

## **Cross Culture Management-An Examination on Task, Relationship and Work Overload Stress Orientations of German and Japanese Working Adults**

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### **Abstract**

*People from different cultures value, believe, and act differently. Cultures influence social behavior and practices. Research in cross-culture management has discussed a great deal the different leadership and management practices across culture. This comparative and cross-national study uniquely examines the task, relationship, and work overload stress orientations of people in two countries from different continents: Germany (Europe) and Japan (Asia). As a result of the analysis of 463 responses including 232 from the German sample and 231 from the Japanese sample, some significant differences were found. In terms of task orientation, it appears that German and Japanese respondents have similar moderately high scores on task orientations. There was a significant difference in task scores based on gender. Male respondents were more task-oriented than female respondents. However, there was no significant interaction between place of birth and gender in the task scores. In terms of relationship orientation, there was no significant difference between German and Japanese respondents although German respondents scored slightly higher than Japanese respondents. No significant difference was found in the relationship scores based on gender although female respondents scored slightly higher than male respondents. There was no significant interaction between place of birth and gender in the relationship scores. In terms of work overload stress orientation, no significant difference was found in the stress scores of German and Japanese respondents. There was no significant difference in the stress scores based on gender although female respondents scored slightly higher than male respondents. However, there was a significant interaction between place of birth and gender in the stress scores. In this paper, literature on the behavioral approach to leadership, stress perception, and German and Japanese cultures are presented along with practical application, suggestions and implications for future studies.*

### **Introduction**

A good deal of research has shown that beliefs about what constitutes effective leadership vary across cultures (Dickson, DenHartog, & Mitchelson, 2003; Giberson, Resick, Dickson, Mitchelson, & Randall, 2009).

The GLOBE project indicated that the core values and tacit beliefs of leaders in professional organizations are influenced by culture (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002). Leaders in cross cultural settings need to pay close attention to cultural values and norms in order to understand what their subordinates expect of them (Kuchinke 1999; Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001). Hofstede (1993) believed that national culture greatly impacts local leadership and management practices. Moreover, management and leadership theories developed in Western cultures such as the U.S. may not work well in other cultures (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to conduct comparative research to examine cross-cultural similarities and dissimilarities in the leadership orientations of people in different countries as managers, trainers and researchers need to examine how differences in cultural background and context can lead to cultural misunderstanding, diminished performance and motivation, and lack of commitment, which can potentially lead to organizational failure.

The purpose of this comparative, cross-national study is to examine the similarities and dissimilarities in task, relationship and work overload stress orientations between adult German and Japanese respondents, expand the body of knowledge of cross-cultural leadership and management, and provide practical implications for international and multicultural business managers who work with these populations. More specifically, this paper addresses the following research question: Do German and Japanese differ in their task, relationship and stress orientations based on culture and gender? In addressing this question, we use the Style Questionnaire, provided by Northouse (2007) to obtain a general profile of a person's leadership behaviors regarding task and relationship orientations and the Overload Stress Inventory, adapted from Hyde and Allen's conceptual analysis of overload (1996, pp. 29-30), to assess the stress perception of respondents.

We chose to compare Germany and Japan for several reasons. First of all, the two countries have a unique relationship that began in 1860 with the first official visit to Japan from Prussia, a German kingdom and historic state out of the Duchy of Prussia and the Margraviate of Brandenburg, which existed before the German Empire was established in 1871. Germany and Japan experienced a period of intense intellectual and cultural exchange in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the relationship dissolved when the two empires showed conflicting aspirations in China. Japan declared the war on Germany in 1914 by allying itself with Britain. Both Japan and Germany were defeated and suffered great losses in the Second World War. However, both countries recovered quickly from these losses and the bilateral relationship was re-established with a focus on economic growth. Japan and Germany were the third and fourth largest economies (in GDP) in the world (estimated \$5.1 trillion and \$3.6 trillion respectively) ("CNNMoney," 2013). Trade volume between the two countries reached \$45.6 billion in 2012 and Germany is the largest trade partner of Japan in EU ("JETRO," 2012). Today, they both enjoy great benefits from their strong cooperation in various areas including political, cultural, scientific and economic, and view each other more positively than ever.

## ***Literature Review***

### **German and Japanese Cultures**

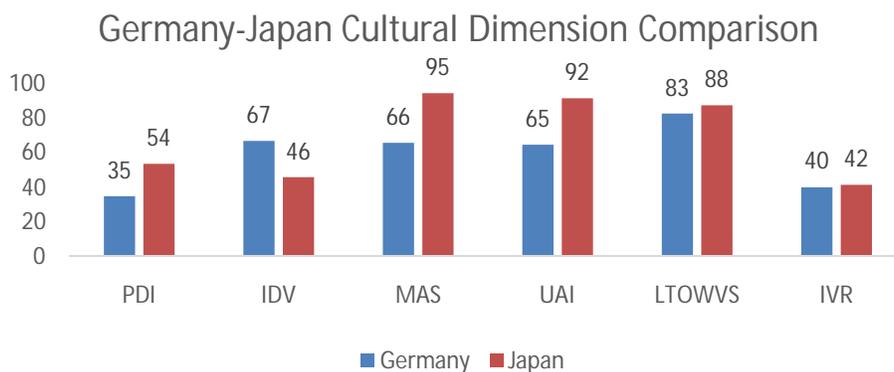
The Federal Republic of Germany, or Germany in short, is Europe's largest economy. Located in Central Europe, Germany plays a key role in the continent's economic, political, and defense systems. Germany has a population of about 81.5 million people spreading out in 16 states in the country. Berlin is the nation's capital and federal republic is the government structure ("Central Intelligence Agency," 2012a). German culture has been strongly influenced by major intellectual and popular trends in Europe and by its own history. In post war Germany, two different cultures emerged for forty years. In Eastern Germany, culture was challenged to relate to the political and social issues, that is, to promote the socialist personality. In Western Germany, there has been a long standing distrust of ideologies and a general detachment from politics for a long time (Kolinski & Van der Will, 2004). Post-war culture in Western Germany tried to carve out a politics-free space for the individual. Material welfare and economic achievements were highlighted (Kolinski & Van der Will, 2004), and traditional virtues like diligence, accuracy, timeliness, and reliability were emphasized, and are still stressed today. In 1989, in the Eastern part of Germany, people demonstrated against the German regime, causing its final collapse. Furthermore, the culture of Germany today is one in which the people want to have more control over their fate and destiny, similar to other developed and democratic countries.

Japan is located in Eastern Asia. With a population of about more than 127 million people, majority of Japanese people are in the age range of 15-64 years (almost 63%). It is worth noting that almost a quarter of Japanese population are 64 years of age and older.

Japan has 47 prefectures and Tokyo is the capital. Japanese is the official language and the country's type of government is a parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy ("Central Intelligence Agency," 2012b). The Japanese culture is a complex system with a long history of tradition that has been formed and developed over thousands of years. Japan is often regarded as a high-context culture where people tend to have orientations toward collectivism, relationship, long-term, and group activities (Nakane, 1967, 1970; Hall, 1976; Ouchi, 1978, 1980; Hofstede, 1980).

The following section compares the cultural dimensions of Germany and Japan based on the six dimensions developed by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) and Hofstede (2001). As can be seen from Figure 1, Germany and Japan have quite different scores on the cultural dimensions. As Figure 1 shows, Germany has a lower score of *Power Distance* (35) than that of Japan (54). It indicates that Japanese people are more acceptable to inequalities than German people. This might be traced back to the German apprenticeship system contributing to a high level of education. Consequently, well-educated Germans expect their superior to be an expert in solving problems (Hofstede 1993). On the *Individualism/Collectivism* dimension, Germany has a higher score (67) than that of Japan (46). It indicates that Germany is an individualistic society while Japan is a collectivism society. Germans tend to believe that they control their own fate and destiny. However, Germany, though sharing this pattern with other Western countries, tends to be on the lower end of individualism. German people prefer a loosely-knit social framework while Japanese people prefer a close-knit social framework. Japanese people tend to have "in-groups" thinking style, prefer group activity and decision making that benefit the group instead of personal goals (Fan & Zigang, 2004; Parks & Vu, 1994; Scott, Bishop, & Chen, 2003). On the *Masculinity/Femininity* dimension, both Germany (66) and Japan (95) are considered masculine societies, with Japan being more extreme than Germany. In Germany, traits associated with masculinity, such as achievement, assertiveness, and material success are favored. (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002). In Japanese society, extremely high masculinity combined with moderate power distance leads to fierce competition more at the group level and less at the individual level. In the *Uncertainty Avoidance* dimension, Japan has a much higher score (92) than that of Germany (65). This indicates that Japanese society is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries in the world while Germany seems to have a moderate preference for avoiding uncertainty. Germans tend to be moderately risk and ambiguity averse. On the *Long Term Orientation* dimension, both Japan and Germany demonstrate a long-term orientation through their high score of 88 and 83 respectively. Japanese people live their lives guided by virtues, such as humaneness, righteousness, propriety, knowledge, loyalty, and integrity. In Japan, long-term relationship is the key to business success. In Germany, it tends to take longer for people to make decision since Germans seem to have a high need for perfection (Schroll-Machl, 2013). Perseverance, persistence, and synthetic thinking are commonly seen in long-term oriented cultures such as Japan and Germany. On the *Indulgence/Restraint* dimension, both Japan and Germany show a high level of restraint in their cultures through their low scores of 42 and 40 respectively. In both cultures, people have less control over their desires and impulses. The restrained nature of Japanese culture is visible since Japanese people live their lives guided by virtues with strict social norms as mentioned above while in Germany, people respect professionalism and compliance with rules and policies, which may take away some control over their individual drive to having fun and enjoying life.

**Figure 1. Germany-Japan Cultural Dimension Comparison**



### Task and Relationship-Oriented Leadership

The behavior paradigm of leadership emerged in the 1940s after disappointing results from research on the trait theory of leadership (Judge, Piccolo, & Iles, 2004). This research, led by a group at Ohio State University, examined the leadership behaviors, or styles, of effective leadership (see Stogdill, 1950). A leadership style is a pattern of behavior that a leader exhibits in a certain way and does not change much across situations (Stock-Homburg, 2008, p. 406). Two main behaviors emerged from this literature: the task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors, also referred to as initiating structure and consideration (Fleishman, 1967; Judge et al., 2004; Northouse, 2007; Oaklander & Fleishman, 1964).

Initiating structure style is the degree to which a leader focuses on objective task performance, is oriented toward the attainment of goals, follows rules and procedures, maintains high standards, and holds subordinates accountable (Stogdill, 1963). On the other hand, the consideration style relates to the degree to which leaders demonstrate concern and respect, are friendly and approachable, provide support and encouragement, and empower subordinates.

It should be noted that researchers at the University of Michigan conducted behavioral research at the same time provided similar findings to those of the Ohio State University studies. These studies identified two similar categories of leadership behavior: employee-centered and production-centered (Daft, 2008; Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2008). Employee-centered leaders, who resemble the consideration leaders categorized in the Ohio State University studies, focus on the well-being and human needs of their followers. They facilitate positive interaction and seek to minimize conflicts among their subordinates (Daft, 2008). On the other hand, production-centered leaders, who resemble the initiating structure leaders, concern goals, tasks and how to accomplish them (Nguyen, Boehmer, & Mujtaba, 2012). They direct their subordinates' work activities, plan and organize work schedules to accomplish tasks and achieve efficiency (Daft, 2008). The behavioral dimensions of leadership from the University of Michigan studies have received far less attention than those of Ohio State (see Judge et al., 2004)

Until the 1970s, behavioral theories dominated leadership research (Judge et al., 2004). In fact, Fleishman (1995) indicated that, "Consideration and Initiating structure have proven to be among the most robust leadership topics" (p.51). Since that time, however, the behavioral leadership paradigm, and consideration and initiating structure fell out of favor and were criticized both methodologically and conceptually (Judge et al., 2004).

House and Aditya (1997) concluded that there was no consistent pattern of leader behavior related to meaningful organizational outcomes, such as satisfaction or effectiveness.

More recent research has evaluated structure and consideration in a far more positive light. In an integrative trait-behavioral model of leadership effectiveness, Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey (2011) found that initiating structure was the most important leader behavior for predicting group performance, accounting for 32.9% of the variance. Consideration behaviors accounted for 16.6% of the variance. In terms of follower satisfaction, initiating structure behaviors accounted 20.1% of the variance; consideration accounted for 44.9% of the variance. Furthermore, Judge et al. (2004) meta-analyzed the relationship of initiating structure and consideration with several leadership effectiveness measures. Results revealed that both initiating structure and consideration have moderately strong relationships with leadership outcomes, with consideration more strongly related to leader and job satisfaction, motivation, and leader effectiveness and structure more related to leader job performance and group-organization performance. It is clear that these concepts hold value in leadership research.

Many studies have examined gender differences in leadership literature (e.g., Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Although male and female leaders have been found to be equally effective (e.g., Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995), women are thought to be more concerned for other people, sensitive and caring. Isaković (2011) indicated that female leaders, with their specific skills and attributes, produce a more humane, relationship-oriented, flexible, participatory, and caring organization. However, this gender-stereotypic assumption that women are more considerate than men in the leadership style has not been supported. However, women were found to be more democratic and participative, and less autocratic and directive than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Less research has focused on how cultural differences influence the relationship between gender and leadership style. Nguyen and Mujtaba (2011) found that females are more accommodative and relationship-oriented. However, research results are inconclusive. Nguyen and Mujtaba (2011) found that Vietnamese females are more relationship-oriented than Vietnamese males. On the contrary, no significant differences were found in the relationship orientation between females and males in Oman, Germany, and Iran (Mujtaba, Khanfar, & Khanfar, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2012; Tajaddini & Mujtaba, 2011).

## Work Overload Stress Perception

People, regardless of their cultural orientations, age, gender, educational backgrounds, or work experience, are likely to experience stress. Stress is defined as “an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that is a consequence of any action, situation, or event that places special demands on a person.” (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996) This definition assumes that stress is a reaction to a situation (not the situation itself), and that stress is individual in nature; we do not find the same situations or events stressful. According to Ellis (2006), stress is “a sequence of events with the presence of a demand, and the perception that the demand is taxing on an individual’s resources well-being.” The impact of stress can be spread out in many aspects of a human being’s life, including physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral. 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 clearly indicate this impact (Frese, 1985; Hyde & Allen, 1996; Nichols, 2008; Selye, 1956). According to Hyde and Allen (1996, p. 27), overload stressors can lead to changes in one’s psychology, physiology and when not managed effectively quantitative overload can cause blood cholesterol level to increase, which can be linked to such disorders as atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease. Similarly, people experiencing overload feel burned out which can result in a decrease in their work motivation. Janssen, Schaufeli, & Houkes (1999) exhibited that the higher level of job demand results in emotional exhaustion. In organizational settings, stress not only impacts individuals but also impacts the organizational performance as a whole. Interpersonal conflicts, hostility, and non-cooperative relationships among employees and colleagues can be seen as signs of organizational stress (Oaklander & Fleishman, 1964). In high stress environment, employees are more likely to show defensive and uncooperative behaviors; reduce communication; express hard feelings and mistrust among others; isolate themselves from the group; and freeze the relationship.

Bahrami (2010) noted that, “International organizations such the World Health Organization and United Nations have ..... concluded that job stress has become a world-wide problem” (p. 52). Cultural and societal norms are likely to influence both the manner in which an individual perceives stress, and the resources they use to manage stress (Bahrami, 2010). Cross cultural research has shown that cultural differences, such as autonomy and individualism, are related to perceptions of stress. Liu, Spector, & Shi (2007) found differences between United States and Chinese workers both in their reported stressors and reactions to these stressors.

### *Study Methodology and Analysis*

#### Measurement

**Task and Relationship Orientations.** Northouse’s (2007) Style Questionnaire is used to obtain a general profile of a person’s leadership behaviors regarding task and relationship orientations. A rating of 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and a rating of 5 means “Strongly Agree” with the person demonstrating the specific behavior. The scoring interpretation 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

**Work Overload Stress.** The Overload Stress Inventory, adapted from Hyde and Allen’s conceptual analysis of overload (1996, pp. 29-30), is used to assess the stress perception of respondents. Work overload stress can be understood as: regularly taking work home to finish in the evenings or weekends, having more work than it is possible to complete, having many important deadlines which cannot always be met; feeling less competent on tasks; having limited time to do as good of a job as one is capable of doing; being given more work than one’s current qualifications and skills; falling behind schedule and deadlines; having too many tasks and jobs at the same time; and often feeling overwhelmed by the amount, difficulty and complexity of tasks and assignments. A rating of 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and a rating of 5 means “Strongly Agree” with the person demonstrating

the specific behavior. The responses are assessed according to the following general criteria (adapted from Hyde & 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 German adults are different from Japanese adults in terms of task orientation, relationship orientation, and overload stress perception. Another aspect of this study was to determine whether there is any difference between the two countries' gender on these scores. The specific hypotheses for this study are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: German respondents have task scores that are significantly different than Japanese respondents.
- Hypothesis 2: There is significant difference in the task scores between male and female respondents.
- Hypothesis 3: There is significant interaction between gender and country in the task scores.
- Hypothesis 4: German respondents have the relationship scores that are significantly different than Japanese respondents.
- Hypothesis 5: There is significant difference in the relationship scores between male and female respondents.
- Hypothesis 6: There is significant interaction between gender and country in the relationship scores.
- Hypothesis 7: German respondents have the overload stress perception scores that are significantly different than Japanese respondents.
- Hypothesis 8: There is a significant difference in the overload stress perception scores between male and female respondents.
- Hypothesis 9: There is significant interaction between gender and country in the overload stress perception scores.

### Sample and Procedure

Convenient sampling procedure was used for selecting and contacting respondents. The target respondents are German and Japanese adults who can speak and understand English well. The original English questionnaires were distributed to insure its validity. The authors used both web link and hard copy to collect the data. For the German sample, hard copies were distributed in several universities and companies.

In addition, the questionnaire was made available as a web link that was distributed via several online services such as email and Facebook. Overall, 232 complete questionnaires were received from German participants. For the Japanese sample, 231 returned surveys were fully completed. Altogether, there were 463 completed surveys that were used for this study.

As seen in Table 2, the German sample included 73 respondents in the 35 to 44 years old group (32%), 70 respondents in the 26 to 34 years old group (30%), 49 respondents in the 17 to 25 years old group (21%), and 40 respondents who were 45 years old and above (17%). As for the Japanese sample, the majority of the Japanese people were in between 35 to 44 years of age with 104 respondents (45%) while there were 67 respondents in the 26 to 34 years old group (29%) and 51 respondents in the 45 and above (22%). There were 9 Japanese in the sample who were in between 17 to 25 years of age (4%).

**Table 2: Age**

		Place of Birth		Total
		Germany	Japan	
Age	17-25	49	9	58
	26-34	70	67	137
	35-44	73	104	177
	45 and older	40	51	91
Total		232	231	463

As seen in Table 3, the German sample had 135 female respondents (58%) and 97 male respondents (42%) while the Japanese sample had 166 male respondents (72%) and 65 female respondents (28%).

**Table 3: Gender**

		Place of Birth		Total
		Germany	Japan	
Gender	Male	97	166	263
	Female	135	65	200
Total		232	231	463

As seen in Table 4, the German sample had 79 respondents with 6 to 10 years of work experience (34%), 69 respondents had 11 years or more of work experience (30%), 50 respondents had 1 to 5 years of work experience (21%), and 34 respondents had no work experience (15%). All respondents from the Japanese sample had work experience, of which 156 respondents had 11 or more years of work experience (68%), 45 respondents had 6 to 10 years of work experience (19%), and 30 respondents had 1 to 5 years of work experience (13%).

**Table 4: Work Experience**

		Place of Birth		Total
		Germany	Japan	
Work Experience	None	34	0	34
	1-5 years	50	30	80
	6-10 years	79	45	124
	11 or more years	69	156	225
Total		232	231	463

As seen in Table 5, the German sample had 100 respondents had high school diplomas (43%), 65 respondents had bachelor degrees (28%), 62 respondents had master degrees (27%), and 5 respondents had doctorate degrees (2%). The Japanese sample had 114 respondents who had bachelor degrees (49.4%), 98 respondents who had master degrees (42.4%), 12 respondents who had doctorate degree (5.2%), and 7 respondents who had high school degrees (3%).

**Table 5: Education**

		Place of Birth		Total
		Germany	Japan	
Education	High school	100	7	107
	Bachelor	65	114	179
	Master	62	98	160
	Doctorate	5	12	17
Total		232	231	463

**Analysis and Results**

Univariate analysis of variance (Two-way ANOVA) was used for hypotheses testing in this research. Two-way ANOVA is a commonly used statistical technique for finding significant relationships between groups or samples by comparing the means of those groups on two factors of interest.

**Task Orientation Scores**

As presented in Table 6-1, the average scores of both German and Japanese respondents for task orientation fell in “moderately high range” (M=35.60 and M=35.76 respectively). This difference was not statistically significant (F=.34, p= .563), as shown in Table 6-2. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported. There was no statistically significant difference between the average task orientation scores of German and Japanese. It appears that German and Japanese respondents have similar moderately high scores on task orientations.

Also seen in Table 6.1, the average task score of male respondents was higher (M=36.37) than that of female respondents (M=34.77). This difference was statistically significant (F= 6.32, p= .012), as shown in Table 6-2.

Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported. Male respondents scored significantly different, in this case higher, than female respondents. Males appeared to be more task-oriented than females.

Table 6-2 shows no significant interaction between place of birth (Germany and Japan) and gender in the task scores ( $F=.12$ ,  $p=.729$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

A helpful way to understand what it means when a difference between groups or an interaction between variables is not statistically significant is to check the observed power value. As Table 6-3 reported, there would be only 6% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and gender in the task scores in this sample.

**Table 6-1: Descriptive Statistics**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Task\_Scores

Place of Birth	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Germany	Male	36.47	7.13	97
	Female	34.98	6.54	135
	Total	35.60	6.82	232
Japan	Male	36.31	7.33	166
	Female	34.34	6.75	65
	Total	35.76	7.21	231
Total	Male	36.37	7.24	263
	Female	34.77	6.60	200
	Total	35.68	7.01	463

**Table 6-2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Task\_Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	311.31 <sup>a</sup>	3	103.70	2.13	.096	6.38	.542
Intercept	516121.71	1	516121.71	10582.79	.000	10582.79	1.00
Place of Birth	16.37	1	16.37	.34	.563	.34	.09
Gender	307.97	1	307.97	6.32	.012	6.32	.71
Place of Birth * Gender	5.85	1	5.85	.12	.729	.12	.06
Error	22385.38	459	48.77				
Total	612136.00	463					
Corrected Total	22696.69	462					

a. R Squared = .01 (Adjusted R Squared = .01)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

### Relationship Orientation Scores

As presented in Table 7-1, the average relationship scores of German participants fell in the upper “moderately high range” ( $M=39.76$ ) while Japanese respondents scored in the “moderately high range” ( $M=38.79$ ). This difference was not statistically significant ( $F=2.66$ ,  $p=.104$ ), as shown in Table 7-2. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported. There was no statistically significant difference between the average scores for relationship orientation of German and Japanese respondents, although German respondents scored slightly higher than their Japanese counterparts.

Also seen in Table 7-1, the average score of female respondents was slightly higher ( $M=39.60$ ) than male respondents ( $M=39.03$ ). However, this difference was not statistically significant ( $F=.36$ ,  $p=.547$ ), as shown in Table 7-2. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was not supported. It appears that male and female respondents have similar scores on relationship orientations.

Table 7-2 also shows no significant interaction between place of birth (Germany and Japan) and gender in the relationship scores ( $F=.08$ ,  $p= .781$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 6 was not supported. There would be only 6% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and gender in the relationship scores in this sample.

**Table 7-1: Descriptive Statistics**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Relationship\_Scores

Place of Birth	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Germany	Male	39.66	4.99	97
	Female	39.83	4.87	135
	Total	39.76	4.91	232
Japan	Male	38.66	5.45	166
	Female	39.12	6.06	65
	Total	38.79	5.62	231
Total	Male	39.03	5.30	263
	Female	39.60	5.28	200
	Total	39.28	5.29	463

**Table 7-2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Relationship\_Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	119.64 <sup>a</sup>	3	39.88	1.43	.234	4.28	.38
Intercept	632210.14	1	632210.14	22633.57	.000	22633.57	1.00
Place of Birth	74.19	1	74.19	2.66	.104	2.66	.37
Gender	10.15	1	10.15	.36	.547	.36	.09
Place of Birth * Gender	2.16	1	2.16	.078	.781	.078	.06
Error	12820.98	459	27.93				
Total	727183.00	463					
Corrected Total	12940.61	462					

a. R Squared = .01 (Adjusted R Squared = .00)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

**Work Overload Stress Scores**

As presented in Table 8-1, the average scores of both German ( $M=27.08$ ) and Japanese ( $M=26.05$ ) respondents for work overload stress perception fell in “moderate range” which German scored slightly higher than Japanese. This difference was not statistically significant ( $F=2.18$ ,  $p= .140$ ), as shown in Table 8-2. Therefore, hypothesis 7 was not supported. There was no statistically significant difference between the average scores for work overload stress perception of German and Japanese.

Also seen in Table 8-1, the average stress scores of both male and female respondents fell in the “moderate” range though female respondents scored slightly higher ( $M=27.05$ ) than male respondents ( $M=26.20$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between these two mean scores ( $F= .31$ ,  $p= .577$ ), as shown in Table 8-2. Therefore, hypothesis 8 was not supported. There was no significant difference in the stress scores based on gender although female respondents scored slightly higher than male respondents.

Table 8-2 shows a significant interaction between place of birth (Germany and Japan) and gender in the stress scores ( $F=4.85$ ,  $p= .028$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 9 was supported.

**Table 8-1: Descriptive Statistics**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Stress\_Scores

Place of Birth	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Germany	Male	25.85	7.16	97
	Female	27.97	8.12	135
	Total	27.08	7.79	232
Japan	Male	26.40	7.76	166
	Female	25.14	8.04	65
	Total	26.05	7.84	231
Total	Male	26.20	7.53	263
	Female	27.05	8.18	200
	Total	26.57	7.82	463

**Table 8-2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Sum\_Stress\_Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	453.47 <sup>a</sup>	3	151.16	2.49	.059	7.48	.62
Intercept	283710.03	1	283710.03	4681.54	.000	4681.54	1.00
Place of Birth	132.127	1	132.13	2.18	.140	2.18	.31
Gender	18.90	1	18.90	.31	.577	.31	.09
Place of Birth * Gender	293.75	1	293.75	4.85	.028	4.85	.59
Error	27816.27	459	60.60				
Total	355030.00	463					
Corrected Total	28269.74	462					

a. R Squared = .02 (Adjusted R Squared = .01)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

## Discussion

### Implications for Management

It was hypothesized that German and Japanese respondents will have significantly different scores for relationship and task orientations, and the current study did not support these hypotheses as respondents in Germany appeared to have similar task and relationship orientation scores with respondents in Japan. These findings were unexpected. Japanese people, although coming from a high collectivistic and power distance culture, are as task-oriented and relationship-oriented as their German counterparts, who come from an individualistic and low power distance culture. This has significant implications for global managers and leaders who work specifically with German and Japanese workforces. It appears that a relationship orientation has become more popular as managers have begun to pay more attention to the “softer” side of management. German managers value mutual trust, compassion, generosity, and interpersonal skills in addition to their high respects for technical skills (Nguyen et al., 2012). Therefore, global managers and organizations should be aware of these unique differences and not assume similarity and dissimilarity of leadership styles based on the cultural differences.

It was hypothesized that gender will make a difference in the task and relationship orientation scores in this sample and the current study only found a significant difference in the task scores but not in the relationship scores. Male respondents were more task-oriented than female respondents.

It was hypothesized that there will be a significant interaction between place of birth (German and Japan) and gender in the task and relationship orientation scores in this sample and the current study did not support these hypotheses.

It was hypothesized that German and Japanese respondents will have significantly different scores for work overload stress perceptions and this study did not support this hypothesis as no statistically significant difference was found. German respondents appeared to have similar work overload stress perception scores with Japanese respondents. Gender was thought to be a factor in the work overload stress perception of respondents but we found no significant difference based on gender in this category. However, a significant interaction was found between place of birth and gender in the stress perception scores.

Based on these results, we can conclude that German and Japanese respondents have similar task and relationship orientation scores. Male respondents are more task-oriented than female respondents, and that people from both countries have similar level of work overload stress perception.

As the workforce becomes more culturally diverse, it is strategically important for leaders and managers to understand how to manage their diverse workforce as effectively and efficiently. It is important to understand the expectations and behaviors of employees in different cultures and strategically plan to organize and lead this diverse workforce successfully. This study has shed light into the differences in leadership orientations (task and relationship) and stress perception between these two unique countries. It provides more empirical results regarding the task, relationship, and stress orientations between German and Japanese adults based on gender and culture, from which researchers and scholars can benefit. This study also provides real-world implications and recommendations for managers and practitioners, especially those who do business or deal with these working adults.

### **Directions for Future Research**

More specific population should be studied such as comparing populations with similar working backgrounds. Future studies can examine other demographic factors such as age, levels of education, and government work experience. Follow-up research can examine larger sample size with similar population and the surveys can be translated into the local German and Japanese languages. Future research can examine these stressors to have a more complete understanding of employee stress. Finally, future studies can look into different countries from different continents in order to have a better understanding of the task, relationship, and stress orientations of employees across the globe.

### **Limitation of the Study**

Like many other empirical research, this study has several limitations. First of all, this study was conducted with a general adult population in Germany and in Japan. Secondly, this study only looked into gender between the two cultures. Another limitation is the small sample size, which included only working adults who can speak fluent English in both countries. Thus, these results cannot be generalized to the larger population, especially those who do not speak any English. In addition, this research only examined the work overload stress of respondents while there are other work-related and life-related stressors that can cause stress to employees. Finally, this study only focused on German and Japanese respondents.

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