



Reevaluating the Age-Effectiveness Paradigm in Leadership: Insights from Film

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Introduction

- Age has been a significant factor in allocating responsibilities and roles within society.
- The average age of...
 - The US House of Representatives is 58.
 - The UK House of Commons is 51.
 - The parliament in Japan is 55.
- Noticing this common trend, we ask the question; **Is there a curvilinear relationship between leader age and effectiveness?**
- Older leaders found to be more amicable and positive (Thrasher, G. R., Biermeier-Hanson, B., & Dickson, M. W. (2019))
- The study asked more than 400 managers from various industries in the UK about their leadership styles. It found that age plays a big role in how managers lead. Older managers tend to involve others more in decision-making (consultative, participative, and delegative styles), preferring to make decisions collectively rather than on their own. In contrast, younger managers are more likely to make decisions without necessarily getting input from others. (Oshagbemi, T. (2004))
- Another study looked at how the age of mayors influences their leadership style during discussions and debates in council meetings. They found that the level of activity increased as the mayors got older, reaching a peak in their mid-fifties.
- The researchers also looked at how political experience affected this relationship. They found that less experienced mayors tended to be less active, regardless of their age. But among more experienced mayors, those in their sixties and seventies were the least active. (Schubert, J. N. (1988))
- No relationship found between leaders age and leader effectiveness (Boerrigter, C.M.M. (2015))
- **Hypothesis:** A curvilinear relationship is present between leadership effectiveness and age, with peak leadership effectiveness being around middle age.

Methods

- A **historiometric design** was employed
- There was a minimum cell size of 20 to 30 cases for each leadership style according to the CIP model
- Total sample size of 220 movies aimed to ensure representation of less prevalent leader styles.
- Inclusion criteria for selected movies:
 1. Portrayal of central character displaying leadership based on input from multiple judges.
 2. Must have been released in U.S. theaters between 1996 and 2006.
 3. Top 50 highest-grossing films of the year it was released.
 4. Not a re-release from an earlier time.
- This ensured that the movies were similar, and it made it easier to compare them.
- It is reflective of what the U.S. movie industry was like around the turning point of the 21st century.
- Source Material:
 - Utilized publicly available online sources: Youtube, Wikipedia, and Rotten Tomatoes.
 - Movie trailers gave us a "gist" of the central crisis faced by the leader.
 - Wikipedia offered written plot summaries and movie characteristics.
 - Rotten Tomatoes provided ratings from critics and viewers.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the leader helped the group achieve their goal or outcome as a result of their social influence. Coded on a 5-point Likert scale.
- The judges consisted of five graduate students in industrial and organizational psychology and two upper-level undergraduate students in psychology.
- Judges participated in 20-hour training program and practiced applying to 10 movies.

Results



- A scatterplot graph was created for the data in our experiment, with a best-fit quadratic line overlaid on top of the scatterplot.

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.772	2	.386	.802	.450
Residual	93.832	195	.481		
Total	94.603	197			

The independent variable is age.

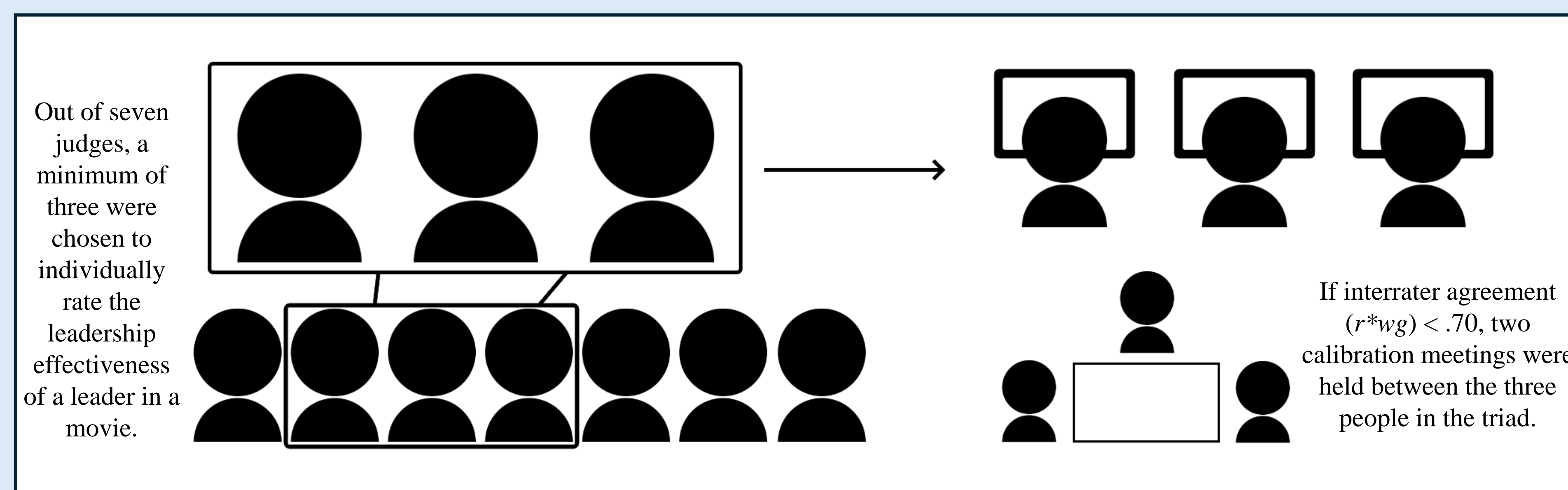
Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
age ** 2	.000	.000	-.338	-1.186	.237
(Constant)	3.351	.311		10.767	<.001

- According to the ANOVA table, there is not a significant difference between age groups with respect to leadership effectiveness ($p = .45$).

- According to the Coefficients table, there is not a significant correlation between the scatterplot and the best-fit quadratic (curvilinear) line ($p = .24$).

Coding Procedure



Discussion

- Findings
 - Results did not suggest a curvilinear relationship between leadership and age.
 - ANOVA analysis
 - Not a significant difference between age groups with respect to leadership effectiveness ($p = .45$).
 - Suggests consistent leadership effectiveness throughout all age groups.
 - Coefficients
 - Not a significant curvilinear correlation between leadership effectiveness and age ($p = .24$).
 - Even if there was a relationship, it wouldn't follow the quadratic model.
- Significance
 - Challenges assumption that older leaders are more effective
 - Useful in political sphere
- Limitations
 - Fiction may not dictate reality
 - Inclusion criteria may have introduced bias, limiting generalizability
- Future Research
 - Utilize real-world examples of leaders
 - Qualitative research methods may offer more nuanced explanations
 - Investigate if stereotypes influence how people vote
- Conclusion
 - Suggests that age alone is not a reliable predictor of effectiveness

References

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