

USING THE COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK TO ASSESS MANAGERIAL ALIGNMENT TOWARDS THE ORGANIZATION'S VISION, FOCUS AND PREFERENCE FOR STRUCTURE

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Abstract

This study determines the extent to which middle, senior and top managers fulfill their managerial roles (mentor, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, director, producer, broker, innovator). It also evaluates their focus (internal versus external) and preference for structure (stability and control versus flexibility and change) as well as whether their orientations are aligned towards the same vision/goal. A sample of 202 managers (middle, senior, top) was drawn using a stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study emphasize the importance of aligning the organizational focus and preference for structure with the organizational vision/goal and ensuring that the managerial cadre is appropriately developed in the competencies needed to attain the vision/goal.

Keywords: Organizational Focus, Organizational Preference for Structure, Competing Values Framework, Managerial Roles, Vision and Mission

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Of recent, the transformation of organizational life is attributed mostly to the ubiquitous presence of the capricious factors of globalization, changing technology and emerging economies. With this moderating effect, performance, productivity and flexibility as growth objectives lean toward a long-term advantage in a changing environment. Companies are precipitating their efforts to augment quality, sustain excellence and hone competitive strategies. The competitive pricing of products, including services, are seen in the light of survival tools as the future may be less predictable in demanding markets. The goal is to uphold a 'competitive edge' over their competitors (Dale, 2003). The effect of aligning internal organizational changes with the external environment is prosperity and survival (Daft, 2005) thereby, requiring synchronisation. The availability of knowledge to the 'right people' and at the 'right time' is flagrantly for the sustenance of organizational competencies (Alazmi & Zairi, 2003).

The process of organizational effectiveness which entails research, knowledge, creativity, innovation and development (Christopher & Paul,

2010) are ingrained in organizational life. Christopher & Paul (2010) emphasize the need for contemporary organizations to keep up with environmental trends, changes and emerging setbacks and threats as they are the only permanent characteristics of organizations. Of importance, the effectiveness of an organization is decided by the degree to which its goals are realized (Cetin & Cerit, 2010), and the imperatives of organizational development (OD) founded upon humanistic-democratic values to improve the performance and effectiveness of organizations whilst taking cognisance of collaborative organizational processes (Robbins, 2003; Cummings & Worley, 2001; Mullins, 2002), without incapacitating its resources. However, goals can only be realized if they are clear and well communicated. In other words, a company's survival depends on a defined inspirational vision. Berson, Shamir, Avolio and Popper (2001:54) assert that a vision's content is critical to ascertain whether a leader succeeds when emerging in new directions or in continuously sustaining high levels of success. Quality leaders need to create a vision, and corporate success stories have been created by visions that are quality-oriented

(Evans, 2005). Those formulating a mission need to understand the organization, ensure that the vision 'fits the times' and reflect the 'uniqueness of the organisation' (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2009). A vision must contribute toward long-term customer loyalty or else the organization will not survive. Presenting the vision in an intriguing way grasps people's imagination in the organization (Evans, 2005) which outlines the vital role that leaders need to play not only in crafting the vision but also in realizing it.

The core purpose of this study is to use the Competing Values Framework (CVF) to assess managerial alignment towards the organization's vision, focus and preference for structure. A brief outline of the CVF cascades to the main focus of this study. Quinn has called the CVF framework a 'theory of theories' as it seeks to differentiate and immerse previous models of both organizations and their effectiveness (Faerman & Quinn, 1985 cited in Smart, 2003). The study utilizes the CVF consisting of four opposing models, that is, human relations model, open systems model, internal process model and rational goal model that can increase effectiveness (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson & McGrath, 2003). The CVF which is extensively used, is influential and robust. Its usefulness is for organizing and understanding the individual and the organizational strategies for growth, organizational effectiveness, organizational culture and design, stages of life-cycle development, leadership roles and profitability (Thakor, 2010). Hence, it was extensively used in various areas ranging from leadership development to organizational change (Al-Khalifa & Aspinwall, 2001).

Furthermore, the CVF highlights the paradoxical roles of organizational leaders (Quinn et al., 2003) because, for competing expectations, effective leaders need to perform roles of a contradictory nature (Yang & Shao, 1996) in response to the fact that organizations must be adaptable and flexible yet simultaneously stable and controlled. This paradox is depicted by two axes in the Framework which range from flexibility to control (vertical) and from an internal focus to an external focus (horizontal). Hence, this framework analyses an array of effectiveness indicators based on two major aspects that pave the foundation of effectiveness:

- *Organizational focus* having an internal and external emphasis, whereby the former dwells on the well-being and development of people in the organization and the latter pronounces the well-being and development of the organization itself (Yu & Wu, 2009).
- *Organizational preference* for structure, which depicts the contrast between stability and control and, flexibility and change (12Manage, 2008).

These effectiveness indicators place the CVF into four quadrants which represent different models:

- The human relations model emphasizes flexibility, internal focus, commitment and morale. An organization displaying this model has a 'team-oriented climate' (Blair, 2004).
- The open systems model places emphasis on survival in a competitive environment through 'adaptability, flexibility and responsiveness' (Blair, 2004).
- The rational goal model emphasizes control and productivity with an external focus.
- The internal process model culminated with the contributions of Max Weber and Henri Fayol (Quinn et al., 1996 cited in Blair, 2004). The 'organizational climate is hierarchical' and decisions are "colored by existing rules, structures and traditions" (Blair, 2004:2).

Each model has insightful segments. Of importance, one model may dominate within an organization, but the various models do co-exist. Each model assumes different criteria of effectiveness known as the Competing Values Framework (Quinn et al., 2003), indicating the complexity of managerial work. A feature of the framework is that each model has a perceptual opposite. The human relations quadrant in the CVF entails the facilitator and mentor roles. The facilitator role is linked to cohesion, teamwork and problem solving in groups while the mentor engages in training, building skills and in employee development. Hence, managers in the human relations quadrant perform the people leadership function (Business Network, 2001). The open systems quadrant indicates the innovator and broker roles. The innovator observes and manages changes whilst tolerating uncertainty and risk and the broker builds and maintains a power base, negotiates agreement and commitment and, presents ideas. Managers in the open systems quadrant, therefore, perform the adaptive leadership function (Business Network, 2001). The rational goal quadrant reflects the producer and director roles. The producer's concerns are task and work, including motivation. The director is competitive and engages in planning and setting goals. Therefore, in the rational goal quadrant leaders undertake the task leadership function (Business Network, 2001). Lastly, the internal process quadrant details the coordinator and monitor roles. The coordinator manages projects, designs work, manages across functions and handles crises whilst the monitor is analytical and engages in inspections. Leaders in the internal process quadrant display the stability leadership function (Business Network, 2001).

The CVF suggests challenges to use 'multiple mindsets' in observing the organizational world; to learn to use competencies linked with the four models; and to integrate competencies of a diverse nature in facing the 'world of action' (Quinn et al., 2003). Managers using these challenges are behaviourally complex, are capable of integrating opposite roles (Quinn et al., 2003) and are hence,

most effective. Today's business environment requires managers with skills, abilities and new competencies.

Of utmost focus, the effectiveness of managers are important to the continuing self-renewal and eventual organizational survival (Bowin & Harvey, 2001), hence determining short and long term success, and viability and profitability. Effective managers encourage subordinates, prevent elements that enervate the workplace and emphasize the importance of widening the information flow to ensure professional vitality. By 'transforming knowledge' into action, special skills are needed, but effective managers learn to achieve this by combining experience with critical thinking (Clampitt, 2002). They also need to redefine vision and mission and, have recent information and effective personnel to respond to global changes. Effectiveness must be linked to the achievement of some 'purpose, objective or task', and the criteria for assessing a manager's effectiveness should be viewed in terms of measuring the results or outcomes that a manager is to achieve (Mullins, 2002:233). 'Apparent effectiveness' is the extent to which the manager's behaviour is in giving immediate answers, making nimble decisions and good public relations provides the 'appearance of effectiveness'; whereas 'personal effectiveness' is the extent to which one achieves personal objectives, such as, power and prestige, instead of organizational objectives (Reddin, 1970 cited in Mullins, 2002). The search for universal theories of effectiveness seems dismal with major complexities and organizational changes, but management leadership theory stresses competing values. This approach highlights different competing effectiveness criteria and indicates effective managerial roles (Quinn et al., 2003).

According to Quinn et al. (2003), the eight roles of mentor, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, director, producer, broker and innovator put into perspective the expectations of a person in a leadership position and, the fusion of these competencies fosters effective functioning. The eight roles address specific demands in the organizational spectrum (Hooijberg & Choi, 2000). This article embarks on determining what critical managerial roles are needed. For example, a manager may motivate employees to accomplish goals and yet pay attention to environmental changes. Furthermore, managerial responsibilities vary at the levels of the organizational hierarchy, for example, the tasks and responsibilities of a first-level manager and an upper-level manager differ, but similarities will emerge in the competencies as all managers need interpersonal skills and self awareness (Kiechel, 1994 cited in Quinn et al., 2003).

This study determines the extent to which middle, senior and top managers fulfill their managerial roles (mentor, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, director, producer, broker, innovator) and whether they differ in this regard. Hence, it is hypothesized that there is a significant difference in

the extent to which managers in the various levels (middle, senior, top) fulfill the managerial roles (mentor, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, director, producer, broker, innovator) respectively. The study also evaluates the organizational focus (internal versus external) and preference for structure (stability/control versus flexibility/change) of middle, senior and top managers and whether their orientations are aligned towards the same vision/goal.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Respondents

The population comprised of middle, senior and top management in a large public sector department in eThekweni (Durban) in South Africa. The population comprised of approximately 400 managers. The sample of 202 subjects was drawn using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportionate representation from the strata of the designated groups of interest, that is, managers. According to the population-to-sample size table by Sekaran (2003), the corresponding minimum sample size for a population of 400 is 196, thereby confirming the adequacy of the sample size for this study whilst securing a 51% response rate. In terms of the composition, 12.9% of the sample consisted of top managers (N = 26), 32.7% were senior managers (N = 66) and 54.4% were middle managers (N = 110). The adequacy of the sample was further determined using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.768) and the Barlett's Test of Sphericity (2975.330, $p = 0.000$) for the eight managerial roles, which respectively indicated suitability and significance. The results indicate that the normality and homoscedasticity preconditions are satisfied.

Measuring Instrument

Data was collected using a self-developed questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section related to biographical information and the second section comprised of 40 items pertaining to the eight Managerial Roles needed to Create Master Managers as outlined in the Competing Values Framework. The biographical data relating to level of management was collected using a nominal scale with pre-coded option categories and the items relating to the managerial roles were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree/not disagree (3), agree (4) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire was formulated on the basis of identifying recurring themes that surfaced during the literature review as well as the competencies outlined in the Competing Values Framework and, items included in the questionnaire related directly to the constructs being measured. This ensured face, content and construct validity. Furthermore, in-house pretesting was

adopted to assess the suitability of the instrument. Pilot testing was also carried out using 12 subjects, selected using the same procedures and protocols adopted for the larger sample. The feedback from the pilot testing confirmed that the questionnaire was appropriate in terms of relevance and construction.

Research procedure

The research was only conducted after ethical clearance was obtained for the study and upon completion of a pilot study.

Measures/statistical analysis of the questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed using Factor Analysis. A principal component analysis was used to extract initial factors and an iterated principal factor analysis was performed using SPSS with an Orthogonal Varimax Rotation. In terms of the validity of the section relating to the managerial roles and competencies, the eight roles as outlined in the Competing Values Framework were generated (Table 2).

The items assessing the managerial roles were also reflected as having a very high level of internal consistency and reliability, with the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha being 0.893.

Administration of the measuring instrument

The questionnaires were administered over a three month period and subjects were expected to respond to the self-report measure using the scale provided. Completed questionnaires could either be posted in the attached self-addressed envelope or sent electronically to the researchers.

Statistical analysis of the data

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and an inferential statistic (Analysis of Variance) will be used to evaluate objectives and hypothesis of the study.

RESULTS

A: Extent to which Managerial Roles are being fulfilled by Middle, Senior and Top Managers

In order to determine the extent to which middle, senior and top managers fulfill their managerial roles, the eight roles as identified in the Competing Values Framework were assessed (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics: Extent to which Managerial Roles are being fulfilled by Middle, Senior and Top Managers

Managerial Roles	Middle Managers		Senior Managers		Top Managers	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Mentor	3.788	0.4132	3.736	0.4821	3.831	0.5357
Facilitator	3.449	0.5497	3.348	0.6993	3.427	0.7404
Monitor	3.940	0.4840	3.840	0.5436	4.031	0.5050
Coordinator	3.715	0.5169	3.669	0.5060	3.873	0.4292
Director	3.462	0.5395	3.369	0.6401	3.738	0.5861
Producer	3.548	0.5148	3.419	0.7132	3.523	0.6301
Broker	3.722	0.4424	3.673	0.4692	3.762	0.5933
Innovator	3.775	0.3931	3.756	0.4421	3.710	0.4556

Table 1 indicates that middle and senior managers are fulfilling their managerial roles in a very similar

manner or order, which differs from the manner in which top managers are fulfilling their roles (Table 2).

Table 2. Order in which Middle, Senior and Top managers are fulfilling their roles

Middle Managers	Senior Managers	Top managers
Monitor	Monitor	Monitor
Mentor	Innovator	Coordinator
Innovator	Mentor	Mentor
Broker	Broker	Broker
Coordinator	Coordinator	Director
Producer	Producer	Innovator
Director	Director	Producer
Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator

Table 1 and Table 2 also indicate that managers at all levels fulfill the facilitator role to the least extent and that top managers are fulfilling the coordinator role to a greater extent than the middle and senior managers. Furthermore, as expected, top managers are fulfilling the director role to a greater extent than middle and senior managers.

Analysis of Variance was also used to assess whether managers differ in the extent to which they fulfill the various managerial roles.

Hypothesis 1:

There is a significant difference in the extent to which managers in the various levels (middle, senior, top) fulfill the managerial roles (mentor, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, director, producer, broker, innovator) respectively (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of Variance: Extent to which middle, senior and top managers fulfill managerial roles

Managerial Role	F	p
Mentor role	0.486	0.616
Facilitator role	0.545	0.581
Monitor role	1.533	0.218
Coordinator role	1.542	0.216
Director role	3.795	0.024*
Producer role	0.971	0.381
Broker role	0.394	0.675
Innovator role	0.266	0.767

* $p < 0.05$

Table 3 indicates that managers in the various managerial levels (middle, senior, top) differ significantly in the extent to which they fulfill the director role only. Hence, hypothesis 1 may only be accepted in terms of the director role, at the 5% level of significance. These findings support the results of the descriptive statistics which indicate that top managers are fulfilling the director role to a greater extent than middle and senior managers.

B: Organizational focus

The organizational focus (Internal versus External) of the middle, senior and top managers were also assessed. The extent to which they fulfill the mentor, facilitator, monitor and coordinator roles determine their internal focus (Table 4). The degree to which they fulfill the innovator, broker, producer and director roles determine their external focus (Table 4). A comparison of these will determine where their organizational focus lies (Table 4).

Table 4. Organizational focus of middle, senior and top managers

Level of Management	Internal Focus (Mentor + Facilitator + Monitor + Coordinator)	External Focus (Innovator + Broker + Producer + Director)	Orientation
Middle managers	3.723	3.627	Internal
Senior managers	3.648	3.554	Internal
Top managers	3.791	3.683	Internal

Table 4 indicates that all levels of management (middle, senior, top) have a greater internal than external focus. Their orientation in day-to-day operations is therefore, more internal.

C: Preference for structure (stability and control versus flexibility and change)

The preference for structure (stability and control versus flexibility and change) of the middle,

senior and top managers were also assessed. The extent to which they fulfill the monitor, coordinator, director and producer roles determine their orientation for stability and control (Table 5). The degree to which they fulfill the facilitator, mentor, innovator and broker roles determine their orientation for flexibility and change (Table 5). A comparison of these will determine where their orientation or preference for structure lie (Table 5).

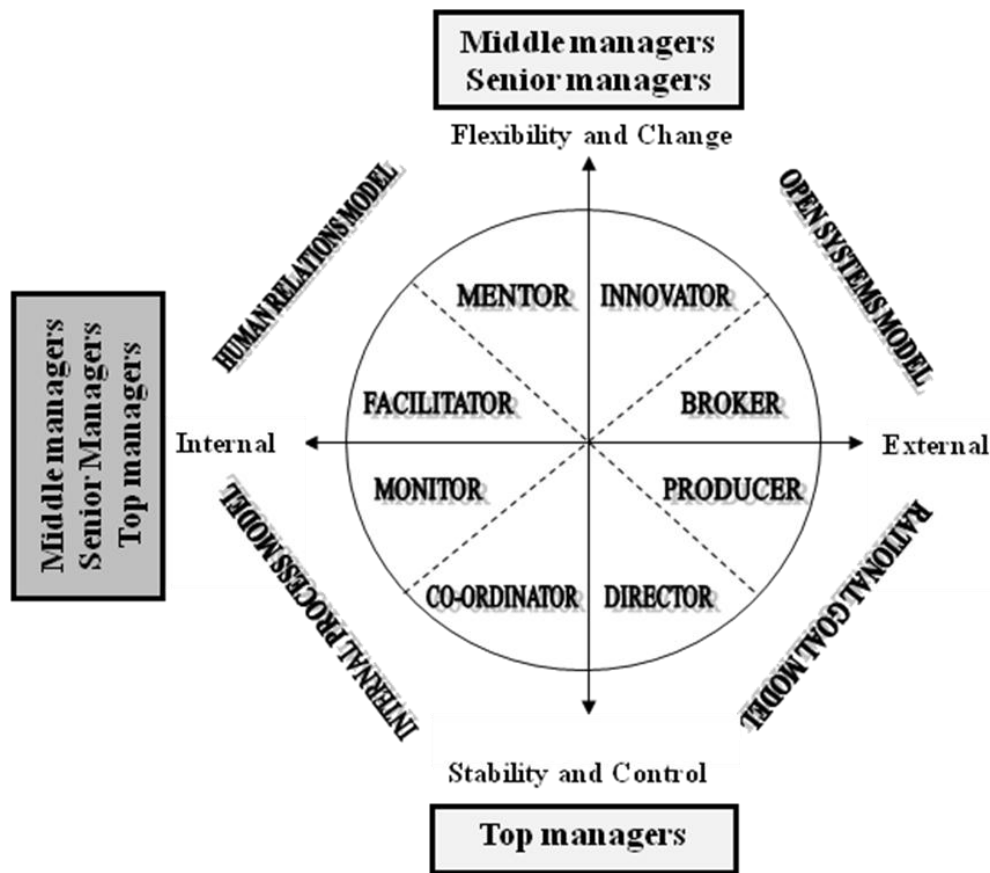
Table 5. Preference for structure of middle, senior and top managers

Level of Management	Stability and Control Orientation (Monitor + Coordinator + Producer)	Flexibility and Change Orientation (Facilitator + Mentor + Innovator + Broker)	Orientation
Middle managers	3.666	3.684	Flexibility and Change
Senior managers	3.574	3.628	Flexibility and Change
Top managers	3.791	3.683	Stability and Control

The results indicate that whilst middle, senior and top managers share a more internal than external stance, middle and senior managers differ from top managers in their preference for structure (Figure 1). Whilst middle and senior managers have a flexibility

and change orientation, top managers have a stability and control orientation, which is evidently influenced by their greater fulfillment of the coordinator role (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Preference of middle, senior and top managers for structure



D: Vision/goal alignment of middle, senior and top managers

The management cadre is fulfilling their roles more or less in tandem, except for the director role. The implication is that they are working towards the same vision or goal. However, the mean score values in each of the roles in all managerial levels, against a maximum attainable score of 5, indicates room for improvement in fulfilling their roles and hence, in accomplishing the vision or mission. Furthermore,

whilst all managers share the same organizational focus, they do differ in preference for structure with middle and senior managers having a flexibility and change orientation and top managers displaying a stability and control stance. This may imply a deviation or detour in the action planned for goal accomplishment.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In terms of the extent to which middle, senior and top managers are fulfilling the various managerial roles, it is evident that top managers are fulfilling the coordinator role to a greater extent than middle and senior managers. Furthermore, the descriptive and inferential statistics indicate that top managers are fulfilling the director role to a significantly greater extent than middle and senior managers. Whilst it is not clear from literature which level of management should be more involved in fulfilling these various roles, it is evident from the results (ANOVA) of this study that the managers in the various managerial levels are fulfilling these roles in a similar manner and extent and are, therefore, working towards the vision/goal more or less in tandem. However, all managers are not fulfilling their various roles optimally (evident in the deviation of the mean scores from the maximum attainable score of 5), thereby indicating that they lack behavioural complexity or the ability to effectively respond to competing

demands. Hence, this demonstrates that the management cadre is not in a position to fully realize their vision or goals.

Furthermore, in terms of the organizational focus, all the managers (middle, senior and top) have an internal focus. This means that they tend to dwell more on the well-being and development of people in the organization rather than the well-being and development of the organization itself.

In addition, in terms of the preference for structure and alignment to the vision/goal, whilst middle and senior managers display a preference for flexibility and change, top managers reflect a preference for stability and control. This implies that the three levels of management do not display the same preference for structure and may be misaligned in terms of the vision/goal of the organization (Figure 2). Undoubtedly, the greater fulfillment of the coordinator role by top managers would have resulted in their dominance for stability and control.

Figure 2. Managerial roles, focus and orientation: Implications for vision/goal

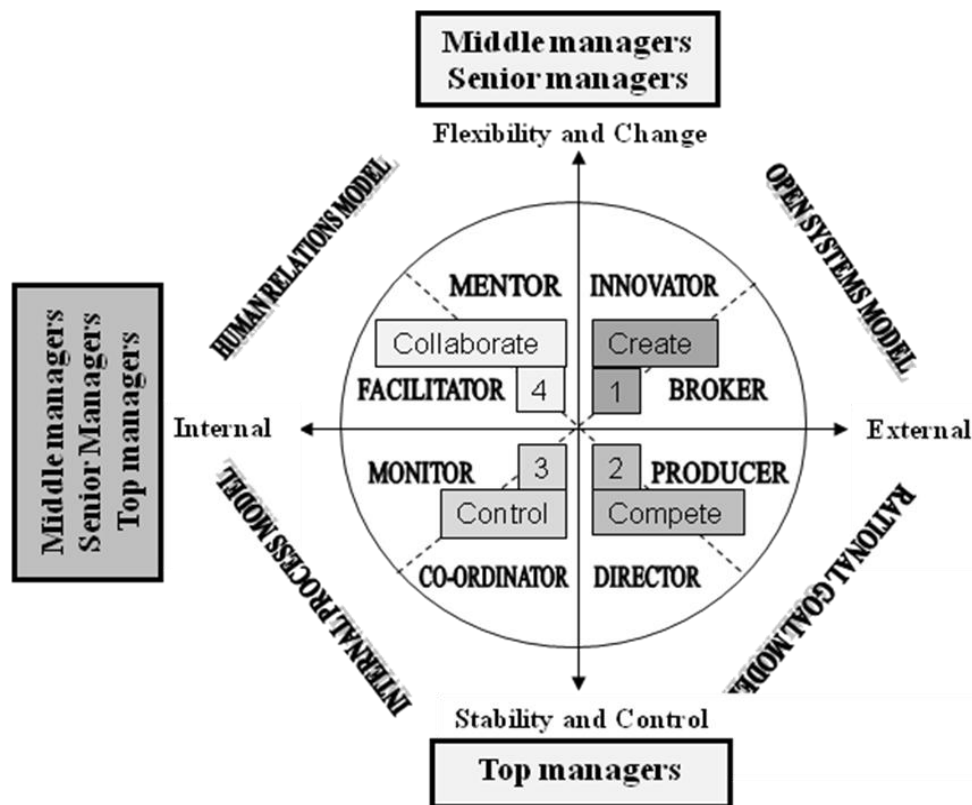


Figure 2 indicates that middle and senior managers display an internal and flexibility and change orientation and will, therefore, locate in the fourth quadrant of the Competing Values Framework (Figure 2). The fourth quadrant is the Human Relations Model which relates to people and emphasizes flexibility, internal focus, commitment and morale and a 'team-oriented climate', where the

focus is to collaborate. On the other hand, top managers display an internal and stability and control orientation and will, therefore, locate in the third quadrant of the Competing Values Framework (Figure 2). The third quadrant is the Internal Process Model which relates to managing processes and characterizes a hierarchical organizational climate that is defined rules, structures and established ways of

doing things and the focus is to control. With dominance being shown in different quadrants in terms of preference for structure, the implication may be that managers in the various levels are not operating completely in tandem in fulfilling the vision/goal. It must, however, be noted that they fulfill the managerial roles to a similar extent (except for the director role) and display an internal stance. Evidently, none of the managerial levels display an external stance or locate in the first and second quadrants that represent creativity and competition respectively. This may imply that the organization is inadequately responding to the environment and its changes, and may not be orientated towards producing results and leading change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative for an organization to first determine the climate (create, compete, control, collaborate) that it would like to shape and nurture in order to achieve its vision/goal. This would imply determining the organizational focus (Internal versus External) and the organizational preference for structure (Flexibility and Change versus Stability and Control) that will best support the determined vision/goal. Thereafter, the organization needs to inculcate, in their managerial cadre, the managerial roles and competencies that are needed to accomplish this. This will be best achieved by creating the right climate and through management development of the competencies needed. This approach will optimize the accomplishment of the vision/goal.

CONCLUSION

Appropriately aligning the organizational focus (Internal versus External) and preference for structure (Flexibility and Change versus Stability and Control) to the vision/goal plays a critical role in its accomplishment. It also ensures that the right managerial roles are sufficiently developed in order to support the desired organizational outcomes.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, data was collected from middle, senior and top managers using a cross-sectional analysis. It would be advisable to undertake a longitudinal study to assess whether dominant managerial roles, organizational focus and preference for structure change in response to the dynamic and ever-changing environment.

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