

Comparison Between the Value Systems of Boys and Girls in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Background: Shalom Schwartz defined the core values “as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importances that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives”. The value types proposed by Schwartz were: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition and security. This study designed to determine values preferences in students of Tehran city.

Methods: This is a descriptive study. The sample size consists of 1000 students that educating in Tehran high schools. We used clustering method for sampling. Each student was given Schwartz value survey

Results: the value ranking in sample was Conformity, security, Self-direction, universalism, benevolence, achievement, hedonism, power, stimulation, tradition. The highest relation was between Schwartz and self-enhancement ($r=0.88$) and Schwartz and openness to change

Discussion: The Conformity, the first value in the ranking introduces the life-adjustment as the most important challenge among adolescent population. In the other words adolescence is the time in which we face a big change in hormones level and physiologic status.

Keywords: Values System, boys, girls, Students, Iran

Introduction

Conceptually, at the individual level, a value is a discrete belief about something or someone [1]. A value can be an absolute dichotomous belief, as well as a conditional belief. Individual values can be described as being terminal (i.e., representing desirable end states) or instrumental (i.e., means to accomplishing a goal) [1]. Values can be expressive [2]. An attitude is said to be a collection of values or beliefs bounded within a particular situation, or can be a value that transcends many situations [1].

Individual values can be combined to form a value system. A value system can be said to be “an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance” [1]

Studies at the national level have also documented differences in the value aspects of cultures around the world and explicated their sources and implications (e.g., Hofstede, Inglehart, Markus & Kitayama, Schwartz, Smith & Schwartz, Triandis) [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8]. These studies reveal a great deal of variation in the value priorities of individuals within societies as well as groups across nations. The research suggests that individuals both within and across societies have quite different value priorities that reflect their different genetic heritage, personal experiences, social locations, and enculturation.

Researchers are generally agreed that subjective values are very important variables that influence the decision-making process [9]. According to Schwartz' and Bilsky's theory [10], [11, 12] values are cognitive constructs that play role as well motivating as justifying behaviour. Schwartz defined values as trans situational, desirable goals which serve as guiding principles in one's life and which vary in their importance for an individual. Feather [9, 12, 13] has proposed that values can be viewed as abstract structures --- a source of person's beliefs about desirable goals life and desirable or not ways of behaving. These beliefs have an oughtness or normative quality. Values have their source in basic human needs and in societal demands too. Values are properties of the person; they are hierarchically organized because they differ in their importance for the self. According to Feather subjective values are relatively stable thanks they maintain some stability of behavior across situations and across a time frame. However values are not unchanging during the life span. People usually react with feeling, even with strong feeling, when their values, especially central values, are frustrated because values are not affectively neutral. According to Feather's conception person's values may be considered not only as generalized beliefs about what is or what is not desirable end state but at the same as person's motives. The strength of one's values may influence how much effort an individual involves into his/her activity and how long a person persists at his/her activity. Secondly, values, which an individual prefer, may influence affective responses that occur when an activity is undertaken unsuccessfully. Schwartz and Bilsky [11] proposed that there are ten motivational types of values that could be derived from the three universal human requirements. Schwartz and Bilsky also specified sets of dynamic relation between the value types. The Schwartz's Value Survey contained 56 values covering a wide range of content, which were incorporated into ten

types. The value types proposed by Schwartz [14] were: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition and security. Shalom Schwartz, defined the core values "as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importances that serve as guiding principles in people's lives".

The value of Self-direction, by nature, is intrinsically satisfying. Self-direction is important in meeting personal self-oriented needs, such as autonomy, independence and creativity, and can also be perceived as important to the overall productivity of a group. The goal is to have the freedom to choose and work in a meaningful way. The values of hedonism and stimulation have high correlations with self-direction. The goal is to have stimulating and pleasurable experiences. Educational research [15] certainly supports the idea that feelings of pleasure, gratification and challenge support intrinsic motivation. Self-direction, hedonism and stimulation make up a related cluster of values important to serve the needs of the "self". However, self-direction pursued for only self-pleasure and gratification through novelty and challenge does not serve the need of relatedness to others or promote the well-being for important others and society. When self-direction is "other focused," as when a student chooses to make a contribution to society and receives satisfaction from it, self-direction would cluster more closely with benevolence and universalism, rather than hedonism and stimulation

The value of benevolence represents the need to be responsible to others who are personally important, such as family. This need is fulfilled when there are cooperative relations that promote the well-being of everyone in a particular group. According to Roe the need for relatedness is developed in early childhood with family members and fosters a sense of interdependence and the need to be responsible to others like them. As experiences broaden, this value is transferred to other important social groups and becomes the value of universalism. Universalism requires open-mindedness in understanding groups where individuals differ. This value is related to the need to be responsible to others, outside of one's own "in-group". The individuals' goal is to contribute to equity and social justice across different groups. [14]

The value of Achievement, as defined by Schwartz, refers to a personal success through demonstrating competence in comparison to others. This value fulfills the needs to be successful, ambitious and capable. When achievement is associated with the need for social status, prestige, control and dominance, it reflects the need for Power. Therefore, the values of achievement and power reflect the goals of outperforming others and seeking power. The need to feel relatedness to others is fulfilled by satisfying the needs of social power, authority and preserving one's image in society. Additionally, the value of achievement can be ranked in close proximity to the values of Security, Conformity and Tradition.

Security reflects the need to feel safe through harmony and stability of society. The goal is to feel safe, physically and emotionally. If the values of achievement and power are hierarchically important then it may become important to reciprocate relations to help promote social order in society to remain safe. Conformity reflects the need to restrain inclinations and impulses that disrupt society and therefore repre-

sent goals of obedience and self-discipline. Not disrupting the balance of society is another way to ensure continued pursuit of the needs represented in achievement, power and security. Tradition reflects a valued commitment to cultural or religious customs, ideas and the goal is to be humble and respectfully accept life's condition. As can be seen, different combinations and hierarchies of the values represented in Schwartz's theory motivate behavior for different reasons, and guide behavior differently.

According to Skarzynska [16], preference of values is connected with the general orientation towards reality. In modern societies, individuals preferring self-guidance (also called developmental or autonomous) values have better chance for personal development, good life and success. Development values (self-reliance, self-sufficiency, individual autonomy, responsibility, openness to experience) lead to individualism, achievement motivation, independence. The concept of pro-developmental orientation and "the modern mentality syndrome" proposed by Zysk [17] based on the results of the research on the development of societies by Inceles and Smith [18, 19] also proposes that a modern personality, actively taking part in the process of the social changes, is characterized by specific types of values.

This study designed to determine values preferences in students of Tehran city.

Material and Methods

This is a descriptive study. The sample size consists of 1000 students that educating in Tehran high schools. We used clustering method for sampling, for this reason we divided Tehran to 4 geographical region based on socio economic aspects also. We selected 2 random schools from north region one of them was girls' schools and another for boys. This selection was repeated for west and east regions. But in south region we selected 4 schools because more students were available in this area. In each school we selected 100 students randomly. So our sample consists of 1000 students 500 girls and 500 boys. Each student was given Schwartz value survey.

The Schwartz Value Survey [4] includes 56 single-value items representing groups of 10 types of values: tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, self-direction, hedonism, stimulation, universalism, and benevolence. Respondents rate the importance of each value item ("a guiding principle in my life") on a 9-point scale ranging from 7 (of supreme importance) to -1 (opposed to my values). The structure of the 10 values has shown cross-cultural stability across dozens of countries and has been found to relate meaningfully to real behaviors, such as prosocial, antisocial, environmental, political, consumer, and intellectual behaviors. Definitions of the values and corresponding single-value items, as well as the way that structural relations between the 10 values may be spatially represented, can be found in many published papers [2,3]

Results

Table 1 demonstrates the distribution of samples is age groups. The average of ages were $M=16.01$ and the $SD=0.973$.

Most people were in 15-16 ages.

Table 4 demonstrates the relation between subsequent of Schwartz inventory. As you can see all relations were significant ($P < 0.001$). The highest relation was between Schwartz and self-enhancement ($r = 0.88$) and Schwartz and openness to change ($r = 0.88$). The lowest relation was between stimulation and self-transcendence ($r = 0.36$) and after that between hedonism and stimulation ($r = 0.38$). The self-enhancement and openness to change showed high relation with power.

Table 5 demonstrates the mean of scores of 2 groups and as you can see the highest mean in both groups belongs to universalism and the lower if for hedonism. Boys had lower mean than girls in universalism, self direction, security and benevolence aspects.

For comparing between boys and girls in Schwartz values inventory we performed t test. The results outlined in table 6. As you can see the results showed significant differences between boys and girls in "security", "tradition", "conformity" and "hedonism". In other words in "security" there was significant ($p < 0.004$) differences and girls have higher score than boys. In "tradition" aspect there was significant ($p < 0.016$) differences and boys have higher score than girls. In "conformity" aspect there was significant ($p < 0.007$) differences and girls have higher score than boys. In "hedonism" aspect there was significant ($p < 0.017$) differences and boys have higher score than girls.

Discussion

In a culture where everyone holds the same moral, political, religious, and social values, identity achievement is relatively easy [20] However, in a society with rapidly changing values and norms characterized by a dominant group, minority-group members are faced with an ever expanding array of identity choices, making it very difficult for the adopted teen to choose an individual identity.

The results of this study suggest that the values, interests and goals to satisfy basic human needs are consistent with the theories used in this study. Students' reported patterns of values within the categories of interest that supported the idea that values play a role in motivation toward specific types of careers. This is consistent with the theoretical model presented by Miller and Brickman. As students progress through school they experience working with subject content in the social context of school, with multiple internal and external factors shaping and giving meaning to different types of tasks. Through these continued experiences students gain knowledge, develop interests, skills and abilities to set goals to meet "self" and "self among others" needs which ultimately become a representation of the values of the student. Values become consumed in future expected outcomes such as career choice. Some students learn to prefer tasks that are completed in a social context and are motivated at school when they have the opportunity to use knowledge, skills and abilities that they feel confident and value the needs that can be accomplished within a social environment. Still other stu-

dents have developed interests and preferences for tasks that have proved successful for fulfilling "self needs" within a non-social environment. Clearly, these students differed in their values and subject content interests, and in different types of activities, social and non-social. These findings provide a view of the role of values in a students' motivation to finish their education.

The results of Schwartz periodic questionnaire of values showed that, in terms of the ranking of values, the value of Conformity had conquered the first place between all ten values, and Security and self-direction were in second and third place. The last steps between eight and eleven ranks were belonged to the Tradition, Stimulation and Power which was placed in the end of the list. The Conformity, the first value in the ranking introduces the life-adjustment as the most important challenge among adolescent population. In the other words adolescence is the time in which we face a big change in hormones level and physiologic status.

The important role that gonad steroid hormones play throughout development and adulthood in regulating plastic changes in neuronal structure and function is noted, highlighting the need for further studies to determine the extent to which the dramatic increases in circulating steroid hormones at puberty modulate brain circuits that underlie changes in social behaviors, risk-taking behaviors, and cognitive function at adolescence and these abrupt changes may culminate in adjustment disorders. Adolescents in a psychiatric unit may go through periods of crisis and each crisis could be understood as an attempt to change the adolescent's relationship with these adults. One of these crises is the security crisis. Based on Abraham Maslow's theory, the security is one of the most important basic needs of the human; therefore, lack of security may block all other aspects of evolution. Poverty, family conflict, and depression are some of the predictors of adolescent insecurity. In addition; security plays a special role in adolescent population, that's why the security has placed in second rank. In the related study findings suggest that security is closely connected to the workings of the mother-adolescent relationship via a secure-base phenomenon, in which the teen can explore independence in thought and speech from the secure base of a maternal relationship characterized by maternal attunement to the adolescent and maternal supportiveness. Independence solicitation in adolescence period diminishes values of power and tradition down to the end of list. Adolescent who is seeking a new identity may see tradition and power as traverses. And in the case of power, this value is not so practical in this stage of life, therefore they rarely face situations which need use of power and this value is also placed at the end of the list. A related study shows that Parental Power Bases and Processes as Predictors of Adolescent Conformity which means that several dimensions of parental power bases and processes were significant predictors of adolescent conformity.

Table 1: distribution of samples base on age

Age group (years old)	n	percents
< 14	25	2.5
14-15	288	29.3
15-16	353	35.9
> 16	297	30.2
missing	21	2.1
total	984	100

Table 2: Distribution of samples base on the grade in high school

grade	n	percents
1 st year	350	35.6
2 nd year	193	19.6
3 rd year	327	33.2
4 th year	40	4.1
missing	74	7.5
total	984	100

Table 3: distribution of samples base on geographical region

Geographical region	n	percents
East of Tehran	351	35.7
North of Tehran	201	20.4
West of Tehran	223	22.7
South of Tehran	209	21.2
total	984	100

Table 5: Mean and SD of boys and girls scores of Schwartz values in samples

No.	value	sex	n	M	SD
1	universalism	Girl	315	35.57	3.66
		Boy	577	35.19	5.35
2	power	Girl	317	20.55	2.78
		Boy	586	20.74	3.27
3	Spirituality	Girl	320	16.66	2.51
		Boy	592	16.73	2.96
4	Self-direction	Girl	320	27.08	2.75
		Boy	583	26.69	3.78
5	security	Girl	319	22.97	2.15
		Boy	580	22.42	3.43
6	tradition	Girl	314	23.61	3.25
		Boy	575	24.21	3.86
7	Conformity	Girl	322	18.50	1.79
		Boy	592	18.13	2.38
8	stimulation	Girl	323	12.00	2.48
		Boy	592	12.16	2.72
9	hedonism	Girl	324	8.11	1.47
		Boy	594	8.37	1.69
10	benevolence	Girl	321	30.78	3.69
		Boy	579	30.58	4.86
11	achievement	Girl	315	20.68	2.74
		Boy	587	20.76	3.28
12	total	Girl	258	237.71	20.88
		Boy	484	238.27	29.44

Table 6: t test for comparing between boys and girls in Schwartz value inventory.

No.	value	equal variances assumed	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
		Equal variances not assumed	21.246	0.000	1.130	890	0.259
					1.257	845.478	0.209
1	universalism	equal variances assumed	2.110	0.147	1.130	890	0.259
		Equal variances not assumed			1.257	845.478	0.209
2	power	equal variances assumed	9.982	0.002	-0.388	910	0.698
		Equal variances not assumed			-0.407	749.835	0.684
3	Spirituality	equal variances assumed	15.219	0.000	1.643	901	0.101
		Equal variances not assumed			1.797	832.180	0.073
4	Self-direction	equal variances assumed	28.321	0.000	2.557	897	0.011
		Equal variances not assumed			2.905	882.472	0.004
5	security	equal variances assumed	3.462	0.063	-2.304	887	.021
		Equal variances not assumed			-2.423	741.058	0.016
6	tradition	equal variances assumed	11.411	0.001	2.493	912	0.013
		Equal variances not assumed			2.704	821.064	0.007
7	Conformity	equal variances assumed	1.749	0.186	-0.880	913	0.379
		Equal variances not assumed			-0.904	715.094	0.366
8	stimulation	equal variances assumed	8.523	.004	-2.304	916	0.021
		Equal variances not assumed			-2.398	743.910	0.017
9	hedonism	equal variances assumed	13.346	0.000	0.639	898	0.523
		Equal variances not assumed			0.690	814.239	0.490
10	benevolence	equal variances assumed	6.606	0.010	-0.349	900	0.727
		Equal variances not assumed			-0.368	747.094	0.713
11	achievement	equal variances assumed	12.160	0.001	-0.272	740	0.786
		Equal variances not assumed			-0.301	682.391	0.764

Table 4: the relation between subsequent of Schwartz inventory

	Self-Enhancement	Openness to change	Universalism	power	Self Transcendence	Self direction	security	tradition	conformity	stimulation	hedonism	benevolence	achievement
Openness to change Sig r	0.000 0.79												
Universalism Sig r	0.000 0.71	0.000 0.73											
Power Sig r	0.000 0.88	0.000 0.66	0.000 0.62										
Self Transcendence Sig r	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.55	0.000 0.62	0.000 0.52									
Self direction Sig r	0.000 0.68	0.000 0.87	0.000 0.87	0.000 0.72	0.000 0.61								
security Sig r	0.000 0.62	0.000 0.66	0.000 0.71	0.000 0.57	0.000 0.55	0.000 0.70							
tradition Sig r	0.000 0.70	0.000 0.65	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.61	0.000 0.56	0.000 0.61	0.000 0.53						
Conformity Sig r	0.000 0.63	0.000 0.66	0.000 0.60	0.000 0.58	0.000 0.52	0.000 0.70	0.000 0.68	0.000 0.58					
stimulation Sig r	0.000 0.57	0.000 0.80	0.000 0.48	0.000 0.47	0.000 0.36	0.000 0.50	0.000 0.39	0.000 0.45	0.000 0.41				
hedonism Sig r	0.000 0.67	0.000 0.67	0.000 0.51	0.000 0.50	0.000 0.47	0.000 0.43	0.000 0.47	0.000 0.47	0.000 0.41	0.000 0.38			
benevolence Sig r	0.000 0.63	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.68	0.000 0.51	0.000 0.64	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.65	0.000 0.60	0.000 0.61	0.000 0.36	0.000 0.48		
achievement Sig r	0.000 0.85	0.000 0.63	0.000 0.58	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.47	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.50	0.000 0.59	0.000 0.52	0.000 0.51	0.000 0.38	0.000 0.56	
Schwartz (total) Sig r	0.000 0.88	0.000 0.88	0.000 0.87	0.000 0.78	0.000 0.73	0.000 0.83	0.000 0.80	0.000 0.79	0.000 0.78	0.000 0.61	0.000 0.63	0.000 0.81	0.000 0.75

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