The Relationships Between Self-Rated Emotional Intelligence (EI), Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) and Cultural Value of Collectivism

Peter P. Soltys[1] [*], Phyllis Duncan[1], Barbara Hinojosa[1] and Jared Montoya[1]

[1]Department of Leadership Studies, Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, TX 78207

*Email: PSoltys@Gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX), and Collectivism while controlling for Age, Gender, Education, Ethnicity, Tenure, Country of Origin, if not the United States (U.S.), and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX). Specifically, this study examined the relationships between participants' self-rated Emotional Intelligence as measured by the *Schutte's Self-Report Emotional Inventory* Test (SSEIT), the Leader-Member Relationship Quality as measured by the *Leader-Member Exchange* (LMX-7), and participants' cultural practice of Collectivism "as is" measured by the *Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness* (GLOBE). A sample of convenience was used, with a total of 461 surveys collected. Three hundred thirty-eight surveys were fully completed ($N = 338$, $M_{age} = 44.01$). A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine if relationships existed between participants' Emotional Intelligence, Leader-Member Relationship Quality, and Collectivism. Overall findings revealed there were significant relationships between participants' Emotional Intelligence, Leader-Member Relationship Quality, and Collectivism. Education and Gender were predictors of Collectivism.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX), Collectivism, Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism

1   Introduction

Humans, although vastly spectacular in innovation, cognition, communication, and survival methods, have an instinctual drive for relationships and emotional response. These basic, instinct-level traits are what gives humans their uniqueness in the animal kingdom. The study of human nature, and emotional responses have been present and widely utilized since the earliest days of intellectuals. One prominent philosopher, Plato, found that "human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge" (Plato, c.428-347 B.C.E./2018). This Athenian philosopher reflected on human emotions and the effect of those emotions on our being, good judgement, and common sense. Charles Darwin, in his book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, published in 1872, expressed the importance of the emotions and emotional expression, which gave modern psychologists a continuum to study humans emotions.

Even though the term "emotional intelligence" appeared in the past, for example in Leuner (1966), Payne (1985), or Greenspan (1989), its true revelation and beginning of its multiple relationship studies started with Salovey and Mayer's (1990) definition and their study of emotional intelligence, and then the popularization of such term by psychologist

Goleman (1995). Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). Goleman (1995) defined Emotional Intelligence, which some might know it as EI or EQ, as "the ability to identify, assess, and control one's own emotions, the emotions of others, and that of groups." Goleman (1998) introduced the EQ model, which concentrated on EI "as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance, and consists of five areas: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation" (p. 135). This more distinctly defined emotional intelligence now includes others' regulation as part of the individual's criteria for being emotionally intelligent. It also encompasses the moral obligation leaders must ensure that there is harmony among the followers, and that emotional deregulation could impact the final business production and profitability (Goleman, 1998). The apparent need to focus on not just the individual, but also groups, has created an entirely new definition of emotionally intelligent leadership.

In the book, *Becoming a Resonant Leader*, McKee, Boyatzis, and Johnston (2008) wrote that "leadership is a conscious process, starting with

clarity about one's own personal vision and hope for the future. Leadership requires emotional and social intelligence and a deep understanding of how social systems - and the people in them - must work together to achieve complex and challenging goals" (p. 43). McKee et al. (2008) adding the collectivistic approach to emotional intelligence opens the world for leaders to focus more heavily on leader-follower exchanges. The notion of being a transformative leader with emotional intelligence is not new, yet this approach signifies a possible lack in the leadership community where there is little to no emphasis placed on regulation of a leader's teams' emotions. Humans can't effectively study other humans without first understanding how emotional responses and emotional intelligence contributes to, or disrupts, the society surrounding the individual. Because of the ever-present emotional feedback loop, research must envelop the understanding of how emotional intelligence, or lack thereof, impacts the very same relationships that humans so desperately need for survival.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) developed a theory that describes the relationship between leaders and followers, the Leader-Member Relationship Quality, or LMX-7. This measurement of quality of relationships among dyadic workplace relationships allows for a deep understanding of the different levels of closeness, openness, and trust in varying dynamics. To expound on the shifting progression of trust and openness, LMX-7 identifies three groups that a leader-member relationship may fall into: stranger phase, acquaintance phase, and mature partnership phase. These phases evolve through formal interactions, to career-oriented social exchanges, to mutual and full trust with high quality exchanges. Understanding where a leader is with each of their followers allows for a more diversified and individualized approach to relationships. There still seems to be an area of opportunity for the Leader-Member Relationship Quality measure to also study the emotional intelligence of the dyad in order to personalize communication and increase trust fully.

Effective leadership, associated with a positive sense of self and social awareness, requires working collectively within a team or organization to build trust, ensure cohesiveness, and create and execute a communal vision (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2000). Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkow discussed the importance of a collectivistic culture in society. They emphasized "the power of the group explaining collectivism not as political connotation, but rather as the structure of a group, family, team, or a society. The individual, within such a group, thinks of themselves as part of the "we" group (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 91). There is a need for leaders to recognize constituents as parts of several "we" groups, and that these individuals desire to come together in a workplace environment to feel welcomed, safe, and part of yet another "we" group, rather than being a part of a sum of parts. Creating collective groups may possibly lead to more effective and productive teams, as they could feel an internal drive to communal success.

In the article "Leading through the duration of the COVID-19 emergency" McNulty (2020) expressed leaders' need to pay much closer attention to transparency and open communication, and to develop collective teams that are ethical, fair, and trusted. However, beyond this article, others wrote about leaders' need to understand teammates' feelings, to create personal purpose beyond profit, and to nurture passion and a sense of personal growth while focusing on personal relationships, and maintaining human connections with team members (Garner, 1990).

The reorganization of the workforce inspired a sense of wonder about how individuals with different levels of emotional intelligence connect with each other. Considering 64% of organizations do not positively view their leadership development efforts, 75% of leaders do not find leadership traits in new recruits, 83% of companies believe there is a lack of collaboration in their companies and, 65% believe that organizations should shift

to a team-centric belief, one must draw a conclusion that the current interfacing needs adjustment for the drastic adaptations of the newly evolved workplace (Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends, 2019). With a massive tilt in what is seemingly the emotional intelligence level of the workforce, it is imperative that one delves into the connections that emotional intelligence has with society, the quality of the relationship between the leader and member, culture, and cultural effects of collectivism.

2 Purpose of the Study

This study was set up with two areas of study. The purpose of Research Area 1 was to measure the relationship between participants' self-reported Emotional Intelligence (Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, and Utilization of Emotion) as measured by the *Schutte's Self-Report Emotional Inventory Test* (SSEIT) and their cultural value of Collectivism (Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism) measured at the level "as is" by the *Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness* (GLOBE) when controlling for Age, Gender, Education, Ethnicity, Tenure, Country of Origin, and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) measured by *Leader-Member Exchange* (LMX-7).

The purpose of Research Area 2 was to measure the relationship between participants' self-reported Collectivism (Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism) measured at the level "as is" by the *Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness* (GLOBE) and the Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) measured by *Leader-Member Exchange* (LMX-7).

3 Participants

This study utilized sample of convenience which consisted of the researcher's personal network, family, colleagues, and acquaintances. Data were collected between April 17, 2020, and May 12, 2020. The total of 928 surveys were distributed, 461 (49%) surveys were returned, out of which 338 (73.4%) were deemed usable. There were 185 males (54.7%) and 153 females (45.3%). Respondents ages ranged from 18- to 76-years old ($M = 44.01$). Tenure ranged from 0- to 57-years of experience ($M = 24.46$).

Two hundred twelve participants represented the White (Non-Hispanic or Latino), 96 participants Hispanic or Latino, 8 participants Black/African American, 15 Two or more races and 7 participants represented the Other group. Groups, such as: Black/African American, Two or more races, and Other, were combined to one larger group called "Other".

Twenty-two participants reported their education level as high school or equivalent (e.g., GED), 89 participants reported some college/associate degree, 139 participants with bachelor's degree, and 88 participants reported graduate degrees.

4 Instruments

Participants accessed the designated *Qualtrics*® link to complete the survey where they read and attested to the Informed Consent Form first and then completed a *Demographic Survey*, the *Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire* (LMX-7), the *Schutte's Self-Report Emotional Inventory Test* (SSEIT), and the *Collectivism Survey*.

4.1 Demographic Survey

The *Demographic Survey* – participants were asked to complete a 6-item demographic survey: Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Education, Tenure, and the Country of Origin.

4.2 Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

The *Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test* (SSEIT) is a 33-item self-report inventory test to assess general characteristics of emotional intelligence. Participants completed 33 questions rating themselves using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree, reporting the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement (Schutte et al., 2009). The SSEIT measured the four sub-scales of Emotional Intelligence: Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, and Utilization of Emotion (Schutte et al., 2009).

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha SSEIT

Emotional Intelligence	Cronbach's alpha	
	Schutte et. al., 2009	Soltys, 2020
Perception of Emotion	.80	.83
Managing Own Emotions	.78	.80
Managing Others' Emotions	.66	.70
Utilization of Emotion	.55	.69

4.3 The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX-7)

The Leader-Member Relationship Quality was measured by 7 questions *Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire* (LMX-7) using 5-point Likert scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The total scores were utilized.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha LMX

Leader-Member Relationship Quality	Cronbach's alpha	
	Graen & Uhl Bien, 1995	Soltys, 2020
LMX-7	.90	.92

4.4 Collectivism (GLOBE)

Institutional Collectivism was measured by GLOBE Section 1 of Form Alpha "The Way Things Are in Your Work Organization". Survey included a 3-item questionnaire on a 7- point Likert scale and mean scores were utilized.

In-Group Collectivism was measured by GLOBE Section 1 of Form Alpha "The Way Things Are in Your Work Organization". Survey included a 5-item questionnaire on a 7-point Likert scale and mean scores were utilized.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha Collectivism

Collectivism	Cronbach's alpha	
	GLOBE, 2004	Soltys, 2020
Institutional Collectivism	.44	.41
In-Group Collectivism	.70	.83

5 Null Hypotheses

5.1 Research Area 1

Null Hypothesis 1 (H_O1) - There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence (Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, and Utilization of Emotion) and Institutional Collectivism when controlling for Age, Gender, Education Level, Ethnicity, Tenure, Country of Origin, and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX).

Null Hypothesis 2 (H_O2) - There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence (Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, and Utilization of Emotion) and In-Group Collectivism when controlling for Age, Gender, Education Level, Ethnicity, Tenure, Country of Origin, and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX).

5.2 Research Area 2

Null Hypothesis 3 (H_O3) - There is no significant relationship between Collectivism (Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism) and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) when controlling for Age, Gender, Education Level, Ethnicity, Tenure, and Country of Origin.

6 Results

The first analytical test was a Pearson Bivariate Correlation, which provided a preliminary assessment of the bivariate (one-on-one) relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. Values between .01 to .29 indicate a weak association, values between .30 to .49 indicate a moderate association, and of .50 to 1.0 indicate a strong association.

6.1 Bivariate Correlations

Table 4 represents a bivariate correlation with controlled variables: Age and Tenure, which had a weak positive relationship with only one EI subscale - Managing Own Emotions (MOE).

Table 4. Bivariate Correlations

	Age	Tenure
Age	1	
Tenure	.940**	1
MOE	.138**	.142**

MOE: Managing Own Emotions.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows Institutional Collectivism (IC) was not correlated to any of the subscales of EI. Interesting thing to point out is that In-Group Collectivism (IGC) had a strong relationship with LMX at .644.

Table 5. Bivariate Correlations

	POE	MOE	MOE2	UOE	IC	IGC	LMX
POE	1						
MOE	.438**	1					
MOE2	.528**	.512**	1				
UOE	335**	.478**	.506**	1			
IC					1		
IGC	.110*	.220**	.144**	.190**	.254**	1	
LMX	.125*	.280**	.209**	.148**	.145**	.644**	1

POE: Perception of Emotion; MOE: Managing Own Emotions; MOE2: Managing Others' Emotions; UOE: Utilization of Emotion; IC: Institutional Collectivism; IGC: In-Group Collectivism; LMX: Leader-Member Relationship Quality.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

6.2 Multiple Regression

Using the IBM's statistical software SPSS v.26, multiple regression analyses were performed. The first model analyzed the Research Area 1 Null Hypothesis 1 (H_O1), the relationship between Emotional Intelligence subscales and Institutional Collectivism (Table 6).

Gender accounted for 1.2% of variance explained in Institutional Collectivism ratings ($R^2 = .012$, $\beta = .112$, $p < .05$). T-test revealed Males scored significantly higher on preference for an Institutional Collectivism than Females $t(337) = 2.082$, $p < .05$. 2.

LMX was a second predictor that accounted for an additional 1.9% of the variance explained in Institutional Collectivism ($\Delta R^2 = .019$, $\beta = .135$, $rp = .136$, $p < .05$).

There was no significant relationship between EI subscales and Institutional Collectivism, therefore the researcher failed to reject the Null Hypothesis 1 (H_O1).

Table 6. Model summary for the relationship between EI subscales and Institutional Collectivism

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	Partial Correlation	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.112 a	.012				1	336	.04
2	.178 b	.032	.019	.135	.136	1	335	.01

a. Predictors: **Gender**

b. Predictors: **Gender, LMX**

The second model analyzed the Research Area 1 Null Hypothesis 2 (H_O2), the relationship between Emotional Intelligence subscales and In-Group Collectivism (Table 7).

Education was a significant predictor that accounted for 2.6% of the variance explained in In-Group Collectivism ratings ($R^2 = .026$, $\beta = .162$, $p < .05$). ANOVA was significant F(3, 334) = 3.014, $p < .05$. Fisher LSD post-hoc was run, which revealed participants with bachelor's degree reported a higher preference for an In-Group Collectivism than participants with graduate degree. There were no differences in HS and some college than other groups.

LMX was a significant predictor that accounted for 40.1% of the variance explained in In-Group Collectivism ratings ($\Delta R^2 = .401$, $\beta = .636$, $rp = .642$, $p < .05$).

Utilization of Emotions was a significant predictor that accounted for 1.1% variance explained in In-Group Collectivism ratings ($\Delta R^2 = .011$, $\beta = .108$, $r_p = .140$, $p < .05$).

Since a multiple regression for the Null Hypothesis 2 (H_O2) found a significant relationship between Utilization of Emotion (EI) and In-Group Collectivism, the researcher rejected the Null Hypothesis 2 (H_O2).

Table 7. Model summary for the relationship between EI subscales and In-Group Collectivism

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	Partial Correlation	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.162 a	.026				3	334	.03
2	.654 b	.428	.401	.636	.642	1	333	.00
3	.663 c	.439	.011	.108	.140	1	332	.01

a. Predictors: **Education**

b. Predictors: **Education, LMX**

c. Predictors: **Education, LMX, Utilization of Emotion**

The third model analyzed the Research Area 2 Null Hypothesis 3 (H_O3), the relationship between Collectivism and the Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) (Table 8).

In-Group Collectivism was the only predictor that accounted for a huge 41.5% of the variance explained in Leader-Member Relationship Quality ratings ($R^2 = .415$, $\beta = .644$, $p < .05$).

Since the multiple regression for the Null Hypothesis 3 (H_O3) found a significant relationship between In-Group Collectivism and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX), the researcher rejected the Null Hypothesis 3 (H_O3).

Table 8. Model summary for the relationship between Collectivism and LMX

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	Partial Correlation	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.644 a	.415				1	336	.00

a. Predictors: **In-Group Collectivism**

7 Discussion and Conclusion

The researcher failed to reject the Null Hypothesis 1 (H_O1), rejected the Null Hypothesis 2 (H_O2), and the researcher rejected the Null Hypothesis 3 (H_O3).

The most important finding in this study was the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX), and Collectivism. The researcher expected to find a much stronger relationship between Emotional Intelligence subscales and Collectivism. Nevertheless, this study revealed a significance between EI and Collectivism. A strong relationship between LMX and In-Group Collectivism was somewhat unexpected finding for the researcher.

For the Research Area 1 (Table 9), only Gender and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) were significant predictors of Institutional Collectivism. Emotional Intelligence sub-scales: Age, Tenure, Country of Origin, Education, and Ethnicity were not predictors of Institutional Collectivism. For In-Group Collectivism, Education, LMX and Utilization of Emotion were significant predictors of In-Group Collectivism. Control variables: Age, Gender, Tenure, Country of Origin, and Ethnicity were not predictors of Institutional Collectivism.

Table 9. Summary of findings for Research Area 1 (H_O1 & H_O2)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable– Collectivism	
	Institutional Collectivism	**In-Group Collectivism**
Gender	$R^2 = .012$, $t(337) = 2.082^*$ M > F	
Education		$R^2 = .026$, F(3, 334) = 3.014* Bach. Deg. > Grad. Deg.
LMX	$\Delta R^2 = .019$, $\beta = .135$, $r_p = .136^*$	$\Delta R^2 = .401$, $\beta = .636$, $r_p = .642^*$
Utilization of Emotion		$\Delta R^2 = .011$, $\beta = .108$, $r_p = .140^*$

*Study at the $p < 0.05$ level.

For the Research Area 2 (Table 10), only In-Group Collectivism was a significant predictor of LMX.

Table 10. Summary of findings for Research Area 2 (H_O3)

	Dependent Variable
Independent Variables	**LMX**
In-Group Collectivism	$R^2 = .415, \beta = .644^*$

*Study at the $p < 0.05$ level.

8   Limitations

The first limitation of this non-experimental study was used of a sample of convenience which included researcher's family members, colleagues, acquaintances, and personal social network with a snowballing sample. While a sample of convenience allowed the researcher to generalize findings to the population studied, it did not allow inferences to be generalized to the population.

The second limitation was the lack of diverse representation between different ethnic groups. Originally, this study was set up with 8 different ethnic affiliations based on the U.S. Census criteria: White (Non-Hispanic or Latino), Hispanic or Latino, Black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Two or more races, and Other. However, only 5 categories were represented and three of those with very low representation percentages (62.7% White/Non-Hispanic or Latino; 28.4% Hispanic or Latino; 2.4% Black/African American; 4.4% Two or more races; and 2.1% Other). Therefore, to increase the statistical power of the study, the last 3 groups were collapsed to one larger group called Other.

Another limitation was lack of representation from countries other than the U.S. The researcher was collecting data during unprecedented times (April 17th, 2020 – May 12th, 2020), during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, pandemic, quarantine, working from home orders in other countries, might have hindered participation of non-U.S. citizens. There were many unknowns of the connectivity, internet, and equipment availability in different countries during quarantine. Therefore, there could be multiple unexplained variances affected by the pandemic and participants working from home. Participants' perception of Collectivism and Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX) could look very different during a pandemic than it would during pre or post pandemic. The relationship building just didn't look the same virtually, especially during times when data were collected. Nations were still kind of new at the full-time virtual world. Therefore, some of those unexplained variances could very well explain why some predictors were so low.

9   Recommendations for Further Research

The first recommendation would be to gather a much higher participants' representation from different ethnic groups. The existing literature showed ethnic affiliation is a significant predictor of Collectivism, while this study found ethnicity as not significant predictor of Collectivism nor Leader-Member Relationship Quality (LMX). Therefore, securing a much higher participants' representation between different ethnic groups might further explain different cultural preferences that are based on ethnicity.

The researcher recommends expanding future studies to participants from other countries, especially to countries with a different cultural preference between Individualism and Collectivism. Such representation could allow for a higher diversity and representation of different cultural preferences; therefore, it would allow for a further analysis of relationship building and if collectivism preferences differ based on nationality.

The researcher recommends replicating the same study post pandemic to analyze if the results are different, if the sample population is thinking differently about the idea of collectivism, or about relationships between leaders and followers. COVID-19 pandemic was a point in history and data for this study was collected in an unprecedent time. Therefore, there could be measurable differences in preferences how participants view the leadership, and the organizational culture as a result of working virtually.

The researcher suggests further research in the area of Emotional Intelligence and its relationship with an Institutional Collectivism as well as with In-Group Collectivism.

10   Implications and Major Findings

The key takes away from this study is the fact there was a relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Leader-Member Relationship Quality and Collectivism. This could be observed as a steppingstone of the development, where the higher level of Emotional Intelligence could allow for a higher quality relationship between the leader and the team member. In effect, the relationship could drive to a much higher preference for collectivist/cohesive approach to a team, but also to the organization.

This study also revealed the critical importance of the Leader-Member Relationship Quality. Even though Emotional Intelligence (Utilization of Emotions) was a significant predictor of In-Group Collectivism, the Leader-Member Relationship Quality was a key predictor of In-Group Collectivism with a huge 40.1% variance explained in LMX. The researcher set-up the Research Area 1 with LMX as a controlled variable, understanding from previous literature that it might have some effect on participants' preference for Collectivism. However, it was unknown and very unexpected to the researcher, the Leader-Member Relationship Quality would have a such of high effect and would become a key predictor of an In-Group Collectivism and a significant predictor of an Institutional Collectivism.

Implication of such findings might include:
- Leaders may want to consider engaging in high quality relationships with the followers to build high interdependency among members in the organization
- Leaders may want to consider engaging in open and trusted relationships which build group loyalty and exhibit a high degree of commitment toward other team members
- High quality relationships may promote harmony and affective commitment toward group, community, and an organization, but also may encourage employees to voice their ideas and opinions
- Leaders who are empathetic generally feel and understand others' emotions which may improve in-group harmony, and loyalty toward the leader, team, and the organization
- Leaders could consider engaging others in decision-making processes which may improve individuals' pride and loyalty among the team members and the organization
- Leaders' rational and logical thinking may build stronger bonds with the team members, influences collaboration and create group synergy

The study also revealed the effect of Gender on Institutional Collectivism and leaders need to understand differences in cultural preferences based on gender. Leaders may consider to be more aware of Gender cultural preferences and integrate more inclusive and supportive institutional culture. In this study, Males scored significantly higher on preference for an Institutional Collectivism than Females.

In addition, this study revealed Education as a significant predictor of In-Group Collectivism, where participants with a higher education level showed a less preference for In-Group Collectivism, consequently being a more of an individual contributor.

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