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**Mayor, Cheerleader, Lawyer, or Juggler? An Exploratory Study of
CAO Leadership Metaphors and Challenges**

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Abstract

Two-hundred-twenty-four CAO members of the Council of Independent Colleges completed a survey suggesting metaphor to describe their position and assessing their own leadership style and communication behavior. The solicited metaphors (N=148) were sorted into four clusters labeled hierarchy, paradox, competence, and relational. These four clusters were then arranged in a 2 x 2 matrix reflecting ontological orientation (realist or idealist) as well as approach to interpersonal influence (macro or micro). CAO's were also asked to identify the greatest challenge to their leadership effectiveness. The resultant answers were sorted into a four category typology consisting of political, relational, competence, and resource challenges to effectiveness.

KEY WORDS: Leadership, Metaphors, Communication, Higher Education Administration

Mayor, Cheerleader, Lawyer, or Juggler? An Exploratory Study of CAO Leadership Metaphors and Challenges

Colleges and universities are a ubiquitous, integral, and influential part of modern society and the nexus of many individual aspirations. In spite of this importance personally and socially, schools in the U.S. according to Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2002, p. 5) “are facing a dearth of leaders capable of providing good leadership.” Compounding the problem is the fact that the study of management in higher education has been relatively neglected in favor of studies focusing on the business sector (Mech, 1997). However, nascent research in higher education administration suggests that academic leaders specifically find themselves in a unique position with a leadership role that has no clear parallel in business or industry due to its dualistic nature. Although most organizations require shared governance between individuals or groups, with sometimes inconsistent and even incompatible goals, “dualism” is *the* defining characteristic of academic leadership as the responsibilities and interests of trustees, administrators, and faculty are continuously negotiated through bureaucratic maneuvers (Edelstein, 1997, p. 58). As a result, according to Gmelch (2000), academic leaders may occupy the least studied and most misunderstood management position in America.

The foregoing is troubling indeed given the pervasive belief that leadership is the single most critical component of organizational success (Birnbaum, 1992). Fortunately, disillusionment with traditional leadership models and the realization that leadership must be practiced in a troubled, complex, and crisis-ridden context has led to a new wave of leadership studies in academe. In this project we will contribute to this literature in two distinct ways. First, we solicited academic leadership metaphors from our sample in an effort to create a leadership typology and uncover taken-for-granted assumptions about the CAO role and the interpersonal dynamics inherent in that role. This creation of a leadership metaphor typology, and a resultant 2 x 2 matrix predicated on underlying ontological assumptions and influence strategy, helps to bring these dynamics into sharper focus. Secondly, we solicited a list of leadership challenges that enabled us to create a second typology and relate that typology of challenges to the leadership metaphor types previously identified.

Literature Review

University Governance

Organizational types. Martin and Semels (1997, p. 64) suggest that US universities tend to cluster into four organizational types that they label “collegial, archaic, political, and bureaucratic.” The collegial model is most likely found in small, liberal arts colleges with very direct and immediate communication linkages between organizational members. The archaic structural style represents the “organized anarchy” sometimes found in huge, “flagship” state universities with massive numbers of students and a long, rich history which sometimes ossifies historic practices. The political model is distinguished by a diffusion of formal power, the dominance of unions and entrenched committees, and the proliferation of special interest groups often found in complex state university systems. Finally, the bureaucratic university is characterized by centralized decision making, the proliferation of rules and policies, and a highly structured organizational environment. This last organizational type is by far the most prevalent

model of university governance in the US and often is a dominant characteristic of the other three organizational types as well (Martin & Semels, 1997).

The Chief Academic Officer. The position of the chief academic officer (CAO) is especially challenging and deserving of attention. Traditionally the titles Academic VP, Provost, and Dean of Faculty were used interchangeably to identify broadly those responsible for academic oversight at US colleges and universities. The more recent use of titles such as VP for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer (CAO) reflects the more complex organizational structure and management responsibilities currently expected of academic leadership (Martin & Samels, 1997). This increasing complexity of the CAO role often results in high job stress, role ambiguity, and high rates of turnover. As a result, CAO's frequently report low job satisfaction and leave administration to return to the classroom.

One explanation for this phenomenon concerns the scope of the CAO's position which is often wider and more complex than that of the president (Bright & Richards, 2001). CAO's, more than any other leader, link the central administration with academic departments and become the crucial backbone of university decision-making (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). Every CAO must be prepared to deal with a bewildering variety of developing relationships, priorities, and problems. CAO's are frequently caught between the expectations of individual faculty, college departments, and those of the central administration (Wolverton, 1984). According to Bright and Richards (2001), the CAO is "invoked as the cause and explanation of unpopular campus policies, as the reason for a failed promotion, and for other sources of discontent. In short, the provost is "like a dean but even more remote and terrible" (Bright & Richards, 2001, p. 233). A role of this scope and imagery requires a leadership style that will ultimately cultivate these working relationships and motivate and maintain continued development of faculty and staff (Mech, 1997). Unfortunately there is a temptation to say more than we know about leadership in higher education when our assumptions are predicated on models inappropriately gleaned from other organizational contexts.

Leadership Paradigms in Higher Education Administration

Leadership in academia. Following Wolverton and Gmelch (2002, p. 33), we define academic leadership as "the act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff." Leadership of this type requires movement away from coercion and bureaucratic manipulation toward a collaborative orientation that holds everyone accountable to a higher vision of the organization. In the process of working collaboratively, opportunities will also be created to involve, reward, resource, recognize, and empower faculty in ways that transcend traditional bureaucratic hierarchy. Lastly, this conceptualization of leadership entails the mutual negotiation of a joint vision that elevates priorities above the ordinary and mundane in a way that inspires our best efforts. Next we will contrast bureaucratic approaches to leadership with the possibilities revealed by transformational leadership when applied to higher education administration.

Traditional bureaucratic models. The leadership dilemma noted previously stems both from the nature of the job itself as well as the leadership model routinely embraced in higher education. Leadership in colleges and universities is problematic because of the dual control systems, conflict between professional and administrative authority, unclear goals, and other professional organizations (Bensimon, Neumann, &

Birnbaum, 1989). However, many institutions seem by default, to develop a bureaucratic model of leadership in an effort to establish “strict boundaries” and keep things “neat and tidy” (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002, p. 5). Leaders who employ a bureaucratic framework emphasize setting priorities, making orderly decisions, and communicating through established lines of authority (Birnbaum, 1992). In a study by Lees, Smith, and Stockhouse (1994), higher education administrators most often defined leadership as “a one way approach whose purpose was getting others within the organization to conform to or comply with the leader’s directives by using various sources of social power” (p.12). The bureaucratic leader can control the institution, but this style of leadership does not motivate the faculty and the staff, who must approve or at least implement new programs and other changes if they are to be successful (Wolverton, 1984). Until a new leadership paradigm can be implemented, CAO’s will be placed in the position of needing to create change in an environment with little motivation or commitment to do so (Montez & Wolverton, 2000).

Transformational leadership. Over the past several years, much attention has been given to the notion of transformational leadership as a contrast to traditional bureaucracy (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998). Burns (1978) characterizes transformational leadership as a process that motivates followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values. Transformational leadership seeks to raise followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals and moving followers to address higher-level needs (Covrig, 2000). This type of leadership is concerned with follower’s values and beliefs, and asks followers to respond to a higher level of moral and ethical conduct (Northouse, 2001). Transformational leadership utilizes this commitment to emphasize the inspirational aspects of the relationships between leaders and followers (Brown & Moshavi, 2002).

Communication in Higher Education Administration

In order to create organization change and motivate the constituents of any organization, competent communication is essential. According to Zorn and Violanti (1996) communication is central to organizational function and to the daily goals of individuals in the organization. A major part of the CAO’s role is establishing effective relationships and a major part of that task involves effective communication (Hickson & Stacks, 1992). When viewing leadership as an influential relationship, a communication-based perspective of leadership becomes paramount. Hackman and Johnson (2000) define leadership as human communication that modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs. Leadership styles inherently display a distinct set of communication behaviors.

Many CAO’s have expressed a desire to become more competent communicators. In a study by Townsend and Bassoppo-Mayo (1996), almost half of the respondents desired skills and knowledge in communication competence. The need for traditional communication skills of listening, speaking and writing, as well as the ability to mediate and resolve conflicts were expressed. Administrators must be able to arbitrate between several possible moral codes, and at the same time, portray a unified moral front to keep the organization on course (Covrig, 2000). If administrators can combine communication competencies with a transformational leadership style that inspires and elevates faculty and staff to higher levels of innovation, critical thinking, and morality, the revolution that higher education is calling for may begin. Therefore, in this study we will include

several measures of communicator style, social support, and role negotiation in an effort to foreground “how” CAO’s are doing what they are doing as they interact with others.

Metaphors and Leadership

Perusal of the relevant literature reveals a rich history of discourse analysis in the organizational communication discipline (Bantz, 1993). As Fairhurst (2001, p. 407) notes, communication scholars are especially interested in analyzing symbolic forms of communication in order to identify recurrent themes, tensions, goals, and sense-making devices in organizational life. As such, a useful method for understanding the leadership role of the CAO is through the use of metaphor analysis (Forward, 2001).

The importance of metaphor analysis as a methodology is highlighted by Foss (1989, p. 359) who summarized the arguments of I. A. Richards and Kenneth Burke with the assertion that “all thought is metaphoric.” Metaphor, according to these scholars, is an omnipresent attribute of thought and is logically prior to meaning and indeed is necessary to the generation of ideas and the discovery of “truth.” Metaphors serve as structuring principles that enable us to construct a particular reality based on the language we use to describe that reality (Foss, 1989). As such, metaphor analysis can be used as a diagnostic tool to analyze what is happening interpersonally in an organizational context and to surface taken-for-granted assumptions about normative behavior and expectations (Morgan, 1997).

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) leadership is preeminently “a language game.” Therefore a linguistic analysis provides a meaningful look at how individuals view their roles, relationships, and orientation toward power (Linstead, 2001). The metaphors that individuals use to describe their roles may be indicators of deeply held organizational meanings, values, and proscribed actions (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). They are significant indicators of how CAO’s view themselves as leaders and the relationships that characterize leadership within higher education. Therefore, CAO’s were asked to describe their position in terms of a metaphor (simile) by completing the phrase: “A CAO is like a _____.”

Research Questions

To gain more insight into the unique dynamics of the CAO role, the following research questions are presented.

RQ 1: What types of metaphors do CAO’s use to describe their role?

RQ2: What types of leadership challenges do CAO’s identify in their work?

Method

Research Participants

The subjects in this study (N = 225) ranged in age from 31 to 76 with a mean age of 54 (SD = 8.7). Sixty-two percent (n = 139) were male and 38 % (n = 85) were female. The sample was predominately white (90.2 %, n = 202) but included 14 (6.3 %) individuals who identified themselves as Black/African-American. Many of the CAO’s were relative neophytes. Examination of the descriptive statistics revealed that a majority of the respondents (73.5 %, n = 165) had been in their present assignment for five years or less. The entire sample had a mean tenure in their present assignment of 4.8 years (SD = 5.5, Median = 3.0) with an average of 15 years teaching experience (SD = 8.3) prior to moving into an administrative post.

A plurality of respondents (42.2 %, n = 95) serve as Chief Academic Officer in institutions that enroll between one to two thousand students. Only 14 (6.3 %) work in institutions that enroll five thousand or more students whereas 51 (22.7 %) serve schools that enroll fewer than one thousand students. Most survey respondents taught full-time prior to assuming administrative responsibilities. They listed more than fifty academic specialties which cluster broadly into nineteen disciplinary domains (Table 1). However, five academic disciplines including Literature, Education, History, Psychology, and Chemistry/Biology, account for over half of the sample (55 % n = 123).

Research Procedures

This research focuses on Chief Academic Officers in higher education. The sample frame was established by securing a membership directory from the Council of Independent Colleges headquartered in Washington, D.C. The CIC is a professional organization comprised of private, four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. One of the authors of this paper is a CIC member and attends their annual meeting. The membership directory identified 479 affiliated CAO's at the time of this study.

A survey packet was constructed consisting of a cover letter, survey, SASE, and separate response card so that names could be removed from the mailing list in preparation for a second mailing to non-respondents. The mailing list was prepared by removing the names of the 30 CAO's included in a pilot test, as well as removing the CIC member co-author and two others who had vacated their positions. This resulted in an initial mailing sent to the 446 CAO's remaining. One-hundred-eighty surveys were returned (40.4 %) following this first mailing. An identical second packet was sent to those remaining on the list approximately 5 weeks later. This mailing generated an additional 46 (10.3 %) surveys for an accepting sample of 50.7 % (N = 226 with 1 unusable survey). This is an acceptable response rate for survey research in general and is especially robust given the top management tier of a university CAO (Baruch, 1999).

As part of a larger project, respondents completed a four-page survey measuring variables of interest and soliciting leadership metaphors and challenges to leadership in academia. The final section of the survey collected demographic data about the respondents (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity), their personal history (e.g., discipline, teaching history, tenure as CAO), and institutional enrollment.

Results

CAO Role Metaphors

The first research question sought to identify the types of metaphors CAO's use to describe their academic role. Survey recipients responded to the following prompt: "A CAO is like a _____." One hundred forty eight CAO's supplied a metaphor and a brief explanation in response to this request. Each metaphor and explanation was placed on a separate card with the intention of identifying any thematic patterns that might emerge (Boyatzis, 1998). Using the constant comparative method (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), the entire stack of cards was sorted into clusters. The first author utilized key terms and ideas from the raw information to inductively construct four data-driven categories focusing either on hierarchical placement, relational influence, expert knowledge or competence, or irony and paradox. (Boyatzis, 1998). The second author then re-sorted all 148 cards into these previously supplied categories. Following McGee and Cegala (1998), a conservative measure of inter-rater reliability was employed

Table 1: Academic Discipline of Origin for CAO's (n = 223)

Academic Discipline	N	%
Humanities	90	40.4
Literature/English	39	17.5
History	20	9.0
Bible/Ethics/Philosophy	13	5.8
Music/Art/Photography	12	5.4
Languages	6	2.7
Professional Studies	53	23.7
Education/Administration/Curriculum	28	12.6
Business/Management/Operations	10	4.5
Nursing/Medical/Physiology	9	4.0
Physical Education	3	1.3
Food Nutrition	2	.9
Law	1	.4
Social Sciences	48	21.5
Psychology/Counseling	19	8.5
Political Science	14	6.3
Communication	9	4.0
Sociology	6	2.7
Natural Sciences	32	14.3
Chemistry/Biology	17	7.6
Mathematics	11	4.9
Physics/Engineering	2	.9
Geology/Geography	2	.9

yielding a coefficient of .90 for the entire data set. Table 2 lists the four metaphor types, representative examples, frequencies, and inter-rater reliabilities for each individual category.

A plurality of responses (n = 52, 35.1%) identified the CAO role in terms of placement in the organizational hierarchy either as the central figure or “number two”

Table 2: CAO Metaphors

Metaphor Type	N	%	Reliability
Hierarchy/Legitimate Authority <i>(Including COO, Senior Manager, CEO, and Mayor)</i>	52	35.1	.88
Relational Influence <i>(Including Coach, Pastor, Parent, and Cheerleader)</i>	47	31.8	.88
Competence/Expert Knowledge <i>(Including Attorney/Judge, Broker, and Teacher)</i>	26	17.6	.80
Irony/Paradox <i>(Including Herder of Cats, Juggler, Circus Ringmaster, and Playground Monitor)</i>	23	15.5	.76

Note. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Agreements minus Disagreements}}{\text{Agreements plus Disagreements}}$$

person in support of the president. Central figure metaphors included images like CEO, mayor, hospital president, and high school principal. These metaphors tended to focus on the enormous responsibility for budgeting, daily decisions, and internal management of the organization. The most common metaphor highlighting the role of a “number two” person was COO. Explanations for this designation tended to focus on managing the academic life of the university on behalf of the President or Board of Trustees who establish university policy and vision.

Another large subset (n = 47, 31.8 %) focused on relationships and facilitating faculty member growth by building interpersonal relationships and encouraging the development of others. This relational emphasis was expressed in two ways in this subset. The first used metaphors that expressed relational and developmental functions like servant or cheerleader. The second cluster described the same functions but did so in terms of specific jobs like coach or conductor. However, the explanations for these metaphors highlighted a concern for the feelings, gifts, and needs of others.

An additional 26 (17.6 %) CAO’s described their role in terms of a knowledge-based expertise. These metaphors emphasize skills, credentials, or professional roles (e.g., lawyer) that allow CAO’s to utilize specialized knowledge in the service of others and yet remain somewhat independent. Finally, twenty-three respondents (15.5 %) took an ironic view by using something “inappropriate” to capture the unique ethos of the job.

This group used humor and paradox to highlight the unpredictable and uncontrollable aspects of life in an academic bureaucracy. Herder of cats, juggler, and playground supervisor were representative images of this fourth group of metaphors.

Challenges to Effective Leadership

In analyzing the second question the same procedures were utilized, placing each challenge on a card, and sorting the cards for themes. Key terms were identified and again themes emerged among the plurality of responses. While not originally predicted, clear parallels were discovered between the role metaphor categories and the CAO's reported greatest challenge to their leadership. The same category types used to conceptualize leadership were utilized to classify the CAO's leadership challenges. The leadership challenge types, examples, and frequencies are summarized in Table 3 and their relationship to the leadership metaphor types are represented in Figure 1.

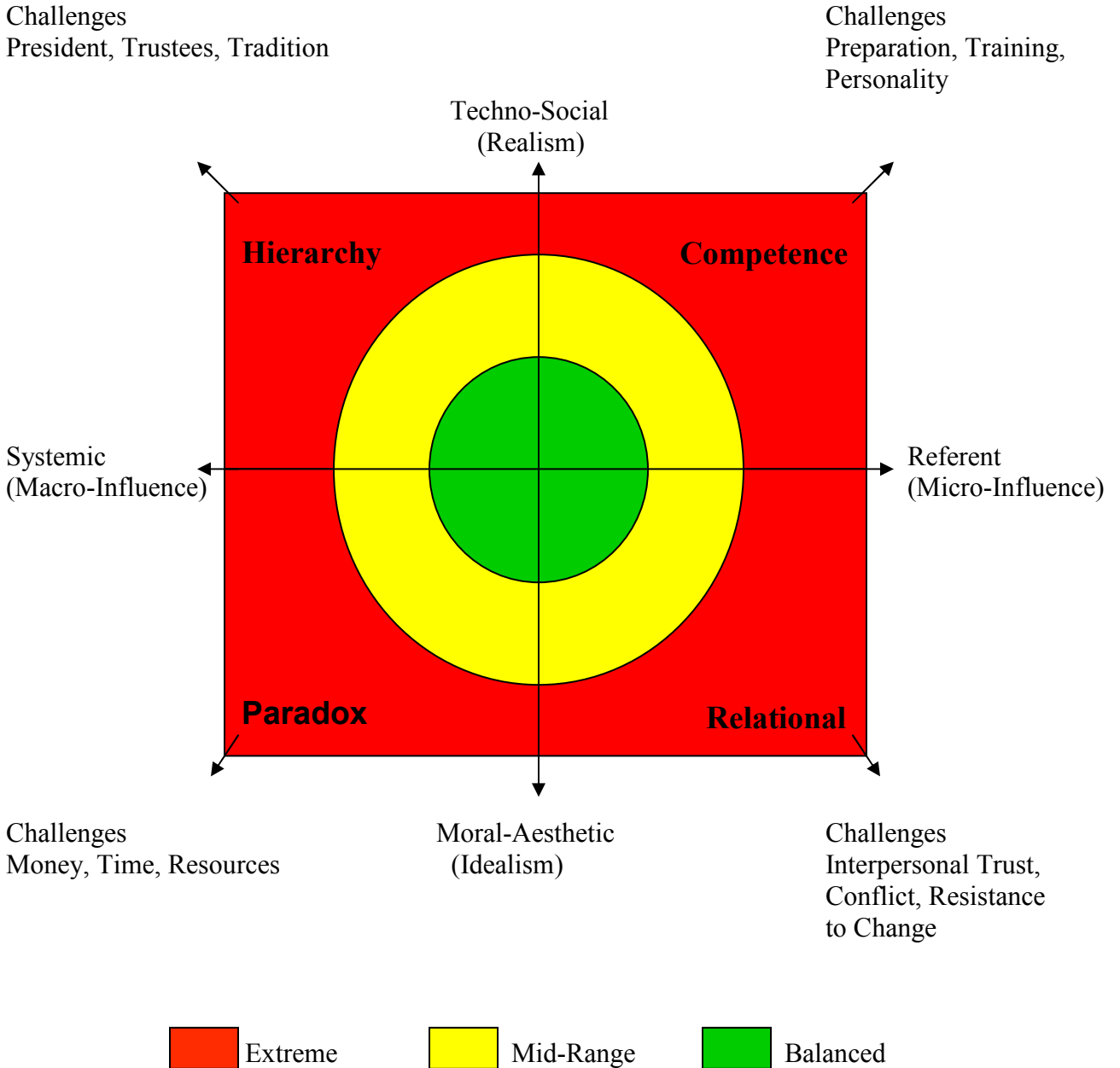
The first set of challenges dealt with issues relating to organizational hierarchy and legitimate authority (n=47, 22.9%). From this cluster several sub-categories were identified. Several CAO's listed the president as their single greatest challenge to their leadership. Often in this context the president was further described as a "micromanager". The organizational structure also referred to specific interactions with the Board of Trustees. The final subset dealt with the overall power and politics in the organization as manifested in traditional policies and practices. These challenges included knowing the "law of the land" and dealing with "unwritten policies and procedures".

CAO's also reported several interpersonal relationship aspects (n = 70, 34.1%) that effected their leadership. These relational issues tended to deal almost exclusively with faculty relationships. Three sub categories were apparent within the relational issues identified. CAO's repeatedly reported the development of trust as one of their greatest challenges. CAO's felt that earning the "trust of the faculty" was a crucial dynamic affecting their leadership. The next relational issue CAO's dealt with was conflict. Conflict cumulated in many forms, including conflict among faculty, departments, and staff. Most conflict issues expressed a fragmented view of the purpose of the academic institution as a whole. Dealing with change was the third reoccurring theme. CAO's felt that "faculty resistance to change" was a major hurdle in their quest for effective leadership.

As with the leadership metaphors, CAO's expressed competency based concerns with the demands of their position (n = 16, 8%). This third category addressed CAO's challenges in two specific areas. The first was with job preparation and training. Some felt that little had been done to prepare them for their role, especially if they only had a "teaching background". Along with preparation, many cited their own personality traits as hindering their leadership potential. For example, one CAO noted his own sense of "humor and irony" as off-putting to some people and a subsequent hindrance to his performance and ability to relate to those people.

The final category we developed for greatest CAO leadership challenge revolved around limited resources, both tangible and intangible. This resource category was compared to the fourth metaphor role category of paradox. The rationale for this was simply the irony of needing more by way of resources than one will ever be able to obtain. This theme was mentioned quite often by our respondents (n = 72, 35.1%). The issues here centered on inadequate money or time to do the job. Furthermore, the

Figure 1: CAO Leadership & Metaphor Matrix



workload of the job was reported as one that is simply “impossible to do”. A general lack of support was also identified by several as impacting effective CAO leadership.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to specifically explore CAO conceptualizations of their leadership role through metaphor analysis. In addition, we sought to contribute to the extant literature by identifying challenges to leadership effectiveness as experienced by those responsible for providing direction in academic administration.

CAO Role Metaphors and Challenges

One of the most frequently studied sense-making devices in qualitative communication research concerns the use of metaphor (Lindlof, 1995). The metaphors that individuals use to describe their roles and are indicators of deeply held organizational meanings, values, and proscribed actions (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). As such, they are significant indicators of how CAO's view themselves as leaders and the relationships that should characterize their leadership in the academy. All metaphors tend to foreground certain aspects of organizational life, while simultaneously minimizing and de-emphasizing others (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001).

The four metaphor clusters identified in this research can be meaningfully arranged in a 2 x 2 matrix on the basis of two underlying dimensions including ontological orientation and focus of power and influence (see Figure 1). The first dimension, as explicated by Gowler and Legge (1996), contains two contrasting ontological orientations. The techno-social or "realist" orientation tends to foreground issues relevant to the economic, mission-related goals of the organization. This approach focuses on serving the legitimate interests of the organization as traditionally understood in bureaucratic institutions like higher education. The hierarchy metaphor cluster does this by highlighting the CAO's position and authority in the bureaucratic structure. The competence cluster does so by focusing specifically on the knowledge, skills, and abilities most likely to add value to the organization and further organizational interests.

The moral-aesthetic or "idealist" ontological orientation tends to foreground issues related to truth, beauty, and implicational meanings. The paradoxes and irony inherent in modern organizational life have long been obscured by the "myth of rationality" or treated as dysfunctional behavior to be corrected (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004). Instead, paradox brings into focus incongruous structures, policies, and practices that exist in all organizations and may even be necessary to function effectively (Tracy, 2004). The paradox cluster of metaphors does this by bringing practical dilemmas into sharp focus and highlighting the limitations inherent in supposed rationality. Pearce (2004, p. 175), reflecting on her tenure as an interim dean, concluded that typical academic governance "...puts adjectives like Byzantine, red tape, bureaucratic, ossified, and Kafkaesque to shame." The use of paradoxical metaphors can bring into sharp focus the inevitable disparity between the real and ideal in everyday organizational practices (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). According to Putnam and Fairhurst (2001), irony and paradox can be liberating, empowering, a source of counterintuitive insight, and a means of encouraging discussion and diversity.

The relational metaphor cluster represents moral-aesthetic idealism by focusing on interpersonal dynamics highlighting nurture, servanthood, and personal supportiveness in CAO-faculty interaction. A relational style foregrounds the people in the organization and how they actualize and grow, in addition to the ways they can contribute to the organization and corporate goals. The assumption here is that investing in the development and growth of individuals will both motivate and enable them to make greater contributions to their department and the university.

The second underlying dimension in the 2 x 2 matrix reflects the ground of power and influence in an organizational context. This dimension is parsed on the basis of orientation toward impersonal organizational structures and processes or orientation toward personal relationships, in exercising influence. Both the hierarchy and paradox

metaphor clusters operate at the macro-level of organizational structure either by endorsing or resisting the implications of bureaucracy. The competence and relational clusters focus on the micro-level of interpersonal dynamics focused either on self (competence) or other (interpersonal relationship).

This matrix can also be used to help create a more complete picture of the challenges, role, and system in which CAO's operate on a daily basis (Table 3). When

Table 3: Challenges to CAO Leadership

Challenge Type	N	%
Political Challenges <i>(President, Trustees, Tradition)</i>	47	22.9 %
Relational Challenges <i>(interpersonal trust, conflict, change)</i>	70	34.1 %
Competence Challenges <i>(preparation, training, personality traits)</i>	16	7.8 %
Resource Challenges <i>(money, time)</i>	72	35.1 %

used in this way, the findings of the matrix resonate with the literature characterizing the CAO role as one full of conflict and ambiguity (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). The matrix has further implications for the effectiveness of the CAO's leadership style. The matrix (see Figure 1) can be viewed through three additional lenses borrowed from family communication research (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989). The first lens is located in the center of the diagram which calls for a balance of all four dimensions. In this inner circle, the goal of the CAO is to find a balance between the realist and idealist by using both legitimate and referent forms of influence and power. This balance would indicate a leadership style that is able to focus on the ideal vision of the institution while simultaneously maintaining a realistic or pragmatic orientation that may temper the ideal. This perspective would further recognize the use of both systemic and individual referent power to maintain relationships, build trust, and pursue needed change. This area of balance would incorporate all of the numerous roles of the CAO while still dealing as effectively as possible with the challenges identified.

As one moves out of the area of balance on the figure into mid-range, the leadership and role challenges CAO's face become more difficult to overcome. This is the area in which CAO's exhibit over-reliance on the behaviors of certain dimensions and the concomitant under-utilization of the opposite dimension (Swenson & Henkel-Johnson, 2002). Finally the extreme areas of the figure represent a system where leadership is possibly pre-defined and influence and power only come from one source

resulting in either rigid or chaotic, and enmeshed or disengaged leadership as behavior gravitates toward the extremes (Swenson & Henkel-Johnson, 2002). These extremes would likely exacerbate the challenges of the opposite quadrant and lead to little to no effectiveness for the CAO. This phenomenon lends support to the provocative notion that the skills organizations reward with promotion to higher office may not be the skills needed to keep one there (Richmond & Martin, 1998).

Conclusion

Johnson (1999) cites data suggesting that a majority of employed adults work for someone with poor leadership skills. There is no reason to conclude that academics are an exception to this generalization since many CAO's are selected on the basis of skills and criteria that do not reflect the demands of their administrative assignment (Bogue, 1994). As such, there are three practical implications that can be drawn from this research to aid in understanding how CAO's function in their administrative role. First, this project highlights the fact that metaphor analysis is a useful method for exploring meaning in organizational life. One way it does this is by explicating metaphors in order to surface *sub rosa* conceptualizations of how CAO's view themselves as leaders and the dynamics that should characterize their interactions (Forward, 2000). Metaphor analysis also helps in developing conceptual frames and typologies necessary to understand the inherent tensions and paradox in organizational life (Ashcraft & Trethewey, 2004).

Secondly, communication matters for educational leaders and their followers. A brochure produced by the Educational Management Network (2002) concludes that the skills most essential for academic administrator success are effective interpersonal communication and team-building abilities. Effective communication creates an organizational environment in which CAO's can receive needed emotional and information support and where followers are listened to and engaged in an active process of role negotiation.

Lastly, this research hints at a link between leadership style and challenges to leadership. Pascarella (1996, p. 9) has argued: "We need a spiritual foundation for working together to manage our technical capabilities and our human faults." Unfortunately, long emergent assumptions and practices have accumulated to shape workplaces that often stifle the human spirit and discourage displays of our humanity and spirituality (Pascarella, 1996). As Bogue (1994, p. xi) notes, "a few collegiate leaders would appear to suffer not only from a paucity of ideas but a poverty of ideals" including integrity, candor, stewardship, humility, and compassion. This project makes a beginning contribution to the literature by suggesting there is a link between communication, challenges, and leadership.

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