Gender Differences in the Work Values of Filipino College Students

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Abstract

One way to understand future workforce behavior is to examine the work values. Work values imply individual career development and work performance. In this study, the role of gender on work values of college students has been examined. Using the Filipino Work Values Scale, 400 full-time college students (200 males, 200 female), aged 18 to 26 years old, enrolled in engineering, teacher education, business education, and information technology education degree programs were randomly selected in the study. Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to compare gender and work values. Results showed that college students have moderate to weak work values among the ten work values subscales. Gender differences in work values were noted on intellectual-achievement, material, and variety. This study generates helpful insights for developing gender-sensitive career counseling services.

Keywords: work values, gender, employability, career counseling, college students

Introduction

Changes in work conditions continue to raise questions for employers, educators, and policymakers about the generic and specific skills and competencies that college students need to succeed in their profession. Evidence for essential skills needs from employer surveys revealed, digital skills, teamwork, presentation skills, analytical skills, critical thinking skills, professional competence, and ability to meet the deadline (Australia, 2018; Niemelä, 2016).

As a result, many recent efforts have begun to reconceptualize skills in ways that potentially expand the content and range of learning experiences in higher education. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) develops and implements job-skills matching project, relevant and responsive research, development and extension (RDE), and gender and development program
as its long-term strategy to ensure quality education and employability of graduates (Licuanan, 2017).

Higher education institutions (HEI) across the Philippines develop academic and non-academic programs that will support the development of skills and competencies of students (Custodio, Espita, & Siy, 2017; Ejercito & Cadosales, 2009). For example, educators redesign curriculum, strict implementation of the academic retention policy, upgrading and utilization of technology required in the practice of the profession, service learning or volunteer work, in-house review (for board courses) and strengthening of industry linkage and partnership (for student internship and practicum). School counselor, career advisors, and psychologist tailor-fit guidance program align with the wellbeing and career and vocational needs of students.

The school counselor, career advisors, and school psychologist guide students to understand their future work role in their lives. According to Rohan (2000) and Rounds & Armstrong (2005) students should ask themselves the questions why they work, what they want to get from the work situation, and how the worker role will fit with their other life roles and life meaning. Understanding one’s personal work values system helps the individual answer the fundamental question about work. Thus, guidance and career advising assist students to learn about themselves, academic and occupational options, and decision-making skills so they can implement satisfying and rewarding academic and career plans (Gordon, 2006) and therefore, guidance counselors, career advisors, and psychologist must address work values of the students.

The theory of work values

Work values are defined as a set of beliefs and concepts that reflect the work and work-related satisfaction based on an individual’s preferred attributes and orientation (Dajani, 2018; Zytowski, 1970). This also refers to an objective psychological state that one seeks to achieve at work (Super, 1980).

To understand work values, Super’s lifespan, life-space theory and Schwartz theory of basic human values remarkably influenced the practice of career guidance. Super’s life-span, life-space theory posits the 5 developmental stages such as; growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement (Super, 1980). The primary goal of the ‘growth’ stage includes achieving autonomy and cultivating self-esteem, followed by the ‘exploration’ stage which focuses on individual solidifying vocational identity and decides on the career. As new skill sets that meet the demands of work develop during the ‘establishment’ stage, the acquired work-related skills and knowledge are then ‘maintained’. Lastly, the disengagement stage occurs when the individual takes on lesser work responsibilities and begins planning for retirement (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Schwartz theory of basic human values postulates the 10 universal personal values such as; stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, security, power, achievement, and hedonism. This personal value occurs in a motivational continuum. This continuum gives rise to the circular structure that personal values are adjacent to other values. The closer the two values to each other around the circle,
the more similar their underlying motivations while the more distant results in opposing motivations, for example, pursuing achievement values typically conflicts with benevolence values. Consequently, seeking success for self may hinder action aimed at helping others in need. Pursuing both achievement and power values is usually compatible. Thus, individuals and groups have different value priorities in work setting (Schwartz, 2012).

The family and socio-economic background (Kirkpatrick- Johnson, 2005; Llenares, 2017; Team, 1987) contribute to the distinctive values priorities of the individual. From a psychological standpoint, parent’s employment conditions shape work values that then shape parenting values and behavior and ultimately child outcomes (Kirkpatrick- Johnson, 2005). According to (Abrigo & Francisco-Abrigo, 2019) married women entry in the labor force is affected by their parenting role specifically if the child is at a young age. Mother's care has low substitutability which put more premiums on jobs that promote family time. Consequently, in the Philippines, more fathers with 97% reported being in the labor force compared with 61% mothers (Abrigo & Francisco-Abrigo, 2019).

Besides, gender shapes individual work values (Hüttges & Fay, 2015). Men are more likely to give importance on extrinsic reward-oriented values, salary and promotional opportunities while women value accessibility of workplace from one’s home (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Hüttges & Fay, 2015; Konrad, Ritchie Jr, Lieb, & Corrigall, 2000). According to Elizur (1994), women prefer affective work values (social relationship) while men consider instrumental pay and cognitive work values (influence, independence, and responsibility).

The sets of literature provide evidence on the role of family, socio-economic, and gender on explaining work values. However, there is a dearth of information that supports gender differences in the work values of Filipino college students.

**The present study**

Understanding college students work values generate helpful insights for employers (Aygün, Arslan, & Güney, 2008; Cortés-Pascual, Cano-Escoriza, & Orejudo, 2014; Haberman, 1997; Zupan, Kaše, Rašković, Yao, & Wang, 2015). Since work values are known to have an impact on job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational values, and organizational commitment (Elizur & Koslowsky, 2001; Ho, Oldenburg, Day, & Sun, 2012; Sousa & Porto, 2016)

With this, the present study aims to describe the work values of college students enrolled in various degree programs. And also, explore the role of gender on the work values of college students.

In this study, we hypothesized that;
a) There are differences between male and female college students on environmental, family-oriented, intellectual-achievement, interpersonal, managerial, material, occupation, organizational, religious and variety work values.

Methodology

Respondents and Sampling

There were 400 full-time 3rd year to 4th year college students, aged 21 ± 2.53 (range: 18-26) enrolled in architecture (n = 64), business administration (n = 58), civil engineering (n = 67), computer engineering (n = 48), computer science (n = 38), education (n = 33), electronics engineering (n = 67), and information technology (n = 25) degree programs were randomly selected for the study respondents during the second semester of academic year 2010-2011 in selected private Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Manila.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the administration of the survey, an orientation was conducted regarding the goal of the study. Consenting respondents were handed the pen-and-paper survey instrument. The respondents were informed that; a) they can participate and or withdraw with the study anytime; b) they will not receive any money or incentives for joining; c) there were no right or wrong answers; d) all items are needed to be answered, and e) confidentiality of data.

Instruments

The Filipino Work Values Scale (FWVS) Cronbach α = 0.90, a standardized instrument developed by (Cervera, 1999) was used as the tool for the study. FWVS was utilized to assess the ten work values of respondents in terms of environmental, Cronbach α = 0.88, familial, Cronbach α = 0.89, intellectual-achievement orientation Cronbach α = 0.85, interpersonal, Cronbach α = 0.88, managerial, Cronbach α = 0.85, material, Cronbach α = 0.88, occupational, Cronbach α = 0.87, organizational, Cronbach α = 0.84, religious, Cronbach α = 0.89, and variety, Cronbach α = 0.89 work values. The FWVS was consists of 80 items and rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree).

Table 1. The definition of work values and sample items (Cervera, 1999)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Values Scale</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sample Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>associates with pleasant physical working conditions: not too hot, cold, noisy, dirty, crowded, or too far from where one lives</td>
<td>‘A place of work which is not far from where you live’</td>
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<td>Family-Oriented</td>
<td>relates to family values: cohesion, unity, emotional closeness and security, respect for parents and family image</td>
<td>‘Work assignments which do not pull you away from your family much of the time’</td>
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<td>Intellectual-Achievement</td>
<td>associates with the opportunity for independent and critical thinking and with the feeling of accomplishment in doing a job well</td>
<td>‘A job, which maximizes your potential’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>relates to traits such as ‘amor propio’ (self-esteem), ‘hiya’ (coyness), ‘utang na loob’ (indebtedness), use of intermediaries or go-betweens, loyalty, hospitality, ‘pakikisama,’ emotional closeness, respect for authority</td>
<td>‘Working with people who have —pakikisama i.e., who are yielding to the will of the leader or majority to make the group completely agree in decisions’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>relates to the coordination of human and material resources to accomplish the objectives of a work organization associates with aspects of work that enables one to gain prestige, security and economic returns</td>
<td>‘A work organization which gives you the freedom to decide on matters of which you are responsible’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>relates to the exercise of one’s skills and competencies; subsumed in this are the following traits: fairness, competence, altruism, self-regulation, professional autonomy, and public service</td>
<td>‘A high salary/pay’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>relates to a feeling of membership in the work organization; the knowledge and acceptance of organizational goals and willingness of the organization to help reach these goals</td>
<td>‘A job of which you are fully knowledgeable’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>relates to the exercise of faith and other spiritual conviction</td>
<td>‘A work organizations which you are proud of being a member’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘A place of work where you are allowed to exercise your religious facilities’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variety associates with work that provides an opportunity to do different types of job in contrast with routine work ‘Varied work assignments’

Statistical Analysis

Shapiro Wilk test was used to report the normality of data at p>0.05. Since the work values data are non-normally distributed or free distributed data, Independent sample Mann-Whitney U test was computed (Field, 2013; Rahi, 2017). Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare a group of students (men and women) (categorical and independent variable) on the dependent continuous variables (work values) at p <0.05 using SPSS version 21.0 and GraphPad prism. Median was used to substitute mean on describing the work values of respondents on non-symmetrical data (Field, 2013).

Results

The goal of the study is to describe the work values of students. Based on the survey, the three dominant work values of the students were interpersonal (Med score = 54), intellectual-achievement orientation (Med score= 50), and occupational (Med score = 45.50) see (Figure 1-A). These work values were categorized only as ‘moderate’ work values. According to Saito, Imamura, & Miyagi (2010) interpersonal relationship or known as ‘Pakikisama’ is an innate value of Filipinos. This refers to being friendly, supportive, and helpful towards people at all times; it is the standard for tactful and polite interaction (Jocano, 1997). However, the intense value of Pakikisama may result in conformity. People tend to follow the group rather than doing what is right which lead to misconduct behavior.

Also, the results imply that the students generally consider future jobs that for them provide an opportunity for independent thinking and promote professional growth (intellectual achievement). They also regarded jobs that are in line with their education and competencies as essential (occupational).

The three lowest work values of students were organizational (Med score = 26), familial (Med score = 21) and variety (Med score = 17) (Figure 1-A). These lowest work values were classified as ‘weak’ work values. The result suggests that the students may allow the violation of certain conditions in the workplace such as ‘weak’ work values for as long as certain ‘stronger’ values are satisfied. For example, an engineer may decide to work in electronic manufacturing companies even if family time is compromised (familial), not proud of as a member of the organization (organizational) and jobs are routinary (variety) because the jobs provide a sense of accomplishment (occupational).
Gender Differences on Student Work Values

In this research, we hypothesized that gender affects the ten work values. However, male and female respondents significantly differ on intellectual-achievement, material, and a variety of work values (Figure 1-B). Intellectual achievement refers to the opportunity for independent and critical thinking with the feeling of accomplishment in doing a job well. Women are more attracted to jobs that are challenging and promote professional growth than men. This implies that female students give a premium on occupational growth.

‘Material’ work value varies significantly among gender. Material refers to the aspect of work enables ones to gain prestige, security and economic returns. This suggests that women are more interested in a job that offers high compensation and prestige than their male counterpart.

Furthermore, genders differ in ‘variety’ work values. Variety refers to work that provides the opportunity to do different types of jobs. Women are attracted to jobs that provide the opportunity to do various kind of work assignment as important.

Generally, the study failed to show significant differences between gender and other work values. Men and women do not differ on the seven work values namely, environmental, familial, interpersonal, managerial, occupational, organizational, and religious work values. This suggests that men and women have similar job preferences such as work that is near where they lived (environmental), work that provides balance to provide time for family (family-oriented), working with people with ‘pakikisama’ (interpersonal), work that promote freedom to decide to achieve objectives (managerial), job which provides professional autonomy (occupational), work which you are proud to be a member (organizational) and job that promotes opportunity to exercise spiritual conviction (religious).
Figure 1. Work Values of College Students

Figure 1. Work Values of College Students. Figure 1-A) Median score based on work values of 400 undergraduate students enrolled in various programs Figure 1-B) Comparison of the intellectual-achievement, material, and variety work values between male and female students. Shown are the values for Mann Whitney U test and p-value. Asterisk in figure 1-A shows the significant differences between men and women on the three-work values subscale.

DISCUSSION

Work values are considered as job preferences (Dajani, 2018; Zytowski, 1970). It is an evaluative standard by which individuals assess the importance of job characteristics (Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999). In this study, work values of college students were assessed, and the role of gender was explored whether it influences work values.

College students are expected to be the future workforce. It is a time where they clarify and reflect what they value in life including what they value in work. In the present study, college students dominant work values are interpersonal, intellectual-achievement orientation and occupation. This suggests that college students have realistic expectations in their job and find it more tolerable to handle difficulties linked with work relationship, job autonomy, and job specialization. However, family, organizational, and variety of work values described as least work values. This suggests that college students compromise family time, organizational membership, and routine jobs in replace of more important work values in the workplace.

The present study provides evidence for gender differences in intellectual-achievement orientation, material, and a variety of work values. According to Hüttges & Fay, (2015) gender appraisal processes affect career-related outcomes. In this study, women appeared more interested in autonomy and challenging jobs compared with men. Women appeared to have a stronger preference in high paying jobs and job variety. Although, previous study believed that women preferred social values (contribution to society and working with people) that high earning jobs (Duffy & Sdlacek, 2007). What makes women work values change? The job competition and economic conditions may likely change the work values of women. Today, women choose non-traditional careers such as engineering and information technology considered as high paying jobs. These non-traditional careers provide intellectual and professional autonomy. Hence, augment income for their family.
Of interest, the result of analysis concerning the influence of gender on work values and its contribution to work values theory is not straightforward. There may be other reasons affecting the work values of college students (e.g. parental influence, and so on). Although, work values are seen as a higher-order psychological construct emerging from the interactions among needs, culture, and experience, and thus, capable of explaining a wider range of phenomena (Murdoch & Rounds, 2014). In this research, it is expected that individual differs in their work values. According to (Hofmans, De Gieter, & Pepermans, 2013; Malka & Chatman, 2003) people will differently perceive their work situations, resulting in diverse career outcomes.

It is noteworthy to study the influence of gender on work values since it is linked with career development and human resource practices. First, gender appraisal on work values guides them on career decision and job entry (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Men and women would likely be happier, motivated and satisfied when work values possessed are congruent with their social (Ali & Panatik, 2015; Cheung & Scherling, 1999) and organizational commitment (Xiao & Froese, 2008). Secondly, work values guide employers on recruiting the right job candidate for the job. According to Sousa & Porto, (2016) individual work values must be compatible with the organizational values.

Finally, some limitations of the study should be noted. First, the FWVS instrument developed by (Cervera, 1999) should be updated to obtain recent work values of the college students. Second, given the results of the work values, it is also important to consider other variables that may explain the development of work values among Filipinos. Third, the researchers may consider using other methods to have a rich context of Filipino concept of work values.

Concluding Remarks

The gender may exert influence on some work values. Gender appraisal on work values generates insight for understanding their job expectation and how it can affect work behavior. This suggests that career centers and guidance counseling center may develop career pathing and counseling programs that are gender-sensitive to help students develop good work-life. The school counselor or psychologist may consider providing work values instrument together with other psychological measures to assists students plan his or her career. Future studies may consider longitudinal studies to trace the career development of students. It is also suggested to conduct trend analysis to trace the changes on the work values of college students.
References
