' qualification against the minimum criteria (a B.A/Sc degree) set by Ministry of Education to assign a school principal, 46% of school leaders did not qualify for the school leadership posts since they didn't have Bachelor Degrees. From this, it is possible to assume that the objective of assigning the most qualified principal so as to make school management professional, democratic and efficient has not yet been fully realized. This in turn inhibits the successful school leadership practices. Regarding work experiences of respondents, 69%, 9%, 9% and 13% of the principals served as principals for 0-5, 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 years, respectively, while 52%, 20% and 16% of teachers served for 0-5, 6-10 and 21 and above years, respectively.

#### *Dominant School Leadership Orientation*

Section I of the questionnaire consisted of 32 statements corresponding to four leadership frames each. The principals rated themselves on a 5 point Likert scale; teachers rated their supervisors' leadership orientation on a similar scale.

**Table 1: Perceived Leadership Orientations of Principals by Respondents**

Leadership Frames	Mean Scores Values (X)		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Principals	Teachers			
Structural Orientation	4.07	3.51	13.466	3	.001
Human Orientation	4.32	3.55			
Political Orientation	3.93	3.32			
Symbolic Orientation	3.96	3.37			

As indicated in Table 1, the school leaders rated themselves as they exercise four frames of leadership often. The mean scores of the four frames showed that principals rated themselves relatively high on the first two structural (4.07) and human (4.32) frames of leadership orientations but low on political (3.93) and symbolic (3.96) frames. Structural and human leadership orientations were perceived as practiced more frequently than the remaining two frames. The self-ratings on political and symbolic leadership frames indicated that there were cases where these two frames were exercised seldom. In other words, principals employed the four leadership frames according to their self-ratings. It was also noteworthy that the human resource frame was most often used by principals followed by structural, symbolic and political. Like principals' self-ratings, teachers rated principals following the same trend scoring the highest mean value (3.55) on human resource frame followed by structural (3.51), symbolic (3.37) and political (3.32) frames which was surprisingly parallel to the principals' self-ratings. It was also interesting to note that teachers rated principals the lowest on the political frame. This may imply that principals did not utilize the value of negotiation and shared symbols. However, effective leaders value symbols and recognize the importance of articulating a vision that provides purpose, direction and meaning to an organization (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

When comparing the mean scores of principals' self-rating and teachers' rating, the mean scores of teachers' ratings were lower than the principals' self-ratings mean scores for all frames. The t-test ( $t=13.466$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) result in this table indicated that there was statistically significant difference observed between the two groups' leadership perception implying that disagreement on the degree of each leadership frame practice. From this, one concludes that principals rated themselves higher on each leadership frame thus reflecting what they thought as appropriate degree of leadership exercise and how they actually behaved was not in agreement.

The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate from 1 (given to the item that defines them the least) to 4 (given to the item that defines them the most) in order to compare it with the data on Section I of the same questionnaire. The highest point that the principals could get from this section was 4 as each question had four choices representing four frames. With the help of these three classifications, one can observe which frames of leadership styles were exercised less or more often.

**Table 2: The Perceived Leadership Style of Principals**

Leadership Frames	Mean Scores Values (X)		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Principals	Teachers			
Structural Leadership Style	2.66	2.72	-.257	3	.814
Human Leadership Style	3.04	2.83			
Political Leadership Style	2.19	2.46			
Symbolic Leadership Style	2.09	2.00			

As the data in Table 2 above depicts, like the first section of the questionnaire response, principals rated their leadership style on average (2.6) and high score (3.03) on structural and human leadership style, respectively. The principals again rated their political

and symbolic leadership styles on average near to less than average, but they thought they employed political leadership style more than symbolic leadership style. Likewise, teachers also thought that principals predominantly used human resource and structural leadership styles more often than political and symbolic leadership styles as the mean scores were the highest on the human resource frame followed by structural frame, the political and symbolic frames. Like responses on Section I of the questionnaire, principals mostly used the human resource frame followed by the structural leadership frames. However, it was worth mentioning that principals' score on political frame was found to be higher than the symbolic frame. This reflects that political leadership becomes the third and symbolic frame comes last. This may indicate that they thought they were being more politicized than being visionary. The calculated t-test result ( $t=-.257$ ,  $p=.814$ ) also showed there was no statistically significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers in rating the leadership framework.

Principals' use of the human resource frame dominantly showed that they thought that the schools should fit teachers' needs as organizations and people needed each other, otherwise organizations would exploit people or people would find ways to exploit organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1991). On top of this, they understood that the school's most critical resources were people's skills, insights, ideas, energy and commitment. As a result, schools were more value relationships, feelings of the teachers and they tried to lead through facilitation and empowerment in their leadership process. Of course, it was also contentious whether the principals really did what they thought or not. It was clearly understood that they may have also wanted to show that they cared and considered the needs of others.

Furthermore, these principals thought that they utilized the structural frame which stipulated that people should focus on getting the job done rather than on doing what they pleased. Based on the task and environment, coordination may be achieved through authority, rules,

policies, and standard operating procedures, information systems, meetings or a variety of informal techniques (Bolman & Deal, 1991). This shows that although principals valued the human side of schools, they still gave a lot of importance to rules, authority and structure which are dominant concepts in school cultures rather than to being more far sighted to articulate school vision.

Principals' leadership orientation of human and structural against the aforementioned environment was found partially feasible. The use of human resource frame tended to support, participate and empower a set of heterogeneous followers so that it was very appropriate to instill motivation through increasing sense of belongingness and heightening employees' morale. They were at least aware of the fact that if school leaders were not skilled in human relations, they would not be effective. The other side of their leadership frame (structural), due to the fact that resources are scarce in school environment, principals thought that they were supposed to be more efficient being more structured in using and distributing resources so as to maximize the use of whatever resources they had to improve school quality. They didn't consider much applying networking, coalition and negotiation that represented political leadership frame to support the conflict resolution and to mobilize people and resources to get things done. This may be due to the reason that the negative connotations embedded in being a politician.

The principals were, further, less likely to articulate the school vision and values through creating a sense of shared school mission in every occasions. For this reason, principals did not really exercise visionary leadership which is considered an indication of symbolic leadership. Furthermore, it was difficult to expect them to focus on abstract issues such as meaning, symbols and faith as there was a scarcity of resources and handling a voluminous administrative work at a fast pace.

So, for a substantial improvement to the deteriorating quality of the general education without compromising its expansion, due attention should be given to multifaceted school aspects. The willingness and full participation of students and teachers in particular is vital in attempting to promote effective quality provision. Principals must pay due attention to motivate students and teachers to commit themselves to the betterment of education in the schools. In view of this situation, employing relatively only the two frames, human and structural leadership frames, does not guarantee educational quality improvement as the degree of influence they bring onto them is not much strong. The prevalent educational system needs very high degree of individual commitment and motivation that could last long. Particularly, structural frame is rarely enough to get the job done in an environment where almost all followers, main actor of the school (teachers), have equivalent educational level, expertise and age group against their supervisors. This is because its source of power to drive behavior is authority, so the impact it brings on subordinates would be little and fleeting or would not last long. Principals need to also resort to as many of those other types of power as possible to rectify the shortcomings of one another.

#### *Relationship between Principals' Work Experience and Leadership Frames*

As shown in Table 3 below, within the first tenure of principals (0-10 years), they rated themselves the highest level of scores on human resource frame, followed by structural, symbolic and political frames. The mean scores of all leadership frames for years of service 11 to 15 years, principals rated their orientation to four frames on average. It means that they didn't exercise the four leadership frames as much as principals with less than 10 years' work experience did or they did in the first 10 years of their work experience. After 15 years of work experience, the self-rating shows that there was an increase of their orientation on the four leadership frames. To check the linear correlation between years of experience and their leadership

orientation, the Pearson’s (r) measure of association was used and presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 3: Relationship between Principals’ Work Experience and Leadership Frames**

Leadership Frames	Years of Experience			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
Structural Orientation	4.08	4.54	3.88	4.25
Human Orientation	4.41	4.67	3.79	4.31
Political Orientation	4.03	4.13	3.50	3.81
Symbolic Orientation	4.01	4.17	3.92	4.25

Table 4 shows, first, that there was a negative correlation for all leadership orientation as there was negative sign for all frames; second, very weak correlation (r= less than 0.5); and third, there was a significant correlation with political frame. Hence, it can be inferred that there was an inverse but very weak association between years of services and leadership orientation of principals except for political leadership orientation. Therefore, it is possible to state that the increase in length of services may result in decline of orientation of principals on Structural, Human Resource and Symbolic leadership orientation, especially for political leadership orientation as the inverse relationship was found significant.

**Table 4: Correlations between Principals’ Experience and their Leadership Orientation (Section I)**

		Experience	Structural	Humanistic	Political	Symbolic
Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	-.041	-.319	-.376*	-.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.823	.075	.034	.355

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*Relationship between Principals' Work Experience and Leadership Frames (Section II)*

Table 5 below indicates the means of self-rating by principals on the four leadership style of Section II of the questionnaire. Principals rated themselves average score in structural frame (2.62), political frame (2.23) and symbolic frame (2.08) except in human frame (3.08), which was a higher score, the first five years of their work experience. These findings comply with the result from Section I of the questionnaire analysis with regard to the pattern or set of leadership styles. But, the ratings obtained from Section I was much higher than the ratings gained on Section II. This shows that principals were found to be more generous while rating their orientation towards leadership frames. The Pearson's (r) coefficient was calculated and presented in Table 6.

**Table 5: Relationship between Principals' Work Experience and Leadership Frames (Section II)**

Leadership Frames	Years of Experience			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
Structural Leadership Style	2.62	2.67	2.89	3.08
Human Leadership Style	3.08	2.67	3.06	3.33
Political Leadership Style	2.23	2.17	1.78	1.67
Symbolic Leadership Style	2.08	2.50	2.28	1.92

Table 6 shows, first, that there was a negative correlation for structural, human, political and symbolic leadership orientations as there was negative sign; second, very weak correlation ( $r =$  less than 0.5); and third no significant correlation. Hence, it was found a negative correlation but no strong association between their work experience and their orientation towards all leadership frames. This shows that the increase in length of services will result in a decline orientation of



principals on each leadership style maintaining a uniform pattern of leadership styles.

**Table 6: Correlations between Principals' Experience and their Leadership Orientation (Section II)**

	Experience	Structural	Human	Political	Symbolic
Experience Pearson Correlation	1	-.180	-.075	-.146	-.090
Sig. (2-tailed)		.325	.681	.425	.624

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The self-ratings collected from both sections show that overtime principals become less energetic but willing to remain mainly humanist to the empowerment of the school dwelling themselves on establishing a clear structure and setting goals for the school. They also believe that coordinating and controlling the work environment must be practiced mostly by being humanist and analyst. Put in other words, they have been more idealistic and they value the relationships and feelings of individuals (Bolman and Deal, 1991). Hence, the dominance of human and structural frames remains during their tenure over political and symbolic leadership's frames.

It was also noteworthy that principals who have a work experience of 15 years scored average on all frames considering themselves being more inspirational than negotiator. This might be due to the long period that principals spend in the same particular job with no hope for further promotion and change. As a result, they preferred to focus on terms such as charisma, being a role model to others and inspirational than bargaining and negotiating, because they may understand the notion that effective leaders value symbols and recognize the importance of articulating a vision that provides purpose, direction and meaning to an organization (Bolman and Deal, 1991)

A close look at the mean scores on both Sections I and II of the questionnaire, the self-ratings with work experiences of 11-15 and 16-

20 years' scores were ascending for human resource and structural frames, but were notably descending for symbolic and political frames. Therefore, one can infer that the more the principals gain experience, the less they use the political and symbolic frames. In addition to this, principals with these work experiences scored relatively higher on symbolic frame when compared with the political frame. Thus, it can be said that next to human resource and structural frames, principals consider themselves as being more symbolic rather than political leaders in their tenure.

Looking at closely the association result, in general, it was found out that the predominantly exercised leadership frames were primarily human resource frame followed by structural, symbolic and political frames with the increasing length of services. As it was clearly indicated, the uniform pattern of leadership behaviors has been manifested by school principals over their period of occupation. Thus, it can be stated that there was a very weak and negative association between the leadership frames and principals' work experience as the degree of their orientation for all leadership frames decreased overtime. This result calls for further investigation on the reasons why principals become less oriented to these leadership frames.

#### *Relationship between Teachers' Work Experiences with the Perceived Principals' Leadership Frames*

As one can learn from Table 7, the mean scores on all four leadership frames were found to be average over their work experience. Teachers with a work experience of 21 years and above think that principals mostly use structural frame followed by human resource frame, just like teachers with a work experience less than 21 years as the mean score was higher on structural frame than human resource frame. On the contrary, teachers with less than 15 years of work experience perceived that principals practiced more human resource frame followed by structural frame and the other two. In general, the more experience teachers gain the less they rated principals on human

resource frame. The same pattern applies to the relationship of teachers' work experience with other leadership frames of principals such as structural, political and symbolic frames. The Pearson's (r) association shown below confirmed this result having a negative association but very weak relationship.

**Table 7: Relationship between Teachers' Work Experience and their Perception towards Principals' Leadership Frames**

Leadership Frames	Years of Experience				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	≥21
Structural Orientation	3.58	3.25	3.33	3.54	3.56
Human Orientation	3.65	3.38	3.36	3.44	3.50
Political Orientation	3.46	3.11	3.21	3.22	3.16
Symbolic Orientation	3.51	3.17	3.16	3.16	3.28

Table 8 below shows, first, that there was a negative correlation for the four leadership orientations; second, very weak correlation ( $r =$  less than 0.5); and third, significant correlations for political and symbolic frames. Hence, it can be inferred that there was a negative correlation but very weak association between teachers' work experience and their perception towards principals' first two leadership frames. It implies that the increase in teaching experience of teachers negatively affects teachers' perception towards the school leaders' leadership orientation, especially political and symbolic frames were greatly impacted. It means that as teachers gain more experience they assign lower score to the principals on all leadership frames, particularly on political and symbolic frames.

**Table 8: Correlations between Teachers' Experience and their perception towards Principals' Leadership Orientation (Section I)**

		Experience	Structural	Humanistic	Political	Symbolic
Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	-.029	-.088	-.143*	-.138*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.674	.199	.035	.042

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As reported in Table 9, the perceived scores for the four leadership models by teachers were found to be average over teachers' work experience. But, human resource frame scored higher in all years of work experience than structural, political and symbolic frames. Teachers perceived that principals were mainly catalyst and servant in the schools all the time employing supportive, empowerment process and moving decision making down into the schools. On top of that as teachers gain more experience, they rated principals lower on symbolic leadership frame. The same conclusion can be drawn by looking at the measures of association result presented below.

**Table 9: Relationship between Teachers' Work Experience and their Perception of Principals' Leadership Frames (Section II)**

Leadership Frames	Years of Experience				
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	≥21
Structural Leadership Style	2.76	2.67	2.80	2.67	2.67
Humanistic Leadership Style	2.80	2.88	2.97	2.68	2.87
Political Leadership Style	2.38	2.52	2.67	2.61	2.50
Symbolic Leadership Style	2.07	1.93	1.57	2.04	1.95

Table 10 below shows, first, that there was a negative correlation for all of the leadership frames; second, very weak correlation ( $r =$  less than 0.5); and third, no significant correlation. Hence, it can be stated that

there was a negative correlation but not strong association between teachers' work experience and their perception in principals' leadership styles. This implies that the increase in teaching experience of teachers negatively affects teachers' perception towards the school leaders' leadership orientation as teachers gain more experiences.

**Table 10: Correlations between Teachers' Experience and their perception towards Principals Leadership Orientation (Section II)**

		Experience	Structural	Human	Political	Symbolic
Experience	Pearson	1	-.065	-.020	-.129	-.096
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.340	.769	.059	.161

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Unlike principals' perception of their leadership orientation over their tenure, teachers' perception over long period of their work experience differs towards principals' practice on political and symbolic leadership orientation. This means principals with longer work experience were exercising more political frame than symbolic frame following human and structural frames. Teachers rated principals the lowest on the symbolic frame when compared with the other three leadership frames. This implies the fact that principals did not exercise symbolic leadership as much as they did others. This may prove that they failed to act as a role model conveying values through clothing, behavior, attention and routines. Nevertheless, symbolic leadership was necessary to articulate values and choices that most people find very difficult or uncomfortable.

From the discussion on Section I and II, the more work experience the two respondents gain, the less they rated on each leadership framework but the ratings remained mediocre. Since the correlation coefficients indicated negative and small value, it is possible to conclude that principals' leadership orientation on all frames has an inverse relation with their years of services. However, the pattern of leadership style was found to be the same as discussed in the first part of the analysis of predominant leadership styles.

It was noteworthy that teachers with work experiences of 0-5 years rated principals relatively higher on the four leadership frames when compared with the remaining teachers' work experience. This might be due to the fact that less experienced teachers have spent much less time with their principals and have not had the chance to observe their leadership style more than the experienced ones. The decline in teachers' ratings may be further explained by the length of time spent working with principals as there was a higher chance of observing failures and mistakes in principals' practices.

#### *Principals' Effectiveness as Leaders and Managers*

Effectiveness of principals' leadership style as leaders and managers was also examined by taking into account the perception of both principals and teachers. They were requested to rate school leadership and management effectiveness as compared to their relative and previous knowledge of effectiveness.

**Table 11: Principals' and Teachers' Ratings on Effectiveness as Leaders and Managers**

Leadership Frames	Mean Scores Values (X)	
	Principals	Teachers
As a Leader	2.66	2.37
As a Manager	2.59	2.40

As shown in Table 11, the mean scores of the two respondents towards leadership and management effectiveness fall in the group of average effectiveness (2-3). This implies that both principals and teachers think that school leaders were not effective; so, they needed further improvement, professional development and training in order to become better leaders and managers.

However, teachers' mean scores on leader and manager effectiveness, 2.37 and 2.40, were slightly less than the principals' self-rating

effectiveness mean scores, as leader (2.66) and manager (2.59). This means that principals, as usual, rated themselves higher towards their leadership and management effectiveness.

The interpretation of the above figures was presented as follows. As perceived by teachers and principals themselves, principals' leadership orientations majoring human resource frame followed by structural frame made them to be considered as average effective managers and leaders. But, principals considered themselves more effective leaders than managers as the mean score for leaders was found to be greater than the mean score for managers. On the contrary, teachers think that principals were better managers than leaders in the range of mediocrity. This clearly shows that principals largely focus on mundane tasks such as allocation of roles, tasks and resources needed to achieve school goals rather than emphasizing more abstract concepts such as vision, culture and interpersonal relationships (Bush and Glover, 2003). Previous research indicated partially similar results about principal attaching more importance to teachers' needs and skills than the school's goals and achievements; autocratic and democratic leadership styles (Temesgen, 2011; Gonfa, 2011 and Abraham, 2011).

Bolman and Deal's research (2008) did not outline specific characteristics of effective individuals. Effectiveness can, however, be found examining specific issues from a number of perspectives. While evaluating the above findings against their leadership frames, the current school working environment requires individual commitment and motivation from a variety of stakeholders. Motivating these heterogeneous school members equally to commit themselves to the betterment of education constrained by finance absolutely demands more than human and structural frames. Even the symbolic frame which could allow all stakeholders to focus on educational vision evenly was not adequately attempted to manifest by principals though they think they exercised it next to the human resource and structural.

In general, the symbolic image was the best predictor of leadership effectiveness by Bolman and Deal, but the structural image was the best predictor of a managerial efficiency. Human resources and political images were moderately associated with effectiveness as both managers and leaders. On top of that, the explanation given on the topic of successful leadership re-echoed that for successful leadership there must be the need to focus on the concept of purpose of the organization i.e., vision, people and the organization as a whole.

Therefore, it could be generalized that these principals were more of managers than leaders but their effectiveness was found to be mediocre. They need training and development for further management and leadership skills such as skills to articulate school vision, to inspire, to emphasize school culture and values, to negotiate and bargain. It was also noteworthy to note that the mean scores concerning principals' effectiveness as managers and leaders were only differing slightly when they were examined closely. This may be due to the fact that respondents could not distinguish the concepts of leadership and management so they assigned similar values to the items which represent them. In addition to this, Bolman and Deal (2008) stated that the result of their study was a manifestation of those two concepts: leadership and management for the school principalship were harder to distinguish as qualities of effective managers and effective leaders overlap.

### **Conclusion**

This study was intended to study the leadership orientations of all government primary school principals at Bole sub city. The study was based on Bolman and Deal's (1990) work concerning reframing leadership orientation or style mental model. The findings of the study include:

- Principals in Bole sub city government primary schools tend to use human resource frame predominantly followed by structural,



on average, while relatively neglecting political and symbolic elements as also reported by teachers. The t-test result depicted that there was no statistically significant difference in the leadership style perceptions between teachers' and principals' themselves except for Section I. This was only because principals' self-rating was much higher than teachers' rating towards principals' leadership orientation. This shows that what principals think as appropriate degree of leadership exercise and how they actually behave was inconsistent.

- With regard to the relationship between years of service and principals' perception towards their leadership style, it was found out that the predominantly exercised leadership frames were human resource frame followed by structural, symbolic and political frames over years of services. The correlation coefficients on the four leadership frames yields negative  $r$  values but very weak correlation at  $P > 0.05$  confidence level for the four frames. It shows that there existed an inverse, very weak correlation between their work experience and their leadership style perception. It was also shown principals' work experience was related to their belief that they exercised more of symbolic leadership than political frame.
- With regard to the relationship between teachers' years of service and their perception towards principals' leadership style, the correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) for the four frames showed that there existed an inverse, very weak correlation between their work experience and their perception towards principals' leadership style. It was also depicted that as teachers gained more experience, they perceived their principals practicing more of political leadership frame than the symbolic frame maintaining the predominant leadership styles.
- As to the effectiveness as leaders and managers, principals considered themselves, on average, as being effective leaders

than effective managers. On the contrary, teachers considered their principals as more of effective managers than leaders with average effectiveness.

Based on the major findings of the study, it is possible to conclude that with limited leadership knowledge and skill, principals in Bole sub city government primary schools tended to use primarily human resource frame followed by structural frame as indicated by the teachers. However, the practice of political and symbolic frames was differently perceived by teachers. Besides, in the aspects of the degree of exercise on the four leadership frames, principals rated themselves higher on all leadership orientation than teachers' rating on the same set of leadership frames with significant differences in perception between the two groups. Yet, principals preferred using all four frames despite the less frequently practice of political and symbolic leadership frames irrespective of years of experience.

Principals were thus far from being effective leaders as symbolic leadership style was considered the best predictor of leadership effectiveness by Bolman and Deal's view, but the structural leadership style was the best predictor of a managerial efficiency. Therefore, it made them to be considered more managers (in mediocre effectiveness) than leaders. This conclusion does also comply with principals' role expectation as they were expected to use legitimate and expert power i.e., instructional leaders. This further implies that school principals fail to act as change agents which demand more of their leadership roles than the managerial ones. This could again hamper the schools to embark on change and thereby limit themselves to routine activities.

In light of the findings and conclusions drawn in this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

- Investing in good principals is a cost-effective way to improve teaching and learning throughout entire schools. To successfully establish good school leadership, principals should therefore possess the requisite knowledge and skills on educational administration. They should be trained in school leadership. The Addis Ababa Education Bureau should provide them with timely pre-service as well as in-service training to let them acquire persuasion skill, adroitness, inspiration and charismatic skills.
- The Addis Ababa City Education Bureau needs to encourage and train principals to use not only human resource and structural frames but also political and symbolic frames. Since there is actually no good fit between people and school, the human resource leadership style should be supported by symbolic leadership style that inspires teachers and other staff in a situation of ambiguity rather than structural leadership style. Particularly, political and symbolic leadership skills will enable them to curb resource constraints through mobilizing resources from the school community.
- The Addis Ababa City Education Bureau needs to revise principal performance assessments to focus more attention on improving school leadership. Moreover, principals' job description as well as the training module that is supposed to be given to new entrants to school leadership should be revised to incorporate powerful items in accordance with the Bolman and Deal leadership framework; the revision should be made in a way that mainly focuses on the four leadership styles. Doing so would help to change their role expectations and galvanize principals to start thinking about the existence of multiple ways to respond to school problems.
- Finally, the findings of the study indicated that even though principals use all leadership frames to various magnitudes, their

orientation towards each leadership frame decreases as they gain more experience. Therefore, further study should be conducted on why the decreases in their leadership orientations over their tenure in Bole sub city and in other government schools found in different sub cities.

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