

# INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM SCALE (also known as the Culture Orientation Scale)

## Reference:

Triandis, H. C. & Gelfand, M. J. (1998). Converging measurement of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 118-128.

## Description of Measure:

A 16-item scale designed to measure four dimensions of collectivism and individualism:

*Vertical Collectivism* – seeing the self as a part of a collective and being willing to accept hierarchy and inequality within that collective

*Vertical Individualism* – seeing the self as fully autonomous, but recognizing that inequality will exist among individuals and that accepting this inequality.

*Horizontal Collectivism* –seeing the self as part of a collective but perceiving all the members of that collective as equal.

*Horizontal Individualism* –seeing the self as fully autonomous, and believing that equality between individuals is the ideal.

All items are answered on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1= never or definitely no and 9 = always or definitely yes.

## Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Triandis, H. C.(2001). Individualism-collectivism and personality. *Journal of Personality*, 69, 907–924.

This paper provides a review of the main findings concerning the relationship between the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism and personality. People in collectivist cultures, compared to people in individualist cultures, are likely to define themselves as aspects of groups, to give priority to in-group goals, to focus on context more than the content in making attributions and in communicating, to pay less attention to internal than to external processes as determinants of social behavior, to define most relationships with ingroup members as communal, to make more situational attributions, and tend to be self-effacing.

Markus, H. R. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psych Review*, 98, 224-253.

People in different cultures have strikingly different construals of the self, of others, and of the interdependence of the 2. These construals can influence, and in many cases determine, the very nature of individual experience, including cognition, emotion, and motivation. Many Asian cultures have distinct conceptions of individuality that insist on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to each other. The emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious interdependence with them. American culture neither assumes nor values such an overt connectedness among individuals. In contrast, individuals seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to the self and by discovering and expressing their unique inner attributes. As proposed herein, these construals are even more powerful than previously imagined. Theories of the self from both psychology and anthropology are integrated to define in detail the difference between a construal of the self as independent

and a construal of the self as interdependent. Each of these divergent construals should have a set of specific consequences for cognition, emotion, and motivation; these consequences are proposed and relevant empirical literature is reviewed. Focusing on differences in self-construals enables apparently inconsistent empirical findings to be reconciled, and raises questions about what have been thought to be culture-free aspects of cognition, emotion, and motivation.

Matsumoto D., Kouznetsova, N., Ray R., Ratzlaff C., Biehl M., & Raroque, J. (1999). Psychological culture, physical health, and subjective well-being. *Journal of Gender, Culture, and Health*, 4, 1-18.

This article investigates the role of psychological culture in influencing health by examining the relationship between cultural discrepancies and physical health and subjective well-being. Participants completed a large battery of tests assessing their individual, psychological culture; perceptions of the larger, ecological culture; coping strategies; emotion and mood states; physical health and subjective well-being. Cultural discrepancies were operationalized as the difference between ratings of psychological and ecological culture. Regression analyses indicated that cultural discrepancies were associated with greater coping strategy usage which, in turn, was associated with anxiety and depression. These emotions were then predictive of both physical health and psychological well-being. These findings suggest that this approach is promising, and may open the door to other studies that operationalize culture on the individual level, forcing us to consider psychological culture and cultural discrepancies in our theoretical models of culture and health.

**Scale:** *The items should be mixed up prior to administering the questionnaire. All items are answered on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1= never or definitely no and 9 = always or definitely yes.*

Horizontal individualism items:

1. I'd rather depend on myself than others.
2. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
3. I often do "my own thing."
4. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Vertical individualism items:

1. It is important that I do my job better than others.
2. Winning is everything.
3. Competition is the law of nature.
4. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

Horizontal collectivism items:

1. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
2. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
3. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
4. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Vertical collectivism items:

1. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
2. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.
3. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.
4. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

**Scoring:**

Each dimension's items are summed up separately to create a VC, VI, HC, and HI score.