



PERSONALITY TRAITS, ALTRUISM AND INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURES

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate personality traits, altruism and intercultural sensitivity among undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. The basis for categorization of countries as individualistic and collectivistic was referred from Hofstede's research (Hofstede, 2010). The present research used comparative research design. Population for the research comprised of undergraduate students who were approached via purposive sampling. The sample size consisted a total of N=190 participants comprising of 95 Pakistani and 95 American undergraduate students. Cultural Orientation Scale was used to assess the nature of culture along with three other scales namely Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, Big Five Inventory and Adapted Self-Report Altruism scale to measure intercultural sensitivity, personality traits and altruism respectively. In order to find significant differences between the two distinct cultures i.e. individualistic and collectivist cultures, independent sample *t* test was used. The results indicated individualistic cultures to have higher intercultural sensitivity and altruism as compared to collectivist cultures. As far as the personality traits were concerned, significant differences among extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness were found with higher levels of extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience in individualist cultures and higher levels of agreeableness in collectivist cultures. Neuroticism however tended to be same between the two identified cultures. Findings from this research suggest several implications for Pakistani community such as exposing the student population to mixed communities, spreading awareness about diverse groups, arranging several study abroad trips and counseling them about helping others.

Keywords

Intercultural Sensitivity;
Altruism; Personality;
Individualism;
Collectivism; Cross-
Cultural.



1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to understand the various aspects of personality traits, altruism and intercultural sensitivity applied to individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Each year, thousands of undergraduate students travel abroad for either educational or vocational purposes which results in numerous elements experienced in the shape of personality, culture sensitivity and helping behavior. With the exchange of students in a cross cultural environment, several personal accounts report various experiences as to how they were treated or how they liked to be treated, what sort of personalities were they exposed to and how they interact in those specific environments. With time, several aspects of cultural biasness and prejudices have changed among majority of cultures as new thought processes and an acceptance towards other cultures have emerged. The current study aimed to examine the current elements of intercultural sensitivity, altruistic behavior and personality traits that are present within collectivist and individualistic cultures.

1.1 Individualistic vs Collectivist Culture

Culture can be divided into individualistic and collectivist culture. One of the common factors that distinguish the two cultures is the regard and focus towards in-group and out-group goals. Individuals residing in countries termed as individualistic tend to have individualized out-group goals that mainly focus on the needs of the self where as individuals belonging to collectivist

cultures are more focused towards the needs and goals of in-groups (Hofstede, 2001).

Some of the characteristics of a collectivist culture include an individual's requirement to be an active member of the society; to adhere and respect the rights of the family and community. Another vital aspect of a collectivist culture is the adherence towards rules and a belief that rules promote brotherhood, selflessness and unity. Some examples of collectivist countries include Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Korea, China, Japan, Nepal, Argentina etc.

Individualistic cultures on the other hand emphasize on the "I" factor i.e. much preference is given to the self and the needs and goals of the self. Another important aspect of this culture is the emphasis on the rights of an individual and the value placed on independence. Independence is highly valued in individualistic cultures to an extent that dependency can sometimes be regarded as shameful. Countries that are considered individualistic include United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Ireland, Belgium, Italy etc.

Triandis (1995) defined and categorized cultures into four dimensions primarily known as Horizontal Individualism, Vertical Individualism, Horizontal Collectivism and Vertical Collectivism. The notion of Horizontal in this respective aspect refers to the idea of equality and cohesion within groups with a further emphasis of individuals being united within groups and attaining equal status. On the contrary, Vertical aspect refers to one's services to the group and the

ability of a group member to make sacrifices for the benefit of the group. Ranking takes precedence with all the group members being familiar with the concept of inequality and hierarchal placements. Horizontal aspect entails horizontal collectivism (H-C) and horizontal individualism (H-I) with H-I relating to the ideology of having similar status as others along with maintaining a certain level of autonomy and H-C relating to sufficient consideration of equal status but a relatively higher regard for interdependence.

On the other hand, Vertical collectivism relates to the idea of the self being defined as part of the in-group along with the acknowledgement of some group members having different hierarchal status than others and Vertical Individualism refers to the ideology of independence and autonomy among individuals with a strong acceptance of inequality among people and the notion of viewing themselves as different from other members of the group (Triandis, 1995).

1.2 Personality

Personality has been defined as a mixture of significant components of thought, behavior and emotion along with psychological mechanisms that form an individual's characteristic patterns (Funder, 1997). One prominent reason behind the diversification of each individual's personality traits is the environment and the culture that an individual associates with. Each culture has a diverse mixture of personalities that is unique and different in terms of its formulation and exhibition. This idea suggests that every

individual is shaped, groomed and molded in a way that suits their respective culture. It can be stated that personality traits are adapted and shaped by the respective culture which an individual interacts in.

In the present research, personality traits were analyzed and assessed across the two prominent cultures i.e. individualistic and collectivistic cultures. There are some prominent factors, according to findings, that distinguish the two cultures. Individuals belonging to individualistic cultures are known to be competitive, self-reliant and emotionally distant from their in-groups where as individuals belonging to collectivistic cultures are interdependent and sociable (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

Cultural values tend to be important for determining relationship between culture and personality. A research conducted on a cross-cultural population which used the Chinese Personality Inventory suggested that collectivist cultures tended to have lower scores on extraversion and agreeableness as compared to individualistic cultures (Cheung et al, 2001).

Personality can also be described as a configuration of habits, cognitions and emotions which activate upon stimulation of expression specific to their situations. Based on this ideology, the notion that "personality attributes may tend to differ among individuals of individualistic and collectivist cultures" was presented in this research.

Previous researchers have used various modes of personality to identify and analyze the personality

traits of individuals residing in various cultures. personality traits were used to correspond at the personality level to collectivism and individualism. The Big Five personality structure, due to its adaptive significance, is considered to be universal to all cultures (Golberg, 1981). Researchers suggest that big 5 personality structure has a strong cross-cultural robustness and researches concerned in this area have been widely replicated in various cultures (McCrae, 2000).

Conscientiousness. This element of the personality relates to conformity and achievement. According to researchers, individuals with a higher regard of conscientiousness tend to value order, self-discipline, achievement, duty and are highly competent (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002). In addition, individuals with a higher level of conscientiousness also tend to deliver effective job performance and extrinsic and intrinsic career success (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

Soldz and Vaillant (1993) conducted a longitudinal study, the results of which indicated a positive correlation between conscientiousness and life adjustments. Results of this study helped researchers maintain a viewpoint that individuals high in conscientiousness are well adapted to handling and tackling various obstacles thrown their way. Moreover, the results of the study also demonstrated a negative correlation with depression and substance abuse. As far as its correlation with other big five personality traits is concerned, there was a negative correlation between conscientiousness and neuroticism where

in the present study, Big Five as a positive correlation between conscientiousness and agreeableness but no correlation with the remaining personality traits (Ones, Viswesvaran & Reiss, 1996).

Openness to experience. This trait is highly related to peace and tolerance. Individuals high at this trait are more likely to focus on justice and equality for all (Dauglas, Bore & Munro, 2016). Researches also indicate a positive correlation of openness to experience with intellectual ability and knowledge. Furthermore, correlation with creativity and originality were also found to be positive. Correlations among the big five factors suggest a weak correlation with neuroticism and extroversion and no correlation with conscientiousness and agreeableness (Ones, Viswesvaran & Reiss, 1996).

Extraversion. Extroverts are regarded as sociable, active and assertive. They are also known to shun self-denial when it comes to pleasure and excitement. Moreover, extrovert individuals tend to value achievement and have a lesser regard for conformity or tradition (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002).

Extroversion tends to be a strong predictor of leadership and has a positive correlation with social relationships, political attitudes and high income (Soldz & Vaillant, 1990). Moreover, extraversion also tends to be a significant predictor of general wellbeing and effective functioning with a positive correlation with confidence and positive emotions (Verduyn &

Brans, 2012). In comparison with other traits of the big 5 personality factors, there seemed to be a negative correlation among extroversion and neuroticism and a positive correlation between extraversion and openness to experience (Ones, Viswesvaran & Reiss, 1966).

Agreeableness. Individuals possessing this trait tend to have a high regard for conformity, tradition and benevolence and lesser regarded for selfish pleasures, achievement and power; factors that are widely common and seen among collectivist culture

(Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002). Research indicates that social obligation or the need to follow established norms may be a driving force for agreeableness. Moreover, it is also suggested that irrespective of the motivating force, individuals high on agreeableness are not motivated by selfish desires (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002).

Furthermore, research also suggests that individuals who possess this trait tend to have a positive family and peer relationship, having a higher regard for forgiveness, gratitude and are more likely to attain life satisfaction (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). As far as long-term relationship is concerned, evidence suggests that people high in agreeableness tend to have a healthy midlife adjustment and strong social support. However, it is also suggested that due to their primary focus centered on family and friends, they are less motivated to attain success

(Soldz & Vaillant, 1999). Relationship with other traits suggests a weak correlation between agreeableness and extroversion but a positive correlation between agreeableness and conscientiousness (Ones, Viswesvaran & Reiss, 1996).

Neuroticism. Neuroticism is defined to relate negatively to an individual's locus of control, their self-esteem and self-efficacy (Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoresen, 2002). Further correlations suggest a poor job performance, lack of motivation and distributed goal-setting ideologies for those high in neuroticism. Research suggests long term correlates or neuroticism with smoking, drug abuse and mental health issues (Soldz & Vaillant, 1999).

1.3 Altruism

Altruism relates to an individual's ability to display helping behavior without wanting something else in return. Over the years, people from different cultures and communities have reported various accounts of experiences/instances regarding the selfless helping behavior of others towards them. A common ideology persists that individuals belonging to collectivist cultures are more inclined towards helping others. However, several accounts of research also suggest that individuals coming from individualistic cultures are more likely to go out of their way to accommodate or help another person.

Numerous studies have been conducted in this area which suggest that culture shapes and molds one's altruistic behavior. Smith et al (2006)

described altruism as a component of behavior which intends to facilitate others, irrespective of their duties and beyond simple sociability and is primarily associated with the roles, for example work or family. The concept of altruistic behavior has also been defined as an act of physical or cognitive help provided to another individual that are displayed outside the boundaries of role relationship i.e. excluding the social roles. In short, the definition provided by Smith and his colleagues does not include the altruistic behavior demonstrated in terms of being carried out as part of obligated social roles, rather with people with whom one has little or no association with. Examples of such behavioral instances include an employee going out of his way to help his boss, a doctor taking extra hours to carefully complete a surgical procedure.

1.3.1 Altruism among individualistic vs collectivistic cultures:

As far as the element of altruistic behavior among individuals of various cultures is concerned, researchers suggest that communist cultures revolve around articulated systems that relate to certain social obligations as compared to individualistically oriented cultures (Bresnahan, 1991). It should be noted that a higher emphasis on the facilitation of in-group activities is placed within communal cultures. The element of cultural values prioritizes the notion of with-in group's needs, concerns and goals (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, the cultural values of individualistic cultures tend to place a higher

emphasis on an individual's autonomy, goals, needs and personal choice.

Research findings have provided with significant reasons as to why an individual adheres to altruistic behavior. Some suggest that a helpful behavioral conduct is sometimes carried out for social obligations, maintenance of face relations rather than as an act of altruism (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

Smith et al (2006) in his research defined altruism using five components. The five components of altruistic behavior include:

Concern. An individual's locus of concern tends to be a vital element while describing altruistic behavior. A common idea around altruism suggests that the behavior is conducted for the wellbeing of other person rather than for the self (Monroe, 2002). An altruistic individual can be defined as someone who does something for someone else's sake rather for one's internal well-being or self-promotion. In short, most theorists define altruism as a facilitation of others over self. On the other hand, some theorists maintain a viewpoint that doing good for others may have secondary gains such as a monetary or non-monetary reward (Post, 2002).

Cost. Helping another individual may have certain implications on an individual's personal health. Oliner (2002) defined this element of altruism as 'cost'. Cost can either be a physical cost such as death or an injury or an emotional cost such as embarrassment or grief. Further costs include materialistic costs such as loss of car, home or money for the sake of helping another individual.

The degree of cost that an individual has to face in his/her act of altruistic behavior depends and differs from culture to culture.

Benefit to the recipient. A vital component of altruistic behavior is focused towards the well-being of another individual, to benefit them in ways that provide them with physical or psychological satisfaction. Some researchers suggest that for an act to be considered altruistic, the recipient must receive some type of benefit. The type of benefit received by the recipient can be emotional such as a boost in self-esteem or confidence. Moreover, physical, spiritual or material benefit can also be provided (Smith et al, 2006).

Empathy. A common ideology persists that an act of altruistic behavior emerges from empathy (Batson, 2002). As far as its relationship with altruism is concerned, empathy can be displayed as an emotional response, cognitive response or a combination of both. Emotional response would include sharing of same or similar emotional state with the recipient where as a cognitive response would include one's ability to take the perspective of the other individual.

Ease of escape. Last but not the least, the fifth factor that can be used to define altruism is the notion of ease of escape. Ease of escape can be defined as an element, individual might use in order to display altruistic behavior to other individuals. This may be presented as self-blame, shame or guilt. This aspect is also described as a punishment-based feeling which emerges when someone may not help another person in need

(Batson, 2002). Reflecting this idea to a cultural context, individuals from communal cultures may find it difficult to escape such a situation due to communal obligations. Even in cases where they may not feel much obligated, failure to help another individual of the In-group might lead to negative self-consequences (Smith et al, 2006).

1.4 Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity refers to the ability of an individual to be able to discriminate and identify among various cultures. To properly define intercultural sensitivity, Milton Bennett (1993) devised a developmental model for intercultural sensitivity (DIMI) to streamline and clarify its significance.

According to this model, intercultural sensitivity is comprised of several stages which includes:

Denial. The element of denial as explained in the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity relates to the idea of being comfortable with the familiar. This stage of the model states that an individual in an intercultural atmosphere tends to be ignorant of the cultural differences and tends to keep him/herself aloof from individuals who seem different. Cultural differences at this stage are ignored and not given any importance.

Defense. In this stage, one's culture tends to hold priority over the other culture. The individual perceives his/her culture as the better one. At this stage, for an individual, the perception of the world is divided into elements of 'us' and 'them' where 'us' refers to an individual's community/culture and 'them' refers to other cultures/communities. 'Us' is considered superior

whereas 'them' is considered inferior. Individuals during this stage tend to feel threatened about the cultural differences which results in a critical perception of other cultures. Recipients of critical perceptions may include their own guests, hosts or any newcomers to their respective society.

Minimization. During this stage, an individual tends to minimize the existing cultural differences and tends to view one's culture as universal. Individuals at this stage are prone to find similarities among their own and other cultures.

Acceptance. As an individual progress from the previous stages to this one, he/she tends to get curious about other cultures and begins to learn about other cultures leading to respect for existing cultural differences.

Adaptation. This stage is defined as experiencing of one's culture as equal to other cultures and perceptions. The perceptions of various cultures are adapted and accepted and one tends to perceive the world through different angles. Individuals at this stage may mold and accommodate their behavioral patterns for effective communication with individuals from other cultures.

Integration. Cultural integration difference is the expansion of a person's experiences within two or more cultural world views. Cultural marginality expresses issues of people at Integration, commonly seen in low profile minority groups, nomads and long term expatriates (Binnet, 1993). It should be noted that much of the individuals coming from collectivist cultures may not be culturally sensitive as they are more concerned

about their in-group attributes, whereas individuals coming from individualistic cultures with no such firm values tend to be accepting and indulging with all other communities making it easier to mingle and form kinship with individuals of diverse cultures.

1.5 Literature Review

Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard (2006) conducted a longitudinal study on students who attended a study-abroad program to assess their level of intercultural sensitivity. In order to assess the intercultural sensitivity among the students, the intercultural developmental inventory was used. The administrative protocols of the inventory involved an administration before and four weeks after the study abroad program. The results of the study indicated that the study abroad program had a possible impact on the students regarding cross-cultural sensitivity.

Yablo and field (2007) conducted a study on a cross-cultural sample of college students to analyze the effect a culture has on an individual's altruistic behavior. The sample size for the study consisted of 56 students of United States and 62 students of Thailand. Altruistic behavior was assessed using the self-report altruism scale, in-depth interviews and altruism appreciation test. Findings suggested Thai students to have a higher score on the self-report Altruism scale than American students. A prominent aspect that came through during the interview process was that Thai students suggested religion to be a major reason behind altruistic behavior whereas for American students, religion was not a motivating

source for them to perform an altruistic act. Findings from this research suggest that collectivist societies tend to be more altruistically-oriented than individualistic societies.

Ruddock and Turner (2007) conducted a qualitative study on nursing students who took part in a study abroad program to analyze and assess the level of cultural sensitivity among students. Data was collected using in-depth interviews, results of which indicated a significant amount of adjustment issues by the students at the start of the program due to cultural shock. The findings of this research also indicated that with progression of time, the students adjusted in the environment, and could incorporate their social structure and communicate effectively in their culture.

McMurray (2007) postulated a research which focused on assessing the intercultural sensitivity in the student population. The sample size for the study consisted of 133 undergraduate students and 47 graduate students. Out of the total sample size there were 130 female participants and 50 male participants. Cultural categorization of the sample consisted of 84 white non-Hispanic, 15 African Americans, 34 Asians, 15 Caribbean, 4 Asian American and 19 Hispanics. The data was further categorized into international students, domestic students without an experience of international travel and domestic students with an experience of international travel. To assess the intercultural sensitivity among the students, intercultural sensitivity scale was used. Further means of assessments included the intercultural

developmental inventory and cross-cultural adaptability inventory. The results of the research indicated that the student population which has experienced an international travel tended to be more culturally sensitive than those who had not travelled abroad.

Triandis (2001) conducted a study to review the main findings concerning the personality traits and attributes among individualistic and collectivist cultures. Findings from this study indicated that individuals belonging to collectivist cultures are more likely to focus on in-group goals, more likely to associate themselves in groups and more likely to make situational attributions as compared to collectivist cultures who place a higher regard for personal goals and achievement.

Eap et al (2008) conducted a study to analyze the personality traits among individuals of various cultures. To examine the personality traits in a cross-cultural population, personality was assessed on a big 5 personality dimension. The sample size for the study consists of 320 Asian Americans and 240 Americans from Europe. The Asian and the European Americans usually follow the preexisting norms. However, more adaptability is observed in European Americans and highly refined Asian American men as compared to the less acculturated ones. Same is the case of the construct LOF. Conscious Asian American men are likely to show personality traits similar to European American men as compared to low Loss of Face (LOF) concerned

Asian American men. The Asian American men also differ significantly from European American men in conscientiousness, extraversion and openness, as well as neuroticism.

Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiketun and Smith (2003) conducted a research to assess rhetorical sensitivity to analyze and assess cross-cultural communication effectiveness among two distinct cultures. The two identifiable cultures for the respective research were of America and Thailand. The population for the research consisted of university students with 182 American students and 316 students from Thailand. Students were approached from Bangkok University and California State University. Results suggested American population to higher rhetorical sensitivity as compared to Thai students and thus higher intercultural communication and adaptability in cross-cultural settings.

Sarwari and Wahab (2017) suggested the importance of intercultural competence via their study on international post-graduate students, which aimed to assess the relationship between intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity and its effect on cross-cultural adaptability. The sample size for the research consisted of 108 post-graduate students from 17 African and Asian countries. The researcher used convenient sampling as their sampling technique and consulted participants from Malaysian public university. Out of total sample size, 63 students were pursuing Master's degree and 45 were enrolled in PhD program. Gender categorization

consisted of 83 males and 25 females. Instruments used in this research included Intercultural Communication Competence Questionnaire and Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. Findings suggested a significant relationship between intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity thus suggesting that individuals with higher levels of intercultural sensitivity tend to have better adaptability in cross-cultural settings.

1.6 Rationale

Intercultural sensitivity and exposure to various personality types tends to be a vital concern for students in mixed cultural environment. How they interact in a multicultural environment, the type of personality traits that they're exposed to and the sort of behavioral aspects that they encounter all seem to affect an individual when exposed to a different culture. This notion of receiving and understating of various personality and behavioral aspects of other individuals may vary for individuals in individualistic and collectivist cultures. The elements of intercultural sensitivity, personality traits and altruism all tend to be key factors for how an individual represents themselves in their own and other cultures. Several personal accounts suggest issues in adaptability by Pakistani students when they are in an intercultural atmosphere. However, when encountered with a foreigner in their own country, they may behave differently from what they wish to be treated like in another culture. The present study tended to seek significant differences among intercultural sensitivity, altruism and personality traits among individualistic and

collectivist cultures and how the identified variables tend to differ in the two cultures.

1.7 Objectives

To identify the personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness), altruism and intercultural sensitivity of undergraduate students belonging to individualistic and collectivistic cultures

1.8 Hypothesis

H1 There is a significant difference in the personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness), altruism and intercultural sensitivity of undergraduate students belonging to individualistic and collectivistic cultures

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research design

Cross-sectional design was used in the present research.

2.2 Sample and sampling strategy

The sample size consisted of $N=190$ undergraduate students from individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Cultural representation for collectivist culture included 95 Pakistani students whereas individualistic culture was represented through 95 students from United States. American undergraduate student population was consulted via Iowa State University ($n=46$), Montana State University ($n=23$) and Lake Forest College ($n=28$).

As far as the Pakistani population for the research was concerned, questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students of Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi comprising of Kinnaird College for

Women ($n=22$), Forman Christian College ($n=19$), Lahore University of Management Sciences ($n=29$), Bahria University ($n=12$) and Roots IVY ($n=11$). The sampling strategy used in the current research is purposive sampling.

2.2.1 Inclusion criteria

- Students currently enrolled in undergraduate study were included in the study
- Students having Pakistani or American nationalities were included in the study
- Type of the culture, either individualistic or collectivist was assessed using Cross-Cultural Orientation Scale.
- Nature of culture was also cross-checked via Hofstede & Minkov's reference of their book "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind", 3rd edition 2010.

2.2.2 Exclusion criteria

- Students not enrolled in undergraduate study were excluded from the current research

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Demographic Information Sheet

The demographic sheet required the respondents to list down the essential details of the participant. The demographic information comprised of gender, age, nationality, current country of residence, current level of educational qualification, year in college, name of institute and culture of the participant.

2.3.2 Cultural Orientation Scale (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998)

The culture orientation scale was devised by Triandis and Gelfand (1998). The questionnaire consists of 21 items which aim to measure four dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Responses are measured on a 9-point Likert Scale with 1 denoting as 'never' and 9 denoting as 'always'. Responses in each dimension are added separately to create a separate score for Vertical Individualism, Horizontal Individualism, Vertical Collectivism and Horizontal Collectivism. A high score on either of these dimensions signifies the culture of the respondent. As far as the coefficient reliabilities are concerned, H-I had the coefficient reliability of $r = 0.60$, H-C with reliability of $r = 0.68$, V-I with reliability coefficient of $r = 0.62$ and V-C with reliability coefficient of $r = 0.65$.

2.3.3 Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000)

The intercultural sensitivity scale is a questionnaire formulated by Chen and Starosta (2000) to analyze and assess cross-cultural attitudes and intercultural sensitivity. The scale consists of 24 items and is rated on a 5 point Likert scale with 1 denoted as strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree and 5 as strongly agree. Out of the 24 items, 9 items are reverse coded. A higher score on the intercultural sensitivity scale signifies higher intercultural sensitivity. The scale consists of 5 sub scales i.e. interaction engagement with a reliability coefficient of 0.518, respect for cultural differences having a reliability coefficient of 0.711, interaction enjoyment with a reliability coefficient of 0.691, interaction confidence

having the reliability coefficient of 0.624 and interaction attractiveness with a reliability coefficient of 0.351. Excluding the item 22 from the first sub scale results in a cronbach's coefficient value of $\alpha = 0.631$ which is regarded as acceptable than 0.518. The alpha coefficient can be increased by removing the item number 4 thus leaving the cronbach's coefficient as $\alpha = 0.679$. As far as the alpha coefficient for the fifth sub scale is conducted, it tends to be very low as it contains only three items (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

2.3.4 Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1998)

The big five inventory is a self-report inventory devised by John and Srivastava (1998). The personality test consists of 44 items and measures the 5 distinct personality traits of an individual namely Agreeableness, Extroversion, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Openness. The personality test is formulated in a way that it caters to the maximum population using easy vocabulary and short phrases, allowing easy access to individuals whose first language is not English.

The big five inventory uses a 5 point Likert scale where 5 is denoted as agree strongly and 1 as disagree strongly. The scale has an administration time of approximately 10 min. As far as the scoring of the scale is concerned, the big five inventory follows the reverse scoring rule.

2.3.5 Adapted Self-Report Altruism Scale (Witt & Boleman, 2009)

The adapted version of Altruism scale is a self-report measure formulated by Witt and Boleman

(2009). Consisting of 14 items, Altruism scale is devised on a five point Likert scale where 0 is denoted as never, 1 as once, 2 as more than once, 3 as often and 4 as very often used to assess the relevant intensions of an individual regarding their altruistic behavior. The target population for this scale is the youth. As far as the scoring of the scale is concerned, all item ratings are summed up together and the higher score indicates higher altruism.

As far as the reliability of the scale is concerned, Standards tend to range from 0.5 to 0.9 which depends on the context of the instrument and the intended use.

2.4 Procedure

Permission from the panel of designated teachers was taken followed by an approval from the respective institutions which were approached for data collection. Questionnaires for majority of the sample size were distributed via online forum i.e. Email and Google Forms. The respondents were required to mention their country of residence in the demographic details for recognition of their belonging to either individualistic or collectivist culture. After the collection of data, scores obtained on the scales were analyzed and assessed to make a proper comparative analysis.

3. Results

Reliability analysis for the scales used in the present research demonstrated varied levels of Cronbach alpha values. Cultural Orientation Scale illustrated strong reliability coefficient for each of its subscale. On the other hand, Intercultural

Sensitivity Scale and Adapted self-report Altruism Scale also demonstrated high reliability with Cronbach alpha value of ($\alpha = 0.84$) and ($\alpha=0.85$) respectively. As far as the reliability of Big Five Inventory was concerned, it's subscales demonstrated moderate reliability with Extraversion having Cronbach alpha value of ($\alpha= 0.62$), Agreeableness with Cronbach alpha value of ($\alpha= 0.60$) and conscientiousness with Cronbach alpha value of ($\alpha=0.65$), neuroticism ($\alpha= 0.62$) and openness to experience with Cronbach alpha value of ($\alpha =0.79$).

Independent sample *t* test was used to assess personality traits among undergraduate students suggesting various significance values for each subscale of Big Five Inventory. The calculated significance *p* value for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience was 0.00 which is smaller than $p<0.05$ suggesting a difference in all four variables among undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivist cultures. Mean values suggest that undergraduate students belonging to individualistic cultures have higher levels of extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience with lower levels of agreeableness as compared to students belonging to collectivistic cultures. As far as neuroticism was concerned, no significant difference was observed as the calculated *p* value for neuroticism was 0.49 which is greater than $p<0.05$ indicating no significant differences.

The calculated significance *p* value for altruism is 0.00 which is smaller than $p<0.05$ thus accepting

the alternate hypothesis and suggesting a difference in altruistic behavior among undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivist cultures. Mean values suggest significant differences with individualistic cultures obtaining a mean score of (M=37.56, SD=8.18) and collectivist cultures having the mean score of (M=31.38, SD= 9.98) indicating that undergraduate students belonging to individualistic cultures tend to exhibit higher levels of altruistic behaviors as compared to undergraduate students of collectivistic cultures. Results derived from applying independent sample *t* test indicate that the calculated *p* value for intercultural sensitivity is *p*= 0.00 which is

less than 0.05 suggesting a significant difference in the intercultural sensitivity of undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivist cultures. Mean differences among the two populations indicate individualistic population to obtain a mean score of (M=98.53, 8.91) and collectivist population having mean score of (M=95.00, SD=7.96). This suggests that undergraduate students belonging to individualistic cultures tend to have higher intercultural sensitivity as compared to undergraduate students belonging to collectivist cultures.

Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Undergraduate Students

Variables	Individualistic Culture	Collectivist Culture		Total
	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Age				20.75(1.53)
18	5(5.3%)	4(4.2%)	9(4.7%)	
19	19(20%)	9(9.5%)	28(14.7%)	
20	31(32.6%)	24(25.3%)	55(28.9%)	
21	22(23.2%)	22(23.2%)	44(23.2%)	
22	13(13.7%)	18(18.9%)	31(16.3%)	
23	3(3.2%)	9(9.5%)	12(6.3%)	
24	1(1.1%)	6(6.3%)	7(3.7%)	
25	1(1.1%)	3(3.2%)	4(2.1%)	
Gender				
Male	51(53.7%)	44(46.3%)	95(50%)	
Female	44(46.3%)	51(53.7%)	95(50%)	
Nationality				
Pakistani		95(50%)	95(50%)	

American	95(50%)		95(50%)
Culture			
Individualistic	95(50%)		95(50%)
Collectivistic		95(50%)	95(50%)
Education			
Undergraduate	95(50%)	95(50%)	190(100%)
Name of Institute			
Kinnaird College for Women		22(11.6%)	22(11.6%)
LUMS		29(15.3%)	29(15.3%)
Bahria University		12(6.3%)	12(6.3%)
Roots IVY		11(5.3%)	11(5.3%)
FCC		19(10.0%)	19(10.0%)
Montana State University	23(12.1%)		23(12.1%)
Iowa State University	46(24.2%)		46(24.2%)
Lake Forest College	28(14.7%)		28(14.7%)

Note: N=190, Pakistani = 95, American = 95; LUMS=Lahore University of Management Sciences, FCC= Forman Christian College

Table 3.2 Psychometric Properties of Major Study Variables in the Sample

Variables	<i>K</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	Skewness	
Subscales of COS	1.Horizontal individualism	5	34.80	7.14	0.81	-1.40
	2.Vertical individualism	8	43.11	10.71	0.78	0.00
	3.Horizontal collectivism	8	55.07	10.82	0.87	-1.26
	4.Vertical collectivism	6	38.17	9.55	0.85	-0.80
	5.Intercultural Sensitivity	24	96.76	8.61	0.84	0.22
Subscales of BFI	6.Altruism	14	34.47	9.61	0.85	-0.07
	7.Extraversion	8	30.01	3.68	0.62	0.27
	8.Agreeableness	9	36.53	3.00	0.60	-0.50
	9.Conscientiousness	9	36.42	3.58	0.65	-0.12
	10. Neuroticism	8	29.38	4.24	0.62	0.04
	11. Openness	10	39.12	5.33	0.79	-0.21

Note. *k* = No of items, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *α* = Cronbach's alpha BFI = Big Five Inventory, COS= Cultural Orientation Scale

Table 3.3 Shows the Mean (Mean), Standard Deviation (SD), Degree of Freedom (df), Independent Sample t Test Score and Significance Value (p) of Personality Traits, Intercultural Sensitivity and Altruism among Undergraduate Students of Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures (N=190, 95 Individualistic Culture and 95 Collectivistic Cultures)

Variable	Individualistic culture		Collectivist culture		t(df)	p	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Extraversion	31.45	3.56	28.56	3.22	5.84(188)	0.00	1.91	3.85
Agreeableness	35.94	3.10	37.11	2.80	-2.72(188)	0.00	-2.01	-0.32
Conscientiousness	37.15	2.58	35.69	3.44	2.86(188)	0.00	0.45	2.46
Neuroticism	29.64	4.12	29.12	4.36	0.83(188)	0.40	-0.69	1.73
Openness to experience	40.34	4.90	37.57	4.66	3.98(188)	0.00	1.39	4.13
Intercultural sensitivity	98.53	8.91	95.00	7.96	2.88(188)	0.00	1.11	5.95
Altruism	37.56	8.18	31.38	9.98	4.66(188)	0.00	3.56	8.79

Subscales of BFI

Note. M= Mean, SD = Standard deviation, df= Degree of freedom, LL= Lower Limit, UL= Upper Limit, CI= Confidence interval, p* < 0.05

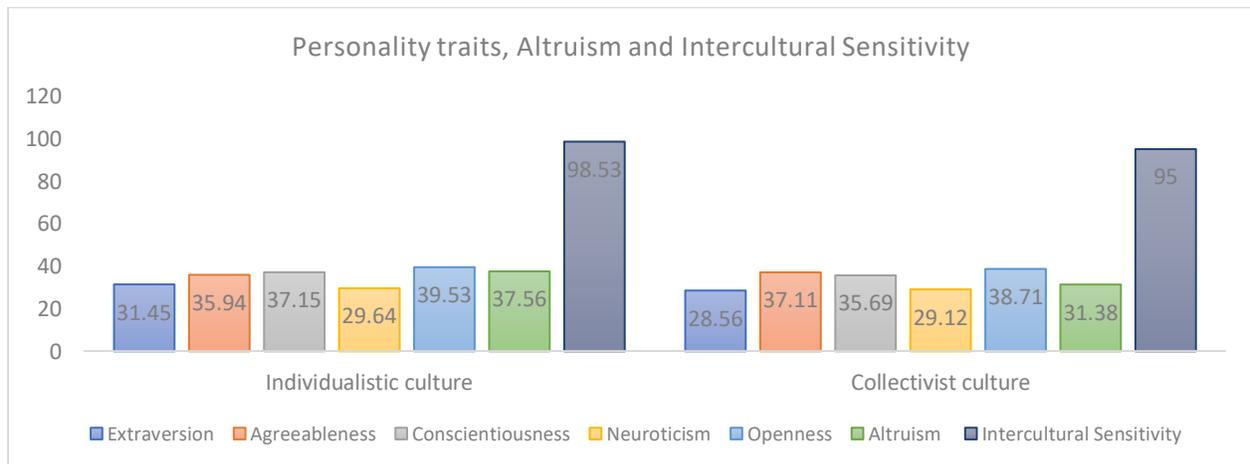


Figure 3.1 Shows the differences in personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness), altruism and intercultural sensitivity among undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivistic cultures

3. Discussion

Significant differences were found in personality traits among undergraduate students of individualistic and collectivist cultures. Personality was measured on a Big Five personality dimension, results of which indicated significant differences in extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience with p values for all traits less than $p > 0.05$. Neuroticism however, tended to be same among the two cultures. Eap et al (2008) conducted a study to identify personality traits in two distinct ethnic groups via Big Five personality dimension which undertook 240 European Americans and 320 Asian Americans. Findings indicated Asian Americans to have lower scores on extraversion as compared to European Americans. These findings were consistent with another study conducted on Chinese population which indicated Chinese to have relatively lower scores on extraversion as compared to American students (Yung, 1986). Such findings depict consistency with present research which suggests Pakistani students to have lower levels of extraversion as compared to American students.

In the research conducted by Eap et al (2008) Asian Americans tended to exhibit higher levels of agreeableness which indicated their need to conform to their in-groups which tended to be consistent with present research indicating Pakistani students to have relatively higher levels

of agreeableness as compared to American undergraduate students. Such a difference stems from the cultural value placed on collectivist culture.

Neuroticism tended to be same across two populations which suggests equal levels of vulnerabilities to psychotic behavior by both populations. This can be suggested by varied levels of stressors in both Pakistani and American communities and similar levels of ability to counter those stressors.

As far as openness is concerned, American students tend to have higher opportunities and exposures as compared to Pakistani students. Ep et al (2008) suggested European Americans to have higher levels of openness to experience as compared to Asian Americans which can be explained by individualistic cultures' higher need and desire to explore and gain exposure.

Furthermore, Conscientiousness, as studied in the present research tended to be higher in American student population denoting individualistic cultures to have higher levels of conscientiousness. These findings were consistent with Ep *et al's* research which suggested European Americans to exhibit higher levels of conscientiousness as compared to Asian Americans (Ep *et al*, 2008). The present research signifies the impact of culture on personality and how personality traits vary across cultures. The reason for such a difference mostly stems from

the emphasis on value, needs and goals placed in within-group members limiting exposure to out-groups.

A common conception revolves around the ideology that collectivistic cultures tend to be more altruistic than individualistic cultures (Yablo & Field, 2007). This ideology stems from the concept of collectivist cultures placing a higher value and emphasis on the facilitation of in-group activities, goals, values and needs. However, the current study contradicts these findings and suggests individualistic cultures to be more altruistic as compared to collectivistic cultures.

The construct of Altruism can be defined in terms of provision of help to members of in-group and provision of help to out-group (mainly consisting of individuals not known to self). The instrument used in the present research to assess altruism, called Adapted Self Report Altruism Scale assesses an individual's desire and ability to help those not known to the self. This conception of helping someone not known to the self tends to be familiar with among individualistic cultures as they tend to be more charitable than collectivist cultures. However, altruism towards members of in-group tends to be higher in collectivist cultures. Yablo & Field (2007) conducted a research on American and Thai students in order to assess their altruistic behavior. The results suggested Thai students to have higher altruistic values as compared to American students.

However, their reasons for such behaviors include religious aspirations and the need to conform to in-group needs and values, elements that do not necessarily contribute to provision of help to strangers.

The ideology of Individualistic cultures being more altruistic than collectivist can be explained via the concept of altruism that related to provision of help to those unknown to the self. Finkelstein (2011) postulated a research to assess volunteering and charitable behavior in individualistic and collectivist culture, the results of the study did not formally indicate which culture was more prone to volunteer, however it did put forward an important notion that both individualist and collectivist cultures have their own reasons, motives and perceptions regarding deliverance of help to others with collectivist cultures relating helping behavior to personal responsibility and social support group whereas individualistic cultures relating altruism as a means of participation in political and social activism.

According to Charity Aid Foundation, countries that have provided with maximum charitable funds include world's top individualistic countries. According to Hofstede's ranking of individualism, America tends to have the highest individualism score followed by Australia and Canada (Hofstede, 2001). Charity Aid foundation suggested America to be second most generous in providing charity, funds and volunteering

followed by Australia and New Zealand (CAF, 2016). One may assume that charity has to do with wealth. However, it is not entirely true as wealth does not explain the helping behavior towards strangers on a regular basis. It is not to state that collectivist cultures are less altruistic, they do hold inclination towards helping others but their inclination is mostly directed and focused towards helping members of the in-group. According to Charity Aid Foundation, China, a collectivist country was ranked 140 on world giving index (CAF, 2016). These findings support the results obtained in the present research which suggested American students to be more altruistic than Pakistani students.

Chen and Starosta (2002) devised an Intercultural Sensitivity Scale in an attempt to assess the intercultural sensitivity of individuals. Individuals who tend to have higher levels of exposures, are more open-minded and friendly are generally considered to be more culturally sensitive than those with limited exposure. Penbek, Sahin and Cerit (2012) conducted a study on students to assess their intercultural sensitivity, results of which indicated that students who possess higher levels of exposure either in form of travel abroad or other forms of exposure were more likely to be culturally sensitive than those with limited exposure. Moreover, international interaction tended to exhibit higher respect for diverse groups which also resulted in easy adaptability in diverse settings. These findings are consistent with a

research conducted by McMurray (2007) who assessed intercultural sensitivity between international students, domestic students who had prior travel abroad experience and domestic students those who did not.

Results of the study indicated that the student population which has experienced an international travel tended to be more culturally sensitive than those who had not travelled abroad. These findings do not state that traveling abroad makes an individual culturally sensitive but suggest that acquiring exposure and mixing with a cross-cultural environment tends to increase an individual's ability to adapt in cross-cultural settings.

The present study undertook Pakistani and American undergraduate students as representations of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Findings suggested American undergraduate students to be more interculturally sensitive as compared to Pakistani students. Significant reasons for such a difference can be explained by the way Pakistani and American students are brought up and the extent to which they interact in cross-cultural settings. Speaking of within country cross-cultural mix-up, Pakistan has a limited number of cultures for individuals to mix-up with, which mainly include Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Kashmiri and Pathans. Moreover, there are several Pakistani students who travel abroad for either educational or entertainment purposes. Internal and external

mix-up of Pakistani individuals gives them an opportunity to assess how well they can adapt to diverse surroundings.

Current research suggested that Pakistani students tend to have a tough time in adjusting and adapting to diverse cross-cultural settings signifying lower intercultural sensitivity. Americans on the other hand displayed higher level of intercultural sensitivity suggesting easy adaptability and adjustment in a cross-cultural setting and with cross-cultural groups. Reasons for easy adaptability among American students may stem from rich cross-cultural groups in their home country. Cultural make-up of American society consists of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds such as White Americans, Arab Americans, Latino and Hispanic Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, European Americans, Cuban Americans, Asian Americans and African Americans. The wide range of ethnic make-up provides rich cultural makeup of the country enabling maximum of the American citizens to be exposed to cross-cultural groups thus increasing their intercultural sensitivity. Society consists of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds such as White Americans, Arab Americans, Latino and Hispanic Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, European Americans, Cuban Americans, Asian Americans and African Americans. The wide range of ethnic make-up provides rich cultural makeup of the country enabling maximum of the American

citizens to be exposed to cross-cultural groups thus increasing their intercultural sensitivity.

4. Conclusion

The present research suggests that collectivist cultures have lower intercultural sensitivity as compared to individualistic cultures. Reasons for such differences mainly include the cultural values and the need and value placed on in-group and out-group. Altruism also tended to be different in this respective cross-cultural population with American students having higher altruistic behavior as compared to Pakistani students. Last but not the least, personality traits tended to be somewhat different among the two cultures with different levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness whereas neuroticism tended to be same in both the cultures.

5. Limitations

- The present research undertook undergraduate students decreasing its ability to be generalized to other student populations such as post-graduate and school-going students limiting the variation in age construct.
- The current research employed a single cross-group comparison comprising of two nationalities namely Pakistani and Americans, lowering the ability of results to be generalized to students belonging to other nationalities and lowering external validity.

- The length of the entire survey was long, containing a total of 105 items which resulted in monotonous responses at the end of the questionnaire while some respondents had left the last 5-10 items incomplete. Several questionnaires had to be discarded because of this reason.

6. Recommendation

- For further researches, more countries should be included in the individualistic/collectivistic paradigm.
- Respective variables used in the present research should be assessed in Pakistani population alongside other individualistic cultures such as Australia and Canada.
- An examination of relationship between genders in respect to the outlined variables should also be done in future studies.
- The present research should be replicated in work-place settings.
- Sampling international students from each country can provide greater value to heterogeneity in groups and could make the sample more representatives of various countries around the globe.

7. Strengths

- The sample for the present research was taken from three cities from each country i.e. Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi from Pakistan and Iowa, Montana and Illinois from America thus increasing the chances of

results to be generalized to the respective country.

- The research paved its way in presenting cross-cultural comparison and analysis.

8. Implications

The present research gives an outlook for future implications suggesting the dire need for collectivist cultures especially Pakistani students to attain and develop adaptability towards other cultures. Results obtained via this research suggested Pakistani students to have lower intercultural sensitivity as compared to American undergraduate students. To overcome this dilemma, individuals from a younger age should be taught and encouraged to mix and dwell with out-groups, seek challenges, befriend individuals with different backgrounds and attain cross-cultural knowledge.

Moreover, modifications and amendments should be made on an educational level with frequent workshops and seminars, regarding adaptation to diverse cultures and improving one's capability to adapt and adjust in varied diverse settings. Educational institutions in Pakistan should fund and encourage study abroad trips like summer schools and semester exchange programs to increase intercultural sensitivity and communication and competence among Pakistani students. Lastly, the present research gives opportunities to future researchers to replicate findings and to conduct research between Pakistani students and International students; spreading awareness to the masses regarding the

similarities and differences that exist within Pakistani and international communities. The present research also signifies and refines cross-cultural dilemmas of Pakistan and paves the way for future researchers to study inter-cultural interactions and behaviors of Pakistani population with other populations. Moreover, this study tends to spread cross-cultural empirical research to suggest latest findings that coincide with progressive theoretical development in cross-cultural phenomena.

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