

## SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

### **Great Man – from mid 1800s – early 1900s**

Assumptions -

- Leadership development is based on Darwinistic principles
- Leaders are born, not made
- Leaders have natural abilities of power and influence
- 

Criticisms:

- scientific research has not proved that leadership is based on hereditary factors
- leadership was believed to exist only in a few elite individuals

### **Trait – from 1907-1947**

Assumptions:

- A leader has superior or endowed qualities
- Certain individuals possess a natural ability to lead
- Leaders have traits which differentiate them from followers

Criticisms:

- The situation is not considered in this approach
- Many traits are too obscure or abstract to measure and observe
- Studies have not adequately linked traits with leadership effectiveness
- Most trait studies omit leadership behaviors and followers' motivation as mediating variables

### **Behavioral – 1950s-1960s**

Assumptions:

- There is one best way to lead
- Leaders who express high concern for both people and production or consideration and structure will be effective.

Criticisms:

- Situation variables and group processes ignored; studies failed to identify the situations where specific types of leadership behaviors are relevant

### **Situational/Contingency – 1950s – early 1980s**

Assumptions:

- Leaders act differently depending on the situation
- The situation determines who will emerge as the leader
- Different leadership behaviors are required for different situations

Criticisms:

- Most contingency theories are ambiguous, making it difficult to formulate specific, testable propositions
- Theories lack accurate measures

### **Influence – mid 1920 – 1977**

Assumptions:

- Leadership is an influence or social exchange process

Criticisms:

- More research needed on effect charisma has on the leader-follower interaction

### **Reciprocal – 1978 – present**

Assumptions:

- Leadership is a relational process
- Leadership is a shared process
- Emphasis on followership

Criticisms:

- Lack of research
- Further clarification needed on similarities and differences between charismatic and transforming leadership
- Process of collaboration, change, and empowerment are difficult to achieve and measure

**LEADERSHIP: A relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good.**

**From Exploring Leadership, by Komives, Lucas, and McMahon**