



Research in Social Sciences and Technology

VALUE PRIORITIES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between value priorities of public and private university students in Turkey and whether their values differ. This is a quantitative study using ANOVA for the analysis of the data. The results suggest that private university students show greater tendency towards universalism, power, tradition, conformity, and hedonism compared to the public university students, while the public university students showed greater sensitivity to benevolence compared to the private university students. The test results also showed that the education level of mothers do not have a significant effect on value priorities of both public and private university students, while father's education has significant effect on the perception of power.

Keywords: Value Perceptions, Turkish Universities, Higher Education, Traditional Culture, Private Universities

Introduction

Values are defined as being the social representations of basic motivational goals that play important roles in guiding people and their lives (Rokeach 1973; Rohan 2000). The meaning of values and beliefs in a person's life is so important that they demonstrate attractive actions and as a result motivate and direct behavior of that person (Feather 1995; Mauch and Tarman, 2016). Research on the role of values on one's life has shown that the values a person holds predict his level of social contact with other people who are not the member of their communities (Sagiv and Schwartz 1995). There are studies conducted on specific values, such as religious values, cultural values and social values and their relationship with the experiences of university students (Yeh,

Carter and Pieterse 2004; McCollum 2005; Yigit, 2016; Yigit and Tarman, 2016). These studies tell us that the value students bring with them to university have significant effects on their behaviors.

Values have been considered crucial in defining personal and social organizations (Durkheim 1985). Schwartz (1999) defines values as conceptions that direct individual persons or organizational leaders to evaluate other people. The way that people show their value priorities might change from society to society. In individualistic countries, the values related to self-direction and security might be represented more deeply, as in the United States, compared to the collectivist countries where values related to tradition and universalism are attached more importance, as in Turkey (Tarman, 2012; 2016; Yigit and Tarman, 2013).

Schwartz (1992) have identified ten types of core values that are usually recognized in all around the world. They are 1) universalism, 2) self-direction, 3) power, 4) tradition, 5) security, 6) stimulation, 7) conformity, 8) achievement, 9) benevolence and 10) hedonism. There are many aspects to measure each value. However, some aspects are considered twice that measure different values. The aspects for the value *self-direction* include creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, independent and being curious. The value *stimulation* is measured by taking a varied life, daring and an exciting life aspects into account. *Hedonism* is measured by the aspects pleasure, enjoying life and self-indulgent while the aspects for *achievement* are ambitious, successful, capable, influential, intelligent, self-respect, and social recognition. For the value type *power*, the aspects are authority, wealth, social power, preserving my public image, and social recognition. *Security* includes social order, family security, national security, clean, reciprocation of favors, healthy and moderate sense of belonging. *Conformity* includes the aspects obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honoring parents and elders, loyal and responsible. The aspects under the *tradition* value are

respect for tradition, humble, devout, accepting my portion in life, moderate and spiritual life. *Benevolence* includes helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love, sense of belonging, meaning in life and a spiritual life. The aspects under last value type *universalism* are broadminded, social justice, equality, world at peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, protecting the environment, inner harmony and a spiritual life (Table 1).

Table 1: Single Values Representing Motivational Types of Values and Their Definitions

Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources. Social Power, Authority, Wealth, Preserving my Public Image, Social Recognition.
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Successful, Capable, Ambitious, Influential, Intelligent, Self-Respect.
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself. Pleasure, Enjoying Life.
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. Daring, a Varied Life, an Exciting Life.
Self-Direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring. Creativity, Freedom, Independent, Curious, Choosing own Goals, Self-Respect.
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. Broadminded, Wisdom, Social Justice, Equality, a World at Peace, a World of Beauty, Unity with Nature, Protecting the Environment.
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact. Helpful, Honest, Forgiving, Loyal, Responsible, True Friendship, Mature Love.
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self. Humble, Accepting my Portion in Life, Devout, Respect for Tradition, Moderate.
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. Politeness, Obedient, Self-Discipline, Honoring Parents and Elders
Security	Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. Family Security, National Security, Social Order, Clean, Reciprocation of Favors, Sense of Belonging, Healthy.

Resource: (Schwartz 1996)

There are numerous studies conducted in the areas of cultural and individual values. Among the research conducted in this area, Turkey is considered as a collectivist country with a score of 37 out of 100 in the dimension of individualism. In this sense, Turkey is described as a country where people belong to in-groups, like families or organizations and look after each other for the sake of loyalty (Hofstede 2012). There are some research conducted in Turkey in the areas of value priorities of families, teachers and students (Kılınç and others, 2016; Tahiroglu and Aktepe 2014; Tarman and Acun, 2010), value perceptions of a specific public university students (Zavalsiz 2014) and value tendencies of elementary school students (Yigittir and Ocal 2010). However, there are limited studies conducted in the area of value priorities of public and private university students taking their parents' educational and economic status into account. In this sense, this study will have grounded an important role in determining the differences, if there is any, among the perceptions of university students in terms of the values they prioritize.

The purpose of this study is to look at the value priority differences of public and private university students in Turkey. The research aims at finding whether public and private university students' values differ by taking their parents' education and economic levels into consideration. The researchers try to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference between public and private university students' value priorities?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference among university students' value priorities based on their parents' education and economic level?

Method

This is a quantitative study conducting a comparative analysis between private and public university students' value priorities. The causal comparative design is adopted for this study. The aim of the causal comparative design is to learn the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The reason behind choosing this research design method is that the independent variable cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The independent variable in this study were economic status and school types. The economic status of the students was measured by asking a question about their parents' current economic position to be classified as high, middle and low and the school type was already marked by the researcher on the survey since he knew they type of the school beforehand. Father's and mother's education level were asked separately on the top of the survey form to be classified as primary school, secondary school, high school and university level. The dependent variables were all the motivational types of values subject to this study, which are; universalism, power, tradition, conformity, hedonism, self-direction, security, stimulation, achievement and benevolence.

Data Collection

The researcher works in a private university located in Istanbul, Turkey. Finding all sources of information in all private and public universities in Turkey was a challenge for the researcher. The researcher would be most successful in accessing pertinent participants at the universities in Istanbul. The data from both private and public universities subject to this research comes from those universities that the researcher accessed in Istanbul. After getting permission from the administration, the researcher visited classrooms randomly during the lectures and asked the instructor for permission to conduct the survey with the students between October-December 2014. After getting the permission from the lecturer, the students were asked to participate in the study

if they wanted to do so. The ones who accepted to participate in the study were given the survey questions to answer. Each questionnaire took between 5-7 minutes to complete.

The total sample of 341 respondents were delivered the Schwartz Value Survey (1992) adapted into Turkish language by Kusdil and Kagitcibasi (2000) and collected by the researchers. The reliability coefficients for the adapted survey ranges from .51 to .77. In terms of each value type, the reliability coefficient for universalism is .77, for benevolence is .76, for hedonism is .54, for power is .75, for achievement is .66, for stimulation is .70, for self-direction is .69, for tradition is .63, for conformity is .51 and for security is .59 (Kusdil and Kagitcibasi 2000).

Participants

The data for this study were collected from a population of students of a public and a private university in Istanbul, Turkey. In terms of student success, students of both universities are considered successful by taking the ranking of both universities into account.

In our sample, the females are over-represented compared to the males. Participants were 242 females and 99 males aged 17 to 38 (male: $M = 20$, $SD = 2$; female: $M = 19$, $SD = 2$). The average age of the participants was 19.13 years ($SD = 1.680$). The reason of this over-representation is observed to be the Education departments since females constitute about 66 percent of the population in faculties of education (OSYM 2013). This might be considered as one of the limitations of the study and further studies might be conducted taking this limitation into account. The samples from private and public universities are almost equally divided. The 49.3 percent of the samples come from the private university whereas 50.7 percent comes from the public university. Although the sample size cannot be considered as representative for public and private universities in Turkey, it can be regarded as a heterogeneous sample since the backgrounds of the

students participated in this study represent a substantial variation of Turkish students' cultural and economic backgrounds.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 20 statistical analysis software. The data were first analyzed to find out whether the distribution was normally distributed. The test results showed that the data are normally distributed with a skewness of -0.296 ($SE= 0.134$) and kurtosis of -0.439 ($SE= 0.267$). The level of significance adapted as the reliability level was 0.05. After the normality test, one-way variance of analysis for random samplings (One-way Anova) was adopted in order to analyze the data.

Results

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the differences in private and public university students' value priorities (Table 2). There was a significant effect of the school type on the motivational type of value *universalism* that included single values broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, and protecting the environment at the $p<.05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 8.750, p = 0.003$].

Among the motivational types of values analyzed was also *self-direction* that included single values creativity, freedom, independent, curious, choosing own goals, and self-respect. The test result showed that there was not a significant effect of the school type on this value at the $p<.05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 2.535, p = 0.112$]. *Power* was the third motivational type of value that included the single values social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image, and social recognition. The ANOVA test showed that school type had a significant effect on *power* at the $p<.05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 7.316, p = 0.007$]. The test results also showed that type of school had a

significant effect on *Tradition* that included the single values humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition and moderate at the $p < .05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 10.658, p = 0.001$]. The test results did not show a significant effect of school type on the motivational type of value *security* at the $p < .05$ level [$F(1, 329) = .697, p = 0.404$] that included the single values; family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favors, sense of belonging, and healthy. The test result also showed that they type of school did not have a significant effect on the motivational type of value *stimulation* at the $p < .05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 0.077, p = 0.782$]. The single values representing stimulation were daring, a varied life, and an exciting life. Another motivational type of value was *conformity* that included the single value items politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honoring parents and elders. The test result showed a significant effect of school type on this value at the $p < .05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 13.987, p = 0.000$]. For the motivational type of value *achievement* that included the single value items successful, capable, ambitious, influential, intelligent, and self-respect, the test result did not show a significant effect of school type at the $p < .05$ level [$F(1, 329) = 0.506, p = 0.477$]. The test results for the last two motivational type of values, *benevolence* [$F(1, 329) = 85.667, p = 0.000$] and *hedonism* [$F(1, 329) = 4.255, p = 0.040$] showed a significant effect of school type on the perceptions of those values at the $p < .05$ level. The single value items under *benevolence* were helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible, true friendship, and mature love. On the other hand, the single values under *hedonism* were pleasure, and enjoying life.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance of Value Priorities by School Type

	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Universalism	Between Groups	126.615	1	126.615	8.750	.003
	Within Groups	4760.992	329	14.471		
	Total	4887.607	330			
Self-Direction	Between Groups	86.242	1	86.242	2.535	.112
	Within Groups	11194.145	329	34.025		
	Total	11280.387	330			
Power	Between Groups	91.267	1	91.267	7.316	.007
	Within Groups	4104.141	329	12.475		
	Total	4195.408	330			
Tradition	Between Groups	148.491	1	148.491	10.658	.001
	Within Groups	4583.860	329	13.933		
	Total	4732.350	330			
Security	Between Groups	5.165	1	5.165	.697	.404
	Within Groups	2437.252	329	7.408		
	Total	2442.417	330			
Stimulation	Between Groups	.422	1	.422	.077	.782
	Within Groups	1809.143	329	5.499		
	Total	1809.565	330			
Conformity	Between Groups	149.342	1	149.342	13.987	.000
	Within Groups	3512.761	329	10.677		
	Total	3662.103	330			
Achievement	Between Groups	3.769	1	3.769	.506	.477
	Within Groups	2449.899	329	7.447		
	Total	2453.668	330			
Benevolence	Between Groups	1609.458	1	1609.458	85.667	.000
	Within Groups	6181.056	329	18.787		
	Total	7790.514	330			
Hedonism	Between Groups	29.029	1	29.029	4.255	.040
	Within Groups	2244.409	329	6.822		
	Total	2273.438	330			

The researcher looked at the whether there was a statistically significant difference among university students' value priorities based on their parents' economic level (Table 3). The test results did not show a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level for the motivational types of values *universalism* [$F(2, 328) = 1.284, p = 0.278$], *self-direction* [$F(2, 238) = 2.340, p = 0.098$], *power* [$F(2, 328) = 0.111, p = 0.895$], *tradition* [$F(2, 328) = 0.865, p = 0.422$], *security* [$F(2, 328) = 0.014, p = 0.986$], *stimulation* [$F(2, 328) = 0.938, p = 0.393$], *achievement* [$F(2, 328) = 0.310, p = 0.733$], and *benevolence* [$F(2, 328) = 0.508, p = 0.602$]. On the other hand, the test results showed a significance effect of parents' economic level on the perceptions of *hedonism* [$F(2, 328) = 5.032, p = 0.007$], and *conformity* [$F(2, 328) = 3.187, p = 0.043$]. Because we have found a statistically significant result in this example, the researcher needed to compute the Tukey post hoc test compare each of our conditions to every other condition. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for *conformity* indicated that the mean score for the high income ($M = 38.78, SD = 2.846$) condition was significantly different than the low income ($M = 36.06, SD = 4.494$) condition. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for *hedonism* indicated that the mean score for medium income ($M = 17.04, SD = 2.627$) condition was significantly different than the high income ($M = 18.52, SD = 2.254$) condition. The researcher also looked at to find out whether the education level of mother has an effect on the value priorities of the university students. The test results showed that mother education did not have a statistically significant effect at the $p < .05$ level on *universalism* [$F(3, 325) = 0.872, p = 0.456$], *self-direction* [$F(3, 325) = 0.569, p = 0.636$], *power* [$F(3, 325) = 2.342, p = 0.073$], *tradition* [$F(3, 325) = 0.454, p = 0.715$], *security* [$F(3, 325) = 1.395, p = 0.244$], *stimulation* [$F(3, 325) = 0.422, p = 0.737$], *conformity* [$F(3, 325) = 0.882, p = 0.451$], *achievement* [$F(3, 325) = 0.896, p = 0.444$], *benevolence* [$F(3, 325) = 1.606, p = 0.188$] and *hedonism* [$F(3, 325) = 0.761, p = 0.517$].

Table 3: One-Way Analysis of Variance of Value Priorities by Parents' Economic Level

	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Universalism	Between Groups	37.968	2	18.984	1.284	.278
	Within Groups	4849.639	328	14.785		
	Total	4887.607	330			
Self-Direction	Between Groups	158.666	2	79.333	2.340	.098
	Within Groups	11121.720	328	33.908		
	Total	11280.387	330			
Power	Between Groups	2.850	2	1.425	.111	.895
	Within Groups	4192.558	328	12.782		
	Total	4195.408	330			
Tradition	Between Groups	24.831	2	12.415	.865	.422
	Within Groups	4707.520	328	14.352		
	Total	4732.350	330			
Security	Between Groups	.205	2	.103	.014	.986
	Within Groups	2442.212	328	7.446		
	Total	2442.417	330			
Stimulation	Between Groups	10.290	2	5.145	.938	.393
	Within Groups	1799.275	328	5.486		
	Total	1809.565	330			
Conformity	Between Groups	69.817	2	34.909	3.187	.043
	Within Groups	3592.285	328	10.952		
	Total	3662.103	330			
Achievement	Between Groups	4.636	2	2.318	.310	.733
	Within Groups	2449.032	328	7.467		
	Total	2453.668	330			
Benevolence	Between Groups	24.053	2	12.027	.508	.602
	Within Groups	7766.460	328	23.678		
	Total	7790.514	330			
Hedonism	Between Groups	67.676	2	33.838	5.032	.007
	Within Groups	2205.762	328	6.725		
	Total	2273.438	330			

On the other hand, the test results showed a statistically significant effect of father's education level on *power* at the $p < .05$ level [$F(3, 326) = 4.426, p = 0.017$] whereas did not have a statistically significant effect on *universalism* [$F(3, 326) = 0.511, p = 0.675$], *self-direction* [$F(3, 326) = 2.386, p = 0.069$], *tradition* [$F(3, 326) = 1.091, p = 0.353$], *security* [$F(3, 326) = 2.462, p = 0.063$], *stimulation* [$F(3, 326) = 0.877, p = 0.453$], *conformity* [$F(3, 326) = 1.075, p = 0.360$], *achievement* [$F(3, 326) = 0.674, p = 0.569$], *benevolence* [$F(3, 326) = 1.635, p = 0.181$] and *hedonism* [$F(3, 326) = 0.459, p = 0.711$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test for *power* indicated that the mean score for secondary school level ($M = 43.44, SD = 3.985$) condition was significantly different than university level ($M = 42.39, SD = 3.510$) condition.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first research question was to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between public and private university students' value priorities. The results suggest that while there are statistically significant differences for most of the motivational types of values, there are also some values that did not show a significant difference. The students of the private university showed greater sensitivity to the motivational type of values *universalism, power, tradition, conformity, and hedonism* compared to the public university students. On the other hand, the public university students showed greater sensitivity only to the motivational type of value *benevolence* compared to the private university students. A recent study claims that students with the value of universalism may be experiencing a sense of isolation from the bigger society (Karabati and Cemalcilar 2010). The result of our study do not examine whether public and private university students experience a sense of isolation due to their value priorities. This might be a good research area for future studies.

An earlier study conducted in Turkey showed that adults attributed more importance to benevolence compared to university students (Aygün and Imamoglu 2002). In this regard, the priority towards this type of motivational value shows similarity between public university students and adults in Turkey. For the values *self-direction*, *security*, *stimulation*, and *achievement*, the results did not show a significant effect of school type on their priorities both for public and private university students. Since Turkey is regarded as a collectivist country (Hofstede 2001), it is normal that students of both public and private universities do not show difference in terms of priority of self-direction. This is because in such societies, members usually prefer being the part of a system and directed by it instead of acting autonomously.

Our second research question was to find out the difference among university students' value priorities based on their parents' education and economic level. The results indicate that as the parents' economic level increase, the students' priority for the motivational type of value *conformity* and *hedonism* also increase. On the other hand, the test results suggest that there is no relationship between parents' economic level and the priority of *universalism*, *self-direction*, *power*, *tradition*, *security*, *stimulation*, *achievement* and *benevolence*. The results also indicate that mother's education level do not have an effect on the priority of the motivational types of values of the university students while the education level of father's have only significant effect on *power*. In other words, as the education level of father's decreases, the university students' priority towards social power, authority, wealth, preserving public image, and social recognition decrease.

The image of private university students in Turkey is that they tend to be more sensitive to economic and cultural freedom compared to the public university students. They are known to be the members of wealthy families who have different value priorities compared to families of public university students. In terms of thinking globally, they are considered to be more open to the

universalism and different cultures around the world. Also, private university students in Turkey are usually regarded as the members of the society who do not follow the traditional and cultural doctrines of the classis Turkish families. The results of this study confirm that private university students are more inclined towards universalism compared to the public university students. However, contrary to the general belief in Turkish society, private university students participated in this study are not far away from their own cultural and traditional values. Compared to the public university students, private university students showed greater sensitivity to traditional values. On the other hand, the result that public university students showed greater sensitivity only for the motivational value type *benevolence* shows that the general image of private university students in Turkey will change soon since they are more sensitive to cultural and traditional values while also adopting universal ones.

The result of this study could be different if conducted one or two decades ago. The economic situation of families in Turkey was not as good as it is nowadays in general. The number of private universities was very few and their annual costs was very high that only certain families could send their children to those institutions. The social and economic disparities between the families who sent their children to private universities and public universities were so visible in Turkey that it was not difficult to distinguish between them. However, recent reforms in Turkey helped lower and middle class families to come up with those high-class families in almost all areas, including education. The number of private universities increased drastically since 2005 and a competition started among those institutions. As a result, families who hold traditional and cultural values of the society started to send their children to those institutions. Thus, we can consider the results of this study as the consequence of those developments in Turkish society.

Due to time and economic reasons, this study was conducted in only one metropolitan area in Turkey with the participation of two universities. This might be considered the main limitation of the current study. A more comprehensive research that will include different cities and universities in Turkey would give us more well-rounded results. Hence, a similar study with the participation of diverse universities in Turkey can be considered by researchers.

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