

The Leadership–Management Compass Model: A Bi-Axial Diagnostic Framework for Positioning Leadership–Managerial Roles within Organizational Contexts

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Abstract

This study aims to propose an original conceptual–diagnostic model called the “Leadership–Management Compass,” designed to analyze and classify behavioral-functional positioning of individuals within organizational structures. The model is based on a dual-axis framework: The Leadership–Management axis and the Vision–Execution axis. By intersecting these axes, the model generates a four-quadrant behavioral matrix consisting of: Visionary Leader, Executive Leader, Structured Manager, and Bureaucratic Administrator. Through analytical interpretation and practical applications, the model provides a comprehensive perspective for assessing professional roles across managerial environments. The research adopts a qualitative analytical methodology based on an extensive review of relevant leadership and organizational theories, and proposes a scalable tool for behavioral diagnosis and leadership development in both public and private sectors. The paper concludes with practical implications and potential areas for future empirical validation.

Keywords:

Leadership, Management, Behavioral Roles, Organizational Diagnosis, Vision–Execution Model, Leadership Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern organizational environments are witnessing unprecedented transformations marked by uncertainty, complexity, and intensified competitive pressures. In this volatile context, the need for leadership and management models that enable institutional agility and adaptive response has become more urgent than ever. While the literature is rich in theoretical discussions on leadership and management, there remains a significant gap between these two dimensions, both conceptually and practically. Often treated as independent paradigms—leadership being associated with vision and inspiration, and management with structure and execution—existing models have largely resulted in fragmented frameworks that lack integrative capacity.

This study seeks to address this gap by proposing a novel diagnostic model—the Leadership–Management Compass—designed to analytically position individuals within organizations based on their behavioral and functional inclinations. The model introduces a dual-axis framework that reflects the balance between leadership and management, and between vision and execution, offering a comprehensive matrix for organizational role diagnosis and development.

2. Problem Statement and Research Questions

Despite significant progress in leadership and management literature, the relationship between these two concepts is still frequently addressed in a disconnected or parallel manner. This dichotomy limits the capacity of existing frameworks to interpret the dynamic overlap between leadership and managerial roles within organizational settings. As a result, practical applications often view leadership as an emotional, inspirational function and management as a rational, structural function, without effective integration between the two.

This theoretical and functional gap has generated challenges in organizational diagnostics and the design of leadership development programs. It has also contributed to a fragmented understanding of behavioral patterns in the workplace—such as individuals who demonstrate vision without execution, control without creativity, or inspirational leadership without administrative responsibility.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following central research question:

How can an integrative analytical model be developed to reconcile leadership and management dimensions within a unified conceptual–practical framework that enhances the diagnosis of behavioral roles and organizational practices?

From this central question, the study further explores the following sub-questions:

- A. What are the key conceptual gaps in contemporary leadership and management literature?
- B. What are the core components and theoretical foundations of the proposed Leadership–Management Compass model?
- C. How can leadership–managerial behavioral patterns be categorized within the Vision–Execution matrix?
- D. What practical applications can the model offer for institutional diagnostics and professional development?

3. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to achieve the following theoretical and applied objectives:

- A. To construct an integrative conceptual model—termed the “Leadership–Management Compass”—that unifies leadership and management dimensions within a dynamic analytical framework.
- B. To examine the theoretical and practical contexts that have contributed to the leadership–management divide and assess its impact on organizational performance.
- C. To design an analytical matrix that links strategic thinking and visionary orientation with execution styles and professional behavior.
- D. To classify organizational actors based on their leadership–managerial behavioral positioning, thereby informing targeted development and training programs.
- E. To explore the potential practical applications of the model in institutional diagnostics, leadership development, and role restructuring.

4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from three main dimensions:

- **Theoretical Contribution:** This study introduces a novel model that addresses a knowledge gap in leadership and management literature. It offers an integrative perspective that bridges classical and contemporary theories within a unified interpretive framework.
- **Practical Relevance:** The model provides diagnostic tools to assess leadership–managerial positioning and readiness for leadership roles, thus enhancing decision-making, training design, and organizational development.
- **Contextual Relevance:** This study responds to the accelerating transformations in Arab organizational environments, emphasizing the need for flexible, adaptive models that accommodate cultural and administrative complexity.

5. Methodology and Study Procedures

This research adopts a **descriptive–analytical methodology** as the most appropriate approach for the subject matter and objectives. It involves a multi-stage analytical process aimed at building a conceptual model that integrates leadership and management within a cohesive structure.

The study was implemented in three primary phases:

- A. **Literature Review:** The analysis involved more than 150 academic sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles, theses, and research reports in both Arabic and English. The reviewed literature was categorized into four thematic axes:
 - (a) Leadership models
 - (b) Management theories
 - (c) Integration and convergence trends
 - (d) Contemporary organizational transformations
- B. **Comparative Model Analysis:** Seven prominent leadership–management models were deconstructed and analyzed—such as transformational leadership, management by objectives, and situational leadership—to identify their strengths, limitations, and conceptual gaps. This step guided the refinement of the proposed model.
- C. **Preliminary Application:** The model was preliminarily tested on 15 case studies from diverse institutions (educational, healthcare, and nonprofit) in Arab organizational contexts. These cases were analyzed using behavioral assessment tools to verify the model’s applicability and its ability to differentiate between leadership–managerial roles.

6. Methodological Notes:

- The study did not utilize quantitative tools or field surveys, due to its conceptual and theoretical orientation, and instead focused on analytical synthesis.
- Key terms and constructs were operationalized based on a cross-analysis of Arabic and international sources, ensuring contextual relevance to Arab organizations.

7. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

Developing a comprehensive analytical model grounded in a solid theoretical foundation is an essential prerequisite for any research seeking to make a genuine contribution to its field. Based on this principle, this study relies on a comparative and critical analysis of a range of theoretical perspectives addressing the leadership–management relationship, focusing on points of convergence, divergence, and conceptual gaps that have not been sufficiently addressed.

The theoretical framework can be classified into four primary intellectual streams:

7.1 Functional Separation Approach (Strict Differentiation)

This approach is founded on the premise that leadership and management are fundamentally distinct functions. Leadership emphasizes vision, influence, and change, while management focuses on stability, structure, and control. Key proponents of this school include:

- **John Kotter (1990)**, who argued that leadership is about coping with change, while management deals with complexity: leaders align people toward a vision, managers organize systems and operations.
- **Bennis & Nanus (1985)**, who famously stated: *“Managers do things right, while leaders do the right things.”*

Although consistent in its functional distinction, this view has been critiqued for oversimplifying reality—many leaders perform managerial tasks and vice versa.

7.2 Integrative–Holistic Approach (Analytical Convergence)

This view rejects the artificial dichotomy between leadership and management, arguing that effective organizational actors engage in overlapping roles that combine strategic vision with operational discipline. Key references include:

- **Gary Yukl (2013)**, who proposed a comprehensive model that incorporates both leadership functions (influence, vision) and managerial duties (planning, monitoring), advocating for a flexible understanding of the leader–manager role.
- **Henry Mintzberg (1973)**, who identified that successful leaders must enact a complex web of roles across communication, information processing, and decision-making.

This approach lays the foundation for the concept of the “reflective practitioner” who fluidly transitions between roles as the situation demands.

7.3 Contextual–Transformational Approach (Environmental Responsiveness)

This school emphasizes the fluidity of roles depending on task nature, team dynamics, and environmental complexity. Influential models include:

- **Situational Leadership (Hersey & Blanchard)**, which proposes that effective leaders adjust their behavior based on team maturity and task demands.
- **Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985)**, which frames leadership as a process of inspiring and motivating followers toward strategic change.

While this perspective emphasizes adaptability, it does not offer a cohesive structural model for practical application.

7.4 Arab Contributions to Understanding Leadership–Management Relations

Despite the scarcity of original frameworks in Arab contexts, emerging scholarly contributions have begun to address this gap. Key trends include:

- **The Cultural–Administrative Perspective**, which emphasizes the need to understand leadership within Arab social and value systems (Al-Assaf, 2006; Mar'i, 2015).
- **The Balanced Institutional Perspective**, which highlights the importance of harmonizing managerial rigor with human-centered leadership under rigid administrative structures.

There remains a pressing need for an **original Arab-rooted model** that integrates theory and practice and reflects the complexities of regional organizational dynamics.

7.5 Core Conceptual Constructs in the Study

This study draws upon five foundational concepts that form the basis of the proposed model:

Leadership

Leadership is the capacity to develop a future vision, mobilize people toward it, and guide them through strategic influence and inspiration. As Northouse (2021) defines it:

"Leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."

Bass & Avolio (1994) emphasize behaviors such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration as critical to effective leadership. Zhang, H. and Ye, M. (2016)

Management

Management refers to the structured pursuit of organizational goals through planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Mintzberg (2009) describes management as a network of roles involving decision-making, coordination, and navigating institutional complexity. Kotter (1996) adds that management is about preserving operational stability and implementing short-term plans.

Conceptual Model

A conceptual model is a theoretical structure used to understand or interpret complex phenomena by synthesizing key concepts into a unified analytical framework. According to Whetten (1989), it: *"Consists of related constructs that describe and explain phenomena while proposing potential relationships among them."*

In this study, the model serves as an interpretive matrix to analyze the dynamic interaction between leadership, management, vision, and execution.

The Leadership–Management Compass

This is a four-quadrant integrative framework structured around two primary axes:

- **Horizontal Axis (Leadership ↔ Management):** Measures behavioral and functional balance between inspirational leadership and procedural administration.
- **Vertical Axis (Vision ↔ Execution):** Reflects the continuum from strategic thinking to daily operational implementation.

The model is informed by Yukl's (2013) integrative theory, as well as Goleman et al.'s (2013) emotional intelligence model.

Professional Positioning

This refers to the behavioral placement of individuals or teams within the Compass matrix, depending on their emphasis on vision vs. execution and leadership vs. management. It enables performance mapping, development planning, and diagnostic classification of functional roles.

8. The Proposed Model: The Leadership–Management Compass

8.1 Epistemological Background of the Model

The need for the Leadership–Management Compass Model arises from a dual gap evident in both theoretical literature and contemporary organizational practice:

- On one hand, leadership and management are often addressed in separate conceptual silos, despite their strong functional overlap.
- On the other, organizations lack diagnostic tools capable of analyzing an individual's professional–behavioral positioning in terms of balance between execution and strategic leadership.

Thus, the model seeks to integrate theoretical, analytical, and behavioral dimensions into a unified conceptual framework that enables a deeper understanding and practical analysis of both individual and institutional roles.

8.2 Model Components

The Leadership–Management Compass is structured as a four-quadrant matrix defined by two intersecting axes:

A. Horizontal Axis: Leadership ↔ Management
This axis reflects behavioral orientation:

- Does the individual exhibit influence, inspiration, and motivation? (Leadership)
- Or do they emphasize structure, control, and monitoring? (Management)

It draws on the debate between Kotter—who associates leadership with change—and Yukl—who views both leadership and management as context-dependent functions.

B. Vertical Axis: Vision ↔ Execution
This axis highlights the cognitive–operational orientation:

- Is the individual capable of crafting strategic visions? (Vision)
- Or are they more skilled at implementing plans and overseeing tasks? (Execution)

This dimension reflects both strategic and operational thinking, acknowledging that some leaders have vision without execution capabilities, and vice versa.

8.3 Behavioral Matrix of the Model (Positioning Patterns)

The intersection of the two axes produces four primary behavioral–functional profiles:

Table No. (1) Intersection points of the model axes

Type	Description	Key Attributes	Potential Risks
Visionary Leader	High leadership + strong vision	Creativity, inspiration, innovation	Weak in execution; overly ambitious

Executive Leader	Balanced leadership and execution	Strategic governance, agility	Role overload; risk of burnout
Structured Manager	Strong management + high execution	Discipline, clarity, efficiency	Resistance to change; low flexibility
Bureaucratic Admin	Strong management + weak vision	Procedural rigor, stability	Lack of innovation; rigid mindset

*Source; prepared by the researcher

* Hybrid forms may also emerge (e.g., "the Innovative Organizer" or "the Hesitant Leader") depending on the cultural and organizational context.

8.4 Applications and Practical Uses of the Model

The Compass is not only an analytical tool but a flexible instrument applicable in several domains:

A. Diagnosing Leadership–Management Behavior

- Use structured interviews or surveys to identify an individual's position on the Compass.
- Detect gaps between perceived and actual roles.

B. Organizational and Team Restructuring

- Align role distribution based on actual behavioral positioning.
- Avoid redundancy (e.g., three Bureaucratic Managers and no Visionary Leader).

C. Designing Targeted Leadership Development Programs

- Those in the "Structured Manager" quadrant can be trained in visioning.
- "Visionary Leaders" can be coached in operational follow-through.

D. Assessing Institutional Readiness for Change

- Organizations lacking "Executive Leaders" may struggle with transformation.
- Bureaucracy-heavy systems may need external creativity injections.

8.5 Key Features of the Model

- A. **Flexibility:** Individuals may move across quadrants depending on role evolution and context.
- B. **Integration:** It links theory (vision) with practice (execution).
- C. **Realism:** It builds on frameworks validated in global literature.
- D. **Measurability:** It can support the development of quantitative or qualitative tools.

8.6 Comparative Positioning Among Global Models

Table No. (2) Comparative Positioning Among Global Models

Feature/Model	Leadership– Management Compass	Transformational Leadership	Situational Leadership	Managerial Roles (Mintzberg)
Vision and Leadership	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Execution and Application	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Contextual Flexibility	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Measurability	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓

Source; prepared by the researcher

* This demonstrates the model's broader analytical and practical scope compared to many established frameworks.

9. Behavioral Pattern Analysis within the Leadership–Management Compass Model

9.1 Analytical Introduction

Modern organizational environments are increasingly complex, with a growing overlap between leadership and managerial roles, making it difficult to draw a clear line between them in practice. While leadership is often associated with vision and influence, and management with structure and execution, individuals within organizations rarely operate strictly within one domain. Instead, they shift between roles depending on context, task, and their personal and professional attributes.

Traditional models tend to view these roles linearly or categorically. In contrast, the Leadership–Management Compass introduces an integrative and analytical framework that merges four intersecting dimensions into a behavioral–functional matrix. This matrix serves as a tool for diagnosing leadership–managerial positioning within institutions and interpreting individual performance patterns accordingly.

9.2 Core Axes of Behavioral Analysis

The Compass Model is built upon two central behavioral axes:

- A. Horizontal Axis: Leadership ↔ Management**
This dimension captures the individual's orientation toward either:
- Inspirational, visionary, and empowering behaviors (Leadership), or
 - Structuring, monitoring, and operational control (Management).
- B. Vertical Axis: Vision ↔ Execution**
This dimension reflects the degree to which an individual:
- Generates strategic foresight and innovation (Vision), or
 - Translates plans into action with consistent oversight (Execution).

9.3 The Four Core Behavioral Types

The intersection of the axes generates four principal behavioral patterns, each with strategic implications for organizational leadership and development:

A. Visionary Leader

*** Positioning:** High leadership + high vision; low execution and management

*** Description:**

Possesses a compelling vision, strategic imagination, and transformational awareness, but may lack executional discipline and attention to operational detail.

*** Strengths:**

- Capable of shaping long-term strategic direction
- Builds an organization-wide culture of meaning and purpose

*** Weaknesses:**

- Difficulty with follow-through and day-to-day management
- Relies heavily on others to operationalize vision

*** Ideal Settings:**

Early-stage ventures, periods of transformational change, or strategic planning functions.

B. Executive Leader

*** Positioning:** Balanced across leadership, vision, execution, and management

Description:

A flexible figure with high leadership proficiency who bridges strategic vision and practical implementation.

*** Strengths:**

- Combines inspiration with results
- Adapts readily to evolving organizational needs

*** Weaknesses:**

- Risk of psychological overload due to role multiplicity
- May overestimate own capacity without external evaluation

*** Ideal Settings:**

Multidisciplinary teams, dynamic senior leadership roles, or growth-stage organizations.

C. Structured Manager

*** Positioning:** High in management and execution; low in vision and leadership

*** Description:**

Detail-oriented and systematic, prefers stability and avoids unplanned change.

*** Strengths:**

- Ideal for routine operations and compliance functions
- Strong with procedures and hierarchical systems

*** Weaknesses:**

- Resistant to innovation or strategic shifts
- Limited emotional engagement or inspirational capacity

*** Ideal Settings:**

Operations departments, HR administration, legal and regulatory roles.

D. Bureaucratic Administrator

*** Positioning:** Very high in management and execution; minimal vision and leadership

*** Description:**

Enforces rules and authority rigidly; uses formal procedures more as control mechanisms than developmental tools.

*** Strengths:**

- Effective in environments requiring strict order and control

*** Weaknesses:**

- Stifles creativity and initiative
- Minimizes human interaction, leading to mechanical institutional behavior

*** Ideal Settings:**

Conventional bureaucracies, crisis compliance operations, or security-intensive contexts.

9.4 Hybrid Patterns

The model assumes that behavioral positioning is fluid and evolves with organizational context, task nature, and individual maturity. As such, hybrid patterns emerge, including:

- **The Dreamer Leader:** Visionary without execution
- **The Inspirational Manager:** Structured yet motivational
- **The Analytical Leader:** Combines depth, vision, and operational discipline

9.5 Cross-Dimensional Behavioral Attributes

Table No. (3) Cross-Dimensional Behavioral Attributes

Behavioral Dimension	Visionary Leader	Executive Leader	Structured Manager	Bureaucratic Administrator
Flexibility	High	Very High	Medium	Very Low
Initiative	Very High	High	Low	Near None
Communication	Participatory / Inspirational	Strategic	Formal / Directive	Hierarchical / Command-based
Motivation	Symbolic / Vision-based	Targeted / Practical	Functional	Absent

Source; prepared by the researcher

9.6 Scientific and Practical Value of the Model

- Enables measurement of individual and team behavioral–professional positioning
- Serves as a diagnostic and developmental tool in recruitment, training, and restructuring
- Provides a foundation for future empirical studies on performance, satisfaction, transformational leadership, and organizational effectiveness

10. Theoretical Foundations of the Leadership–Management Compass Model

The Leadership–Management Compass Model is grounded in a multi-layered theoretical integration that draws on four foundational intellectual frameworks. These were selected for their high explanatory power in describing organizational role realities and their broad presence in contemporary literature:

10.1 Mintzberg’s Managerial Roles Theory

Henry Mintzberg (1973, 2009) introduced one of the most realistic models for understanding the managerial role, rejecting the simplification of management into classical functions. Instead, he proposed ten managerial roles, grouped into three categories:

- **Interpersonal Roles:** Figurehead, leader, liaison
- **Informational Roles:** Monitor, disseminator, spokesperson
- **Decisional Roles:** Entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator

❖ Relevance to the Proposed Model:

Mintzberg’s roles reveal that managers are not merely executors but also leaders when they inspire their teams, and influencers when they negotiate or initiate change. The Compass reinterprets these roles across the leadership–management and vision–execution axes, positioning individuals based on behavioral role integration rather than fixed job titles.

10.2 Transformational Leadership Theory – Bass & Avolio

This theory, among the most influential in modern leadership studies, posits that effective leaders go beyond routine management and bring about transformative cultural and behavioral change. According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders demonstrate:

- **Charisma (Idealized Influence)**
- **Inspiration (Motivational Encouragement)**
- **Individualized Consideration (Support for Development)**
- **Intellectual Stimulation (Encouraging Innovation and Critical Thinking)**

❖ **Relevance to the Proposed Model:**

This framework underpins the “Visionary Leader” quadrant in the Compass, characterized by strong vision and influence but potentially weak in execution. The Compass not only captures this behavioral profile but also highlights its risks if not balanced with operational capabilities.

10.3 Emotional Intelligence and Leadership – Goleman et al.

Daniel Goleman (2013) emphasized that leadership effectiveness stems not only from cognitive and strategic skills but also from emotional and relational intelligence. Key dimensions include:

- **Self-awareness**
- **Self-regulation**
- **Internal motivation**
- **Empathy**
- **Social skills**

❖ **Relevance to the Proposed Model:**

The Compass assumes that professional positioning is shaped not only by task execution but also by emotional and interpersonal competence. The “Executive Leader” quadrant, for example, represents a profile that balances emotional influence with operational excellence—mirroring Goleman’s emotionally intelligent leader.

10.4 Flexible & Contingency Leadership Theory – Gary Yukl

Gary Yukl argued that effective leadership is context-dependent rather than fixed. Success requires adapting behaviors and decisions based on environmental, team, and task variables. He proposed a balanced leadership model integrating:

- **Task-oriented behavior**
- **Relation-oriented behavior**
- **Change-oriented behavior**

❖ **Relevance to the Proposed Model:**

The Compass embodies this idea by enabling movement across quadrants rather than confining individuals to a single static type. In crisis contexts, individuals may shift toward the “Executive Leader” role, while in innovation phases they may lean toward the “Visionary Leader.”

10.5 Theoretical Integration Summary

The Leadership–Management Compass combines:

- **Mintzberg’s role precision**
- **Bass & Avolio’s transformational depth**
- **Goleman’s emotional–relational intelligence**
- **Yukl’s contextual adaptability**

This synthesis gives the Compass a theoretical advantage and high applicability, surpassing many traditional models that treat leadership and management as isolated constructs.

11. Conclusion and Research Recommendations

11.1 Conclusion

This study was developed in response to a growing academic and practical need for a conceptual framework capable of bridging the persistent gap between leadership and management, and capturing the complex interplay of organizational actor roles in dynamic environments.

The proposed **Leadership–Management Compass Model** is introduced as an integrative and analytical framework that enables the understanding of individuals' behavioral–functional positioning. It is structured around a four-quadrant matrix that merges the dimensions of leadership, management, vision, and execution.

The behavioral patterns derived from the model's axes were shown to accurately reflect real professional dynamics within organizations. Furthermore, the model presents versatile applications in areas such as diagnosis, training, development, performance evaluation, and organizational restructuring.

Additionally, the model demonstrated superiority in its flexibility, measurability, and the coherence of its theoretical foundations with real-world institutional applications.

11.2 Research Recommendations

Based on the theoretical and analytical findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

(1) Theoretical Recommendations:

- Deepen scholarly exploration of the leadership–management interface by conducting comparative studies between the Compass Model and established leadership frameworks.
- Develop a comprehensive theory of professional–behavioral positioning based on empirical applications of the Compass across varied organizational contexts.
- Integrate cultural and contextual dimensions (Arab/Western) into the study of leadership–management patterns, particularly in transitional environments.

(2) *Practical Recommendations:*

- Utilize the Compass Model as a strategic tool in selecting organizational leaders, especially for mid- and senior-level roles.
- Employ the four-quadrant matrix to design tailored training and professional development programs aligned with individuals' behavioral positioning.
- Apply the model in assessing institutional readiness for digital or administrative transformation.
- Develop quantitative and qualitative tools to measure positioning, such as self-assessment surveys, behavioral interviews, and performance metrics derived from the model.

(3) *Future Research Directions:*

- Conduct field-based experimental studies to evaluate the model's effectiveness across diverse Arab settings (public sector, private enterprises, NGOs).
- Test the relationship between Compass positioning and organizational performance indicators such as job satisfaction, productivity, and innovation.
- Establish a regional database of leadership–management positioning profiles for organizational leaders, to support succession planning and strategic assessment efforts.

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