Original Article

Reframing the Perceived Changing Academic Roles of Deans: A Case of Makerere University

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ABSTRACT

Existing literature shows that deans in higher education institutions are key in nurturing, facilitating growth and setting high standards for faculty, staff, and students among other stakeholders. They are also expected to create a positive work environment within schools, colleges, or departments. However, less literature has concentrated on how these deans reframe their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. This study therefore set out to explore the reframing strategies of deans as regards their perceived changing academic roles in the context of Makerere University. Findings indicate that deans reframe their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University using multi-frame. That is using all four or three of the frames to view a particular decision through four different lenses before selecting the best option. These four lenses are majorly the human resource, followed by structural and political. The symbolic frame was the least exploited among the frames, yet science-based disciplines were seen to be using the political frame majorly. The study concludes that multi-framing as recommended by Bolman and Deal was adhered to by all deans meaning that despite the complex environment in which they work, they have remained relevant due to the use of three or four frames. It was noted that the political frame was highly used in the science-based disciplines, especially the hard applied fields. The study recommends that the symbolic frame be exploited by the deans due to its benefits including deans being role models and using ceremonies where faculty meet, share, and relax to break the routine of academic work for this is energizing. Further still, the study recommends that deans embrace the political frame to boost their schools financially.

INTRODUCTION

Reframing is the competence and the ability of a leader of an organization such as a school, college or university must view a particular decision through the four different lenses before selecting the best approach (Photinopoulos, (2021) to use the four frames of Bolman and Deal including structural, human resources frame, political and symbolical frames. Reframing is a process in which leaders must view a particular decision through four different lenses before selecting the best approach. Bolman and Deal argue that those who can reframe situations will be most successful therefore, all four frames are needed for effective leadership and management in higher education and no one frame is better than any other thus reframing is one strategy utilized to improve organizations' efficiency and effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Frames may be thought of as lenses through which leaders view an intentional plan or windows, maps and tools that capture pieces of the whole that need to be communicated. A frame can also be a mental model or a set of ideas and assumptions that an individual such as a dean carries in his or her head to help them understand and negotiate territories and spaces. Bolman and Deal believe that frames are vital because organizations do not come with navigation systems or directions to guide them turn by turn to a particular destination. This kind of thinking requires moving beyond the narrow, mechanical approaches used to understand organizations, and looking at the same thing from multiple points of view. The four-framed approach includes structural, political, human resource and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Like any other university, deans at Makerere University work in a complex and challenging academic environment characterized by changing and challenging academic roles, hectic work, and financial constraints, yet their academic roles are politically influenced. All these and other factors are attributed to factors such as the changing environment, the strategic direction of the university, transformation of Makerere University to the Collegiate system of governance, return of people abroad and admission of ill-prepared students at high school and increasing technology as shared by the deans as participants.

Statement of the Problem

Deans are important in higher education institutions (Simala, 2019). They nurture, facilitate growth and development, and set, and uphold high standards for faculty, staff, and students (Kasozi & Mamdani, 2016). They create a positive work atmosphere and learning environment within the schools that they head. However, the changing and complex environment in which they are working is financially constrained, and politically influenced yet faced with hectic, multiple, and complex academic roles. Conditions such as these affect the effective and efficient management of academic roles for deans yet they must remain relevant (Mamdani, 2019; Muriisa, 2018). They are also not empowered financially by the institution to manage budgets which is likely to compromise the quality of academic services the fact that all academic responsibilities are concentrated within schools that deans head (Muriisa, 2018). Such conditions would necessitate understanding how deans perceive their changing academic roles and how they reframe their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. This may contribute to understanding the deans' perceptions regarding their changing academic roles and their reframing strategies amidst the changing academic roles in a challenging and complex environment. Research Question

How do deans reframe their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University?

RELATED LITERATURE

### Theoretical Review

This study was anchored in the reframing theory. This Theory is hinged on the perspectives of structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames to understand deanship's ability to shift between different frames and their competence in using the different frames simultaneously to remain relevant in a changing and challenging environment (Bolman & Deal, 1984). The

diagrammatic representation of the reframing theory is further seen below.

Figure 1: Reframing Theory by Bolman and Deal (1984)
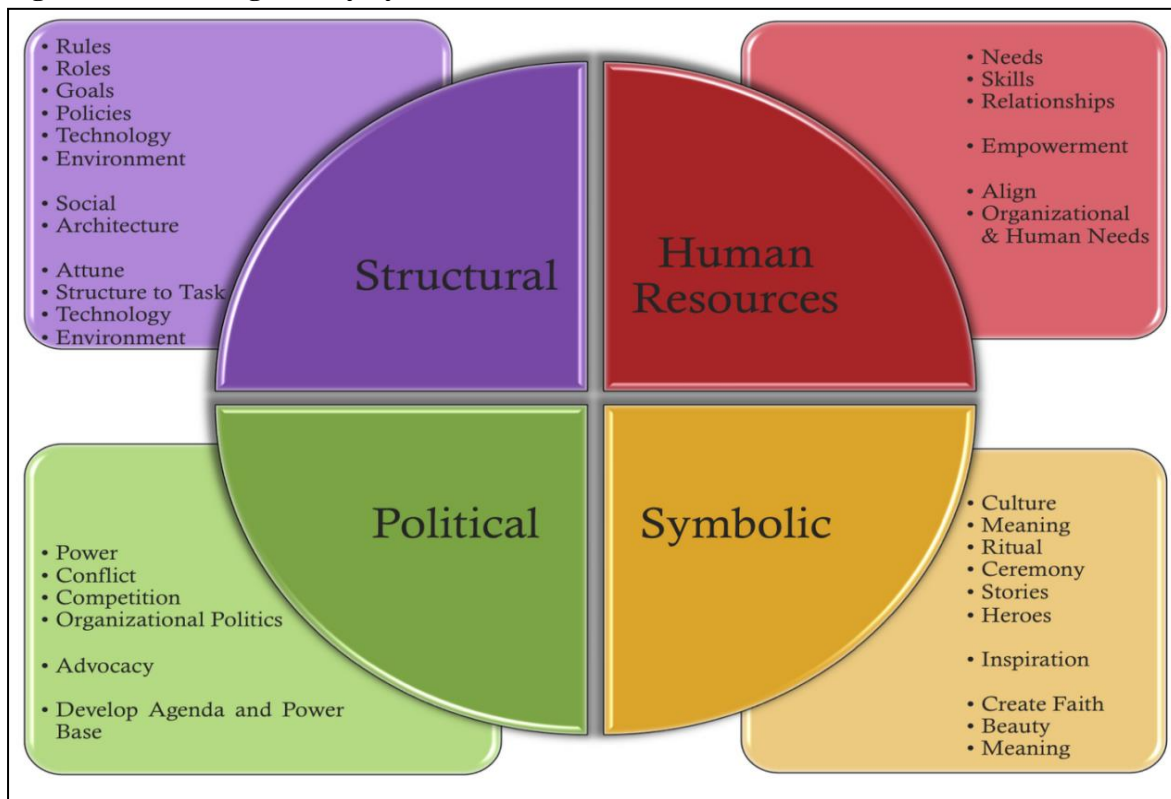
Source: Bolman & Deal, 1984)

Each frame is a set of ideas that helps deans to interpret situations and to determine the appropriate action strategy (Al-Omari, 2013). The first of these frames is the structural frame which focuses on clear roles, rules, policies and technology within an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2009). Similarly, it posits that organizations like universities through their academic leaders for instance the deans differentiate people into specific roles and they coordinate academic activities using policies, rules, and chain of command. However, other studies from other scholars indicate that human resource frame, attention is paid to human needs like security, empowerment, team-work and career development among others. It assumes that organizations that meet such basic human needs, work better than those that do not (Schoepp & Tezcan-Unal, 2017). However, the above studies were carried out in the contexts outside Uganda specifically Makerere University and this pauses a research gap

Literature, indicates that the human resource deans \ assume that organizations need ideas, energy and talents from people as identified by Lavigne (2018). Other studies show that other deans also need salaries and opportunities from the organizations they work for (Adserias, Charleston, & Jackson, 2017). However, other studies indicate elements of the human resource frame including good working relationships, commitment, passion, teamwork, active participation, selflessness, loyalty, and sharing responsibilities among others. These studies above however, pause a conceptual gap as far elements of human resource frame is concerned that this current study will fill.

Likewise, literature indicates that in the third frame which is the political frame according to Bolman and Deal (2008), political deans make decisions in an environment of scarcity of financial resources (Holmes & Scull, 2019). In such an environment faculty have divergent

interests, values and beliefs (Adserias et al., 2017). This puts conflicts at the centre and power is a very important asset among political leaders. Other scholars found out that deansspend time networking (USCHER, 2020). On the other hand, some studies indicate that deans who are engrossed with the political frame create coalitions in order to satisfy the interest groups of the faculty (Doyle & Brady, 2018). One wonders whether the similar elements can be identified by the deans in the context of Makerere University and this pauses a research gap.

Furthermore, some scholars present the symbolic deans as making use of symbols, role modelling, beliefs, and ceremonies to make sense and meaning out of a chaotic or blurred situation to shape human behaviour or gain clarity. Yet other scholars present deans as persons that instil a sense of enthusiasm and commitment through ceremonies and stories, values, and beliefs. These act as modes of communication that convey the symbolic meaning to members of the organization to build a culture which provides patterns and order in social life (Bolman and Deal, 2017). This too pauses a theoretical gap and hence the study.

Much as the reframing theory has its strengths, it is important to note that deans who use multiple lenses get a better sense of dealing with the challenges they face and identify the leadership actions necessary to address them (Hodgman, 2014). Despite the theory's strength, each of the four frames has been criticized. The structural frame ignores everything that falls outside the rational jurisdiction of procedures, policies, and organizational charts (Monahan, 2004). Likewise, human resources glorify human nature at the expense of the organization (Li, 2018). Additionally, the political frame can become a sarcastic self-fulfilling tool which is male-dominated at the expense of females (Vuori, 2018). In addition to that, the symbolic frame could be vague and not voluntarily chosen and bent towards male-dominated (Sowell (2014). In a nut shell reframing is complex and needs cognitive thinking which may not be a skill for all academic leaders including deans (Vuori, 2018).

The current study seeks to explore the conceptual and contextual gaps.

The reframing theory has been used in higher education (Reinholz & Apkarian, 2018). Studies have been conducted in universities in countries like Finland, the USA, and China (Li, 2018; Monahan, 2004; Vuori, 2011). However, in another study, the deans are guided by policies, rules, and the chain of command to remain relevant in the delivery of informal and formal services as reflected in the structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Furthermore, in other studies, deans are seen to have a political inclination due to the scarcity of resources (Reinholz et al., 2019). On the other hand, other academic leaders identified making coalitions as an element of political system (Holmes & Scull, 2019). Finally deans using symbolic frames focus on stories, rituals and ceremonies to achieve a vision Vuori (2011). More still, some studies indicate that deans were able to network and do partnerships to be able to mobilize financial resources as a reframing strategy (Sriram & Farley, 2014). While this frame has been applied in higher education instutions, none of the studies point to deans in Makerere University and this creates a research gap. Empirical Review

Reframing the Perceived Changing Academic Roles of Deans

Many university academic leaders as well as other organizational leaders and other individuals tend to identify one frame as preferred or as most comfortable either they lack the cognitive skills to or their situations warrant that. However, it is beneficial to use all four frames as required by Uzarski and Broome (2019) who claim that leaders who are able to use all four frames tend to be more effective than those who use two because this limits their ability to successfully address situations. Bolman and Deal's claims as well as other scholars who support using all four frames or three out of the four frames are consistent with the findings of the current study where all eight participants exhibited the use of four or three out of the four frames to remain relevant in their perceived changing academic roles.

Hellsten et al. (2013) work stresses the need for academic leaders to practice a multi-frame approach in their respective organizations because of the benefits identified above. According to scholars' leaders who use the structural frame define clear roles, plan their multiple academic activities, or set agendas to fit in the structural frame. Other initiatives may require human resource sensitivity to individuals' needs such as empowerment, interpersonal relationships and teamwork or symbolic initiatives such as creating ceremonies to give meaning to work among employees such as faculty. Implementing change may require building political alliances and leveraging relationships (Snyder, 2018). Similarly, the human resource frame sees organizations as families that focus on needs and relationships among its members (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Since organizations are comprised of individuals, the needs of those individuals must be central to the goals of the organization. If individuals are growing, nurtured, and learning, their health and welfare will extend to the entire organization.

Conversely, if managers overlook the welfare of individuals, then the overall purpose of the organization will suffer. Leaders in the human resource frame must focus on individual empowerment while they align human and organizational needs (Snyder, 2018). This approach is similar to what was described by the participants in the current study where interpersonal relationships were used to foster growth through teamwork. Deanship in common situations has been exhibited to have a leadership structure whereby there are departmental leaders, and coordinators who cooperate for smooth progress. Similar findings from the human resource frame indicate that middle academic leaders serve the organization by supporting and empowering team members for both personal growth as well as organizational growth (Holmes & Scull, 2019). The response to this element appears to be similar to the discoveries in a study of Show me the resources: Teacher perceptions of educational leaders' responses (Snyder, 2018) which draws upon responses generated from two

sets of teacher interviews conducted, teacher groups spoke toward the significance of all four frames although they immensely put emphasis on the importance of the human resource frame. In this frame, they identified interaction with educational leaders working to increase student achievement.

Similarly, the importance of creating, building, and maintaining relationships between teachers and administrators was stressed by the teachers and this was another aspect of the human resource frame where in the study being a people person, a good communicator as well as being physically present and mentally present were added advantage to maintaining relationships (Snyder, 2018). The findings above relate to what was discovered in the current study that a good leader develops good interpersonal relationships that enable him/her to accomplish tasks attached to deanship. This is done mainly through working as a team and fostering team-spirit. Deanship in common situations has a leadership structure whereby there are departmental leaders, coordinators, and chairs among others. It has been identified that where there is no ability to cooperate as a leadership team, there cannot be smooth progress. Team spirit begins with a good working relationship with heads of department, fellow deans, faculty, and students.

Relatedly, in another study carried out by Sriram and Farley (2014), administrators made use of the human resource frame by supervising and monitoring faculty and students that they directly deal with. Such people are within the department and are in regular, direct contact, so, employing the human resource frame helped employees feel like equals. The aim of dealing with people in the human resource frame was to gather peoples' contributions, ideas, and opinions for the purpose of building harmony as far as common objectives were concerned and proper decision-making to realize their set goals and objectives. The human resource frame encourages one to care not just about getting things done, but about the people who look to the manager as a role model and mentor (Bolman & Deal, 2013). However, while the human resource frame was used in circular

framing in the students' affairs practice, its aim was to get peoples' opinions on how to create harmony among students and faculty. In the present study, the human resource was used by the eight participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles. Participants SD1 from the College of Education and external Studies, a soft applied discipline made mention of working as a team and sharing responsibilities with faculty where they all feel valued and included. SD4 from a hard pure discipline shared the importance of good interpersonal relationships in dealing with people they work with. Yet SD5 and SD6 from the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences and College of Natural Science respectively stressed the need for commitment to work. All these are integrated within the human resource framework of Bolman and Deal. One can therefore state that individual situations and scenarios reflect aspects of a particular frame.

According to an extensive study on female academic leaders such as provosts, deans and directors of universities, colleges and schools using the leadership frames, the majority of participants used all four frames as needed, but described themselves as preferring the human resources frame most often (Percy et al., 2021). Participants in this study appeared to value communication and collaboration highly, which correlates with the human resources frame and aligns with traditional views of female leadership. This is in line with the findings of the current study where the eight participants who are the heads of schools, three used the three frames while the five used all four frames to remain relevant in reframing their perceived changing academic roles in the context of Makerere University. However, the participants in the current study valued teamwork, interpersonal relationships and sharing responsibilities which are integrated within the human resource framework of Bolman and Deal (2017).

With reference to deans reframing their perceived changing academic roles, various scholars have exhibited the following ideas. In a study carried out by Doyle and Brady (2018), several participants recognized the importance of the structural frame and the primary responsibility of the academic administrators was planning and coordinating academic activities systematically for professional development including meeting the needs of students, faculty, staff and other university stake holders. This approach is consistent with the findings of a study carried out by Sriram and Farley (2014) whose conclusions indicate that administrators and academic leaders such as deputy deans preferred using the structural frame as bosses in making decisions and expecting obedience or allegiance from the subordinates from the decisions made which was vital for the success of the entire staff. Here, the structural frame gives weight to a hierarchy that makes clear decisions, authority must be respected, roles must be delegated, and results must matter.

The discourses above relate to those from the current study where deans used the structural frame in reframing their perceived changing academic roles through scanning and understanding the environment where issues are quickly aligned to the context as described by SD2 a participant from the College of Computing and Information Sciences, a hard applied field. In the same way, another participant SD3 mentioned the importance of being strategic and conversant with the school's strategic plan which gives him mileage to communicate to staff any relevant information. For participant SD4 from the College of Natural Sciences, a hard pure discipline stressed that being submissive to the top administrators helped him to lead the school to greater heights because through submission he was able to get all the necessary support. On the other hand, SD8 a participant from the College of Business and Management Sciences, a soft applied discipline highlighted the importance of planning and budgeting as key elements of the structural frame. In a nutshell, the structural frame has been used by different academic leaders from different contexts or the same contexts differently to interpret organizational complexities and analyse decisions accordingly. Meaning it does not matter whether leaders are in the same context,

the way they apply the same frame will differ according to the way they interpret situations.

The political frame, however, requires the leader to be a shrewd negotiator, a role most typically associated with men. This is further strengthened by (Fruehauf, Al-Khalifa, & Coniker, 2015) whose study indicated that women were perceived as more easily misled than men, and therefore less able to negotiate effectively. This means that the political frame is male-oriented and dominated. On the contrary, this contrasts with the findings from the current study clearly indicating that the political frame was mainly dominated by a female participant, SD3 from the College of Health Sciences, a hard-applied discipline who exhibited politically related elements highly such as mobilization of finances from both local and international partners, networking and creating partnerships from local and international bodies as well as networking and negotiating with various constituents. It is imperative to note that the school that the said female participant heads constitutes 50% of all the grants of the university.

Similarly, still using the political lens several academic leaders recognized and acknowledged the need for mindful negotiation when implementing changes within their respective faculties, departments, and schools. With dialogues, discussions, and debates in place people such as faculty and students felt appreciated for the simple fact that they felt listened to and heard by their immediate supervisors. Thus faculty appreciated administrators who were willing to have a discussion so that teachers get a clearer understanding of the proposed changes within the different departments (Snyder, 2018). Additionally, in a world of limited resources, politics provides and plays an important role in guiding leaders like the deans to set priorities in choosing between divergent interest groups as well as gathering the resources specifically financial to accomplish goals (Schoepp & Tezcan-Unal, 2017). Similarly, findings from the study that was carried out by Rishi and Jesse Sriram and Farley (2014) indicate that academic leaders made use of the structural frame by seeking partnerships

from both local and international partners to cater for the needs of the different interest groups within the university. In the end, learning how to use the political frame allowed administrators to distinguish when it is best to partner and when it is best to compete. In the current study, six participants out of the eight identified various ideas stemming from the political frame. For instance, mobilization and networking with private partnerships to get computers (SD1, SD2 and SD3), engaging with partners both government or non- government sectors or the global community that support schools (SD1, SD3 and SD8), negotiating and mediation between conflicting faculty and students, gambling to sail through unexpected waves (SD5 and SD7) and guidance and counselling (SD1 and SD5).

Deans and other academic middle managers with a symbolic orientation throughout all the literature reviewed scored lowest in the symbolic frame indicating that they tend to use this frame least. It makes sense, therefore, that further development of the symbolic frame could increase levels of perceived effectiveness. This is in line with the conclusions from the current study where participants used the symbolic frame the least. There is some evidence to suggest that women tend to outperform men in maintaining larger and more varied social networks (Li, 2021). Several teachers reflected elements from the symbolic frame that emphasizes community, as well as the rituals, history and traditions that preserve their community. This was exhibited in showing appreciation to good performers which helped in community building. Likewise, other related symbolic elements that have been described in another study by Akoğlu et al. (2022) Include story telling as a means of communicating important events to the various academic constituents. With so many departments, programs, and activities that are in existence on a single campus, there was a need for storytelling to communicate important events through such stories by the administrators. Story telling is an element of the symbolic frame and has been identified as important because of the quick meaning people get from stories and thus sense-

making. It is also true that stories move people. Relatedly, using the symbolic frame in the current study, deans reframed their perceived changing academic roles not in story telling as in the previous study, but they used volunteers and experts to do some technical work to provide essential services to their schools being understaffed. Prayer as a symbolic element was also identified as a tool to give one faith and hope in complex situations. Participants also made mention of organizing some events where faculty came together as one entire family and relaxed in a bid to get to know each other out-side academic circles and this created synergy and togetherness among other benefits.

In the general observation, according to a discussion of leadership and gender using Bolman and Deal's four-frame model, Katz and Wahlgren's (2022) findings indicate that based on the brief overview of the Four-Frame Model, one might be motivated to think that women tend to prefer the human resource frame due to the emphasis on family-like relationships. This inclination stems from a traditional view of female sex roles in which women are perceived as nurturing and concerned with relationships. Similarly, in the same study, conclusions were drawn that indicated that men prefer the political frame due to its emphasis on competition and strategic tactics, plots or skills and that men pursue positions of power and leadership and women are more likely to maintain supportive and healthy social networks (Katz & Wahlgren, 2022). In contrast to the above, while the above assertion of the frames has been related to gender roles and relationships, the findings of the current study indicate otherwise. For instance, the use of the political frame has been exploited by all the participants both males and females due to the need to get financial resources as a result of the scarcity of resources due to the failure of the centre to release money to the centre. Similarly, participants in the current study used the human resource exclusive of gender-related relationships. This was the most dominant frame used by all the eight participants including six males and two females and this was likened to the

fact that deans as leaders do not work in a vacuum but rather with faculty, students, and other stakeholders. To this, the sharing of responsibilities and teamwork helps in the bringing and sharing of new ideas where everyone feels so included. Likewise, the structural frame has been important in the current study and used to plan for activities that have been discussed as multiple. This frame too like the two frames above already discussed has been exploited by all the participants.

Relatedly, despite the assumptions individuals tend to make regarding gender roles, numerous studies indicate that there is limited evidence, if any that gender plays a significant role in preference for a particular frame. In a study, Katz and Wahlgren (2022) found that gender had no significant bearing on frame preference. Similarly, a study which focused on the program directors' four frames by Vuori (2011) showed that gender did not have a significant impact on leadership effectiveness. This is related to the current study whose findings indicate that there is no connection between gender and frame usage. Rather what has been exhibited in the current study is the fact that frame usage is dependent on the situation, needs of the time, preference, and cognitive ability.

In summary, Bolman and Deal suggested that leaders who explore challenges from a variety of angles are able to solve more complex problems. In a study that examined the leadership frames of university presidents, the findings show the frame usage and presented in descending order of higher exploitation: human resources, structural, political, and symbolic. By viewing problems from various angles, leaders may be able to perform more creative problem-solving to better address stakeholders' concerns as stated by Monahan and Shah (2011). This is in congruence with what was discovered in the findings of the current study where despite the changing and challenging higher education environment with its associated complexities including financial constraints, multiple roles and hectic changing academic roles, participants acknowledged that they were able to remain relevant because of

multi-frame usage including human resource, structural, political, and symbolic frames.

In addition to that, Tobe (1999) found two-thirds of female African American presidents who also double as academic leaders had multiple frame orientations. In addition, Lemon et al. (2022) encourage multi-frame leadership for faculty seeking administrative positions. This is in line with the findings of the present study where multi-framing has been ably exhibited by all eight participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles in the context of Makerere University. However, this contrasts with the findings of Bensimon (1989) that indicate that in a frame analysis of 32 college presidents interviewed, thirteen exploited a single frame, eleven applied two frames, seven used three frames, and one employed four frames. Bensimon concluded that although Sowell (2014) suggests that multi-frame leadership is better, many college presidents are not effectively using multiple frames. Sowell (2014) further suggests that although the leaders have not successfully integrated the four frames into their leadership style, the leadership of the college/university continues to be effective when the top management team have to balance leadership frame coordination. The latter has been fully exhibited by the deans as participants in the current study where five participants utilized all four frames, while the three other participants utilized three out of three-four frames to remain relevant in the changing and challenging complex higher educational environment.

Gallos (2006) studied deans at Masters and Doctoral institutions and found the human resource frame was primarily used, followed by the structural, then political, and finally the symbolic leadership frames. The order in which the deans as participants in the current study is similar to what has been discussed in the above study. However, the difference is identified in the kind of institution in that the present study took place. It is an institution that caters for undergraduate, master and doctoral students yet transformed into a collegiate system of governance with deans as the heads of the schools

and the participants in the study. The conclusion drawn in the above two studies from the different contexts and different types of universities is that it does not really matter what type of an institution the four frames are applied, but what matters is that these leadership frames of Bolman and Deal are applicable in all situations and are helpful in resolving issues in complex higher education environments. There is no difference in frame usage by gender, ethnicity, college, discipline, type of institution that is private or public

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Makerere University in the Colleges of; Education and External Studies, Computing and Information Science, Natural Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering, Design, Art and Technology and College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The qualitative and case study was grounded on the interpretivism paradigm guided by the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserls which states that only those who have lived a phenomenon can have an experience of it and therefore are in a position to explain that phenomenon. This therefore answers the questions of meaning in understanding an experience from those who have experienced it. A case study design was used in this study because of a small number of participants and this enabled the study to yield an effective amount of data to be analysed and the need to get deeper and richer information as regards the reframing strategies of deans in their changing academic roles in the context of Makerere University. And so, the a need to explore their lived experiences in their respective and diverse contexts on this issue. It is also true that a case study design that was used in the study helped the researcher to collect in-depth data as well as the ability to capture the actual context and the lived realities of the participants.

The study aimed to explore the reframing strategies of deans as regards their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. The participants of the study were the deans who are the heads of the different Colleges. The participants were selected purposively using

Biglan Becher's typology of academic disciplines including soft pure, hard pure, hard applied and soft applied to cater for all deans as indicated that participants chosen from the different fields have the same characteristics. From the population of 28 academic deans, eight were purposively selected from the Colleges mentioned above.

The researchers used semi structured interview guide to solicit data from the participants through verbal interaction which helped them in getting different views from participants as they freely expressed. The same semi-structured interview guide also helped the researchers in controlling the line of inquiring and kept track of the same to avoid losing focus in order to achieve the relevant information on the objective of the study. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used for participants for instance SD=SCHOOL DEAN. Each participant was either contacted via mobile phone or physically to take part in the interviews. The researchers went along with a notebook which spelt out the aims of the research and highlighted key ethical issues including informed consent and anonymity.

In addition, all participants were asked for their informed consent to record all their sharing during the interview sessions to which all consented. All interviews were conducted in the participants' offices with each lasting on average 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews were semi-structured and based on an interview guide with prompts and probes. There was no strict fixed order of questions which allowed for more flexibility and this enabled appropriate probing to occur when it was called for by the researchers.

Regarding data quality control, the study adhered to the four standards of judging the quality of data and collection instruments which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The study ensured credibility by interviewing participants who provided relevant information, field notes were kept throughout the study process. Consent for recording their voices was sought which was accepted and this helped us t o transcribe verbatim all the voices.

Additionally, we ensured the transferability of the research by providing an exhaustive description of the methodologies to enable those who would later like to do the same research to follow the whole study process and procedure. For dependability, the study documented the whole procedure for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study process. This will enable other researchers to reuse the same procedure in case they are interested in confirming the results of the study. Finally, confirmability was ensured by member checks where the participants were asked to review their transcripts to make alterations, omissions, or additions to the data to ensure accuracy. This was justified to ensure that all findings in the study were given by participants and not our own concoctions.

Regarding data analysis, we followed the four stages of data analysis of qualitative research including data preparation, data identification, data manipulation and data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). During the preparation stage, we organized data from the interviews during data collection by taking notes and recording all interviews verbatim to avoid missing out on any details. We further transcribed the interviews verbatim. We created files for each interview where the name of the participant, gender, college, school, field, rank, and number of years of deanship experience were recorded. This information was later useful in the interpretation of the data.

We then read and re-read all the transcripts during the identification stage to make sense and meaning out of the data after which we came out with similar responses that were shared by each participant participants. We used open coding and came out with labels from the chunks of data where we uncovered meaning which helped us categorize for accessibility during reference in the analysis. In addition to that during the manipulation stage, we searched for ideas that were similar to each participant's shared story and we came up with different categories from codes that appeared most popular. From these, we developed sub-themes which were later merged to create themes.

Finally, was the data analysis stage where we described the participants' bio-data and combined ideas together to make a story which showed the deans' reframing strategies in the context of Makerere University. We dragged strings together which we called sub-themes, and later these were merged to create themes. Data results were interpreted through the themes and in summary, data analysis followed thematic analysis.

FINDINGS / RESULTS

In this section, we narrowed our findings to the four sub-themes including human resource frame, structural, political, and symbolic frames which together make up frames of reference. These frames catered for the objective; to explore how deans reframe their perceived changing academic roles in Makerere University. Frames are forms of reference that are used by leaders to navigate or interpret situations and to determine the course of action (Bolman & Deal, 2018). The first of these frames is the structural frame which focuses on clear roles, rules, hierarchy, policies, planning, agenda setting and taking risks among others. The human resource frame assumes that organizations need ideas and talents from people and the people also need salaries and empowerment from the same organization. As regards the political frame, this deals with networking, mobilization of scarce resources and making partnerships. Finally, is the symbolic frame which deals with role modelling, beliefs and the creating of ceremonies among others. The findings from the four frames are exhibited below.

Human Resource Frame

Deans reframing their Perceived Changing Academic Roles Using the Human Resource

The interviews all indicate that the human resource frame was the most utilized frame of leadership by all eight participants. All participants described the human resource-related actions and discussed issues relating to the human resource frame. Elements from the human resource frame included sharing responsibilities, teamwork and team spirit, collaboration and cooperation, active participation, consultative

leadership, empowering faculty, commitment and working hard.

As regards collaboration as an element from the human resource frame, this was identified as the ability to recognize the abilities and potentials of others and being able to enlist their support in any endeavour. Deans cannot work on their own because they have massive work which can be hectic if they work alone. Most of them seek the support of colleagues to work on some tasks. For instance, a participant SD1 from the College of Education and External Studies a softly applied discipline explicitly said that:

> It is significant to share responsibilities as much as possible and I think it is human nature to share duties because people feel appreciated when you ask them to do some work since they have the capacity to do it.

A good leader develops good interpersonal relationships that enable him or her to accomplish tasks attached to the deanship. This is mainly done through working as a team and fostering teamwork and team spirit. Deanship in common situations has a leadership structure whereby there are departmental leaders, coordinators, chairs, etc. where there is no ability to cooperate as a leadership team, there cannot be smooth progress. Every member of a group is expected to actively and fully be part of the group in order to enable social and personal growth. A participant SD5 from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, a soft pure field shared that:

> To harness the role of teamwork and team spirit begins with a good working relationship with heads of department, fellow deans, faculty, and students. I make sure that these relationships are maintained. I have never found work so frustrating from the time I started maintaining these constant interpersonal relationships.

Nevertheless, working with others is not encouraged at the faculty level only, but also at higher levels. Deans are expected to be in good relationships with those above. They are also expected to participate in higher-ranking meetings

where they share membership. This enables them to garner information necessary for their faculty as well as fostering interpersonal relationships with other leaders for their faculty as well in the university. Therefore, a participant SD2 from the College of Computing and Information Science, a hard applied discipline intimated that:

> *International connections are important because they have helped us to collaborate with national and international institutions. We also promote the idea of publications that help us in the promotion and in the visibility of the school. When people publish, they are known making networking easy in getting funding.*

As dean, the most central resource is students. They constitute the main constituency of clients. Without them, the university cannot be. Therefore, putting them first in the service of the dean is very important. That is why SD7 a participant from the College of Engineering Design, Art and Technology, a hard-applied field had this to say:

> *I am here for students and I make sure I protect them all the time by resolving issues they encounter, especially academic-related issues. Although some faculty take me to courts of law when I fight for students' rights that affect them academically, the vice chancellor gives me lawyers to defend me so that students can study in a peaceful environment with no threats.*

Structural Frame

Deans Reframing their Perceived Changing Academic Roles Using the Structural Frame

The structural frame was the second most exploited frame by the participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles. This was exhibited in actions such as planning, scanning the environment, budgeting, goal setting, taking risks, administrative support, and consultation from higher authorities and support from the structures among others. Deanship is more of leadership than being managerial. A leader recognizes the presence and indispensability of various constituencies. People are necessary to enable the success of a leader. They have rich experiences and knowledge about situations and various issues. Consulting them can help one forge a people-centred deanship. Therefore, consulting with various people is key. A participant, SD8 from the College of Business and Management Sciences, a softly applied discipline shared that:

> *In order to be able to push certain strategies, you must embrace a consultative leadership style, especially with the higher authorities so that they help you implement these strategies as soon as possible.*

One of the most important constituencies to consult are those in administration, mainly the bosses or those on top of the structure. They help in advising on how to succeed in a position. Most of the deans I interacted with confirmed seeking administrative support. A participant SD6 from the College of Natural Sciences, a hard pure discipline intimated that, "I get support from the administration of the university to perform my academic roles". Nevertheless, consultation extends to fellow deans so that they share experiences on how they manage the deanship in various Colleges. The commonest platform is the senate as SD5 explains further:

> *Because structurally, when you are a dean, you are also a senator. You meet other deans and discuss issues concerning the university as a whole and this kind of administrative arrangement has helped me.*

Support can also be garnered from the faculty under the deans' supervision. Some of them have been leaders elsewhere, or they have knowledge and skills in leadership. The staff are always ready to help in various roles if assigned to perform them. And most of them endeavour to fulfil their assigned duties well. Therefore, soliciting their support can be a great help in one's deanship. Participant SD3 from the College of Health Sciences, a hard-applied discipline had this to say:

> *We have managed to perform our academic duties because we have the academic staff to help us coordinate all academic activities.*

They help us track and follow the students' academic progress and they make sure students are supported beyond academic matters.

Political Frame

Deans Reframing their Perceived Changing Academic Roles Using the Political Frame

The participants who used the political frame exhibited it in actions such as financial resource mobilization, networking, collaborations, negotiations, bargaining, creating partnerships and gambling among others. Networking and international collaborations benefit a lot in academic leadership and management. A leader in this case the academic dean, broadens their interactive society and widens their cohesion. A mind that seeks to make relationships beyond local boundaries is a far-sighted one. There are lots of returns from connecting globally. Participant SD3 from the College of Health Sciences, a hard applied discipline made mention of international linkages to mobilize financial resources:

> *I network and bring in new partners in the school and I make sure that our partners are happy with us and that we deliver quality results on time. We are doing well through networking because we have a fairly big port-folio of research partnerships and projects. We also have a heavy procurement that supports the work we do.*

Participants reflected that deanship is a lot more than occupying a position. A successful dean is judged based on their ability to attract resources for the school. SD2, a participant from the College of Computing and Information Sciences, a hard-applied discipline intimated that:

> *We network to mobilize financial resources to support research in the school. We also mobilize private-public partnerships to get computers for use in the school, and to get research funds and grants for faculty through writing proposals. In the long run, the funds too support faculty and students and sustain most academic activities.*

Deanship requires that deans be able to lobby for their respective schools. There ought to be materials as well as financial resources brought into the school due to the deans' lobbying skills. A dean is expected to be shrewd and vigilant in order to understand situations and make a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis for the benefit of the school. SD3 explains that:

> *Understanding the opportunities, harnessing them, and maximizing them is vital. It is important that one understands the challenges and issues one has and aligns such issues to the context.*

According to SD5, one does not stop at attracting resources from out-side and within the university, but they may also go to the extent of using their own resources for the good of the school. Therefore, selflessness is the cost of deanship. SD5 a participant from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences said that:

> *I use my personal money sometimes because there is no way the school can survive without a dean using their personal money to support some of the academic activities.*

Symbolic Frame

Deans Reframing their Perceived Changing Academic Roles Using the Symbolic Frame

The symbolic frame was the least used frame work utilized by participants. Three out of the eight deans did use it and not highly although these participants exhibited it in actions including being exemplary, role modelling, beliefs, prayer, and use of ceremonies. It is important to note that staff or faculty may not easily come to the dean as a leader looking for where and how to support. An exemplary leader such as a dean looks for their staff and faculty, which builds confidence in them and they become good collaborators in the leadership. For instance, SD1 a participant from the College of Education and External Studies, a soft applied discipline showed his exemplary strategy and shared that:

One thing I have understood is to be exemplary as a leader and how you work with your staff as colleagues. I have also realized that it is vital to consider all staff as collaborators because when you consider them as collaborators, they will give you all the support necessary.

Therefore, a good leader such as a dean not only identifies their staff's abilities but also goes ahead to create rapport with each staff so that they feel part of the leadership. SD5 a participant from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, a soft pure discipline had this to say:

One thing I have personally developed and learnt as a dean is to visit my staff in their offices. I do not think that there is any academic staff I have not visited. I prefer to personally visit them in their offices and we share a few things because to me it is a sign of humility exhibited to be a role model and it creates a rapport between a dean and the faculty.

Additionally, a participant reflected that deanship is a lot more than occupying a position. A successful dean is judged based on their ability to be resourceful as far as self-commitment is concerned. This is when a leader invests their total self, the time they would spend with family and friends, the energy they would spend on doing personal and family projects, for the good of the school. SD7, a participant from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, a soft pure discipline intimated that:

I got this grey hair while in this office because of working tirelessly where I do not have time to relax or even time for my family. All my personal time is spent doing academic work for the school. Today for example I woke up at six in the morning and I have to leave at eight in the evening because of this endless work.

Similarly, symbolic leaders such as deans are resourceful through creatively using local resources for the success of the school and this is highly commendable. This echoes what SD5 from

the College of Engineering Design, Art and Technology, a hard-applied field shared:

We try to be innovative and creative by using all the readily available materials that students can lay their eyes and hands-on. Our materials for fine art are so expensive that we cannot keep buying all that is needed. We use barks of trees; and leaves and it is the reason for having a green environment.

God is the first and primary resource. None of the deans, save SD8, mentioned that their deanship is fruitless if God is put out of the picture. Without God, nothing can succeed. No wonder SD8 said, "every day starts with a prayer and it also ends with a prayer. Let me tell you, without this Crucifix I can do nothing with my own strength". Therefore, soliciting divine support is the foremost resource that deans need to acknowledge.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

We narrowed our discussion to one major theme which is frames with it's constituent elements namely; human resource, structural, political, and symbolic frames which emerged from the data.

Human Resource Frame

According to the findings from the current study, the human resource frame has been the most exploited and used perspective by all eight participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. This has been identified by all the participants in creating good working relationships, working together, team spirit, capacity development, cooperation, commitment, loyalty, selflessness, inter-disciplinary cooperation, and collaboration among others. Study findings revealed that deans worked as a team by creating committees (SD1, SD2 and SD3), organizing workshops and sharing responsibilities (SD5, SD6 and SD7). This made it very easy to make work move first, bringing in new ideas where people felt valued and important because all staff were considered collaborators. These results are supported by findings from the different studies that the human resource frame was the dominant frame used in a number of

studies including Bolman and Deal (1992) that referred to cooperation between leaders and the led; McArdle's (2013) study findings expressed commitment and cooperation. Whereas findings among organizational leaders in higher education institutions including rectors and deans focused on capacity development and interdisciplinary cooperation (Holmes & Scull, 2019). Therefore, this shows that the human resource frame is widely used in universities.

Similarly, Monahan and Shah (2022) investigated frame usage among academic deans from 426 public master's degree-level colleges and universities and doctorate-granting institutions across the United States. The results indicated that academic deans preferred to use the human resource. This was exhibited in collegiality, shared decision-making in higher education among academic middle managers and their faculty as well as reframing using interpersonal relationships. Based on the above findings, there is a similarity with what was declared by participants in the present study. For instance, SD1, a participant from the College of Education and External Studies said that they work as a team and share all academic responsibilities which saves time. He also said that teamwork helps in bringing and sharing new ideas especially when the faculty is told about the new ideas which helps them to share their opinions as well. When you do this, everyone feels included and valued and then you will not have any problems with the staff. It is important to consider all staff as collaborators and when you do this, they give you all the necessary support.

Similarly, another study indicated that academic leaders fully exploited the human resource frame while paying attention to commitment to work (Katz & Wahlgren, 2022). This too resonates with the findings from the present study where participants shared their views on being committed. For instance, SD5 declared that she sits on seven academic committees including appointments, promotions, finance, and budgeting among others. She further expressed that commitment to work such as attending to the

committees helped her to get information and ideas that are needed in the running of the school.

Correspondingly, a study of division deans in the North Carolina Community College System in the United States of America indicated that the human resource frame was found to be most prevalent among the North Carolina Community College System deans along with a paired orientation with the structural frame. These deans paid attention to working hard, being selfless and commitment to all academic tasks. Likewise, Omah's (2017) study indicated that the majority of respondents perceived their primary leadership behaviour as most closely matching the human resource frame where deans agreed to work with each other while keeping their individual interests in teaching and research. This same frame has been exhibited in the findings that deans control university intellectual life and academic future through faculty support which is capacity development (Otara, 2014). In support of the above still, the Makerere University Human Resource Staff Manual 2009 section 11.1 gives provision for academic staff development, to be a continuous process involving an agreement between employee and supervisor on performance targets in every unit for every employee. The same Makerere University human resource manual provides for employee induction in clause 2.10. The findings in the discourse above agree with the current study's findings for instance SD8 shared recruiting new staff, training and inducting them in teaching and research as well as making sure that by the time he leaves office, he made mention of the determination to make sure that all assistant lecturers are on the level of lecturers. Thus, paying attention to empowerment of skills and knowledge. Similarly, in the current study, SD3 shared empowerment in aspects including involving students in key responsibilities, faculty and communities in the evaluation and curriculum reviews for instance community diagnosis which is public problems and issues. This concurs with SD5 and SD6 who valued capacity development through training and engaging faculty in the different collaborations and partnerships with both the local and international communities.

Additionally, findings from other studies indicated that human resource leaders value relationships and feelings of people and seek to lead by defining problems in individual or interpersonal terms and looking for ways to adjust the organization to fit people or to adjust the people to fit the organization. Similarly, (Davis et al., 2016) conducted a study on the impact of managerialism on the strategy work of university middle managers. They established the importance of collegiality among peers and subordinates. They also observed a friendly environment with numerous practices of emotional support, such as peer collaboration, team building and creating a safe space for staff to talk about how they felt and what the issues were. These are integrated within the human resource frame work of the reframing theory of Bolman and Deal. The results are supported by the findings of the current study as stressed by SD2 in the use of cooperation and the interdisciplinary approach with other fields or schools to integrate for transformation. SD4 supports the above by emphasizing good interpersonal relationships to be able to deal with faculty and students. With this, findings indicate that he managed to get colleagues together on board and worked well as one team. He made mention of the support from the registrar and the deputy principal who were s cooperative since deans get business sorted out by the school and college registrar. All these allude to a good working relationship between the deans and the faculty as a reframing strategy.

With respect to reframing their perceived changing academic roles using the human resource framework, deans as participants in this current study acknowledged that they paid attention to participative leadership and sharing of responsibilities. For instance, this was exhibited in participants sharing that they attended and chaired several meetings that helped them to learn and share with fellow deans in other schools as expressed by SD1. In the same way, SD2 mentioned the importance of consultative leadership that enabled him to push certain strategies. Likewise, SD3 discussed the value of shared leadership. Equally, SD4 made mention of collaboration and cooperating together as a team while SD5 and SD6 stated that interpersonal relationships were key in reframing their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. These findings are similar to the conclusions of the study carried out (Henning, 2022) which indicated that the academic middle managers were able to perform their roles well because they attended and called for meetings with the faculty and stakeholders to get their input and suggestions before making proposals or decisions. He further explained that this is an inclusive and participative practice. Likewise, Otara (2018) supports the above views further that what deans should strive for in the academy is a healthy and respected sharing of ideas and concepts where people feel free to express their divergent and oftentimes conflicting views. In fact, many historians consider this concept to be one of the trademarks of higher education academic middle managers.

Good communication skills have been identified by Uzaraski and Broome (2019) that helped academic middle managers bring on board all the staff, students, and other university stakeholders as one entity. Correspondingly, (Quainoo et al., 2020) established the value of listening to faculty's input as well as students' views as an attribute of good communication skills. Likewise, the Delaney's, (2021) findings pointed toward communicating an inspired and clear vision, goals, and strategies that are consistently pursued and communicated with integrity, an understanding of individual needs, and energetic commitment. Correspondingly the findings of the current study share similar views with the discourse above as far as good communication skills are concerned. A case in point is interviewees SD2, SD3 and SD7 who revealed that communicating while using polite language instead of authoritative language to one's faculty was very vital. SD4 reported the significance of consultation as a form of communication skill. In summary of the above discourse, the concepts including commitment, shared vision and good communication skills have also been echoed in the present study by all the eight participants. This

shows the usefulness of the human resources frame and how it has been exploited by academic middle managers in higher education institutions globally.

Structural Frame

In this current study, this structural frame or perspective or lens has been exhibited in the established practices with elements including planning, support from structures, goal setting and taking risks, agenda setting, and scanning the environment, budgeting, and administrative support, among others. It should be noted that the structural frame was the second highest frame of usage by all the participants in the current study to reframe their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. That is, all the eight participants exhibited elements as identified above and they are herein discussed in collaboration with the literature.

With respect to the literature on reframing theory among academic leaders such as deans in high education institutions, particularly the structural frame usage, findings indicate that college and division deans placed a large amount of importance on planning daily academic activities (Smethers, 2020). This is in harmony with the study by McArdle (2008) who found out that higher educational leaders plan the allocation of responsibilities to individual faculty. They also plan, propose, organize and put in place the rules, policies, and structures to be followed in an academic environment. Similarly, in a study carried out by Vuori (2011), findings indicate that using the structural frame, the program directors' work endeavoured to make all sub-systems work together which was achieved through planning. In the current study, deans do plan their daily activities including putting emphasis on agenda setting as stated by SD8 he plans and sets agenda for the daily activities to achieve the goals of improving teaching, learning, research, and staff welfare issues among others. Similarly, SD1 declared that he plans all the daily activities and hardly moves outside what is planned. Similarly, SD2 stated that he plans his academic activities to influence the direction in which the profession

should take. Similarly, SD3 stated that his procedures and plans include being conversant with the school's strategic plan and, the university strategic plan in order to communicate what is relevant. Likewise, SD4 made mention of planning through understanding the opportunities within the school and maximizing them. In summary of the above dialogue, systematic planning skills are both needed and appreciated in the university's environment by academic leaders and it can be maintained that planning is the basic mechanism for academic middle managers to have a positive impact on their environment and this has been supported and exhibited in the present study.

Additionally, in a private university in Malaysia, deans rated themselves high in coordination of activities while sticking to procedures and policies (Joo et al., 2014). Coordination of academic activities and responsibilities is an important structural frame element and this has been established by a study of division deans including chairs, directors, and assistant deans in North Carolina community colleges. Their findings demonstrated that traditionally deans held a historical role of administering colleges through coordination of activities referring or with reference to policies and rules. These findings corroborate with findings established by SD1 a participant from the college education and external studies that he manages the multiple roles by following policies and rules as set by the administration including coordination of activities. Also, SD2 stressed the importance of chairing committees and meetings by coordinating with other deans of the different schools within colleges. Similarly, SD3 emphasized that as a school, they follow the policies and school guidelines to develop the school curriculum as well as over- seeing its implementation through coordination of persons and responsibilities. In the same way, SD4, SD5 and SD6 put importance on research grant writing and implementation through the coordination of all faculty to participate in the same.

Political Frame

As regards the present study, the third dominant frame next to human resource and structural frames was the political frame. One can also say that both the political and the structural frames were used equally by participants and therefore both took the second position to be used by the participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles at Makerere University. Various elements of the political frame have been exhibited by the participants in this study as follows: financial resource mobilization, networking, collaborations, negotiating, bargaining, mediation, use of partnerships and gambling among others. These elements have also been identified in the literature by previous scholars and they are herein discussed below.

With respect to the mobilization of financial resources by academic middle managers within the higher education context emerged the title of strategic and executive deans (Istianto & Wahyurudhanto, 2022). These executive and strategic deans have their roots in the globalization discourses due to the pressure of decreasing resources and increasing accountability. These came because the World Bank in 1995 challenged the relevance of university education and suggested that investing in university education had limited returns and thus proposed to governments to increase investment in primary education (Beerkens & van der Hoek, 2022). Universities were advised to design alternative sources of funding and this saw the emergence of academic leaders referred to as executives and strategists. Due to the above, several studies have exhibited academic leaders as resource mobilizers because all they have to do to remain relevant is to jump onto the band wagon and embrace financial resource mobilization. For instance, in their study about rethinking leadership management and career advancement for 21st deans in the social sciences and humanities at Makerere University, Kabonesa and Kaase-Bwanga (2014) findings indicate that deans are spending their time attending administrative meetings of the college in order to look for sources of funding for their respective schools.

Likewise, participant SD3 in my present study said that as a school, they look for partners internationally or locally for financial assistance to manage the challenges that they would not manage internally. Participant SD7 also indicated that what has kept them from moving as a school is lobbying and soliciting funds for the enhancement of the progress of the school. He too mentioned the move of mobilizing for research grants. Similarly, SD6 specified that they are able to manage through lobbying for financial facilitation from the university. He further still clarified that in his school, departments are able to financially facilitate themselves through writing projects to support most academic work. These findings have been established by participants including SD1, SD2, SD5 and SD8 who have claimed to do lots of partnerships, networking, and fundraising both locally and internationally to raise funds necessary to support graduate training, research, and innovations.

Symbolic Frame

The final frame is the symbolic lens which attaches an organization's culture to symbols that bring out meanings for the leaders and those they lead (Bolman & Deal, 2014). Important aspects of the symbolic frame of leadership include the rituals, culture, and values of an organization (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). This frame is utilized to promote a culture in an organization through the use of symbols, ceremonies as well as role modelling. A symbol is something that everyone in an organization can readily identify with and take pride in (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). For instance, in the current, ceremonies as a symbol of unity have been expressed by SD1 who stressed that he organizes get-together parties where faculty relax and share with one another and get to know each other away to break the normal routine of academic work.

Although a symbol is important, leaders of organizations must be the ones to attach meaning to such symbols. For instance, Herb Kelleher, former Chief Executive Officer of Southwest

Airlines, would show his employees what it meant to be a Southwest employee through his example of being a role model (Leišytė, 2016). This is in line with the findings from this current study where all eight participants said that they actively got involved in all the academic affairs of their respective schools. Other examples of elements of the symbolic frame from the literature include special celebrations to mark the separation of the interlibrary loan unit from the joint space it occupied with the circulation unit and the completion of shared space arrangements (Phillips & Baron, 2013). The symbolic frame offers a program director a chance to make meaning of the many conflicting episodes which are caused by the loosely coupled nature of the organization. For instance, inspiration gives people something they can believe in (Phillips & Baron, 2013).

Furthermore, organizations develop symbols and culture that shape human behaviour and provide a shared sense of mission and identity. Symbols are created to reduce confusion, and tensions as well as give leaders a sense of belief and hope. Ceremonies, rituals, faith, and beliefs help people to find meaning from their experience. Symbolic leaders instil a sense of enthusiasm and commitment through charisma and drama. They pay attention to ceremonies, stories, and other forms. These findings as expressed in the discourse above align with what was found out and expressed by SD8 that the Cross or the Crucifix of the Lord Jesus Christ is what he believes in before embarking on any duties. He relates this to his Christian belief system that helps him in reducing confusion and tensions but rather gives him identity courage and strength to go on. Similarly, my participant SD6 discussed the symbol of being a figure head thus representing the principal of different functions. And as a figure head, he is expected to know it all by all those he leads thus he acts as an example. Therefore, the exemplary nature that he portrays is a strategy for reframing his perceived changing academic roles in the context of Makerere University.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the discussion as regards the reframing strategies, the study concluded that despite the complex, challenging and changing higher education environment, deans at Makerere University have remained relevant due to adhering to the multi-frame usage. Although there was multi-frame usage, the most used frame by all the participants in reframing their perceived changing academic roles was the human resource, followed by structural, political, and finally the symbolic frame. The human resource frame taking centre stage was attributed to the fact that deans do not work in a vacuum but with people and therefore focusing on people's needs is key in academic leadership. It is also true that since organizations are comprised of individuals, the needs of those individuals must be central to the goals of the organizations. Empowering faculty, nurturing them and their welfare will extend to the organizations. Therefore, working in such a complex environment, deans at Makerere University need significant others including faculty, students, and local and international partners to remain relevant and hence teamwork, interpersonal relationships, and participative leadership to satisfy this web of relationships as emphasized by the human resource frame.

We further still concluded that the structural frame which was the second most exploited frame was attributed to the fact that an organization such as the university that Makerere is a hierarchical system with established policies, rules, and guidelines to follow. These create order in schools, no wonder its relevance. More to that, the political frame emerged strongly in science-based disciplines specifically the hard applied. This was also attributed to the unique needs of the school, and the fact that the school has a big research portfolio where about 80% are predominantly graduate students including masters and PhD.

Recommendations

As regards the reframing strategies, the study recommends that while all four frames were utilized, the least exploited frame was the symbolic perspective. This frame's benefits were

identified as how important it was for deans to act as role models as well as manifesting the importance of creating ceremonies to break the routine academic work for school faculties which is vital for an academic environment. We recommend that all deans use this frame because of its crucial benefits as indicated above.

The study also recommends that deans embrace the political frame in all their respective schools because this frame has been exploited fully in the science-based disciplines specifically the hard-applied fields and it has helped in the generation of financial resources which SD3 boasts of. In this frame, various key elements such as networking, collaborations and resource mobilization have been important in solving the issue of financial constraints which has been identified as a major challenge among other participants in their various schools.

Areas for Further Research

Some recommendations for further research should focus on the following: In this study, the perceptions of the deans were attributed to the transformation of Makerere University to the collegiate system of governance. There is a need to extend the scope of the study to other public or private universities under the faculty-based system and explore the deans' perceptions as regards their roles. The scope of the study can be extended to generate additional empirical insights in a comparative way by expanding the number of universities to be included in the study. Some of these universities would be those that are chartered, profit-oriented private universities among others.

The findings of this study show the use of the political frame more in science-based disciplines which are hard applied disciplines. It would be interesting to carry out a comparative study in universities that are science-based and explore how deans reframe their academic roles using the political frame. The use of the symbolic frame in this study has been the least used reframing strategy and has been linked to faith and strong beliefs in God. I suggest that other researchers

conduct a study and focus on this symbolic frame in detail.

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