Discussion Questions

# Chapter 2: Trait Approach

1. Define and discuss the importance of the following traits associated with leaders: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Is this list all-inclusive?

2. Choose one of the main traits associated with leaders. How can it be developed? Demonstrated to others? Identify one or two people who have this trait. How does it serve them in their leadership role?

3. Are some traits harder to acquire than others? Why?

4. How might traits that enable a person to emerge as a leader in one situation not allow them to maintain leadership over time? Can you give an example?

5. What are the “Big Five” personality factors? How do they affect your leadership abilities and capabilities? Which factor(s) was most strongly associated with leadership? Discuss which of these personality traits you feel you possess and give a personal example of how they benefited you in a leadership context.

6. Define/describe emotional intelligence. How big of an impact do you think emotional intelligence has on helping people be successful? Give a personal example of its impact on your life.

7. How can leaders use emotion to facilitate thinking? Give an example.

8. Complete Case 2.1 and answer all questions. If you were one of the candidates applying for this position what would you do to improve your chances of being selected? How would knowledge of the trait approach help you with your preparation and application for this position?

9. Rate yourself on the Leadership Trait Questionnaire. What do you perceive as your greatest strength? Give an example of how your behavior in one situation illustrated this strength. What do you perceive as your greatest weakness? Give an example of how your behavior in one situation illustrated this weakness.

10. Is charisma an inborn trait or can it be acquired later on in life? How might a person acquire charisma?

11. Compare the traits of emotional intelligence and social intelligence. How are they the same? Different? Can a person possess one of these traits without the other?

12. Why do people’s *perceptions* of leaders matter? How does perception fit with the process nature of leadership? How does it fit with the influential nature of leadership?

13. What outcomes of a group’s process might be linked to a leader’s intelligence? Determination?

14. What is meta-analysis? Why might this be a useful approach to studying trait research?

15. Kirkpatrick and Locke postulated that leaders differ from non-leaders on six traits. What do you think non-leadership looks like? Why might some people not want to be leaders?

16. What are some leadership challenges today? (e.g., economic policy, climate change, and world hunger). Which of the leadership traits on Table 2.1 are most relevant to address that challenge? Are any traits needed by leaders today that aren’t listed here?

17. Distinguish between traits, talents, and strengths.

18. Can introverts become effective leaders? What additional traits do they need to develop in order to do so?

19. Explain the curvilinear relationship between leader IQ and perceived leader effectiveness.