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Leading Change Without Formal Authority: The ICC Model for the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Change seems to be a constant feature of the 21st century workplace. Successful organisations embrace change and make sure the personnel are valued, and that they remain engaged and motivated. Employers do not require to formally be in charge of a group of people to be called leader, but demonstrating leadership is an important feature for employees at every level of an organization. Women face a diverse range of difficulties in today's workplace, and therefore this study aims to focus on the phenomenon of leading change without formal authority and develop a model for women to bring about change within their working climate. This conceptual research aims to identify novel connections between the concepts of leadership and feminism and in consideration of the features of the 21st century workplace. Reviewing the relevant literature particularly around the leadership qualities (drive, motivation, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business) this study proposes dedication, political skill and sincerity as qualities of leadership without formal authority. Since, male and female personalities appear to be different in a number of aspects, the basic five personality qualities (known as the Big Five) are reviewed: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Reviewing models of change as well as females' qualities, this study suggests a model for leading change without formal authority including Identifying gaps, Connecting with emotions, and Committing to change (ICC model).

Key Words: ICC Model, Informal Authority, Leadership.

LEADING CHANGE WITHOUT FORMAL AUTHORITY: A MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

"We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free."

– Ramdas (2020, p. II)

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century workplace is changing significantly (Karoly & Panis, 2004; Ware & Grantham, 2003), and change seems to be a constant feature of the work environment. Although change and uncertainty create an opportunity to improve the status quo, it requires a deeper understanding to be able to cope and still be productive. During the time of change and uncertainty, organizations are successful if they are able to embrace change and make sure the personnel are heard, understood and valued, and that they remain engaged, motivated, and productive (Knight, 2020).

This study will look at the current literature around the features of the working environment in the 21st century, seeking to explore the essential principles of today's workplace; and analyse and identify the strengths of women in today's workplace. The primary focus of this study is on the phenomenon of leading change with no formal authority, aiming to provide a model for women to bring about change in their working environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will be conceptual research, which builds on prior conceptual and empirical leadership research. Following the notion of a 'model' as conceptual research designed by Jaakkola (2020), this study aims to identify novel connections between the concepts of leadership and feminism and in consideration of the features of the 21st century workplace. As a result, this research will develop a theoretical proposition that introduces a new relationship between these factors. To achieve this, the relevant literature will be reported to address the key elements of leadership, particularly leadership without formal authority, female qualities and leading change ().
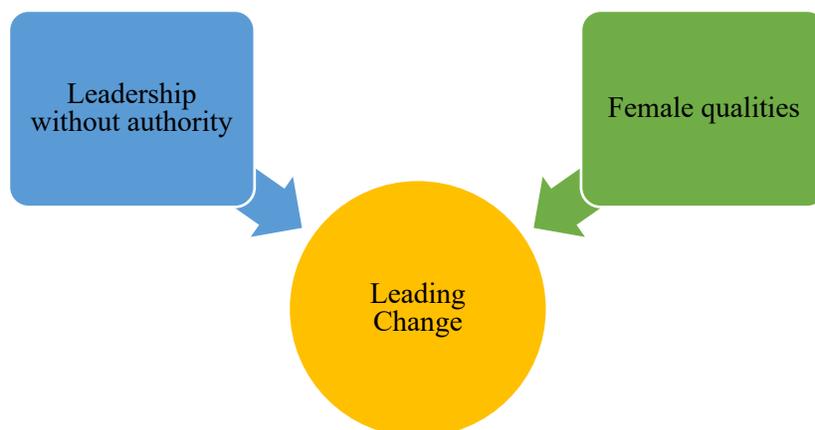
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The ultimate goal of the research is to develop a model that explains the relationships between these variables in order for women to be effective leaders even without formal authorities at the workplace.

Review of the Relevant Literature

This study aims to research literature that outlines key variables associated with leadership without formal authority and female characteristics. Therefore, the review of literature will focus on three major areas: leadership, feminism, and 21st century workplace features.

The Concept of Leadership

The term leadership refers to leading a group of people or leading an organisation; and leading a group or an organisation is used to attain power, authority and control (Yukl & Gardner, 2019). As Irving and Strauss (2019) explained, in the past, leadership involved actions in order to "convince, cajole, coerce, or compel others to do your bidding" (p. 5) . However today, cajoling, coercing, or compelling have no place in leading others, and leadership is all about influence, "nothing more, nothing less" (Maxwell, 1998, p. 3). It is defined as "a process that involves influence with a group of people toward the realisation of goals" (Amanchukwu et al., 2015, p. 7) where developing vision, aligning people with that vision, motivation, inspiration, and making change are demonstrated in leadership (Kotter, 1999).

The term leadership has been used in different disciplines whereas it carries unnecessary connotations that create ambiguity of implication (Yukl & Gardner, 2019). For instance, management and leadership are usually used interchangeably to mean one and the same concept. The next section discusses the distinctions between leadership and management.

Leadership qualities

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) discuss traits such as drive, motivation, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business are precondition characteristics which significantly contribute to leaders' achievement. The next six subsections briefly introduce each of these qualities.

Drive

In the field of psychology, the concept of drive refers to the need of an individual which motivates his/her towards a set of actions to achieve a sense of satisfaction (Heinrich & Spielberger, 1982; Tsolas & Anzieu-Premmereur, 2017). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) describe drive as a set of motives and traits reflecting a high desire. Factors such as achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity and initiative are other aspects of drive.

Motivation

As Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) argue, for an individual, just being achievement-oriented, ambitious, energetic, tenacious, and proactive would not be enough to be a leader, he/she must have a strong desire to lead and influence others. Motivated leaders inspire a sense of passion to achieve goals and improve the status quo. Motivation is a personal resource for developing a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020).

Honesty and integrity

Stephen Covey argues that "integrity includes but goes beyond honesty. Honesty is telling the truth - in other words, conforming our words to reality. Integrity is conforming reality to our words - in other words, keeping promises and fulfilling expectations" (2009, p. 217). Honesty and integrity both create the basis of a trustworthy and reliable relationship between a leader and their followers (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) where "integrity is the correspondence between word and deed and honesty refers to being trustful or non-deceitful" (p. 53).

Self confidence

The term self-confidence refers to an individual's belief that he/she can successfully achieve a desired goal (Herbst, 2020). High level of self-confidence not only empowers the leader to

influence his/her followers (Axelrod, 2017), but also contributes in decision-making and obtaining others' trust (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Cognitive ability
Cognitive ability refers to "the capacity to process, understand, reason with, and remember information" (Dilchert, 2018, p. 248), involving the ability to solve problems, learn quickly and learn from experience (Gottfredson, 1997). As Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) narrate, due to rapid technological advancement, leaders are expected to "be intelligent enough to formulate suitable strategies, solve problems, and make correct decisions" (p. 55).

Knowledge of the business
Having extensive knowledge about the organisation and its industry and other technical issues would help a leader to manage the circumstances of an issue. As Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) explain, "in-depth knowledge of the organisation and industry allows effective leaders to make well-informed decisions and to understand the implications of those decisions" (p. 56).

Leadership without formal authority
Leadership qualities are a catalyst in leading organisations, however the shift in workplace conditions has impacted on leadership enormously. Nowadays, due to decentralising and flatter organisational structures, outsourcing, and cross-functional and cross-cultural collaborations, employees are required to make decisions and accept more responsibility while they may not be formally titled leaders (Goman, 2017; Heard et al., 2018; Miki, 2019). There is no official authority involved for these employees (Van De Mieroop et al., 2019) and so they are labelled as leaders without formal authority. Despite the growing research around the concept of leadership without authority (informal leadership), still much remains to be explored (Neubert & Taggar, 2004; Shaughnessy et al., 2016). In a comparison between formal leaders and informal ones, each comes with its' own qualities and traits (there might be overlap), and personal traits (i.e., the Big Five) can predict the emergence of leaders without formal authority (See for example Neubert & Taggar, 2004). However, the bottom line is having influence to inspire others, getting the team onboard and make the change happen. As cited by Heard et al. (2018) leaders without formal authority are individuals who "do not possess authoritative power like their more formally titled counterparts; however, they play a key role in enabling, influencing, and guiding others in the work environment" (p. 1).

Qualities of leadership without formal authority
The top 10 qualities for leaders without authority are identified as honesty and integrity, credibility, fairness, sense of humour, dignity and respect, having fun, promoting gender quality, being ethical, caring, and principle -centred (Pielstick, 2000). In another study of exploring the qualities of leadership without authority, the following qualities are identified: commitment, communication, ability, knowledge, willingness, and influence (Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014). In line with these range of traits, the literature shows that leaders without formal authority who succeed in their role do five things well: developing a broad network of relationships, identifying gaps, connecting their work to the current priorities, planning creatively and building credibility (Olson & Simerson, 2015).

Shaughnessy et al. (2016) argue that in order to influence others, individuals are required to have both political skill and ambition. Political skill refers to truly understanding the needs of

the organisation and its members and applying that knowledge to effectively influence others (Ferris et al., 2011; Shaughnessy et al., 2016). Shaughnessy et al. (2016) also define ambition (political will) as the need for accomplishment and intrinsic motivation to engage in leading others. They argue that individuals' need for power is the source of motivation to be involved in leading others.
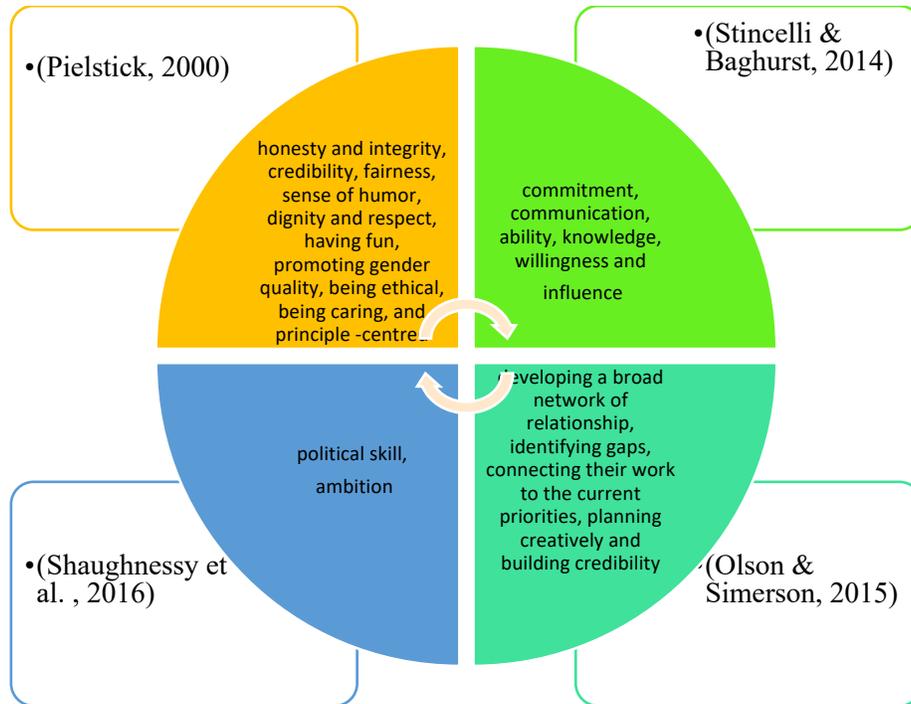

Figure 2: Qualities of leadership without formal authority

Considering the above-mentioned range of qualities of leadership without formal authority (Figure 2) and in a comparison with leadership qualities such as drive, motivation, self-confidence (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), sense of commitment, willingness (Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014), and ambition (Shaughnessy et al., 2016) can fit in one category as Dedication, which is the quality of being dedicated and committed to leading others and inspiring them to succeed.

Similarly, cognitive capability, knowledge of the business (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), credibility, having a sense of humour and fun (Pielstick, 2000), ability to influence (Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014), developing network, identifying gaps, prioritising, planning (Olson & Simerson, 2015), and political skill (Shaughnessy et al., 2016) are behaviours of politically skilled individuals. Therefore, these features can sit under political skill. As explained earlier, political skill refers to the ability to understand others and to use this knowledge to influence other employees to act in ways that enhance personal or organisational goals.

And lastly, honesty and integrity (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Pielstick, 2000), fairness, dignity and respect, sense of caring, promoting gender quality, and being ethical (Pielstick, 2000) all can be covered under Sincerity, which is the quality of acting based on honesty and genuineness.

This study offers an adapted category of qualities of leadership without formal authority including Dedication, Political skill and Sincerity (Table).

Table 1: Proposed Qualities of Leadership without Formal Authority

Leadership qualities (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991)	Qualities of leadership without formal authority	Proposed qualities of leadership without formal authority
Drive, Motivation, Self-confidence (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991)	Commitment, Willingness (Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014), Ambition (Shaughnessy et al., 2016)	Dedication
Cognitive ability, Knowledge of the business (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991)	Credibility, Sense of humour, Having fun (Pielstick, 2000) Communication, Ability, Knowledge, Influence (Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014) Developing network, Identifying gaps, Prioritising, Planning, Building credibility (Olson & Simerson, 2015), Political skill (Shaughnessy et al., 2016)	Political Skill
Honesty & integrity (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991)	Honesty & integrity, Fairness, Dignity &respect, Caring, Promoting gender quality, Being ethical, Principle-centred (Pielstick, 2000)	Sincerity

Feminism- Equality Despite of Differences

Feminism refers to the point of view that females are treated unjustly within the society and that males' perspectives are usually prioritised (Gamble, 1998). While the main goal is to provide an equal treatment for females, 'equality feminism' talks about 'sameness'. It claims that men and women are equal. However, 'difference feminism' claims that men and women are basically different, and therefore they have different abilities and strengths, and each add different values and qualities to the community (Voet, 1998). Based on the dominant understanding within the broader society, both equality and difference feminism can be found to different degrees (Tripp, 2016). Regardless of the distinction between equality and difference approaches, the ultimate objective is equality over difference (Tripp, 2016). As Liff and Wajcman (1996) nicely explained, the goal is "to ensure that if individuals bring the same abilities to work, or perform in the same way, they should receive the same access to jobs and employment benefits…" (p. 79). In the gender diversity discussion, equality over diversity is the main goal. While some other factors such as race and ethnicity also play an important role (Tripp, 2016), this study focusses only on similarities amongst women despite other differences.

To overcome the issue of gender equality in some societies, gender quotas are introduced to improve the participation of women in areas of society where they are traditionally under-represented, such as employment, education and politics (McCann, 2013). Gender quotas have been used in many countries as an effective tool to boost women's representation (McCann, 2013). However, some countries who believed more in equality feminism (such as the US) had difficulty in justifying gender quotas (Tripp, 2016).

Gender binary

Gender binary, is a framework that outlines only two types of gender, male or female (Hyde, 2019), which still plays a heavy role in many societies. In these societies, there is a common belief that males and females possess biological differences such as males being more masculine in appearance, or taller in stature. From the sociological perspective, a female's main concern would be nurturing their family and dealing with emotional needs, whereas a male's main duty is to be a provider for the family. This study is based on a broad outline of gender binary.

Personality qualities

To analyse human behaviour, researchers have studied individuals' qualities. Fiske (1949) is a pioneer in identifying personality factors where he developed the theory of the five basic personality qualities known as the "big five" (Kentle, 1994). The basic five personality qualities (known as the Big Five) are neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Male and female personalities appear to be different in a number of aspects.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism which is also known as 'emotionality' (Barrick & Mount, 1991), refers to the emotional (or physical) response to stress and challenge. Neuroticism refers to the "tendency to experience negative emotion and related processes in response to perceived threat and punishment" (Weisberg et al., 2011, p. 2). It includes negative emotions such as 'anxiety', 'hostility', 'depression', 'self- consciousness', 'impulsiveness' and 'vulnerability' (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 179). An individual who exhibits a high level of neuroticism usually "worries about the future, is frustrated by the events of the past, and is irritated by what is in the present" (Kentle, 1994, p. 796). Individuals who are high in this trait tend to experience a lot of stress and anxiety; and concern about many things (Cherry, 2021), but they also tend to be smart, and have reasonable expectations, a superior self-awareness and motivation; they take less risks, and have a great desire to provide for others (Tzeses, 2021). Females have been found to score higher than males on neuroticism (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008; Weisberg et al., 2011).

Extraversion

Extraversion, also known as 'surgency', refers to a personal trait that is described as being 'active', 'assertive', 'energetic', 'enthusiastic', 'outgoing' and 'talkative' (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 178). Extraversion demonstrates sociability and interpersonal interaction (Weisberg et al., 2011), and hence extroverts often enjoy meeting new people as well as being the centre of attention. Extraversion is defined by positive emotions (Power & Pluess, 2015), understood as a combination of 'ambition' and 'sociability' (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Individuals who are high in extraversion like being the centre of attention and usually start the conversation; appreciate meeting new people and have a wide social circle of friends; it would be easy for them to make new friends; and they will be energised when around other people (Cherry, 2021). Females tend to score higher than men on extraversion (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008; Weisberg et al., 2011).

Openness

Openness is known as 'intellect', 'openness to experience' or 'culture' (Barrick & Mount, 1991). It refers to "imagination and intellectual curiosity" (Power & Pluess, 2015, p. 1) as well as "the

ability and interest in attending to and processing complex stimuli" (Weisberg et al., 2011, p. 3). Other characteristics associated with openness include being 'artistic', 'curious', 'imaginative', 'insightful' and 'original' (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 179). Individuals who are high in this trait are usually very creative; willing to try new things and tackling new challenges; and like to think about abstract concepts (Cherry, 2021). No significant gender differences are reported on openness (Weisberg et al., 2011).

Agreeableness
Agreeableness which is also known as 'likability', 'friendliness' and 'social conformity' (Barrick & Mount, 1991, p. 4), is an individual's level of cooperativeness and empathy (Power & Pluess, 2015). It describes "the tendency toward cooperation, maintenance of social harmony, and consideration of the concerns of others" (Weisberg et al., 2011, p. 2). Other characteristics associated with agreeableness include being 'appreciative', 'forgiving', 'generous', 'kind', 'sympathetic', and 'trusting' (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 178). Individuals who are high in agreeableness tend to have an interest in other people and care about them; feel empathy for others; enjoy helping others who are in need and contributing to their achievements (Cherry, 2021). Females consistently score higher than males on agreeableness (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008; Weisberg et al., 2011)

Conscientiousness
Conscientiousness refers to carefulness and organizational ability (Power & Pluess, 2015) "to exert self-control in order to follow rules or maintain goal pursuit" (Weisberg et al., 2011, p. 2). It has been known as 'conscience', 'conformity', 'dependability', 'will' or 'will to achieve' (Barrick & Mount, 1991, p. 4). Individuals with high level of this trait are 'efficient', 'organised', 'planful', 'reliable', 'responsible', and 'through' (McCrae & John, 1992, p. 178). Individuals with high levels of conscientiousness show that they spend more time in preparation; prioritise tasks; pay attention to detail; and enjoy having a set schedule (Cherry, 2021). Females score higher than males on conscientiousness (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008).

Gender polarisation
According to the largest study on the state of women in corporate by McCKinsey & Company (2021), females are less likely to be represented in executive positions. Since having more female leaders can promote not only gender equity but also institutional productivity, appropriate actions require to be taken to empower female leaders. There is a need to develop policies and strategies geared towards increasing women's participation in decision making and leadership to promote gender equity in academic leadership and career progress (Silander et al., 2013).

Change and workplace features in 21st century
Ware and Grantham (2003) identified six fundamental drivers that impact future workplaces, including: the changing nature of work itself, demographics, the change in society in terms of values and expectations, technology, environmental issues, and government and public policy. Organisations need to be more responsive to change at a reasonable speed. Workload, lack of required data for making decisions, and increasing the level of complexity of involved factors in decision making all have strong contributions in making the leadership role more challenging and complicated. However, influencers can play a key role in the organisation to get things done.

Lewin's model of change

Kurt Lewin's model of change (Lewin, 1947) includes three steps: Unfreeze, Change and Refreeze. In this model, the process of change involves the forming a clear plan for change which is essential (Freeze), then establishing the new preferred behaviour (Change) and in the end, setting the new behaviour as the rule (Refreeze).

The aim of the first stage, Freeze, is to raise awareness about how the status quo is impending the organisation. This stage is based on the perception that the more the employees know about the urgency of the change, the more they are motivated to accept the change. At the implementation stage (Change), employees begin to learn the new behaviours. The more willing the employees are at this stage, the easier this stage is to finalize. Refreezing, as the final stage, is to set and solidify the new behaviour as the new status quo.

The key advantage of Lewin's model is that it is very simple, and therefore, it is easy to plan and implement. Lewin's model is very logical and objective oriented. The change may make rational sense and look decent on paper, but the lack of consideration for individuals' emotions and experiences may have negative effects (Viherlaiho, 2014).

Kotter´s model of change

There are eight steps are involved in John Kotter's model of change (Kotter, 1995):
1. Create urgency: where employees feel the need for change as an emergency act.
2. Form a powerful coalition: Create a team of individuals who will be able to guide, coordinate, and communicate the change.
3. Create a vision for change: Provide employees with a clear vision of what the change is.
4. Communicate the vision: The change needs to be communicated frequently and powerfully, and embedded within daily activities, so employees should be able to see how the change will benefit them.
5. Remove obstacles: To build the strength of the change, all obstacles that disempower individuals with unrealistic and unfeasible goals must be removed.
6. Create short-term wins: setting some short-term goals not only help to sustain the enthusiasm but also re-motivate employees to continue backing the change.
7. Build on the change: setting goals and assessing what can be done better for sustained progress.
8. Anchor the changes in corporate culture: setting the change as part of the core of the organisation to have a lasting result.

The focus of Kotter's model is more on planning the change while the process can be implemented step-by-step. Transition will be easier, and the aim is to make the employees prepare for change. At the same time, implementing this model would be time consuming and steps must be followed one by one and cannot be missed. It is a top-down model and each individual emotion must be taken into consideration (Viherlaiho, 2014).

Leading change and the role of leadership

To ensure change success, Hays (2014) in his book 'The Theory and Practice of Change Management' lists seven tasks that needs to be done.
1. Sense making: Analysing the status quo and making sense of the environment to identify the gaps and areas (opportunities and threats) that requires further attention

2. Visioning: Identifying a desirable goal and developing a plan and vision to move forward to achieve this goal.
3. Sense giving: Grabbing every opportunity to communicate the vision and respond to feedback as a commitment to pursue change.
4. Aligning: Providing a set of appropriate directions that can be implemented by employees towards achieving the vision.
5. Enabling: Empowering employees to implement the change by creating a safe environment and removing barriers.
6. Supporting: Identifying, acknowledging and responding to the concerns of those affected by the change.
7. Maintaining momentum: Demonstrating commitment to vision to keep people focused on the change.

In an attempt to investigate the relationship between personality qualities and job performance, Barrick and Mount (1991) studied the validity of five dimensions of personality; openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism.

Leading change without formal authority
Lewin's model can be combined with Kotter's model to provide the organisation with a systematic process for organizational change. Kotter's model can be utilised as an extension of Lewin's model while creating urgency, forming coalition, creating and communicating vision, removing obstacles, and creating short-term goals (Kotter's model) are considered the preparation stage and forming the perception of change which aligns with the Freeze stage of Lewin's model. Moving to the role of leaders in the process of change and referring to Hays's steps of managing change, the first three steps of Hays' model of managing change including sense making, visioning and sense giving will fit into the first stage of change in Lewin's model (colour coded in Yellow). By taking these steps, the leader helps employees to develop the perception of change. Overall, the focus of the first stage in leading change (Yellow steps) is recognising the opportunities and threats and developing an action plan towards the goal while responding to concerns.

Individuals who do not possess any authority are not in the position to create vision, set goal and respond to concerns. However, to be able to make a bigger contribution and support the organisation to achieve its goals, identifying the gaps can be regarded as the first and most important step to lead change. As discussed earlier, individual's qualities such drive and motivation, commitment, willingness and ambition (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Shaughnessy et al., 2016; Stincelli & Baghurst, 2014) would provide the internal drive for individuals to seek ways to improve the current status quo whereas their political skill drives them to understand the needs of the organisation and its members and apply that knowledge to identify what needs to be done.

Next, building change on Kotter's model refers to establishing the new norm (Change) from Lewin's model (colour coded in Green). Steps 4 and 5 in Hays' stages of leading change (aligning and enabling) which include providing directions for change and empowering employees to implement the change fit into the green stage. This would be the most important stage as leaders deal with implementation change. Basically, the role of leader in this stage is to provide a set of applicable directions to be implemented by employees towards the new vision and

assessing what can be done better for sustained progress. Obviously, giving directions by an employee who does not possess any form of authority usually without buy-in from other employees. However, for an individual to obtain other employees' acceptance and their willingness to actively support and participate in the new direction (Change), he/she needs to understand other employees need and desire (political skill), and to create space for them to be heard without judgement. Demonstrating empathy and communicating transparently leads to building trust, as a fundamental element of vital and valuable connections.

Individual's honesty, integrity, fairness, dignity, respect and sense of caring for others (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Pielstick, 2000) in addition to their understanding of other employees' need and desire paves the way for emotional connection. In this case, being aware of others motivation is a good way for building the relationship and making connections. For some individuals, the driving motivation might be the desire for accomplishment or sense of belonging (intrinsic motivation); or pay increases, and bonuses (extrinsic motivation). For individuals with an intrinsic orientation, work is valued itself and is expected to be satisfying and expected to provide opportunities for personal growth and development (Dunford, 1992).

Lastly, the Refreeze step from Lewin's model which refers to setting the new behaviour as the rule is in line with the last stage of Kotter's model: anchoring the change (colour coded in Blue). In Hays' steps of leading change, responding to employees' concerns, as well as showing commitment in implementing change can be in the Blue category of Refreeze.
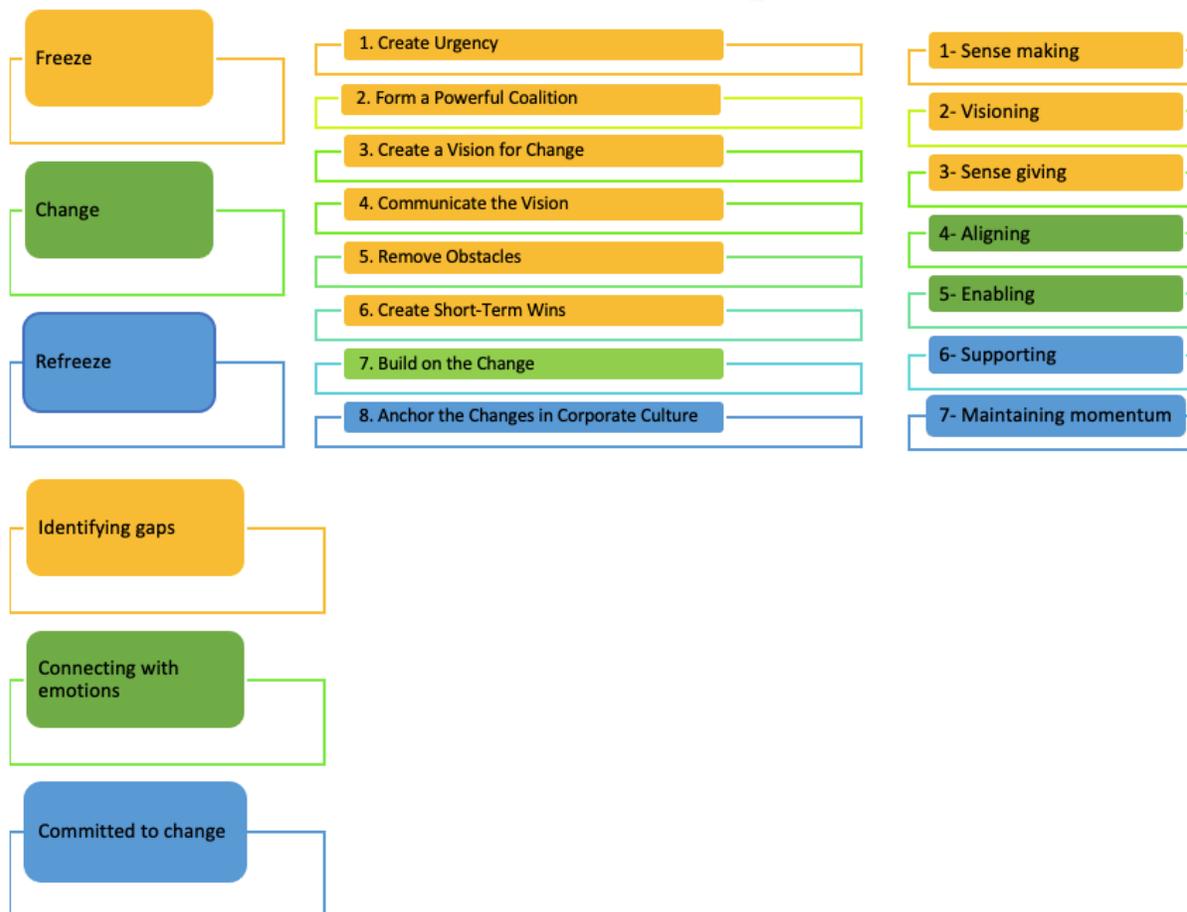

Figure 3: Leading Change without Formal Authority

Women and leading Change without Formal authority
The last section provided explanation how individuals without formal authority can have a bigger contribution to the organisation's mission and lead the change. The next three sub-sections elaborate how females may apply the ICC model to lead change. ICC stands for **I**dentifying gaps, **C**onnection with emotions and **C**ommitting to change.

ICC model of leading change
Looking back at the basic five personality qualities, the following sub-sections discuss how female personalities lead them to be more successful in each phase of leading change without formal authority.

Identifying gaps
The fact that females exhibit a high level of neuroticism (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008; Weisberg et al., 2011) may seem not to be a helpful quality as it deals with anxiety and vulnerability. However, research has shown that neuroticism is linked with higher levels of creativity (Perkins et al., 2015). As Dr. Kyung Hee Kim, Professor of Creativity explains creative individuals are aware of surroundings and look for what is missing and think beyond what can be seen (Kim, 2020). Moreover, neurotic individuals prefer to be well-prepared and tend to overanalyse everything, so they can avoid unwanted surprises (Holmes, 2015). The high level of creativity and being prepared in females leads to look beyond the missing and hidden components at workplace and helps to identify various needs in work environment. Females may use neuroticism to their advantage by exploring what is lacking in their workplace, and by asking why they are following a routine and as a result, they are likely to find a process that needs to be improved.

Highly conscientious individuals tend to be more detail-oriented (Cherry, 2021). The high level of conscientiousness in female (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008) and being neurotic lead them to consider things above and beyond the norm, tend to analyse the current situation and compare the existing situation with the ideal state.

Connecting with emotions
Neurotic individuals possess more emotional depth since they are more experienced in managing their negative emotions. Individuals who are high in Neuroticism, as Tzeses (2021) cites: "have more experience handling negative emotions, which, though difficult, can also make them deeper, and facilitate empathy and understanding for other people's struggles" (para 6). Individuals higher in neuroticism exhibit more desire in helping others, they are more generous and tend to support and comfort others. The fact that females are more neurotic makes them more empathic and human-like and makes them more a suitable fit in this component of connecting with emotions.

Individuals who are high in extraversion are tend to be more social, talkative, assertive, engaging, friendly and approachable (Cherry, 2021; Power & Pluess, 2015). Females score higher on extraversion (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008; Weisberg et al., 2011) and so they are more likely to assert themselves in groups and having interactions with other.

Highly conscientious individuals are cautious about how their behaviour impacts others (Cherry, 2021). Likewise, individuals who are high in agreeableness tend to feel empathy and

care about other team members (Cherry, 2021). These features (neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) make females a better fit for emotional connection as an aspect of leadership without formal authority.

COMMITTING TO CHANGE

Individuals with high level of conscientiousness exhibit preparedness, prioritising tasks and paying attention to detail (Cherry, 2021). Moreover, thoughtfulness and goal-oriented behaviour are features of highly conscientious individuals (Cherry, 2021; Power & Pluess, 2015). Planning step by step and focusing on completing specific tasks to achieve the planned outcome (change) are features of highly conscientious individuals.

Individuals who are high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative (Cherry, 2021). Since females score high on conscientiousness and agreeableness (Michelangelo Vianello, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2008), these traits equip them to stay committed to change until the desired goal is achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Possessing a certain set of skills equips employees to be able to create the vision, plan the direction, and be able to influence other employees to adapt the change. This would impact on their own performance as well by:

- Getting more support and assistance from other colleagues
- Having more opportunities to be involved in other projects across the whole organisation
- Having the opportunity to practice leadership skills
- Being able to utilise their knowledge and skills in other areas of their own expertise
- Having the opportunity of networking and building relationship and connection

Moreover, this study recommends that by developing servant mindset and self-awareness in addition to getting involved in mentorship programs, females can succeed in obtaining others cooperation.
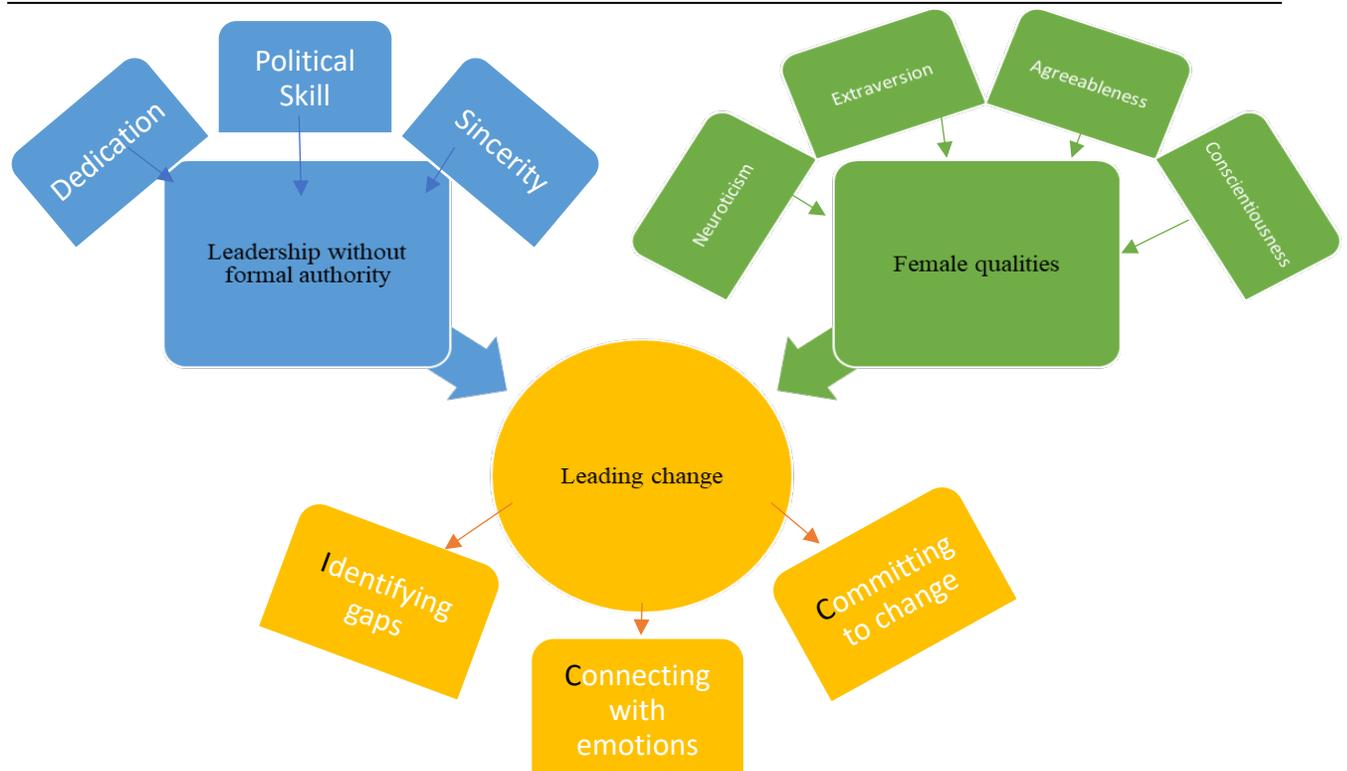
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