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Leadership Styles in Hollywood-Based War Movies: An Analysis for Motivating Young Leaders

in Military Service

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Abstract:

Film has a huge impact on the human mind. The major aim of this paper is to highlight the style of leadership portrayed in academy award winning war films. This can help leadership educators to incorporate specific movies in their leadership courses, particularly those for military personnel. This may motivate the young military leaders for better performance in their roles. Most of the movies portray transformational, transactional, and authoritarian styles of leadership. Looking more closely, the movie heroes are presented as transformational, ethical, transactional, situational, follower-based, and servant leaders.

Key words:

Leadership Style, War Movies, Leadership Courses, Military Service

Introduction

Students value films as a medium for contextualizing actions that demonstrate different leadership styles, and research suggests films can communicate, embody and articulate the effectiveness of behaviors of leadership (Rajendran & Andrew, 2014). Toward this end, Hollywood has supplied a variety of award-winning files that portray the heroism and sacrifices of different military leaders in battlefield. These movies could significantly change the behavior of the newly appointed military leaders, yet there is limited scholarly literature on the leadership styles in war films. Therefore, we have explored different movies in this regard and connected those in the leadership literature.

Walz, Creamer, and Kaufman (2013) articulated that students and professors have used the motion pictures in course of academic instruction. More specifically, instructors show movies to students to illustrating important learning points or bring the learners into higher levels of learning. Movies have a significant impact on human behavior and can be helpful for applying lessons of theory to practice. According to Walt Disney (n.d.), "Movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood." Moreover, Sivakumar and Thirumoorthy (2018) argue "entertainment-education in the form of a telenovela or soap opera can help viewers learn socially desired behaviors in a positive way from models portrayed in these programs" (p. 160). This perspective is based on Social Learning Theory, first coined by Albert Bandura in 1963. According to Grusec (1992), the theory or of social learning behavior is based on the following tenets:

1. Learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context, however it is not purely affective.

2. Learning can occur by vicarious reinforcement, like observing a behavior *and* by observing the consequences of the behavior.

3. Learning happens trough a specific process, like by observation, extraction of information from those observations, and making decisions about the performance of the behavior.

4. Reinforcement in an integral part of learning process.

5. The learner is an active recipient of information; cognition, environment, and behavior all mutually influence each other (through reciprocal determinism).

In order to take full advantage of the potential of social learning behavior, leadership educators need to consider the intent and appropriate framing for various resources (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). To help facilitate this process, we pursued the following objectives: (1) identify the leadership styles displayed in different war, (2) conceptualize the prescribed behavior for the group leaders who lead military personnel in the battlefield, and (3) highlight the potential for integration of movies in military leadership education.

Methodological Approach

In total, we identified seven war movies to critically analyze. The movies were selected based on the following criteria:

i)   Based on war experiences (involving formal military bodies),

ii) Won at least one Academy Award,

iii) Internet Movie Database (IMDb) rating ≥ 7.5,

iv)   Rotten Tomato Score ≥ 75%, and

v)   Metacritic Score ≥ 65%.

IMDb Ratings

(Source: https://help.imdb.com/article/imdb/track-movies-tv/faq-for-imdb-ratings/G67Y87TFYYP6TWAV#)

All the registered members of IMDb can cast their votes (from 1 to 10) for any movie listed in the IMDb website. IMDb takes the votes cast by the registered users and uses them to calculate a single rating. However, IMDb is using a weighted average rating instead of arithmetic mean or median. The following formula is used to calculate the Top Rated 250 titles. This formula provides a true 'Bayesian estimate', which takes into account the number of votes each title has received, minimum votes required to be on the list, and the mean vote for all titles:

Weighted rating = $(v \div (v+m)) \times R + (m \div (v+m)) \times C$

Where,

R = average for the movie (mean) = (rating)

v = number of votes for the movie = (votes)

m = minimum votes required to be listed in the Top Rated list (currently 25,000)

C = the mean vote across the whole report

Rotten Tomato Ratings

(Source: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/about)

Rotten Tomatoes' Tomatometer score represents the percentage of professional critic reviews that are positive for a given film or television show. A Tomatometer score is calculated for a movie or TV show after it receives at least five reviews. The scale of Tomatometer is as follows:

- When at least 60% of reviews for a movie or TV show are positive, a red tomato is displayed to indicate 'Fresh' status.

- When less than 60% of reviews for a movie or TV show are positive, a green splat is displayed to indicate 'Rotten' status.

The most prestigious score for Tomatometer is 'Certified Fresh' status. A movie with certified fresh status should have following parameters:

- A steady Tomatometer score of 75% or higher.

- At least five reviews from Top Critics.

- Films in wide release must have a minimum of 80 reviews.

- Films in limited release must have a minimum of 40 reviews.

- Only individual seasons of a TV show are eligible, and each must have a minimum of 20 reviews.

Metacritic Ratings

(Source: https://www.metacritic.com/about-metascores)

Metacritic is a website that aggregates reviews of media products: films, TV shows, music albums, video games, and formerly, books. The rating of the Metacritic is termed as METASCORE. It is a weighted average of the published critic reviews contained in the chart on that page, and thus does not include any votes or comments from our users.

	General Meaning of Score	Movies, TV & Music	Games
🟩	Universal Acclaim	81 - 100	90 - 100
🟩	Generally Favorable Reviews	61 - 80	75 - 89
🟨	Mixed or Average Reviews	40 - 60	50 - 74
🟥	Generally Unfavorable Reviews	20 - 39	20 - 49
🟥	Overwhelming Dislike	0 - 19	0 - 19

Movies Analyzed

The seven movies identified for analysis cover a range of time periods and award categories, as outlined in the following table.

Name of the Movie	Ratings	Year of release and Director	Awards	Plot
Schindler's List	IMDb: 8.9 Rotten Tomatoes: 97% Metacritic: 93%	1993 Steven Spielberg	Seven Academy Awards (Best picture, best director), National Film Registry, AFI# 8th	World War II
Saving Private Ryan	IMDb: 8.3 Rotten Tomatoes: 93% Metacritic: 91%	1998 Steven Spielberg	Five Academy Awards (Best Picture, Best Actor) National Film Registry	World War II
Inglourious Basterds	IMDb: 8.3 Rotten Tomatoes: 88% Metacritic: 69%	2009 Quentin Tarantino	One Academy Award (Best supporting actor), Cannes Film Festival's best actor,	World War II

			BAFTA, Golden Globe	
The Bridge of the River Kwai	IMDb: 8.2 Rotten Tomatoes: 94% Metacritic: 84%	1957 David Lean	Seven Academy Awards (Best picture), National Film Registry, AFI listed, 11th greatest British film of the 20th century	World War II
Platoon	IMDb: 8.1 Rotten Tomatoes: 88 % Metacritic: 92%	1986 Oliver Stone	Four Academy awards (best picture), AFI# 83,	Vietnam War
Black Hawk Down	IMDb: 7.7 Rotten Tomatoes: 96% Metacritic: 74%	2001 Ridley Scott	Two Academy Awards	Somalian Civil War
The Hurt Locker	IMDb: 7.6 Rotten Tomatoes: 97% Metacritic: 94%	2009 Kathryn Bigelow	Six Academy Awards (Best Picture, 1st best director as female)	Iraq War

Leadership Styles Identified

Our approach was a class project for Virginia Tech's LDRS 5454 course: Leadership Foundation for Diverse Contexts. The purposive selection of the movies was done to complete the project within the assigned short period of the class. Three textbooks guided the analysis, including Northhouse' (2019) *Leadership: Theory and Practice*; Jackson and Perry's (2018) *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership*; and Rath and Conchie's (2008) *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*. The selected movies were viewed and described in the form of a blog post, reflecting upon leadership styles (i.e., approaches) described in the text books. The blog posts also highlighted insights from other bloggers, websites, and related resources. Class discussions followed each blog post allowing for critique of subjective biasness that may have influenced perspectives on the movies. More movies could be included for more robust analysis and

categorization. The project emerged from dialogue within the class, and the target was merely to identify the leadership styles projected in the chosen films. Epistemologically, the findings of this study could help the young military leaders reflect the ideal and prescribed characters in the movies, which could improve their leadership performances professionally.

Findings and Discussions

Case 1: Schindler's List

(Movie Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEY0dQAF4k4)

Schindler's List is an American epic historical period drama film released in 1993, directed and co-produced by Steven Spielberg and written by Steven Zaillian. It is based on the novel *Schindler's Ark* by Australian novelist Thomas Keneally. According to Richard and Richard (2005), this movie is often listed among the greatest films ever made. It has won seven Academy Awards (out of twelve nominations), including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Original Score, as well as numerous other awards (including seven BAFTAs and three Golden Globes). In 2007, the American Film Institute ranked the film 8th on its list of the 100 best American films of all time (American Film Institute, 2007). The Library of Congress (2004) selected it for preservation in the National Film Registry. *Schindler's List* illustrates the profoundly nightmarish Holocaust. It re-creates a dark, frightening period during World War II, when Nazi-occupied Krakow first dispossessed Jews of their businesses and homes, then placed in ghettos and forced labor camps in Plaszow, and finally resettled in concentration camps for execution. Oskar Schindler, a German businessperson and an opportunist member of the Nazi party acquires a factory for the production of mess kits and cooking paraphernalia. Without prior experience, he gained a contact, Itzhak Stern, who has

links with the underground Jewish business community in the ghetto. They loan him the money

for the factory in return for a small share of products produced for trade in the black market.

Schindler witnesses the horrifying visions of the Holocaust and the toll it takes on the Jewish

people. Schindler's motivations switch from profit to human sympathy and by lavishly bribing

the SS officials; he is able to save over 1,100 Jews from death in the gas chambers. I found two

distinct leadership pattern for two characters in this movie: Oskar Schindler is the

transformational leader and Nazi commander Amon Goeth is an autocratic leader. These findings

also supported by Lavella (2013), a blogger who concluded that at the very beginning of the

movie, it is clear Schindler is a perceptive, charismatic businessperson who can do anything to

make a fortune. Therefore, when Nazi law encourages the exploitation of Jews as workers,

Schindler jumps at the chance to take advantage of the scenario. However, as the war progresses

and by observing the fate of the Jews becomes worse, Schindler slowly transforms to a

courageous, sympathetic leader determined to use his power and persuasive charisma for the

betterment of the Jews. Sacrificing his safety and wealth to help others, Schindler bravely stands

up for what he believes in through bribing Nazi/SS commanders to protect his Jewish workers

and keep his factory a safe "sub-camp" for them. Demonstrating courage, kindness,

assertiveness, and charisma all in the face of one of history's most ruthless regimes Schindler

provides an extraordinary example of leadership still relevant today. On the other hand, the Nazi

commander Amon Goeth is an autocratic leader, using a ruthless, authoritarian leadership style

to assert his power and control over the Jews of the Plaszów work camp. Deeply rooted in Nazi

philosophy, Goeth rarely listens to input from others, refuses to admit he is wrong for fear of

showing weakness and dictates all decisions in the camp–including shooting random prisoners

from his Villa balcony for fun.

Case 2: Saving Private Ryan

(Movie Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pddSegN5dLg)

Saving Private Ryan is an epic war film directed by renowned filmmaker Steven Spielberg and produced by Robert Rodat. This movie was released in 1998 based on the Invasion of the Normandy in the Second World War. This movie achieved very good critics from the worldwide and praised a lot to Spielberg and Tom Hanks as Captain Miller in the movie. Moreover, this movie has a huge commercial success; in the USA, it has earned 216.8 million USD and worldwide 481.8 million USD (wikipedia.org). This movie was nominated in eleven categories for a seventy-first academy award and won the awards in five categories including Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Sound Mixing, Best Film Editing, and Best Sound Effects Editing (oscars.org). Besides Oscars, this movie also won multiples awards worldwide. This movie was an ethno-biography of Private Ryan, a Second World War veteran. The plot of the movie was based on the Second World War. Three of the four sons of the Ryan family were killed in Warfield. Therefore, the fourth son (James Ryan affiliated with 101st Airborne Division in Normandy) was ordered to back home immediately. Captain Miller of the second Ranger Battalion leads a breakout on Omaha Beach to find Ryan and bring him back home. Captain Miller choose six people the assist him for this mission and started to find Ryan in the different battlefields. Before reaching Ryan, Captain Miller lost two men on the road and finally found him near Ramelle. Ryan was defending a tactically important bridge near Ramelle from the German Soldiers. Ryan learned that all of his brothers were killed in battle and felt sorrow for them. However, he refused to leave his post. Therefore, Captain Miller had to make a quick, tough decision to defend the bridge together, and afterward bring him back. By this time, they took preparation with their small arms and ammunition to defend the Germans. Within a few

hours, the heavily armed German Troops came to the bridge and resisted by US Army. During the fighting, most of the men of that company were killed including captain miller. However, he continued to shoot his last bullet before the air strike support. Reiben and Ryan are with Miller as he utters his last words, "James... earn this. Earn it."

This movie I choose for discussion because of the leadership quality of Captain Miller. He was a school teacher in Pennsylvania and his target after finding Ryan was to go home and pass time with family. Therefore, he was processing the trait of transactional leadership traits. However, his human qualities were found just after releasing a captured German Soldier. He never compelled his fellow team members to do anything. When one of his team members refused to continue the mission, he just told him his own story and that soldier was with the group. Moreover, to me, he was an innovative leader and willing to take the responsibilities on his own shoulders. During the last scene, he motivated the team members to resist the bridge with low arms and ammunition. He motivated them to make the stick bombs for the tiger tanks with the help of the field manual. He also took the responsibility of frontline fighting and keep Ryan with him. Therefore, he could save Ryan. In addition, rest of the members were assigned with their capacity. This trait also showed 'transformational leadership' quality to me. Because the bridge resist was not their mission. However, he and his fellow teammates were agreed to serve beyond their objectives, though they knew that they would not survive. Also, to me, it is a follower-based approach to leadership. He always discussed with his followers and his followers' feedback was always welcome. He directed to accomplish the team goal.

Chuck Homes (2014b), former Veteran, entrepreneur, the author found ten leadership lesson for this movie. According to him, Capt. Miller showed examples as leads not with just word but by example, honesty is the best, establish authority and create purpose, do not question

the validity of a mission, learn from the mistake, the leader is willing to make the quick and critical decision, emotions not shown to the soldiers, leaders can be at all levels, leaders listen and consult, and finally lead until death you part. These qualities are portrayed by strong positive leaders. He also recommended that every military leader must watch this movie and report back their leadership learning reflection from this movie.

According to Dave (2012b), Captain Muller is termed as a great leader. They analyzed Cpt. Muller as open to feedback to the fellow teammate but loyal to the chain of command, tough decision maker and empathy personnel. His motivation to Private Reibien was: "Sometimes I wonder how my wife's ever going to recognize me when I eventually get home to her,' he tells them, 'and how I'll ever be able to tell her about days like today. If finding Ryan is the thing I need to do to get back to my wife, then that's my mission." This statement helps Private Reibien to stick the mission. According to Saving Private Ryan (2014), in addition, Captain Muller, Sergeant Horvath and James Ryan also portrayed the leadership traits; which show the principles of follower based leadership style. Sergeant Horvath motivated Captain Muller to continue this mission until he found Ryan, which showed inspiring and motivating characteristics to others. This portion helps me to resemble the idea of follower based leadership style. The leader should learn to, listen from the followers, and continue the mission with the fellow members, that is a follower based approach.

Rogers (2015) found the leadership qualities from Captain Muller as follows: "Know when you need to give the orders, Don't be afraid to show your weaknesses, reveal as much of yourself as you need to (when you need to), don't gripe about your superiors to your team, don't lie about a task you don't believe in, admit when you've made a mistake, and Let everyone know you'll lead from the front."

Finally, it could be concluded that *Saving Private Ryan* is a great piece of Steve Spielberg portraying an epic leadership style. It is composed of transactional, transformational and follower based approach of leadership. Moreover, military leaders should watch this movie and reflecting their learned leadership lesson from this movie.

Case 3: Inglourious Basterds

(Movie Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoCwsMoQW1I).

Inglourious Basterds was released in 2009, a black comedy war film written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. This movie starred Brad Pitt, Christoph Waltz, Michael Fassbender, Eli Roth, Diane Kruger, Til Schweiger, and Mélanie Laurent. The film is based on a remarkable story of assassinating Nazi Germany's leadership, one planned by Shosanna Dreyfus (Laurent), a young French Jewish cinema proprietor, and the other by a team of Jewish American soldiers led by First Lieutenant Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt). It received multiple awards and nominations, among them eight Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay. For his role as Landa, Waltz won the Cannes Film Festival's Best Actor Award, as well as the BAFTA, Screen Actors Guild, Golden Globe, and Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor (wikipedia.org, oscars.org).

This movie was divided into multiple chapters. In the very first chapter of the movie, SS colonel Hans Landa interrogates French dairy farmer Perrier La Padite on the last unaccounted-for Jewish family in the area. Colonel Landa has given an offer to the Paite to leave his family alone for the rest of the war in exchange the hiding location of that family and La Padite reveals that the Dreyfus family is hidden under the floor. Landa orders SS soldiers to shoot through the floorboards. Only Shosanna, a young woman, escapes. The second chapter was based on a story

of 1944. Three years later after Shosanna escaping, Lieutenant Aldo Raine of the First Special Service Force has recruited eight Jewish-American soldiers to the Basterds for spreading fear among the German soldiers by killing and scalping them. Moreover, the Basterds also recruit a German soldier called Sergeant Hugo Stiglitz, who murdered thirteen Nazi officers. The third chapter on Fredrick Zoller, a German war hero who killed 250 soldiers in a single battle came closer with Shosanna who operates a cinema in Paris under an assumed name. A Nazi propaganda film was developed on the bravery and success stories of Zoller. Obsessed with Shosanna, Zoller convinces German propaganda minister to hold the premiere of the film at her cinema. Shosanna and her original lover, Marcel, plot a plan to kill the Nazi leaders attending the premiere by setting the cinema ablaze. In the next chapter, British Royal Marine Lieutenant Archie Hicox is planning an attack at the premiere with the Basterds. Hicox visited a tavern with Hugo Stiglitz and Basterd Wilhelm Wicki to meet an undercover agent. During the conversation, Hicox was exposed for his unusual accent. Everyone was killed except Wilhelm and Hammersmark during the open shootout. The final chapter of this movie illustrates the premier day of the movie. During the screening, Zoller slips away to the projection room to see Shosanna. Zoller and Shosanna killed each. As the movie reached its climax, spliced-in footage of Shosanna tells the audience that they are about to be killed by a Jew. Having locked the doors of the cinema, Marcel ignites a pile of flammable nitrate film behind the screen as Shosanna's image laughs. Two Basterd members came out with guns and killed everyone in the theater.

I choose this movie because it has illustrated that movies based on national war heroes may encourage other soldiers during the war period. It has a strong influence on the other people's life. I found two strong leadership characters in this movie, one in Colonel Landa and other one is Lieutenant Aldo Raine. Both of them were patriots and loyal to their own beliefs and

values. Landa has processed a directive leadership category with huge cruelty, racist, and inhumane killer. He was very much focused, influential, and cunning to achieve his own goal. I could conclude him as a transactional leader who is very much goal oriented. However, at the very end of the movie, he betrayed the Nazis for his own safe passage for escaping. However, Raine was a very much transformational leader who could motivate other people to serve in the war to kill Nazis. He was also cruel to Nazis and wanted to spread fear among the Nazis. This is not only to war the war but also broken the Nazis psychologically. I found him as a transformational leader. All Basterds were highly motivated by him and risking their lives by invading the Nazi's territory. The Meridian: Knowledge Solution (2016) also illustrated Landa as a charismatic leader with incredibly driven and focused people.

Case 4: The Bridge of the River Kwai

(Movie link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ2hSDILLMU)

The Bridge on the River Kwai was released in 1957, directed by David Lean and based on the novel Le Pont de la Rivière Kwaï (1952) by Pierre Boulle (Wikipedia.org). The cast of this movie included William Holden, Jack Hawkins, Alec Guinness, and Sessue Hayakawa. This film has won seven Academy Awards in multiple categories (oscar.org). According to American Film Institute (2007), in 1997, the film was deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the United States Library of Congress. It has been included on the American Film Institute's list of best American films ever made. In 1999, the British Film Institute voted The Bridge on the River Kwai the 11th greatest British film of the 20th Century (wikipedia.org, Oscar.org).

In early 1943, the Japanese Army prisoned British POWs in a camp of Burma. The commandant, Colonel Saito ordered to construct a railway bridge on the river Kwai to connect the Bangkok and Rangoon to the all prisoners regardless to the rank. The senior British officer, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson, found this order as a complete violation of Geneva Convention and disagree to build the bridge. Saito threatens to have them shot, but Nicholson refuses to back down to work and Saito left the prisoners standing all day in the intense heat and locked Nicolson in an iron box.

Temporarily, the prisoners worked as little as possible on bridgework and tried to delay the work. There was an obligation for Saito to finish the work by a deadline and if he missed the deadline, he would be obliged to commit ritual suicide. Nicholson was shocked by the poor job performance of his men. He ordered Captain Reeves and Major Hughes to design and build a proper bridge to maintain his men's morale. The team found that the design of the Japanese Engineers was faulty and the construction site was selected poorly. They decided to build a new bridge downstream. Shears, an American Navy man, was compelled to volunteer to destroy the bridge by a British Major Warden. In the meantime, Nicholson ordered his men hard to complete the bridge on time. Ethically, this work may exemplify the ingenuity and hard work of the British Army long after the war's end. With the help of Siamese women and village chief, Warden Shears, and Canadian Lieutenant Joyce reached the river in time. Shears and Joyce plant explosives on the bridge towers below the water line at night.

However, by next morning the water level has dropped, uncovering the connecting wires of the explosives to the detonator. Nicholson spotted the wire and brought it to Saito's attention. As the train approached, both of them rushed to the bank of river for investigate. Joyce attempted to detonate the explosive and stab Saito to death. Nicholson tried to stop Joyce to detonate the

explosives. Joyce was wounded by Japanese fire and Shears swam across the river, but is himself shot. Warden fired a mortar that wounded Nicholson. The dying colonel was able to detonate the explosives in time, and the crossing train was submerged into the river. Finally, after the successful mission the Warden was left the spot with the help of Siamese women and village chief.

There are two dominant leadership roles played in this movie: Colonel Saito and Lieutenant Nicholson. I found Colonel Saito as an authoritarian, directive, path-goal oriented leader. His only goal target was to complete the bridge in time with fear or rewards. This also falls under the category of transactional leadership. However, Nicolson seems an indirect, path-goal oriented leader, with high ethics and moralities. He tried to glorify his character as a good leader to his soldiers by performing his job perfectly. The findings are supported by Guibla (2016), as well as Kapur and Gahlot (2012). However, Kapur and Gahlot (2012) also criticized the role of Nicolson for his role in very last part of the movie. According to Aristotle, a leader should process the theory of wisdom (both theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom). According to Presidential Global Scholar (2012), both Saito and Nicolson were path-goal leaders. According to them, "Both Colonel Nicholson and Colonel Saito's style of leadership could also be described as task-motivated, as described by the Contingency Theory of leadership since there was a very specific goal and way to complete that goal."

Case 5: Platoon

(Movie Link: https://www.amazon.com/Platoon-Tom-Berenger/dp/B0095IE2JS)

Platoon was written and directed by Oliver Stone based upon his experiences as a U.S. infantryman in Vietnam and produced by Arnold Kopelson in the context of the Vietnam War of

1967. This movie was released in December 1986 and won the Academy Award in four categories: Best Picture of the year, best director, best sound mixing and best film editing. *Platoon* was the first Hollywood movie written and directed by a veteran of the Vietnam War. In 1998, the American Film Institute placed this movie in their "AFI's 100 Years... 100 Movies" poll as placed in 83rd position (American Film Institute, 2007). In 2011, British television channel 'Channel 4' voted *Platoon* as the sixth greatest war film ever made, behind *Full Metal Jacket* and ahead of *A Bridge Too Far*. However, this movie was shot in the Island of the Philippines in a political dilemma (wikipedia.org, oscar.org).

An inexperienced and young Lieutenant Wolfe who has less control to his group led the infantry. However, practically the soldiers admire and follow two of his older and more experienced subordinates: the hardened and distrustful Staff Sergeant Robert "Bob" and the more idealistic Sergeant Elias. Therefore, the pattern of leadership is kind of laissez-faire, because the soldiers burned the entire village, killed two innocent people and tried to rape two children publicly without any resistance from the leader of the team. The commander has less control over his team discipline and 'let it be' type of situation. Someone may argue this is the democratic type of leadership because the team members were actively exercising their decision-making ability. Conversely, my argument is beyond the control of the platoon leader, the power dynamics between the two-experienced sergeant's moral struggling portrayed more vigorously. The sergeants were taken their own decisions on the demand of the situation. Therefore, situational leadership is another pattern that has been depicted here for the platoon commander in the first half of this movie.

Furthermore, the lieutenant ordered twice his fellow soldiers in the entire movie and one of his fellow soldiers has disagreed with his decision directly. Staff Sergeant Bob acted as a

transactional leader: he ordered one of his soldiers to walk with his infected feet. When the soldier disagreed to walk, then Bob threatened that soldier with court marshal and compelled him to walk with that wounded foot. However, Sergeant Elias processed the transformational leadership quality with a high sense of social justice in his mind. He was able to inspire his fellow soldiers to perform beyond their capacity to accomplish the common goal of the company. The storyteller of this movie, Army volunteer Chris Taylor stated, "We did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves. And the enemy was in us. The war is over for me now, but I will always be their rest of my (….) and I am sure Elias will be." Even in the last fight, Chris was risking his life to save his post alone and one of his fellow soldiers inspired by this event and accompanied him in frontline firefighting. He was able to inspire his fellow soldiers to perform beyond their capacity to accomplish the common goal of the company. Kirkpatrick (2017) described "….the Willem Dafoe (Sergeant Elias), this seasoned soldier is the voice of his lower enlisted troops and brings a human element to an inhumane world." I found that there was dissatisfaction among the common soldiers due to lack of any kind of true leadership pattern among the field level commanding officers. Most of the times, the soldiers wanted to serve the company, but lack of distinct common goal and visionary power of leadership, they were unable to do that and be dissatisfied, confused and try to escape the battlefield. Therefore, inexperienced leadership may impede the goal of accomplishment for the group.

Case 6: Black Hawk Down

(Movie Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ygi2lDAdLo)

Black Hawk Down released in 2001 based on a true fact from Somalia. This film was produced and directed by Ridley Scott from a screenplay by Ken Nolan. This movie was based on the 1999 non-fiction book *Black Hawk Down* by journalist Mark Bowden. In 1993, the US

military operated a raid in Mogadishu to capture faction leader Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The ensuing firefight was known as the Battle of Mogadishu. In January 1991, Somalian President Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown by a coalition of opposing clans, precipitating the Somali Civil War. In this civil war, around three hundred thousand (300,000) people were killed. Therefore, this civil war turned to genocide and the united nation had to intervene for the peacekeeping. *Black Hawk Down* won two Academy Awards for Best Film Editing and Best Sound Mixing at the 74th Academy Awards (wikipedia.org, oscars.org).

This movie has a strong foundation of political dilemma and social justice issue. In 1992, U.S. forces had arrived in Somalia on a humanitarian mission to provide the food access to starving people in a city where different militia groups controlled basic resources. Initially, Task Force Ranger and U.S. Joint Special Operations force was a collaborated with other elite forces units from Army Special Operations Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, and Navy Special Warfare Command. Fifth Ranger Regiment and Delta Force was the sharing the major members of this operation. Members from the seventh Task Force Ranger was dispatched to seize two of Aidid's high-echelon lieutenants during a meeting in the city. The goal of the operation was achieved, though conditions spiraled into the deadly Battle of Mogadishu. The initial operation on October 3, 1993, intended to last an hour, became an overnight standoff and rescue operation extending into the daylight hours of October 4th (South, 2018). In this operation, 19 US soldiers sacrificed their lives and more than 1000 Somalian militia and civilian were killed.

To me, most of the were movies were based on a single hero, however, for the *Black Hawk Down* movie, it is a story of many heroes. The same statement also supported by the

blogger Lisa Petrilli (2011). She has identified ten leadership lesson from this movie. According to her, the major leadership lessons from this movie as follows:

- The people on your right and on your left make all the difference

- Lead by example, be willing to carry the burden of leadership, and know when to be a good follower

- Be prepared for the call that is destined to come

- Be a person that can be counted on,

- It is better to have and not need than to need and not have,

- It is critical for leaders to understand Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Each one of us is a piece of the puzzle that makes everything work, as you fight, fight as you train

Finally, in Keni's words, "The world needs leaders… The world needs people of character. The world needs you."

There are multiple styles visualized in this movie. This movie is the best example of servant leadership. Because all members of the team have eager to serve for the somalin community welfare and serving the fellow troops. They also took the high risk of their lives for saving their fellow soldiers. According to Dave (2012a), Major General William Garrison was an authoritative but caring leader. During the last part of the movie, when a dead pilot was stuck in the chopper, his command was "No man must not be left behind."

Introverted and idealistic, Staff Sergeant Eversmann is the novice leader, asked to lead his first team on the eve of the operation. A quiet man who genuinely believes in the mission to help the Somalis, I believe this is a very good example of ethical leadership. According to

Harvard Business School (2003), this movie is one of the best examples of leading in crisis. Moreover, situational leadership, ethical leadership is also seen in this movie. Furthermore, I also found the transformational leadership in this movie. Because all the troops were ready to serve beyond their goal. They went back to rescue their fellow soldiers in the hot zones for their love and moral needs, though they were not ordered to do so.

Case 7: The Hurt Locker

(Movie Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KChu8wf5eVo)

The Hurt Locker released in 2009 based on the Iraq War. This movie was directed by Kathryn Bigelow and written by Mark Boal. The producers for this movie were Kathryn Bigelow, Mark Boal, Nicolas Chartier, and Greg Shapiro. *The Hurt Locker* was nominated for nine Academy Awards in the 82nd Academy Award Festival and won six prizes, including Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay, best director; Bigelow also became the first female director to win Best Director. Moreover, in different national and international film festivals, *The Hurt Locker* earned great honors and won the multiple prizes. According to the 2008 Venice International Film Festival, *Hurt Locker* was listed as best top ten movies released on that year. Very specifically, in total it was nominated for 154 awards and won 94 of them.

The first scene was based on a bomb disposal from a street of Baghdad, Iraq. Staff Sergeant Matthew Thompson was a member of US Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) was leading a team with Sergeant J. T. Sanborn and Specialist Owen Eldridge in 2004. He was deceased at the end of the scene with a massive explosion. After his death, Sergeant First Class William James, a former U.S. Army, led that team. James was so skilled and, in total, he neutralized 873 bombs in his life. He was not operating the activities in a traditional way.

Therefore, there were lots of tension in the group for the safety of James. There were multiple rescue operations performed. At the very end of the movie, a civilian was vested with powerful explosive devices, and James tried to rescue him. However, he has diffused too many bombs in shorter time limits; therefore, he decided to abandon the mission. That person was killed with the explosion. With the huge sorrows and mental pressure, Sergeant J. T. Sanborn came back to his family in the USA and continued his family life. However, James also left the Bravo company and started his life with his ex-girlfriend and son. Afterward, he was bored with his normal civilian life and returned to Delta Company for another EOD mission.

This movie seems very important for me from the perspective of situational, strength-based, servant, and distributed leadership. At first, the movie was plotted in different situations, where James was shown his highest leadership skills and professionalism to his group. In the different bomb-disposing scene, encountered by multiple Iraqi Militia, the car bomb, and suicide bombing he showed his highest leadership skills. In the case of a strength-based leadership perspective, I could write his strength to take the mental pressure and being a model leader for his group. Moreover, he also possessed the highest level of skills of bomb disposing. Even his superior officers wanted to meet with him because of his higher level of skills.

Finally, to me, this movie is an epic piece for the example of distributed leadership. After critically observing the movie, I found that three members of the team distributed the task as their best. James was expert to neutralize the bomb, and he does so. Specialist Owen Eldridge was assigned for securing the James, and he has always stayed close with him. Moreover, Sergeant J. T. Sanborn was responsible for the safety of the whole team. There was no specific leader or follower of that team. They were fighting, playing, and laughing each other. During the fighting, everyone also took the responsibilities of their own shoulder as a self-directed way. In a

scene where the militia attacked the team, Sergeant J. T. Sanborn acted upon as a sniper, and James was acted as his associated. Specialist Owen Eldridge also supplied the ammunition and releasing the jam of the box of bullets. Even, in another rescue scene, where the team was responded for a call at night encountered by militias also distributed their responsibilities and three of them were searching three different directions, which seems to me as an example of distributed leadership. However, James also processed multiple positive traits of leadership as he showed his highest level of human characteristics to the whole movie. He was emotional, professional, and motivational. He never showed any transformational characteristics; however, to me it was more transactional. He was very much focused on his objectives. Even, he never left his mission in the middle phase if there is a treat of attack. To me, he showed the characteristics like an innovator. He always tried to learn new things, motivated, risk taker.

There is a blog posted from Penn State that categorized the movie as a good case for situation-based leadership (vr5039, 2013). The unnamed blogger also find that he was also delegating his power in different situation among his fellows. However, Homes (2014a) categorized the Sergeant James as a reckless leader. Baldoni (2010) wrote a column on *The Washington Post* where he reported the movie illustrated the concept of "show people consequences rather than dictate them."

Finally, it is concluded that the Hurt Locker is a good example for distributed, situational, and strength-based leadership for the military leaders.

Temporal Analysis

Figure 1 displays the major leadership characters of the war heroes explored in the seven movies of this project. In the 1950s, the war films were developed based on the plot of Second World War. *The Bridge on the River Kwai* has shown two major leadership styles: authoritarian

and path-goal oriented transactional leadership styles. In the decade of 1980s, movies based on Vietnam War (i.e., *Platoon*) displayed transformational leadership. However, Movies in 1990s (i.e., *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*) also built on the plot of Second World War and mainly situational, transformational, transactional traits of leadership. In comparison, movies created after 2000 (i.e., *Black Hawk Down* and *The Hurt Locker*) displayed transactional, distributed, situational, strength-based, servant, directive, transactional, charismatic, and transformational leadership. The modern movies display a broader spectrum of leadership than the previous century.
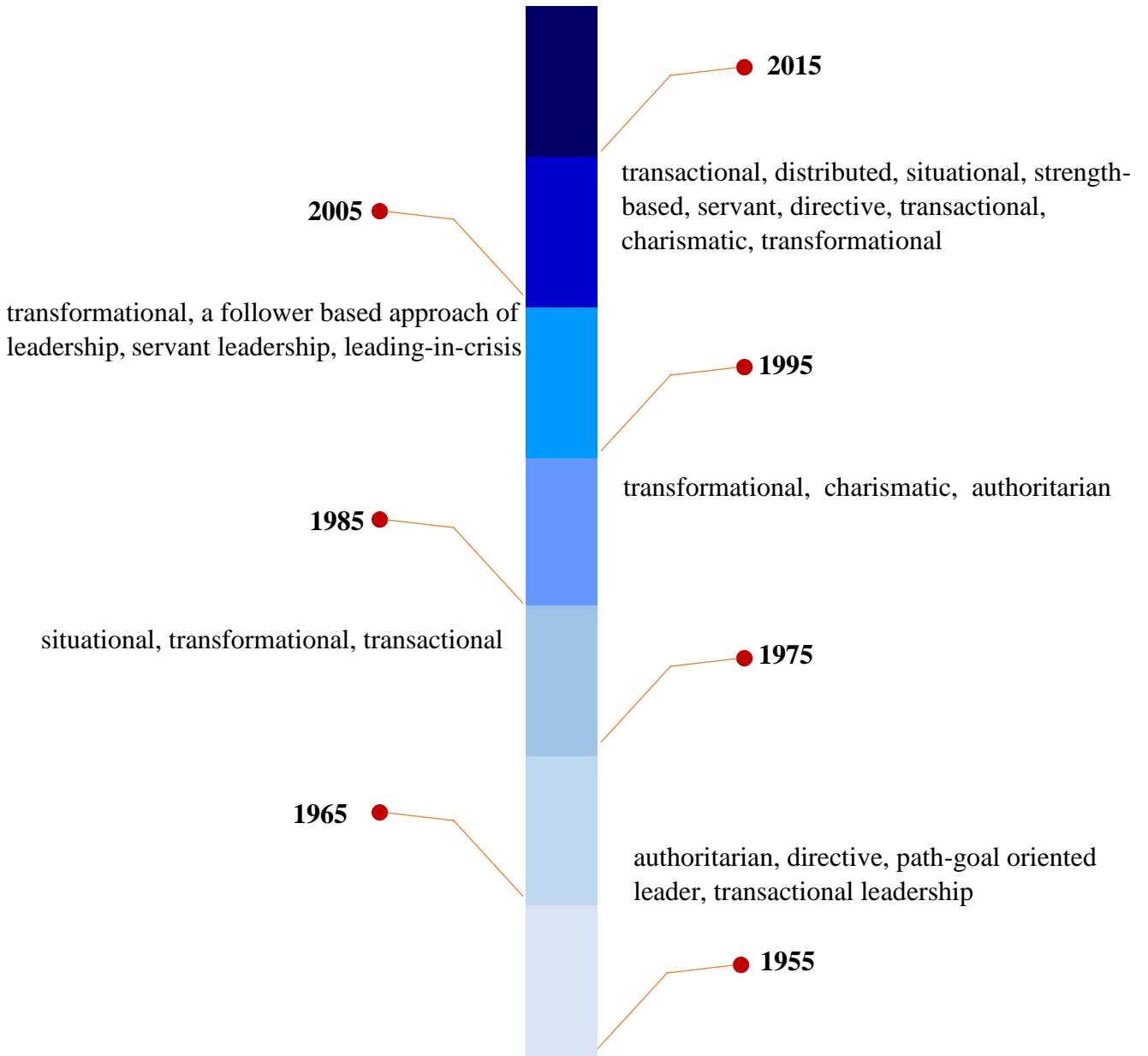
Figure 1. Temporal analysis of the major leadership characteristics of analyzed movies.

War-based Leadership Styles

The selected movies reflect four major military operations (Figure 2). The first category of the movies are based on the Second World War, including *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), *Schindler's List* (1993), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). These movies portrayed mostly the authoritarian, transactional, transformational, and path-goal forms

Figure 2. War-based leadership styles.

of leadership. However, movies based on Vietnam War (i.e., *Platoon*, 1986) showed inexperienced leadership styles that lead to a laissez-faire type of leadership, yet strong ethical transformational leadership was also observed. The movie related to the US peace-keeping mission found a totally different type of leadership than the normal warfare. The Black Hawk Down (2001) displayed servant leadership, including a leading-in-crisis type of leadership style. However, the movie related to the Iraq War turned to a new dimension of leadership. The leadership styles found in *The Hurt Locker* (2009) are situational, distributed, strength-based, and servant oriented. Notably, a transformational type of leadership was displayed in all wars. The war heroes made an effort to exceed their desired goals and influenced the group to hold the lines in critical situations.

Conclusions and Significance to an Interdisciplinary Audience

Movies play a significant role in shaping the human behavior. Young military leaders may benefit from watching war films, because it can help shaping behavior in their professional roles. Most of the movies investigated for this project portrayed transformational, transactional, and authoritarian styles of leadership. However, the movie heroes were displayed as transformational, ethical, transactional, situational, follower-based, and servant leaders. Therefore, leadership educators should include different historic war films in their course curricula. Interdisciplinary audiences may gain a clear picture of most leadership styles portrayed in Hollywood war movies. Leadership scholars may introduce this concept in their research and education, helping to formulate future research ideas or simply incorporate the war films in the preparation of young military leaders. Our vision is not to suggest any specific movies for including in the course curriculum, rather spark ideas. Administrators should find the suitable movies for the course activities to create a resonance in the mind of audiences for better job performances.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

There are hundreds of war movies; therefore, selection of the movies for analysis was troublesome. There are only seven movies studied for this project, allowing ample opportunity for further study with more movies. Also, we only selected the Hollywood-based war movies. Future researchers may work on other film industries to bring a different perspective. Finally, we recognize the potential for subjective biases in our analysis. A multiple coders policy could be applied in future to projects to reduce the risk of such bias.

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