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Leadership Trait Theory Dr. Neal

- Trait Approach to Leadership> there are traits generally associated with those perceived to be leaders.
- What is a trait?
  - Characteristics of an individual that reflect *typical* cognitive, emotional or behavioural tendencies
  - Cognitive
  - Emotional
  - Behavioural
  - Limitations of Personality Theory
- No single trait found among leaders = a limitation of the theory
- Perceived Leadership Traits
  - Intelligence (Churchill)
  - Self-confidence (Steve Jobs)
  - Determination (Michael Jordan)
  - Integrity (Billy Graham)
  - Sociability (JFK)
- Popular Personality Model 5-factor Trait Theory
  - Neuroticism – anxious insecure hostile
  - Extraversion – sociable and assertive
  - Openness – informed, creative, insightful
  - Agreeableness – accepting, conforming, trusting, nurturing
  - Conscientiousness – thorough, organized, controlled, dependable, decisive
- Leaders (both perceived and effective) tend to be:
  - High extraversion - most highly associated with leadership – influencing people
  - High conscientiousness 2<sup>nd</sup> most important – getting things done, follow through
  - High openness – getting information, communicating
  - High agreeableness – weakly associated but useful in interviews
  - Low neuroticism
- Emotional Intelligence key - know and manage own and other's emotions
- Assumption these traits will increase organizational effectiveness.
- Specific traits for specific positions – find a 'fit'
- Assessments: LTQ and Myers Briggs (good in team contexts)
- Trait Theory
  - Intuitive appeal
  - Some research support
  - Highlights role of leader
  - Provides benchmarks for those hiring leaders
- Criticisms
  - No definitive list
  - Doesn't take into account SITUATIONAL EFFECTS – leader must adapt.

- Highly subjective
- Doesn't look at traits in relationship to outcome
- Traits are difficult to measure (largely self-report)
- Limited in training and development (if it is a trait can't easily train IQ and extraversion etc).