

# **Do Age and Management Experience Make a Difference in Leadership Orientations? An Empirical Study of Omani and Vietnamese Working Adults**

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# **Do Age and Management Experience Make a Difference in Leadership Orientations? An Empirical Study of Omani and Vietnamese Working Adults**

## **Abstract**

People from different countries may have different leadership orientations thanks to their cultural differences. This paper uniquely studied the leadership orientations of Omani and Vietnamese working adults. It particularly examined the task and relationship behaviors of the respondents based on age and management experience. Univariate analysis of variance (Two-way ANOVA) was used for hypotheses testing in this research to find significant relationships between groups by comparing the means of those groups on two factors of interest. There were totally 376 responses, of which half were Omani and half were Vietnamese coincidentally. It appears that both age and management experience were not the factors that made a difference in both the task and relationship orientations of Omani and Vietnamese working adults. In addition, there was no significant interaction between place of birth and age as well as place of birth and management experience. Managerial implications and recommendations are presented in this study.

*Keywords:* Age; leadership; management experience, Oman; relationships; tasks, Vietnam.

## **Introduction**

There have been extensive studies on leadership across culture. These studies examined various factors that impact leadership styles of people in different countries. The notion that cultural values and norms carry great impacts on leadership has been examined and validated by many researchers such as Hofstede 1993; House et al. 2002; Javidan et al. 2006; Kuchinke 1999; Lord et al. 2001. Along with this stream of research, the influence of cultures on various aspects of management has been studied, e.g. leadership (Dickson, Den Hartog, and Mitchelson 2003; Giberson et al. 2009), organizational behavior (Peter 1992), human resource management (Schuler and Rogovsky 1998), strategic management (Sayles and Wright 1985), etc. The world of business has become more globalized and the workforce has become more diverse than ever before. Therefore, maintaining, managing, and developing a high performance work system in this globalized and diverse context is a great challenge for leaders and managers. It is significantly advantageous for leaders and managers to understand the needs and expectations of their employees in different cultures to create a “person-job” fit to help motivate them to achieve high performance and satisfaction.

The purpose of this cross-cultural study is to examine the differences in task and relationship orientations between Omani and Vietnamese working adults based on their age and management experience. This research addresses the following research questions: Do age and management experience make a difference in the leadership orientations of Omani and Vietnamese working adults? Is there an interaction between the place of birth and age? Is there an interaction between the place of birth and management experience? This study uses the Northouse (2007) Style Questionnaire to obtain a general profile of a person’s leadership behaviors.

So why compare Omani and Vietnamese working adults? First of all, there has been a significant development in friendship and cooperation between Oman and Vietnam recently.

This cooperation has become more strategic since leaders from both countries have agreed to accelerate their exchanges in economics, politics, trading and investments (Nguyen et al., 2013). The first session of the Omani Vietnamese Joint Committee took place in January 2011 when both countries were “making headways in the field of economic and trade cooperation” (The Voice of Vietnam VOV, 2011). According to The Voice of Vietnam VOV (2011), despite a young diplomatic relationship, trade volume between Oman and Vietnam has almost doubled from 2008 with a total of \$24.2 million to 2010 with a total of \$41.4 million. Vietnam agreed to provide food products to Oman and Oman agreed to provide oil and gas products to Vietnam on a long-term basis. Also during this first session, Oman and Vietnam agreed to establish the Vietnam-Oman Business Council. As recently as January 2014, the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Omani Vietnamese Joint Committee started to discuss the two countries’ cooperation in multiple areas including economic, trade, investment and culture. In particular, the Committee discussed the prospects of increasing trade volumes, investment opportunities and the cooperation of private sectors (Oman Observer, 2014). Second, there has been little research that examined Omani and Vietnamese working adults simultaneously (Nguyen et al., 2013). An empirical study of these two populations may shed more light in understanding the needs and expectations of these two workforces. Finally, both Oman and Vietnam are considered high-context culture and high power distance. It will be of interest to academic scholars, leaders and managers, and the like, to see the similarities or differences in leadership orientations of people from similar cultures.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Omani Culture***

As reported in Nguyen et al. (2013), Oman’s official name is “The Sultanate of Oman.” Located between Yemen and United Arab Emirates, Oman is a Middle East country facing the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, and Persian Gulf. Thanks to this strategic location, which is on Musandam Peninsula adjacent to Strait of Hormuz, Oman plays a vital role in the transit of crude oil in the world. As part of the Arab Council Countries of the Persian Gulf area, Oman has a population of about 3 million people. The major age group is 15-64 years, which accounts for 66% of the population. Oman’s capital city is Muscat and it has 11 governorates. Omani people use Arabic as the official language while English, Balushi, Urdu, and Indian dialects are also commonly used. Oman has a diverse culture thanks to the variety of languages they use and different ethnicities such as Arabs, Balushi, South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi), and African. According to Mujtaba, Khanfar, and Khanfar (2010), Omani culture is high context where social interactions are mainly based on extensive informal networks and close personal relationships. In addition, religion has a strong influence on Omani culture especially with Ibadhi Muslim accounting for three quarters of the population. Religious values unite Omani people, which causes high collectivism. However, Omani people tend to prefer a balance between individualistic and collectivistic orientations (Mujtaba et al. 2010).

### ***Vietnamese culture***

As reported in Nguyen et al. (2013), Vietnam’s official name is “The Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” Located in Southeast Asia, Vietnam shares its border with China in the North and with Laos and Cambodia in the West. Similar to Oman, Vietnam faces the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea. As part of the ten Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam has a population of about 91.5 million people. The major age group is also 15-64 years, which accounts for almost 70% of the population. Vietnam’s capital city is Hanoi and it has 58

provinces and 5 municipalities (major cities). Vietnamese people use Vietnamese as the official language while English has gradually become the second language. According to Nguyen, Boehmer, and Mujtaba (2012), Vietnam has an extremely rich and diverse culture with many years of history. The culture of Vietnam is a mix of the local culture, which is a “fairly large cultural community”, and the cultures inherited from foreign countries such as China, France, other neighbor countries, as well as Western cultures. Vietnam is considered a high context culture as well.

Nguyen et al. (2013) has provided a detailed comparison of the cultural dimensions of Omani and Vietnamese based on Hofstede’s (1984) five cultural dimensions including Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculine/Feminine, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long Term/Short term Orientation. However, only Vietnam has a score for Long Term/Short term Orientation. According to Nguyen et al. (2013), Omani culture is more individualistic than Vietnamese culture. Omani people are more intolerant of unorthodox behaviors and ideas while Vietnamese people feel more relaxed when facing reality. Omani culture is more feminine than Vietnamese culture, and Omani people tend to less tolerate power distance than Vietnamese people.

### ***Task and relationship-oriented leadership***

Leadership is undoubtedly one of the most impactful components to organizational success. Leadership styles and behaviors have been extensively researched since the 1940s following the failure of the stream of research on the leadership trait theory (Judge, Piccolo, and Iles, 2004). There are two main leadership behaviors that received the most attention from scholars and researchers: the task-oriented (also referred to as initiating structure), and relationship-oriented (also referred to as consideration) (Fleishman, 1967; Judge et al., 2004; Northouse, 2007; Oaklander and Fleishman, 1964).

Key research in this stream includes the Ohio State University studies, which identified two leader’s behaviors: initiating structure (task-oriented) and consideration (relationship-oriented). According to the researchers of these studies, initiating leaders’ main concern is to achieve goals and objectives by following rules and procedures. They care about performance and prefer compliance. They are more directive to their subordinates and closely monitor their performance to make sure their plans are executed properly and productively (Stogdill, 1963; Daft, 2008). Task-oriented people focus on efficiency whether it is people, machinery, or other resources. On the other hand, consideration leaders’ main concern is the well-being of the people they lead. They care about the needs and feelings of their subordinates and are highly human-oriented. They are more supportive to their followers and tend to delegate powers to lower-level staff. Consideration leaders trust and respect their subordinates. They appreciate the hard work of their followers and maintain good relationship with them (McShane and Von Glinow 2002; Stock-Homburg 2008; Nguyen et al. 2012; Nguyen, Mujtaba, and Ruijs, 2013). Similar research to the Ohio State University studies was the University of Michigan studies, which identified two similar leadership behaviors: employee-centered (consideration) and production-centered (initiating structure) (Daft, 2008; Schermerhorn et al., 2008). However, the leadership behaviors found in this study received far less attention than those of Ohio State University studies (Judge et al., 2004).

Much research supports the behavioral approach to leadership. Fleischman (1995) concluded that “consideration and initiating structure have proven to be among the most robust leadership topics” (p.51). In their examination of the role of task-oriented versus relationship-oriented leadership in relation to the development of normative contract and group performance,

Taberero, Chambel, and Curras (2009) found an influence of the leaders' behavior, i.e., task-oriented and relationship-oriented, on the development of normative contracts, group processes, and performance. In particular, they found that task-oriented and relationship-oriented behavior had a positive effect on both the development of transactional and relational normative contracts, respectively. The results supported many other studies in believing in the importance of leadership behaviors in the workplace. In a meta-analysis of leadership behaviors, Judge et al. (2004) found a moderately strong relationship between the two leaders' behaviors and leadership outcomes. Particularly, initiating structure was more strongly related to leaders' job performance and group-organization performance while consideration was more strongly related to leaders' job satisfaction, motivation, and leader effectiveness. In a similar study of leadership behaviors and effectiveness, Derue et al. (2011) found that behaviors were important predictors of overall leader effectiveness. They concluded that task-oriented was the most important behavior for improving performance-related leadership outcomes while relationship-oriented was the most important behavior for improving affective criteria such as follower satisfaction with the leader. Northouse (2012) indicated how the two leadership behaviors are demonstrated has an impact on the success of the leaders. He believed that this notion holds true in different situations. In agreement with Northouse (2012), Yukl (2012) stated that leaders can enhance the performance of their team, unit, and organization when they demonstrate a combination of task and relationship-oriented behaviors that are relevant to situation.

However, there has been research criticizing the behavioral approach to leadership both methodologically and conceptually (Judge et al., 2004). House and Aditya (1997) found no consistent relationship between leader's behaviors and organizational performance outcomes. According to Jones and George (2009), research results on this behavioral approach to leadership are still inconclusive.

In general, the authors believe that it is evident that these two leadership behaviors are important components to leadership effectiveness. Effective leaders are required to have the knowledge of when to use and how to balance these two leader's behaviors appropriately.

There has been little research on the impact of age on leadership behaviors though we generally agree that behavior changes as we age. Research found inconclusive results. Nguyen et al. (2012) found that older German respondents were more task-oriented as well as relationship-oriented than younger German respondents. Nguyen, Mujtaba and Ruijs (2013) found similar results that older Dutch working adults were more task-oriented as well as relationship-oriented than younger Dutch working adults. However, Mujtaba et al. (2010) did not find any significant difference in the task-oriented and relationship-oriented orientations between older and younger Omani working adults. Tajaddini and Mujtaba (2011) concluded that older and younger Iranian had similar task-oriented as well as relationship-oriented leadership orientation.

### **Study Methodology and Analysis**

Northouse's (2007) Style Questionnaire is specifically used to obtain a general profile of task and relationship orientations of working adults in Oman and Vietnam. It includes 10 items for task scores and 10 items for relationship scores. Each item is rated on a 5-Likert scale from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 means "Never" and a rating of 5 means "Always" when the respondent demonstrates 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

The purpose of this research was to determine whether task orientation and relationship orientation scores are different based on age groups and management experience in this cross-cultural sample. Another aspect of this study was to determine whether there is any interaction between countries and age groups as well as between countries and management experience on these scores. The hypotheses are proposed as follows:

- *Null hypothesis 1: Respondents who are 25 years of age and younger will have similar task scores as those who are 26 years of age and older.*
- *Null hypothesis 2: There is no significant interaction between age and place of birth on the task scores.*
- *Null hypothesis 3: Respondents who have no management experience will have similar task scores as those who have management experience.*
- *Null hypothesis 4: There is no significant interaction between management experience and place of birth on the task scores.*
- *Null hypothesis 5: Respondents who are 25 years of age and younger will have similar relationship scores as those who are 26 years of age and older.*
- *Null hypothesis 6: There is no significant interaction between age and place of birth on the relationship scores.*
- *Null hypothesis 7: Respondents who have no management experience will have similar relationship scores as those who have management experience.*
- *Null hypothesis 8: There is no significant interaction between management experience and place of birth on the relationship scores.*

Convenience sampling was adopted for selecting the respondents in this study. The target respondents are Omani and Vietnamese adults who are 17 years of age and above and who can speak and understand English well. Respondents selected for this study were mainly students and working adults through primary and secondary contacts of the authors. The study used the original English questionnaires to insure its validity. Both web link and hard copy were deployed to collect the data. There were 376 completed surveys received, of which respondents in each country coincidentally accounted for half.

Table 2 shows the demographic statistics of the two samples based on age and management experience.

Table 2. Demographic Statistics (n=376)

Items	Place of Birth		Total
	Oman	Vietnam	
Age			
17-25	100	43	143
26-34	88	87	175
35-44	0	43	43
45 and above	0	15	15

	Total	188	188	376
Management Experience				
None		74	24	98
1-5 years		98	68	166
6-10 years		16	60	76
11 years or more		0	36	36
Total		188	188	376

The reliability of the instrument was also checked. As seen in Table 3, Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items is .942 and Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted is greater than .935 for each of the 20 items. This indicated that the reliability test was passed with Cronbach's coefficient alpha is greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.942	20

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
TaskScore1	77.38	150.662	.631	.678	.938
TaskScore2	77.43	151.227	.604	.652	.939
TaskScore3	77.20	150.619	.735	.689	.936
TaskScore4	77.18	153.734	.664	.539	.938
TaskScore5	77.28	150.538	.675	.591	.937
TaskScore6	77.31	151.032	.643	.680	.938
TaskScore7	77.36	150.515	.613	.552	.938
TaskScore8	77.21	151.921	.673	.677	.937
TaskScore9	77.36	149.265	.697	.656	.937
TaskScore10	77.06	149.804	.745	.636	.936
RelationshipScore1	77.11	152.054	.632	.632	.938
RelationshipScore2	77.12	152.095	.680	.722	.937
RelationshipScore3	77.35	153.386	.669	.574	.937
RelationshipScore4	77.32	154.273	.537	.662	.940
RelationshipScore5	77.48	153.696	.609	.600	.938
RelationshipScore6	77.13	153.884	.696	.605	.937
RelationshipScore7	77.25	152.616	.702	.573	.937
RelationshipScore8	77.29	151.448	.671	.557	.937
RelationshipScore9	77.56	155.453	.510	.391	.940
RelationshipScore10	77.27	154.405	.569	.537	.939



**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.

**Age and Task orientation scores**

As presented in Table 3-1, the average scores for task orientation of both respondents who are 25 years of age and younger and respondents who are 26 years of age and older fell in the “high range”. The older respondent group scored slightly higher (M=40.8026) than the younger respondent group (M=40.6154) although the difference is not statistically significant (F=.171, p= .679), as shown in Table 3-2. Therefore, hypothesis 1 cannot be rejected. Respondents who are 25 years of age and younger have similar task scores as those who are 26 years of age and older.

Table 3-2 also showed no significant interaction between place of birth (Oman and Vietnam) and age on task orientation scores (F=1.896, p= .169). Therefore, hypothesis 2 cannot be rejected.

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 3-2 reported, there would be only 27.9% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and age on task orientation scores in this sample.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics-Age and Task Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Task Scores

PlaceofBirth	Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Oman	25 and younger	40.3800	7.75350	100
	26 and older	38.8750	9.80360	88
	Total	39.6755	8.78112	188
Vietnam	25 and younger	41.1628	5.58881	43
	26 and older	41.9724	5.75898	145
	Total	41.7872	5.71586	188
Total	25 and younger	40.6154	7.16105	143
	26 and older	40.8026	7.67411	233
	Total	40.7314	7.47402	376

Table 3.2. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects -Age and Task Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Task Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	546.935 <sup>a</sup>	3	182.312	3.324	.020	.026	9.973	.755
Intercept	511891.014	1	511891.014	9334.055	.000	.962	9334.055	1.000
PlaceofBirth	292.258	1	292.258	5.329	.022	.014	5.329	.634
Age	9.386	1	9.386	.171	.679	.000	.171	.070
PlaceofBirth * Age	103.996	1	103.996	1.896	.169	.005	1.896	.279

Error	20400.935	372	54.841				
Total	644749.000	376					
Corrected Total	20947.870	375					

a. R Squared = .026 (Adjusted R Squared = .018)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

**Management Experience and Task orientation scores**

As presented in Table 4-1, the average scores for task orientation of both respondents who have management experience and who don't fell in "high range". The respondents who have management experience scored slightly higher (M=41.0072) than the respondents who don't have management experience (M=39.9490); but the difference is not statistically significant (F=.149, p= .700), as shown in Table 4-2. Therefore, hypothesis 3 cannot be rejected. Respondents who have no management experience have similar task scores as those who have management experience

Table 4-2 also showed no significant interaction between place of birth (Oman and Vietnam) and management experience on task orientation scores (F=.002, p= .963). Therefore, hypothesis 4 cannot be rejected. As Table 4-2 reported, there would be only 5% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and management experience on task orientation scores in this sample.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics-Management Experience and Task Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Task Scores

PlaceofBirth	ManagementExperience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Oman	No	39.4730	8.87388	74
	Yes	39.8070	8.75717	114
	Total	39.6755	8.78112	188
Vietnam	No	41.4167	4.79961	24
	Yes	41.8415	5.84875	164
	Total	41.7872	5.71586	188
Total	No	39.9490	8.08890	98
	Yes	41.0072	7.24008	278
	Total	40.7314	7.47402	376

Table 4.2. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects –Management Experience and Task Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Task Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	427.958 <sup>a</sup>	3	142.653	2.586	.053	.020	7.758	.634
Intercept	377141.538	1	377141.538	6837.098	.000	.948	6837.098	1.000
PlaceofBirth	225.920	1	225.920	4.096	.044	.011	4.096	.523
ManagementExperience	8.220	1	8.220	.149	.700	.000	.149	.067
PlaceofBirth *	.118	1	.118	.002	.963	.000	.002	.050

ManagementExperience							
Error	20519.912	372	55.161				
Total	644749.000	376					
Corrected Total	20947.870	375					

a. R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = .013)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

**Age and Relationship orientation scores**

As presented in Table 5-1, the average scores for relationship orientation of both respondents who are 25 years of age and younger and respondents who are 26 years of age and older fell in “high range. The older respondent group scored slightly higher (M=40.7468) than the younger group (M=40.4126); but the difference is not statistically significant (F=.031, p= .860), as shown in Table 5-2. Therefore, hypothesis 5 cannot be rejected. Respondents who are 25 years of age and younger have similar relationship scores as those who are 26 years of age and older.

Table 5-2 also showed no significant interaction between place of birth (Oman and Vietnam) and age on relationship orientation scores (F=.135, p= .714). Therefore, hypothesis 6 cannot be rejected. As Table 5-2 reported, there would be only 6.6% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and age on relationship orientation scores in this sample.

Table 5.1. Descriptive Statistics-Age and Task Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Relationship Scores

PlaceofBirth	Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Oman	25 and younger	40.0400	8.24856	100
	26 and older	39.6364	7.80831	88
	Total	39.8511	8.02664	188
Vietnam	25 and younger	41.2791	4.56344	43
	26 and older	41.4207	4.55624	145
	Total	41.3883	4.54605	188
Total	25 and younger	40.4126	7.34303	143
	26 and older	40.7468	6.04154	233
	Total	40.6197	6.55939	376

Table 5.2. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects -Age and Relationship Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Relationship Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	230.422 <sup>a</sup>	3	76.807	1.797	.147	.014	5.390	.467
Intercept	511802.242	1	511802.242	11971.084	.000	.970	11971.084	1.000
PlaceofBirth	177.438	1	177.438	4.150	.042	.011	4.150	.529
Age	1.333	1	1.333	.031	.860	.000	.031	.054

PlaceofBirth * Age	5.771	1	5.771	.135	.714	.000	.135	.066
Error	15904.193	372	42.753					
Total	636519.000	376						
Corrected Total	16134.614	375						

a. R Squared = .014 (Adjusted R Squared = .006)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

**Management Experience and Relationship orientation scores**

As presented in Table 6-1, the average scores for relationship orientation of both respondents who have management experience and who don't fell in "high range". The respondents who have management experience scored slightly higher (M=40.7446) than the respondents who don't have management experience (M=40.2653) although the difference is not statistically significant (F=.297, p= .586), as shown in Table 6-2. Therefore, hypothesis 7 cannot be rejected. Respondents who have no management experience have similar relationship scores as those who have management experience

Table 6-2 also showed no significant interaction between place of birth (Oman and Vietnam) and management experience on relationship orientation scores (F=1.738, p= .188). Therefore, hypothesis 8 cannot be rejected. As Table 6-2 reported, there would be only 26% chance of finding a significant interaction between place of birth and management experience on relationship orientation scores in this sample.

Table 6.1. Descriptive Statistics-Management Experience and Relationship Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Relationship Scores

PlaceofBirth	ManagementExperience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Oman	No	39.4459	8.94755	74
	Yes	40.1140	7.39739	114
	Total	39.8511	8.02664	188
Vietnam	No	42.7917	3.62334	24
	Yes	41.1829	4.63946	164
	Total	41.3883	4.54605	188
Total	No	40.2653	8.09041	98
	Yes	40.7446	5.93857	278
	Total	40.6197	6.55939	376

Table 6.2. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects –Management Experience and Relationship Scores

Dependent Variable:Sum Relationship Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	296.343 <sup>a</sup>	3	98.781	2.320	.075	.018	6.960	.582
Intercept	381779.910	1	381779.910	8967.022	.000	.960	8967.022	1.000
PlaceofBirth	278.214	1	278.214	6.535	.011	.017	6.535	.722
ManagementExperience	12.631	1	12.631	.297	.586	.001	.297	.084

PlaceofBirth *	74.004	1	74.004	1.738	.188	.005	1.738	.260
ManagementExperience								
Error	15838.272	372	42.576					
Total	636519.000	376						
Corrected Total	16134.614	375						

a. R Squared = .018 (Adjusted R Squared = .010)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

### Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

As both Omani and Vietnamese cultures are high-context, this study hypothesized that respondents in both countries who are 25 years of age and younger will have similar task scores as well as relationship scores as those who are 26 years of age and older. These hypotheses could not be rejected. Similar results were found between respondents who have management experience and who don't. Respondents who have no management experience will have similar task scores as well as relationship scores as those who have management experience. There is no significant interaction between age and place of birth on both the task scores and on the relationship scores. Finally, we found no significant interaction between management experience and place of birth on both the task scores and the relationship scores.

It is often assumed that age and management experience can impact on a person's leadership orientations. However, this study could not find any significant results in the difference of task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors of Omani and Vietnamese people based on age and management experience. In a similar study, Nguyen et al. (2013) also found no significant difference in the leadership orientations of Omani and Vietnamese based on gender. Perhaps this is because both Omani and Vietnamese cultures are high-context and they may have similar expectations. One interesting finding of this study was that both Omani and Vietnamese respondents scored high on both task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviors. People often assume that in high-context cultures such as Oman and Vietnam, people are more relationship-oriented than task-oriented. This research indicated that people from high-context cultures can focus on both their tasks and relationships. Leaders and managers who work with Omani and Vietnamese workforce can learn from this study's finding that they can be as focused as their western counterparts on setting and achieving goals beside focusing on the relationship behavior. Getting the job done according to plans can motivate and satisfy them as much as their western counterparts do. Therefore, it is important for global and local managers as well as practitioners to understand this uniqueness when dealing with these two workforces particularly and avoid prejudices and stereotyping biases. This in turn can help them understand their employees' needs and expectations and turn them into their strategic core competences to compete and gain competitive advantage in this global economy.

An empirical study like this one carries several limitations. First, the population was rather generic from different industries in Oman and in Vietnam. In addition, only two demographic factors, i.e., age and management experience, were examined, Future studies should compare other populations with various demographic variables. Second, the sample consisted of a relatively small number of working adults who can speak and understand English well in both countries only. Thus, generalization of the findings of this study, for example, to those who cannot speak and understand English, is prohibited. Future studies should examine larger sample size and the survey questionnaire should be translated into local languages. Finally, this study only compared the task and relationship orientations of people in two similar

high-context culture countries. Future studies should be extended to many other countries in different continents in order to have a more complete understanding of the similarities and differences in relationship orientations of the global workforce.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that both Omani and Vietnamese respondents score high on task-oriented as well as relationship-oriented. Age and management experience are not the factors that make a difference in how people in these two countries perceive their leadership orientations. This study has shed light on the similarities in leadership orientations in Oman and Vietnam, a unique pair. Researchers and scholars in a cross cultural management field can benefit from this study as it provides more empirical results in understanding the impact of demographic and cultural factors on leadership orientation in different countries. Leaders, managers and practitioners, can benefit from this study as it provides managerial implications in managing these two workforces in the most effective and efficient manner.

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