Relationship between Hierarchy of Values and Self-esteem among Iranian Students

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Abstract: The aim of the present study is to determine the relationship between hierarchy of values and self esteem among Iranian students. The respondents were comprised of 487 university students (250 female and 238 males) who were selected by the cluster-random sampling method. The Schwartz values survey and Rosenberg questionnaire were used for data collection. The results of the present study indicated that there is a positive relationship between achievement values, self-direction, stimulation, and self-esteem. While, there was negative relationship among tradition values, conformity, security, universalism, benevolence, hedonism, power and self-esteem.

1. Introduction

In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. Self-esteem is often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring. Self-esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about the self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviors. According to Braden (1995) there are three key components of self-esteem: Self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal, healthy development. Self-esteem arises automatically from within based upon a person's beliefs and consciousness. Self-esteem is defined as combination of a person's thoughts, behaviors, feelings and actions.

Also, Coppersmith (1967) indicated classic definition of self-esteem as the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself, it expresses an attitude of approval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of the worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself. Self-esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes. Self-esteem starts forming early in life. According to leading psychologists, positive self esteem is vital in development of a healthy personality. Nathaniel Branden (1995) calls self esteem as the immune system of consciousness. The level of self esteem determines how we operate in life, how we interact with others, spouse, children, friends, and strangers. It determines goals and what we strive for, our achievements, and our satisfaction and happiness in life. The importance of self esteem can be seen when we look at the relationship between healthy self esteem and other psychological traits. Self esteem and personality are closely related. Positive self esteem is related with, creativity, rationality, flexibility, willingness to admit mistakes, openness, honesty, acceptance, cooperativeness, Independence. People with high self esteem tend to be more ambitious in what they want to experience in life. High self esteem people have a drive to express themselves and to communicate openly and honestly about their needs and desires. People with healthy self esteem choose healthy relationships and they recognize the value of relationships. They treat others with respect, non judgmental attitude, and fairness.

Stress is rooted in internal sources. Having a high self esteem is vital for stress relief. Self esteem is the central element on the human mental health. Rogers (1959) write if I were to search for the central core of difficulty in people as I have come to know them, it is that in the great majority of cases they despise themselves, regarding themselves as worthless and unlovable. Based on the theory of Schwartz (1996) values is rooted in different needs of human. According to the Maslow theory self esteem is the High levels of human needs that lead to human development. Playing a causal role in chronic social problems such as child abuse, school drop-out rates, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse and welfare dependency (Andrew Mecca, 1989).

Many factors influence on self esteem formation, such as family, gender, race, religion, culture and social and economic status. Values are the important factors. There are many experimental reasons for relationship between values and self esteem (Schwartz, 1994; Feather, 1991; Oishi et al, 1998). Values are defined beliefs about what is good and important and the sum of such values forms a person's value system. The value system is defined as the way in which people organize, rank and prioritise the topics and make decisions based on them (Ursery, 2008). Value is a concept by which a person or group can be labelled (Garry, Gelade, 2008) or that creates a deep tendency in behaviour so that a matter or reality is preferred to others (Hofstede, 2001) or guiding principles of what people consider important in life and how something ought to be (Cheng & Fleischmann, 2010), and serve a link between self and society (Rokeach, 1979, Koepfle & Fleischmann, 2011).

Some of these values show how to do something, for example, pride, self-regulation, kindness, while others show that objects are valuable in a person's life, for example, money, power, security, family, health and wisdom. They are complex sets of strategies and personal priorities that are used to make personal decisions, and are built on the knowledge, beauty, experience, religious and ethical backgrounds or sets of these (Olson, Stone, 2005). They can be classified into four major categories: personal, national, religious, and global. The four supporter systems of these categories are families, governments, religious centers and mass media such as television and the internet respectively (Soltanifar, 2011).

Value priorities are formed based on the socialization process or cultural and social backgrounds (Schwartz, 1992 Schwartz, Bilsky, 1987, 1990). They are influenced by developmental stages, contextual variables (for example, ethical and race status), which, in turn, are affected by the attribute process and create a deep tendency to see the world in exceptional ways (Aronson, 1999, Kirk patric, Shaver, 1990, Miller, 1995, Shely, 2004).

To obtain and save these value priorities generally occurs through an unconscious interaction among developmental, emotional and attribution processes (Shely, 2004). Teaching and training can transfer the values and skills in more standards ways (Saikhifini, 2011). Values are the main factors not only in culture, but are strong determiners for human behaviour as well as for satisfaction, happiness and progress (Posner, Roy, 2008). Values can be considered guides and factors that determine attitudes, ideologies and social functions that are observed in traditions, laws, beliefs and lifestyles. In psychology, values are important and are investigated from both the functional and theoretical dimensions. From the theoretical aspect the following values are considered: A) Beliefs and values are transmitted across generations, B) Some networks or constellations of beliefs and values become reliably codified into recognizable systems of thought (e.g., authoritarianism), C) What people believe about why they and others do what they do (i.e., their attributions have a demonstrable impact on human development and functioning, D) Developmental, affective and attribution processes are inextricably linked to the beliefs and values people claim as their own, and E) Such processes often occur at a relatively automatic or non-conscious level (Aronson, 1999, Carig, Shely, 2005).

In recent decades, most research about values were based on Hofstede (2001) or Schwartz (1994, 1997). Both these researchers have investigated values in many countries; however, the research by Schwartz is more significant for two reasons: First, Hofstede's (2001) study consisted of 50 countries that are not in this study and their samples were working in an international company whereas the sample of Schwartz consisted of 73 countries that were evaluated at the personal and national levels (Garry, Gelade, 2008); and second, the research of Schwartz produced more hypotheses than

Hofstede. These constitute the reasons why the present research is based on the values theory of Schwartz.

Schwartz (1994, 1999) organized a conceptual system into three domains. These domains cope with the three social principles of organizations. The first domain is related to the relationship of persons and groups. The second aims at behaviour in groups. That is when society balances and coordinates different people's behaviours within itself. The third domain shows the relationship between humans and nature. This relationship can be built on control or concordance. The culture based on control shapes the values that human duty is to control and shape the world based on human ideals. According to Schwartz's value theory, there are ten broad cross-culturally divided individual and collective value. A) Individual values consist of benevolence, universalism, tradition, security and conformity; B) Collective values consist of power, achievement, stimulation and hedonism (Schwartz, Galit, Sagiv, 2000).

(Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Schwartz & Bilisky, 1990; Schwartz & Ros, 1995) describe the derivations of the ten basic values. For example, a conformity value was derived from the prerequisites of interaction and of group survival. For interaction to proceed smoothly and for groups to maintain themselves, individuals must restrain impulses and inhibit actions that might hurt others. A self-direction value was derived from organism needs for mastery and from the interaction requirements of autonomy and independence. Each of the ten basic values can be characterized by describing its central motivational goal: **Self-Direction:** Independent thought and action; choosing, creating, and exploring. **Stimulation:** Excitement, novelty, and challenges in life. **Hedonism:** Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself. **Achievement:** Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. **Power:** Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources. **Security:** Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. **Conformity:** Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. **Tradition:** Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self. **Benevolence:** Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group'). **Universalism:** Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. It should be noted that these ten categories of values include two-dimension value, Conservative and self transcendence and Openness to change and Self enhancement. These dimensions are the most general and stable personal value direction (Schwartz, 1994).

As far as the self esteem goes, as well as high correlation between self esteem and mental health and human success this research consider to answer this question: Are there a correlated between self esteem and values among Iranian students? And are these

correlation adapted are originated from with other cultures? Based on the theory of Schwartz (1996) values are originated of the different needs of human. According to the Maslow theory, self esteem , the high levels of human needs that cause human development, plays a causal role in chronic social problems such as child abuse, school drop-out rates, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse and welfare dependency (Andrew Mecca,1989).

2. Objectives

1. To describe the level of hierarchy of values and self esteem among respondents.
2. To determine the relationship between the hierarchy of values and self esteem of the respondents.

3. Method
3.1. Research Design

This study used a descriptive and correlational research design to examine the relationships between hierarchy of values and self esteem. . The present study is a cross-sectional study which involves collecting data over a short period of time in order to search for the answer for the outlined research questions.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all students of Payame-Noor University of Kerman province. Also, Based on Cocheran formula (1977), the number of sample is 487, who were selected by the cluster-random sampling method. There were 52% female and 47.1% male. The percentage of unmarried participants is 85% and 6.9% of them are married; 45.5% of the subjects are studying in the field of humanities and in the field of basic science the percentage of participants is 54.5%. The participants' aged between 19 and 23 is 79%, while the percentage between 24 and 27 years old is 14.6% from which 52% were male and 48% were men.

4. Measures
4.1. Hierarchy of values

The first instrument developed to measure values based on the theory is now known as the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992, 2005a). The SVS presents two lists of value items. The first contains 30 items that describe potentially desirable end-states in noun form; the second contains 26 or 27 items that describe potentially desirable ways of acting in adjective form. Each item expresses an aspect of the motivational goal of one value. An explanatory phrase in parentheses following the item further specifies its meaning. For example, 'equality (equal opportunity for all)' is a universalism item; 'pleasure (gratification of desires)' is a hedonism 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, 4 (unlabeled), 3 (important), 2, 1 (unlabeled), 0 (not important), -1 (opposed to my values). People view most values as varying from mildly to very important. The SVS has been translated into 48 languages. The score for the importance of each value is the average rating given to items designated a priori as markers of that value. The number of items to measure each value ranges from three (hedonism) to eight (universalism), reflecting the conceptual breadth of the values. Across 212 samples (national representative, teacher, student), alpha reliabilities of the 10 values average .68, ranging from .61 for tradition to .75 for universalism (Schwartz, 2005a).

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is the most widely used measure of global self-esteem (Demo, 1985).The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

5. Data Analysis

Data from the current study were processed and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16. Three statistical procedures such as descriptive analysis, and inferential statistical analysis were utilized for the data analyses. Descriptive statistics such as mean score, standard deviation, percentage and frequency distribution were used to describe the demographic profiles of the respondents. Inferential statistics that was used in the data analysis were Pearson Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression analysis.

6. Results

The first results about hierarchy of *values* among responding explaining.
According to descriptive analysis, Benevolence (mean= 64.31, SD= 9.71). 2. Universalism (mean= 62.5, SD= 8.79). 3. Security (with average of 50.49, standard deviation of 7.46). 4. Self-direction (mean=42.65, SD= deviation of 7.53). 5. Tradition (mean= 34.56, SD= 8.79). 6. Power (mean= 33.06, SD= 8.07). 7. Achievement (mean= 32.40, SD= 7.28). 8. Conformity (mean= 26.53, SD= 5.88). 9. Stimulation (mean= 19.60, SD= 4.19). 10. Hedonism (mean=12.05, SD= 3.17). In this hierarchy, the collected values are stated in the first priority and the individual values are dominated in the second priority. The final values with a mean of 196.96 have more priority than the instrumental values with a mean of 181.21 by analysing the values hierarchy according to being a final value or being as an instrumental value. Values hierarchies based on four main values are analysed and the results is shown in the Table 1:

Table 1: Frequency distribution of four main values

Kind of value	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Percentage
Self enhancement	165	37	77.53	13.8	30.3
Self transcendence	206	26	126.56	18.86	22.4
Conservation	150	22	74.31	11.87	23.8
Openness to change	205.5	37	111.58	17.04	23.8

Results of the present study showed that self transcendence had a mean score more than self-enhancement. Also, conservation had a mean score more than openness to change. As shown in Table 2, majority of the respondents reported high levels of self-esteem.

Table 2: Frequency distribution self esteem

Self-esteem	Female	Male
High self esteem	%61.01	%70.77
Low self esteem	%38.98	%29.22

Correlation analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between hierarchical values and self-esteem. The result of the study in Table 3 indicated a significant negative relationship between tradition (r=-0.040, p<.01), conformity (r=-0.034, p<.01), security (r= -0.030, p<.01), universalism (r= -0.012, p<.01), benevolence (r= -0.043, p<.01), hedonism (r= - 0.052, p<.01) with self-esteem. And there are significant positive relationship between achievement (r= o.o8, p<.01), Stimulation (r= 0.096, p<.01), Self-direction (r= 0.068, p<.01) with self-esteem.

Table 3: Correlation result between hierarchical values and self-esteem

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
X1	Tradition	1									
X2	Conformity	.530	1								
X3	Security	.495	0.333	1							
X4	Universalism	.580	0.542	.614	1						
X5	Benevolence	.645	0.499	.602	.648**	1					
X6	Achievement	.567	0.491	.483	.651**	.519**	1				
X7	Hedonism	.394	0.640	.428	.348**	.358	.437	1			
X8	Stimulation	.416	0.303	.458	.445**	.402	.534	0.317	1		
X9	Self-direction	.567	0.510	.583	.651**	.576	.571	0.320	.577	1	
X10	Power	.380	.333	.424	.470**	.407	.503	0.261	0.45	.577	1
Y	Self-esteem	-.040	-.034	-.012	-0.43	-.407	-.052	0.096	0.68	.45	-.38

Also, results of Pearson Correlation in table 4 indicated that there is a negative relationship between values based on conservatism (r= - 0.040, p<.01), and Self transcenden(r= - 0.031, p <.01), with self-esteem. Also, there is positive relationships between values Self enhancement   (r= 0.22, p<.01), Openness to change (r=0.086, p<.01) with self-esteem.

Table 4: Correlation result between value dimensions and self-esteem

	Variables	1	2	3	4
X1	Self transcendence	1			
X2	Conservatism	0.782	1		
X3	Self enhancement	0.567	0.639	1	
X4	Openness to change	0.626	0.731	0.748	1
Y	Self-esteem	-0.31	-0.040	0.22	0.86

Regression analysis was conducted to test correlation between openness to change and personal goals. Based on Table 5, there is a significant relationship between Openness to change and Self enhancement, and outcome (self-esteem) [$F (1, 474) = 3.929$, $p<.05$]. Also, R^2 showed that about 18 % of the variance in self-esteem is explained by Openness to change and Self enhancement. In other words, 82 % of self-esteem is related to the other factors.

Table 5: Result of regression analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R2
1	Regression	28.691	1	28.691	3.929	.048	.18
	Residual	3461.595	474	7.323			
	Total	3490.286	474				

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Results of the study indicated that there was a correlation between value hierarchical and self-esteem. There were positive relationship between achievement values, self-direction, stimulation, and self-esteem. While there were negative relationship between tradition values, conformity, security, universalism, benevolence, hedonism, power, and self-esteem. The present findings are consistent with the findings of past studies (Feather, 1991; Olishi et al., 1998; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1994). Generally, values based on development and achievements have positive relationship with self-steam. This indicates that formation of values related to global and operation of values. According to Schwartz and Bilsky, (1987, 1990), values are rooted in the needs.

A set of needs are biologic and physical that lead to individual survival. Another set of needs are rooted in mental needs that lead to individual development and perfection. In the present study, there was a negative relationship between power value and self-esteem that is inconsistent with findings by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990). One reason for the present result of the study can be culture and sociability styles. Values are certainly set in a social context. The individual as the expectancy on self esteem would have it; botch groups want to feel good about themselves (Mruk, 2006). In religious culture, seeking the position is considered as value. On the other hand, person with high self-esteem don't seek position and power. Achievement values, self-direction, stimulation related to personal goals. This point indicates that there was a positive relationship between high self-esteem and identification and tracking of personal goals. It seems that identification of personal goal has no conflict with group goals and it's in path of coordination and cooperation with group.

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