LITERATURE REVIEW:

There are distinct epistemological lineages to the way academics conceptualise and define Leadership. Some schools of thought view leadership as a trait in a person, whereas some view it as a process between the practitioner and the subjects, and there are still others who view leadership as the coming together of the person and the practice. There are also varied views on what branch of knowledge does leadership belong to, there are voices that claim that leadership is a subject of psychology and others who claim that it is a discipline within management. This paper attempts to review available literature on three of the many frameworks or epistemological lineages in leadership, i.e., The Trait Approach, Leader-Member Exchange Theory and Transformational Leadership. As a beginning, a brief review of leading views on the definition of leadership could be helpful.

Butt (2007, p.191) : describing personality traits as enduring ways ‘in which one individual differs from another’, taking the form of categories existing beyond time and culture within which, subjects are cast.

Kelly (Stevens, 2002, p.199): although writing from a similarly clinical perspective, presents such attempts at escaping categorisation as naïve. Kelly recognized how subjects negotiate their worlds by utilizing personal bipolar constructs such as ‘lively-reserved’. He developed a method called the repertory grid to plot these bipolar, personally idiosyncratic correlations arguing a humanistic critique of personal autonomy through conscious engagement with latent personal meanings. General categorizations are thus rendered meaningless and misleading, diminishing a patient’s ability for personal agency and the possibility of change from clinical interventions.

Peter Drucker who is regarded as ‘the father of modern management’ (Flaherty, 1999) : suggests that traditionally, leadership has been viewed as a process in which a superior person included a group to pursue the goals established by him. Drucker further suggests that the ethos of such traditional and somewhat ‘Palaeolithic’ view on leadership has been preserved and passed on through the generations even to this day when people see a leader as the ‘indispensable man’ (Flaherty, 1999) (Smith, 2006), (Rothschild, 2008).
The ‘Trait Approach’ was one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership with an intent to answer some of these questions. Within the ‘Traits’ framework, leadership is seen as an outcome of the amalgamation of valued characteristics of people’s personalities. It rests on the basic premise that with the presence of some important characteristics, like intelligence, insight, sociability, integrity, charisma et.al., in a person, they could become a leader, as represented in the works of Stogdill (1948), Mann (1959), Lord, DeVader, & Zaccaro (2001):

Zaccaro (2001): specified the following as key leader attributes predicting charismatic influence: cognitive ability, self-confidence, socialized power motives, risk propensity, social skills, and nurturance.

Zaccaro (2001): suggest that leaders differ somewhat from non-leaders in their preferences for extroversion, intuition, thinking, and judging, although some contradictory findings have been reported for sensing and perceiving. We hasten to add McCauley’s cautionary note that “there is evidence that all 16 MBTI types assume leadership positions” (p. 414)

House, Hanges, et al. (1999): investigated a number of leader attributes in a large multinational, multi-method, and multiphase study, titled Project GLOBE (see also Abdalla & Al-Homoud, 2001). This effort has found that (a) the influences of some leader attributes on key leadership criteria extend across cultures and that (b) the influences of other attributes present culture specific effects.

Connelly et al. (2001): indicated that dominance and achievement needs were not associated with leader career achievement and rated solution quality to leadership problems.

Chan and Drasgow (2001): argued that this individual difference construct “affects a leader’s or leader-to-be’s decision to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader” (p. 482)

Social Appraisal Skills

Zaccaro and his colleagues (Zaccaro, 1999, 2001, 2002; Zaccaro, Foti, et al., 1991; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991): have argued that social appraisal skills, or social intelligence, reside at the heart of effective leadership. Social intelligence refers to “the ability to
understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding”

Zaccaro (2002): defined social intelligence as reflecting the following social capacities—social awareness, social acumen, response selection, and response enactment. These capacities refer to a leader’s understanding of the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of others in a social domain and his or her selection of the responses that best fit the contingencies and dynamics of that domain.

Wong and Law (2002): examined the effects of emotion management skills on job performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. They also examined the “emotional labor” of the job as a moderator of these predicted influences. Emotional labor refers to the extent to which the job frequently or infrequently requires incumbents to display particular emotions and to manage and regulate their emotional expressions, particularly in response to the emotion expressions of others. Wong and Law hypothesized that emotion management skills would be more strongly related to performance in highly emotionally laborious jobs than in those involving less emotional labor. They found that emotional intelligence was related to job performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the emotional labor of the job indeed moderated the effects of emotional management skills, such that these skills were more strongly related to job performance, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions when jobs demanded high emotional regulation.

These findings reflect the influence of a leader’s emotional intelligence on his or her own job outcomes.

Leader Problem-Solving Skills, Expertise, and Tacit Knowledge

Mumford, Zaccaro, et al. (2000): argued that leadership represented a form of social problem solving and that, accordingly, social problem-solving skills were important proximal leader attributes predicting leader performance.

Connelly et al. (2000): found that skills in problem construction and solution generation predicted leader career achievement, even after controlling for the influences of general intelligence, creative thinking capacities, personality, and motives.
**Sternberg, 2002, p. 11:** The application of problem solving and appraisal skills to experience drives the acquisition of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be defined as “what one needs to know to succeed in a given environment, and is knowledge that is typically not explicitly taught and often not even verbalized”

**Leader Traits and Attributes: Some Propositions**

**Chen, Gully, Whiteman, and Kilcullen (2000):** define these as “trait-like” individual differences and “state-like” individual differences, respectively. Trait-like individual differences are not situationally bound and thus are relatively stable across time and contexts. State-like individual differences are more specific to certain situations, and they reflect skills, competences, expertise, belief systems, and attitudes that exert influence largely in response to situational parameters.