



A Theoretical Perspectives on Women Leadership: Analysis on Free-Rein Leadership Model

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Abstract: In recent years, women's leadership has become increasingly critical for organizational performance. As women take on more prominent roles in various sectors, companies that cultivate female leaders often achieve better financial results and overall performance of organization.

Women in leadership have numerous benefits for organizations and society as a whole. Studies have shown that companies with more women in leadership positions tend to have better financial performance, as well as increased innovation and creativity. Additionally, women in leadership can serve as role models and mentors for other women, helping to break down gender barriers and inspire future generations of female leaders.

A free-rein leadership style can make the subordinates feel more free, positive, confident and motivated. Women also bring a unique perspective of Free-rein Leadership Models, often valuing collaboration, communication, and empathy, which can lead to more inclusive and effective decision-making. Overall, promoting gender diversity in leadership positions is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes good business sense.

Keywords: Women Leadership, organizational performance, Free-rein Model, Laissez-faire Leadership.

1. Introduction

Leadership has traditionally been associated with masculine traits and qualities, but the paradigm is shifting as women assume prominent leadership roles across various sectors. Women's leadership brings a unique perspective, nurturing qualities, and diverse experiences that contribute to the advancement of society. In this essay, we will explore the importance of women's leadership, its impact on different domains, and the transformative potential it holds for our collective future.

Free-rein leadership is a management style in which leaders give their employees a great deal of autonomy and freedom to accomplish tasks without a lot of oversight or direction. This style of leadership allows



employees to use their own creativity and initiative to achieve goals, while also providing them with the support and guidance they need to be successful.

The leader may provide employees with overall objectives, but they are given the freedom to come up with their own solutions and methods of achieving those goals. This management style can be beneficial in allowing employees to feel empowered and in control of their work, leading to higher job satisfaction and improved morale.

A free-rein or laissez-faire (French for "leave it alone") leadership is a management style in which leaders leave most decisions to their subordinates. Under this approach, leaders assign tasks to employees and give them free rein to choose the best way to complete them. This style also means that leaders do not get involved unless asked and subordinates have unlimited freedom provided that they do not violate existing policies of the company.

2. Women Leadership

Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres. Still, women continue to be vastly under-represented in decision-making in politics, businesses, and communities.

Women as leaders and decision-makers at all levels are critical to advancing gender justice and gender equality and to furthering economic, social, and political progress for all. When women are meaningfully represented and engaged in leadership bodies—such as legislatures, courts, executive boards, community councils—laws, rulings, and decisions are more likely to be inclusive, representative, and take diverse views into account.

Women's leadership within households, including decision-making over land and household income, improves access to education and healthcare for their families. Countries with a greater proportion of women as top decision-makers in legislatures have lower levels of income inequality. Peace agreements are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years if women leaders are engaged in its creation and execution. Research suggested that women hold more executive leadership positions, their companies are more profitable: companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 21% more likely to outperform the national average.'



58 **3. Characteristics of Women Leadership**

59 In this section, we have highlighted core characteristic features of women leaders

60 **3.1. Transformational Leadership Style**

61 Women leaders are more transformational than men leaders. They function as a role model for their
62 subordinates. They inspire their team and spend a lot of time coaching their team. They care a lot about their
63 personal development. Women leaders emphasize teamwork and authentic communication as a key to
64 success. For most women leaders, leadership is not meant only for accomplishing organizational goals but
65 for transforming their followers into better people.

66 **3.2. Task-Focused**

67 Women leaders are invariably focused on completion of tasks assigned within deadlines. From an operational
68 point, completing day-to-day tasks are necessary to ensure smooth functioning of the company.

69 **3.3. Prefer to Work in Collegial Atmosphere**

70 Women leaders generally prefer leading and creating flat organizational structures that enables all to work
71 in a collegial atmosphere interpedently. Women leaders usually are critical of hierarchical structure of
72 organization.

73 **3.4. Promote Cooperation and Collaboration**

74 To work in collaboration with others is a typical feminine characteristic. Women leaders always promote
75 cooperation and collaboration amongst the team members. In this case, all the members of the team need to
76 be clear of their roles and responsibilities, otherwise, it results in redundant work.

77 **3.5 Communication Style**

78 Women leaders tend to be participatory and possess a democratic style of leading people. They seem to abhor
79 ‘command and control style’ practiced by male leaders. Women often times indirectly communicate their
80 expectations of a given task and allow more space in accomplishing a goal. It sometimes helps the team
81 members use their skills and expertise to complete the task, however, at other times it can be a drawback if
82 the assigned task requires a leader to have direct communication with the members.

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85 3.6. Self-Branding

86 Unlike their male counterparts, women leaders often appear to be modest or silent about their own
87 accomplishments. They are seldom good at branding themselves. However, it is necessary that women
88 leaders learn how to brand themselves by sharing their achievements and skills with others. Unless people
89 know or notice what they are capable of, they cannot recognize the leadership qualities of a women leader.

90 4. Free-Rein / Laissez-faire Leadership Model

91 Free-Rein or Laissez-faire leadership, also known as “**delegative leadership**”, is a type of leadership style in
92 which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. Researchers have found that this
93 is generally the leadership style that leads to the lowest productivity among group members. In this section,
94 researchers first define the term of Free-Rein leadership model, characteristics, strength, effectiveness and
95 advantages and disadvantages of model. Finally, discussion on women leaders who used free-rein model and
96 made success records.

97 4.1. The Formal Definition

98 The term Free-Rein or *Laissez-faire* is of French origin and translates to “*letting people do as they*
99 *choose.*” This leadership style is the complete opposite of micromanaging. Laissez-faire/ Free-Rein
100 leaders allow their followers to have the autonomy to make their own decisions and manage their own
101 desks.

102 4.2. Core Characteristics of Free-Rein Leadership Model

103 Free-Rein leadership is very distinctive. Below are a few core characteristics of this leadership style:

- 104 • **Effectiveness:** The ability to effectively delegate work.
 - 105 • **Trustworthiness:** A high level of trust in team members.
 - 106 • **Decision Making:** An understanding of when to step in and when to give space.
 - 107 • **Focused Area:** A focus on the big picture instead of the day-to-day.
 - 108 • **Rewards and Incentives:** The capacity to reward good work and create incentives.
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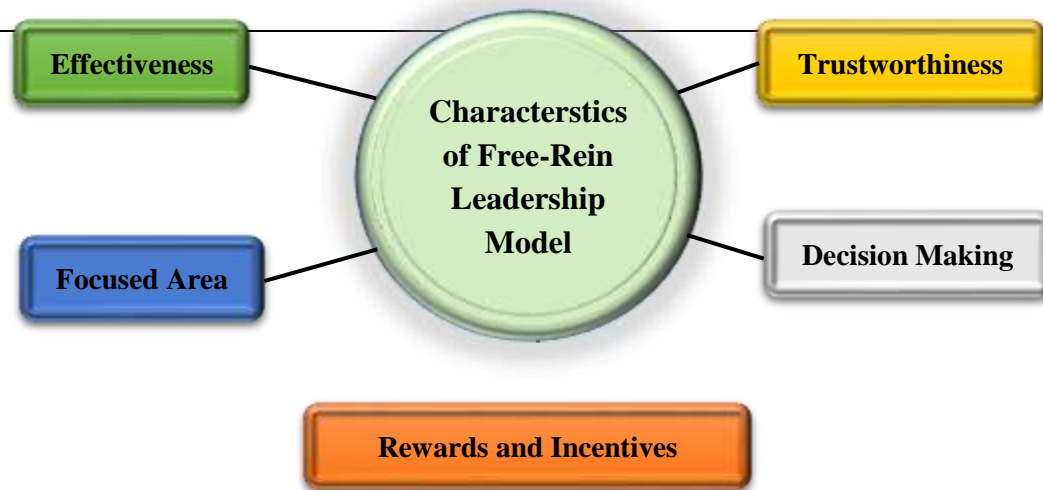


Fig. 1: Characteristics of Free-Rein Leadership Model

4.3. Advantages of Free-Rein Leadership Model

When the Free-Rein leadership style is used in the right setting, there are a lot of benefits towards the organization. Because Free-Rein leadership encourages freedom, team members are more independent, productive, and confident to continue holding their own.

- **Empowerment of Team Members/Individuals:** It Empowers team members or individuals how their leadership skills can used in effective manners.
- **Flexibility:** The flexibility of this leadership style creates a low-pressure environment that fosters innovation, creativity, and collaboration.
- **Accountability:** This leadership style also keeps everyone accountable for their work – team members take responsibility for their own tasks, and the leader is held accountable for the team’s successes and failures.
- **Reliability:** Encourages trust between team members and leader.
- **Independent:** Impart a sense of independence.

4.4. Disadvantages of Free-Rein Leadership Model

- **Productivity Issue:** Can result in low productivity.
- **Conflicts:** It may Conflict amongst team members.
- **Lack of role clarity:** It may lead to confusion about roles and responsibilities.
- **Ineffectiveness:** It may be ineffective with an unskilled or unmotivated team.

4.5. Strengths of Free-Rein Women Leaders

If women leaders have a more free-rein approach to leadership, there are areas and situations where they might tend to do better.



- 143 • **In creative fields:** Working in a creative field where people tend to be highly motivated, skilled,
144 creative, and dedicated to their work can be conducive to obtaining good results with this style.
- 145 • **When working with self-managed teams:** Laissez-faire leaders typically excel at providing
146 information and background at the start of a project, which can be particularly useful for self-managed
147 teams.
- 148 • **During the early stages of a project:** By giving team members all that they need at the outset of an
149 assignment, they will then have the knowledge they need to complete the task as directed.

150 **4.6. Analysis of Women Leadership Effectiveness**

- 151 • **Group performance:** Checking in on group performance.
- 152 • **Feedback:** Giving useful and consistent feedback.
- 153 • **Motivation:** Creating incentives to help increase and maintain motivation.
- 154 • **Role and Responsibilities :** Making sure team members know their roles within the group.

155 **4.7. Situational Analysis of free-rein leadership**

156 Even in situations where a free-rein leadership style may be helpful, such as in a creative field or with self-
157 managed teams, it may pay to utilize a variety of leadership approaches at different phases of the work process.

158 Free-rein leadership may be most effective during the early phases when a product or idea is being
159 brainstormed or created. Once the design is in place and ready for production, however, it may be best to
160 switch to a style that involves more direction and oversight.

- 161 • **Situations where efficiency and high productivity are the main concerns.** Some people are not
162 good at setting their own deadlines, managing their own projects, and solving problems on their own.
163 Under this leadership style, projects can go off-track and deadlines can be missed when team members
164 do not get enough guidance or feedback from leaders.
- 165 • **Situations that require great oversight, precision, and attention to detail.** In high stakes and high-
166 pressure work settings where every detail needs to be perfect and completed in a timely manner, a
167 more authoritarian or managerial style may be more appropriate
- 168 • **People who aren't good at setting deadlines or managing projects.** Using a laissez-faire approach
169 in this type of scenario can lead to missed deadlines and poor performance, particularly if group



170 members are unsure of what they need to be doing or do not have the skills they need to perform tasks
171 with little to no direction.

172 **4.8 Top 5 Free-Rein Women Leaders**

173 Certainly, here five examples of women in leadership roles who have demonstrated free-rein leadership.

- 174 1. **Indra Nooyi:** Indra Nooyi served as the CEO of PepsiCo from 2006 to 2018. She is known for her free-
175 rein leadership style, empowering her teams and encouraging innovation. Nooyi emphasized the
176 importance of diversity and inclusivity, and under her leadership, PepsiCo experienced significant growth.
- 177 2. **Mary Barra:** Mary Barra is the CEO of General Motors, a position she has held since 2014. She is
178 recognized for her free-rein leadership approach, giving her team members autonomy and encouraging
179 them to take risks. Barra is known for fostering a culture of collaboration and open communication within
180 the organization.
- 181 3. **Ursula Burns:** Ursula Burns served as the CEO of Xerox from 2009 to 2016. She is regarded as a free-
182 rein leader, empowering her employees and supporting their innovative ideas. Burns played a significant
183 role in transforming Xerox from a traditional printing company to a diversified technology and services
184 company.
- 185 4. **Sheryl Sandberg:** Sheryl Sandberg is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Facebook and a prominent
186 advocate for women in leadership. She is known for her free-rein leadership style, encouraging autonomy
187 and creativity among her teams. Sandberg is a strong proponent of empowering women in the workplace
188 and has authored the book "Lean In," which addresses gender equality and women's leadership.
- 189 5. **Ginni Rometty:** Ginni Rometty served as the CEO of IBM from 2012 to 2020. She is recognized for her
190 free-rein leadership approach, encouraging her employees to experiment and embrace emerging
191 technologies. Rometty emphasized the importance of continuous learning and led IBM's transformation
192 into a cloud computing and cognitive solutions company.

193 These women have exemplified free-rein leadership by empowering their teams, fostering innovation, and
194 promoting a culture of collaboration and open communication within their organizations.

196 **5. Conclusion**

197 Women's involvement in leadership positions is growing worldwide, and the region is no exception to this
198 trend. Today's organizations are more horizontal and interconnected and changes happen in them faster than
199 before. This is why "*they need collaboration, empathy, sensitivity, and consensus*, which are qualities that are



200 generally associated with women. According to researchers, women who become leaders change their
201 behavior: some of their own characteristics become more marked, and others that had not previously been part
202 of their identity emerge. Their capacity for analysis develops very quickly, as does their ability to make the
203 right decisions. When women have the opportunity to lead an organization for a team, they take it on as a true
204 challenge and focus on the project at hand.

205 Free-rein leadership model is a management style in which leaders give their employees a great deal of
206 autonomy and freedom to accomplish tasks without a lot of oversight or direction.

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