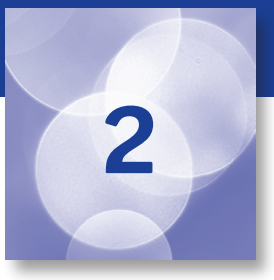

Trait Approach

DESCRIPTION

Of interest to scholars throughout the 20th century, the trait approach was one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership. In the early 20th century, leadership traits were studied to determine what made certain people great leaders. The theories that were developed were called "great man" theories because they focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders (e.g., Catherine the Great, Mohandas Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Joan of Arc, and Napoleon Bonaparte). It was believed that people were born with these traits, and that only the "great" people possessed them. During this time, research concentrated on determining the specific traits that clearly differentiated leaders from followers (Bass, 1990; Jago, 1982).

In the mid-20th century, the trait approach was challenged by research that questioned the universality of leadership traits. In a major review, Stogdill (1948) suggested that no consistent set of traits differentiated leaders from nonleaders across a variety of situations. An individual with leadership traits who was a leader in one situation might not be a leader in another situation. Rather than being a quality that individuals possess, leadership was reconceptualized as a relationship between people in a social situation. Personal factors related to leadership continued to be important, but researchers contended that these factors were to be considered as relative to the requirements of the situation.

The trait approach has generated much interest among researchers for its explanation of how traits influence leadership (Bryman, 1992). For example, an analysis of much of the previous trait research by Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986) found that personality traits were strongly

associated with individuals' perceptions of leadership. Similarly, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) went so far as to claim that effective leaders are actually distinct types of people in several key respects.

The trait approach has earned new interest through the current emphasis given by many researchers to visionary and charismatic leadership (see Bass, 1990; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Nadler & Tushman, 1989; Zaccaro, 2007; Zaleznik, 1977). Charismatic leadership has catapulted to the forefront of public attention with the 2008 election of the United States' first African-American president, Barack Obama, who is charismatic, among many other attributes. In a study to determine what distinguishes charismatic leaders from others, Jung and Sosik (2006) found that charismatic leaders consistently possess traits of self-monitoring, engagement in impression management, motivation to attain social power, and motivation to attain self-actualization. In short, the trait approach is alive and well. It began with an emphasis on identifying the qualities of great persons, shifted to include the impact of situations on leadership, and, currently, has shifted back to reemphasize the critical role of traits in effective leadership.

Although the research on traits spanned the entire 20th century, a good overview of this approach is found in two surveys completed by Stogdill (1948, 1974). In his first survey, Stogdill analyzed and synthesized more than 124 trait studies conducted between 1904 and 1947. In his second study, he analyzed another 163 studies completed between 1948 and 1970. By taking a closer look at each of these reviews, we can obtain a clearer picture of how individuals' traits contribute to the leadership process.

Stogdill's first survey identified a group of important leadership traits that were related to how individuals in various groups became leaders. His results showed that the average individual in the leadership role is different from an average group member with regard to the following eight traits: intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability.

The findings of Stogdill's first survey also indicated that an individual does not become a leader solely because that individual possesses certain traits. Rather, the traits that leaders possess must be relevant to situations in which the leader is functioning. As stated earlier, leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in another situation. Findings showed that leadership was not a passive state but resulted from a working relationship

between the leader and other group members. This research marked the beginning of a new approach to leadership research that focused on leadership behaviors and leadership situations.

Stogdill's second survey, published in 1974, analyzed 163 new studies and compared the findings of these studies to the findings he had reported in his first survey. The second survey was more balanced in its description of the role of traits and leadership. Whereas the first survey implied that leadership is determined principally by situational factors and not personality factors, the second survey argued more moderately that both personality and situational factors were determinants of leadership. In essence, the second survey validated the original trait idea that a leader's characteristics are indeed a part of leadership.

Similar to the first survey, Stogdill's second survey also identified traits that were positively associated with leadership. The list included the following 10 characteristics:

1. drive for responsibility and task completion;
2. vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals;
3. risk taking and originality in problem solving;
4. drive to exercise initiative in social situations;
5. self-confidence and sense of personal identity;
6. willingness to accept consequences of decision and action;
7. readiness to absorb interpersonal stress;
8. willingness to tolerate frustration and delay;
9. ability to influence other people's behavior; and
10. capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

Mann (1959) conducted a similar study that examined more than 1,400 findings regarding personality and leadership in small groups, but he placed less emphasis on how situational factors influenced leadership. Although tentative in his conclusions, Mann suggested that personality traits could be used to distinguish leaders from nonleaders. His results identified leaders as strong in the following six traits: intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion, and conservatism.

Lord et al. (1986) reassessed Mann's (1959) findings using a more sophisticated procedure called meta-analysis. Lord et al. found that intelligence, masculinity, and dominance were significantly related to how individuals perceived leaders. From their findings, the authors argued strongly that personality traits could be used to make discriminations consistently across situations between leaders and nonleaders.

Both of these studies were conducted during periods in American history where male leadership was prevalent in most aspects of business and society. In Chapter 13, we explore more-contemporary research regarding the role of gender in leadership, and we look at whether traits such as masculinity and dominance still bear out as important factors in distinguishing between leaders and nonleaders.

Yet another review argues for the importance of leadership traits: Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991, p. 59) contended that "it is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people." From a qualitative synthesis of earlier research, Kirkpatrick and Locke postulated that leaders differ from nonleaders on six traits: drive, motivation, integrity, confidence, cognitive ability, and task knowledge. According to these writers, individuals can be born with these traits, they can learn them, or both. It is these six traits that make up the "right stuff" for leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke contended that leadership traits make some people different from others, and this difference should be recognized as an important part of the leadership process.

In the 1990s, researchers began to investigate the leadership traits associated with "social intelligence," characterized as those abilities to understand one's own and others' feelings, behaviors, and thoughts and to act appropriately (Marlowe, 1986). Zaccaro (2002) defined social intelligence as having such capacities as social awareness, social acumen, self-monitoring, and the ability to select and enact the best response given the contingencies of the situation and social environment. A number of empirical studies showed these capacities to be a key trait for effective leaders. Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader (2004) included such social abilities in the categories of leadership traits they outlined as important leadership attributes (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the traits and characteristics that were identified by researchers from the trait approach. It illustrates clearly the breadth of traits related to leadership. Table 2.1 also shows how difficult it is to select certain traits as definitive leadership traits; some of the traits appear in several of the survey studies, whereas others appear in only one

Table 2.1 Studies of Leadership Traits and Characteristics

Stogdill (1948)	Mann (1959)	Stogdill (1974)	Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986)	Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991)	Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader (2004)
Intelligence	Intelligence	Achievement	Intelligence	Drive	Cognitive abilities
Alertness	Masculinity	Persistence	Masculinity	Motivation	Extroversion
Insight	Adjustment	Insight	Dominance	Integrity	Conscientiousness
Responsibility	Dominance	Initiative		Confidence	Emotional stability
Initiative	Extroversion	Self-confidence		Cognitive ability	Openness
Persistence	Conservatism	Responsibility		Task knowledge	Agreeableness
Self-confidence		Cooperativeness			Motivation
Sociability		Tolerance			Social intelligence
		Influence			Self-monitoring
		Sociability			Emotional intelligence
					Problem solving

SOURCES: Adapted from "The Bases of Social Power," by J. R. P. French, Jr. and B. Raven, 1962, in D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Group Dynamics: Research and Theory* (pp. 259–269), New York: Harper and Row; Zaccoro, Kemp, & Bader (2004).

or two studies. Regardless of the lack of precision in Table 2.1, however, it represents a general convergence of research regarding which traits are leadership traits.

What, then, can be said about trait research? What has a century of research on the trait approach given us that is useful? The answer is an extended list of traits that individuals might hope to possess or wish to cultivate if they want to be perceived by others as leaders. Some of the traits that are central to this list include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Major Leadership Traits

- Intelligence
- Self-confidence
- Determination
- Integrity
- Sociability

Intelligence

Intelligence or intellectual ability is positively related to leadership. Based on their analysis of a series of recent studies on intelligence and various indices of leadership, Zaccaro et al. (2004) found support for the finding that leaders tend to have higher intelligence than nonleaders. Having strong verbal ability, perceptual ability, and reasoning appears to make one a better leader. Although it is good to be bright, the research also indicates that a leader's intellectual ability should not differ too much from that of the subordinates. If the leader's IQ is very different from that of the followers, it can have a counterproductive impact on leadership. Leaders with higher abilities may have difficulty communicating with followers because they are preoccupied or because their ideas are too advanced for their followers to accept.

In the next chapter of this text, which addresses leadership from a skills perspective, intelligence is identified as a trait that significantly contributes to a leader's acquisition of complex problem-solving skills and social-judgment skills. Intelligence is described as having a positive impact on an individual's capacity for effective leadership.

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is another trait that helps one to be a leader. Self-confidence is the ability to be certain about one's competencies and skills. It includes a sense of self-esteem and self-assurance and the belief that one can make a difference. Leadership involves influencing others, and self-confidence allows the leader to feel assured that his or her attempts to influence others are appropriate and right.

Determination

Many leaders also exhibit determination. Determination is the desire to get the job done and includes characteristics such as initiative, persistence, dominance, and drive. People with determination are willing to assert themselves, are proactive, and have the capacity to persevere in the face of obstacles. Being determined includes showing dominance at times and in situations where followers need to be directed.

Integrity

Integrity is another of the important leadership traits. Integrity is the quality of honesty and trustworthiness. People who adhere to a strong set of principles and take responsibility for their actions are exhibiting integrity. Leaders with integrity inspire confidence in others because they can be trusted to do what they say they are going to do. They are loyal, dependable, and not deceptive. Basically, integrity makes a leader believable and worthy of our trust.

In our society, integrity has received a great deal of attention in recent years. For example, as a result of two situations—the position taken by President George W. Bush regarding Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and the impeachment proceedings during the Clinton presidency—people are demanding more honesty of their public officials. Similarly, scandals in the corporate world (e.g., Enron and WorldCom), have led people to become skeptical of leaders who are not highly ethical. In the educational arena, new K–12 curricula are being developed to teach character, values, and ethical leadership. (For instance, see the Character Counts! program developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics in California at http://www.charactercounts.org, and the Pillars of Leadership program taught at the J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership in Georgia at http://www.fanning.uga.edu.) In short, society is demanding greater integrity of character in its leaders.

Sociability

A final trait that is important for leaders is sociability. Sociability is a leader's inclination to seek out pleasant social relationships. Leaders who show sociability are friendly, outgoing, courteous, tactful, and diplomatic. They are sensitive to others' needs and show concern for their well-being. Social leaders have good interpersonal skills and create cooperative relationships with their followers.

Although our discussion of leadership traits has focused on five major traits (i.e., intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability), this list is not all-inclusive. While other traits indicated in Table 2.1 are associated with effective leadership, the five traits we have identified contribute substantially to one's capacity to be a leader.

Until recently, most reviews of leadership traits have been qualitative. In addition, they have lacked a common organizing framework. However, the research described in the following section provides a quantitative assessment of leadership traits that is conceptually framed around the five-factor model of personality. It describes how five major personality traits are related to leadership.

Five-Factor Personality Model and Leadership

Over the past 25 years, a consensus has emerged among researchers regarding the basic factors that make up what we call personality (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). These factors, commonly called the *Big Five*, are neuroticism, extraversion (surgency), openness (intellect), agreeableness, and conscientiousness (dependability; Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Big Five Personality Factors

Neuroticism	The tendency to be depressed, anxious, insecure, vulnerable, and hostile
Extraversion	The tendency to be sociable and assertive and to have positive energy
Openness	The tendency to be informed, creative, insightful, and curious
Agreeableness	The tendency to be accepting, conforming, trusting, and nurturing
Conscientiousness	The tendency to be thorough, organized, controlled, dependable, and decisive

To assess the links between the Big Five and leadership, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) conducted a major meta-analysis of 78 leadership and personality studies published between 1967 and 1998. In general, Judge et al. found a strong relationship between the Big Five traits and leadership. It appears that having certain personality traits is associated with being an effective leader.

Specifically, in their study, *extraversion* was the factor most strongly associated with leadership. It is the most important trait of effective leaders. Extraversion was followed, in order, by *conscientiousness*, *openness*, and *low neuroticism*. The last factor, *agreeableness*, was found to be only weakly associated with leadership.

Emotional Intelligence

Another way of assessing the impact of traits on leadership is through the concept of emotional intelligence, which emerged in the 1990s as an important area of study in psychology. It has been widely studied by researchers, and has captured the attention of many practitioners (Caruso & Wolfe, 2004; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1995, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000).

As the two words suggest, emotional intelligence has to do with our emotions (affective domain) and thinking (cognitive domain), and the interplay between the two. Whereas *intelligence* is concerned with our ability to learn *information* and apply it to life tasks, *emotional intelligence* is concerned with our ability to understand *emotions* and apply this understanding to life's tasks. Specifically, *emotional intelligence* can be defined as the ability to perceive and express emotions, to use emotions to facilitate thinking, to understand and reason with emotions, and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000).

There are different ways to measure emotional intelligence. One scale is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). The MSCEIT measures emotional intelligence as a set of mental abilities, including the abilities to perceive, facilitate, understand, and manage emotion.

Goleman (1995, 1998) takes a broader approach to emotional intelligence, suggesting that it consists of a set of personal and social competencies. Personal competence consists of self-awareness, confidence, self-regulation, conscientiousness, and motivation. Social competence consists of empathy and social skills such as communication and conflict management.

There is a debate in the field regarding how big a role emotional intelligence plays in helping people be successful in life. Some researchers, such as Goleman (1995), suggested that emotional intelligence plays a major role in whether people are successful at school, home, and work. Others, such as Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000), made softer claims for the significance of emotional intelligence in meeting life's challenges.

As a leadership ability or trait, emotional intelligence appears to be an important construct. The underlying premise suggested by this framework is that people who are more sensitive to their emotions and the impact of their emotions on others will be leaders that are more effective. As more research is conducted on emotional intelligence, the intricacies of how emotional intelligence relates to leadership will be better understood.

HOW DOES THE TRAIT APPROACH WORK?

The trait approach is very different from the other approaches discussed in subsequent chapters because it focuses exclusively on the leader, not on the followers or the situation. This makes the trait approach theoretically more straightforward than other approaches. In essence, the trait approach is concerned with what traits leaders exhibit and who has these traits.

The trait approach does not lay out a set of hypotheses or principles about what kind of leader is needed in a certain situation or what a leader should do, given a particular set of circumstances. Instead, this approach emphasizes that having a leader with a certain set of traits is crucial to having effective leadership. It is the leader and the leader's personality that are central to the leadership process.

The trait approach suggests that organizations will work better if the people in managerial positions have designated leadership profiles. To find the right people, it is common for organizations to use personality assessment instruments. The assumption behind these procedures is that selecting the right people will increase organizational effectiveness. Organizations can specify the characteristics or traits that are important to them for particular positions and then use personality assessment measures to determine whether an individual fits their needs.

The trait approach is also used for personal awareness and development. By analyzing their own traits, managers can gain an idea of their

strengths and weaknesses, and can get a feel for how others in the organization see them. A trait assessment can help managers determine whether they have the qualities to move up or to move to other positions in the company.

A trait assessment gives individuals a clearer picture of who they are as leaders and how they fit into the organizational hierarchy. In areas where their traits are lacking, leaders can try to make changes in what they do or where they work to increase their traits' potential impact.

Near the end of the chapter, a leadership instrument is provided that you can use to assess your leadership traits. This instrument is typical of the kind of personality tests that companies use to assess individuals' leadership potential. As you will discover by completing this instrument, trait measures are a good way to assess your own characteristics.

STRENGTHS

The trait approach has several identifiable strengths. First, the trait approach is intuitively appealing. It fits clearly with our notion that leaders are the individuals who are out front and leading the way in our society. The image in the popular press and community at large is that leaders are a special kind of people—people with gifts who can do extraordinary things. The trait approach is consistent with this perception because it is built on the premise that leaders are different, and their difference resides in the special traits they possess. People have a need to see their leaders as gifted people, and the trait approach fulfills this need.

A second strength of the trait approach is that it has a century of research to back it up. No other theory can boast of the breadth and depth of studies conducted on the trait approach. The strength and longevity of this line of research give the trait approach a measure of credibility that other approaches lack. Out of this abundance of research has emerged a body of data that points to the important role of various personality traits in the leadership process.

Another strength, more conceptual in nature, results from the way the trait approach highlights the leader component in the leadership process. Leadership is composed of leaders, followers, and situations, but the trait approach is devoted to only the first of these—leaders. Although this is also

a potential weakness, by focusing exclusively on the role of the leader in leadership the trait approach has been able to provide us with a deeper and more intricate understanding of how the leader and the leader's personality are related to the leadership process.

Last, the trait approach has given us some benchmarks for what we need to look for if we want to be leaders. It identifies what traits we should have and whether the traits we do have are the best traits for leadership. Based on the findings of this approach, personality and assessment procedures can be used to offer invaluable information to supervisors and managers about their strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve their overall leadership effectiveness.

CRITICISMS

In addition to its strengths, the trait approach has several weaknesses. First and foremost is the failure of the trait approach to delimit a definitive list of leadership traits. Although an enormous number of studies have been conducted over the past 100 years, the findings from these studies have been ambiguous and uncertain at times. Furthermore, the list of traits that has emerged appears endless. This is obvious from Table 2.1, which lists a multitude of traits. In fact, these are only a sample of the many leadership traits that were studied.

Another criticism is that the trait approach has failed to take situations into account. As Stogdill (1948) pointed out more than 50 years ago, it is difficult to isolate a set of traits that are characteristic of leaders without also factoring situational effects into the equation. People who possess certain traits that make them leaders in one situation may not be leaders in another situation. Some people may have the traits that help them emerge as leaders but not the traits that allow them to maintain their leadership over time. In other words, the situation influences leadership. It is therefore difficult to identify a universal set of leadership traits in isolation from the context in which the leadership occurs.

A third criticism, derived from the prior two criticisms, is that this approach has resulted in highly subjective determinations of the most important leadership traits. Because the findings on traits have been so extensive and broad, there has been much subjective interpretation of the meaning of the data. This subjectivity is readily apparent in the many

self-help, practice-oriented management books. For example, one author might identify ambition and creativity as crucial leadership traits; another might identify empathy and calmness. In both cases, it is the author's subjective experience and observations that are the basis for the identified leadership traits. These books may be helpful to readers because they identify and describe important leadership traits, but the methods used to generate these lists of traits are weak. To respond to people's need for a set of definitive traits of leaders, authors have set forth lists of traits, even if the origins of these lists are not grounded in strong, reliable research.

Research on traits can also be criticized for failing to look at traits in relationship to leadership outcomes. This research has emphasized the identification of traits, but has not addressed how leadership traits affect group members and their work. In trying to ascertain universal leadership traits, researchers have focused on the link between specific traits and leader emergence, but they have not tried to link leader traits with other outcomes such as productivity or employee satisfaction. For example, trait research does not provide data on whether leaders who might have high intelligence and strong integrity have better results than leaders without these traits. The trait approach is weak in describing how leaders' traits affect the outcomes of groups and teams in organizational settings.

A final criticism of the trait approach is that it is not a useful approach for training and development for leadership. Even if definitive traits could be identified, teaching new traits is not an easy process because traits are not easily changed. For example, it is not reasonable to send managers to a training program to raise their IQ or to train them to become extroverted. The point is that traits are largely fixed psychological structures, and this limits the value of teaching and leadership training.

APPLICATION

Despite its shortcomings, the trait approach provides valuable information about leadership. It can be applied by individuals at all levels and in all types of organizations. Although the trait approach does not provide a definitive set of traits, it does provide direction regarding which traits are good to have if one aspires to a leadership position. By taking personality tests and other similar questionnaires, people can gain insight into whether they have certain traits deemed important for leadership, and they can pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses with regard to leadership.

As we discussed previously, managers can use information from the trait approach to assess where they stand in their organization and what they need to do to strengthen their position. Trait information can suggest areas in which their personal characteristics are very beneficial to the company and areas in which they may want to get more training to enhance their overall approach. Using trait information, managers can develop a deeper understanding of who they are and how they will affect others in the organization.

Case Studies

In this section, three case studies (Cases 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3) are provided to illustrate the trait approach and to help you understand how the trait approach can be used in making decisions in organizational settings. The settings of the cases are diverse—directing a research department, running an office supply business, and being head of recruitment for a large bank—but all of the cases deal with trait leadership. At the end of each case, you will find questions that will help in analyzing the cases.

CASE 2.1

Choosing a New Director of Research

Sandra Coke is vice president for research and development at Great Lakes Foods (GLF), a large snack food company that has approximately 1,000 employees. As a result of a recent reorganization, Sandra must choose the new director of research. The director will report directly to Sandra and will be responsible for developing and testing new products. The research division of GLF employs about 200 people. The choice of directors is important because Sandra is receiving pressure from the president and board of GLF to improve the company's overall growth and productivity.

Sandra has identified three candidates for the position. Each candidate is at the same managerial level. She is having difficulty choosing one of them because each has very strong credentials. Alexa Smith is a long-time employee of GLF who started part-time in the mailroom while in high school. After finishing school, Alexa worked in as many as 10 different positions throughout the company to become manager of new product marketing. Performance reviews of Alexa's work have repeatedly

described her as being very creative and insightful. In her tenure at GLF, Alexa has developed and brought to market four new product lines. Alexa is also known throughout GLF as being very persistent about her work: When she starts a project she stays with it until it is finished. It is probably this quality that accounts for the success of each of the four new products with which she has been involved.

A second candidate for the new position is Kelsey Metts, who has been with GLF for 5 years and is manager of quality control for established products. Kelsey has a reputation of being very bright. Before joining GLF, she received her MBA at Harvard, graduating at the top of her class. People talk about Kelsey as the kind of person who will be president of her own company someday. Kelsey is also very personable. On all her performance reviews, she received extra-high scores on sociability and human relations. There isn't a supervisor in the company who doesn't have positive things to say about how comfortable it is to work with Kelsey. Since joining GLF, Kelsey has been instrumental in bringing two new product lines to market.

Thomas Santiago, the third candidate, has been with GLF for 10 years and is often consulted by upper management regarding strategic planning and corporate direction setting. Thomas has been very involved in establishing the vision for GLF and is a company person all the way. He believes in the values of GLF, and actively promotes its mission. The two qualities that stand out above the rest in Thomas's performance reviews are his honesty and integrity. Employees who have worked under his supervision consistently report that they feel they can trust Thomas to be fair and consistent. Thomas is highly respected at GLF. In his tenure at the company, Thomas has been involved in some capacity with the development of three new product lines.

The challenge confronting Sandra is to choose the best person for the newly established director's position. Because of the pressure she feels from upper management, Sandra knows she must select the best leader for the new position.

Questions

1. Based on the information provided about the trait approach in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, which candidate should Sandra Coke select?
2. In what ways is the trait approach helpful in this type of selection?
3. In what ways are the weaknesses of the trait approach highlighted in this case?

CASE 2.2

A Remarkable Turnaround

Carol Baines was married for 20 years to the owner of the Baines Company until he died in a car accident. After his death, Carol decided not to sell the business but to try to run it herself. Before the accident, her only involvement in the business was in informal discussions with her husband over dinner, although she has a college degree in business, with a major in management.

Baines Company was one of three office supply stores in a city with a population of 200,000 people. The other two stores were owned by national chains. Baines was not a large company, and employed only five people. Baines had stable sales of about $200,000 a year, serving mostly the smaller companies in the city. The firm had not grown in a number of years and was beginning to feel the pressure of the advertising and lower prices of the national chains.

For the first 6 months, Carol spent her time familiarizing herself with the employees and the operations of the company. Next, she did a city-wide analysis of companies that had reason to purchase office supplies. Based on her understanding of the company's capabilities and her assessment of the potential market for their products and services, Carol developed a specific set of short-term and long-term goals for the company. Behind all of her planning, Carol had a vision that Baines could be a viable, healthy, and competitive company. She wanted to carry on the business that her husband had started, but more than that she wanted it to grow.

Over the first 5 years, Carol invested significant amounts of money in advertising, sales, and services. These efforts were well spent because the company began to show rapid growth immediately. Because of the growth, the company hired another 20 people.

The expansion at Baines was particularly remarkable because of another major hardship Carol had to confront. Carol was diagnosed with breast cancer a year after her husband died. The treatment for her cancer included 2 months of radiation therapy and 6 months of strong chemotherapy. Although the side effects included hair loss and fatigue, Carol continued to manage the company throughout the ordeal. Despite her difficulties, Carol was successful. Under the strength of her leadership, the growth at Baines continued for 10 consecutive years.

Interviews with new and old employees at Baines revealed much about Carol's leadership. Employees said that Carol was a very solid person. She cared deeply about others and was fair and considerate. They

said she created a family-like atmosphere at Baines. Few employees had quit Baines since Carol took over. Carol was devoted to all the employees, and she supported their interests. For example, the company sponsored a softball team in the summer and a basketball team in the winter. Others described Carol as a strong person. Even though she had cancer, she continued to be positive and interested in them. She did not get depressed about the cancer and its side effects, even though coping with cancer was difficult. Employees said she was a model of strength, goodness, and quality.

At age 55, Carol turned the business over to her two sons. She continues to act as the president but does not supervise the day-to-day operations. The company is doing more than $3.1 million in sales, and it outpaces the other two chain stores in the city.

Questions

1. How would you describe Carol's leadership traits?
2. How big a part did Carol's traits play in the expansion of the company?
3. Would Carol be a leader in other business contexts?

CASE 2.3

Recruiting for the Bank

Pat Nelson is the assistant director of human resources in charge of recruitment for Central Bank, a large, full-service banking institution. One of Pat's major responsibilities each spring is to visit as many college campuses as he can to interview graduating seniors for credit analyst positions in the commercial lending area at Central Bank. Although the number varies, he usually ends up hiring about 20 new people, most of whom come from the same schools, year after year.

Pat has been doing recruitment for the bank for more than 10 years, and he enjoys it very much. However, for the upcoming spring he is feeling increased pressure from management to be particularly discriminating about whom he recommends hiring. Management is concerned about the retention rate at the bank because in recent years as many as 25% of the new hires have left. Departures after the first year have meant lost training dollars and strain on the staff that remain. Although management

(Continued)

(Continued)

understands that some new hires always leave, the executives are not comfortable with the present rate, and they have begun to question the recruitment and hiring procedures.

The bank wants to hire people who can be groomed for higher-level leadership positions. Although certain competencies are required of entry-level credit analysts, the bank is equally interested in skills that will allow individuals to advance to upper management positions as their careers progress.

In the recruitment process, Pat always looks for several characteristics. First, applicants need to have strong interpersonal skills, they need to be confident, and they need to show poise and initiative. Next, because banking involves fiduciary responsibilities, applicants need to have proper ethics, including a strong sense of the importance of confidentiality. In addition, to do the work in the bank, they need to have strong analytical and technical skills, and experience in working with computers. Last, applicants need to exhibit a good work ethic, and they need to show commitment and a willingness to do their job even in difficult circumstances.

Pat is fairly certain that he has been selecting the right people to be leaders at Central Bank, yet upper management is telling him to reassess his hiring criteria. Although he feels that he has been doing the right thing, he is starting to question himself and his recruitment practices.

Questions

1. Based on ideas described in the trait approach, do you think Pat is looking for the right characteristics in the people he hires?
2. Could it be that the retention problem raised by upper management is unrelated to Pat's recruitment criteria?
3. If you were Pat, would you change your approach to recruiting?

LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

Organizations use a wide variety of questionnaires to measure individuals' personality characteristics. In many organizations, it is common practice to use standard personality measures such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®. These measures provide valuable information to the individual and the organization about the individual's unique attributes for leadership and where the individual could best serve the organization.

In this section, the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) is provided as an example of a measure that can be used to assess your personal leadership characteristics. The LTQ quantifies the perceptions of the individual leader and selected observers, such as subordinates or peers. It measures an individual's traits and points the individual to the areas in which that individual may have special strengths or weaknesses.

By taking the LTQ, you can gain an understanding of how trait measures are used for leadership assessment. You can also assess your own leadership traits.

LEADERSHIP TRAIT QUESTIONNAIRE (LTQ)

Instructions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure personal characteristics of leadership. The questionnaire should be completed by the leader and five people who are familiar with the leader. Make five copies of this questionnaire. This questionnaire should be completed by you and five people you know (e.g., roommates, coworkers, relatives, friends).

Using the following scale, have each individual indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each of the fourteen statements below. Do not forget to complete one for yourself.

_____ (leader's name) is

Key:	**1 = Strongly disagree**	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly agree**

1.	**Articulate**: Communicates effectively with others	1	2	3	4	5
2.	**Perceptive**: Is discerning and insightful	1	2	3	4	5
3.	**Self-confident**: Believes in himself/herself and his/her ability	1	2	3	4	5
4.	**Self-assured**: Is secure with self, free of doubts	1	2	3	4	5
5.	**Persistent**: Stays fixed on the goals, despite interference	1	2	3	4	5
6.	**Determined**: Takes a firm stand, acts with certainty	1	2	3	4	5
7.	**Trustworthy**: Is authentic and inspires confidence	1	2	3	4	5
8.	**Dependable**: Is consistent and reliable	1	2	3	4	5
9.	**Friendly**: Shows kindness and warmth	1	2	3	4	5
10.	**Outgoing**: Talks freely, gets along well with others	1	2	3	4	5
11.	**Conscientious**: Is thorough, organized, and controlled	1	2	3	4	5
12.	**Diligent**: Is persistent, hard working	1	2	3	4	5
13.	**Sensitive**: Shows tolerance, is tactful, and sympathetic	1	2	3	4	5
14.	**Empathic**: Understands others, identifies with others	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

1. Enter the responses for Raters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the appropriate columns as shown in Example 2.1. The example provides hypothetical ratings to help explain how the questionnaire can be used.
2. For each of the 14 items, compute the average for the five raters and place that number in the "average rating" column.
3. Place your own scores in the "self-rating" column.

Example 2.1 Leadership Traits Questionnaire Ratings

		Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5	Average rating	Self-rating
1.	Articulate	4	4	3	2	4	3.4	4
2.	Perceptive	2	5	3	4	4	3.6	5
3.	Self-confident	4	4	5	5	4	4.4	4
4.	Self-assured	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5.	Persistent	4	4	3	3	3	3.4	3
6.	Determined	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7.	Trustworthy	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
8.	Dependable	4	5	4	5	4	4.4	4
9.	Friendly	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
10.	Outgoing	5	4	5	4	5	4.6	4
11.	Conscientious	2	3	2	3	3	2.6	4
12.	Diligent	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
13.	Sensitive	4	4	5	5	5	4.6	3
14.	Empathic	5	5	4	5	4	4.6	3

Scoring Interpretation

The scores you received on the LTQ provide information about how you see yourself and how others see you as a leader. The chart allows you to see where your perceptions are the same as those of others and where they differ.

The example ratings show how the leader self-rated higher than the observers did on the characteristic Articulate. On the second characteristic, Perceptive, the leader self-rated substantially higher than others. On the Self-confident characteristic, the leader self-rated quite close to others' ratings but lower. There are no best ratings on this questionnaire. The purpose of the instrument is to give you a way to assess your strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate areas where your perceptions are congruent with those of others and where there are discrepancies.

SUMMARY

The trait approach has its roots in leadership theory that suggested that certain people were born with special traits that made them great leaders. Because it was believed that leaders and nonleaders could be differentiated by a universal set of traits, throughout the 20th century researchers were challenged to identify the definitive traits of leaders.

Around the mid-20th century, several major studies questioned the basic premise that a unique set of traits defined leadership. As a result, attention shifted to incorporating the impact of situations and of followers on leadership. Researchers began to study the interactions between leaders and their context instead of focusing only on leaders' traits. More recently, there have been signs that trait research has come full circle, with a renewed interest in focusing directly on the critical traits of leaders.

From the multitude of studies conducted through the years on personal characteristics, it is clear that many traits contribute to leadership. Some of the important traits that are consistently identified in many of these studies are intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. In addition, researchers have found a strong relationship between leadership and the traits described by the *five-factor personality model*. *Extraversion* was the trait most strongly associated with leadership, followed by *conscientiousness*, *openness*, *low neuroticism*, and *agreeableness*. Another recent line of research has focused on *emotional intelligence* and its relationship to leadership. This research suggests that leaders who are sensitive to their emotions and to the impact of their emotions on others may be leaders that are more effective.

On a practical level, the trait approach is concerned with which traits leaders exhibit and who has these traits. Organizations use personality assessment instruments to identify how individuals will fit within their organizations. The trait approach is also used for personal awareness and development because it allows managers to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and to gain a clearer understanding of how they should try to change to enhance their leadership.

There are several advantages to viewing leadership from the trait approach. First, it is intuitively appealing because it fits clearly into the popular idea that leaders are special people who are out front, leading the way in society. Second, a great deal of research validates the basis of this

perspective. Third, by focusing exclusively on the leader, the trait approach provides an in-depth understanding of the leader component in the leadership process. Last, it has provided some benchmarks against which individuals can evaluate their own personal leadership attributes.

On the negative side, the trait approach has failed to provide a definitive list of leadership traits. In analyzing the traits of leaders, the approach has failed to take into account the impact of situations. In addition, the approach has resulted in subjective lists of the most important leadership traits, which are not necessarily grounded in strong, reliable research.

Furthermore, the trait approach has not adequately linked the traits of leaders with other outcomes such as group and team performance. Last, this approach is not particularly useful for training and development for leadership because individuals' personal attributes are largely stable and fixed, and their traits are not amenable to change.

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