Values—A study of teacher and student perceptions in four countries[*]

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Abstract: The study aimed to assess and compare the values prevalent among the students and teachers of Universities in Bangladesh, Japan, USA and Germany. The sample consisted of 480 students and 236 teachers. The sample included 120 undergraduate students Japan; 120 undergraduate students from Bangladesh; 120 undergraduate students from USA, and 120 undergraduate students from Germany. The faculty sample included 60 teachers from Japan, 60 teachers from Bangladesh; 60 teachers from USA, and 56 teachers from Germany. To identify the value preferences of the individuals a list of 10 values, pro-social, achievement, power over others, security, self direction, otherworldliness, fatalism, narcissism, inner directed, and conservative, based on previous values studies by Singh and Parek were prepared. The first five values were identified in previous studies as functional (Singh, 1975) and other five were identified as dysfunctional (Parek, 1988) in the context of national development of Asian cultures. The results revealed that Bangladeshi students held stronger preferences for values identified as functional values than for those identified as dysfunctional. Japanese students indicated stronger preferences for the values identified as functional values except narcissism. The American students indicated a preference for three of the five values identified as functional but also ranked narcissism and other worldliness as third and fifth preferred values respectively. German student showed a preference for functional values, except narcissism which they also ranked as third. Bangladeshi teachers' preferences for functional values were higher than dysfunctional values. Japanese teachers indicated a preference for functional values except narcissism. American teachers preferred functional values except other worldliness. German teachers' value preferences were also functional, except for narcissism which they ranked as fifth. Students and teachers in the four countries sampled indicate preferences for values identified as functional with few exceptions. This research suggests that value preferences among university students and teachers are more similar than different, suggesting a homogenizing effect (Boli, 2005) on human values.

Key words: values; teachers; students; Bangladesh; Japan; Germany; the United States

1. Introduction

The concept of value has been the subject of discussion by social scientists, including philosophers, anthropologists, and psychologists for many years. The attention paid to the concept across many disciplines attests to the fact that in the normal course of their lives people are constantly involved in the process of evaluation, judging what the actions or outcomes are good or bad, or what is desirable or undesirable in relations to more general beliefs and standards. Thus valuing is a part of the human condition.

Our values influence many aspects of our lives, affecting both the way we construe and evaluate situations and the actions that we take in pursuit of important goals. Values involve general beliefs about desirable and undesirable ways of behaving in everyday life and about desirable and undesirable goals or end-states (Cory, Corey & Callahan, 2003). Values are assumed to more specific attitudes towards objects and situations but they influence the form those attitudes take. Kluckhohn (1951, p. 395) defines values as "a conception held by an individual, or collectively by members of a group, of the desirable, and which influences the selection of both means and ends of action from among available alternatives". Hofstede (1980, p. 19) attempted to simplify the definition as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others". Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) identify the following five common features of values: (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) are about desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcends specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance (Allport, 1961; Levy & Guttman, 1974; Maslow, 1959; Morris, 1956; Pepper, 1958; Rokeach, 1973; Scott, 1965).

The above formal features define all of values but do not identify the crucial features of content that distinguishes one value, such as wisdom, from another, such as success. This distinguishing feature is the motivational content of the value. Values are cognitive representations of the important human goals or motivations about which people must communicate in order to coordinate their behavior. Schwartz (1992) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) have generated a comprehensive typology of the different types of value content, based on a theoretical analysis of the universal requirements of the human condition. Empirical studies support the existence of ten distinct types of values: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security (Schwartz, 1992). The relative importance attributed to each of the value types constitutes the individual's system of value priorities.

The meaning of a value is bound up with the pattern of associations that surround the value. In general, we try to obtain evidence that values are equivalent in meaning across cultures by observing whether or not there are regular patterns of relations involving the value with other variables or criteria within each culture and patterns of relations that are similar or the same across different cultures. Such evidence demonstrates functional equivalence because it indicates that the values appear to function in equivalent ways across cultures.

Values are empirical elements in human behavior arising out of experience and hence may be affected by any condition, including social conditions. Values may, therefore, be analyzed as variables, subject to changes that are

consequent to changes in population, technology, economic production, political organization and so on. Attitudes toward a political leader, for example, may be influenced by how much one values freedom, equality, and honest ways of behaving. Values provide standards or criteria that can be used to evaluate actions and outcomes, to justify opinions, conduct, plan, and guide behavior, to decide between alternatives, to compare self with others, to engage in social influence, and to present self to others (Rokech, 1973). The concept of national development is widely considered to involve changes at two levels-the population and the individual. The individual changes in values, attitudes, and motives are thought to influence the economic, political, and social population changes in the population and vice versa (Sinha, 1984, 1990; Triandis, 1995). In a recent study by Allen, et al (2007), two decades of change in cultural values and economic development in eight East Asian and Pacific islands nations found that economic development changes cultural values. Their results also supported the middle-ground position that economic development varies with change in cultural values, presumably because some cultural values are most compatible with certain changes of development. Economic development and cultural change seems to move in coherent patterns. Nations with fast growing economies showed higher support for Dionysian values whereas countries that grow slowly increased their endorsement of submission values.

Ng, et al (1982) found that cultural values in select East Asian and Pacific island nations seemingly varied with economic development, which makes the study of values so important when attempting to identify the reasons for success or failure in national economic and social development. However, empirical and theoretical accounts are divided. Some studies have suggested that cultural values and cultural changes correlate with economic progress (Altman, 2001; Barro, 2004; Frank, et al., 1991; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstead & Bond, 1988; Ingelhart, 1997; Marx, 1976; McClleland, 1961; Schwartz, 1994, 2004; Sowell, 1994; Weber, 1930), but others counter that these association are weak or result from methodological artifacts (Smith & Bond, 1998; Yeh & Lawrence, 1995). Furthermore, those who accept the premise that cultural values and economic (national) development are interwoven disagree on the causal relationship. Some maintain that economic development changes cultural values (Max, 1867/1976), whereas others asserts the cultural values foster economic development (Weber, 1905/1930) and others advocate a middle ground between the two (Inglehart, 1997).

Much of the cross-cultural studies have focused on the differences in personality, attitudes and values of the Asian and western people. Berrien (1966) assessed the needs of American and Japanese students. This study has shown that American male students tended to score higher on needs for deference, achievement and dominance, whereas Japanese male students tended to score higher on need for abasement, change, and endurance. American female students tended to score higher on deference, achievement and affiliation, whereas Japanese female students tended to score higher on need for endurance. Kikuchi and Gordon (1966, 1970) used The Survey of Personal Values for cross-cultural comparisons between Japanese and American students. The result showed that the Japanese are less materialistically oriented than the American students. American students have lesser need for change and diversity. On the other hand, the Japanese place a higher value on a well organized and routinized life and on systematic approaches to relatively well-defined goals. In a cross-cultural study of interpersonal values Begum (1985) found that Bangladeshi student samples were more conforming and also less independent than

Canadian students. It was also found that males scored higher on leadership and lower on benevolence than their female counterparts. Chatterjee (1991) in a study with university students from Bangladesh and Canada found that perceptions of quality of life and life satisfaction were among Canadian samples higher than that of among Bangladeshi samples.

Masuchi, Ahmed and Mahmud (2001) observed the similarities and differences in the values of the teachers and students of two Asian cultures, Japan and Bangladesh. In this study, values were defined as functional or dysfunctional based on the research of Singh (1975), who identified certain values such as disapproval of material and worldly things acceptance of the status quo, low aspirations, conformity, and passivity to be dysfunctional for the national economic development of the Asian nations. The results revealed that for the Japanese students and teachers preferences for functional values except for narcissism were higher than dysfunctional values, and Bangladeshi students and teachers preferences for functional values were higher than the dysfunctional values.

Warchal, Masuchi, Ahmed and Mahmud (2008, pending), using the same value classification system as Masuchi, Ahmed and Mahmud (2001), found that American students and teachers showed preferences for functional values of achievement, security and self-direction (FV). The dysfunctional value of otherworldliness was ranked in the top five by both American students and teachers. Japanese students and teachers preferences for functional values except narcissism were higher than dysfunctional values. For Bangladeshi students and teachers preferences for functional values were higher than dysfunctional values.

Researchers on American values note that the United States is a relatively young nation (an official country for about 225 years) when compared to other cultures that have existed for thousands of years (Kohls, 1988). The American value system is dynamic and developing, but there is general agreement on several specific values. Althen (2002) identified the following values as dominant in American culture (in no particular order of importance): individuality and privacy, equality, informality, future orientation, the goodness of humanity, an achievement orientation, directness, and assertiveness. Kohls (1988) adds the values of perceived control over the environment and time, the value of change, efficiency, and materialism to the list. It is also important to note that these values are generally considered to be positive in American culture.

German values are in some ways similar to and in other ways different from American values. Like American values, they are based on a Judeo-Christian morality that emphasizes success, hard work and security. On the other hand, German culture has existed for thousands of years and has undergone many upheavals that American culture has not (the Holocaust, WWII; the division of Germany and its reunification, etc.). This could lead to a very different development in value-systems. Halloran and Kashima (2004), in a study of value endorsement, found that value choices are dependent on the particular social identity of the culture being surveyed.

The current study builds on the work of Singh (1975) by comparing the value preferences of students and teachers of different nationalities, using Singh's classifications of either functional or dysfunctional in terms of national development. This research included one student sample and one teacher sample from four countries: Japan, Bangladesh, Germany, and the United States. Having two social groups per country made it possible to identify both between country differences and within country differences.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The sample consisted of 120 undergraduate students of Hokkaido University, Japan, 120 undergraduate students of Dhaka University and Chittagong University Bangladesh, 120 undergraduate student from Alvernia College, USA, and 120 undergraduate students from the Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. The study also included 60 teachers from Hokkaido University, Japan, 60 teachers from Dhaka University and Chittagong University, Bangladesh, 60 teachers from Alvernia College and Kurtztown University, USA, and 56 teachers from the Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany.

2.2 Materials

In order to identity the value preferences of the individuals, a list of 10 values, called the schedule for value preferences (Masuchi, Ahmed & Mahmud, 2001), was used in the study. The values assessed and their definitions were: (1) Achievement—The basic need to develop and employ skills for obtaining from the physical and social environment those resources required to thrive for social recognition and admiration; (2) Security—The basic need to survive physically and to avoid threats to the integrity of life; (3) Self-direction—A preference for relying on one's independent capacities for analyzing situations and reaching decisions; (4) Pro-social—A positive and active concern for the welfare of others; (5) Power over others—Need for dominance to have control over many regarding resources; (6) Fatalism—Acceptance of the outcome in life as a function of fate; (7) Conservative—Wishing to keep things as they are; (8) Narcissism—Urge for fulfilling personal gratification; (9) Inner-directed—Ego-centeredness and lack of consideration for others; (10) Other worldliness—More concern for spiritual life.

In accordance with studies by Singh (1975) and Parek (1988), five of these values were classified as functional (pro-social, achievement, power over others, security and self-direction) and other five as dysfunctional (other worldliness, fatalism, narcissism, inner-directed and conservative) in the context of Asian national development. The list of values indicated here are assumed to be universally appropriate in that they are consistent with basic aspects of human nature and requirements of human existence and indeed consistent with other value scales widely used (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). However the classification of the values into the two dichotomous groups of functional and dysfunction may not be universally acceptable as they were designed to classify values deemed functional or dysfunctional for the economic and social development of Asian cultures.

The researchers focused on approaches that provide a standard set of items to which individuals respond. The aggregated responses are then assumed to inform us about similarities and differences about grouped, organizations and cultures. This approach is called the nomothetic approach and it is in contrast to ideographic procedures where the focus is on the individual and the way he or she contrast social reality in personally unique ways. Our bias is on the nomothetic position, consistent with Braithwaite and Scott's (1991, p. 670) assumption that "… the more researchers refine, consolidate, and bridge available nomothetic measures, the sooner we will have a strong empirical base for understanding human values".

The researchers followed the nomothetic measures of values in cross-cultural research involves administering value scales to representative samples from each culture or to samples selected from a defined segment of each culture (i.e. students and teachers) and then aggregating the individual responses for comparisons.

The respondents were asked to rank these values in order of their felt importance. The schedule along with printed instructions is presented in Appendix.

The ranking system (1, 2, 3 and so on) constituted the scores for each value (i.e. 1 indicating most preferred and 10 indicating least preferred). The mean of the rank number were used in the statistical analysis.

2.3 Procedure

Approval from the Institutional Review Boards of each institution surveyed were obtained. The schedules for value preferences (Appendix) were administered by the authors on student samples in classrooms, dormitories and homes. The instruments were administered by the authors to teachers meeting in groups or individually. The respondents were given a brief introduction to the schedule and printed instructions were given. The respondents were instructed to record their response and return it to the authors. The study was conducted during 2000-2002, and then again in 2007 (German sample). The respondents were asked to rank these values in order of importance they felt. Ranks (1, 2, 3 and so on) constituted the scores for each value (i.e. 1 indicating most preferred and 10 indicating least preferred). The mean of the rank number were used in the statistical analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Value preferences of Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students

Value preferences from a cluster of functional values (FV) and dysfunctional values (DV) relevant to national development by Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students is presented in Table 1. The Table 1 shows the values preferred by Bangladeshi, Japanese and American students on the basis of mean scores of value preference ranks (i.e. 1 indicating most preferred and 10 indicating least preferred). Bangladeshi, Japanese and American students recorded their preferred values in ascending order.

Among the Bangladeshi students, the most preferred value was achievement (FV) followed by self-direction (FV), pro-social (FV), security (FV), narcissism (DV), power over others (FV), fatalism (DV), inner-directed (DV), conservative (DV) and other worldliness (DV). This result shows that Bangladeshi students preferences for functional values were higher than for dysfunctional values.

For Japanese students, self-direction (FV) was found to be the most preferred value followed by narcissism (DV), achievement (FV), security (FV), pro-social (FV), fatalism (DV), conservative (DV), power over others (FV), inner-directed (DV) and other worldliness (DV) and it can be noted that for Japanese students preference for functional values was higher than those for dysfunctional values.

For the American students, the most preferred value was achievement (FV), followed by security (FV), narcissism (DV), self-direction (FV), other worldliness (DV), pro-social (FV), power over others (FV), inner-directed (DV), conservative (DV) and fatalism (DV).

Table 1   Mean scores of value preference ranks (ranging from 1-10) by Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students and teachers

Values	Students				Teachers			
	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German
	n = 120	n = 120	n = 120	n = 120	n = 60	n = 60	n = 60	n = 60
Achievement: FV	2.46(1)	3.76(3)	2.38(1)	3.43(2)	3.31(2)	3.96(3)	3.87(4)	3.09(2)
Self-direction: FV	3.33(2)	3.05(1)	4.28(4)	2.40(1)	2.22(1)	1.68(1)	3.22(1)	2.39(1)
Pro-social: FV	3.84(3)	4.95(5)	6.45(6)	4.03(3)	4.01(4)	4.36(4)	3.81(3)	3.32(3)
Security: FV	4.02(4)	4.30(4)	2.73(2)	4.61(5*)	3.75(3)	4.96(5)	3.53(2)	4.36(4)
Narcissism: DV	4.87(5)	3.09(2)	4.25(3)	4.03(3)	4.78(5)	3.41(2)	6.12(6)	4.84(5)
Power over others: FV	5.96(6)	7.37(8)	7.02(7)	7.86(10)	8.56(10)	8.09(10)	7.40(8)	7.52(9)
Fatalism: DV	6.32(7)	6.39(6)	7.77(10)	7.23(7)	7.57(8)	6.88(7)	7.77(10)	7.32(8)
Inner-directed: DV	7.45(8)	7.45(9)	7.26(8)	7.61(9)	6.78(7)	7.23(8)	6.98(7)	8.02(10)
Conservation: DV	7.71(9)	6.76(7)	7.61(9)	7.47(8)	8.44(9)	8.08(9)	7.48(9)	6.98(6)
Other worldliness DV	7.93(10)	7.83(10)	6.00(5)	6.33(6)	6.02(6)	6.31(6)	4.83(5)	7.16(7)

Notes: ( ): Rank based on the mean scores of value preference ranks; *: There are ties in the ranking for German students, Pro social and Narcissism, so the rank after the tied 3 is 5.

The German students' most preferred value was self-direction (FV), followed by achievement (FV), pro-social (FV), narcissism (DV), security (FV), other worldliness (DV), fatalism (DV), conservative (DV), inner directed (FV) and power over others (FV).

3.2 Rank assigned to different values by Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students

Table 2 shows the rank assigned to 10 values by Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students. The table shows that Bangladeshi students differ from their Japanese and American counterparts in ordering the ranks, and the German students also differed from the other 3 groups in ordering the ranks.

Table 2 shows that Bangladeshi students differ from their Japanese and American counterparts in ordering the ranks, and the German students differed from the other three groups in ordering the ranks.

3.3 Coefficient of concordance among value ranks of Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students and teachers

Kendall's coefficient of concordance was computed to examine relationship among value ranks of Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students.

The obtained value (Kendall's W=0.799, $X^2_{(9)}$ =28.78, p<0.001) shows a significant concordance among the four ranks.

The values of Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient are presented in Table 3. Table 3 shows that American students differ from their Japanese and German counterparts in ordering the ranks.

Table 2   Rank assigned to 10 values by Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students and teachers

Values	Students				Teachers			
	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German
	n = 120	n = 120	n = 120	n = 120	n = 60	n = 60	n = 60	n = 60
Achievement: FV	1	3	1	2	2	3	4	2
Self-direction: FV	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1
Pro-social: FV	3	5	6	3	4	4	3	3
Security: FV	4	4	2	5*	3	5	2	4
Narcissism: DV	5	2	3	3	5	2	6	5
Power over others: FV	6	8	7	10	10	10	8	9
Fatalism: DV	7	6	10	7	8	7	10	8
Inner-directed: DV	8	9	8	9	7	8	7	10
Conservation: DV	9	7	9	8	9	9	9	6
Other worldliness DV	10	10	5	6	6	6	5	7

Note: *: There are ties in the ranking for German, Pro social and Narcissism, so the rank after the tied 3 is 5.

Table 3   Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient among Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German students

	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German
Bangladeshi	1.000	0.644*	0.511	0.539*
Japanese	0.644*	1.000	0.333	0.674*
American	0.511*	0.333	1.000	0.449
German	0.539*	0.674*	0.449	1.000

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Kendall's Coefficient of concordance was computed to examine relationship among value ranks of Bangladeshi, Japanese and American Teachers.

The obtained value (Kendall's W=0.879, $X^2_{(9)}$ =31.64, p<0.001) shows a significant agreement among the four rankings. The values of Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient are present in Table 4. Table 4 shows strong correlations between all pairs of rankings.

Table 4   Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient among Bangladeshi, Japanese, American and German teachers

	Bangladeshi	Japanese	American	German
Bangladeshi	1.000	0.778*	0.733	0.733*
Japanese	0.778*	1.000	0.511	0.689*
American	0.733*	0.511	1.000	0.556
German	0.733*	0.689*	0.556	1.000

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

4. Discussion

In the present study, value preferences from a cluster of functional values (FV) and dysfunctional values (DV) relevant to national development were identified by university students and teachers of Bangladesh, Japan, USA and Germany.

In the study, the American students showed preference for three of the values classified as functional, achievement, security, and self-direction and two of the values classified as dysfunctional, narcissism and otherworldliness. The student samples from Bangladeshi, Japan and Germany also ranked narcissism as their preferred value, but not other worldliness.

Japanese, Bangladeshi and German students preferred functional values as their priorities, with the exception of narcissism, one of the dysfunctional values mentioned in this study. Japanese and Germans students' most preferred value was self-direction, which signifies a person's independent capacities for analyzing situations and reaching decisions. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Kikuchi and Gordon (1966, 1970), which mentioned that the Japanese place a higher value on a well organized and reutilized life.

For Japanese students, the second most preferred value was narcissism, which relate to an urge for fulfilling personal gratification. Some social psychologists (Singh, 1975; Sinha, 1988) dealing with Asian national development and behavior regarded narcissism as dysfunctional. Interestingly, Japan is a highly developed industrialized nation. It may be assumed that since the students of Japan do not need to strive for fulfillment of the basic needs, they develop the urge for fulfilling personal gratification. The ranking of other three functional values like achievement, security, and pro-social above dysfunctional values showed their positive approach for national development.

However the most preferred value for Bangladeshi and American students was achievement. Preference for achievement reveals the Bangladeshi and American students' need to thrive for social recognition and admiration. For the Japanese students, achievement is the third most preferred value. Preference for self-direction as the second most preferred value showed the Bangladeshi students' determination to analyze the life situations and take independent decisions. The ranking of other two functional values like security and pro-social above dysfunctional values coincides with the preferences of Japanese counterparts. However preference for narcissism as the first choice among dysfunctional values reveals their desire for fulfilling personal gratification like Japanese students.

For the American students, the second most preferred value was security which signifies the basic need to survive physically and to avoid threats to the integrity of life. The third most preferred value by the American students' was narcissism, which coincides with Bangladeshi and Japanese students as a first choice among dysfunctional values. However the fifth preferred value, other worldliness, reveals their concern for spiritual life, which differed from their Bangladeshi and Japanese counterparts.

The sixth preference by Bangladeshi students as compared to the seventh and eighth preferences by Japanese and American students respectively was power over others, which reveals the need for dominance or to control over many regarding resources are higher for Bangladeshi students than Japanese students and American students.

Japanese students ranked the dysfunctional value fatalism as sixth preference, as did German students.

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Bangladeshi students ranked fatalism as seventh preference and American students as the last preferred value in this study. The students of Japan differed from the students of the other countries by one rank in their preference for the value inner directed. The Bangladeshi and American students ranked conservative as the ninth most preferred value. While Japanese students ranked it as seventh most preferred value, as did the German students. Both Bangladeshi and Japanese students were found to rank other worldliness as the last preferred value in this study. However American students ranked other worldliness as the: fifth preferred value, which reveals their concern for spiritual life, is much preferred value than their Bangladeshi and Japanese counterparts. German students placed otherworldliness just outside the top five preferred values.

The German data provides an interesting middle-ground between the other 3 groups of students. Like the Japanese students, German students ranked self-direction as their most important value, followed by achievement (number one for both Bangladeshi and American students), pro-social (also number 3 for Bangladeshi students, but less important at number 5 and 6 for Japanese and Americans respectively), narcissism (more important to Japanese and America students, but less important to Bangladeshis), security, other worldliness, conservatism, inner-directedness and power over others. German students showed a clear preference for functional over dysfunctional values, with the exception of narcissism. They have this in common with the Bangladeshi and Japanese students.

In the second part of the present study, value preferences from a cluster of functional values and dysfunctional values relevant to Asian national development were identified by university teachers from Bangladesh, Japan, America and Germany. The result shows that for Bangladeshi teachers preferences for functional values were higher than dysfunctional values. So do the German teachers show a clear preference for functional values over dysfunctional values. Japanese teachers indicated a slight preference for dysfunctional values. For the American teachers were more inclined to identify functional values (except otherworldliness) than dysfunctional values. German teachers showed a clear preference for functional values over dysfunctional values.

Bangladeshi, Japanese, American, and German teachers ranked self-direction as the most preferred value. The common preference for the said value showed their independent capacities for analyzing situations and reaching decisions. However the Japanese teachers differ in their preference for the second most choice of values with Bangladeshi and American counterparts. Perhaps the fulfillment of the basic needs, leads to the development of the urge for fulfilling personal gratification in case of Japanese teachers. For the American teachers, the second most preferred value was security which signifies the basic need to survive physically and to avoid threats to the integrity of life. For the German and Bangladeshi teachers, the second most preferred was achievement.

In ranking functional value pro-social, teachers of all the three countries showed more or less similar preferences.

Another finding of the present study was the preference for the value otherworldliness as sixth preference by the Bangladeshi, American and German teachers and seventh by Japanese teachers. They also showed more or less similar preferences pattern for the dysfunctional values of inner directed and conservative, except the German teachers, who ranked conservative as sixth. Japanese teachers ranked the dysfunctional value fatalism as seventh

preference, and German teachers ranked it higher as their 6th preference. Bangladeshi teachers ranked fatalism as eighth preference and American teachers as the last preferred value in this study. Bangladeshi, German and Japanese teachers were found to rank power over other as the last preferred value in this study.

The values preferred by German teachers reflected those of their students. Self-direction was most valued, followed by achievement, pro-social, security, narcissism, other worldliness, fatalism, conservatism, inner-directedness, and power over others. Like the teachers from the other cultural groups, the German teachers' most preferred value was self-direction, followed by achievement, like the Bangladeshi teachers. However, pro-social was the more important to German teachers (and students) than to Japanese or Bangladeshi teachers, but equally important to American teachers. Security was also important to German teachers, but not as much as to American and Bangladeshi teachers. Narcissism (self-gratification) is the preferred dysfunctional value of German teachers, reflecting the value preferences of the other cultural groups.

The present study confirms and extends the previous research by Kohls (1988) and Althen (2002). This study reiterates the importance of achievement for American students as a number one priority. It is interesting to note the previous research on American values did not identify security as an important American value. Yet in this study security ranked as the second highest value for both American students and teachers. This may be an artifact of the timing of this study, since it was conducted in the United States shortly after the World Trade Center tragedy in New York City on 9-11-01.

It would be interesting to see if security remains a top priority in American culture in future studies. It is also interesting to note the difference in the judgment of values in the context of national development. Some of the values listed as dysfunctional in this study might be considered as functional in American and German culture (i.e. narcissism and other worldliness).

The findings (in relation to power value) are quite consistent with Hofer, et al (2006). German respondents reported the lowest importance of power values seems to contradict expected differences between so called individualistic cultures. However, Schwartz (1992) and Oishini, et al (1998) demonstrated that even if power and achievement related values serves personal interests at the individual level, in collectivistic cultures they are often rated as more important than the individualistic cultures. This appears to be the case in Bangladeshi respondents in this study.

German subjects also rated other worldliness highly (sixth), along with narcissism. Higher ratings for pro-social over narcissism and security seem to indicate a less individualistic mindset than among American subjects. Their lower concern for security and higher preference for interest in the spiritual (other worldliness) than their Bangladeshi or Japanese counterparts is perhaps the product of an affluent society that has been at peace for fifty years. However, more research will need to be undertaken to see if these results really reflect the value preferences of the German nation.

It is necessary to consider how the meaning of a particular value item differs across cultural groups. Value refers to situational goals. In the value study, many terms are abstract. The precise understanding of such items is likely to differ to some extent from one group to another. The instrument was administered in four different

languages and in various contexts (classrooms, homes, teachers meetings, in group or individually). Small discrepancies in the meaning of items due to translation and context are almost unavoidable in such circumstances. Moreover, it is plausible that these discrepancies in the meaning are more frequent the more the context and the language differ from those of the typical student sample of a sample at a Western/Asian university. PENG, et al (1979) have argued that the common method of assessing values—giving participants a list of values and asking them to rate or rank them in order of importance may not be valid across cultures because of cultural differences in the meaning of specific value items. However, Schwartz and Sagiv (1995) stated that the values commonly used demonstrate high cross-cultural consistency of meaning or near universal meaning. What may not be consistent is the classification system identifying values as functional and dysfunctional. This classification of functional and dysfunctional may imply different interpretations in different cultures and may not be equivalent when comparing nations at very disparate stages of national development. Fontaine, et al (2008) indicated that teachers and students from countries low in societal (national) development have less experience with numerical rating scales. They therefore communicate their value priorities less accurately in the value measurement. As a result, their data may represent the underlying value structure less well.

Student as opposed to teacher samples from countries higher as opposed to lower in societal (national) development showed less deviation in responses. Methodological factors might explain this, as the cultural context to which students and those from more developed countries are exposed may promote more fully articulated representations of the value domain. The culture in more developed countries as opposed to less developed counties encourages individual autonomy and cultivation of unique personal ideas and preferences, values which were considered dysfunctional in this study, but can be seen as very functional in a developed country (Schwartz, 2004). Similarly, the university cultural context of students encourages individual autonomy and the cultivation of unique personal ideas and preferences (Schwartz, 2004). Consequently, prevailing norm and customs impose fewer constrains on the decision-making and behavior of students and the respondents from developed countries. They are therefore more likely to confront real choices of everyday life and to be obliged to make those choices based on their own assessment of the consequences. According to value theory, such choice experiences are the main vehicle for developing articulated value systems with clear congruities and conflicts among values (Schwartz, 2005). If this post hoc account is correct, personal value priorities may predict behavior more effectively in countries with a high societal (national) development index score.

Societies and social groups may actually differ somewhat in the underlying conflicts and congruencies that characterize their value systems. Based on the size of the structural deviations alone, one cannot say whether substantive differences in the organization of the value domain, mean differences in the organization of the value domain, mean differences, or all these together contribute to the differences in the size of deviations.

The finding that the size of the deviations related more strongly to societal (national) development in the teacher than in the student samples has important implications for cross-cultural studies. It highlights the critical need to include nonstudent samples in cultural comparative studies, for a more accurate representation of the general population of the country.

The differences between student and teacher samples might lie in the different social contexts they generally inhabit. Fontaine, et al (2008) found systematic differences on the person-focused versus social-focused dimension. Value conflict on this dimension is less intense among teachers and among those from less developed countries. This may be due to less frequent and less intense experiences of conflict between values that focus on expressing personal versus social goals in their lives. Teachers, who are older and usually married, are more deeply embedded in family and occupational networks they have chosen, compared to students, whose stage in the life course centers on finding the personal directions that will suit them best. Moreover, as parents, role models, and members of an occupation they chose, teachers are more likely to accept the identity with the goals of their everyday associates. Thus, teachers are less likely to experience pursuit of social-focused values, resulting in less intense conflict between these types of values in the value structure for teacher sample.

This explanation can be applied to the somewhat weaker differences between less developed societies. Less developed societies have more embedded cultures, and more developed societies have more autonomous cultures (Schwartz, 2004).Hence those in less developed societies are less likely to experience pursuit of social-focused values as being in conflict with pursuit of person-focused values.

5. Conclusions

This study showed value preferences from a cluster of values previously identified as functional and dysfunctional values relevant to Asian national development. It is suggested that these value preferences are the results of history, culture, economic achievement, etc., of the societies from which they are drawn. While this study provides important information regarding the universality of values systems, it should be noted that the definitions of national development varies in Eastern and Western culture (Rist, 1997). Thus, the classification of functional and dysfunctional used in this study may imply a worth or significance in the content of national development that is not universally applicable.

Another limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size that consists of university students and faculty. More research with larger numbers of people from a wider cross-section of society need to be taken in order to ascertain a country's value preferences.

Thirdly, the present value survey study is not above criticism because the ranking procedure only provides information about the relative importance of different values not about their absolute importance. The values were not operationally defined in the survey, thus cultural differences in the interpretations of the meaning of the values presented may have influenced the results. Furthermore, each value was presented as a single item to be ranked along with other values. It would be preferable to measure the importance of a value by using multiple items. The use of multiple item to measure the importance of a person, for example, enable one to assess the structure and internal reliability of the scale and would provide a clear definition of the construct being measured than would occur in a single item of being honest was used. In value measurement the rating procedure is the other option in that it separates terminal from instrumental values (Schwartz, 1992). However, PENG, et al (1997) while comparing different value survey methods, such as traditional ranking, rating, attitude scaling and behavioral

scenario rating method concluded that only method that yielded reasonable validity estimates was the behavioral scenario rating method, which is also the least used.

Most cross-cultural studies compare average value scores of cultural groups (Hofstede, 1980). However, investigating the internal structure of the value domain and its stability across groups is necessary for both applied measurement and theoretical reasons. From the measurement point of view, the equivalence of the internal structure is necessary though not sufficient precondition for making valid quantitative comparisons between cultural groups. As stated by Fontaine, et al (2008) such a precondition can not be assumed, it has to be demonstrated empirically.

Finally, the results of this study indicate that students and teachers in the four countries sampled indicate preferences for values identified as functional with respect to national development with few exceptions. This research suggests that value preferences among university students and teachers are more similar than different, supporting Boli (2005) in his suggestion that as the idea of global citizenship becomes more evident, both individualistic and collective societies may experience a homogenizing effect on human values. The widespread multicultural movements of the past two decades may be credited with reducing beliefs about the superiority or inferiority of one culture over another, and thus influencing the values promoted by any individual cultures.

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Appendix:

English version of schedule for value preferences

People have different views and opinion and the value of life is different for every individual. Please rank the following statements according to your choice-the most favored statement should he ranked as 1, the next favored ranked as 2, and so on.

( ) To participate in collective /social welfare activities

( ) To achieve success

( ) To have power and influence over others

( ) To think more about otherworldliness

( ) To depend on fate for the outcomes in life

( ) To lead a secure life

( ) To fix self -direction

( ) To enjoy life by pursuing one's own pleasure

( ) To think more about self

( ) To become conservative