

From Pandemic Control to Explore Collectivism in China

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Abstract:

Covid-19 outbreak caused unexpected repercussion in the world. In the beginning, all people are placed passively due to the complete novelty of the endemic. Panic feelings enclose the world while after a heft of measures adopted by the government, the disaster present a positive phenomenon but still a ghost glooming the world humans. The paper opts to exclusively explore collectivism in China through incorporating satisfactory pandemic control effects compared to some out-of-control western countries. However, if we investigate the original root cause of such different results, it is easily to capture the cultural difference and its traditional embedment. Furthermore, although China's forefathers put forward collectivism in an obscure method. The collectivism custom takes its root in generations' blood. Triandis (1995) based on Hofstede cultural dimensions further made partition of individualism as well as collectivism formed as horizontal and vertical. The article attempts to two types collectivism in among Chinese youth and middle aged persons as they have forming stable value system but also easily connecting with the changing information world. The essay makes conclusion that Chinese people are transferring to horizontal collectivism but vertical collectivism plays a larger role in pandemic control. Therefore, our writing can be labeled as a reference for cultural construction if emergent events arrive.

Keywords:

Collectivism, Covid-19, Horizontal and Vertical, Cultural Dimensions

1. Introduction

Culture is a fuzzy construct. If we are to understand the way culture relates to social psychological phenomenon, we must analyze it by determining dimensions of cultural variation. One of the most promising such dimensions is individualism-collectivism [36]. Cultural complexity is all probability related to individualism-collectivism by a U-shaped function [24]. At higher levels of complexity (e.g., the Romans, Aztecs, Chinese) collectivism is very high. Collectivism can be defined as (1) concern by a person about the effects of actions or directions on others, (2) sharing of material benefits, (3) sharing of nonmaterial resources, (4) willingness of the person to accept the opinions and views of others, (5) concern about self-presentation and loss of face,

(6) belief in the correspondence of own outcomes with the outcomes of others, and (7) feeling of involvement in and contribution to the lives of others [16]. Benevolence, righteousness, manners, wisdom, and credit proposed in Confucianism in ancient times still play a vital role in balancing the relationship between individual and group. In China's ancient feudal society's thinking, self-cultivation, a well-managed family, and the ability to administer the state and to bring peace to the nation, also leads our Chinese people to transfer from individuals to groups and incorporate selves into larger groups, and integrate our small families with our common country. Finally, our Chinese people are willing to sacrifice ourselves for the growth of our country.

However, collectivism is in line with Chinese population, as the involvement of our nation, our traditional value is renewed through embracing essence of other thoughts. It can be assumed that our common value will develop with times. In contrast with western countries, their inner-directedness is clearly mastered by their resentment of conformity while Chinese situation-centered way of life, which emphasizes interdependence. Triandis [34] put forward that collectivism can be further divided into horizontal (pay attention to equality and realism) and vertical (more concentrated and traditional). A host of researchers had conducted various studies on how our collectivism cultural dimension influences many aspects whereas reports on more specific collectivism segmentation only account for a minimal percentage. The paper intends to investigate the collectivism dimension types based on questionnaire [32] aiming to find out what kind of cultural condition Chinese people are situating and probe into how such cultural state impose effects on the efficacy of our country's endemic control.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Researches on Collectivism Abroad

Four cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede: power of distance, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and femininity, and uncertainty avoidance [10]. Collectivism, as a societal, not an individual characteristic, is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. The individualism and collectivism constructs are theoretically analyzed and linked to certain hypothesized consequences (social behaviors, health indices) [36]. Values is people's conceptions of the goals that serves as guiding principles in their lives [28] and value differ in importance, transcend specific situations, and express the interests of individuals and of collectivities [29]. The effects of collectivism on the acceptance or rejection of reformist policies and practices among Chinese workers appears clearly to depend on the type of collectivism, vertical collectivism evidently facilitates reform sentiments, whereas horizontal collectivism works against them [3]. Horizontal collectivists have some common characteristics such as seeking for interdependence and democracy [11], while sacrificing and submitting are some of the more destructive features of vertical collectivists [25]. Horizontal collectivists perceive all the members of a group as equal and they consider the well-being of the group while not feeling subordinate to that group. In contrast, vertical collectivists are willing to accept inequality and hierarchy within a group; they submit to the group norms and even sacrifice their personal identities for the sake of that group [11]. Therefore, vertical collectivists are more willing to sacrifice their individual interests for group's development if nomophobic rules are enacted [2]. Vertical collectivism shows positive effects on modesty and those people also more willing to accept self-criticism which further

promote self-enhancement [19]. Collectivists (horizontal and vertical) seemed more likely to sacrifice personal needs for the sake of the group and preferred an integrating style. Further, horizontal collectivists were more likely to prefer an obliging style and vertical collectivists an avoiding style of conflict management [19]. In collectivist cultures, people think of themselves as parts of their collectives and in most situations subordinate their personal goals to those of their collectives [35]. People selectively form their personal characteristics, communication styles, and preferences from both individualistic and collectivistic cognitive structures under different situations [36]. Cultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism are related with social capital, research has found that individualism shows significantly positive effects on social capital [1]. Cultural dimensions report various impact on human behavior, health etc. with the advancement of technology, studies should also be situated in information era. People in different cultural dimensions show diverse attitude toward the web communication [20]. Idiocentrism and allocentrism were adopted in order to account for personality shaping under the influence of horizontal and vertical individualism or collectivism [37]. People in collectivism cultures regard themselves as interdependent with their groups so their personality is flexible [34]. The vertical dimension is related to power and achievement values which is more important for men, the horizontal dimension is related to universalism and benevolence which is more important for women, vertical collectivism had a positive influence on heritage acculturation for men but not for women, while horizontal collectivism had a stronger influence on heritage acculturation for women than men [43]. Among the Chinese residing in mainland China, national cultural values greatly influence consumer behavior [12]. Such a collectivist orientation is greatly followed by norms and obligations, with an emphasis on group collaboration even when individual interests are unclear [27]. Cultural dimensions have invisible effects on Chinese people's behavior such as favoring heavily-loaded restaurant since they take that great patronage means sound quality and establishment [38]. In particular, consumers show cultural differences in the degree to which they feel responsible for others, and accordingly their expectations for others' behavior toward them, including the behavior of service providers [30]. Emotional and behavioral reactions, psychological maladjustment to infectious diseases, epidemics, and lockdown, might be related to cultural factors. Some of the most important cultural factors are individualism and collectivism, which also affect individual's response to disease risks [8]. The study found that for collectivistic emerging adults, at the moment the social environment is stable and they have to respect duties and obligations, therefore they have to change their own self. In other words, they are more prepared to fit into the environmental changes linked to COVID-19.

In summary, a number of scholars dedicated to explore cultural emphasis of collectivism or individualism, on the other hand, other scholars pay attention to cultural thinking patterns' impact on social behavior and response, etc. Moreover, collectivism specification sports more dimensional researches from the perspective of culture dimensions study. China, a traditional collectivism nation, has been researched just from the general view of collectivism by previous studies, few have probed into its deep segments.

2.2. Researches on Collectivism at Home

Vertical collectivism of female is lower than male and with the increasing of age, the degree of it also elevate accordingly [14]. Yang [40] made research on the tie

between cultural dimensions and employees' trust. The study showed that collectivism and individualism are not two poles in one dimension proposed by Hofstede but a synthesized entirety which can be further diverged in consistent with Triandis' theory. His article also summed up that vertical collectivism makes the most significant contribution to trust. Collectivism is connected with forgiveness for collectivists are prone to maintain group harmony and keep selves' and others' dignity so collectivism's impact on forgiveness model in psychological field need much attention [43]. Liu et al. [23] reported that four preferences show little relevance with collectivism or individualism but present close relations with age and uncertainty avoidance. The research describes the role of collectivism in Chinese management and develops the proposition that collectivism leads to a strong perception in Chinese cultural context [21]. Besides, collectivism cooperating with human's fear which both show positive relation with pandemic preventive intension [13]. Our traditional culture put great emphasis on the same structure of the clan and country and Chinese people also incorporate the "family-country" into individual development principles [7]. Collectivism overlaps with Zhongyong thought since the group-oriented collectivism is intrinsic mediation between individual and group of Zhongyong [6]. Keeping silence in a corporation shows negative relation with collectivism and positively related with individual traditionality from which leader-member relation acts as a moderator [4]. Liu et al. [22] have examined that collective culture in companies will activate employees' innovative information sharing in IT field while power distance enhancement works as barriers of innovation in term of questionnaires processing. [5] concluded that high team efficacy exerts positive influence on team performance and if the collectivism culture constructed in teams such relationship will also be strengthened. The study provides implications for corporations' management. Ye [41] explored Chinese youth in contemporary times who have transformed from vertical collectivist to horizontal collectivists which put great emphasis on mutual equality and realism based on Triandis separation of collectivism. The author proposed that collectivism is the spirit of participation so collectivism can be rooted in the course of joining others. Therefore, modern youth are encouraged to take part in activities which is conducive to individual and common growth in order to practice collectivism value and integrate oneself with larger groups. As the wave of information technology in modern times, people become more anxious of privacy security. Sun [33] investigated collectivism tendency, Weibo platform trust, and self-efficacy are significant factor of privacy paradox behavior. Wang [37] provides insight into critical discourse analysis in People's Daily reports about pandemic. This study arrived at conclusion that anti-epidemic report discourse system highlights values of people-orientation, collectivism-based factual construction, emotional recognition based on national integration, and discourse maintenance based on global vision.

In domestic study, cultural practical embodiment has been investigated such as management, trust, silence, etc. Under the circumstance of pandemic gloom, a heft of researchers transfer their attention to cultural aspects to find out deep causes leading to complete results of epidemic control measures and various rules establishment.

3. Research Procedure

Our research attempts to show insights into how cultural dimension collectivism in China exerts its impact on emergency control effects. Besides, the paper also intends to explore what king of collectivism type we are residing and which kind of

collectivism segment show the most effective correlation with epidemic control. The article is scheduled to conduct survey in terms of literature analysis and questionnaire to present how Chinese culture affects emergency response. Our main target audience is youth who mainly engage in learning since they are in a stable state in value forming.

3.1. Participants and Procedures

Our questionnaire from Triandis et al. [37] individualism and collectivism scale (INDCOL) has been proved that the scale also has good validity in China [15] and Germani et al. [8] measures of perceived knowledge, worries and concerns about COVID-19. The overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.770 which adds reliability for the questionnaire. Our survey mainly focused on the youth and sampled 100 questionnaires as our investigation data. The basic information of participants are illustrated in the following Table 1.

Table 1. The basic information of our participants.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	MD	SD
Gender	100	1.00	2.00	1.48	.50
Age	100	-2.00	6.00	1.42	1.07
Education	100	1.00	5.00	3.98	1.14
Occupation	100	1.00	2.00	1.37	.48

[Gender: 1 represents male, 2 female; Age: 1 (20-25), 2 (26-30), 3(31-35), 4(36-40), 5(41-45), 6(46-50); Education: 1(middle school and below), 2 (high school), 3(Junior college), 4(Bachelor degree), 5(Master and above); Occupation: 1(student), 2 (worker)]

As is shown in Table 1, the number of male accounts up 52 percent higher than female 48 percent. The age mainly situated in 20-25 and 26-30 and most of them are students in master and above period.

3.2. Measures

In investigating the cultural dimensions in our target audience, we defined five-point scale (from 1 "completely disagree" to 5 "completely agree") to identify their cultural orientation. Confidence towards out fighting against the epidemic in China: participants are required to score on a four-point scale (from 1 "completely disagreeable" to 4 "completely agreeable")

3.3. Data Analysis

The correlations among gender, horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism are analyzed by Pearson correlation analysis SPSS 26, from which gender, HC, and VC, P value is over 0.05 arrived at .456 and .459. However, HC and VC present significantly close tie since P value is .000. At the same time, we tested the which cultural dimension is in higher position. From our exploration, modern youth are inclined to horizontal collectivism as they put emphasis on equity and realism, which may be attributed to incessant pace of modern technological development. Besides, men own higher cognition of collectivism irrespective of horizontal and collectivism, MD value is at 3.86 and 3.79 higher than females' 3.84 and 3.76. In addition, the overall collectivism arrives at 3.85 of HC and 3.78 of VC. Therefore, it is clearly seen that Chinese people take collectivism as an important guideline.

4. Results

As illustrated in Table 2, it could be concluded that gender is irrelevant with HC and VC, which is different with previous studies [17,39,42,43]. However, people in China all present a high degree of collectivism orientation. Furthermore, the paper gives insights that there is remarkable correlation between horizontal and vertical collectivism as the significant value stands at .000 which means close ties between two factors.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation analysis.

		HC	VC
Gender	R	.075	.068
	Sig.	.456	.499
Horizontal collectivism	R	1	.692**
	Sig.		.000

***. P < 0.01. significant correlation*

Mean score analysis provide evidence that modern Chinese middle aged and young man are inclined to horizontal collectivism compared to vertical collectivism. The mean score of HC is higher than VC in male and female groups, and males' collectivism orientation is higher than females' in overall degree. it can come to summary that although collectivism segment has little relations since all of whom tend to own relatively high degree of collectivism whereas, the mean score tells us that Chinese men possess higher level of collectivism. (Table 3)

Table 3. M analysis.

Gender		HC	VC
M	MD	3.86	3.79
	CASES	52	52
	SD	.53	.53
F	MD	3.84	3.76
	CASES	48	48
	SD	.58	.60
T	MD	3.85	3.78
	CASES	100	100
	SD	.56	.57

In ANOVA analysis, the significant value proved that at least one of collectivism dimensions has close connections with anti-pandemic confidence which can be horizontal collectivism or vertical collectivism. In order to further analyze which model influence pandemic control more effectively, the following coefficient value clearly answers the question. (Table 4)

Table 4. ANOVA analysis.

ANOVA ^a					
Model	SS	df	MS	F	sig
regression	3.96	2.00	1.98	8.91	.000 ^b
residuals	21.55	97.00	0.22		
Total	25.50	99.00			
a. DV : anti-pandemic					
b. PV : VC, HC					

The linear regression analysis' coefficient adds that HC is closely related with anti-pandemic confidence, $P=.002 < 0.05$, and further regression coefficient B is 0.370,

which shows that if HC is elevated by 1 degree, the anti-pandemic confidence will enhance 0.37 degree. while vertical collectivism in our experiment shows little casual relations with confidence degree. In addition, both VIF value is less than 5 which means that our regression model is stable and reliable. (Table 5)

Table 5. Coefficient analysis.

model		Coefficient ^a			t	Sig.	Multicollinearit	
		USRC		SRC			Tolerance	VIF
		B	SE	Beta				
1	(constant)	1.959	.354		5.540	.000		
	HC	.370	.118	.406	3.141	.002	.522	1.917
	VC	-.016	.116	-.018	-.136	.892	.522	1.917
a. dependent variable: PC								

5. Discussion

Collectivism has been a hot issue since Hofstede [10] first put forward four cultural dimensions in corporation managerial situation. Triandis et al. [37] further specified collectivism and individualism based on Hofstede' cultural dimensions. In China, the integrated community tradition between individual family and country has been rooted for thousand years. Therefore, it is much easier to coordinate people from all works of life to the frontline or adhere to the established rules. It could come to the summary that horizontal collectivism presides more important positions in modern China which demonstrates close tie with anti-pandemic control confidence as well. Gokmen et al. [9], from cultural dimensions to explore their impacts on pandemic infection, proved that individualism is significant to epidemic infection number and collectivism is conducive to pandemic control system. Rajkumar [26], investigating individualism and collectivism's influence on pandemic infection and mortality rates, concluded that individualism poses negative effects on disease control and on the contrary, collectivism positively exerts influence on control of epidemic. ShekriLadze et al. [31] probed into anxiety during the outbreak of pandemic is mediated by cultural orientations individualism and collectivism in which collectivism predicts all coping style in the course of pandemic outbreak. The paper also aims to discuss the rooted cause of different control style and fruits under various cultural orientation. Specifically, the article give priority to explore different dimensions of collectivism as China is traditionally regarded as a country with a high degree of collectivism. After a raft of data analysis, it can be concluded that modern Chinese people tend to prioritize horizontal collectivism as an invisible guideline in decision. Furthermore, Chinese men possess higher degree of collectivism than women. Cultural dimensions make a significant difference to groups' behavior and response to emergent events. Henceforth, it is of great importance to foster a sense of collectivism when emergencies happen. The paper is not to give any partial judgement to cultural dimensions and it only aims to explore how China's cultural orientation impacts its pandemic control since China with such a large population has effectively place pandemic under control and is committed to put its people at the first place.

6. Conclusions

The paper has provided clear analysis of collectivism cultural dimension and arrived at the conclusion that modern Chinese people put priority on horizontal collectivism which is different from traditional ones. Horizontal collectivism is in higher level than vertical collectivism in China and men's collectivism orientation

also exceeds women's. Horizontal collectivism contributes to the control of pandemic and people's confidence of its control since people with HC will emphasize solidarity and unity. Therefore, it is of great significance to the coordination of personnel under the response to the control measures. It also revealed that our national cultural dimensions are also renewed with the wave of information age. Although the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 brings tremendous disaster to our modern development including manufacturing, service, education, and other kinds of industries, the general condition has been placed at a sound level since almost various fields have been restored generally, and new forms of education shows enormous energy under the nations' common efforts. China, with a long history, presents remarkable difference from western countries as history value entitle the country unique cultural values. Therefore, it is unavoidable that some measures adopted in China are criticized in many overseas reports. However, it is necessary to expose our culture value to the international stage in order to acquire understanding to some extent. Under the wave of globalization, showing our cultural values and justifying our measures in the face of emergencies are of much concern among modern Chinese men. There are still some limitations in this paper, the paper is in need to survey a broader range of age to find out whether collectivism dimensions differ in wider-age groups. Meanwhile, the paper's data collection is limited to a small number. However, the article still provides scientific data analysis after a series of data collection procedures. The essay works to offer suggestions for future researches and acts as a reference for academic studies. The paper gives reasonable justification for explaining China's effective control measures in the process of pandemic outbreak. In the end, the article calls for more academic workers to provide more decisive insights to China's cultural roots so as to enhance soft power of China which in turn will reduce cultural defame to some extent. It is of great emergence to foster groups of new era persons to tell the world a real China and establish an objective role in international stage.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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