

мотивацию из-за отсутствия стабильности, что затрудняет достижение личных и профессиональных целей. Следовательно, современные организации должны применять гибкие методы управления, внедрять адаптивные подходы и поддерживать эмоциональное состояние сотрудников для повышения мотивации и устойчивости в условиях неопределенности.

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INVESTIGATING INDIVIDUALISTIC-COLLECTIVISTIC ORIENTATIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN MALAYSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN

ABSTRACT

This study explores the individualistic-collectivistic orientations among university employees in a selected public university in Malaysia and Kazakhstan, examining horizontal and vertical dimensions of cultural preferences. Utilizing an independent groups t-test methodology, the research surveyed 62 employees (31 from each country) to analyse their cultural orientation tendencies. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in horizontal and vertical collectivism, with Malaysian respondents demonstrating higher horizontal collectivism ($t=2.05$, $p=0.045$) and significantly higher vertical collectivism ($t=5.74$, $p=0.000$) compared to their Kazakhstani counterparts. In contrast, horizontal and vertical individualism showed no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Marginally, Kazakhstani participants exhibited slightly higher mean scores in both horizontal (5.2225 vs. 5.0988) and vertical (3.8488 vs. 3.7013) individualism dimensions. Through the examination of cultural orientation patterns in Malaysia and Kazakhstan, the study offers transformative strategies for multinational educational institutions to develop more nuanced, culturally intelligent organizational structures that enhance cross-cultural communication and respect intricate cultural nuances, thereby improving institutional effectiveness and employee engagement. Even though the study's primary strength lies in its comparative cross-cultural design, its limited sample size ($N=62$) and focus on two specific public higher education institutions represent notable limitations, suggesting the need for broader, more comprehensive research to generalize findings across diverse cultural contexts.

Keywords: Individualism, Collectivism, Cross-Cultural Studies, Higher Education, Organizational Behaviour

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 32-year diplomatic relationship between Malaysia and Kazakhstan represents a unique opportunity to examine workplace cultural dynamics in two strategically aligned yet culturally distinct Asian nations. While their bilateral relationship has predominantly focused on economic cooperation, reaching \$121 million in trade by 2022 [1], understanding the deeper cultural orientations within their institutional frameworks, particularly in higher education contexts, becomes increasingly crucial for strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Since Hofstede's [2] seminal work on cultural dimensions, research has evolved to recognize that workplace behaviour stems from both vertical and horizontal aspects of individualism and collectivism, transcending simple East-West comparisons. This understanding becomes particularly relevant as Malaysia positions itself as a global education hub, with initiatives aimed at attracting 250,000 international students by 2025 [3]. The strengthening of academic ties between Malaysia and Kazakhstan has gained significant momentum, with Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) actively pursuing partnerships with Kazakhstani universities to facilitate student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives, and collaborative academic programs [4]. These efforts are further enhanced by Malaysia's commitment to providing affordable, high-quality education opportunities for Kazakhstani students and the establishment of mutual qualification recognition agreements between the two nations. The recent memorandum of understanding between EMGS and the Conference of Rectors of Higher Educational Institutions of Kazakhstan further emphasizes the need for understanding cultural dynamics in academic settings, as it aims to facilitate greater mobility of students and academics between the two countries [4].

The rationale for comparing these two nations extends beyond their growing diplomatic ties and encompasses the evolving landscape of international higher education collaboration. While previous research has predominantly reflected Western theoretical frameworks, there is minimal empirical investigation into cultural orientations within Central Asian and Southeast Asian higher education contexts. This study addresses this critical research gap by examining how cultural preferences manifest in university workplaces, particularly as Malaysia enhances its role as an educational hub and Kazakhstan seeks to modernize its higher education sector.

Understanding these cultural dynamics becomes essential for facilitating effective cross-cultural communication and developing organizational structures that support international academic collaboration, ultimately contributing to both nations' educational development goals. As universities in both countries increasingly engage in joint programs and research initiatives, the success of these partnerships heavily relies on understanding and navigating the cultural nuances that influence workplace behaviour and institutional effectiveness.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Today's researchers understand that workplace behaviour comes from both vertical and horizontal aspects of individualism and collectivism, rather than just comparing Eastern and Western cultures. In educational institutions, horizontal individualism is defined by when staff members value working independently while seeing themselves as equal to others. These employees prefer autonomy but do not try to outperform their colleagues. In contrast, vertical individualism appears when staff focus on personal achievement and competition, often seen in research-focused academics striving for recognition [5].

Collectivism also has two distinct forms. Horizontal collectivism creates strong group bonds while treating everyone as equals. For example, teaching teams work together on courses while respecting each member's input equally. Vertical collectivism accepts hierarchy for group success where staff show strong loyalty to their institutions and respect for authority figures [6]. These cultural patterns shape how universities work. In collectivist settings, institutions often become like extended families, where leaders must show strong commitment to their staff's wellbeing [7]. This differs from individualistic environments where staff members more easily move between institutions based on personal benefits [8].

On top of that, research indicates that cultural patterns, particularly collectivism and individualism, significantly impact intercultural communication processes in academic settings [9]. These cultural dimensions affect various aspects of communication, including in-group membership, self-expression, and cultural values.

Modern universities need both individualistic and collectivistic approaches. While individual creativity drives research innovation, success often needs team collaboration. It was discovered that horizontal collectivism improves how staff help each other and their institution [10]. Similarly, vertical individualism boosts creative breakthroughs, while vertical collectivism helps with steady improvements [5].

Other than that, understanding individualistic-collectivistic orientations is crucial for several reasons in multinational university settings. Firstly, it can inform the design of effective training and development

programs for diverse student and faculty populations [11] Secondly, it can help in managing cross-cultural communication and performance evaluations, particularly in international collaborations and exchanges [12]. Lastly, it can guide the creation of work environments that foster creativity and innovation by balancing individualistic and collectivistic elements [13].

In addition, individualism-collectivism dimension affects how individuals perceive and judge self-presentations in achievement contexts, which is particularly relevant in academic settings [12]. Interestingly, studies have shown that while collectivists express positive attitudes towards cultural diversity, they also emphasize the need to respect their own cultural values [14]. This suggests that multinational universities should strive to create an environment that balances cultural integration with the preservation of individual cultural identities.

Research on collectivistic and individualistic cultural orientations in Malaysian workplaces reveals a complex interplay of cultural values and organizational dynamics. Though there was no study done in the context of higher education institutions, a study comparing Malaysian and Australian managers found significant differences in vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism, and vertical collectivism [15]. This suggests that Malaysian managers tend to exhibit more collectivistic traits, emphasizing group harmony and hierarchical relationships. However, it is important to note that cultural orientations are not static and can evolve over time. The similar study also indicates that there have been significant shifts in value classifications in Malaysia since Hofstede's original research, underscoring the need for caution when applying work-related values to understand organizational behaviours [15]. This is in line a study that suggested that the traditional understanding of individualism and collectivism may be evolving due to globalization, particularly in Asian countries where improved socio-economic conditions have led to a decline in collectivism [16].

While Malaysia has traditionally been categorized as a collectivistic culture, recent research suggests a more nuanced picture. The evolving nature of cultural orientations in Malaysian workplaces emphasizes the need for managers, especially in multinational organizations, to understand and adapt to these cultural-driven differences in work attitudes and behaviors [15]. Future research should continue to explore the multidimensional aspects of individualism-collectivism in Malaysian workplaces, considering both global trends and local cultural nuances.

In the context of Kazakhstani academic settings, findings emerge when comparing Kazakhstani and Russian university faculty members. Despite their shared Soviet past, significant differences in motivational profiles were observed. Kazakhstani faculty demonstrated a higher orientation towards security and work-life balance, while their Russian counterparts showed greater motivation for creativity and challenges [17]. This highlights the complexity of cultural influences on individual orientations, even within seemingly similar contexts. While specific research on Kazakhstan's workplace culture is lacking, the existing literature suggests that individualism-collectivism plays a crucial role in shaping organizational behavior. Future studies should explore how these cultural dimensions manifest in Kazakhstan's unique cultural context, considering both national and individual-level orientations. Such research could provide valuable insights for managing diverse workforces and developing culturally appropriate organizational practices in Kazakhstan.

Research question:

To investigate the inclination of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) employees in a selected public university in Malaysia and Kazakhstan to horizontal and vertical aspects of Individualism and Collectivism.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was used to gather information from 31 university employees respectively, with a focus on academic and administrative staff at public universities in Kazakhstan and Malaysia. A 32-item scale developed by Singelis et al. [18] was used to measure individualism-collectivism. The scale's items are intended to assess both the vertical and horizontal facets of individualism-collectivism. A seven-point rating system, with 1 denoting strong disagreement and 7 denoting strong agreement, was used to answer the questions. It was crucial to prepare the measures in both Russian and English because our study is a cross-national inquiry, and to make sure the two versions are comparable.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the t-test results and comprehensive literature review, significant cultural differences emerge between Malaysian and Kazakhstani university employees in their individualistic-collectivistic orientations. While no significant differences were found in horizontal individualism ($t=-1.24$, $p=0.220$) and vertical individualism ($t=-0.56$, $p=0.578$), Malaysian respondents demonstrated significantly higher levels of both horizontal collectivism ($t=2.05$, $p=0.045$) and vertical collectivism ($t=5.74$, $p=0.000$). These findings align with contemporary research suggesting evolving cultural orientations in Asian countries and support the

observation that modern educational institutions require a balanced approach incorporating both individualistic and collectivistic elements [16, 11]. The higher collectivism scores in Malaysia correspond a research indicating that Malaysian managers tend to exhibit more collectivistic traits, emphasizing group harmony and hierarchical relationships [15]. On the contrary, Kazakhstan's slightly higher individualistic tendencies align with a study's findings about their greater orientation towards self-fulfilment such as security and work-life balance [17]. These differences have important implications for leadership approaches, cross-cultural communication, and organizational development in academic settings, suggesting the need for tailored management strategies that account for these cultural variations. However, the relatively small sample size (N=31 for each group) and focus on university employees limit the generalizability of these findings, indicating opportunities for future research to explore how these orientations influence specific academic outcomes and institutional effectiveness in both countries.

Table 1: Independent Groups T-Test: Malaysian (N=31) And Kazakhstani (N=31) Respondents

VARIABLES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE	2-TAIL SIG
Horizontal Individualism			-1.24	0.220
Malaysia	5.0988	0.545		
Kazakhstan	5.2225	0.224		
Vertical Individualism			-0.56	0.578
Malaysia	3.7013	1.073		
Kazakhstan	3.8488	0.916		
Horizontal Collectivism			2.05	0.045
Malaysia	5.2338	0.774		
Kazakhstan	4.8788	0.509		
Vertical Collectivism			5.74	0.000
Malaysia	5.0500	0.584		
Kazakhstan	4.0563	0.774		

5.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, this study highlights important cultural differences that affect organisational behaviours and management practices by offering insightful information about the individualistic and collectivistic orientations of university employees in Kazakhstan and Malaysia. The results show that both horizontal and vertical collectivism are more prevalent among Malaysian workers, highlighting the value of hierarchical relationships and group harmony in their workplace culture. Kazakhstani workers, on the other hand, exhibit somewhat higher levels of individualism, which is indicative of a stronger emphasis on aspects of personal fulfilment like work-life balance and job security.

Multinational educational institutions must create organisational structures that are culturally intelligent and can accommodate a range of cultural orientations, as these cultural dynamics highlight. Institutions can promote collaboration, improve cross-cultural communication, and increase overall institutional effectiveness by comprehending and navigating these differences. The study also notes that more investigation is required to examine the wider effects of these cultural orientations on academic performance and to extrapolate results to other settings.

Ultimately, acknowledging and appreciating the complex cultural subtleties will be crucial for both Malaysia and Kazakhstan to meet their educational development objectives and guarantee the success of cooperative projects as they both continue to deepen their educational ties and participate in international collaborations.

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МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК БАСҚАРУ ЖҮЙЕСІН ЖЕТІЛДІРУ АРҚЫЛЫ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК САЛАНЫ ДАМУ: ҚАЗАҚСТАН ТӘЖІРИБЕСІ

Қазақстанның әлеуметтік саласының дамуы елдің жалпы тұрақтылығы мен өркендеуіне тікелей әсер етеді. Бүгінгі таңда әлеуметтік саладағы басты міндеттердің бірі — халықтың өмір сүру сапасын жақсарту, білім беру және денсаулық сақтау деңгейін көтеру, сондай-ақ әлеуметтік әлсіз топтарды қорғауды қамтамасыз ету. Осы мақсатта мемлекеттік басқару жүйесін жетілдірудің маңызы зор. Мемлекеттік басқару жүйесінің тиімділігі әлеуметтік бағдарламаларды жүзеге асыруда, халыққа қажетті қызметтерді көрсетуде және азаматтардың әл-ауқатын арттыруда басты рөл атқарады. Мақалада Қазақстанда әлеуметтік саланы дамытуға бағытталған мемлекеттік басқаруды жетілдірудің негізгі бағыттары мен әдістері қарастырылады.

Әлеуметтік саланы дамыту — бұл тек қана мемлекеттік басқару жүйесінің міндеті ғана емес, сонымен қатар экономикалық, саяси, мәдени факторлармен де байланысты күрделі процесс.