

Chapter 2

Traits, Motives, and Characteristics of Leaders

LEADERSHIP: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills

Andrew J. DuBrin, 8th Edition

Learning Objectives

- Identify general and task-related traits that contribute to leadership effectiveness.
- Describe how emotional intelligence contributes to leadership effectiveness.
- Identify key motives that contribute to leadership effectiveness.
- Describe cognitive factors associated with leadership effectiveness.
- Describe the heredity versus environment issue in relation to leadership effectiveness.
- Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the trait approach to leadership.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Personality Traits of Effective Leaders
- II. Leadership Motives
- III. Cognitive Factors and Leadership
- IV. Cognitive (or Analytical) Intelligence
- V. The Influence of Heredity and Environment on
- VI. Leadership
- VII. The Strengths and Limitations of the
- VIII. Trait Approach
- IX. Summary
- X. Key Terms
- XI. Guidelines for Action and Skill Development
- XII. Leadership Case Problem A
- XIII. Leadership Case Problem B
- XIV. Notes

Leadership Characteristics

Trait-Based Leadership Perspective:

When people evaluate managers in terms of their leadership effectiveness, they often scrutinize the manager's traits and personal characteristics.

- The combination of traits and behaviors helps explain differences in leaders' effectiveness.

Characteristics associated with leadership are classified into three broad categories:

- **Personality Traits**
 - **Motives**
 - **Cognitive Factors**
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- Regardless of classification, characteristics point toward the conclusion that effective leaders are made of the *right stuff*.

Personality Traits of Effective Leaders

Leaders have certain personality traits that contribute to leadership effectiveness in many situations – as long as the leader's style fits the situation reasonably well.

A leader's personality traits can be divided into two groups:

- **General Personality Traits**
 - *Traits observable both within and outside the context of work – and related to success and satisfaction in both work and personal life.*
- **Task-Related Traits**
 - *Traits closely associated with task accomplishment*

General Personality Traits

- Self-Confidence
- Humility
- Core Self-Evaluations
- Trustworthiness
- Authenticity
- Extraversion
- Assertiveness
- Enthusiasm, Optimism, and Warmth
- Sense of Humor

The effect of many of the traits is supported by experimental evidence.

Task-Related Personality Traits

- Proactive Personality
- Passion for the Work and the People
- Emotional Intelligence
 - Self-Awareness
 - Self-Management
 - Social Awareness
 - Relationship Management
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Courage

Leadership Motives

- Effective leaders have frequently been distinguished by their motives and needs.
- Leaders have an intense desire to occupy a position of responsibility for others and to control them.
- This desire is evident in four categories of motives and needs:
 - Power
 - Drive and Achievement
 - Tenacity and Resilience
 - Strong Work Ethic

The POWER Motive

- Effective leaders have a strong need to control resources.
- **Personalized Power Motive**
 - Seek power to further their own interest
- **Socialized Power Motive**
 - Seek power to achieve organizational goals or a vision

DRIVE & ACHIEVEMENT Motive

- Leaders are known for working hard to achieve their goals.
- **DRIVE**
 - A propensity to put forth high energy towards achieving goals and to be persistent in applying that energy
 - Usually requires a lot of physical energy and fitness
- **ACHIEVEMENT**
 - The ability to find joy in accomplishment of goals or vision

TENACITY & RESILIENCE Motive

- Leaders are also tenacious and resilient.
- Tenacity multiples in importance for organizational leaders because it does take a long time to implement a new program or to consummate a new business deal.
- Tenacious leaders are resilient when they bounce back from a setback through their continuous efforts.

Cognitive Factors & Leadership

- Leaders must have problem-solving and intellectual skills to gather, process, and store essential information effectively.
- These skills are referred to as cognitive factors.
- **Cognitive Factors:**
 - Cognitive or Analytical Intelligence
 - Practical Intelligence
 - Knowledge of the Business or Group Task
 - Creativity
 - Insight into People and Situations
 - Farsightedness and Conceptual Thinking

Influence of Heredity & Environment on Leadership

Does heredity or environment contribute more to leadership effectiveness? Are leaders born or made?

- Individuals inherit a basic capacity to develop personality traits and mental ability that sets an outer limit on how extensively these traits can be developed.
- Environmental influences, in turn, determine how much of an individual's potential will be developed.
- Genetics play a role in determining leadership potential.
- Emotional intelligence reinforces that leadership is a combination of inherited and learned factors.

Strengths & Limitations of the Trait Approach

Strengths

- Serves as a guide to leader selection
- Can guide individuals in preparing for leadership responsibility

Limitations

- Does not identify which amount of characteristics are absolutely needed
- Can breed an elitist conception of leadership
- Different situations call for different combinations of traits
- Can lead some to be strong at one trade at the exclusion of its opposite

Summary

- The trait-based perspective of leadership asserts certain personality traits, leader motives, and cognitive factors contribute to leadership effectiveness.
- Personality traits include both general traits and task-related traits.
- Leaders can be often distinguished by their needs or motives.
- Cognitive ability is important for leadership success.
- Traits, motives, and cognitive ability derive from a combination of heredity and environment.
- Traits appear to distinguish leaders from non-leaders and effective leaders from less-effective leaders.