A Second-Order Meta-Analysis on Leadership Effectiveness

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Meta-analysis is a quantitative method to review a set of empirical studies and aggregately estimate the population or true effect by correcting sampling error and statistical artifacts in this sample of studies. Thousands of meta-analyses have been conducted on different topics, including leadership and team. Nowadays, it is hard to come across a construct or relationship involving leadership that has not been meta-analyzed.

Its contribution is well acknowledged, nevertheless, meta-analysis has developed into a distinctive and large literature. Many meta-analyses have been published on a variety of topics in different academic fields. for the same topic, there can be multiple meta-analyses over time. Their approaches and conclusions may not necessarily be consistent with each other. To make better use of meta-analyses, scholars have developed novel methods to help extract more information from the literature, which is collectively called the secondary uses of meta-analytic data (SUMAD).

The authors analyzed 133 leadership effectiveness meta-analyses from the literature. The authors categorized leadership variables into three types: positive or relational leadership behaviors, task or control leadership behaviors, and negative or passive leadership behaviors. They also categorized effectiveness variables into 4 categories (i.e., attitudes and well-being; interpersonal; motivations, values, and interests; and performance), partially based on other second-order meta-analyses. The authors concluded second-order meta-analyses for those variable pairs with at least two meta-analytical reports. The current study demonstrates that there has been a critical mass of meta-analytical publications to conduct a second-order meta-analysis on leadership effectiveness. The implication of such a study will be discussed in the talk.

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