

Exploring Value Preferences among Students: An Empirical Study of Salman bin Abdulaziz University

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Abstract: The present investigation contemplated to focus on the terminal and instrumental value preferences of students. The sample consisted of 180 students of college of business administration and college of computer engineering and science in Al-Kharj, KSA. Rokeach Value Survey and demographical information sheet used to collect the information from the students. Mean, SDs and rank order methods has been applied to analyze the data. The findings of the present research revealed that: (i) a comfortable life and salvation appeared highest ranked whereas salvation and a comfortable life ranked 1 and 2 by the students of CBA and CCES in terminal values respectively, (ii) ambitious and independent of instrumental values ranked 1st and 18th by the students of two different colleges respectively (iii) overall preferences in terminal values preferred by the students as salvation and a comfortable life and (iv) overall preferred in instrumental value ranked by the students as ambitious and clean whereas least preferred instrumental values are independent and helpful. The study has given some suggestions for future research based on findings.

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Key words: terminal values, Instrumental values, students, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the concept of value has been a subject for discussion among the social and management scientists and they defined it in a various ways. It is noted that values is a key root to guide our action to maintain the disciplines which has been constantly evaluating, judging to provide outcomes in terms of good or bad and desirable or undesirable actions which reflects the beliefs and standards of the people. Hence, valuing is depends on culture and human conditions. Ethman *et al.*, (1974) values are considered as “standards to decide whether some objects are right or wrong, good or bad, important or worthless, preferable or not preferable”. The concept value studied and researched by several scholars but in the twentieth century Milton Rokeach, who created the Rokeach Value Survey (R.V.S.) to understand human values. Rokeach (1973) developed the Rokeach Value Survey (R.V.S.), which contains two different sets of values with each set containing 18 items. One set is called terminal values, refers to “desirable end-states of existence” such as an exciting life, a world of beauty, inner harmony and true friendship etc. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during in his/her life span. The second set, called instrumental values which means to “preferable modes of behavior or means of achieving the terminal values” such as obedient, responsible, helpful, courageous and ambitious etc. Rokeach stated that these values combine together over time to form people’s personalities and behavior. Nduka (2005) referred value as “interests,

ideals approvals or disapprovals, goals, desires, preferences and standards”. Hofstede (1980) has given a simple definition of value that “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others”. Schwartz and Blisky (1987) identified five common features of values are: (i) concepts or beliefs, (ii) desirable end state or behaviors, (iii) transcend specific situation, (iv) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events and (v) ordered by relative importance (Levy & Guttman, 1974; Rokeach, 1973 & 1979; Scott, 1965 ;Allport *et al.*, 1960; Maslow, 1959; Pepper, 1958; Durkheim 1956, and Morris, 1956; Saba *et al.*, 2012).

Sinha (1984) and Triandis (1995) stressed that individual changes their values, attitudes, motivation and belief are considered to influence the economic, political and social scenario of the people.

Ng, *et al.*, (1982) revealed that cultural values in Pacific island and East Asian countries outwardly different with the economic development, hence the study of values become so vital when trying to explore the reasons for success or failure in national economic and social development. Albeit, various researches has been taken place empirically and theoretically and highlighted that cultural changes and cultural values associated with economic development (Weber, 1930; McClelland, 1961; Marx, 1976; Smith and Martin, 1979; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstead & Bond, 1988; Thomas, 1993; Sowell, 1994; Ingelhart, 1997; Altman, 2001; Barro, 2004 and Schwartz, 2004; Rehman and Saba, 2012).

Inglehart (1990) suggested that the way or direction of societal change in a country might be explained due to change in value across the population. Serif (1985) and Baron and Byrne (1997) have given emphasis that attitude and behavior stems from value which is connected to an individual's personal values.

Haneef *et al.*, (2002) highlighted that values differ among adolescents of different ethnic or religious backgrounds. Shatkin (2002) conducted a study among two groups of Saudi students to compare the value and result revealed that two groups differ somewhat and certain overall preferences are shared with each other.

Several study has given emphasis on culture in relation to values which is important to understand human behavior because cultures varies in their norms, ethics, beliefs, languages and religions (Alqahtani and Saba, 2013). As Robbins (2003) stressed the value laid the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation which is responsible to influence our perceptions. Further, values are considered as central to human behavior and identity and serve as the guiding principles in people's lives, motivating them to take action (Dose, 1999; Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Inglehart, 1977; Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Saba and Alqahtani, 2012). However, Rokeach, (1973) pointed that "values are core beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes and actions, and determine how people behave in certain situations".

However, Mkpa (1987) and Ukoha (2004) stressed that values are the identifiers that influences choices in life and thus direct & shape the behavior. Boli (2005) suggested that value preferences among teachers and students are almost similar due to gender effect.

Mahmud *et al.*, (2009) has conducted a study among the teachers and students of universities in USA, Bangladesh, Germany and Japan with an intention to assess and compare the values prevalent. The results revealed that all four countries students held highest preferences for values determined as functional values than for those determined as dysfunctional values. Giacomino *et al.*, (2011) determined values and value systems of students studying in a private university and suggested that generational differences have been observed in terms of individual variables preferences.

Zaman and Muhammad (2012) initiated a study to see the differences between same level of male and female students studying in both private and public universities of Bangladesh. Their results identified that there were no significant differences observed in aesthetical, religious and theoretical values between male and female students. Further, they revealed that significant differences were observed between two groups of students in terms of political, social and economic values. Another investigator, Boci (2012) conducted a study among students and observed well interpreted and significant differences between male and female students on their value preferences.

Most recently, Giacomino *et al.*, (2013) initiated a study to identify the value systems and personal values of business students studying in China and compared the results with U.S. student where similar methodology have been applied. Their findings revealed that various differences have been observed between both the countries on value systems and personal values.

1.1. Aims of the study

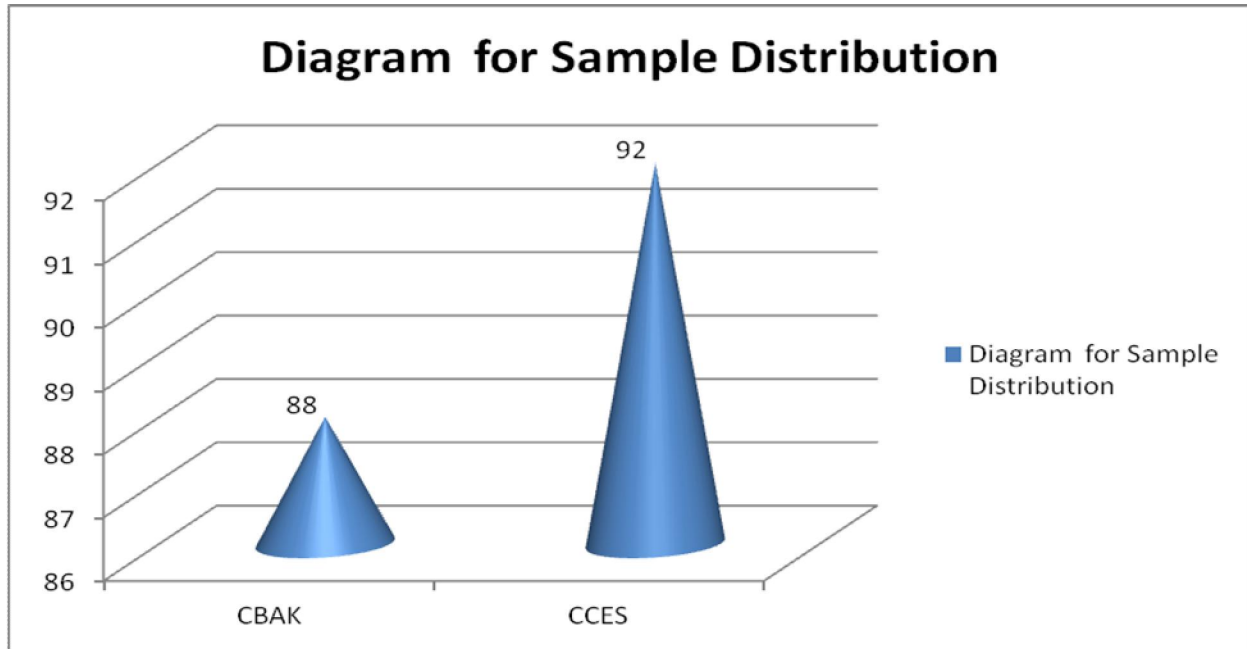
Based on retrospection and available of literature, the researchers made an exploratory study to analyze the value preferences of two groups of different college students at Salman bin Abdulaziz University. Hence, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- ❖ To examine the preferences of terminal values of two groups of different college students.
- ❖ To explore the preferences of instrumental values of two groups of different college students.
- ❖ To compare the preferences of terminal and instrumental values of two groups of college students.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 180 undergraduate students from two different colleges of Salman bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (College of Business Administration =88 and College of Computer Engineering and Science = 92) were selected randomly. The age and level of study varies from 17 to25 years and 1 to 4 years respectively. Following is the diagram for sample distribution:



2.2. Tool

In order to identify the value preferences of the students, Rokeach Value Survey Form developed by Milton Rokeach (1973) has been used. The Rokeach Value Survey Form measures 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values and these two types of values are functionally interrelated to each other. Terminal values refers to goals of existence whereas, instrumental values refers to manner or ways of behavior. Rokeach has established reliability over time i.e. $r = .88$ to $.51$ for the terminal values; $r = .70$ to $.45$ for the instrumental values.

2.3. Statistics

In order to measure the level of preferences of instrumental and terminal values and keeping the realm of present study objectives in mind, the scored provided by students was processed and analyzed by applying mean, SDs and rank order to see the priority of value preferences of two groups of different college students.

2.4. Procedure and Ethics

The questionnaire was administered to 180 students studying in two different college of Salman bin Abdulaziz University i.e. College of Business Administration and College of Computer Engineering and Science. The original questionnaire was in English and keeping in view the understanding level of students it has been translated by expert in Arabic to maintain the significance of the scale. The instructions were given to them in a proper manner to fill up the questionnaire. They were assured of confidentiality in their responses. The respondents were allowed to take their own time to complete the

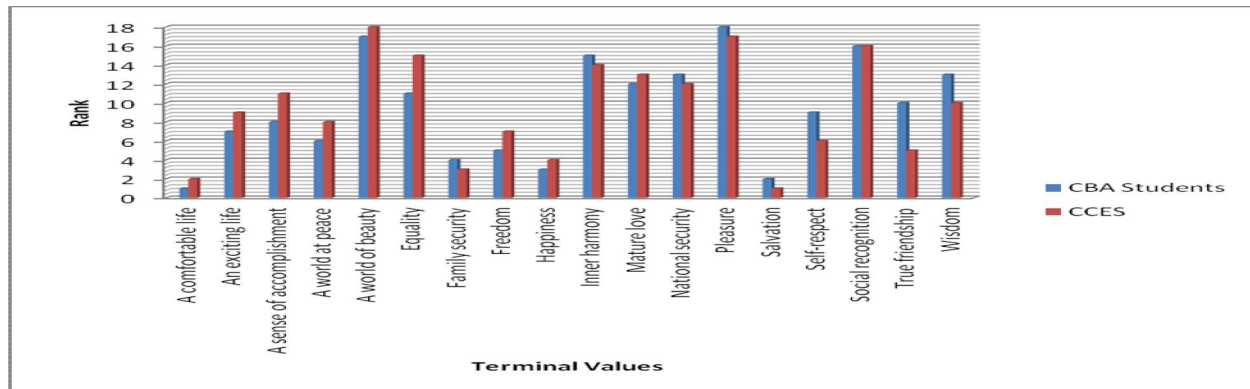
questionnaire and asked to rank 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values according to their own preferences. The collected questionnaires were scored and analyzed. The results were tabulated and discussed accordingly.

3. Results

As follows, the researchers presented a synthesis of the findings obtained in the present investigation after analyzing the data which has been collected from the two groups of students. It is evident from Table-1 that the mean on a comfortable life observed 5.85 with Sd. of 5.17 and it gained highest preferences among all terminal values with rank 1. The mean and Sd. are almost similar though it should not be, the Sd. is 5.17 which is very high and it expressed the more variation in the individual score on a comfortable life among the students of college of business administration followed by salvation and happiness with mean 6.13 and 6.22 along with Sd. 5.83 and 4.46 respectively. The student of college of business administration gave least preference to pleasure with mean 11.19 and Sd. 5.57 ranked 18 that signifies the little importance in the eyes of the students. However, the student of college of computer engineering and science gave highest value preference to salvation with mean 5.55 and Sd. 5.44 ranked 1 followed by a comfortable life with mean 6.54 and Sd. 5.29 ranked 2. The least preference given by the students of CCES a world of beauty ranked 18 with mean 12.54 Sd. 4.29.

Table-1. Showing Mean, SDs and Rank on Terminal values of two groups of different college students.

Sr.No.	Terminal Values	CBA Students			CCES Students		
		Mean	SDs	Rank	Mean	SDs	Rank
1.	A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	5.85	5.17	1	6.54	5.29	2
2.	An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	7.65	4.81	7	9.42	5.22	9
3.	A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	8.49	5.18	8	9.56	4.38	11
4.	A world at peace (free of war and conflict)	7.49	5.66	6	9.31	4.80	8
5.	A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)	10.18	5.82	17	12.54	4.29	18
6.	Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	9.29	5.26	11	10.9	4.3	15
7.	Family security (taking care of loved ones)	6.65	4.70	4	6.64	4.67	3
8.	Freedom (independence, free choice)	7.23	4.93	5	9.25	5.38	7
9.	Happiness (contentedness)	6.22	4.46	3	8.11	5.12	4
10.	Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	9.54	4.78	15	10.7	4.44	14
11.	Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	9.41	5.11	12	10.64	4.67	13
12.	National security (protection from attack)	9.5	4.93	13	10.38	5.19	12
13.	Pleasure (an enjoyable life, leisurely life)	11.19	5.57	18	11.82	5.03	17
14.	Salvation (saved, eternal life)	6.13	5.83	2	5.55	5.44	1
15.	Self-respect (self-esteem)	8.71	5.78	9	8.94	4.91	6
16.	Social recognition (respect, admiration)	10.04	5.54	16	11.01	5.17	16
17.	True friendship (close companionship)	9.08	5.78	10	8.88	4.53	5
18.	Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	9.53	6.13	13	9.45	4.88	10

**Diagram-1. Graphical Presentation of Ranks on Terminal values of two groups of different college students.**

It is very clear from the diagram-1 about the value preferences among the students studying in college of business administration and college of computer engineering and science. The trend showed almost similar preferences to a comfortable life, salvation, a world of beauty and pleasure.

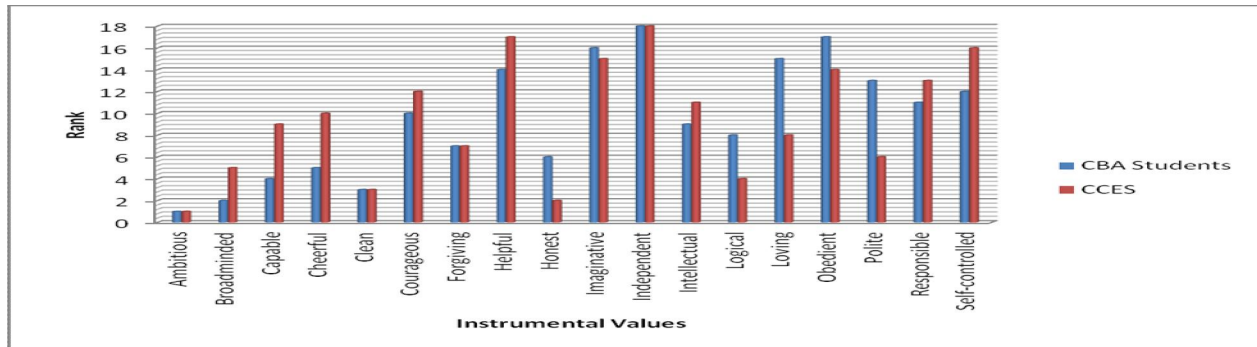
Table-2 showed the value preferences of two groups of students studying in different colleges. The results indicate that students given the highest preference to ambitious with mean 6.09 with Sd. 5.82 ranked 1 whereas the students of CCES has also given the highest preference to the same on instrumental values. The similar trend shown by the all group of

students to clean and the least preference to independent as instrumental values ranked 18 but the little difference occurred with regard to other instrumental values among the students of college of business administration and college of computer engineering and science.

It is apparent from the diagram-2 that ambitious and clean, forgiving and independent given same ranked by two the students of two colleges namely CBA & CCES. Moreover, highest discrepancy observed on instrumental values such as capable, cheerful, loving and polite.

Table-2. Showing Mean, SDs and Rank on Instrumental values of two groups of different college students.

Sr.No.	Instrumental	CBA Students			CCES Students		
		Mean	SDs	Rank	Mean	SDs	Rank
	Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)	6.09	5.82	1	6.49	5.07	1
1.	Broadminded(open-minded)	6.76	5.49	2	8.65	5.38	5
2.	Capable (competent, efficient)	7.38	5.68	4	9.37	5.39	9
3.	Cheerful(lighthearted, joyful)	7.55	5.08	5	9.43	5.19	10
4.	Clean(neat, tidy)	6.79	5.35	3	7.78	5.08	3
5.	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)	8.69	5.65	10	9.46	5.41	12
6.	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)	8.06	5.16	7	9.24	5.33	7
7.	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)	8.96	5.37	14	10.96	4.83	17
8.	Honest (sincere, truthful)	7.69	5.27	6	7.47	4.95	2
9.	Imaginative (daring, creative)	9.19	5.61	16	10.4	4.82	15
10.	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	9.85	5.47	18	11.4	4.83	18
11.	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)	8.5	5.17	9	9.45	4.99	11
12.	Logical (consistent, rational)	8.31	5.38	8	8.41	5.24	4
13.	Loving (affectionate, tender)	9.03	5.21	15	9.31	5.51	8
14.	Obedient(dutiful, respectful)	9.64	5.67	17	9.75	5.54	14
15.	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)	8.81	6.13	13	8.91	5.33	6
16.	Responsible (dependable, reliable)	8.69	5.82	11	9.51	5.43	13
17.	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)	8.79	6.33	12	10.4	5.43	16

**Diagram-2. Graphical Presentation of Ranks on Instrumental values of two groups of different college students.****Table-3. Showing overall Mean, SDs and Rank on Instrumental values of two groups of different college students.**

Sr.No.	Terminal Values	CBA Students & CECS Students		
		Mean	SDs	Rank
1.	A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	6.24	5.23	2
2.	An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	8.66	5.11	7
3.	A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	9.09	4.76	10
4.	A world at peace (free of war and conflict)	8.52	5.25	6
5.	A world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)	11.52	5.13	17
6.	Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	10.21	4.8	15
7.	Family security (taking care of loved ones)	6.64	4.67	3
8.	Freedom(independence, free choice)	8.38	5.27	5
9.	Happiness (contentedness)	7.29	4.93	4
10.	Inner harmony(freedom from inner conflict)	10.19	4.61	14
11.	Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	10.11	4.89	13
12.	National security (protection from attack)	10	5.09	12
13.	Pleasure (an enjoyable life, leisurely life)	11.55	5.27	18

14.	Salvation (saved, eternal life)	5.8	5.6	1
15.	Self-respect(self-esteem)	8.84	5.29	8
16.	Social recognition (respect, admiration)	10.59	5.34	16
17.	True friendship (close companionship)	8.97	5.09	9
18.	Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	9.48	5.44	11

It appears from Table-3 that the students of both colleges given preference on salvation with mean 5.80 and Sd. 5.60 ranked 1st related to terminal values followed by a comfortable life and family security ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively. On the other hand least preferences given to pleasure, a world of

beauty and social recognition with ranked 18, 17 and 16 respectively. As a whole the variations in the individual score observed very high because of higher side standard deviations.

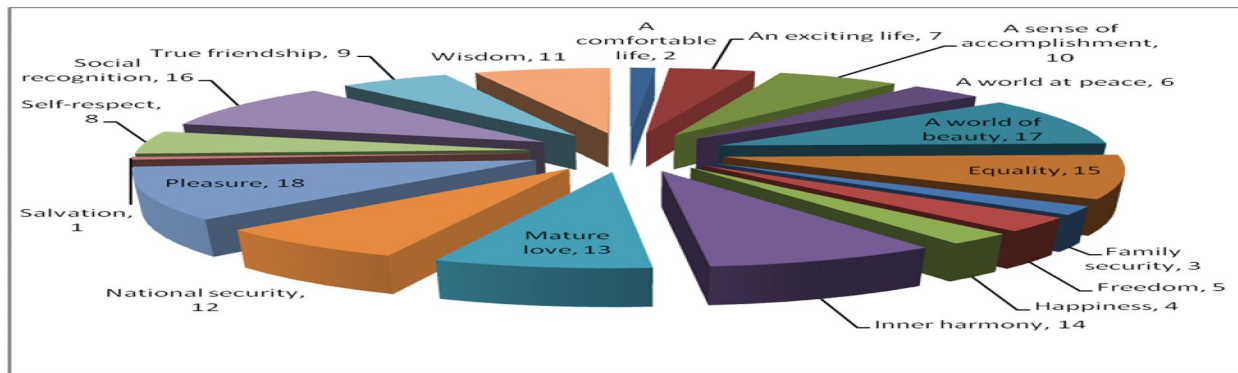


Diagram-3. Graphical Presentation of overall Ranks on Terminal values of two groups of different college students.

With the help of the present diagram-3 which has been tried to make the ranked observable in a glance. Further it is necessary to mentioned that

lower area covered indicates the highest value preferences.

Table-4. Showing overall Mean, SDs and Rank on Terminal values of two groups of different college students.

Sr.No.	Instrumental	CBA Students & CECS Students		
		Mean	SDs	Rank
1.	Ambitious (hardworking, aspiring)	6.32	5.40	1
2.	Broadminded(open-minded)	7.83	5.49	4
3.	Capable (competent, efficient)	8.51	5.59	6
4.	Cheerful(lighthearted, joyful)	8.62	5.21	7
5.	Clean(neat, tidy)	7.36	5.20	2
6.	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)	9.13	5.51	11
7.	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)	8.73	5.27	8
8.	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)	10.09	5.15	17
9.	Honest (sincere, truthful)	7.57	5.08	3
10.	Imaginative (daring, creative)	9.88	5.2	16
11.	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	10.73	5.13	18
12.	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)	9.04	5.08	10
13.	Logical (consistent, rational)	8.37	5.28	5
14.	Loving (affectionate, tender)	9.19	5.37	13
15.	Obedient(dutiful, respectful)	9.7	5.58	14
16.	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)	8.87	5.67	9
17.	Responsible (dependable, reliable)	9.16	5.60	12
18.	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)	9.71	5.88	15

Table-4 highlighted the preferences of instrumental values of both the groups of students. Results revealed that ambitious appeared to be ranked 1 with mean 6.32 & Sd. 5.40 followed by clean (mean 7.36 & Sd. 5.20) and honest (mean 7.57 & Sd. 5.08) ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively. On the other

hand students preferred least preferences on instrumental values such as independent (mean 10.73 & Sd.5.13), helpful (mean 10.09 & Sd.5.15) and imaginative (mean 9.88 & Sd.5.20) ranked 18, 17 and 16 respectively.

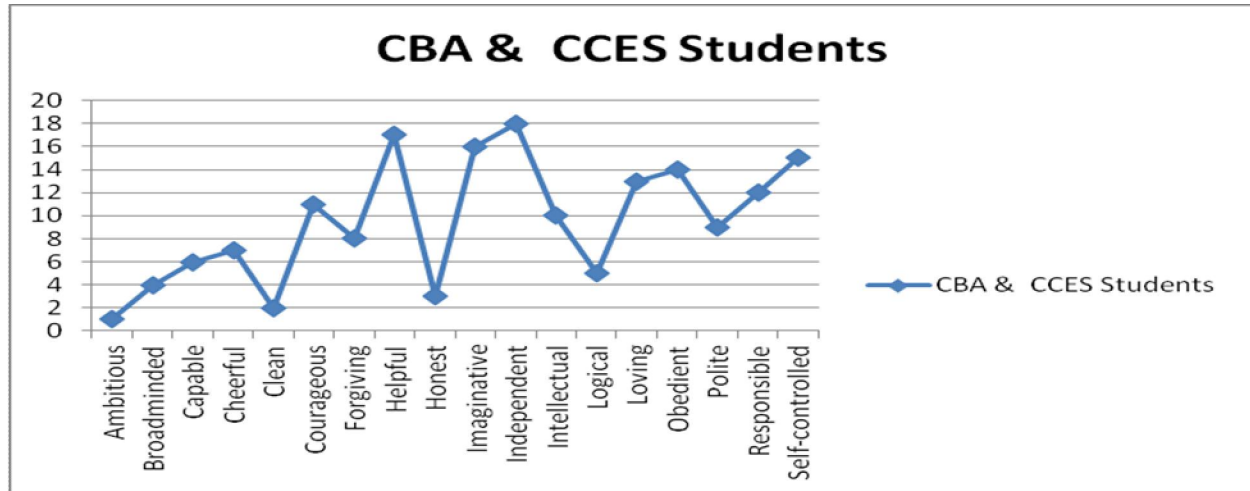


Diagram-4. Graphical Presentation of overall Ranks on Instrumental values of two groups of different college students.

It appears from the diagram-4 about the overall value preferences among the students studying in college of business administration and college of computer engineering and science. Ambitious, clean and honest were observed ranked 1, 2 and 3 respectively whereas independent, helpful and imaginative ranked 18, 17 and 16 respectively; these are considered as least preferred instrumental value.

4. Discussions

The obtained results of the study focused on the value preferences of two groups of different college students have similar connotations about instrumental and terminal values. The literature reviewed indicates that there is similarity in value preferences among the individual because of their cultural and religious beliefs. The obtained results are presenting the value preferences of two groups of different college student in relation to terminal values (Re.Table-1). There are 18 items in the terminal values out of which "A comfortable life" appeared first preferences by college of business students and second ranked by college of computer engineering and science. The results might be highlighted that availability of more resources, government facilities, unwilling to take more risks and a lack of competition might forced them to have a comfortable life. Whereas, at the bottom of terminal values of being "Pleasure" and "A world of beauty" ranked by

CBA and CCES students. Surprisingly, this indicates that students are adhering to the rules, regulations and understanding the cultural boundaries of different nations which reflect their mind set of value preferences (Rokeach, 1973; Hofstede, 1980; Abou-el-Neil, 1988, and Schwartz, 2004).

In the light of obtained results (Ref. Table-2 and 4) students of two different college have given highest preferences to "Ambitious" on instrumental values. It can be interpreted that students have high desire for success in their career and life (Masuchi, Ahmed and Mahmud, 2001). Whereas, least preferences have given to "Independent" on instrumental values which indicates that they want their elders to guide and shape their behavior (Begum, 1985 and Chatterjee, 1991).

The result obtained by both the group of students given first preferences to "Salvation" to terminal values (Ref-Table-3). The results might be highlighted that they want to protect themselves from harm, psycho fear and risk. Indeed, it is necessary to consider the socio-cultural factors to understand the human behavior (Kohls, 1988; Athens, 2002; Turan & Aktan, 2008 and Mahmud *et al.*, 2009). On the other hand least preferences has given to "Pleasure" on instrumental values. The results might be interpreted the relationship between values in terms of religions, personality traits, attitude, thoughts, social changes and socio-cultural background of students (Hadden, 1963; Rokeach, 1979; Pottick, 1983; Bond, 1988; Heaven, 1990;

Perkins, 1992; Gari, 2005; Inglehart, 1990 and Jemna & Curelaru, 2009).

5. Conclusions

The investigation carried out on the adherence to the instrumental and terminal values of the two different college students has obtained some conclusions which can be seen from the results as follows.

- (i) A comfortable life and Salvation has given first priority by CBA students and CCES students respectively while least priority regarded to Pleasure and A world of beauty in the terminal values by both the groups of study.
- (ii) Interestingly, the two groups of students of different colleges ranked highest preferences to Ambitious in the case of instrumental values whereas, least preferences to the Independent by both the groups in related to instrumental values.
- (iii) In the case of overall ranked by both the groups of students on instrumental values is Salvation as a first priority and least priority has given to Pleasure on instrumental values.
- (iv) Ranked on terminal values by both the groups in the case of overall preferences has given to Ambitious as a first priority while Independent has given least preferences by both the groups of students on terminal values.

6. Suggestions and Recommendations

Indeed, it is utmost responsibility of the elder people to inculcate value among young in general and students in particular. As we know that value plays an important role in the development of personality and nation building. However, rapid transformation of higher education in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is taking place in an effective manner with the help of Ministry of Higher Education so, there is need to inculcate nation, religious and cultural values among students. This can only be possible through quality education with the involvement of government, faculty members, parents, societal members and philanthropists. As it is rightly pointed out by one of the philosopher that education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and lies there undigested, instead education must have a life building, man making and character building role.

Moreover, like other research the present study has certain limitations but has avenues for better research in future. The present investigation has widely carried out on male students only and two different colleges of Salman bin Abdulaziz

University in Saudi Arabia. It is suggested to study with other genders, cities, more colleges, different universities and different instruments to make the research more worthy and applicable.

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