



A Survey of Work Values among Undergraduate Students at Huizhou University in China

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Abstract:

This article takes undergraduate students from Huizhou University in China as the research object, and analyzes their work values using a scale and SPSS software. The research results indicate that under graduated students attach great importance to job compensation, benefits, work environment, and long term development when choosing a career, but can reduce their love for work and innovation orientation There are some differences in innovation awareness between males and females, while there is no significant difference in work values according to different year levels.

Keywords: Work Values, Undergraduate Students, Huizhou University

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I. Introduction

Values are standards and guidelines for choosing goals, guiding behavior, and maintaining long-term stability (Kilmann, 1981; Schwartz&Bilsky, 1987). Values develop with changes in culture, society, and personality. Work values can also be referred to as professional values. Through searching relevant literature, it has been found that there is currently no unified standard for the definition of work values in the academic community. Scholars give different understandings based on their research objects and purposes. Super (1970) defined work values as work goals in his research, and the attributes or qualities that people seek in the activities they engage in are also a manifestation of an individual's internal needs. Elizur (1984) believes in his research that work values are the degree to which an individual values a certain outcome obtained in the work environment. Knoop (1991) believes that work values refer to the degree of value, importance, and desirability of what happens at work. Froese (2013) simplified the definition of work values and divided them into two different categories: general values related to the work environment and work centrism. General values have a wide range of meanings, related to both the business environment and the more general environment. For example, individualism refers to the degree to which individuals are individualistic or group oriented. Work centrality refers to the importance or value of work as a major aspect of life for individuals, and how individuals compare the importance of work with other areas of life, such as family, leisure, community, and religion.

With the development and progress of society, the new generation of employees have also begun to enter the workplace and gradually become the main force of the social labor market and indispensable personnel in enterprises. Liu Yuxin (2013) pointed out in his research that the new generation of employees are labor force born after 1980 and working outside the home for non agricultural purposes. Li Jun (2013) believes that the new generation of employees refers to the young labor force born after 1980 in the current environment of information technology and rapid economic progress. Yao Hui (2017) defined post-90s employees as the new generation after considering age, employment, and cultural factors. Li Yanping and Hou Xuanfang (2012) believe that the new generation of employees are workers born in the 1980s and 1990s. They pursue a happy, free, and equal work environment, which is clearly different from the work values of their predecessors.

Subsequently, Hou Xuanfang, Li Yanping, and Tu Yidong (2014) explored the structural connotation of the new generation of work values in the Chinese context and their impact on work performance, which has significant theoretical and practical value. They conducted an open-ended questionnaire survey on the new generation of employees and summarized the characteristics of their work values, ultimately forming five factors: utilitarian orientation, internal preferences, interpersonal harmony, innovation orientation, and long-term development. What are the work values of the new generation of college students studying in

universities? This article attempts to provide an answer.

II. Method

2.1 Research Design

To achieve the main goal of this paper, quantitative methods would be used, and the data would be processed using the SPSS software. Questionnaires adapted from Hou Xuanfang, Li Yanping & Tu Yidong (2014) would be used as research instrument in gathering information. T-test and ANOVA would be also used to get the difference on the level of work value of millennial generation when the respondents are grouped according to Sex and year level.

2.2 Participants

This study was conducted in Huizhou University and take undergraduate students as respondents. The researcher will use non-random sampling at 95% confidence level using the 5% margin of error and take at least 346 students as respondents from the total of 10,335.

2.3 Instrument

Questionnaire from Hou Xuanfang, Li Yanping & Tu Yidong (2014) would be adapted. In the Likert-type evaluation of the scale, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Specifically, Item number A1 to number A4 is for measuring Utilitarian orientation, Item number 5 to number 8 is for measuring Intrinsic preferences, Item number 9 to number 12 is for measuring Interpersonal harmony, Item number 13 to 16 is for measuring Innovation oriented, and Item number 17 to number 20 is for measuring long-term development. This study implemented the analysis steps step by step through the SPSS21 version.

The following describes the descriptions corresponding to the five-point scale:

Table 1 5-point Scale for Interpretation of Data

Scale Weight	Range of Means Values	Descriptive Rating
5	4.51- 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.51- 4.50	Agree
3	2.51- 3.50	Neutral
2	1.51- 2.50	Disagree
1	1.00- 1.50	Strongly Disagree

2.4 Analysis of Instrument Reliability and Validity

After all questionnaires have been duly-answered by the respondents, tallied and properly documented, the data was forwarded to a statistician for data analysis with the aid of the software SPSS. According to the reliability coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items is 0.906, indicating that the overall reliability of the questionnaire is very high.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.897	0.906	20

The coefficient result of KMO test is 0.879, and the coefficient range of KMO test is 0-1. The closer to 1, the better the structural validity. According to the significance of the spherical test, the significance of this test is infinitely close to zero. So the questionnaire has good validity.

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3918.883
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

III. Results

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 4 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	92	26.60%	1.73	0.44
Female	254	73.40%		

Based on the above analysis results, it can be seen that the numerical characteristics of demographic variables reflect the distribution of the surveyed objects. Among them, the mean represents the concentration trend, and the standard deviation represents the fluctuation situation.

According to the frequency analysis results of each variable, it can be seen that the distribution basically meets the requirements of sampling survey. Among them, the gender survey results showed that the male ratio was 26.6% and the female ratio was 73.4%. It can be seen that the focus of this survey is biased towards the will of women, which is consistent with the gender ratio of the entire university.

Table 5 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Year Level

Year Level	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Senior	51	14.70%	2.43	1.01
Junior	179	51.70%		
Sophomore	33	9.50%		
Freshman	83	24.00%		

According to the frequency analysis results of various variables in Table 5, due to the formation and fixation of work values in senior grades, the main respondents are concentrated in senior students. Among them, Senior is 14.70%, Junior is 51.70%, Sophomore is 9.50%, and Freshman is 24.00%, which is consistent with the preset direction of the study.

Table 6 Distribution of mean and extreme values of variables

variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Utilitarian orientation	11	20	17.0145
Intrinsic preferences	6	20	15.7254
Interpersonal harmony	8	20	17.5318
Innovation oriented	4	20	14.4017
long-term development	8	20	17.1561

From Table 6, it can be seen that participants have different evaluations in the five dimensions of work values. Among them, the average score of Utility orientation, Interpersonal harmony, and long term development exceeds 17, indicating that the new generation of young people not only values the income and long term development brought by work, but also focuses on harmonious relationships between people. The average score of Intrinsic preferences is relatively low, only 15.72 points, indicating that the new generation of young people did not consider whether they liked it as an important factor in evaluating the value of their work. Innovation oriented has the lowest score among all variables, indicating that the new generation of young people are not fully engaged in their work.

3.2 Difference Analysis

Differential testing is the study of differences in variables across different dimensions using independent sample t-tests, chi square tests, and one-way analysis of variance. In this analysis, independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were mainly used based on the characteristics of the data.

Table 5 Sex differences in work value

variable	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Utilitarian orientation	Male	92	17.0761	2.21004	0.307	0.759
	Female	254	16.9921	2.25629		

Intrinsic preferences	Male	92	16.0543	2.33165	1.419	0.157
	Female	254	15.6063	2.68257		
Interpersonal harmony	Male	92	17.1848	2.48923	-1.659	0.098
	Female	254	17.6575	2.28693		
Innovation oriented	Male	92	15.1087	2.98515	2.488	0.013
	Female	254	14.1457	3.24836		
long-term development	Male	92	17.1196	2.5628	-0.174	0.862
	Female	254	17.1693	2.27525		

Based on the results of the independent sample t-test mentioned above, it can be seen that there are gender differences in each dimension. The significance test for the gender difference of the Innovation oriented dimension is 0.013, which is significantly less than 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that there are differences in the evaluation of Innovation oriented among participants of different genders. According to the mean value, it can be seen that males have slightly higher evaluations than females. The significance tests for gender differences in Utilitarian orientation, Intrinsic preferences, Interpersonal harmony, and long term development were 0.759, 0.157, 0.098, and 0.862, respectively, which were significantly greater than 0.05. Accepting the null hypothesis, it indicates that there is no gender difference in other dimensions.

Table 6 Year level differences in work value

variable	Year Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.	Multiple comparisons
Utilitarian orientation	Senior	51	16.9	1.98	0.534	0.659	/
	Junior	179	17.14	2.2			
	Sophomore	33	17.09	2.63			
	Freshman	83	16.78	2.34			
Intrinsic preferences	Senior	51	15.12	2.54	1.771	0.152	/
	Junior	179	15.68	2.5			
	Sophomore	33	16.33	2.5			
Interpersonal harmony	Senior	51	16.94	3.31	1.294	0.276	/
	Junior	179	17.61	2.06			
	Sophomore	33	17.61	2.34			
Innovation oriented	Freshman	83	17.7	2.22	1.413	0.239	/
	Senior	51	14.1	3.29			
	Junior	179	14.17	3.04			
long-term development	Sophomore	33	15.09	2.8	1.608	0.187	/
	Freshman	83	14.81	3.6			
	Senior	51	16.49	2.89			
long-term development	Junior	179	17.27	2.14	1.608	0.187	/
	Sophomore	33	17.27	2.32			
	Freshman	83	17.28	2.41			

According to Table 6, it can be seen that the F-value of Utilitarian orientation is 0.534, with a significance coefficient of 0.659, which is significantly greater than 0.05. Accepting the null hypothesis, there is no difference in Utilitarian orientation among grades. The F-value of Intrinsic preferences is 1.771, with a significance coefficient of 0.152, significantly greater than 0.05. Accepting the null hypothesis, there is no difference in Intrinsic preferences among grades. The F-value of Interpersonal Harmony is 1.294, with a significance coefficient of 0.276, significantly greater than 0.05. Accepting the null hypothesis, there is no difference in Interpersonal Harmony among grades. Similarly, there is no difference in grade between Innovation oriented and long term development. In summary, based on the above one-way ANOVA results, it can be seen that there are no differences in the five dimensions of work values among grades.

IV. Discussion

4.1 Undergraduate students attach great importance to job compensation, benefits, work environment, and long-term development when choosing a career, but can reduce their love for work and innovation orientation. This survey result is different from the traditional employment concept in China. Previous studies have shown that the new generation not only focuses on salary and benefits, but also pays more attention to their inner feelings compared to their predecessors. However, this result shows that the new generation has higher rationality. The reason for this may be that after the outbreak of the pandemic in 2019, the new generation re-examined the value of work, and they were able to view the current benefits and long-term plans of employment more rationally. Their acceptance of unsatisfactory jobs also increased accordingly.

4.2 There are differences in innovation awareness between males and females, with males being more willing to innovate. Undergraduate students have a high degree of consistency in job value, with boys only outperforming girls in terms of innovation awareness. The emergence of this result may be due to the strong promotion of core values by the Chinese government in recent years. Not only are core values taught in the classroom, but they are also extensively integrated into extracurricular activities, making it easier for students to form consistent work values. However, at the same time, the lack of innovation awareness indicates that school authorities need to make greater efforts to guide female students to develop sufficient innovation awareness.

4.3 From a numerical perspective, there is no significant difference in work values among undergraduate students of different year levels, but the above table shows that the average values of sophomore and junior grades are slightly higher than those of the other two grades. This may be related to the allocation of educational resources by school authorities, as there are fewer values courses for freshmen and seniors, leading to a decrease in students' acceptance of the value of work. At the same time, due to the frequent exposure of new students and graduates to various social concepts, they are more likely to be disturbed by the community. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out targeted value education to enhance their work value level.

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