

The Trait Theory

1 The Trait Theory's main emphasis is on traits such as physical appearance, personality, intelligence, social background, and natural ability (Taylor, 1994). Like The Great Man Theory, this theory proposed that 2 leaders were born with certain qualities that make them naturally effective leaders. 3 Hackman and Johnson (2000) reported evidence from many earlier studies that were conducted in order to evaluate the specific traits of highly effective leaders. 4 Although initial research had mainly inconclusive results, upon a closer look with more advanced statistical analyses, recent research has shown that there are certain traits or attributes that appear to be present in many highly effective leaders.

5 Administrative factors, interpersonal factors, and cognitive factors are the three features most evident in effective leaders according to Hackman and Johnson.

8 Administrative factors of leadership involve the ability to plan and organize in addition to a willingness to perform even the most menial tasks that are regularly required of the followers. 6 Interpersonal factors include attributes such as integrity, emotional stability, self-confidence, sensitivity, consistency, as well as conflict management skills, and communication skill. 7 Cognitive factors are those related to natural intelligence. Leaders with these traits are more creative and tend to be better problem solvers, decision makers, and critical thinkers. All of these factors would cultivate trust in the leadership.