Task and Relationship Orientations and Stress Perceptions of Working Adults Based in High-Context Culture: Evidence from a Developing Context

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to find out the role of leadership orientation in public sector organizations that might work best in a collectivist culture since effective leadership processes must reflect the culture in which they are found. The study also investigated the role of gender in leadership orientation. Data were collected from employees working in the public sector organizations of the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan; performing some supervisory, managerial, or leadership roles. 595 responses were collected via survey strategy from different public sector organizations in Peshawar using stratified random sampling. The findings reveal that the respondents have different leadership orientations, such as task and relationship orientations; however, gender does not play a significant role in the leadership orientation of respondents. The findings have utility for proper management and leadership of employees who are working in a high-context culture (a collectivist culture). Moreover, findings have been juxtaposed withthe findings of other studies conducted in high and low-context cultures for wider implications. Suggestions and recommendations have been provided that have both practical and theoretical significance. Future studies can compare and contrast the findings of all the empirical research conducted in collectivist as well as individualistic cultures for a meta-analysis on leadership orientation.

Keywords: Relationship orientation; task orientation; leadership; cultural context; high-context culture; Role congruity theory; and Pakistan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature suggests that the role of leadership has increased in the past couple of decades for all types of organizations (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Popescu, & Predescu, 2016). Globalization has prompted changes in both collectivist (high-context) and individualistic (low-context) cultures (Tajaddini & Mujtaba, 2009), which influences individual behavior and also how businesses operate (Lonner, Berry, & Hofstede, 1980; Sinha, Priyadarshi, & Kumar, 2016).Cultural orientation has an impact on the performance and satisfaction levels of employees (Fisher &Bibo, 2000). Thus, an insight into the behavioral aspect of leadership would help us in understanding leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2018). According to Zaccaro and Klimoski (2001), a majority of organizational leadership theories embedded in the psychological literature is devoid of cultural context (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). The authors maintain that organizational leadership cannot be understood effectively without giving due consideration to the context in which it is exercised.

Knowledge of a culture is pertinent for making sense of human behavior, as it is one of its main drivers (Strauss, 2017). Effective leaders must acknowledge the blend of cultural context and leadership orientation for the effective performance of the employees (Eckstein, 2018). Due consideration of the differences in context provides a knowledge base and cultural intelligence that can help in building strong teams as well as effective workplace relationships (Hall, 1976; Salleh, 2005; Flaherty, 2015).Adler (1986) and Sassen (2016) confirmed that national culture has a greater impact on employees than does their organization's culture.

In collectivist cultures, the quality and extent of social interactions between individuals are dependent upon whether they belong to an in-group or an out-group (De Dreu, et al., 2016). Relationship orientation holds a higher value in the leadership role (Hofstede, 2011; Watkins & Liu, 1996). In a high-context culture like Pakistan (Shoaib, Mujtaba, & Awan, 2018) and Afghanistan (Mujtaba, & Kaifi, 2010)people are more sensitive toward culture and can decipher hidden messages in the culture that is reflected in their course of action. In a high-context culture, people expect their leaders to act as patriarchs and the same time maintain the orientation of the organizations to act as a team and family (Liddell, 2005). In collectivist cultures, people strongly uphold the notion of relationship orientation (Kagitcibasi, Kim, & Triandis, 1994; Watkins & Liu, 1996; Story, 2015).

The main intent of this study was to find outthe leadership orientation of people belonging to a collectivist culture. Although, previous research has suggested relationship orientation as a more suitable leadership style for individuals in high-context cultures ((Mujtaba, &Kaifi, 2010), the current study will also probe whether or not this is the case.

Global leaders and managers need to have cultural acumen and respect and react to cultural differences (Javidan & House, 2001). Empirically data collected for the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project confirm the significance of managers' ability to proper interaction with employees belonging to various cultures and guide the production of effective cross-cultural communications (Dickson, Den Hartog, & Mitchelson, 2003). This study seeks to answer which leadership orientation is more suitable for organizations operating in a high-context culture and if there is any difference between the male and female orientation of tasks and relationships in such cultures.

The findings of the study have practical significance for leaders and managers by identifying a suitable leadership orientation that will help in effective workplace relationships with the employees and improve their morale by properly dealing with them. Moreover, the findings will help managers devise proactive strategies for proper identification, controlling, and eradication of the problems on a timely basis, rather than adopting a reactive approach to the management of employees.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Society culture is just like memory to an individual, which encompasses all those things that have "worked" in the past (Triandis, 2018). According to the author, one of the most significant assumptions of culture is that people are bound together into groups of individuals who have interdependencies. Hofstede (2001) has provided different dimensions of a culture, which include: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity index (achievement vs. relationship). Cultures shape our perceptions of almost everything that happens in a society (Jandt, 2004).

The cultural aspect of individualism versus collectivism has been found to explain a greater amount of incongruity in the individuals' social behavior across cultures (Triandis, 1995). Individualism, taken to its extreme, is selfishness; extreme collectivism is tyranny (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1991); however, individuals fit in between the two extremes (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995).

Individualists pay less attention to relationships and they do not find it problematic moving in and out of groups, particularly where leaving the group is more beneficial and less costly than staying in the group (Moustafa, Bhagat, & Babakus, 2005), and if the costs exceed the benefits, the relationship is often abandoned (Singelis et al., 1995). On the other hand, the opposite is true for collectivist societies (Hofstede, Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994).

Leadership Style and Cultural Orientation

It has become common wisdom among researchers and academicians that effective leadership processes must be reflective of the culture in which these exist (Ayman, 1993; Smith & Peterson, 1988; Driskill, 2018). Some research demonstrates that people in collectivist cultures usually have a stronger bonding with their organizations and will keep their individual goals subordinate to group goals (Earley, 1989; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, 2018). Collectivists strive to maintain long-term relationships with their organizations and regard relationships (Datu, Yuen, & Chen, 2018) and having interpersonal skills to be more valuable than possessing specific job knowledge and job-related skills. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007) call it 'grit', which has been defined as the individual's predisposition toward pursuing long-term goals.On the other hand, individualists are expected to be more motivated by transactional leadership (Jung & Avolio, 1999; Feng & Wang, 2018). Such leadership is more focused on short-term goal achievement and is congruent with the values orientation in individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1993; Bird & Mendenhall, 2016).Due to the high level of congruence between the values of the followers and the leaders in a collectivist culture, the achievement of collective goals becomes easier (Jung & Avolio, 1999). Consequently, it is expected that any suggestion and emphasis by a transformational leader concerning the achievement of collective goals would be more readily adhered to by the group members in a collectivist culture (Jung, Bass, & Sosik, 1995; Feng & Wang, 2018).

Leadership research is a complicated endeavor (Dickson, et al., 2003). Early studies emphasized that the behavior of the leaders was primarily perceived in terms of two factors, such as initiating structure (task-orientation) and consideration (relationship-orientation) (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Fleishman, 1967). The two main roles of leadership are: to accomplish organizational tasks with and through subordinates and to develop proper relationships with the subordinates to motivate them (Fisher &Bibo, 2000; Mujtaba, 2014). The task orientation dimension is characterized by the leader making the expectations known to the group members and then seeing that those expectations are met by making individuals work up to their capacity (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016; Mujtaba, 2014) and are focused on the outcomes of those tasks (Bass & Riggio,2006). The task context contains situations that comprise how a manager will accomplish certain tasks through people, and in which consideration is given by both individual and manager to the task completion (Sherwood & DePaolo, 2005) that may

involve planning of the tasks, task coordination, and task execution. Conversely, relationship orientation is characterized by the leader making the group members feel at ease by talking to them and maintaining a friendly relationship by making themselves accessible to the group members (Fisher &Bibo, 2000). Bass (1985) found relation-oriented functions to be associated with subordinate satisfaction, and task-oriented functions to be associated with group performance. Relationship-oriented leadership goes along with the people and connects well to social capital (Strömgren, Eriksson, Ahlstrom, Bergman, &Dellve,2017).

Leadership style is affected by personal values, and personal values are affected by culture. Cultural diversity prohibits us from providing a universal document of rights and wrongs or simply dictating morality to another (Osaka, 2013). What is acceptable and highly appreciated in one culture might be unacceptable and denied in other organizations. Effective leaders maintain a balance between task execution and developing and maintaining relationships with individuals inthe workplace (Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Chuang, 2013).Less effective leaders tend to emphasize one orientation over the other, thus losing the equilibrium (Sutcliff, 1997). According to Wibbeke (2009), globalization has posed unique intercultural challenges for business leaders. The challenge for inter-cultural leaders is that what might be valued highly in one culture may completely be intolerable in another (Mendenhall, et al., 2017). Culture provides people with the sight to make sense of the world or the blinders that encumber perceiving someone else's reality.

Role Congruity Theory and Leadership Orientation

The Social Role Theory provides bedding for Role Congruity Theory (RCT), which focuses on gender roles and their significance in differences in behavior based on sex (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). RCT further discusses role congruence about perceptions of leadership roles and their consequences on individuals' behavior (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Scheurer, 2005). One result of these perceptions is an unfavorable attitude toward women in positions of power and leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002). According to these authors, the biased perception against female leadership is characteristic of female gender role that follows from the expectation of people that is dissimilar about leaders.

The extant literature on role incongruity has highlighted the factors associated with roles or leadership that may aggravate human perceptions of role incongruity (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), based on gender stereotyping (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). The leadership style differs with gender; particularly to the extent that the role of leadership was commonly associated with males rather than females (Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). The leadership styles of males and females also differ because their brains are wired differently, which can lead to different perceptions and behaviors (Feldhahn, 2009). A meta-analysis of leadership stereotypes demonstrated that leaders are culturally masculine and have more agency traits compared to communion traits (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011). Moreover, women are mostly associated with communal traits (Kite, Deaux, & Haines, 2008). However, this masculine construal of leadership orientation is losing force with the changing trends in perception. In a meta-analysis of leadership orientation and gender, it was found that gender differences were not of significance in leadership orientation (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Despite this fact, the role of gender in leadership orientation cannot be ruled out as some laboratory experiments have confirmed differences in significance based on gender. Rich (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of experiments conducted on different types of discrimination inthe workplace in which gender was regarded as one such factor. Also, a meta-analysis

of 49 experiments conducted at the workplace has endorsed the fact that there are differences in the workplace concerning gender (e.g., Davison & Burke, 2000; Koch, D'mello, & Sackett, 2015).

Research has been conducted on the factors related to perceivers that impact role incongruity-based predispositions (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). According to Simon and Hoyt, (2008) and Rudman and Kilianski (2000), it is not surprising that one compelling predictor of people's appraisals is their attitude towards gender roles of females in non-traditional roles, such as leadership.

Based on the literature and seeking answers to the research questions the following hypotheses were framed:

Hypothesis 1: The respondents will have different scores on task and relationship orientations.
Hypothesis 2: Male and female respondents will have different scores on task orientations.
Hypothesis 3: Male and female respondents will have different scores on relationship orientation.
Hypothesis 4: Male respondents will have similar scores on task and relationship orientations.
Hypothesis 5: Female respondents will have similar scores on task and relationship orientations.

3. METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data collection Process

Data were collected using stratified random sampling. The respondents were working as supervisors, managers, or leaders of groups/teams in different public sector organizations in Peshawar, Pakistan. Surveys were sent through web links, and also hard copies were distributed to some respondents. Using both these methods increased the chances of getting a higher response rate. Two enumerators who were university students were specifically hired for data collection and paid according to the existing market rate for data collection. Overall, 1000 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 595 returned questionnaires were in usable form. This exercise yielded a response rate of around 60%.

Data collection Instrument

Effective leadership refers to influencing people's behaviors via the use of task and relationship behaviors (Kaifi & Mujtaba, 2010). Northouse (2010) provided a useful instrument, known as the Style Questionnaire, to obtain a general profile of a person's leadership behavior regarding task and relationship orientations. The study employed the survey provided by Northouse (2010) using a Likert Scale of 1 to 5 for measurement; where 1 means "Never" and a rating of 5 means "Always" displaying a precise behavior. A total of 19 items measured the construct of task and relationship orientations, where 9 items measured the former and 10 items the latter. The scoring for the Style Questionnaire by Northouse (2010) was interpreted as below:

☐ Scores ranging from 45-50 (very high)
☐ Scores ranging from 40-44 (high)
☐ Scores ranging from 35-39 (moderately high)
☐ Scores ranging from 30-34 (moderately low)
☐ Scores ranging from 25-29 (low)
☐ Scores ranging from 10-24 (very low)

Measurement and Analysis

The measurement tool has been previously used in several studies of the kind that makes it reliable and valid. For further validity and reliability confirmation of the measurement tool, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to find out the loading of different items on two factors, such as task orientation and relationship orientation of employees. During EFA two items of relationship

orientation were removed due to problematic loading; giving a non-positive definite matrix. The error indicates that some of the eigen values of the correlation matrix are not positive numbers (Wothke, 1993).Moreover, three more items of relationship orientation were removed due to cross-loading on the factor of task orientation and one item of task orientation was removed due to higher cross-loading. The discriminant validity was thus confirmed by the remaining items that loaded neatly on their respective factor, as provided in Table 1. All loadings of the items were above 0.50. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure for sampling adequacy value (0.89) was significant and well above the threshold of 0.50 (Kaiser, 1970). The total variance explained by the two factors was 55.99%. None of the factors accounted for more than 50% variance, which is an indication ofthe absence of Common Method Bias in the data collection tool (Harman, 1976). The reliability of the tool was confirmed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test, which showed 0.89 for 9 items of task orientation and 0.78 for 8 items of relationship orientation. The two factors had no issue with multicollinearity as the correlation value was 0.55**.

Table 1: Pattern Matrix

	Factors	
	Task Orientation (TO)	Relationship Orientation(RO)
TO1	.611	
TO2	.802	
TO3	.872	
TO4	.874	
TO5	.513	
TO6	.793	
TO7	.852	
TO8	.629	
RO1		.761
RO2		.783
RO5		.735
RO6		.697
RO8		.474

Data Analysis and Results

Data were analyzed using SPSS. The statistics of the sample demographics reveal that out of a total of 595 respondents, 81% were male and 19% female, which is understandable as females in Pakistan are usually housewives or work on farms rather than working in the formal sector (Asian Development Bank, 2016). The number of women working in formal employment is significantly low (Kanbur, Rhee, & Zhuang, 2014; Asian Development Bank, 2016). About 10.4% of respondents were either off or below the age of 25 years, whereas, 89.6% were above the age of 25 years. Finally,the experience of the respondents was also measured at three levels, i.e. 1 to 5 years (low), 6 to 10 years (moderate), and 11 and above years (high). The percentages for the three levels of experience of the respondents were 40.2%, 46.2%, and 13.6% respectively. The descriptive statistics for the variables used in the study have been provided in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

N 595	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relationship Orientation	1.63	5.00	4.12	.62
Task Orientation	1.44	5.00	3.86	.78
Age	1	2	1.90	.30
Gender	1	2	1.19	.39
Years of work experience	1	3	1.73	.68

The given hypotheses were tested using different statistical tests in SPSS. The findings of these tests have been provided in the tables provided later in the analysis. The average scores of Pakistani respondents for task orientation fall in the "moderately low range," and their relationship orientation average falls in the "high range," as presented in Table 3. Thus, the difference between the two mean scores is 7.45, which is significant at the given values of (t=27.047***). Looking at the scores there is sufficient evidence to acceptor reject hypothesis 1, which states that there will be a difference between the average scores of the respondents on the two types of orientations.

Table 3: Task and Relationship Orientation of the Respondents

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Task Orientation	595	34.46	7.65
Relationship Orientation	595	41.91	5.67
	t=27.047, *p*=. <001 (***)		

The average scores for the male and female respondents on task and relationship orientations have been provided in Table 4. The difference between the two means is1.48, which is not significant at the given values of (t=1.861, *p*=.063). Looking at the results we fail to accept hypothesis 2, which states that there will be a significant difference between scores of male and female respondents on task orientation.

Table 4: Male and Female Respondents on Task and Relationship Orientations

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Task Orientation	Male	482	34.74	7.63
	Female	113	33.26	7.65
		t=1.861, *p*=.063		
Relationship Orientation	Male	482	41.90	5.83
	Female	113	41.99	4.96
not significant (ns)		t= -.160, *p*=.87 (ns)		

Hypothesis 3, which states that the male and female scores will be significantly different on relationship orientation, has not been supported as the difference between the two average scores is not significant. The given hypothesis is thus rejected at the given values of (t= -.160, *p*=.87).

The difference between the mean scores of male respondents on task and relationship orientation is significant at the given values of (t=-11.313***). The average scores on the two types of orientations are given in Table 5. This finding leads us to rejection of hypothesis 4, which states that the male respondents will have a similar score on task and relationship orientations.

Table 5: Male Respondents on Task and Relationship Orientations

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Males	Task Orientation	38.48	482	8.23
	Relationship Orientation	41.89	482	5.83
		t=-11.313, *p*=. <001 (***)		

The mean scores of female respondents for task and relationship orientations are provided in Table 6. The difference between the mean scores on the two types of orientations is significant at the given values of (t=-6.176***). This finding leads us to rejection of hypothesis 5, which states that females will have a similar score on task and relationship orientation. The difference between the average scores of the two types of orientations is higher in the female respondents as compared to male respondents.

Table 6: Female Respondents on Task and Relationship Orientations

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Females	Task Orientation	33.26	113	7.65
	Relationship Orientation	41.99	113	4.96
		t=-6.176, *p*=. <001 (***)		

4.   DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The role of leadership has increased in the past couple of decades for all types of organizations, including private and public sectors. This has in turn increased pressure on academic disciplines to speed up research on leadership orientation in organizations since leadership is professed as an indispensable component of effective management.

According to the results of this study, the average score of the Pakistani respondents is higher on relationship orientation as compared to task orientation. This finding has also been supported by the literature that individuals in a high-context culture are more tilted towards a relationship orientation, which increases its validation. The findings of this study are congruent with the fact that people have more tilt toward relationship orientation in Malaysia(Tajaddini & Mujtaba, 2009), Afghanistan (Mujtaba & Kaifi, 2010), and Iran (Tajaddini & Mujtaba, 2011). However, the Omani people have a similar score on task and relationship orientation (Mujtaba, Khanfar, & Khanfar, 2010). Besides these several other studies confirm relationship orientation to be a striking feature of the high-context culture. People like to emphasize and prioritize relationships over tasks (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005). The high-context culture involves close relationships as opposed to the low-context culture (Hall, 1998; Manrai, Manrai, Lascu, & Friedeborn, 2018). Pleasant relationships inthe workplace can facilitate the work of employees and they feel emotionally and psychologically secure in their workplace (Colbert, Bono, & Purvanova, 2016).

The results also suggest that there is no difference between the male and female scores on relationship orientation. This result can be explained because both the genders are part of the larger

community and share the same family and work norms, therefore, they are bound to have similar orientations in relationships.

People are influenced by two sets of values, one that pertains to the external environment and the other that pertains to the organization. The external values are shaped by the cultural context of the community, which in turn affects the internal values that prevail inside the organization. Simply put, individual behaviors are affected simultaneously by the interaction of the two types of values. Individuals consider themselves as part of the community first and then as part of an organization. The community values have engulfed people in every aspect of their life, both inside and outside their workplaces, and this applies to both genders.

The results reported in this study have practical implications for managing individuals in a high-context culture. Leaders should be well aware of the cultural norms of a region for effective leadership of their followers and the same applies to the management. Leaders and managers must fully comprehend the values of the people, before devising management strategies. Leadership styles can only be effective if they conform to the cultural context in which these are applied. Asians are particularly sensitive about their cultural norms. People in such cultures have a special place for relationships with other people inside and outside the family and can go to any length to uphold their relationships with their family members, colleagues, peers, subordinates, and supervisors. People in collectivist cultures give preference to family ties and their workgroups over and above their personal or individual needs. Whenever the two are in conflict the former is likely to take precedence over the latter. Managers should inculcate the relevant features of cultural contexts in their work process for better acceptance by the employees.

A high score on relationship orientation will thus affect peoples' behavior. Individuals like to work in groups and teams. People tend to adhere more to group norms rather than work norms and they like to associate themselves with certain groups to fulfill their social needs. Developing close relationships with other group members increases group cohesion and plays a central role in determining an individual's identity. In such cultures, people like to help each other, and also the supervisors assist their subordinates in getting the work done, which maximizes the welfare of all (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Such behaviors are more reflective of organizational citizenship behavior. Altruism is one dimension of organizational citizenship behavior that is directly and purposely aimed at helping people in a different situation, (i.e., providing orienting to new entrants in the organization, helping colleagues who have a heavy workload, covering up for some who are absent from the workplace, etc.). Altruism is common in a collectivist culture. The finding of Cohen and Avrahami (2006) confirms that employees in collectivist cultures tend to display organizational citizenship behavior more frequently as compared to employees related to individualistic culture. When employees are more collectivist, managers should design tasks in such structures that encourage teamwork (Earley, 1989). Employees will get satisfaction from tasks that are performed in a group, which can, in turn, enhance their motivation and positively affect their productivity. However, sometimes people in a high-context culture avoid conflicts with their colleagues and would rather work independently on certain tasks.

In a high-context culture, people are afraid of sanctions because they do not want to have any negative effects on their workplace relationships. Undue tensions of task deadlines and coercion in the workplace may have negative effects on the productivity of employees. The participative management style is a preferred strategy for avoiding conflicts and deadlocks between the management and employees. This will also encourage a generation of novel ideas and better solutions to the problems, where ideas can be exchanged without the fear of straining personal relationships.

The findings are particularly significant for managers and leaders who are working with a culturally diverse workforce. Managing projects become extremely difficult in diverse workgroups and teams with people having different cultural background, work styles, and belonging to different generations (Snedaker, 2005). Without adequate knowledge of the mindset of the people and acquaintance with the cultural context, managers may end up doing practices that might not fully harness the potential of their employees. It is imperative to understand these differences both for employees and supervisors/managers as both styles of leadership can be effective in different situations and with a different mix of people. At times even a combination of the two styles can also be beneficial.

With the ever-increasing need for globalization and a competitive environment for businesses, understanding the behaviors of employees is paramount to success (Haung & Mujtaba, 2010) because leadership is not just holding a position of having some authority, rather it is a practice that can be pursued by any individual (Vrdoljak Raguž & Borovac Zekan, 2015). The authors regard leaders to have a mental ability that facilitates understanding of their behavioral effects on multiple objectives and the need of harmonizing competing values.

5.   CONCLUSION

Global managers and academics need to have the know-how that cultural differences cannot be done away with; particularly in modern organizations, which reflect a high degree of diversity in the workforce. Therefore, these should be embraced if employees are to develop lasting relationships for effective workplace performance. Some common differences exist across cultures with countries having individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Mujtaba, 2008).Leaders and leadership cannot be understood apart from the context in which they operate, and the system over which they lead (Gardner, 1990). Gardner stresses that leaders are an essential component of any system. Cross-cultural researchers strive to understand, how and if, the qualities of effective leadership are provisional or universal (Avolio, 2007). Avolio admits that the manager's personality and leadership style can impact different aspects of the organization's strategy and culture. According to Yukl (2002), a universal cultural theory has prescribed certain dimensions of leadership that could apply to any situation, whereas contingent theories present an opposite view, stressing aspects of leadership to be contingent upon the situation in which they function.

The major conclusion of this discussion is that in a collectivist culture the leadership orientation should be more relationship-oriented for effective leadership of employees. People in such cultures tend to uphold relationships and are more inclined towards teamwork. Thus, a relationship takes precedence over task orientation. The results of this study are not in congruence with a similar study conducted by Haung and Mujtaba (2010). This indicates that besides cultural-context leaders have to depend upon other factors that might have an impact on employees' behavior. However, the findings of this study are in congruence with the research findings of Tajaddini and Mujtaba (2009) that Malaysians have a higher relationship orientation rather than task orientation, which is also the general perception about the eastern cultures that are usually characterized by features of high-context. The findings of this study thus reinforce the perception that South-Asian people have a high relationship orientation.

Moreover, the current finding is a word of caution for managers and leaders who work in this region. People mostly rely on ready-made models and theories imported from the West, which is a low-context culture. These models are implemented without modification to the local cultural context. Ditto's implementation of the Western ideas and models can fail due to diverse cultural contexts, norms, and work practices. As such, local and expatriate managers must be cautious and should adjust their management and leadership practices according to the local norms and cultural contexts of people across the globe, especially in South Asia's Peshawar, Pakistan.

6.   LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research has limitations like any other study. One limitation of the study is that data were collected only from the public sector organizations, which by default might have different organizational cultures than organizations operating in the private sector. Therefore, in the absence of data from the private sector, we cannot claim with absolute confidence that the findings are a true reflection of the entire population including employees in both the private and public sectors. Another limitation was that the respondents' first language is not English and while responding to any question there is a probability that they might have misunderstood, and thus, responded incorrectly. As a future strategy, questionnaires can be administered using both versions; English and Urdu languages, for better comprehension of the respondents.

The current study collected data from employees working in the public sector organizations in Peshawar, Pakistan, which might not be the true representative of the overall population of the country. Future studies can include respondents from different parts of the country along with respondents from the private sector in similar studies for a comparative analysis of the two sectors and also different parts of the country to examine employees' orientation to generalize the findings. Future studies can compare and contrast the findings of all the empirical research conducted in collectivist cultures and individualistic cultures for a mega-analysis on leadership orientation.

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