Teachers' Perceptions of Bolman and Deal's Leadership Frames in Nine-Year Schools in the Durrës District, Albania

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Abstract

This study examined teachers' perceptions of Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames; structural, human resource, political, and symbolic, in nine-year schools within the Durrës district of Albania. Adopting a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from 610 teachers across 60 schools, selected through purposive and proportional sampling to ensure representation of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The Leadership Orientation Instrument (LOI) developed by Bolman and Deal (1990) was used to assess teachers' perceptions of leadership orientations. Descriptive statistics and standardized Z-scores were applied to compare and categorize the four frames. Results indicated moderate and balanced levels across all dimensions: structural (68%), human (67%), political (68%), and symbolic (68%). Approximately one-fifth of the schools achieved high ratings across all four dimensions, showing that leadership orientations are generally balanced, with similar levels observed across the four frames. The findings provide a descriptive overview of leadership orientations in Albanian basic education and offer a foundation for future studies exploring relationships among leadership frames and contextual variables. Interpretations should be considered in light of the study's geographic focus and reliance on teachers' perceptions.

Keywords: *Educational leadership, teachers' perceptions, structural model, human model, political model, symbolic model*

1. Introduction

School leadership is widely recognized as a key determinant of educational effectiveness, teacher motivation, and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021). The increasing complexity of educational systems requires leaders capable of managing change, fostering collaboration, and sustaining organizational learning. Within this context, leadership extends beyond administrative functions to a multidimensional process integrating structural, human, political, and symbolic dimensions (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The Four-Frame Leadership Model, comprising structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, offers a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding how school leaders interpret and respond to organizational challenges in complex environments.

The structural frame emphasizes goals, rules, and efficiency through clearly defined roles and division of labor (Bush, 2011; Mintzberg, 1993), reflecting Weber's (1947) rational-bureaucratic tradition. The human resource frame centers on people, highlighting trust, motivation, and professional growth (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020). The political frame portrays schools as arenas of competing interests where negotiation and resource distribution are key to maintaining balance (March & Cohen, 1972; Photinopoulos, 2021). The symbolic frame focuses on culture, vision, and shared meaning as foundations of collective identity and commitment (Schein, 1990; Reinholz & Apkarian, 2018; Holmes, 2024). Together, these frames provide a holistic perspective on leadership practice.

Empirical evidence indicates that effective leaders seldom rely on a single frame; rather, they integrate multiple perspectives to adapt to contextual demands (Bradbury et al., 2012; Akyürek et al., 2025). Studies conducted in diverse educational contexts suggest that leaders who combine structural clarity with human empathy, political acumen, and symbolic inspiration tend to foster sustainable school improvement (Kocak & Özdemir, 2020; Duran & Ermiş, 2025). As Hallinger and Kovačević (2021) observe, educational leadership has evolved toward more inclusive, ethical, and culturally responsive models that balance accountability with empowerment, a challenge particularly relevant in post-transition educational systems.

Despite the international recognition of Bolman and Deal's framework, empirical applications within the Albanian educational context remain limited, particularly in basic education. Albania's socio-educational transition poses specific challenges, rigid administrative structures, limited school autonomy, and uneven leadership capacities, that make this framework especially relevant for understanding how leadership is enacted and perceived in schools. Accordingly, the present study focuses specifically on measuring and comparing teachers' perceptions of Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames in nine-year schools of the Durrës district. Rather than testing correlations or causal relationships, the study adopts an intentionally descriptive approach aimed at identifying dominant leadership orientations and establishing a baseline understanding of leadership tendencies in this context. This focused design allows for a clear and contextually grounded picture of how leadership practices are distributed across structural, human, political, and symbolic dimensions, thereby contributing empirical insight to the growing literature on educational leadership in Albania.

2. Literature Review

Research on educational leadership has evolved across multiple theoretical paradigms, reflecting shifts in how organizations and human behavior are conceptualized within educational contexts. Early approaches emphasized hierarchical control, bureaucratic authority, and rational structures. Over time, however, scholars such as Bush (2011) and Leithwood et al. (2020) have argued that leadership in education extends beyond administrative management to include cultural, interpersonal, and moral dimensions. This evolution parallels a broader transition from transactional to transformational and distributed leadership paradigms, emphasizing collaboration, trust, and shared purpose (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2021; Harris & Jones, 2019).

Building on this intellectual progression, Bolman and Deal's (2017) Four-Frame Model offers a comprehensive framework for interpreting leadership through four interrelated lenses: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The model synthesizes insights from organizational theory, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, providing a multidimensional view of how leaders interpret complexity and guide change. Recent research (Akyürek et al., 2025; Photinopoulos, 2021; Holmes, 2024) has demonstrated the model's analytical utility in educational contexts, where schools function as complex systems shaped by competing values and expectations.

Examining leadership through these four frames enables researchers and practitioners to better understand how school leaders and teachers navigate challenges related to accountability, professional autonomy, and school culture. Each frame provides a distinct yet complementary perspective: the structural frame emphasizes organization and clarity; the human frame focuses on motivation and relationships; the political frame highlights negotiation and power; and the symbolic frame underscores shared meaning and vision. The following sections examine each frame in turn, integrating classical theories with contemporary empirical evidence.

The structural frame: The structural frame remains one of the most enduring and widely applied approaches in leadership and organizational theory. Rooted in the belief that organizations exist to achieve explicit goals through clearly defined roles, structures, and coordinated processes, it traces its origins to Weber's (1947) rational-legal model of authority. Weber viewed bureaucracy as a mechanism that ensures efficiency through hierarchy and specialization. Bolman and Deal (2017) expanded this logic by portraying organizations as "factories", whose architecture rules, routines, and coordination produces order and performance. Contemporary perspectives, however, view structure not as an end in itself but as an adaptive mechanism for achieving organizational purposes. This marks a shift from rigidity to flexibility, requiring leaders who design responsive rather than controlling systems.

In educational settings, structure remains essential for clarity, fairness, and accountability but must coexist with collaboration and innovation. Photinopoulos (2021) found that structural design enhances order and equitable participation in academic committees, although excessive hierarchy can constrain creativity. Similarly, Fruehauf et al. (2015) argued that effective governance depends on balancing technical and human dimensions, positioning structure as a coordinating mechanism across systems. Sebastian et al. (2018) demonstrated that instructional leadership and organizational management are inseparable; effective leaders combine technical planning with cultural vision to improve

performance. Duran and Ermiş (2025) extended this reasoning to the integration of generative artificial intelligence in education, highlighting the need for organizational restructuring and leadership adaptation to manage innovation responsibly.

Meta-analytic findings by Akyürek et al. (2025) confirm strong interrelationships among Bolman and Deal's four frames, indicating that the structural dimension contributes meaningfully to institutional performance only when aligned with the human, political, and symbolic dimensions. Reinholz and Apkarian (2018) similarly emphasize that sustainable organizational change emerges when "the system that forms order" (structure) aligns with "the meanings that give purpose" (symbolism).

Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that clear structures promote school improvement when they support fairness and flexibility rather than bureaucracy. Likewise, Iter and Oteer (2025) observed that in public schools, leaders rely heavily on structural mechanisms to maintain order yet often underutilize the human and symbolic dimensions. Thus, the contemporary structural leader is not merely an architect of hierarchy but a designer of balance, integrating formality with adaptability to ensure clarity, justice, and collaboration. Structure therefore functions as an intelligent architecture of purpose and coordination, guiding collective action while leaving space for innovation and professional growth (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Akyürek et al., 2025; Duran & Ermiş, 2025).

The Human Resource Frame: Contrasting the rational and bureaucratic approach, the human resource frame positions people at the center of organizational life. Schools are viewed not merely as structures but as communities of relationships, where motivation, well-being, and professional growth are essential to sustainable improvement. Within this perspective, leaders are not controllers of processes but caregivers who nurture people and relationships.

McGregor's (1966) Theory Y posits that individuals possess an inherent capacity for growth, responsibility, and self-motivation. The leader's task is to create conditions that allow these potentials to flourish. Bolman and Deal (2017) expand on this view through the metaphor of the organization as a family, a moral community where care, collaboration, and ethical responsibility bind people together. Human leadership is thus expressed through empathy, trust, and mutual respect.

Recent research reinforces the centrality of this perspective by linking human-centered leadership to well-being and motivation. Ghamrawi et al. (2023) found a reciprocal relationship between teacher leadership and well-being, showing that leaders who invest in teachers' emotional and professional growth foster commitment, creativity, and resilience. Similarly, Akoğlu et al. (2022) demonstrated that leadership grounded in human and symbolic values enhances motivation and job satisfaction, transforming trust and care into tangible sources of productivity.

Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasized that effective leaders build human capacity through professional development, instructional support, and shared authority, thereby cultivating trust and belonging. Likewise, Kocak and Özdemir (2020) found that collective teacher efficacy relies on leaders' ability to develop shared meaning, coherent vision, and collaborative school environments. Together, these findings underscore the human frame as the foundation of relational trust and collective efficacy in schools. Hallinger and Kovačević (2021) identify a paradigmatic shift in educational leadership research, from technical management toward human and cultural dimensions, positioning leaders as builders of relationships and learning climates. In this regard, Bachnik et al. (2023) found that challenging leadership experiences, particularly among women, strengthen relational and empathetic capacities, demonstrating how emotional intelligence becomes a source of empowerment and inclusive leadership.

In this context, the contemporary human resource leader is not a manager of personnel but a creator of conditions for well-being, trust, and professional growth. Such leaders recognize individual potential, nurture community, and guide through meaning rather than control. As Akyürek et al. (2025) observe, leaders who balance the human and symbolic frames foster sustainable organizations built on shared culture and positive relationships. Ultimately, the human frame represents leadership that perceives every individual as a source of growth and collective value.

The Political Frame: Schools are not only spaces of collaboration but also political arenas where power, resources, and interests intersect. Morgan (2006) conceptualized organizations as political systems in which conflict is inevitable and decision-making emerges through negotiation, coalition, and influence. In the same vein, Bolman and Deal (2017) employed the metaphor of a "jungle," emphasizing that limited resources and competing interests make power a necessary instrument for achieving collective goals. In educational contexts, the political dimension becomes evident in the daily governance of schools, where leaders must balance the often-competing interests of teachers, students, parents, and policymakers. Bush (2011) defines political leadership as a negotiated process in which outcomes arise from the interaction of power relations and compromise among stakeholders. Similarly, Cuban (1996) describes school leaders as operating across three interdependent dimensions; instructional, managerial, and political, constantly mediating between stability and change. Møller (1996) refers to these tensions as a "language of dilemmas," capturing

contradictions between control and autonomy, or between justice and efficiency.

Power, in this sense, is not inherently negative but a resource for building relationships and achieving collective influence. Pettigrew (1977) linked strategy formulation to internal political processes, while Stacey (2011) viewed politics as a mechanism for managing uncertainty and directing change. Zaleznik (2008) argued that leaders use power constructively to transform conflict from zero-sum to win–win situations, and Fisher and Ury (1981) introduced the principle of negotiation focused on shared interests and creative problem-solving. These perspectives are particularly relevant in schools, where leaders must convert disagreement into collaboration and shared purpose. Contemporary scholarship has broadened the political frame to include governance, representation, and inclusion. Photinopoulos (2021) highlighted that equitable representation in academic committees is inherently political, requiring inclusive and ethical leadership. Fleming-May and Douglass (2014) connected professional image and power to the empowerment of underrepresented groups, showing that symbolic and political influence can promote cultural transformation within institutions.

At a broader level, Alamoud (2025) extended the political frame to cross-cultural and global contexts, arguing that educational innovation depends on negotiation between local values and national policy agendas. Duran and Ermiş (2025) further emphasized that in the era of artificial intelligence, organizational politics acquire ethical and technological dimensions, requiring leaders to balance innovation, security, and institutional responsibility. Similarly, Akyürek et al. (2025) found that the political frame plays a central role in shaping organizational culture and influencing how authority and fairness are distributed within institutions.

Thus, the contemporary political leader is not a manipulator but a mediator of interests, building coalitions, managing resources, and exercising power with integrity to maintain institutional balance. Politics, therefore, is not an obstacle but a vehicle for transformation, justice, and inclusion, where decisions emerge through dialogue and shared influence (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Akyürek et al., 2025; Alamoud, 2025). This dynamic understanding of power connects directly to the symbolic frame, where vision, culture, and shared meaning sustain organizational coherence and legitimacy.

The Symbolic Frame: The symbolic frame positions meaning, culture, and vision at the core of organizational life. Bolman and Deal (2017) conceptualize organizations as symbolic systems, spaces where shared beliefs, values, and aspirations bring coherence and collective purpose. Within this perspective, leaders act as interpreters of meaning who sustain hope in times of uncertainty and reinforce identity through rituals, narratives, and vision. Morgan (2006) describes culture as a web of shared understandings, norms, and traditions that influence how people interpret and act. Similarly, Bush (2011) views the cultural dimension of leadership as essential for educational management, emphasizing that successful leadership is less about procedures and more about creating meaning, purpose, and shared direction. Pettigrew (1977, 1979) also argues that myths, stories, and symbols do more than convey information, they legitimize organizational action and help members make sense of both continuity and change.

Foundational perspectives reinforce this understanding. Waterman and Phillips (1980), through the 7-S framework, identified “shared values” as the core of effective organizations. Schein (1985, 1990) further demonstrated that culture is transmitted through leaders’ behaviors and key experiences, while Van Maanen and Schein (1977) showed that organizational socialization shapes how individuals internalize meaning. Sergiovanni (2009) expanded on this by arguing that symbolic leadership originates in moral and emotional commitments that transform personal convictions into collective purpose.

Contemporary research has renewed attention to the symbolic dimension by addressing cultural, gendered, and technological change. Bachnik et al. (2023) found that women leaders often turn challenging experiences into empathetic and narrative-based leadership, transforming emotion into a source of symbolic strength. Fleming-May and Douglass (2014) demonstrated that image and professional identity serve as tools of symbolic influence, showing how storytelling and representation contribute to legitimacy in academia. Extending this view, Alamoud (2025) explained that shared meanings and symbols connect global educational reforms with local traditions, bridging diverse cultural contexts.

The symbolic frame has also gained significance in the technological era. Duran and Ermiş (2025) argue that as artificial intelligence reshapes education, symbolic leadership becomes vital for maintaining ethics, identity, and purpose. Through rituals and collective stories, institutions preserve coherence and meaning amid transformation. Similarly, Akyürek et al. (2025) found that when the symbolic frame interacts with the human and structural dimensions, it reinforces belonging, cohesion, and organizational sustainability. Ultimately, the symbolic leader is an architect of meaning. Rather than enforcing compliance, such a leader interprets change, unites people through shared narratives, and transforms everyday routines into expressions of collective identity. The symbolic frame reminds us that leadership extends beyond managing systems—it is about inspiring belief, nurturing culture, and giving shared life to organizational purpose (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Bachnik et al., 2023; Duran & Ermiş, 2025).

3. Methods

Study design: This research employed a quantitative descriptive design to examine teachers' perceptions of Bolman and Deal's (2017) four leadership frames; structural, human resource, political, and symbolic, in nine-year schools across the Durrës County, Albania. The descriptive approach was chosen to provide a clear measurement and comparative overview of leadership orientations rather than to test predictive or correlational relationships. This design allows for the identification of distributional tendencies and dominant leadership orientations across large school populations.

Participants and sampling: The study involved 610 teachers from 60 nine-year schools in the Durrës district. Participants were selected through purposive and proportional sampling to ensure adequate representation of both urban and rural areas. The sample included 44% of teachers from rural schools, 33% from suburban schools, and 23% from city centers. Regarding gender distribution, 71.8% of participants were female and 28.2% were male, reflecting the gender composition typical of the Albanian teaching workforce. Approximately 40% of teachers had more than 20 years of experience, indicating a highly experienced and professionally stable teaching population across the district.

Instrument: Data were collected using the Leadership Orientation Instrument (LOI) developed by Bolman and Deal (1990). The instrument contains 32 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, measuring perceptions of leadership behaviors across four dimensions: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Previous studies have confirmed its strong internal consistency and construct validity. In this study, the instrument demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.90$ across all dimensions.

Data collection and analysis: Data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) were applied to verify the distribution of scores for each leadership frame. Although significance values were below 0.05, the visual inspection of histograms and Q–Q plots, together with skewness (-0.48 to +0.03) and kurtosis (-0.85 to -0.13) values within acceptable limits (±1), supported the assumption of approximate normality across the four leadership dimensions. Descriptive statistics, means (M) and standard deviations (SD), were calculated to summarize teachers' perceptions. To enable cross-dimensional comparison, raw scores were standardized using the transformation $Z = 100 \times ((\text{Score} - \bar{x}) / SD) + 500$, producing a scale with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Based on the conventional ±1 SD rule, three interpretive ranges were defined: low ($Z < 490$), medium ($490 \leq Z \leq 510$), and high ($Z > 510$). These standardized scores represent relative rather than absolute positions, illustrating the degree to which each leadership frame is emphasized within the participating schools.

Ethical considerations: Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any stage. No identifying personal information was collected, and all data were analyzed in aggregate form. Official authorization for data collection was obtained from the Durrës Education Office. The study adhered to ethical research standards, ensuring participants' rights, privacy, and dignity were fully protected. All data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

4. Results

To address the research question concerning the four leadership frames and their perceived performance levels, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted for each dimension of Bolman and Deal's framework. Mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) were calculated based on teachers' responses to the Leadership Orientation Instrument (LOI), which assessed leadership orientations across the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic domains.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis revealed that the structural frame recorded the highest mean value (M = 26.50, SD = 4.09), followed closely by the human (M = 25.96, SD = 4.40) and political (M = 25.68, SD = 4.17) frames, whereas the symbolic frame showed a slightly lower mean score (M = 24.79, SD = 4.54). Table 1 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each leadership frame.

Table 1. Descriptive results for the four leadership frames

Model	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Structural (St)	26,5	4,09
Human (H)	25,96	4,4

Model	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Political (P)	25,68	4,17
Symbolic (Si)	24,79	4,54

Tests of normality: Tests of normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk procedures indicated minor deviations from normality ($p < .05$). However, as shown in the Q–Q plots (Figure 1), the data closely followed the expected normal trend, supporting the assumption of approximate normality across all four leadership dimensions. This confirmed the adequacy of the dataset for subsequent descriptive and comparative analyses based on standardized Z-scores.

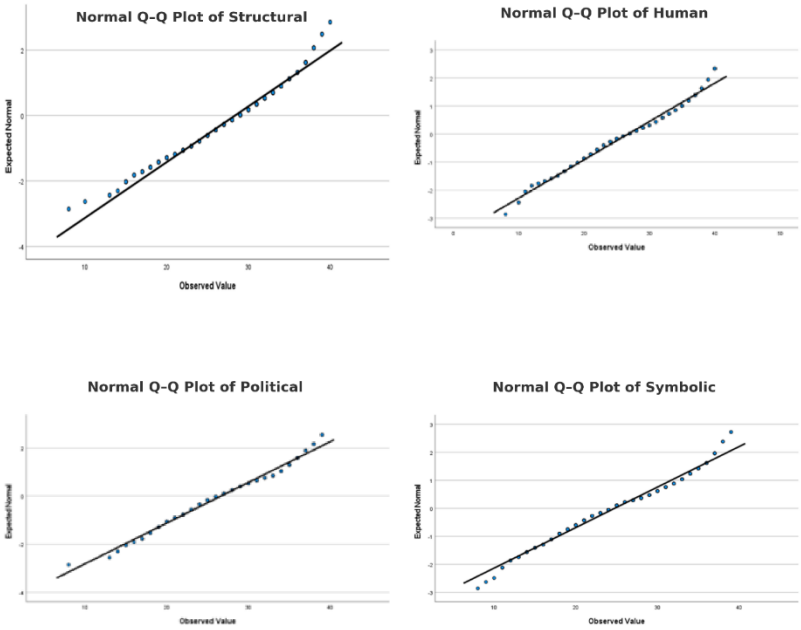

Figure 1. Q–Q plots of leadership frame distributions

Standardized Scores and Distribution Levels: Standardized Z-scores, calculated according to the transformation described in the methodology, were used to compare leadership orientations across the four dimensions. The resulting scale allowed for the interpretation of relative prominence among frames, where higher Z-scores indicated stronger perceived leadership emphasis. Figure 2 illustrates the mean standardized Z-scores for the four leadership frames. The structural frame recorded the highest mean value (M = 510), followed by the human (M = 500), political (M = 499), and symbolic (M = 490) frames, suggesting that structural leadership behaviors were perceived as slightly more prominent across schools.

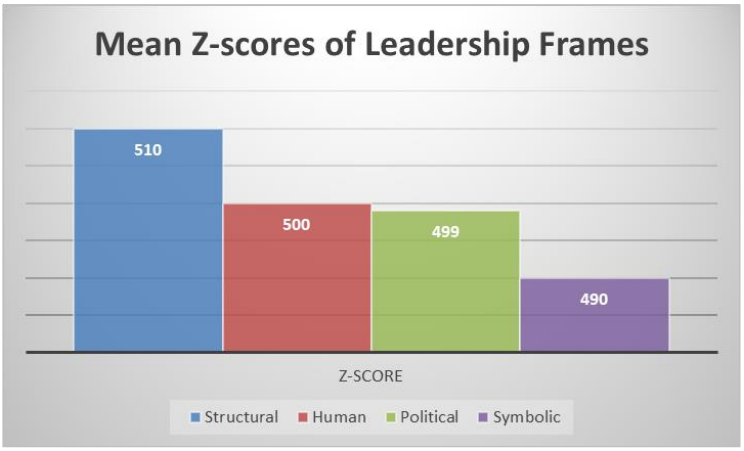

Figure 2. Mean Z-scores of Leadership Frames

4.2 Distribution of Leadership Frames

The classification of standardized scores into interpretive levels showed that most schools were positioned within the medium range across all four leadership frames. Specifically, 68% of schools scored within the medium category for the structural, political, and symbolic frames, and 67% for the human resource frame. Meanwhile, between 12% and 15% of schools were rated as low, and approximately 18–20% achieved high scores across the four dimensions. These findings suggest that the majority of schools exhibit balanced but moderate leadership orientations, reflecting consistency rather than distinct emphasis on any particular frame. Figure 3 illustrates the comparative distribution of leadership frames across the three performance levels (low, medium, high). The figure highlights a similar trend across dimensions, indicating that the four frames are applied in a relatively uniform manner, with minor variation between structural and symbolic orientations.

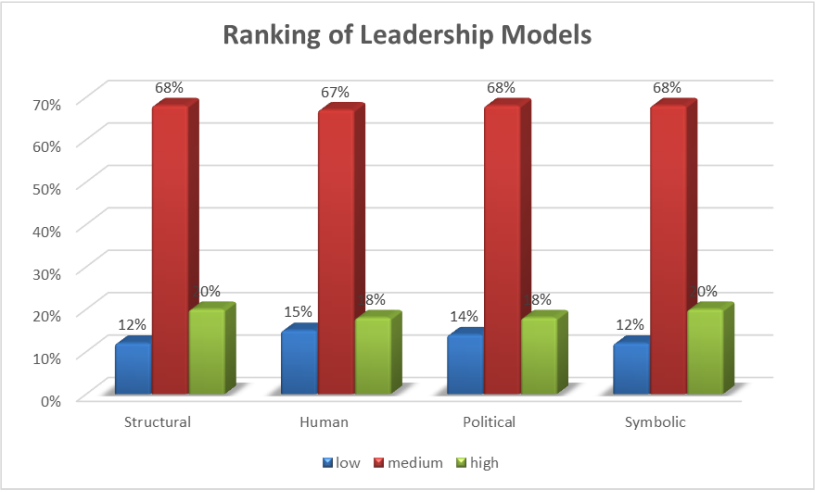

Figure 3. Distribution of leadership frames across three performance levels (in %)
Detailed standardized Z-score values for each school and corresponding performance levels are provided in Appendix A (Table A1).

5. Discussion

The descriptive analysis of teachers' perceptions revealed that all four leadership frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) were rated at moderate levels overall. Approximately 68% of schools fell within the medium range for the structural, political, and symbolic frames, and 67% for the human resource frame, while about 18–20% of schools reached the high level. These results indicate that, according to teachers' perceptions, leadership orientations in Durrës nine-year schools are generally balanced but moderately expressed across Bolman and Deal's (2017) four-frame model.

This finding aligns with Akyürek et al. (2025), who emphasize that the four frames coexist in practice and that leadership effectiveness depends on their integration rather than the dominance of a single dimension. The predominance of medium scores suggests that school leadership in the Albanian context reflects an adaptive but not yet fully integrated multiframe approach,

The slightly higher mean value for the structural frame suggests that school leadership remains grounded in organizational procedures and administrative clarity. This is consistent with Photinopoulos (2021) and Bush (2011), who note that in educational systems with limited autonomy, structural alignment often becomes a prerequisite for stability and accountability. However, the moderate presence of the human and symbolic frames indicates that while relational and cultural aspects are recognized, they are not yet central to leadership practice. Similar tendencies were reported by Kocak and Özdemir (2020), who found that the human dimension of leadership evolves gradually within hierarchical or transitional systems.

The political frame was also rated at a moderate level, suggesting that negotiation and resource allocation are perceived as relevant but not defining characteristics of school leadership. This observation corresponds to Hallinger and Kovačević (2021), who argue that participatory leadership models require institutional trust and an enabling organizational culture to replace top-down decision-making. Reinholz and Apkarian (2018) likewise contend that change within schools becomes sustainable only when supported by shared understanding and cultural coherence, elements closely related to the symbolic frame.

The relatively lower values observed for the symbolic dimension are consistent with findings by Duran and Ermiş (2025), who underline that the symbolic function of leadership remains underdeveloped in many educational contexts. Similarly, Shorty et al. (2023) introduced the notion of a "fifth frame" of leadership, which integrates ethical and emotional awareness into organizational practice, reinforcing the relevance of value-based and culturally embedded leadership in education.

The findings portray a leadership landscape that is organized and balanced across the four frames but remains largely procedural in nature. The structural and political dimensions appear consolidated, while the human and symbolic aspects show potential for further development. These descriptive trends provide an empirical snapshot of leadership orientations in Durrës district schools and set the groundwork for deeper examination of how educational leaders integrate structural efficiency with human and cultural depth.

6. Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

This study examined teachers' perceptions of Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames (structural, human resource, political, and symbolic) within nine-year schools in the Durrës district of Albania. The descriptive results indicated that all four frames were expressed at moderate levels. Approximately two-thirds of schools scored within the medium range across the four dimensions, while a smaller proportion reached either the low or high ranges. These findings suggest that, from the teachers' perspective, school leadership in this district exhibits a balanced yet primarily procedural application of Bolman and Deal's framework. No single frame dominates the leadership landscape, and fully integrated multiframe leadership remains relatively uncommon.

The results provide a descriptive overview rather than an inferential explanation. They do not imply causal relationships or predictive effects among frames; rather, they illustrate the relative prominence of structural, human, political, and symbolic orientations as perceived by teachers.

The implications of these findings are primarily practical. Leadership development initiatives in Albanian schools could build upon the existing equilibrium by strengthening underrepresented dimensions, particularly the human and symbolic frames, through reflective practice, collegial learning, and ethical dialogue. However, these implications should be interpreted cautiously, given that the study's design was descriptive and not inferential.

This study also has several limitations. The data rely solely on teachers' perceptions, which may not fully capture leaders' actual behaviors. The research was geographically limited to the Durrës district, so the results cannot be

generalized to all Albanian regions. Furthermore, the exclusive use of descriptive and standardized (Z-score) analyses precludes assessment of statistical relationships or significance among variables. Future studies should therefore adopt mixed-method or correlational approaches to explore how leadership frames interact with contextual variables such as teacher empowerment, role conflict, or organizational climate.

Despite these limitations, this research offers one of the first empirical insights into leadership orientations within Albanian basic education. It provides a valuable reference point for future inquiry into how Bolman and Deal's four frames manifest in local school contexts. The findings depict a leadership profile characterized by structural stability and relational balance, reflecting an evolving practice that integrates organizational, human, political, and symbolic considerations in shaping school leadership.

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Appendix A (Table A1): Overview of leadership frames by standardized scores

ID	Structural (Z)	Human (Z)	Political (Z)	Symbolic (Z)	Structural Level	Human Level	Political Level	Symbolic Level
1	420,4238	406,0836	424,5896	402,914	medium	medium	medium	medium
2	457,8199	447,0028	516,7903	463,446	medium	medium	medium	medium
3	344,1358	464,985	463,7899	480,872	low	medium	medium	medium
4	447,1558	465,2554	478,4567	512,973	medium	medium	medium	medium
5	428,0462	439,4545	437,5675	422,174	medium	medium	medium	medium
6	669,9579	670,7393	671,176	672,952	high	high	high	high
7	491,7422	502,5719	506,9331	511,008	medium	medium	medium	medium
8	499,9756	512,8474	494,0758	514,152	medium	medium	medium	medium
9	544,8509	527,071	545,5048	551,887	medium	medium	medium	medium
10	548,3477	534,6546	531,7904	531,133	medium	medium	medium	medium
11	684,4802	683,7724	678,4581	671,642	high	high	high	high
12	406,7729	398,194	389,5037	385,226	medium	low	low	low
13	419,8675	437,854	439,7898	446,02	medium	medium	medium	medium
14	443,3148	460,0636	463,4822	476,418	medium	medium	medium	medium
15	456,0953	456,9862	440,5898	433,792	medium	medium	medium	medium
16	446,7842	442,1251	434,8666	440,517	medium	medium	medium	medium
17	400,5359	390,1033	396,26	406,888	medium	low	low	medium
18	483,0296	481,8216	453,7898	403,464	medium	medium	medium	medium
19	504,0551	498,678	494,8671	479,038	medium	medium	medium	medium
20	542,4511	539,9715	545,2305	545,356	medium	medium	medium	medium
21	555,7298	552,0568	544,7136	545,074	medium	medium	medium	medium
22	489,7215	484,8429	499,7902	488,821	medium	medium	medium	medium
23	479,1892	482,9672	485,9719	462,071	medium	medium	medium	medium
24	601,1879	606,7887	610,5409	606,523	high	high	high	high
25	608,4923	611,4238	624,3624	618,446	high	high	high	high

ID	Structural (Z)	Human (Z)	Political (Z)	Symbolic (Z)	Structural Level	Human Level	Political Level	Symbolic Level
26	549,8719	548,7691	537,3289	523,586	medium	medium	medium	medium
27	440,2218	435,6456	420,7896	431,346	medium	medium	medium	medium
28	650,5313	645,9347	652,5654	661,553	high	high	high	high
29	652,733	651,9999	653,6374	651,464	high	high	high	high
30	270,0163	248,6578	266,5254	262,589	low	low	low	low
31	462,2803	454,2588	471,79	466,198	medium	medium	medium	medium
32	432,5324	421,7737	421,1809	432,68	medium	medium	medium	medium
33	715,8459	712,5175	726,9222	716,833	high	high	high	high
34	457,14	458,5094	461,7099	453,358	medium	medium	medium	medium
35	432,3026	390,1033	401,9071	386,405	medium	low	medium	low
36	459,0024	466,2098	446,6989	457,026	medium	medium	medium	medium
37	384,5058	367,1871	361,7892	383,654	low	low	low	low
38	533,1097	525,9352	519,7903	519,393	medium	medium	medium	medium
39	619,4831	615,3625	607,7909	609,886	high	high	high	high
40	261,0543	263,7105	257,7885	262,589	low	low	low	low
41	374,0915	381,9694	374,075	400,949	low	low	low	medium
42	392,6732	381,699	379,0621	392,658	low	low	low	low
43	576,9047	571,2558	559,2191	595,91	medium	medium	medium	medium
44	616,058	619,2534	624,3624	600,103	high	high	high	high
45	639,3777	642,2044	643,7912	627,985	high	high	high	high
46	572,592	575,7732	576,518	580,759	medium	medium	medium	medium
47	459,4348	445,11	440,2898	438,683	medium	medium	medium	medium
48	557,0896	571,4835	568,7137	570,754	medium	medium	medium	medium
49	304,5507	289,6071	302,2888	287,352	low	low	low	low
50	593,1782	583,4384	589,0215	622,115	medium	medium	medium	high
51	566,9286	560,0068	567,0847	562,5	medium	medium	medium	medium
52	495,4298	514,0539	488,0254	488,21	medium	medium	medium	medium
53	601,0051	593,0024	588,4308	587,263	high	medium	medium	medium
54	460,0387	460,3881	459,7899	446,938	medium	medium	medium	medium
55	491,4085	476,6126	494,4568	532,233	medium	medium	medium	medium
56	435,7222	437,3492	434,2897	446,938	medium	medium	medium	medium
57	625,9625	619,763	606,7909	609,275	high	high	high	high
58	580,7512	583,9062	594,1908	579,009	medium	medium	medium	medium
59	440,47	456,5532	449,5041	438,683	medium	medium	medium	medium
60	521,539	531,6806	478,99	500,316	medium	medium	medium	medium