

The Trait Theory

1 The Trait Theory of Leadership focused on traits such as personality, physical appearance, social background, intelligence, and ability (Taylor, 1994). The theory believed that 2 leaders were born with certain traits that made them naturally effective leaders. 3 Hackman and Johnson (2000) stated that with many earlier studies performed to evaluate the specific traits of these highly effective leaders, researchers found 4 inconclusive results, but with more advanced statistical analyses, recent researchers have shown that certain traits or attributes appear to be present in many effective leaders.

5 Hackman and Johnson (2000) list the following three traits as the most evident in effective leaders: interpersonal factors, cognitive factors, and administrative factors. The 6 interpersonal factors contain items such as integrity, sensitivity, consistency, emotional stability, self-confidence, communication skills, and conflict management skills. 7 Cognitive factors are said to be related to leadership in that more intelligent leaders are better at problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and creativity. The 8 administrative factors are having the ability to plan and organize as well as being able to perform most of the tasks regularly required of the followers.