

TASK VERSUS RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND WORKPLACE
INCIVILITY IN CHINESE BANKING SECTOR

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**TASK VERSUS RELATIONSHIP ORIENTED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND
WORKPLACE INCIVILITY IN CHINESE BANKING SECTOR: A
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS IN LIGHT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

Master Thesis

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I have written this Master's Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Abstract

With China's economy rapidly accelerating alongside the ongoing globalization of the world economy, the banks acting as a part of the national financial systems play a crucial role in national and worldwide economic development. However, China's rapid but short economic transformation over the past 50 years since 1978, has led to a shortage of modern management experience within the Chinese banking sector. Therefore, it is imperative to establish effective leadership and address workplace incivility issues in order to enhance the core competitiveness of the Chinese banking sector. Scarce previous research explored leadership measuring task orientation, relationship orientation and workplace incivility simultaneously in Chinese banking sector. Thus, in this study, the author aims to examine leadership behavior in terms of task orientation, relationship orientation, and workplace incivility in Chinese banking sector while taking into account social demographic factors such as age, gender, bank type, experience years, position and education. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the connection between the aforementioned three dimensions. The empirical analysis was conducted using a quantitative survey questionnaire that collected data from 305 employees working in Chinese banking sector. The results show that task-oriented leadership is dominant in Chinese banking sector. Furthermore, bank type, gender, age, position, work experience, and education level are not significant factors affecting leadership orientation. Moreover, workplace incivility demonstrates a weak negative correlation with relationship-oriented leadership, serving as a minor negative factor in Chinese banking sector. The implications of the findings for research and practice are presented in the following discussion section.

Keywords: Leadership behavior; Workplace Incivility; Task orientation; Relationship orientation; Banking sector; China

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1. Introduction

As economic globalization continues to strengthen, enterprises worldwide face challenges and opportunities from fierce competition in domestic and foreign markets. It is widely recognized that an enterprise's comprehensive competitiveness is not limited to its products and services alone but also includes its internal management, such as leadership behaviors and a healthy workplace environment.

Numerous previous studies have explored the significance of leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Li et al., 2015; Dinibutun, 2020; Tran, 2022). The effectiveness of strategy implementation in organizations is significantly influenced by leadership behavior (Hsing-Er Lin & McDonough, 2011). However, ineffective leadership can have detrimental consequences, leading to division and conflict among individuals and groups (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Task and relationship-oriented leadership is one of the classic approaches in leadership behavior theory, with a long history and far-reaching impact (Dinibutun, 2020). Thus, this approach will be adopted for this study due to not only focusing on tasks and goals but also on harmonious relationships that help leaders create a positive work environment and increase team morale. Besides, workplace incivility exists in a covert manner within organizations, resulting in negative impacts that impede the healthy development of the organization (Pearson, 2010; Moon & Morais, 2022). Consequently, an increasing number of scholars and entrepreneurs have focused on workplace incivility in recent years with the goal of building a civil work environment to enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises. The banking industry in China is certainly no exception to this trend (Shi et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2019). Therefore, some scholars focused on the leadership behaviors in Chinese banking sector and its impact on employee creativity, job satisfaction, and performance (Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai, 2011; Li, Zhao, & Begley, 2015; Song, Tian, & Kwan, 2022). Other scholars have explored workplace incivility issues in Chinese banking sector (Shi et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2019). However, comprehensive research examining the aforementioned three dimensions simultaneously in this specific Chinese banking sector remains limited.

Furthermore, as the world's second-largest economy, China's influence on the global economy is significant. China's economic environment has experienced profound transformations since the economic reform and opening-up policies in 1978, leading to a systematic transformation in banking sector (Nolan, 2010). Therefore, Chinese banking sector is

currently facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges (Nolan, 2010). Chinese banks are gradually transitioning from central planned banks to commercial banks. A passive internal management strategy gradually transfers to a customer-centric and active market-oriented culture (Nolan, 2010). Aforementioned, effective leadership and workplace incivility is a crucial part of bank's internal management that enhances core competitiveness. However, with only a short 50 years of economic transformation, the Chinese banking sector lacks modern enterprise management experience, which poses significant challenges in exercising effective leadership and creating a healthy and civilized work environment. Thus, adopting effective leadership and developing a civilized work environment for banks in China is imperative, which brings us the primary research questions to guide this study as below:

1. What is the primary characteristic of leadership in terms of task versus relationship orientation in Chinese banking sector?

2. What is the role of workplace incivility and its relationship with leadership in Chinese banking sector?

Overall, the study aims to examine leadership behavior in terms of task orientation, relationship orientation, and workplace incivility in Chinese banking sector while taking into account social demographic factors such as age, gender, bank type, experience years, position and education. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the connection between the aforementioned three dimensions. Empirical research was conducted using a quantitative survey questionnaire collecting data from 305 bank employees in China. The second chapter will provide a theoretical background, particularly its foundation in the Chinese context, prior works on task and relationship-oriented leadership and workplace incivility. The third chapter outlines the methodology, including data collection and data method. The detailed result of data analysis will be demonstrated in the fourth chapter. The following chapter will interpret the data analysis result as well as discuss the findings and implications. The sixth chapter presents the main conclusions. Finally, the author acknowledges the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research on related topics. Research classification code(s) (CERCS) is S263.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Chinese Context

2.1.1 Overview of China

China is widely recognized as one of the world's four ancient civilizations, boasting a

fascinating history that spans five millennia and encompasses a vast array of dynasties, empires, and revolutionary periods. Its cultural heritage is rich and diverse and continues to be celebrated and studied today. During the long history, critical philosophical traditions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism emerged, influencing Chinese society for centuries to come (Yuan, Chia, & Gosling, 2023). Even though China has experienced significant social, political, and economic changes, China still preserves essential cultural traditions and values. Confucianism is an ancient Chinese philosophical tradition that has significantly influenced Chinese culture and society for thousands of years (Yuan, Chia, & Gosling, 2023). Confucianism emphasizes the importance of social order, respect for authority, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships (Yuan, Chia, & Gosling, 2023). Its impact on the development of Chinese organization management cannot be overemphasized (Lin, 2011; Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005; Yuan, Chia, & Gosling, 2023). Thus, it is vital to explain how Confucian culture impacts on leadership behavior and workplace incivility in Chinese banking sector.

Meanwhile, China is the world's second-largest economy and has experienced rapid economic growth in recent years. In 2022, China's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 121,020.7 billion yuan, representing a 3% growth from the previous year (Statista, 2022). China's economy in 2023 is expected to account for more than 18.5% of the global economy, maintaining its global leadership in economic development (Statista, 2022). Besides, China's population is equivalent to 18.2% of the total world population, a total of about 1.45 billion people, ranking number 1 in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population (Worldometers, 2022). At the same time, the vast population and territory, representing China's cultural diversity and the world's largest consumer market, are quietly affecting the world landscape.

With China's transition from a centrally planned economy to a quasi-market economy, the overall economic environment in China has changed dramatically (Tsui, Wang, & Xin, 2006). China is currently undergoing two transformative tests. One is the challenges and opportunities of globalization experienced through its admission to the World Trade Organization in 2001, and the other is informatization, as developments in information technology, particularly with the rise of the Internet and new technologies, drive new ways of organizing work and culture in China (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). Fortunately, China has made rapid progress in the wave of

globalization and digitization and has become an influential economy in the world despite the unpredictable global situation.

2.1.2 The History of Banking in China

With the transition and reform of the planned economy to the market economy, China's financial market is gradually opening up to the outside world, of which the reform of the banking industry is a crucial part. Prior to the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, China's economy was entirely central-planned, with a financial system that relied on a single bank known as the People's Bank of China (PBC). This bank served as both the central and commercial bank for the country. Instead of utilizing the banking system to provide most long-term investment financing for enterprises, budgetary allocations were the primary source of funding. (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009)

In 1979-2001, The most significant achievement of the reform at this stage was the realization of the separation of the specialized national bank and the central bank, breaking the unified banking pattern and creating the commercialization reform of state-owned banks (SoECB). PBC operates as the central bank and established four state-owned banks in chronological order: Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, China Construction Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. (Hu &He,2000). Non-state-owned banks (Non-SoECB) such as Joint-venture commercial banks like China Everbright Bank, China Pingan Bank, China Guangfa Bank, as well as other institutions entered the financial system after 1994. At that time, state-owned banks held approximately 78% of the total assets in the financial sector, thus exerting a dominant influence on the industry. (Podpiera, 2006).

As the reform of China's financial system progressed, the reform of state-owned banks was also being gradually promoted. At the end of 2003, the Chinese government decided to select two pilot banks, Bank of China and China Construction Bank, to carry out joint-stock reform on a pilot basis. This shareholding reform fundamentally improved the operation of state-owned commercial banks and realized the historical transformation of state-owned commercial banks from the traditional financial system to the modern enterprise system (Hu &He,2000).

After China acceded to the WTO in 2001, a large quantity of foreign commercial banks entered the Chinese market to compete with local commercial banks on the basis of national treatment as the result of the Chinese government effectively fulfilling its commitment to open the financial market to foreign banks (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). Large commercial banks,

medium and small-sized commercial banks, urban commercial banks, foreign commercial banks, non-bank financial institutions and other market players will collide and integrate from various levels, such as corporate management, customer relationship and product development, to form a variety of competition (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). A diversified competition pattern in the Chinese banking industry will become the norm. Consequently, the leadership behaviors of banks also urgently need to be adjusted and improved in the context of a more diverse era.

2.1.3 Chinese Culture

The definition of culture can encompass the collective beliefs, values, customs, and practices that are distinctive to a particular society or group of people (Hofstede, 2013). It plays an important role in shaping people's behaviors, attitudes, and worldviews. Many studies have explored the relationship between culture and various aspects of human life, such as communication, education, health, and social norms. One of the key dimensions of culture is individualism-collectivism, which refers to the degree to which individuals prioritize their own goals and interests over those of the group (Hofstede, 1980; Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005; Jones & George, 2020). Generally speaking, culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that influences many aspects of human life. Understanding cultural differences is essential for effective communication and organization management. For instance, leadership styles may not only differ among individuals, but also across countries and cultures. There is growing evidence to suggest that cultural factors can play a significant role in shaping leadership behaviors (Jones & George, 2020). Hence, understanding cultural nuances is crucial for leaders working in global contexts, as it can impact their ability to build and maintain effective relationships with team members and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

Hofstede (2001) conducted a study on cross-cultural issues in 72 countries, categorizing them based on six cultural orientations. China was one of the countries that were investigated in this study. Hofstede's study aimed to identify the cultural aspects of different countries and rank them accordingly and summarized the primary cultural characteristics of China as below,

Power Distance. There is a recognition of social inequality within societies. It reflects the level of agreement among individuals in a culture regarding the importance of social rank and status, as well as their attitudes towards power dynamics and hierarchy (Hofstede, 2001). Chinese culture tends to place a high value on hierarchical order, as evidenced by their score of 80 on this metric. This indicates a general acceptance of social inequalities within their society.

Individualism/Collectivism. This cultural orientation of a country influences the degree of interdependence that exists among its population (Hofstede, 2001). China scores 20 which is low on individualism, indicating that it is a collectivist society where people tend to prefer working in groups and prioritize the needs of the group over their individual goals.

Masculinity. This orientation reflects the degree to which a country values traits that are traditionally associated with masculinity or femininity, the higher masculinity is, the nation is more task orientation (Hofstede, 2001). According to its score of 66, China has a more dominant Masculinity orientation, meaning the nation focus more on task orientation.

Uncertainty Avoidance. This reflects the degree to which individuals in a society are comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty and potential threats may influence their willingness to avoid risks, particularly in situations where ideas or actions go against societal norms (Hofstede, 2001). China's UAI low score of 30 suggests that the society has a relatively low level of risk aversion, indicating a greater acceptance of ambiguity and uncertainty (Tran, 2019).

Indulgence. This orientation reflects the extent to which a society allows individuals to pursue pleasure and personal freedom. It also measures the degree to which individuals in a culture have been socialized to control their impulses and desires (Hofstede, 2001). China has a restrained cultural orientation, as evidenced by its low score of 24 on the Indulgence index.

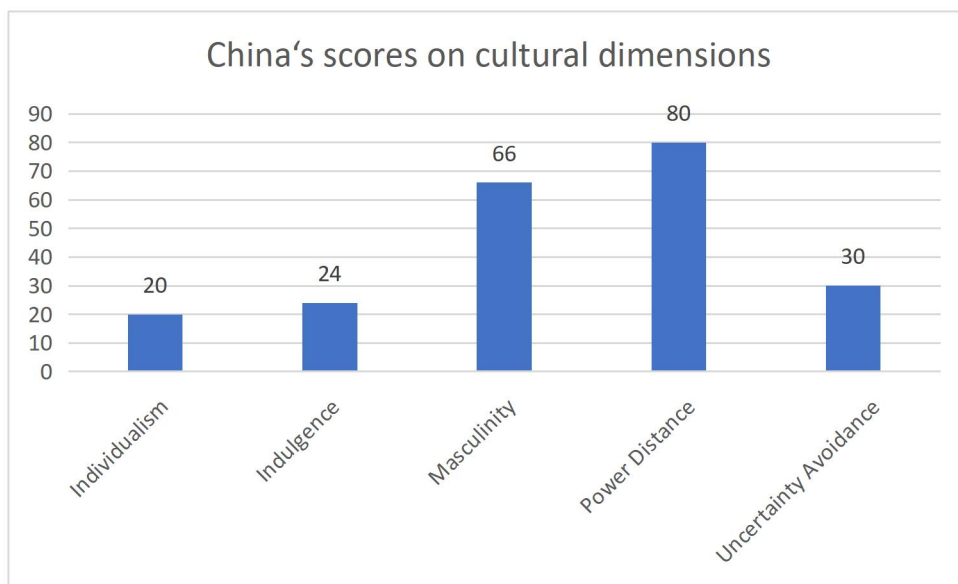


Figure 1. China's scores on cultural dimensions

Source: Hofstede (2001)

Furthermore, China has a deep-rooted foundation in a culture based on Confucianism. Wang, Ruona & Rojewski (2005) examined the core characteristics of Confucian-based culture and its impact on organizational and management strategies in Asian countries, including China. The study explored three other major aspects of Confucianism and their influence on organizations besides collectivism and time orientation.

Hierarchy and Harmony. Confucianism advocates for the idea that everyone in society has a predetermined position, and maintaining social harmony requires that individuals behave in accordance with their rank and social status. Furthermore, subordinates are expected to demonstrate a lifetime commitment to their superiors, and in return, the superiors are assumed to take care of subordinates.

Guanxi (Relationship/Connection/Network). Another important aspect of Confucianism is the concept of Guanxi, which refers to the cultivation of personal relationships and networks. In Chinese enterprise culture, Guanxi is often seen as essential to success.

Mianzi (Face). The concept of Mianzi plays an important role in Chinese organizational culture, as it shapes social interactions and relationships among colleagues, superiors and subordinates. Upholding Mianzi is considered crucial to maintaining harmonious relationships and building trust among colleagues and can often influence conflict resolution strategies within Chinese organizations. However, the author thinks that the Mianzi culture merely serves to preserve superficial harmony and does not contribute to a sustainable and healthy work environment in the long run, resulting in the concealment of genuine thoughts and a lack of resolution for underlying issues.

2.2 Leadership Behavior

2.2.1 Overview of Leadership

In this section, the author will explore the concept of leadership and different leadership approaches. Effective leadership is essential for creating a vision, setting goals, and motivating employees to work towards achieving goals. Since the early 1900s, there has been significant attention given to leadership-related theories. Researchers have attempted to understand the nature of effective leadership and how it can be developed and applied in various settings. Theoretical research on the relationship between the characteristics of managers and the potential success or failure of their leadership has been a crucial area of study in management and organizational behavior.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) referred leadership is to influence others to motivate and inspire them to undertake tasks or actions that they may not have done otherwise. This definition emphasizes the role of leaders in guiding and directing followers towards achieving common goals and objectives. Similarly, Burns (1978) defined leadership is a process by which a leader motivates their followers to work towards objectives that reflect the shared values, aspirations, wants, needs, and ideals of both the leader and their followers. However, Kotter (2000) made an argument that leadership and management should be viewed as separate interdependent systems of behavior. In today's dynamic and intricate business environment, the significance of both cannot be overstated as they are essential for achieving success. Management deals primarily with complexity, while leadership focuses on responding to change (Kotter, 2000).

Generally speaking, the study of leadership is essential for driving organizational success through implementing effective leadership. In summary, leadership encompasses four main aspects. Firstly, leadership involves the dynamic influence on the activities and processes of organizational members. Secondly, it involves the leader influencing members of the organization to establish shared core values, organizational mission, vision, and goals. Thirdly, it entails using leadership to motivate, develop, and empower followers to work together constructively towards achieving common goals. Finally, leadership should be able to cope with complex and changing environments and adapt to changing circumstances.

There are numerous leadership approaches, each with its own focus and assumptions. Some of the most well-known approaches include trait theory, behavioral theory, contingency theory, transformational leadership, and servant leadership (Dinibutun, 2020). Each approach emphasizes different aspects of leadership, such as personality traits, behaviors, situational factors, or values and ethics. **Table 1** presents the overview of most significant leadership approaches and theories nowadays based on Dinibutun (2020).

Table 1

Overview of leadership approaches

Leadership approaches	Description
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Trait theory	Trait theory proposes that certain personal qualities and characteristics are innate and make individuals better suited for leadership roles. These distinguishing traits include intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance, among others. While numerous personal traits and abilities have been associated with successful leadership, possessing these traits alone does not guarantee effective leadership.
Behavioral theory	Behavioral theories of leadership focus on the behaviors and actions of leaders rather than their personal traits or characteristics. One of the most influential approaches in behavioral theory is task and relationship-oriented leadership.
Contingency theory	Contingency theory of leadership proposes that the most effective leadership style depends on the situation. This theory suggests that leaders should adapt their behavior to match the needs of their followers and the demands of the situation.
Transformational leadership	Transformational style is marked by a mutual support and shared purpose between the leader and followers, leading to the formation of a moral relationship. Leaders inspire and motivate their followers to strive for a common cause, and together they experience the benefits of planned change and interdependence.
Servant leadership	Servant leadership prioritizes the needs and well-being of followers or subordinates. Leaders who serve their followers are more effective in achieving their goals and creating a positive work environment.

Source: Dinibutun (2020)

2.2.2 Task Oriented versus Relationship-Oriented Leadership

In this study, the author will focus on leadership measuring task and relationship orientation since this is one of the classic and most influential leadership approaches and measuring not only achieving the common goal but also building harmony work environment (Oaklander& Fleishman, 1964; Bass&Avolio,1994; Schermerhorn et al., 2008; Mujtaba, Khanfar, & Khanfar, 2010; Tran, 2022). Early research on task and relationship-oriented leadership can be traced back to the 1940s. However, during that time, the terminology used to describe these two dimensions differed. For example, the labels of initiating structure and consideration were used to describe task and relationship orientations, respectively (Oaklander&Fleishman, 1964). Initiating structure emphasizes goal-oriented tasks and involves an individual's attention towards objectives, tasks, and delegation of authority. In contrast, consideration focuses more on employees' feelings and well-being (Oaklander&Fleishman, 1964). Generally speaking, this theory developed two main types of leader behavior: task-orientation and relationship-orientation and suggested that influential leaders should exhibit a balance between both types of behavior, which has a profound impact on both theoretical and practical implications.

Similarly, Bass and Avolio (1994) mentioned that task orientation emphasizes goal achievement and productivity, while relationship orientation focuses on interpersonal relationships and the well-being of employees. Schermerhorn et al. (2010) identified two similar types of behavioral characteristics as task and relationship orientation: job-centered and person-centered. The job-centered orientation is characterized by a task-oriented approach that emphasizes the optimization of efficiency, productivity, and output (Schermerhorn et al., 2010). This type of culture places a high value on achieving objectives and continuously seeks to enhance processes and systems to achieve superior results. Conversely, the person-centered orientation is relationship-oriented and prioritizes employee well-being, which values employee satisfaction, participation, and development, and fosters a supportive and positive work environment to facilitate optimal performance (Schermerhorn et al., 2010). In summary, task orientation focuses on achieving specific goals and objectives. Leaders who adopt a task-oriented style tend to be highly organized and efficient, and they prioritize task completion and productivity above all else (Tran, 2022). Leaders who are task-oriented tend to be highly directive in their communication style, providing clear instructions and expectations to their followers and closely monitor progress and offer feedback to ensure that tasks are completed efficiently and effectively (Tran, 2022). While relationship-orientation pays attention to building

strong relationships with followers and promoting their well-being. Relationship-oriented leaders tend to be highly supportive of their followers and create a positive, caring and inclusive work environment. They may engage in behaviors such as active listening, providing emotional support, and offering feedback to help their followers grow and develop (Tran, 2022).

Furthermore, demographic variables can sometimes play a certain role in influencing leadership behaviors. Hence, some scholars and researchers focused on this factor. Previous studies have examined the impact of various demographic variables such as age, gender, work experience, and type of enterprise on leadership behavior (Tran, 2020). Gender is typically one of the most commonly explored demographic factors in studies of leadership behavior. Research suggests that there may be differences in leadership behavior between men and women, which can impact employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational performance. Some scholars suggest that men tend to exhibit more competitiveness and task orientation in their leadership, while women tend to prioritize interpersonal relationships and teamwork (Tran, 2020).

According to Nguyen and Mujtaba's (2011) study, it was found that Vietnamese men had lower scores in relationship-orientation compared to women. However, there were no significant differences between the genders in terms of task-orientation scores. Generally speaking, the existence of such gender differences remains a controversial topic and requires further research and exploration. Moreover, the type of organization is also a commonly discussed factor in the study of leadership behavior. Organizations can be classified into public or private, and working in different types of organizations may result in different leadership orientations. Research has shown that there are differences in leadership behavior between state-owned and private enterprises (Nguyen, 2011; Mujtaba and Sims, 2011). For example, leaders in the Indian state sector tend to exhibit lower levels of task-orientation and relationship-orientation, while those in the private sector tend to display higher levels of both task-orientation and relationship-orientation. However, the result in the Vietnamese context is totally opposite. In Vietnamese, leaders in public enterprises are more focused on task-orientation and less on relationship-orientation compared to their counterparts in private enterprises (Nguyen & Mujtaba, 2011). Conversely, Tran (2020) found that Vietnamese respondents working in government sector did not exhibit significant differences in their scores for task-orientation and relationship-orientation from the workers in private sector. This finding is particularly noteworthy considering Vietnam's emphasis on active government enterprises, resulting in fewer distinctions between the two

sectors. Therefore, the underlying reasons for these divergent research outcomes are worth exploring in greater depth.

Especially, it is necessary to emphasize that task orientation and relationship orientation are not inherently contradictory or mutually exclusive (Mujtaba, Khanfar & Khanfar, 2010). Task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles should not be viewed as distinct and separate approaches, but rather as complementary dimensions that can be integrated and connected (Mujtaba, Khanfar & Khanfar, 2010). Effective leaders must possess both high task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviors (Mujtaba, Khanfar, & Khanfar., 2010; Tran, 2021).

2.2.3 Leadership Study in Chinese Banking Sector

This section presents recent research on leadership in Chinese banking sector. However, the author has to note there are limited prior work studying leadership in Chinese banking sector cant be found so far and none of them measures task and relationship orientation.

Over the past decade, the Chinese banking sector has undergone significant changes, leading to increased competition and globalization, highlighting the need for effective leadership. Scholars have focused on the role of leadership in the Chinese banking sector and its impact on employee creativity, job satisfaction, and performance (Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai, 2011; Li, Zhao, & Begley, 2015; Song, Tian, & Kwan, 2022).

One leadership approach gaining increasing attention is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers, fostering creativity, innovation, and empowerment among their subordinates (Li et al., 2015). For example, Lee et al. (2011) examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee creativity in Chinese banks, focusing on the mediating role of psychological empowerment and the study found that transformational leadership and team performance largely impact on service quality. Similarly, Li et al. (2015) explored whether transformational leadership can encourage employee creativity, using a Chinese-specific transformational leadership model. Analysis of data from 123 branches of a retail bank in mainland China showed that two dimensions of transformational leadership are positively related to employee creativity. The study highlighted that culture could explain these findings. In collectivist societies such as China, there is often an expectation for employees to prioritize work over self-interest and family time without necessarily receiving

sufficient personal attention from top management. As a result, individualized consideration from a leader can serve as a powerful motivator for employee creativity (Li et al., 2015).

Other studies applied servant leadership in the Chinese banking sector. For example, Song et al. (2022) investigated the effects of servant leadership on employees' voice behavior, with a focus on the mediating role of job engagement and the moderating role of proactive personality. The study found that perceived servant leadership was positively related to employees' voice behavior, and these relationships were mediated by enhanced job engagement.

Narrative interview as qualitative method was also used to explore leadership behavior in the Chinese banking sector. Xing and Sims (2012) interviewed 20 informants, including five top executives and 15 senior managers, eliciting their narratives of leadership. The findings suggested that leadership in the Chinese banking sector is highly associated with Chinese traditional culture, indicating that Chinese culture plays an important role in Chinese banking sector management.

Overall, the literature suggests that effective leadership is critical for achieving success in Chinese banking sector within Chinese traditional culture. By inspiring and empowering their followers, leaders can foster a culture of creativity, and collaboration, driving the competitiveness and success of Chinese banks in an increasingly globalized marketplace. Therefore, based on the aforementioned leadership theoretical background from whole chapter including three sub sections, the author proposed the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** *Task orientated leadership is correlated with relationship oriented leadership in Chinese banking sector.*
- **Hypothesis 2:** *Chinese banking professionals will display similar scores on task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership.*
- **Hypothesis 3:** *State-owned Chinese banking banks professionals will display similar scores on task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership compared to non-state-owned banks professionals.*
- **Hypothesis 4:** *Male Chinese banking professionals will display similar scores on task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership compared to female professionals.*
- **Hypothesis 5:** *Chinese banking professionals over 30 will display similar scores on task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership compared to those under 30.*

- **Hypothesis 6:** *Chinese banking professionals with working experience exceeding 5 years will display similar scores on task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership compared to those with working experience below 5 years.*
- **Hypothesis 7:** *Chinese banking professionals in manager/director positions will display similar scores on task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership compared to those in staff positions.*
- **Hypothesis 8:** *Chinese banking professionals with a higher education level of Master/Ph.D. will display similar scores on task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership compared to those with Bachelor/Vocational School.*

2.3 Workplace Incivility

2.3.1 Workplace Incivility and Its Tie to Leadership

This section will explore the concept of workplace incivility, the role of workplace incivility in organization management as well as the connection between workplace incivility and leadership. Workplace incivility is a prevalent and growing issue in many organizations, as it can have detrimental effects on employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Pearson, 2010; Vasconcelos, 2020; Moon & Morais, 2022).

The definition of workplace incivility varies. One classic definition comes from Andersson and Pearson (1999) "Workplace incivility is low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others." Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout (2001) supported the notion presented by Andersson and Pearson (1999) that workplace incivility can be subtle and nonspecific, encompassing behaviors that are not physically aggressive. Such incivility may include routine slights and indignities that lack overt malice, which some people may perceive as trivial and dismiss as unimportant.

Similarly, Pearson (2010) suggested that workplace incivility is a form of interpersonal mistreatment characterized by subtle and ambiguous behaviors that differ from bullying or harassment. Moreover, workplace incivility manifests in various ways, such as belittling comments, rude gestures, social exclusion, withholding information, deflecting blame for mistakes, and spreading rumors about colleagues (Pearson, 2010). Although these behaviors do not have much impact in the short term, they can have significant adverse effects on employees,

including stress, decreased job satisfaction and reduced productivity in the long run (Moon & Morais, 2022). Here, the author adopts the definition of workplace incivility from Cortina, Magley, Williams, and Langhout (2001) for further research.

It is plain to see workplace incivility has negative impact on organization management and elicits several negative consequences for both individuals and organizations. For instance, it has been linked to decreased job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and decreased job performance (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Porath & Erez, 2009). It can also lead to increased absenteeism and turnover, as employees may seek to avoid uncivil behavior (Moon & Morais, 2022). Therefore, Organizations have attempted to address workplace incivility through various interventions, such as training programs and policies to promote respectful communication and behavior (Pearson, 2010). Some research has suggested that interventions that focus on promoting positive relationships and a supportive work environment may be more effective in reducing incivility (Porath & Erez, 2009).

Several factors have been identified as antecedents of workplace incivility. One such factor is job demands, which can create stress and frustration among employees, leading them to engage in uncivil behavior (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). Another factor is a lack of social support, which can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion and increase the likelihood of incivility (Porath & Erez, 2009). Furthermore, individual differences, such as personality traits and values, influence the likelihood of engaging in and accepting workplace incivility behavior (Moon & Morais, 2022).

Furthermore, leadership behavior also can be identified as the primary link between the antecedent of workplace incivility and workplace incivility (Walsh, Lee, Jensen, McGonagle, & Samnani, 2018). The connection between workplace incivility and leadership behavior has gotten attention from some scholars. For instance, Harold and Holtz (2015) examined the relationship between passive leadership and workplace incivility. Passive leadership is characterized by a lack of action exhibited by individuals in positions of authority, including neglect of workplace issues, the failure to exemplify or reinforce appropriate behavior, and the tendency to evade decision-making (Harold & Holtz, 2015). The findings of the study revealed that passive leadership has a notable direct impact on behavioral incivility, as well as an indirect effect through the experience of incivility (Harold & Holtz, 2015).

Another study investigated the relationship between positive leadership behavior and workplace incivility. Positive leadership behavior is associated with charismatic leadership and ethical leadership. The study found that positive forms of leadership may negatively relate to workplace incivility. (Walsh, Lee, Jensen, McGonagle, & Samnani, 2018)

In a more recent study, Young, Hassan, and Hatmaker (2021) explored the impact of ethical leadership on workplace incivility experienced by government and non-profit employees in Pakistan, with a particular focus on gender differences. The study found that women were more susceptible to experiencing workplace incivility than men, but this association was weakened when their direct supervisor demonstrated ethical leadership. Additionally, the study findings indicated a negative correlation between ethical leadership and workplace incivility among both male and female public employees.

The literature mentioned above suggests that there is a tie between leadership and workplace incivility. Positive leadership behaviors are less likely to create incivility in the workplace. In contrast, leaders who engage in negative behaviors, such as passive leadership are more likely to foster a culture of incivility in the workplace. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of effective leadership in creating a positive work environment and preventing workplace incivility. However, the author could not find research on how task/relationship-oriented leadership impacts workplace incivility, which could be identified as a research gap. As a result, the author proposed the following hypotheses,

- **Hypothesis 9:** *workplace incivility is correlated to task-oriented leadership in Chinese banking sector.*
- **Hypothesis 10:** *workplace incivility is correlated to relationship-oriented leadership in Chinese banking sector.*

2.3.2 Workplace Incivility in Banking Sector and Other Organizations in China

Due to the dearth of existing research on workplace incivility in the Chinese banking sector, the current section will expand the prior research work not only in Chinese banking sector but also encompass other organizations in China to provide a more comprehensive recent workplace incivility research status in China.

Workplace incivility is an invisible problem that has persisted in Chinese organizations for a long time. Several studies conducted in China have investigated the impact of workplace

incivility on job-related outcomes, such as job burnout, employee creativity, innovative work behavior, turnover intention, and job satisfaction.

To illustrate this issue, Shi et al. (2018) conducted a study with 903 nurses participating in China to investigate the impact of workplace incivility on job burnout of new nursing staff. There was a significant positive correlation between workplace incivility and anxiety as well as job burnout among newly employed nurses. The results also indicate that new nurses who exhibit higher levels of resilience may be able to mitigate the adverse impact of workplace incivility through the use of positive coping strategies (Shi et al., 2018).

Additionally, Chen et al. (2019) recruited 300 employees in China to explore the relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction. Their findings revealed a negative correlation between eight dimensions of workplace incivility and job satisfaction among Chinese participants. In addition, the collectivism cultural norms prevalent in Chinese organizations could help explain why workplace incivility exists and how it manifests in such settings. Understanding how cultural norms and values shape the experience and expression of workplace incivility in Chinese organizations is critical to effectively addressing this issue.

Notably, only a limited number of prior studies examine workplace incivility in the Chinese banking sector. For instance, Zhan, Li, and Luo (2019) investigated 306 supervisor-subordinate from banking sector, building material manufacturing and power generation industry in China, the findings indicated that workplace incivility has a negative association with employee creativity and Perceived Insider Status (PIS) was found to mediate this relationship. Furthermore, due to the strong influence of power distance orientation in Chinese organizations, employees often perceive organizational hierarchy as a desirable and acceptable norm. As a result, subordinates may feel reluctant to speak up or report instances of workplace incivility, particularly if it comes from higher-level managers. Additionally, subordinates may attempt to rationalize or justify the uncivil behavior of their superiors.

Similarly, the study conducted by Rasool et al. (2019) investigated a sample of 180 employees working in Chinese banks. The research findings indicate a direct negative correlation between workplace incivility and innovative work behavior. Moreover, Huang and Lin (2019) examined 512 employees from high-tech and banking industries for connection between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Test results reveal that emotional exhaustion fully

mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and turnover intention. Organizational identification positively moderates the effect of workplace incivility on emotional exhaustion.

In conclusion, research on workplace incivility is still relatively new but necessary in Chinese banking industry since it harms individuals or organizations in various ways. Based on the literature mentioned above, the author proposes the following hypotheses,

- **Hypothesis 11:** *State-owned Chinese banking professionals will display similar scores on workplace incivility compared to those in non-state-owned banks.*
- **Hypothesis 12:** *Male Chinese banking professionals will display similar scores on workplace incivility compared to female professionals.*
- **Hypothesis 13:** *Chinese banking professionals over 30 will display similar scores on task workplace incivility compared to those under 30.*
- **Hypothesis 14:** *Chinese banking professionals with working experience exceeding 5 years will display similar scores on workplace incivility compared to those with working experience below 5 years.*
- **Hypothesis 15:** *Chinese banking professionals in manager/director positions will display similar scores on workplace incivility compared to those in staff positions.*
- **Hypothesis 16:** *Chinese banking professionals with a higher education level of Master/Ph.D. will display similar scores on workplace incivility compared to those with Bachelor/Vocational School.*

3. Methodology and Data

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

Aforementioned, the study aims to examine leadership behavior in terms of task orientation, relationship orientation, and workplace incivility in Chinese banking sector while taking into account social demographic factors such as age, gender, bank type, experience years, position and education. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the relationship between the aforementioned three dimensions. The quantitative method allows researchers to collect data in a more efficient and reliable way to test hypotheses and draw objective conclusions based on data. The results allow the generalization of the findings to a larger population beyond the sample studied. While qualitative analysis can provide rich and detailed insights into complex phenomena, however, it may lack generalizability and objectivity. Consequently, this study

primarily adopted quantitative research methods and employed the survey questionnaire designed by Tran (2021) based on Northouse (2007) and Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout (2001).

The participants are all from banking sector in China. The author collected samples from four banks located in Zhejiang Province of China during December.2021- June.2022 to conduct further research and test hypotheses. The participants working in each bank were randomly selected. All the respondents were assured that participation in filling in the questionnaire was voluntary and their responses would be kept confidential. As the respondents mainly work in banking sector in China, the questionnaire was designed in double languages, English and Chinese. The Chinese part was translated from original English questions. Later, the collected data and Chinese answers were translated back into English for further analysis. The Tencent questionnaire platform (<https://wj.qq.com/>) is the mainstream questionnaire distribution and digital collection platform in China. Therefore, the author placed the translated questionnaire on this platform, targeting Chinese banking professionals. Data protection is an important consideration when designing a questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaire for this study included a statement informing participants of the purpose of the study and how their data will be used, as well as a statement indicating that their responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed, and 305 valid questionnaires were returned, resulting in a return rate of 80.2%. The remaining 19.8% of the respondents for some missing information or marked the same answer throughout the questionnaire, rendering them invalid data. **Table 2** shows the demographic characteristics of the 305 participants surveyed. Among them, 227 (74.43%) are female, and 78 (25.57%) are male. The majority of participants, 241 (79.02%), are between 18-29 years old, followed by 51 (16.72%) in the age group of 30-39, and 13 (4.26%) are over 39 years old. The bank type of respondents is balanced, with 155 (50.82%) working in state-owned banks, and 150 (49.18%) working in non-state-owned banks. In terms of educational level, the majority of respondents, 215 (70.47%), hold a bachelor's degree, while 60 (19.67%) have a master's degree, and 26 (8.52%) have a vocational school degree. Only 4 (1.31%) respondents hold a PhD degree. In terms of working experience, the majority of participants (233, 76.39%) in the sample have worked for 1-5 years, while

59(19.34%) participants have worked for more than 6 to 10 years, and only 13 (4.26%) participants have over 10 years of experience.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics (N = 305)

Items		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	25.57%
	Female	227	74.43%
Age	18-29	241	79.02%
	30-39	51	16.72%
	>39	13	4.26%
Experiences	1-2 years	103	33.77%
	3-5 years	130	42.62%
	6-10 years	59	19.34%
	11-20 years	10	3.28%
	>20 years	3	0.98%
Position	Staff	237	77.7%
	Manager/Director	68	22.3%
Bank Type	State-owned bank	155	50.82%
	Non-state-owned bank	150	49.18%
Education	Vocational school	26	8.52%
	Bachelor	215	70.49%
	Master	60	19.67%
	PhD	4	1.31%

Source: Author's own calculation

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire (Northouse, 2007; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001) consists of four parts: task-oriented leadership, relationship-oriented leadership, workplace incivility and demographic information. In order to eliminate participant prejudgment, the questionnaire was purposely grouped relationship and task-oriented questions together, where odd numbers were about task-oriented questions and even numbers were about relationship-oriented questions.

Task-oriented Leadership. The questionnaire used 10 items for measuring task orientation. This is in the first part with odd numbers, measuring the respondents evaluate how often leadership behavior engagement in task-orientation in the organization. Responses ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). A sample question was 'Tells group members what they are supposed to do.'

Relationship-oriented Leadership. The questionnaire used 10 items for measuring relationship orientation. This is in the first part with an even number, measuring the respondents evaluate how often leadership behavior engagement in relationship-orientation in the organization. Responses ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). A sample question was 'Helps others in the group feel comfortable.'

Workplace Incivility. The questionnaire used 7 items for measuring workplace incivility. This is in the second part, measuring the have ever respondents suffered workplace incivility in the organization. Responses ranged from 0 (Never) to 5 (All the time). A sample question was 'Have your co-worker or supervisors put you down or was condescending to you.'

Demographic Factors. The questionnaire collected 9 items for demographic check and analysis. These items included age, gender, location, work experience, size of bank, type of bank, position, specific job title and level of education.

Table 3 displays the scoring range for the task and relationship-oriented leadership module based on Northouse (2007, pp. 87).

Table 3

Task and relationship orientation score

Score	Range
4.5–5.0	Very high range

4.0–4.4	High range
3.5–3.9	Moderate-high range
3.0–3.4	Moderate low range
2.5–2.9	Low range
1.0–2.4	Very low range

Source: Northouse (2007, pp. 87).

3.3 Data Method

The study used SPSS 27.0 (IBM 2023) to run data analysis and test the proposed research hypotheses. Firstly, we utilized descriptive statistics to summarize the mean and distribution percentages of the data, which helped us gain a comprehensive understanding of the basic features of the collected sample. This approach facilitated our exploration of the underlying patterns and characteristics of the data and provided a basis and reference for further research, as well as a method to explain and interpret our findings. Secondly, in order to proceed with further data analysis, the data must meet the following criteria: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value must exceed 0.5, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) value must exceed 0.4, and Cronbach's Alpha value must exceed 0.7 (Kaiser, 1974). Consequently, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis on the variables in our model to evaluate the data validity and Cronbach's Alpha was applied to check data reliability. Secondly, the author performed correlation analysis to explore the relationship between task-oriented leadership, relationship-oriented leadership and workplace incivility. Finally, the analysis of t-test was selected to test the aforementioned hypotheses. The detailed result of data analysis will be presented in the next section.

4. Data Analysis and Result

4.1 Validity and Reliability of Data

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the author first conducted the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test. The KMO values for the leadership items and work incivility items were 0.905 (sig<.000***) and 0.903 (sig<.000***), respectively, which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5. This indicates that the data is suitable for further factor analysis. Next, the author performed a factor analysis presented in **Table 4**. Q3, Q5 from the task orientation part, Q2, Q4, Q6 from the relationship orientation part, and Q21 from the workplace incivility part were removed because either component 1 score was lower than 0.4, or component

1 was not at least double the size of component 2. Ultimately, 21 items were confirmed as valid for further data analysis. Especially, the complete factor analysis result can be found in

Appendix 1.

Finally, the author conducted a reliability analysis to ensure data reliability. Table 4 shows the Cronbach's Alpha scores for the three parts were 0.806, 0.842, and 0.884, respectively. These scores exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7, indicating the high reliability of the research data and suitability for further data analysis.

Therefore, we can conclude that the data from each facet of the survey questionnaire exhibits good reliability and convergence validity. The data validity and reliability test result with comprehensive measurement indicators is presented in **Table 4.**

Table 4.

Data validity and reliability analysis

Dimensions	Items	Component1	Component2	Cronbach's Alpha
Task Orientation	Q1	0.495	-0.026	0.806
	Q7	0.623	0.163	
	Q9	0.736	0.076	
	Q11	0.653	-0.208	
	Q13	0.662	-0.215	
	Q15	0.698	-0.104	
	Q17	0.666	-0.396	
Relationship Orientation	Q19	0.566	-0.281	0.842
	Q8	0.725	0.139	
	Q10	0.585	-0.063	
	Q12	0.699	-0.303	
	Q14	0.759	-0.116	
	Q16	0.71	-0.417	
	Q18	0.558	-0.435	
Q20	0.784	-0.069		

	Q2	0.835	
	Q3	0.811	
Workplace	Q4	0.838	
Incivility	Q5	0.824	0.884
	Q6	0.874	
	Q7	0.856	

Source: Author's own calculation

4.2 Correlation between Task-Oriented Leadership, Relationship Oriented Leadership and Workplace Incivility

As demonstrated in **Table 5**, there is a significant positive correlation between task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership ($r=0.837$; $\text{sig}<0.001^{***}$) can be found, indicating that Chinese banking employees who exhibit higher levels of task-orientated leadership also tend to display higher levels of relationship-orientated leadership and vice versa. In addition, the correlation coefficient is $0.837>0.7$, indicating a highly positive relationship between task and relationship-oriented leadership. Therefore, **Hypothesis 1** is supported that task-oriented leadership is positively correlated with relationship-oriented leadership.

Moreover, the correlation coefficient between task-oriented leadership and workplace incivility is negative ($r=-0.038$; $\text{sig}=0.510$) but insignificant. Thus, the result cannot be valid and **Hypothesis 9** is rejected. However, the results show that workplace incivility is significantly negatively correlated with relationship-oriented leadership ($r=-.125$; $\text{sig}=0.029^{***}$). Due to correlation coefficient being significant but less than 0.3, indicating a negative correlation between task-oriented leadership and workplace incivility is valid but weak. Thus, these findings suggest that workplace incivility is a minor negative factor with a weak impact on leadership in Chinese banking sector. Thus, the author concludes that **Hypothesis 10** is weakly supported that relationship-oriented leadership is weakly correlated with workplace incivility at a relatively low level.

Table 5

Correlation between three dimensions

Variables	Task orientation	Relationship orientation	Workplace incivility
Task orientation	1		
Relationship orientation	0.837(P<0.001) ***	1	
Workplace incivility	-.038(P=0.510)	-.125(P=0.029) **	1

Notes. ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%.

Source: Author's own calculation

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Table 6 presents the results of mean scores of three variables: task orientation, relationship orientation, and workplace incivility. Notably, the mean of task orientation score (3.462, $p < 0.001$ ***) is higher than the relationship orientation leadership score (3.378, $p < 0.001$ ***). This indicates the task-orientated leadership score is higher than the relationship-oriented leadership score in Chinese banking sector. Furthermore, the results show that the p-value for the task orientation, relationship orientation and workplace incivility is less than 0.000***, which is much below the significance level of 0.05. Hence, **Hypothesis 2 is rejected** at the significance level of 0.05, and the author concludes the Chinese banking employees have significant higher task-oriented leadership than relationship-oriented leadership.

Table 6

Scores of Task orientation, relationship orientation and workplace incivility

Dimensions	Mean (S.D.)	T	P
Task orientation	3.462(.586)	103.223	<0.001***
Relationship orientation	3.378(0.638)	92.449	<0.001***

Workplace incivility	2.109(0.975)	37.769	<0.001***
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Notes. *** significant at 1%.

Source: Author's own calculation

The t-test result of leadership in terms of task and relationship orientation grouped by age, gender, bank type, experience years, position and education can be found in **Tables 7 and 8**. According to **Hypothesis 3**, Chinese respondents working in state-owned banks will display similar scores for task orientation and relationship orientation compared to their colleagues in non-state-owned banks. Based on the results presented in **Tables 7 and 8**, there is no statistically significant difference between state-owned bank employees and non-state-owned bank employees when measuring their task-oriented leadership and relationship-oriented leadership. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported. This result aligns with a leadership study conducted by Tran (2020), where there is no significant difference between workers in state-owned enterprises and private-owned enterprises in Vietnam, which share similar cultural and historical characteristics with China. Similarly, **Hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8** are all supported because there is no significant ($P>0.05$) distinguish from different groups in terms of age, gender, experience years, position and education when examining task orientation and relationship orientation.

Table 7

T-test of Task-Oriented Leadership

Item	Number	Group	Mean	St.D	T	P
	155	SoE banks	3.452	0.648	0.747	0.323
	150	Non-SoE banks	3.473	0.515		
Task orientation	78	Male	3.538	0.646	1.333	.184
	227	Female	3.436	0.563		
	241	Age<30	3.435	0.565	-1.573	0.117
	64	Age>=30	3.564	0.653		

233	Working experience<=5 years	3.460	0.577		
				-0.107	0.915
72	Working experience>5 years	3.469	0.617		
237	Staff	3.453	0.587		
68	Manager/Director	3.496	0.583	-0.543	0.588
241	Bachelor/Vocational school	3.456	0.599		
64	Master/Ph.D	3.484	0.539	-0.339	0.735

Source: Author's own calculation

Table 8

T-test of Relationship Orientated Leadership

Item	Number	Group	Mean	St.D	T	P-value
	155	SoE banks	3.393	0.680		
	150	Non-SoE banks	3.363	0.594	0.684	0.407
	78	Male	3.480	0.701		
	227	Female	3.343	0.613	1.639	.102
Relationship orientation	241	Age<30	3.350	0.611	-	
	64	Age>=30	3.482	0.728	1.472	0.142
	233	Working experience<=5 years	3.371	0.620	-	
	72	Working experience>5 years	3.401	0.696	0.346	0.729
	237	Staff	3.357	0.640	-	0.295

68	Manager/Director	3.450	0.633	1.050	
241	Bachelor/Vocational school	3.363	0.637	-	0.438
64	Master/Ph.D.	3.433	0.645	0.776	

Source: Author's own calculation

Furthermore, **Table 9** Presents the t-test result of workplace incivility grouped by age, gender, bank type, working experience, position, and education level in Chinese banking sector. **Hypotheses 11, 13, 14 and 16** are all supported due to there is no statistical difference in workplace incivility in terms of bank type, age, experience years and educational level.

However, in terms of **Hypothesis 12**, it can be found that the workplace incivility score of male groups (2.308, P=0.037**) is significantly higher the female group (2.040, P=0.037**) in Chinese banking sector. Thus, hypothesis 12 is rejected, and we have evidence to believe there is a difference between workplace incivility between the male and female groups. In addition, As per **Hypothesis 15**, Chinese banking professionals in head/director positions will display similar scores for workplace incivility compared to those in staff positions. **Table 9** shows a significant difference in workplace incivility between staff (2.044, P=0.029**) and manager/director (2.336, P=0.029**). The manager and director demonstrate higher scores of workplace incivility than the ordinary staff. Thus, hypothesis 15 is rejected.

Table 9
T-test of Workplace Incivility in Chinese Banking Sector

Item	Number	Group	Mean	St.D	F	P
	155	SoE banks	2.115	0.976	0.909	0.115
	150	Non-SoE banks	2.102	0.977		
Workplace incivility	78	Male	2.308	0.971	2.1	.037*
	227	Female	2.040	0.969		
	241	Age<30	2.077	0.966	-	0.278

64	Age>=30	2.227	1.009	1.088	
233	Working experience<=5 years	2.081	0.959	-	0.369
72	Working experience>5 years	2.199	1.027	0.899	
237	Staff	2.044	0.970	-	0.029*
68	Manager/Director	2.336	0.967	2.192	
241	Bachelor/Vocational school	2.075	0.956	-	0.273
64	Master/Ph.D	2.234	1.042	1.104	

Notes. ** significant at 5%

Source: Author's own calculation

5. Discussion

5.1 The Orientation of Leadership Behavior in Chinese Banking Sector

The present study has shed light on the primary characteristic of leadership in Chinese banking sector with regards to task and relationship orientation, which evidenced the first research question. The results reveal that professionals in Chinese banking sector are more task-oriented than relationship-oriented regarding leadership behaviors. These findings corroborate Tran's (2022) previous research results on Chinese working adults regardless of the working sectors, who reveal higher task orientation than relationship orientation. Furthermore, a highly positive correlation between task orientation and relationship orientation was observed, suggesting that the more task-oriented leadership in Chinese banking sector also tends to prioritize relationship-oriented leadership and vice versa. This result corresponds with the argument suggested by Mujtaba, Khanfar and Khanfar. (2010) that task and relationship orientations are not mutually exclusive, and both orientations can be high or low simultaneously. It is interesting to note that the study found no significant difference in task/relationship-oriented

leadership between state-owned banking professionals and non-state-owned banking professionals in China. This also aligns with Tran's (2021) research on Vietnamese leadership styles due to similarities between China and Vietnam not only in history and culture but also in the same economic policy that transferred from national centralization to private centralization, which could prompt state-owned enterprises to adopt task-oriented goals to adapt to diverse and competitive economic environments.

Furthermore, the study attributes the consequences of the prevalent task orientation in Chinese banking leadership to the economic reform, enterprise ownership reform, and foreign investment that the Chinese government has implemented since the 1978 reform and open-up policies. This has been in line with the national policy of prioritizing economic development as the central focus (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). All the measures have accelerated the market-oriented economy and profoundly impacted China's economic and banking system development (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). The banking sector in China has historically been heavily influenced by the country's central planning system, which emphasized task-oriented leadership and prioritized meeting economic targets (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). The focus on task orientation has been further reinforced by China's ongoing economic reforms, such as Economic development-centered policy, which have pushed state-owned banks to become more market-oriented and to prioritize efficiency and profitability (Guo, Yolles, & Iles, 2009). Furthermore, Chinese culture also contributes to task-oriented leadership to a certain extent. Based on Hofstede (2001) and Tran (2019), China has a low score in the indulgence dimension and a high score in collectivism, which indicates the trait of diligence is deeply rooted in Chinese genes and tend to sacrifice their own spare time or personal interests to work and achieve a common goal for group and organization.

Moreover, the study's findings reveal that relationship-oriented leadership is also valued in Chinese culture, and there is a highly positive correlation between task orientation and relationship orientation in the Chinese banking sector. This aligns with Wang, Ruona & Rojewski (2005)' finding that Chinese culture emphasizes on the harmony, connection and Mianzi Culture, leading a relatively harmonious relationship in the organizations. Consequently, this provides an opportunity and insight for senior managers in Chinese banking industry to reflect on how to implement effective leadership while simultaneously increasing task orientation and relationship orientation. For instance, this can be achieved through methods such

as establishing clear goals and tasks, fostering strong team relationships, creating a positive work environment, and implementing performance evaluation and reward mechanisms, which can simultaneously enhance both task and relationship orientations. These approaches can facilitate the overall development of employees and organizations and also could be a research topic for further exploration. Foreign investors also need to understand the Chinese culture to implement effective management policy when entering into Chinese market.

In addition, the study found that gender, age, working experience, position, and educational level do not significantly influence both task and relationship-oriented leadership. This finding implies that task and relationship orientation is not affected by the aforementioned demographic factors, highlighting the universality of these leadership orientations across the Chinese banking sector.

5.2 The Role of Workplace Incivility in Chinese Banking Sector

Workplace incivility has been identified as a relatively minor negative aspect in the Chinese banking sector, as it showed a weak negative correlation with relationship-oriented leadership. Therefore, the second research question has also been addressed. This can be explained by the fact that relationship-oriented leaders tend to prioritize the needs and concerns of their employees, foster a positive and respectful work environment, and encourage open communication and collaboration. In contrast, workplace incivility involves disrespectful and rude behavior, such as belittling, ignoring, or undermining others, which can create a toxic work environment, damage employee relationships, and decrease job satisfaction and productivity. Hence, it is evident that these two dimensions are in opposite directions.

Specifically, male employees were more likely to experience workplace incivility than their female counterparts. This phenomenon can be attributed to a combination of cultural and social factors. In traditional Chinese culture, men are expected to exhibit assertiveness and dominance, whereas women are often socialized to be more cooperative and caring (Wang, Wang, Ruona, & Rojewski, 2005). This cultural norm can create an environment in which male employees who display behavior perceived as too passive or non-assertive may be more likely to be the targets of workplace incivility. Besides, based on Hofstede (2001), the hierarchical nature of Chinese society may also contribute to the gendered pattern of workplace incivility. Men often hold higher positions of power and authority in the workplace, leading to resentment and hostility towards male subordinates who are perceived as threats to their status. On the other

hand, women may face more subtle forms of incivility, such as being excluded from decision-making processes or not being taken seriously in meetings due to gender stereotypes. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to address and prevent workplace incivility to create a healthy and respectful work environment for all employees.

Moreover, Managers or directors were more likely to experience workplace incivility than ordinary employees, which shows findings similar to Zhan, Li, & Luo (2019). This is because of the cultural value of higher power distance orientation, employees in China tend to view the organizational hierarchy as appropriate or even preferable (Hofstede,2001). As a result, lower-level employees may be more likely to remain quiet, tolerate incivility from higher-level managers, and may even attempt to rationalize or justify the actions of those who exhibit uncivil behavior (Zhan, Li, & Luo, 2019). Secondly, the organization often plays higher expectations and demands on those in managerial or leadership positions. They are expected to set a good example and maintain high standards of behavior, which can make them more vulnerable to workplace incivility if they fall short of these expectations.

6. Conclusion

To summarize, this study reveals that Chinese banking professionals have higher task-oriented leadership than relationship-oriented leadership. Moreover, the study demonstrates a highly positive correlation between task-oriented leadership and relationship orientation. Notably, the type of bank does not significantly affect leadership orientation, as state-owned banks in China must set up clear goals and tasks to adapt to internal reorganized, market changes and an increasingly competitive external environment since the 1978 reform and opening up policy. Other demographic factors such as age, gender, position, work experience and educational level do not appear to play a significant role in determining leadership style. However, workplace incivility serves as a minor negative aspect with a low correlation to relationship-oriented leadership within China's banking sector. The study finds that male employees are more likely to experience workplace incivility than female employees, while managers are more susceptible to such behaviors compared to ordinary staff. This difference may be attributed to significant influence of traditional Chinese Confucian culture.

7. Limitations

Although this study has deeply measured, analyzed, and explored the leadership orientation and workplace incivility in the Chinese banking sector, there are still limitations due to time and objective conditions. Firstly, China has a vast territory and diverse ethnicity, policies and regulations vary from province to province. However, this study only collected samples from Zhejiang Province, therefore, the overall data sample of this study is still limited. In order to explore more comprehensive and accurate understanding of leadership behavior and workplace incivility in Chinese banking industry, the subsequent research could expand the empirical research samples to other provinces in China.

Secondly, the research method used in this study mainly adopted a quantitative measure to analyze multiple dimensions of leadership and workplace incivility due to time and geographic limitations. However, the limitations of quantitative research methods are evident, such as its inability to fully explore and understand people's subjective cognition and emotional experiences of leadership behavior and workplace incivility experience. Therefore, subsequent research could integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods, supplementing in-depth interviews, etc., to better leverage the strengths and advantages of two research approaches. Through multi-perspective research methods, we can further deepen our understanding of the leadership behavior and workplace incivility in the Chinese banking sector, providing more comprehensive and reliable basis for enhancing future management and strategies in Chinese banking sector.

Finally, there are only task-oriented leadership, relationship-oriented leadership and workplace incivility examined in this study. Thus, in future research, other factors can be considered to examine leadership behavior and workplace incivility in a more comprehensive way.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Complete Results of Factor Analysis

Dimensions	Items	Component1	Component2
Task Orientation	Q1	0.495	-0.026
	Q3	0.479	0.678
	Q5	0.59	0.516
	Q7	0.623	0.163
	Q9	0.736	0.076
	Q11	0.653	-0.208
	Q13	0.662	-0.215
	Q15	0.698	-0.104
	Q17	0.666	-0.396
	Q19	0.566	-0.281
Relationship Orientation	Q2	0.479	0.567
	Q4	0.69	0.386
	Q6	0.609	0.477
	Q8	0.725	0.139
	Q10	0.585	-0.063
	Q12	0.699	-0.303
	Q14	0.759	-0.116
	Q16	0.71	-0.417
Workplace Incivility	Q18	0.558	-0.435
	Q20	0.784	-0.069
	Q1	0.29	
	Q2	0.835	
	Q3	0.811	
	Q4	0.838	
	Q5	0.824	
Q6	0.874		
Q7	0.856		

Source: Author's own calculation

Resümee

ÜLESANNE VERSUS SUHETELE ORIENTEERITUD JUHTIMISKÄITUMINE JA TÖÖKOHA EBASTABIILSUS HIINA PANGANDUSSEKTORIS: KVANTITATIIVNE ANALÜÜS DEMOGRAAFILISTE TEGURITE VALGUSES

Jieru Li

Kuna Hiina majandus kiireneb kiiresti koos maailmamajanduse jätkuva globaliseerumisega, on riikide finantssüsteemide osana tegutsevatel pankadel riigi ja ülemaailmses majandusarengus ülitähtis roll. Hiina kiire, kuid lühike majanduslik ümberkujundamine viimase 50 aasta jooksul alates 1978. aastast on aga viinud Hiina pangandussektoris kaasaegse juhtimiskogemuse puudumiseni. Seetõttu on Hiina pangandussektori põhilise konkurentsivõime tõstmiseks hädavajalik kehtestada tõhus juhtimine ja käsitleda töökohal ebaviisakas probleeme. Vähesed varasemad uuringud uurisid juhtimist, mõttes Hiina pangandussektoris samaaegselt ülesandele orienteeritust, suhetele orienteeritust ja töökoha ebakindlust. Seega on käesolevas uurimuses autori eesmärk uurida Hiina pangandussektoris juhikäitumist ülesandele orienteerituse, suhetele orienteerituse ja töökoha ebakindluse seisukohalt, võttes samal ajal arvesse sotsiaalseid demograafilisi tegureid, nagu vanus, sugu, panga tüüp, kogemuse aastad, ametikoht ja haridust. Lisaks püüab uuring uurida seost eelnimetatud kolme mõõtme vahel. Empiiriline analüüs viidi läbi kvantitatiivse küsitluse abil, mis kogus andmeid 305 Hiina pangandussektori töötajalt. Tulemused näitavad, et ülesandele orienteeritud juhtimine on Hiina pangandussektoris domineeriv. Veelgi enam, panga tüüp, sugu, vanus, ametikoht, töökogemus ja haridustase ei ole olulised tegurid, mis mõjutavad juhtimisorientatsiooni. Veelgi enam, töökoha tahtmatus näitab nõrka negatiivset korrelatsiooni suhetele orienteeritud juhtimisega, mis on Hiina pangandussektoris väike negatiivne tegur. Tulemuste mõju uurimistööle ja praktikale on esitatud järgmises aruteluosas.

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