

Globethics Repository



Stress,task,and relationship orientations of taiwanese adults

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy
of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Article
Authors	Huang, Kuo-Ying;Mujtaba, Bahaudin G.
Publisher	Academic and Business research institute
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-09-23 05:34:18
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/176553

Stress, Task, and Relationship Orientations of Taiwanese Adults: An Examination of Gender in this High-Context Culture

Kuo-Ying Huang
Nova Southeastern University

Bahaudin G. Mujtaba
Nova Southeastern University

Abstract

Men and women are different and are likely to have different orientations toward stress, tasks, and relationships. To explore the stress, task, and relationship orientation of people in the high-context culture of Taiwan, this paper focused on the differences of 249 adult Taiwanese. It appears that they have similar scores on the relationship and task orientations. However, males seem to be more task-oriented than female Taiwanese. Overall, the Taiwanese reported a moderate level of stress and they have an equal focus on their tasks and relationships. In this paper, literature on high and low context cultures is presented along with practical application, suggestions and implications for future studies.

Keywords: Relationships, tasks, culture, high context, low context, stress, Taiwan

Introduction and Cultural Values

Cultures drive human behavior, and therefore understanding it becomes extremely critical in a global workplace. Taiwan has multinational corporations as well as small entrepreneurs living or doing business there or through the country with other international firms. In international business it is important to realize that cultural differences severely affect the communication process. There is a clear distinction in the way of communicating between the so-called high-context and low-context cultures (Mujtaba & Balboa, 2009; Salleh, 2005). In high-context cultures such as Taiwan, Thailand, Japan or India, there is a less verbally detailed communication and less written/formal information. Instead, there is a more subliminal understanding of what is communicated. Often what is left unsaid is as important as what is said. Low context cultures such as the United States or United Kingdom put more emphasis on the written or spoken words. In such an environment, communication is very explicit and clear, and normally “what is meant is what is said.”

A society's culture is passed on through family, school, community activities, workplace relationships, and youth clubs. Mujtaba (2008a) states that culture is interrelated, it has many parts that correlate to the next, for example one's upbringing and social class interrelates to the language that a person will use, and their social mannerisms. Finally, culture is generally shared by individuals from the same society. The factors that make a culture different from others are also what make communication difficult between diverse people groups.

For international managers and researchers it is essential to understand the culture of the country or region in which it is doing business. Today, it is almost impossible for a manager or a company to be successful in a foreign country without knowledge and understanding of the culture. Managers of international operations should be aware of the importance of context in various countries. Context indicates the level in which communication occurs outside of verbal discussion (Mujtaba & Balboa, 2009). Understanding the effect of the differences in context provides a knowledge base and cultural intelligence that can help provide not only strong teams but more over effective business relationships with a firm's vendors and customers (Hall, 1976; Salleh, 2005; Mujtaba & Balboa, 2009).

In the competitive world of manufacturing and retail business, understanding behaviors of employees are paramount to succeeding. It is important for managers, trainers and researchers to reflect on their relationships with people of different cultures and examine how differences in context can lead to cultural misunderstanding for overseas employees living or working in Taiwan or other high context cultures. The purpose of this study is to analyze the stress orientation as well as relationship similarities and dissimilarities between male and female adult Taiwanese.

The Culture of Taiwan

Cultures are made up from the collective behaviors of its inhabitants. On the other side, cultures also drive the behaviors of its inhabitants in a predictable and uniform manner through years of socialization and acculturation. Hofstede (1980) emphasized that culture plays an important role in the behavior of its people. Adler (1986) argued that national culture has a greater impact on employees than does their organization's culture. Thus, management must concern itself more with developing appropriate management methods relevant to the national

culture than with optimizing organizational culture. The Asian culture differs from American culture in many ways. However, Asians as well as Americans, enjoy great levels of freedom and pragmatism as both groups of people are flexible and open-minded toward new ideas, creativity and innovations. As can be witnessed, most Asians have adopted many western practices perhaps due to the constant evolution of culture and widespread availability of information over the cyberspace highways. Similarly, in search of better teamwork, Americans have adopted many eastern or Asian practices as to encourage employees to work more collectively to achieve the organization's goals. In essence, modern practices and focus on competitiveness have induced changes in all cultures (Mujtaba, 2008a).

In the Taiwanese culture the group is the primary unit of social organization as a consequence of their living in extended families; thus, this explains why it is easier for them to work cohesively as teams and groups. Taiwan's culture is mostly a hybrid blend of Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese aboriginal cultures; it has been largely shaped by the processes of imperialism and colonization (Yip, 2004). Originally, the culture of Taiwan was characterized by Chinese Han frontier farmers and Taiwanese highland aborigines. After the Chinese Qing Empire ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895, Japanese styles of thinking and behavior were gradually instilled into many of the Taiwanese customs and mannerisms. Both China and Japan are Asian countries in which group-oriented norms prevail and, to borrow Hall's term, can be categorized as high-context cultures (Hall, 1976). As a result of the influence of Chinese and Japanese cultures, generally speaking, Taiwanese ways of life fall into such a high-context style.

Taiwan is a densely-populated country short of natural resources. High density of population implies fierce competition for jobs and earning a living. And shortage of natural resources means the necessity of international trade for upgrading the domestic economy. To lead a decent life, Taiwanese people have to work more diligently and compete with both their fellow citizens and multinational entrepreneurs. As a result, the Taiwanese usually feel under stress from their jobs because they have to get their tasks accomplished most efficiently in terms of time and motion (Siu et al., 1999).

In general, Taiwan is a group-oriented and relationship-based society, which may have been shaped by the work the Taiwanese people in preceding generations did for a living (Winckler, 1994). Traditionally, social mobility and population density were usually caused by the economic lifestyle of the community. Taiwan formerly was an agricultural society in which people remained in one place for a long period of time (Winckler, 1994). In such an agriculturally-oriented economy, low social mobility led to high population density and people got together and shared knowledge easily. In an agricultural society, as soon as a person joined a group, he considered himself one of the group members who were closely related to each other (Chang, 2005). Maybe it is this cultural heritage that causes the Taiwanese to be group-oriented and relationship-based.

In Taiwan, males and females play different roles in the family and suffer stress from different sources. Males usually shoulder the responsibility of supporting the family; thus, they have to go out working and earning money. In order to earn a good salary, male Taiwanese have to compete with their co-workers in the workplace and even the contestants from outside the company (Cheng et al., 2001). The major stress for female Taiwanese comes from within the family, since they are responsible for taking care of children, associating with other relative members, and doing daily chores of cleaning, cooking, and shopping (Cheng et al., 2001; Liang & Kuo, 2002). Of course, Taiwan has transformed from an agricultural society into a highly-industrialized one and most female Taiwanese have left the kitchen and become career women.

However, males still bear the major economic burden of the whole family (Cheng et al., 2001; Tseng, 2001).

Globalization and workforce mobilization have contributed to globally dispersed collaborations in many areas (Kotlarsky & Oshri, 2005; Salleh, 2005; Mujtaba, 2007). As many companies and enterprises turn to global markets, more and more professionals and employees are finding themselves making their living in foreign locales. As a result, cross-cultural communication or negotiation is very common in today's business relations (Kotlarsky & Oshri, 2005; Salleh, 2005). However, effective communication between different countries lies in an understanding of each other's culture. It is the key to success in business to know how each society conveys meaning.

As mentioned formerly, thousands of multinational corporations and small entrepreneurs do business in Taiwan or transact deals with other firms through this country. For foreign enterprisers or entrepreneurs to succeed in Taiwan, it is imperative to recognize the cultural trait and the communication style of Taiwanese people. Companies ignoring the salience of intercultural communication differences may face potential relationship problems. And overlooking cultural differences can jeopardize long term ties for businesses (Mujtaba, 2007; Samovar & Porter, 2004).

Mandarin Chinese, which is the official language in Taiwan, is a high-context language (Hall, 1976, 2000). It means that it differs from English and other European languages in various aspects. In many cases, meaning of interlocation is embedded in the context in which the communication occurs rather than in the verbal communication itself. Besides, Mandarin Chinese is a tone language, and it is different from English which is a stress language. Using Mandarin Chinese to communicate effectively with Taiwanese people, foreigners have to know the pronunciation of the words and to understand the four tones of each word which carry a different meaning for each tone (Fromkin et al., 2007; Li & Thompson, 1981).

Cultural context can have significant implications on negotiation processes. The Taiwanese are non-confrontational and they often choose to avoid hurting the relationship between negotiators. Like Japanese, Taiwanese people tend to express disagreement indirectly because expressing negative feelings directly implies impoliteness (Minami, 2002; Mujtaba, 2007). It is also the case when they are expressing their needs. Generally, when expressing disagreement or making requests, Taiwanese speakers usually talk indirectly around the topic and expect the interlocutor to understand the cues or hints. They provide part of the message and leave the remaining to be filled by the listener. It appears demanding and implies stress if they express what they want directly. For people from a low-context culture, such mannerisms are difficult to understand and may cause misunderstandings in the negotiation process. In order to avoid miscommunication and succeed in business transaction, entrepreneurs need to learn, understand, and accommodate cultural differences, especially in the process of negotiation (Mujtaba, 2007).

Stress and Overload Perception

Stress impacts men and women as well as young people and older individuals in the society without necessarily discriminating toward any specific groups.

Anna Hart (2007) listed the seven leading causes of stress in today's society which are: finances, work, family, personal concerns, personal health and safety, personal relationships, and death. In a recession-burdened economy, finance has become a leading cause of stress in many

people's lives both in developing as well as developed countries. Of course, when the economy is in a recession, loss of job or loss of retirement income can easily become major causes of stress. Besides financial causes, stress can be induced at work or by family, health, and other such issues that all people deal with on a day-to-day basis. Overall, according to Nichols (2008) Selye (1956) and others, the impact of stress can be physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral.

Stress can be all those feelings and perceptions in lack of time, ability, skill, or resources to effectively deal with personal or professional demands in a given time. Stress is all those real and perceived forces that encroach or are imposed on the individual (Mujtaba & McCartney, 2007; Selye, 1974).

Mujtaba and McCartney (2007) state that research over the years has established this fact: the body and mind are consistently adjusting to balance and equilibration. 'Homeostasis', the term used for physiological "balance," and 'equilibration,' the term used to indicate emotional balance, must be maintained. Any change or threat to equilibrium can cause either eustress or distress. Stress begins with life situations that become very difficult to understand and which overwhelms individuals in any personal or professional environment in which humans function.

Overall, in any given situation, a person's level of stress can be ranked as low, moderate, high, and severe. Those at the high end of the continuum who are consistently experiencing high and severe levels of stress can easily become sick and unproductive. Therefore, these individuals should take proper steps to eliminate or reduce the sources of such extreme levels of stress. Stress can often be caused by taking on too many projects or tasks at work or at home. Sometimes people take on more projects than they can handle on voluntarily basis and, at other times, it is delegated by one's superiors or colleagues. In either case, one should be very careful and understand that consistently overloading oneself can be problematic (Selye, 1956, 1974; Mujtaba & McCartney, 2007).

Hyde and Allen (1996, p. 27) state that overload stressors can produce psychological, physiological and behavioral changes. Quantitative overload can cause elevation in blood cholesterol level which is associated with such disorders as atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease (Hyde & Allen, 1996, p. 27). Overload can decrease motivation toward learning / work performance. To manage stress better, know your optimal work load, for most people this is very hard to do because they want to be successful. Try to manage your time by scheduling, planning and organizing your time in a balanced manner for family, school, and work. Set priorities, and determine what is important and what your limitations are, and know when to say no!

There are many factors that contribute to the positive or negative aspects of one's health. Such factors can be genetic make-up, specific behaviors, the environment, and/or one's personality. For example, one important factor contributing to people's health is their genetic make-up. Genetic make-up consists of the physiological aspects that help people adjust to stress such as heart rate and blood pressure. An example would be when a person gets upset and their blood pressure rises while the heart rate increases. Specific behaviors also contribute, either positively or negatively, to one's health such as regular exercise and healthy diet or smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages. The environment or location also has an effect on one's health. A person's personality has a significant impact on personal health since self-esteem and emotional stability impact how one feels physiologically which can have an affect physically. While there are many variables that impact a person's level of stress that can lead to physiological or psychological health problems, this study is designed to assess whether Taiwanese respondents report low, moderate, high, or severe levels of stress associated with task overload (Mujtaba, 2008b).

Study Methodology: Stress, Task and Relationship Orientations

This research attempts to clarify whether Taiwanese are more relationship oriented or more task-oriented. It further attempts to determine whether males and females have a different focus on stress, tasks and relationships. Since effectively handling stress, tasks and relationships are elements of leadership, it is best to start by defining the terms. *Leadership* is the process of influencing an individual or a group of individuals while providing an environment where personal, professional, and/or organizational objectives can be successfully achieved. Leaders tend to use various amounts of task or relationship behaviors (Hersey, 2009). Generally speaking, *task behavior* is the extent to which leaders engage in top-down communication by explaining what the follower is to do, as well as when, where, and how each function is to be accomplished; and *relationship behavior* is the extent to which leaders engage in joint communication with followers while providing socio-emotional support (Sherwood & DePaolo, 2005; Hersey, 1997). Peter G. Northouse (2007) provides a useful instrument, known as Style Questionnaire, which can be used to obtain a general profile of a person's leadership behaviors regarding task and relationship orientations. The Style Questionnaire can be completed by oneself as well as one's friends, peers, bosses, and/or employees for comparison purposes. The results can show one's use of various task and relationship behaviors. To determine one's personal leadership characteristics, the person circles one of the options that best describe how he or she sees himself or herself (or the person that is being evaluated) regarding each statement. For each statement, the person indicates the degree to which he or she (or the person being evaluated) engages in the stated behavior. A rating of 1 means "Never" and a rating of 5 means "Always" with the person demonstrating the specific behavior. To determine one's scores for the leadership styles questionnaire, one can add the responses for the odd numbered items to determine the score for task-orientation behaviors, and add the responses for the even numbered items to determine the score for relationship-orientation behaviors. The scoring interpretation for the Style Questionnaire by Northouse (2007, p. 87) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Task and Relationship Score Interpretations

SCORES	DESCRIPTIONS
• 45-50	Very high range
• 40-44	High range
• 35-39	Moderately high range
• 30-34	Moderately low range
• 25-29	Low range
• 10-24	Very low range

High task behavior scores tend to mean that the leader engages in more top-down communication by explaining what the follower is to do, as well as when, where, and how each function is to be accomplished (Mujtaba, 2008b). High relationship behavior scores mean the leader engages in more joint communication with followers while providing socio-emotional support (Northouse, 2007). Of course, the degree to which one engages in more task or relationship oriented behaviors should depend on the variables present in the situation; some of

the situational variables can include the difficulty of the task, the importance of the job, the time available to get it done, and the readiness of the follower to successfully complete the task without much input. Effective leaders stay in control by managing through a balance of both task and relationship oriented behaviors, as appropriate, to make sure the objectives and goals are accomplished (Sherwood & DePaolo, 2005; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001).

The Overload Stress Inventory, adapted from Hyde and Allen's conceptual analysis of overload (1996, pp. 29-30), can be used to assess the stress perception of respondents. This study used the Overload Stress Inventory to assess how Bahamian males and females see their level of overload stress. This inventory has ten statements, and for each statement the respondent indicates the degree to which he or she (or the person being evaluated) engages in the stated behavior. A rating of 1 means "Never" and a rating of 5 means "Always" with the person demonstrating the specific behavior. The responses are assessed according to the following general criteria (adapted from Hyde and Allen's 1996 book):

- *Scores in the range of 40 – 50 tend to mean severe stress from overload.*
- *Scores in the range of 30 – 39 tend to mean high stress from overload.*
- *Scores in the range of 20 – 29 tend to mean moderate stress from overload.*
- *Scores in the range of 19 and below tend to mean low stress from overload.*

The research question for this study was to determine whether adult Taiwanese are highly or moderately stressed and whether they have a higher average score on the relationship orientation or task orientation. Another aspect of this study was to determine whether high-context culture male Taiwanese have a higher or lower average scores on the relationship orientation or task orientation when compared with their high-context female counterparts. The specific hypotheses for this study are as follows:

1. *Null Hypothesis1:* Taiwanese respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.
2. *Null Hypothesis2:* Taiwanese female respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.
3. *Null Hypothesis3:* Taiwanese male respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.
4. *Null Hypothesis4:* Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores on task orientations.
5. *Null Hypothesis5:* Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores on relationship orientations.
6. *Null Hypothesis6:* Taiwanese will report a moderate level of work overload stress.
7. *Null Hypothesis7:* Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores for work overload stress.

For the purpose of this study, 500 questionnaires were distributed to people in Taiwan and 249 returned surveys were fully completed and used for this study. There were 159 female respondents and 90 males that successfully completed the surveys for the study.

Task and Relationship Results

As presented in Table 2, the average scores of Taiwanese respondents for task orientation falls in “moderately high range,” and their relationship orientation average falls in “high range.” Similarly, the average score of Taiwanese respondents for stress perception falls in the “moderate” range.

Table 2 – Task and Relationship Orientation Scores of Taiwanese Respondents

Respondents	No.	Average Task Orientation Score	Average Relationship Orientation Score	Stress Perception Score
Taiwan	249	38.2	38.0	26.78
Males	159	39.2	37.97	26.97
Females	90	37.7	38	26.7

As can be seen from Table 3 and using the t-test for differences in two means, at a 0.05 level of significance, the first null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations*”) failed to be rejected because the calculated t value (0.6) falls within the critical value of t for statistical significance; in other words, since the t value falls within the critical values (+1.96 and -1.96), the hypothesis can be supported. Furthermore, since the p-value of 0.53 is greater than alpha (α) = 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 3 – Taiwanese: Task vs. Relationship

<i>Task Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	249
Sample Mean	38.26
Sample Standard Deviation	5.2
<i>Relationship Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	249
Sample Mean	38
Sample Standard Deviation	4.1
<i>Intermediate Calculations</i>	
Pooled Variance	21.925
Difference in Sample Means	0.26
t-Test Statistic	0.6196
<i>Two-Tailed Test</i>	
Lower Critical Value	-1.966
Upper Critical Value	1.966
p-Value	0.536

Based on the results, the task orientation and relationship orientation scores of Taiwanese respondents appear to be similar. As such, one can conclude that the Taiwanese respondents have similar scores on the task and relationship orientations. Perhaps because of their high-context and collective culture, Taiwanese respondents seem to be putting equal emphasis on their tasks and relationships.

As can be seen from Table 4, the null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese female respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations*”) failed to be rejected because $t = -0.59$ falls within the critical values. Also, because the p-value is greater than alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$), there is sufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Based on these results, female Taiwanese respondents’ scores for task and relationship orientations are similar.

Table 4 – Taiwanese: Females: Task vs. Relationship

<i>Task Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	159
Sample Mean	37.72327
Sample Standard Deviation	5.399147
<i>Relationship Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	159
Sample Mean	38.05031
Sample Standard Deviation	4.255746
<i>t</i> -Test Statistic	-0.599849971
<i>p</i> -Value	0.549036107

As can be seen from Table 5 and using the t-test for differences in two means, at a 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese male respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations*”) failed to be rejected because t value falls within the critical values and the p-value is greater than alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the male Taiwanese respondents have similar scores on the relationship and task orientations.

Table 5 – Taiwanese: Males: Task vs. Relationship

<i>Task Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	90
Sample Mean	39.21111
Sample Standard Deviation	4.720251
<i>Relationship Orientation</i>	
Sample Size	90
Sample Mean	37.96667
Sample Standard Deviation	3.884426
<i>t</i> -Test Statistic	1.931240546
<i>p</i> -Value	0.05504187

As can be seen from Table 6, the null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores on task orientations*”) is rejected because the calculated *t* value is outside the critical value of *t* for statistical significance and the *p*-value (0.029) is smaller than alpha (0.05). Based on these results, the task orientation scores of male and female Taiwanese respondents appear to be different as males have a higher score.

Table 6 – Taiwanese: Males/Females: Task

<i>Task Orientation – Males</i>	
Sample Size	90
Sample Mean	39.21111
Sample Standard Deviation	4.720251
<i>Task Orientation – Females</i>	
Sample Size	159
Sample Mean	37.72327
Sample Standard Deviation	5.399147
<i>t</i> -Test Statistic	2.183842221
<i>p</i> -Value	0.029914977

As can be seen from Table 7, the null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores on relationship orientations*”) cannot be rejected because the calculated *t* value falls within the critical value of *t* for statistical significance, and the *p*-value (0.878) is greater than alpha (0.05). Based on these results, the relationship orientation scores of male and female Taiwanese respondents are statistically similar.

Table 7 – Taiwanese: Males/Females: Relationship

<i>Relationship Orientation – Males</i>	
Sample Size	90
Sample Mean	37.96667
Sample Standard Deviation	3.884426
<i>Relationship Orientation – Females</i>	
Sample Size	159
Sample Mean	38.05
Sample Standard Deviation	4.256
<i>t</i> -Test Statistic	-0.154
<i>p</i> -Value	0.878

The Taiwanese received a score of 26.8 on the stress overload perception and this falls in the moderate range. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that the “*Taiwanese will report a moderate level of work overload stress*” failed to be rejected. This is good news for all Taiwanese as they are able to successfully handle their tasks and work responsibilities. Perhaps due to their high-context culture and socialization, they have more support outlets for effectively dealing with stress.

In regard to gender-related stress perceptions, as can be seen from Table 8 and using the t-test for differences in two means, at a 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (“*Taiwanese male and female respondents will have similar scores for work overload stress*”) failed to be rejected because the calculated t value (0.38) falls within the critical value of t for statistical significance; in other words, since the t value (0.38) falls within the critical values (+1.97 and -1.97), the hypothesis can be supported. Furthermore, since the p-value (0.70) is greater than alpha (α) = 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to support the null hypothesis.

Table 8 – Taiwanese Male/Female Stress Scores

<i>Stress Overload - Males</i>	
Sample Size	90
Sample Mean	26.96667
Sample Standard Deviation	5.00438
<i>Stress Overload – Females</i>	
Sample Size	159
Sample Mean	26.7044
Sample Standard Deviation	5.270594
<i>Two-Tailed Test</i>	
t-Test Statistic	0.38
Lower Critical Value	-1.9696147
Upper Critical Value	1.9696147
p-Value	0.7012287

Based on the results, the stress perception scores of male and female Taiwanese appear to be similar. As such, one can conclude that Taiwanese male and female respondents have similar scores on their perception of stress and perhaps the way they deal with it.

It was hypothesized that Taiwanese respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations, and the current study did support this first hypothesis. Furthermore, male and female Taiwanese respondents also had similar scores for relationship orientation, but males had a significantly high score on the task orientations, and females had a significantly higher score the relationship orientation. The results support the concept of high-context cultures being highly relationship-focused. What is interesting is to find that these Taiwanese also focused on their tasks as well.

Implications and Limitations

Due to the societal conditioning and general nature of human beings, some managers assume that employees from high-context cultures are likely to be more relationship-oriented rather than the tasks. This research demonstrated Taiwanese are equally focused on both their tasks and relationships. This research has shown that Taiwanese respondents from a high-context culture of Taiwan are just as task-oriented as they are relationship-oriented. Overall, managers and supervisors should feel comfortable in knowing that Taiwanese employees will get their jobs done in a timely manner while maintaining a healthy relationship with their colleagues,

peers, customers, and superiors. Furthermore, it appears that the Taiwanese are good at handling stress since they only reported a moderate range of stress.

One limitation is the fact that this study was conducted with a convenient adult population from different sectors and industries in Taiwan. Future studies can compare populations with similar working backgrounds and demographic variables such as comparing government employees with the private sector.

Conclusion

This paper discussed some of the characteristics of high-context cultures. After reflecting on the behaviors of people in different cultures such as those from Taiwan, one is better able to get an understanding of Taiwanese workers and their cultures. The results of this study show that Taiwanese respondents are equally focused on their relationships and tasks. People usually function in the way that they are accustomed to working based on their cultural upbringing and socialization. Since Taiwanese are socialized in high-context culture, it is reasonable to assume that they will value personal relationships with their friends, customers, vendors, employees, and superiors. Since they are competing internationally with firms from all over the world, it is also reasonable to assume that they will be determined to get their tasks completed in a timely manner. This study has shown that they are highly focused on their tasks and relationships. International managers and expatriates wanting to do business in Taiwan should work on developing a healthy relationship with their Taiwanese counterparts, colleagues, vendors, and customers.

References

- Adler, N. J. (1986). *International dimensions of organizational behavior*. Boston, MA: Kent Publishing.
- Chang, M. (2005) The movement to indigenize to social sciences in Taiwan: Origin and predicaments. In J. Makeham & A. C. Hsiu (Eds.). *Cultural, ethnic, and political nationalism in contemporary Taiwan: Bentuhua*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cheng, Y., Guo, Y. L., & Yet, W. Y. (2001). A national survey of psychosocial job stressors and their implications for health among working people in Taiwan. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 74, 495–504.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2007). *An introduction to language* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Hall, E. T. (2000). Context and meaning. In L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (Eds.). *Intercultural communication: A reader* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Hart, A. (2007, March 1). *Seven leading causes of stress*. Retrieved February 25, 2009, from <http://ezinearticles.com/?7-Leading-Causes-of-Stress&id=473303>
- Hersey, P. (2009). *Personal communication on situational leadership*. Capstone workshop by Dr. Hersey and facilitators of 'The Center for Leadership Studies'. May 2009, Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.
- Hersey, P. (1997). *The situational leader*. Escondido, CA: The Center for Leadership Studies.
- Hersey, P., Blanchard, K., & Johnson, D. (2001). *Management of organizational behavior* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hyde, D., & Allen, R. (1996). *Investigations in stress control* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Kotlarsky, J., & Oshri, I. (2005). Social ties, knowledge sharing and collaboration in globally distributed development projects. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 14, 37–48.
- Li, C. N., & Thompson, S. A. (1981). *Mandarin Chinese: A functional reference grammar*. Berkeley: University California Press.
- Liang, W. M., & Kuo, H. W. (2002). Effects of workplace condition on Taiwanese workers' quality of life. *Mid-Taiwan Journal of Medicine*, 7(4), 206–214.
- Minami, M. (2002). *Culture-specific language styles: The development of oral narrative and literacy*. New York: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Mujtaba, B. G. (2007). *Cross cultural management and negotiation practices*. Davie, FL: ILEAD Academy Publications.
- Mujtaba, B. G. (2008a). Task and relationship orientation of Thai and American business students' based on cultural contexts. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 1(1), 38–57.
- Mujtaba, B. G. (2008b). *Coaching and performance management: Developing and inspiring leaders*. Davie, FL: ILEAD Academy Publications.
- Mujtaba, B. G., & Balboa, A. (2009). Comparing Filipino and American task and relationship orientations. *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 14(2), 3–19.
- Mujtaba, B. G., & McCartney, T. (2007). *Managing workplace stress and conflict amid change*. Coral Springs, FL: Llumina Press.
- Nichols, M. (2008). *Stress and its impact on your life*. Retrieved on February 26, 2009 from <http://anxietypanichealth.com/2008/09/10/stress-and-its-impact-on-your-life/>
- Northouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (2004). *Communication between cultures* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Thompson Wadsworth.
- Salleh, L. M. (2005). High/Low context communication: The Malaysian Malay Style. *Proceedings of the 2005 Association for Business Communication Annual Convention*.
- Selye, H. (1956). *The stress of life*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Selye, H. (1974). *Stress without distress*. New York: Lippincott.
- Sherwood, A. L., & DePaolo, C. A. (2005). Task and relationship-oriented trust in leaders. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, Baker College System, Center for Graduate studies.
- Siu, O., Lu, L., & Cooper, C. L. (1999). Managerial stress in Hong Kong and Taiwan: A comparative study. *Journal Managerial Psychology*, 14(1), 6–25.
- Tseng, Y. (2001). *Job stress and health status among employees of high-tech microelectronic industry in Taiwan: Evaluation of two alternative job stress models—Karasek's Demand-Control-Support Model and Siegrist's Effort-Reward Imbalance Model*. Unpublished Master Thesis, National Cheng Kun University, Taiwan.
- Winckler, E. (1994). Cultural policy in postwar Taiwan. In S. Harrel & C. C. Huang (Eds.). *Cultural change in postwar Taiwan*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Yip, J. (2004). *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, cinema and the nation in the contemporary imaginary*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.