



Values of Social Work Students: A Cross Cultural Study

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Abstract:

Values are very important aspect of humans' life. They differ from a person to another and from a culture to another but they are similar in the way affect one's behavior and actions. This study aims at identifying the general human values which influence the beliefs and the manners of social work students. A total of 267 social work students from Kuwait and United States of America participated in the study and responded to Schwartz Value Survey (2002). The results showed that American and Kuwaiti students prioritized their values in a similar way to a certain extent. However, there were differences between groups in some values' importance.

Values are very important aspect of humans' life. Every human being holds several values which vary in their degree of importance. Although they might differ from one person to another and/or from a society to another, human values are similar in that they build the foundation on which individuals base their behaviors and attitudes. Furthermore, human values affect our perception, problem-solving, personality and sensitivity to other people, social problems, and political issues (Segal, 1993). In general, individuals structure their values system according to their understanding of the meaning of life as well as according to their social context and what their culture/tradition/religion emphasizes as acceptable and desirable.

The profession of social work believes in certain values that are known to be humanitarian, empathetic, and compassionate. Social work practitioners, therefore, are expected to express values comparable to those of the profession to better understand and assist their

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clients. Hence, it is important to examine and identify the general human values which influence the beliefs and the manners of social work students who will soon be practitioners.

The present study is one of the very rare studies comparing values of social work students in two different cultures (Segal, 1993; Chau, 1980). It compares values of social work students in Kuwait and United States of America. These apart countries represent two distinct societies with diverse economic, social, and cultural features. One can say that Kuwait symbolizes a collective civilization that emphasizes conformity to society's rules and traditions while America represents an individualist culture in which people express great deal of autonomy and independence in beliefs and actions. The aim of the study is to focus on similarities and differences in human value importance between Kuwaiti and American social work students. In other words, the aim is to answer the intriguing question: does cultural background have any influence on how students of the same profession prioritize their values? The author hypothesizes that there is no relationship between cultural background and values prioritization and that social work students will share the same values regardless of their cultural background.

Literature review

Values and theory

Literature is rich in studies and theories discussing values and their importance in explaining behaviors and attitudes as well as personal and social change (Schwartz, Starch, Segal, 1993; Hayes & Varley, 1965; Weiss, 2005; Aldahery & Sufian, 1997; Sufian, 1999). To define the term value, (Roccas et al, 2002) defines values as "cognitive representations of desirable, abstract goals (e.g., security, justice)". (Prince-Gibson and Schwartz, 1998) define human values as "transsituational, varying in importance, that serves as guiding principles in the life of a person or a group" (p. 49). In the field of social work, the Social Work Dictionary (1999) defines value as:

The customs, beliefs, standards of conduct, and principles considered desirable by a culture, a group of people, or an

individual. Social workers, as one group, ascribe to a set of core values on which social work's mission is based. These core values, as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics, are service, social justice, dignity and worth of person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. (p. 507).

One of the main theories that explain the meaning of values, values importance and priority, and the relationship between individuals' values and their behavior and attitudes is the Human Basic Values theory developed by (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, 1990) then modified by Schwartz in 1992. In his theory about human basic values, (Schwartz, 1992) discusses the meanings of human values and explains values as (1) concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, (5) are ordered by relative importance, and (6) relative importance of multiple values guide action (Schwartz, 2006). Schwartz proposed that the core content aspect of a value is the nature of goal or motivational concern that it articulates. He derived 10 basic values that he believed were universal human requirements and that people across nations share. These ten values and their motivational goals are:

- 1 - **Power:** this value focuses on attainment of social status and prestige, social power and authority, wealth, and having control over people and resources.
- 2 - **Achievement:** this value emphasizes personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards to obtain social approval.
- 3 - **Hedonism:** this value signifies pleasure, sensuous satisfaction, and enjoying life.
- 4 - **Stimulation:** this value is related to one's need for excitement and challenge in life.
- 5 - **Self-direction:** this value focuses on independent thought and action, choice, autonomy, creativity, and freedom.
- 6 - **Universalism:** this value relates to understanding, appreciation, and protection for the welfare of all people and the environment.

- 7 - **Benevolence:** this value refers to the concern for preserving and enhancing the welfare of close people whom one has regular and direct contact with.
- 8 - **Tradition:** this value focuses on respect and commitment to society's rites and customs as well as acceptance of the rites of one's culture or religion.
- 9 - **Conformity:** this value emphasizes self-discipline, obedience, and control of actions or desires that could violate social expectations or norms.
- 10 - **Security:** this value is related to the sense of belonging and the safety and stability of society, relationships, as well as of self.

According to his theory, Schwartz states that although these 10 values are universal, their priority differ from one person to another. People order the importance of each value depending on their life experience and circumstances. He also suggests that a person's background defines the way this person prioritizes his/her values. He explains:

Peoples life circumstances provide opportunities to pursue or express some values more easily than others. For example, wealthy persons can pursue power values more easily, and people who work in the free professions can express self-direction values more easily. Life circumstances also impose constraints against pursuing or expressing values. Having dependent children constrains parents to limit their pursuit of stimulation values. And people with strongly ethnocentric peers find it hard to express universalism values. In other words, life circumstances make the pursuit or expression of different values more or less rewarding or costly. (Schwartz, 2006, p. 23).

In terms of age, Schwartz believes that the older the person grows, the more embedded in social networks he/she becomes, the more committed to customary patterns, and less exposed to changes and challenges. This means that preservation values such as tradition, conformity, and security increase with age while openness to change values such as self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism decrease.

As for income, it is believed that material comfort creates opportunities to engage in discretionary activities and encourages a person to choose one's life style freely. For example, people with higher income express values of stimulation, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement more than values of security, conformity, and tradition (Schwartz, 2006).

Many cross-cultural studies were conducted to test this theory and confirmed that these 10 values had equivalent meaning in different cultures (Schwartz, et al, 1997). It was found that the 10 values do have equivalent meaning in many different cultures, however, not all the items explaining each value showed similar meaning all cultures. Other studies focused on differences within the culture in regards to gender (Struch, et al, 2002), age, education, ethnicity (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998). Interestingly, no noteworthy gender differences were found in this study (Struch et al, 2002). (Prince-Gibson and Schwartz, 1998) found that age and level of education had considerable effect on values priorities. They also found that "ethnicity had substantial effect on value rating that corresponds to the order of ethnic groups from more traditional to more modern" (p. 61).

(Schwartz and Sagie, 2000) discussed the relationship between socioeconomic development and political democratization on value importance and value consensus. Their study on 42 nations showed that "the higher the level of both socioeconomic development and democratization, the greater the importance attributed to self-direction, stimulation, universalism, benevolence, and hedonism values, and the less the importance attributed to power, conformity, and security values" (p. 483).

Values and the profession of social work

In the profession of social work there are core values embraced by social workers. Values, such as social justice, dignity and worth of person, and the importance of human relationships, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective (NASW Code of Ethics, 1996). Not only it is important for social practitioners and students to believe in and express these values in order for them to be

able to help clients and people in need, but it is even more important that individuals entering the profession of social work have these core values as a part of their personality, way of life, and philosophy. In fact it was found that there was a relationship between students' personality characteristics and the specialty they choose to study, especially students majoring in Social Work, Psychology, and Nursing (Sufian, 1999).

Unfortunately, very few studies focused on the importance of values among social work students. For example, (Weiss, 2005) conducted a cross-national comparative study to examine the similarities and differences in professional ideology among social work graduates in 10 countries. She found out that there was substantial similarity in their professional ideology regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds. Looking back at one of the first studies on this subject we find that (Hayes and Varley, 1965) conducted a study to test the impact of social work education on students' values. They assumed that graduate students would express higher professional values than undergraduate students because they have undergone longer significant period of professional socialization. They found out that there was little difference between the scores of the two groups of female students and greater difference between the males' two groups.

To the knowledge of the author, studies comparing values of social work students from different cultures are scarce. One study by (Chau, 1980) investigated the similarities and differences of the professional values held by social work students and faculty members in United States of America and Hong Kong. Findings of his study showed that American and Hong Kong students shared similar normative values (which were formulated based on the social welfare conceptions of man, society, and their interface) but differed significantly on instruments values (which were formulated according to the definition of poverty, remedies for poverty, and attitudes toward public dependency). He also found that faculty members in both countries expressed similar normative and instrumental values. There-

fore, he suggested that some professional values were universally shared while other values were influenced by cultures.

A study by (Segal, 1993) tried to compare the personality traits of Indian and American social work students as a reflection of national and professional values. He proposed that there would be differences in values and personality traits based on the nature of the society which the students come from- individualism vs. collectivism. He suggested that American students would express more individualistic views and maximum importance to personal goals, while Indian students would demonstrate higher consideration to interest of others in the community. As expected, students from the individualist culture (America) showed evidence of more self-oriented behaviors than Indian students (collectivist culture). However, he also found out that "although national culture has a significant impact on the individual, the effect of a professional culture that cuts across national boundaries may be evidenced in that individual's behavior, attitudes and personality" (p.69).

In terms of developing an instrument that particularly measure values of social workers, very small number of scholars tried to achieve this goal. (Pike, 1996) developed a scale (**Social Work Values Inventory**) to measure the adherence to social work practice values. (Abbot, 1998) developed another scale (Professional Opinion Scale) to measure values of social work practitioners when they make a decision. Neither of those scales fit the goal of this study- that is to identify the general human values which social workers embrace and appreciate.

Moreover, literature in Arabic is very poor in terms of developing a measurement to assess values of social work students or practitioners. The very few studies which the author found, however, used different foreign scales to measure values of psychology students (Aldahery & Sufian, 1997; Sufian, 1999). Aldahery and Sufian found out that female Psychology students scored higher in the Study of Values Scale (Allport et al, 1951) than males. They also noticed that there was no significant correlation between values and number of years in the psychology program. However, they explained the limited change/increase in students' values as a result of having high social

values to begin with as psychology students which also explains their choice of this particular major.

Methodology

The instrument

There was no instrument measuring values of social work students in particular, thus, the author decided to use Schwartz Value Scale (SVS, 1992) because it has a broader and more general spectrum of values that apply to all people in different professions and different cultures. (Schwartz, 1992) developed an instrument to measure values based on his theory. The instrument is known as the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992, 2005a). The SVS provides the reader with two lists of value items. The first list includes 30 items that describe potentially desirable end-states in noun form such as: freedom and pleasure. The second list includes 26 or 27 items that describe potentially desirable ways of acting in adjective form, such as loyal and independent. Each item expresses an aspect of the motivational goal of one value. The number of items measuring each value varies according to the conceptual width of the value. Some values have only three items such as stimulation and hedonism, where other values have up to eight items such as universalism. To make it easy for the reader to understand the abstract terms, the author of the instrument provided an explanatory phrase in parentheses following each item to further specify its meaning. For example, WEALTH (material possessions, money) is one item to measure the value of Power; and BROADMINDED (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs) is a Universalism item.

Respondents rate the importance of each value item "as a guiding principle in MY life" on a 9-point scale labeled 7 (of supreme importance), 6 (very important), 5 and 4 (unlabeled), 3 (important), 2 and 1 (unlabeled), 0 (not important), -1 (opposed to my values). Schwartz explains that the reason for structuring his scale this way is because "people view most values as varying from mildly to very

important. This nonsymmetrical scale is stretched at the upper end and condensed at the bottom in order to map the way people think about values, as revealed in pre-tests. The scale also enables respondents to report opposition to values that they try to avoid expressing or promoting. This is especially necessary for cross-cultural studies because people in one culture or subculture may reject values from others cultures" (p12). According to Schwartz, the importance of each value is measured by calculating the average rating given to items associated with that value.

In terms of reliability, "across 212 samples (national representative, teacher, student), alpha reliabilities of the 10 values average 0.68, ranging from 0.61 for tradition to 0.75 for universalism" (Schwartz, 2006, p.12). Most of the sample was school teachers or university students who were recruited depending on convenient sampling way. Teachers in grades 4 to 10 were recruited because they "play an explicit role in value socialization, they are presumably key carriers of culture, and they are probably close to the broad value consensus in societies rather than at the leading edge of change" (Schwartz, 1992, p.18). University students were chosen because they were easy to access and because student data from other value studies are always available for comparisons. In another study, internal consistency was examined by computing a coefficient alpha of each value type and it was found that the stimulation index showed the highest reliability with a mean of 0.75, while lowest reliability was for the tradition index with a mean of 0.55 (Schwartz, 1992).

The Schwartz Values Scale (1992) has been translated into 47 languages. In this study the author uses the English version of the scale with social work students in the United States of America. The Arabic version of the scale is used with social work students in Kuwait. Personal contact with the author of the scale indicated that the Arabic version has been used in some studies in Egypt, Sudan, and some other

Arabic speaking countries. However, it was not possible to find published research papers on this matter.

Content validity

Because there was no previous studies reporting on the validity of the Arabic version of the SVS, a panel of social work professors was asked to evaluate the scale. It was found that all 57 items were stated clearly and did not need any changes or alteration in the wording.

Convergent validity

Correlation coefficients between the ten subscales of the SVS showed significant correlation among most subscales. After calculating the MRAT, the subscales which showed no significant correlation were: Tradition and Benevolence, Tradition and Universalism, Tradition and Security, Benevolence and Achievement, Benevolence and Security, Universalism and Self-Direction, Universalism and Stimulation, Universalism and Security, Self-direction and Hedonism, Self-direction and Achievement, Self-direction and Power, Stimulation and Hedonism, Stimulation and Achievement, Hedonism and Achievement, Power and Achievement, and Power and Security.

Reliability

The internal consistency of the scale was computed using Cronbach's alpha and found to be 0.94 which indicates high reliability. As for the subscales, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.58 for the Power value to 0.88 for Benevolence and Universalism (See table No. 1). A closer look at the subscales reliability shows that reliability was lower when calculated separately for Kuwaiti sample and ranged from 0.58 for the Power value to 0.78 for Universalism. In fact, after consulting with the author of the SVS, one item in the Power subscale (question number 46: preserving my public image) was eliminated before conducting the final analysis because of its negative effect on the whole subscale.

Table (1)
Reliability of the scale

No	Scales	Items	American (n = 102)	Kuwaitis (n = 165)	All (n = 267)
1.	Conformity	4	.810	.645	.710
2.	Tradition	5	.781	.692	.724
3.	Benevolence	5	.882	.603	.729
4.	Universalism	8	.882	.782	.822
5.	Self-Direction	5	.804	.624	.695
6.	Stimulation	3	.711	.636	.673
7.	Hedonism	3	.765	.612	.650
8.	Achievement	4	.847	.703	.764
9.	Power	3	.787	.583	.706
10.	Security	5	.845	.705	.780
	Overall	45	.971	.910	.941

Procedures

As a first step, the author received an IRB approval to conduct this study. A total of 267 social work students participated in the study. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling strategy. Data were collected in two different countries representing two different cultures. In United States a sample of 102 social work students in the undergraduate program (BSW) was recruited from the University of Wyoming and the San Francisco State University. A higher number of students (165) were recruited from the undergraduate social work program in Kuwait University. Both groups completed the SVS with no noteworthy remarks or concerns.

Data Analysis

Collected data were statistically tested using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive analyses were conducted to provide information about the sample and to find out the

means, standard deviations, and ranges of scores. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine if the instrument had adequate internal consistency.

Results

Sample characteristics

Majority of the 267 students were females (93.5%). In the Kuwaiti sample 97% were females while females in the American sample were 87.6%. Age range was between 19 and 70 years old (mean = 25.11). The majority of Kuwaiti students were under the age of 21 (73.2%) while most of American students were 25 years old and above (52.5%). In terms of education, the largest part of Kuwaiti students was in fourth year (58.2%) while in the American sample first year students represented the highest group with 38.1%. Majority of the total sample were single (59.4%). Kuwaiti single students represented 70.3% while single Americans were 39.6%. Most of the students had an average annual income (62.6%).

Differences between groups

When conducting t-test to find out the differences between groups there were significant differences between Kuwaitis and Americans in seven of the subscales. Kuwaiti students had higher means in Conformity (mean = 16.3, SD = 4.23, $p < .01$), Tradition (mean = 19.5, SD = 5.9, $p < .001$), and Security (mean = 23.6, SD = 4.5, $p < .001$) while Americans had higher means in Self-direction (mean = 20.2, SD = 5.3, $p < .001$), Stimulation (mean = 7.8, SD = 3.6, $p < .001$), Hedonism (mean = 9.8, SD = 3.4, $p < .05$), and Power (mean = 9.1, SD = 5.2, $p < .01$). Benevolence, Universalism, and Achievement were the only values which showed no significant differences (See table No. 2).

Table (2)
T-test between Kuwaitis and Americans

Scales	American		Kuwaitis		df	t
	M	SD	M	SD		
Conformity	14.57	4.54	16.26	4.23	202	3.08**
Tradition	16.34	6.55	19.50	5.88	196	4.08***
Benevolence	21.08	5.87	21.30	4.70	179	.34
Universalism	34.06	9.01	31.96	8.66	207	1.89
Self Direction	20.20	5.29	17.86	5.17	210	3.55***
Stimulation	7.81	3.58	5.28	4.79	255	4.91***
Hedonism	9.81	3.35	8.78	4.43	254	2.17*
Achievement	15.11	4.60	14.20	4.36	205	1.62
Power	9.14	5.23	7.22	4.02	174	3.17**
Security	20.70	5.83	23.58	4.52	175	4.25***

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, 1-tailed

Gender differences were not tested in this study because of lack of male students in both Kuwaiti and American samples. Therefore, comparison was made between females only. T-test showed significant differences between Kuwaiti and American females in all values except Benevolence. For Kuwaiti females, values of Conformity (mean = 16.3, SD = 3.6, $p < .01$), Tradition (mean = 19.5, SD = 5.9, $p < .001$), and Security (mean = 23.5, SD = 4.6, $p < .001$) were of higher importance than to Americans.

In terms of age, the sample was divided in to three groups: below 21 years old, 22-24 years old, and 25 years and above. It was difficult to compare the three age groups because of the lack of cases in the other two categories especially the third group (only one case in the Kuwaiti sample). Therefore, the third group (25 and above) was eliminated and the other two groups were combined and the comparison was made for one age category only- that is 24 and below. T-test showed significant difference in four values. Conformity (mean = 16.2, SD = 4.2, $p < .001$),

Tradition (mean = 19.5, SD = 5.9, $p < .001$), and Security (mean = 23.6, SD = 4.5, $p < .001$) were more important for Kuwaitis than for Americans while Stimulation (mean = 6.9, SD = 4.1, $p < .05$) was more important to Americans.

As for education, first year students were eliminated from the comparison for lack of cases in that category in the Kuwaiti sample. All three educational levels were put together and comparison was made between Kuwaitis and Americans. T-test showed significant differences between groups in all values except the Benevolence. Values of Conformity (mean = 16.3, SD = 4.2, $p < .05$), Tradition (mean = 19.5, SD = 5.9, $p < .05$), and Security (mean = 23.6, SD = 4.5, $p < .05$) were of higher importance to Kuwaiti students than to Americans.

Another t-test was conducted to examine differences between groups according to marital status. Because of lack of cases in the other categories, only married and singles were compared. When comparing single Kuwaitis and single Americans, t-test showed significant differences in half of the values. Self-direction (mean = 20.7, SD = 3.4, $p < .05$), Stimulation (mean = 8.6, SD = 2.8, $p < .001$), Hedonism (mean = 11.2, SD = 1.9, $p < .01$), Achievement (mean = 16.4, SD = 2.6, $p < .05$), and Power (mean = 10.8, SD = 3.9, $p < .001$) were more important to American singles than to Kuwaitis. Comparing married Kuwaitis with married Americans, t-test showed significant differences in six values. Universalism (mean = 37.5, SD = 4.2, $p < .01$), Self-direction (mean = 21.8, SD = 2.9, $p < .001$), Stimulation (mean = 9.2, SD = 2.8, $p < .001$), Hedonism (mean = 10.2, SD = 2.1, $p < .05$), Achievement (mean = 16.5, SD = 1.9, $p < .01$), and Power (mean = 12.8, SD = 4.1, $p < .001$) were more important for Americans than for Kuwaitis.

Differences within groups

More analyses were conducted to test out other differences within groups. T-test for married and single Kuwaiti students only showed

significant difference in five values. Universalism (mean = 32.7, SD = 8.3, $p < .05$), Self-direction (mean = 18.6, SD = 4.9, $p < .01$), Stimulation (mean = 5.8, SD = 4.9, $p < .05$), Hedonism (mean = 9.3, SD = 4.4, $p < .05$), and Achievement (mean = 14.8, SD = 4.2, $p < .05$) were more important for single than for married students. For American students, the t-test showed no significant differences in any of the values between single and married students.

One way ANOVA was conducted to test differences within groups in terms of income. Because of the small sample, income levels were regrouped into three categories instead of five. First group included very low and low income, average was another group, and high and very high income was a third group. In the American sample, there was significant difference in the Tradition and Security values only between students with Low and Average income. Both values were of higher importance to the Average income people than to people in the Low income category. As for the Kuwaiti sample, two groups only were available for comparison because there were no cases at all in the low and very low income category. Comparison between Average and high income students showed significant differences in Self-direction, Hedonism, Achievement, and Security in favor of the high income group.

Value Ranking

In terms of value importance, universalism was found out to be the most important value for both Kuwaitis and Americans (mean = 37.8) while Stimulation was the least important value (mean = 11.2). Ranking of the other values, however, differed slightly between groups. Benevolence came second for Americans followed by Security then Self-direction, while Security came second for Kuwaitis followed by Benevolence then Tradition (See table No. 3).

Table (3)
Ranking of Values

Scales	Americans	Kuwaitis	Americans + Kuwaitis
Conformity	7	6	6
Tradition	5	4	5
Benevolence	2	3	3
Universalism	1	1	1
Self Direction	4	5	4
Stimulation	10	10	10
Hedonism	8	8	8
Achievement	6	7	7
Power	9	9	9
Security	3	2	2

Discussion

To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to examine the difference between values of social work students in America and Kuwait. The aim of the study was to understand how people of the same profession yet of different cultures prioritize their values. It was important for the author to elucidate the factors which influence the value importance among social work students and the structure of their guiding principles in life.

The expectation that social work students would prioritize their values differently because they came from different cultures was not highly supported in this study. The analysis showed that both Kuwaiti and American students ranked their guiding principles mainly in the same way in which Universalism was the most important value and Stimulation was the least important value. In accordance with previous literature (Segal, 1993; Sufian, 1999), this study contends that a profession can influence the values of its practitioners. This study articulates the same idea that students of social sciences, such as

psychology and social work, convey values and traits such as kindness, consideration, and compassion. A major finding, yet expected, is that social work students in the two different cultures have no differences in the value of Benevolence, which is a core characteristic of social work practitioners. Moreover, the value of Universalism, which means understanding, appreciation, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature, came first when American and Kuwaiti social work students prioritized their guiding principles.

Although students from individualist culture (Americans) and from collectivist culture (Kuwait) did not prioritize their values differently, they showed significant differences in the importance of some values. For example, in many comparisons the values of Conformity, Tradition, and Security showed higher importance to Kuwaiti students than American students. Those results could be explained giving the fact that Kuwaiti culture emphasizes the ideology of submission and respect for the tradition, rules, beliefs, and customs of the family, group, and society to the extent that individuals would restrain their actions and inclinations that are likely to offend others or violate social expectations and norms. On the other hand, the values such as Self-direction, Stimulation, Achievement, and Power were more important to Americans than to Kuwaitis since Western cultures encourage independent thoughts and actions more than Eastern cultures.

An interesting finding of this study is related to the financial factor. The comparison between Kuwaiti average and high income students showed significant differences in Self-direction, Hedonism, and Achievement in favor of the high income group which supports the finding of (Schwartz, 2006). He suggested that people with higher income express values of stimulation, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement more than values of security, conformity, and tradition. However, the findings of the American sample contradict with Schwartz's in that Tradition and Security values were of higher importance to the Average income people than to people in the Low income.

Conclusion

Because this study is an exploratory study on values differences among social work students in Middle Eastern and Western cultures, it holds certain limitations. First of all, the instrument was administered to a convenient and partially small sample which made some comparisons difficult to be conducted when the variance in responses is very limited if not absent. Another limitation is the lack of male student participants, which can be expected in the field of social work. Moreover, we should take into consideration that when conducting a study concerned with values it is always expected to have what is known as socially desired answers. Therefore it is difficult to generalize the findings of this study.

In terms of further research, this study recommends that future studies take into consideration the cultural perception of some values. For example, the value of Power was viewed in a negative way among the Kuwaiti students because it implies dominance and controlling other people's lives, which is an undesirable trait in a traditional Eastern society. Therefore, one item of this subscale was deleted while conducting the statistical analysis of this study.

Future research may also replicate this study with a different type of sample to see if there are any similarities or differences between cultures and/or within the same culture. For example, researchers can compare values of students from diverse majors and specialties to see if area of study has any influence on the values. Another target population could be the social work practitioners. Research may focus on the connection between the values of the profession and the general human values.

Implications for the field of social work are several. A foremost implication of this study is for social work practitioners who interact with clients from different cultures. It is crucial for practitioners, especially in multi ethnic countries, to view clients' presenting problems within the context of their unique culture and the type of values they embrace which might be very distinct from their own values and ideology. Moreover, such study should add richness to social work

students' and practitioners' understanding of their own and their clients' value system that influence their behaviors and manners. Finally, social work schools and programs worldwide may need to give more attention in their curriculum to values of other nations and cultures to increase the knowledge and awareness of the social work students and prepare them to interact and intervene with clients from a different background.

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