

The Characteristics of Female Leaders and Strategies to Enhance Their Leadership

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Abstract: *With the increasing number of female leaders in modern society and the gradual improvement of women's status in various fields of society, the gender of leaders has been paid more and more attention by society, so the leadership of female leaders has also become a hot topic in management circles. The existence of female leaders also has a positive impact on management in various fields. However, at present, we can see that there are few female leaders, and there are still many difficulties in improving and developing their leadership. We should solve these problems in a scientific and effective way to improve their leadership. This paper will analyze the characteristics of leaders and the strategies to improve leadership ability.*

Keywords: *Women leaders; Characteristic; Leadership; Strategy*

1. Introduction

With the improvement of women's status in society and the increasing attention paid to women leaders, women leaders play a very important role in today's society. With the gradual improvement of the status and number of women in the workplace, it is of great significance to study the characteristics of female leaders and strategies to improve their leadership for promoting gender equality and the diversity of social leaders. The improvement of women's leadership has a profound impact not only on individuals, but also on organizations and society. At this new historical moment, we need more understanding and exploration in order to promote the development of women's leadership and realize a more equal and inclusive societies.

2. Development status of female leadership and literature review

2.1 The status quo of female leadership development

With the continuous improvement of women's social status, the present situation of women's leadership development is also constantly improving and evolving. In the past decades, more and more women have held leading positions in various fields, including government, enterprises and social organizations. Nevertheless, women still face some difficulties in leadership positions. There is still plenty of room for improvement. For example, the report of UN-Women shows that in 2021, only women in 24 countries around the world will be heads of state or government. In 2021, only 23 women will become the leaders in Fortune Global 500 enterprises, and the proportion of women holding leadership or management positions in organizations is far lower than that of men^[1]. In addition, traditional gender stereotypes, online media and gender prejudice may also affect women's access to and retention in leadership positions. However, more and more research shows that women leaders have unique characteristics and advantages. They usually pay more attention to teamwork, listening to other people's voices, cultivate talents and promote diversification. These qualities can bring innovation and success to the organization. Generally speaking, the development of female leadership is developing in a more equal and diversified direction, which is very important for the sustainable development of organizations and society.

2.2 Literature review on the development of female leadership

The literature review of women's leadership shows that researchers have discussed and analyzed the performance and characteristics of women in leadership positions widely. On the one hand, some studies show that female leaders show different characteristics from male leaders in some respects.

Female leaders often pay more attention to interpersonal relationships and employee development, and are better at communicating and expressing their inner thoughts. They usually have more empathy advantages, pay attention to the common goals of the team, and tend to adopt an employee-participatory leadership style. On the other hand, some studies have found that there is no significant difference in women's performance in leadership. This shows that personal leadership style and characteristics may be influenced by many factors, not only gender factors, but also the balance between family and work and their own factors. In addition, the study pointed out that although the challenges and difficulties faced by women in leadership positions still exist, the support and encouragement provided by organizations, society and families and the opportunities provided are crucial to the development of women leaders. Some organizations have implemented gender equality policies and measures to encourage women to take leadership positions and provide equal training and development opportunities. Scholars at home and abroad have studied the existence and value of female leadership, the differences between gender leadership styles, the development paths and obstacles of female leadership, the development of female leadership and other issues, which greatly promoted the process of female leadership research^[2].

To sum up, the literature review of women's leadership shows that women have unique characteristics and performances in leadership positions, but they also need the support.

3. Leadership related concepts

3.1 Summary of the leaders

On the concept of leadership, scholars from different walks of life have different definitions from different angles. To sum up, there are three representative concepts as follows. First, from the perspective of behavior, scholar Terry defines leadership as: "leadership is a behavioral process that affects people's efforts to actively accomplish the common goals of the group." Scholar Stoddard defines leadership as: "leadership is the process of influencing the activities of a newly organized team to set goals and achieve goals." Second, from the perspective of influence, scholar Tannambaum's definition of leadership is: "leadership is under certain conditions, through the process of exchange of ideas to achieve a certain goal of influence." Third, from the perspective of power, scholar Du Ping defines leadership as "the exercise of authority and decision-making", scholar Ke Yang defines leadership as "a form of government in which a person's subordinates are more or less willing to accept the guidance and control of their superiors", and scholar Frank defines leadership as "the control that a person has and exerts on others"^[3].

To sum up, leadership refers to the process of directing and influencing individuals or organizations to achieve a certain common goal under certain conditions. The essence of its leadership is an interactive process of interaction between people.

3.2 Overview of leaders

A leader refers to a person who is in a certain leadership position, has certain leadership powers, assumes certain leadership responsibilities and performs certain leadership functions in an organization. One is a person who have leadership and influence in an organization, team or society. The second kind is a person who can influence others and has management authority. The third is the process of leading and influencing a group to achieve its goals. Leadership is not necessarily managers, and informal leadership is often produced in organizations.

3.3 An Overview of female leaders

Female leaders refer to women who hold leading positions in the organization. They are different from male leaders in their leadership style and behavior, and they have some unique characteristics and advantages. Female leaders focus on democratic participation and teamwork, emphasize the feelings and needs of employees, and are more good at listening and communicating. When getting along with colleagues, they usually take a softer and more approachable way to better understand the needs and expectations of team members. At the same time, when faced with difficulties and challenges, women leaders are often more persistent and determined, able to adhere to their goals and beliefs, and lead the team to success. In addition, they usually listen to other people's opinions and suggestions in order to better understand the needs and expectations of the team, have a strong sense of sacrifice, and pay more

for the team and the organization. Therefore, female leaders play an important role in the organization and have a positive influence on the success and development of the organization.

4. The theoretical Definition of female leaders

4.1 The Theory of Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership refers to leaders who are full of confidence and trust in their subordinates, has high expectations for their subordinates, and have ideal vision and a personalized style.

The characteristics of charismatic leaders include: Charismatic leaders have clear goals and pass them on to their subordinates so that everyone has a common vision and goals. The second is that charismatic leaders have great confidence in themselves, which can inspire the confidence of their subordinates and make everyone believes that their abilities and goals can be achieved. Thirdly, charismatic leaders can make a grand vision for the organization, make subordinates accept and agree with this vision, and work together in this direction. Charismatic leadership refers to leaders who are full of confidence and trust in their subordinates, has high expectations for their subordinates, and have ideal vision and a personalized style. Fourthly, charismatic leaders understand the needs and abilities of their subordinates, and pay attention to personalized management according to their needs and characteristics, so that everyone can give full play to their advantages.

4.2 "Glass Ceiling" theory

The glass ceiling theory refers to that the career choices and job promotions of women and non-whites are blocked by a layer of glass because of gender or racial differences, which is beyond reach. This theory first appeared in the column of "Corporate Women" in The Wall Street Journal in 1986, and then published a series of articles about gender discrimination in the workplace, which aroused widespread concern and discussion in the society. The glass ceiling basically means that women or minorities can not be promoted to the top leaders of enterprises or organizations not because of their limited ability or lack of experience, and not because they do not want the position, but because some managers set up an existing but difficult to see obstacle for women and minorities in terms of promotion^[4].

4.3 The Theory of leadership traits

The so-called characteristics refer to the description of personality characteristics. The theory of leadership traits is often called the great man theory. It was popular before the 1940s, and it was the first attempt to systematically study leadership activities and behaviors. The main representatives of theoretical research on leadership characteristics are Gilbert, Stowe Goedert and Giselle. There are two schools of leadership trait theory: Traditional trait theory: leaders who hold a certain position in the team have some inherent traits. It is by relying on these innate characteristics that they have achieved success, which is somewhat similar to the bloodline in Naruto. Modern trait theory: the theory that the leadership traits are acquired, there will always be some ordinary little people who are promoted in the silent struggle. After a long period of continuous struggle and study, hard work and adaptation to the environment, they will stand out in a certain practice process and become remarkable leaders. Their success is inseparable from the growth and training process acquired.

4.4 Gender social role theory

According to the theory of gender social role, the differences of psychological characteristics between men and women is formed by long-term differences of social division of labor, which is strengthened by daily social communication (Eagly, 1987)^[5]. According to the theory of gender society, the gender differences in social behavior stems from the division of labor between the sexes determined by society, which affects the difference in gender role expectations and gender development skills. In addition, the gender social roles theory also advocates that people can realize the division of labor by seeing men and women play different social roles in practice. This division of labor is directly influenced by traditional ideas, the current data age, gender stereotypes and gender differences cognitive prejudice. The gender stereotype is a derivative of gender social role theory and gender role concept, which reflects people's fixed cognition of the two sexes in daily life.

5. Characteristics of female leaders

First, female leaders usually pay attention to interpersonal relationships and communication. They tend to establish good interpersonal relationships and are good at listening to and understanding the needs and suggestions of others, which gives them an advantage in coordinating relationships between team members, resolving conflicts and effectively communicating with superiors, colleagues and customers. They can create an open environment, encourage employees to share their views and opinions, and build a good team atmosphere.

Secondly, female leaders tend to have higher adaptability and resilience. In the face of challenges and pressures, they can maintain an optimistic and positive attitude and solve problems through flexibility and creativity. Female leaders can often find opportunities from difficulties, quickly adapt to changing environment and lead teams to meet challenges together.

Finally, women leaders usually have keen insight and foresight. They can look at problems from multiple angles, identify opportunities and challenges, and make wise decisions. Female leaders usually have a strong ability to analyze and synthesize information, which enables them to make accurate judgments and formulate effective strategies. In addition, women leaders tend to focus on employee development and well-being. They tend to adopt a cooperative and empowering leadership style, encourage team members to develop their potential, and provide development opportunities and support for employees. Female leaders can usually create a positive working environment, help employees achieve work-life balance and promote their professional growth. Meanwhile, women leaders often have high professional ethics and ethical standards. They pay attention to justice, honesty and responsibility, and have a high sense of responsibility for their employees and business. Female leaders suggest establishing a good corporate culture and promoting the sustainable development of the organization. In a modern society, gender should not be the only determinant of a person's suitability for leadership positions. What is important is to encourage and provide opportunities for people with the potential and ability (regardless of gender) to benefit from gender-differentiated leadership, and to gain broader and continuous thinking by promoting diversity and inclusiveness.

6. The dilemma of Improving the leadership of female leaders

6.1 Gender Stereotype and Cognitive Bias of Leadership

First of all, gender stereotypes and society's inherent knowledge of how men and women should behave form gender stereotypes. Traditionally, men are considered to be more competitive, firm, confident and authoritative, while women are considered to be more compassionate, cooperative and modest. These stereotypes limit women's opportunities to realize their leadership potential and put them at a disadvantage in a competitive workplaces. Secondly, there is a deviation in the cognition of leadership, which makes it easier for people to associate leadership with male characteristics. This prejudice has led to doubts and doubts about female leaders, which makes them face greater difficulties in obtaining leadership positions and recognition. Female leadership may be questioned as inadequate for senior positions. Third, the dual gender view, the concept that there are inherent differences between men and women, is called the dual gender view. This idea holds that men and women are born with different characteristics and abilities, which limits and questions women's leadership roles. The gender dichotomy leads people to think that women should play a role in the family and care for others, rather than playing a leading roles in business or politics. Finally, these factors have brought many difficulties and obstacles to female leaders, but at the same time, they have also prompted society to reflect and change its prejudice against leaders. More and more research and practice have proved that gender does not affect the development and performance of leadership, and women can also have outstanding leadership skills. By breaking gender stereotypes, strengthening gender equality education and training, and promoting inclusive leadership mode, we can gradually eliminate gender stereotypes of leaders and provide more just and equal opportunities for female leaders.

6.2 Public opinion dilemma of mass media

Schramm, a famous American communication scholar, once said, "The mass media is like a pair of huge invisible hands, always hinting, teasing or restricting our daily life" [6]. With the development of economy, society and science and technology, the role of online media in society and people's lives has become increasingly prominent, and women leaders are deeply troubled by the mass media. First of all,

the female images that usually appear in the mass media are often too rigid, such as the traditional gender role orientation such as "women are more suitable for being assistants or secretaries". This stereotype not only restricts the development of women in leadership positions, but also may lead to discrimination and unfair treatment of women in the workplace. At the same time, mass media reports often take the male image as the standard, and put forward stricter expectations and image standards for female leaders. For example, female leaders are required not only to have strong leadership skills, but also to have double standards of family responsibility and social responsibility. This double standard can increase the pressure of female leaders, and even make them attacked and questioned. Second, in the mass media, the number and representation of women leaders are usually insufficient. This makes it difficult for women to get enough role models and examples from the media, thus affecting their leadership skills and self-confidence. At the same time, excessive media attention and gender attacks. When female leaders are paid too much attention in the media, they may be criticized and attacked unnecessarily. Some media may pay too much attention to the appearance, dress, family status and other non-work-related aspects of female leaders, and even distort and belittle them, which will have a negative impact on the image and reputation of female leaders. This will not only affect the performance and improvement of women's leadership, but also affect unity and cohesion within the organization, and ultimately affect the completion of work objectives.

6.3 The dilemma of family and career balance in female leadership

First, time and energy are well distributed. Women leaders usually need to balance time and energy between family and work. Family responsibilities, such as taking care of children and dealing with housework, may limit their working time and energy, and affect their performance and development in their careers. At the same time, it takes a lot of time and energy to pursue the peak of your career, which may also affect the quality of family life. This conflict in the distribution of time and energy may have a negative impact on the career of women leaders.

The second is career development and family stability. In the process of pursuing professional development, female leaders may face the problem of family stability. The pressure of balancing family and career is a dilemma for women leaders to grow up. How to balance family and career development is a difficult problem for every professional woman^[7]. Because the balance between work and family may be difficult to grasp, it may lead to family conflicts, family alienation and other issues. At the same time, due to fierce competition, the pressure of career development will also make it difficult for female leaders to take care of family and work. Traditionally, women are expected to play a more important role in the family, while men are expected to make greater achievements in their careers. This concept may lead to the conflicts between career expectations and family expectations of female leaders. If they fail to meet this expectation, they may be subjected to unfair judgement and criticism.

Finally, social concepts and gender prejudices, gender prejudices and stereotypes of female leaders still exist in society. Some people think that female leaders are not as good as men in leadership, or that women should pay more attention to their family than their career. These concepts can lead to unfair treatment and limited opportunity for female leaders in the workplace. Compared with male leaders, female leaders have a great disadvantage, which are obviously not conducive to their career and future prosperity and development.

6.4 The Dilemma of Self-factors on Female Leadership

The improvement of women's leadership is influenced by their own factors besides the difficulties of traditional ideology, mass media, family and so on. Although women have many innate advantages in leadership, such as good communication, strong insight, adaptability and adaptability, they also have prominent gender weaknesses, including: being too emotional, female leaders may pay more attention to emotion and intuition when dealing with problems, and lack rational analysis and decision-making ability. Without determination, women leaders may be more hesitant and uncertain. Lack of self-confidence female leaders lack self - confidence, and are not confident enough in their own abilities and judgments, so they are more inclined to seek advice and support from others in decision-making. Paying too much attention to details, female leaders are more likely to pay attention to details and trivial matters, which makes it easy to ignore the overall situation and the overall situation. Pay more attention to mood and influence. Female leaders are more easily influenced by emotions, thus affecting their own decision-making judgment. And the role conflict they face, such as the role conflict between wife and mother: female leaders usually play the role of wife and mother in family life, which will make women face conflicts between work and family. Therefore, female leaders need to coordinate and

balance their work and family, so as to give full play to their potential and provide adequate support and care for their family. Role conflict between organization members and leaders: Female leaders may have role conflicts as organization members and leaders. As members of the organization, women need to take an active part in their work and abide by the rules and expectations of the organization. As leaders, they need to guide the team, make plans and ensure the completion of the team's objectives. It can be challenging to coordinate and balance these two roles. Conflict of roles between assistants and decision makers: Female leaders also play the role of assistants in their work, helping their superiors to make plans. However, when women become leaders, they need to be decision makers, making plans and developing directions for the organization. This role change can be challenging for female leaders, because women need to adapt to different work styles and responsibilities. These role conflicts will make it difficult for women to improve their leadership, thus restricting women's progress and all-round development in society.

7. Leadership Strategies of women leaders

7.1 Raise people's awareness of gender stereotypes and cognitive bias of leaders

First of all, starting with school education, we need to emphasize the importance of gender equality and pluralism. Introduce more representative role models into teaching materials and courses to break the traditional gender role orientation. In addition, teachers should actively promote gender equality and the development of leadership. At the same time, in our work, we need to change our culture by advocating the values of equality, respect and tolerance. Organizations should encourage employees to transcend traditional gender roles and provide equal opportunities and promotion space for all. In addition, it can help employees develop their leadership skills by providing training and guidance.

Secondly, through the media, social platforms and public activities, people's understanding of gender stereotypes and cognitive bias of leadership will be increased. Share examples of successful female and male leaders, and prove that gender should not limit the possibility of personal development. At the same time, it is emphasized that leadership is related to individual ability, experience and teamwork, not to a single gender.

Establish diversified networks, encourage people to contact people of different genders, backgrounds and cultures, and broaden their horizons. Establishing contact with different groups by participating in community activities, joining professional organizations or participating in social networks can help to eliminate gender-specific stereotypes. Meanwhile, women should be supported and encouraged to pursue leadership positions with confidence. They are provided with training, counselling and guidance to help them overcome obstacles and realize their potential.

Finally, everyone is encouraged to reflect on their ideas and prejudices and engage in equal dialogue. Try to avoid using gender stereotypes or making assumptions when communicating with others. Listen to different opinions actively and treat others with tolerance and understanding. At the same time, academic and business circles can cooperate to study the relationship between gender and leadership, so as to provide objective data and insights. These findings are helpful to change prejudices against gender stereotypes and leadership cognition, and provide practical suggestions.

7.2 Solving the Public Opinion Dilemma of Female Leadership in Mass Media

First of all, to strengthen the awareness of gender equality, the mass media should actively publicize gender equality, acknowledge the important role and value of women in society, and encourage and support women to participate in the competition for leadership positions. When reporting to the media, more attention should be paid to the achievements of women leaders and their contributions to society rather than to their physical appearance, gender identity or other non-skill factors. Different concerns should be promoted, and female leaders from different backgrounds, occupations and fields should be reported to show the diversity of female leaders. And encourage and support more women to participate in leadership positions by shaping positive, positive and successful images of female leaders. Actively guide public opinion, and the media will guide the public to realize the role and value of women leaders by reporting real cases of women leaders.

Secondly, the mass media should encourage the public to think critically about gender roles, gender discrimination and gender stereotypes, so as to eliminate gender discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes about female leaders. In order to improve public literacy, the mass media should enhance

the public's understanding and acceptance of female leaders through education and publicity, and reduce discrimination and prejudice against them.

Finally, to solve the public opinion dilemma faced by female leaders in the mass media, we need the joint efforts and support of the whole society, including the media, enterprises, organizations and all aspects of society should take active actions to break the traditional gender concepts and stereotypes, provide more opportunities and equal treatment for female leaders, and create a more favorable environment for women's equal development in society and the workplace.

7.3 Coordinate and Balancing the relationship between family and career, so as to enhance female leadership

For female leaders, it is a challenging task to balance family and career, but it is also one of the important ways to improve their leadership. First of all, to set priority goals, female leaders should make clear their career and family goals and set priorities. This will help them make the most effective decisions in a limited time and better balance their family and career. It is also necessary to arrange time reasonably, arrange work and life time reasonably, and ensure that there is enough time and energy to deal with important affairs at home and at work. At the same time, female leaders should learn to allocate time and energy reasonably to achieve a balance between them. Secondly, establish a support network. Women leaders should establish a support network with their family, friends and colleagues so as to get help and support when needed. This will help to lighten their burden and enables them to better balance their family and career. At the same time, it is also necessary to maintain good communication and expression with family, friends and colleagues so as to better understand and solve family and work problems. This will help to relieve their pressure and improve their leadership ability.

Finally, active self-adjustment is needed to adapt to the changing working and living environment. In order to better balance family and career and enhance leadership. Seek professional help if necessary, such as psychological counseling or career counseling, to help female leaders better deal with the challenges between family and career, so as to enhance female leadership.

7.4 Women's Self-improvement of Leadership

First, women leaders need to have a clear understanding and reflection on themselves. Female leaders need to deeply understand their values, strengths and weaknesses, realize their emotions and cognitive prejudices, and strive to overcome these prejudices. At the same time, you should seriously think about your career development goals, make clear your leadership ideas and vision, and make specific action plans. We should actively seek and establish support networks for online media, including family members, friends, colleagues and other female leaders. These supporters can provide emotional support and suggestions to help female leaders overcome difficulties and challenges. They can also provide opportunities and resources to help female leaders develop their leadership, and constantly improve their leadership skills and self-confidence through study and practice. This includes studying leadership theory, attending leadership training courses, seeking guidance from tutors and participating in practical projects. Secondly, to improve one's professional knowledge, besides learning related knowledge of psychology and management, one also needs to improve one's emotional intelligence, communication, expression and persuasion skills, and improve one's leadership skills [8]. Female leaders pay attention to self-improvement and constantly learn and master new skills to adapt to the changing working environment. At the same time, advocate gender equality, and pay attention to and supports the development and growth of other female leaders. This can be achieved by joining women leaders' organizations, supporting women leaders' projects, making speeches and writing articles. Only by promoting gender equality can we truly improve women's leadership.

Finally, female leaders should not regard men as competitors or enemies, but actively establish cooperative relations with men. Through communication and cooperation with male leaders, female leaders can better understand men's ways of thinking and behavior, thus better coping with the influence of gender stereotypes. We must stick to our principles and values, and don't give up our positions and beliefs in order to cater to the views of the media or the expectations of others. At the same time, women leaders should also show their own leadership style and characteristics. They should not pursue perfection, nor should they cater to others excessively. Instead, they should actively use their strengths and specialties to achieve their professional goals and social

8. Conclusions

Women leaders have unique features and advantages. With the continuous development of society, the proportion of women leaders in various fields is increasing. However, in reality, women leaders are confronted with many difficulties and influences in improving their leadership. Therefore, they can not give full play to the advantages and real leadership of female leaders. In order to improve these situations, women leaders need to work harder themselves and take scientific and effective measures with the team to improve their leadership. In the process of improving leadership, not only the society and the organization need to make plans together, but also the female leaders themselves need to make effective adjustments and balance between family and career to improve their leadership ability, and at the same time, establish support networks and continuous learning to continuously improve their leadership. This will help women leaders achieve greater success in their careers, while bringing more contributions to the organization and society.

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