

Does Culture Affect Why We Work: A Comparative Study between Ghana and Turkey

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Abstract—Work values are one of the most fundamental antecedents for various critical organizational and individual outcomes. Investigating the dynamics behind the values people attribute to work is essential for understanding nature of work values and how they differ among individuals. This paper aims to investigate the links between culture and work values through a cross-cultural research. Using questionnaires measuring collectivism and individualism dimensions of culture and work values, study analyzed the effects of culture on work values in Turkish and Ghanaian samples. Reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis are used for testing the power and fit of the measurement model. Findings indicated adequate reliability and fit for the measures used in the study. We utilized correlation analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for revealing the links and effects between variables. Results indicated significant association between variables and significant differences between two countries regarding culture and work values. Results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) provided supportive evidence for the positive effect of individualism on normative and self-oriented work values, and positive effect of collectivism on normative work values. Results indicated no significant effects of collectivism on self-oriented work values. Ghanaian participants were significantly higher on both normative and self-oriented work values. Turkish participants were significantly higher on collectivism.

Index Terms— culture, work values, collectivism, individualism

I. INTRODUCTION

“Why do we work?” is one of the most central and ignored questions behind how we perceive and react to our work environment. People may pursue different kinds of purposes or attribute different levels of importance to assorted possible work values. Schwartz (1999, p.43 [1]) simply defines work values as “the goals or rewards people seek through their work”. Various classifications of work values in the literature construct different groups of values. One fundamental dichotomy is on extrinsic and intrinsic work values (Taris & Feij 2001 [2]; Deci & Ryan, 1985 [3]; Ryan & Deci, 2000 [4]). This also reflects to well-known conceptualization of job satisfaction (Weiss, Dawis & England, 1967 [5]). Intrinsic work values refers to self-enhancement, self-development goals, seeking for joy and fulfilment from work; where extrinsic work values refers to monetary and

nominal outcomes of work. Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss (1999 [6]) suggest a third dimension, adding to first two, as social or interpersonal work values. This last one is about how people place themselves in social life and contribute to the society.

In a study conducted in Turkish context, Tevruz and Turgut (2004 [7]) asked employees why they work and listed more than 60 reasons that are structured under 3 factors. For instance, some of these work values/purposes were: “being beneficial to the community” (normative), “satisfy personal pleasures and hobbies” (self-oriented) or ensuring economic freedom (earthly). The 3-factor structure they revealed is comparable with intrinsic, extrinsic and social work values dimensions. We expect significant variance of work values among individuals. An individual may seek all these 3 factors at the same time but one may dominate the others. For example, earthly reasons for work is common for most individuals and most people would claim that they would like to contribute to society if possible. However, the importance of these may differ among people (Çetin, 2014 [8]).

Work values can also act as a determinant for the levels and directions of the motivations of employees. If an employee values self-oriented work values over normative work values he or she would chose the options that would provide more personal development and joy in the work. On the other hand, an employee directed by the dominance of normative work values would be choosing the paths that gives him or her higher feelings of social contribution.

Variations in work values may reflect to very important consequences and this fact addresses understanding the antecedents of work values as a critical research purpose. Our study hypothesize culture as an antecedent for work values. In his seminal work titled “A Theory of Cultural Values and Some Implications for Work” Schwartz (1999 [1]) emphasizes that cultural dimensions can be used for structuring research models for understanding work related concepts. He suggests that culture level variables serve better grounds (than individual level variables) for determining and realizing how groups of people value and perceive work in their life (p.24 [1]).

Culture teaches us what is valuable and what is right. It serves as a guide to show us what forms of behaviors and attitudes are acceptable and valuable in a society. Culture surrounds us and consciously or unconsciously, we

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follow the rules of the culture and take its guidance. In many ways, culture shapes our way of thinking and feeling and creates our values and priorities. Different cultural characteristics can cause different conceptualization of work and different work values. Implicitly, dominant cultural values teach us what to value and what to search for in our work life.

We focused on individualism and collectivism dimensions of Geert Hofstede (2009 [9]) to address possible links and variations between self-focused (individualistic) and society focused (normative) work values. We believe earthly (economic) reasons of work is much more common among individuals and culture are they are heavily determined by the economic situation of the person. Normative and self-oriented work values can offer more variance among individuals and more affected by the cultural norms.

Turkey has been in the scope of Geert Hofstede's (2009 [9], 2011 [10]) and Globe Studies' (House et al. 2004 [11]) influential findings that provide rich information about the culture in Turkey with comparisons to others. In both studies Turkey is characterized as a highly collectivist culture. Because Ghana was not in the direct scope of these studies, investigations on this domain are critical. In addition, very little is known on comparison of two cultures. Specifically, there is a void in the literature for comparing two cultures on work domains.

This paper aims to investigate how cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism shape employees' work values and whether there are significant differences between Ghanaian and Turkish employees on cultural values and work values. Although there are significant studies on culture and its consequences, there is still much to investigate on how culture affects our work values. This paper is a contribution to the literature as it is the first attempt to investigate the link between work values and culture through comparing Ghanaian and Turkish contexts.

Building on the extant literature and the pattern of conceptual links between concepts, we generate 3 research questions:

1. Do collectivism and individualism dimensions of culture significantly affect work values of Ghanaian and Turkish employees?
2. Are levels of collectivism and individualism significantly different in Turkish and Ghanaian participants?
3. Are levels of work values significantly different between Turkish and Ghanaian participants?

II. METHOD

We analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 25) and AMOS. We utilized confirmatory factor analysis for calculating fit indexes for the measures, correlation analysis for revealing the relationships between variables, t –test for understanding the differences between scores and reliability analysis to calculate Cronbach's alpha scores. Path analysis and

Structural Equation Model revealed the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable and its sub dimensions.

A. Sample

Study was conducted in Ghana and Turkey with 55 participants from Ghana and 75 participants from Turkey. Questionnaires were delivered both online and on paper. Average age of the respondents was 31,32 ranging from 18 to 60. %64 of the participants were male. %44 of the sample were university graduates.

B. Measures

We used the measure developed by Tevriz & Turgut, (2004 [7]) to asses respondents work values. They found high reliability scores for the measure and its sub dimensions. The scale was translated to English using back translation method by a Ghanaian academician. We used the INDCOL scale which is developed by Singelis et al. (1995 [12]) and adapted to Turkish by Li and Aksoy (2007 [13]). The scale measures individualism and collectivism scores with 8 statements for each dimension. Measures demonstrated high reliability and good fit the current study.

III. RESULTS

A. MeasuresResults of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to structure the measurement model and test the fit and reliabilities of scales we conducted confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis. Calculated fit indexes indicates good fit for both scales (Meydan and Şeşen, 2011 [14]). For the scale that is used for determining the culture dimensions the fit indexes were calculated as χ^2/df : 1.64; RMSEA: 0,07; CFI: 0,95; GFI: 0,94 and AGFI: 0,88. For the scale that is used for determining the work values of the respondents the fit indexes were calculated as χ^2/df : 1.72; RMSEA: 0,07; CFI: 0,92; GFI: 0,92 and AGFI: 0,86. The scores are given in Table I.

TABLE I. FIT INDEX SCORES FOR SCALES USED IN THE STUDY

	χ^2/df	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
Culture Scale	1.64	.95	.94	.88	0.07
Work Values Scale	1.72	.92	.92	.86	0.07

B. Results of the Reliability Analysis

Reliability statistics indicates that all measures and sub-dimensions are acceptably reliable (Cronbach's Alpha $> .60$). Reliability scores except for Culture Scale and collectivism are higher than .70, which indicates high reliabilities. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores are given in Table II.

TABLE II. RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR MEASURES AND SUB-DIMENSIONS

Measure/Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Culture Scale	,654
Work Values Scale	,833
Individualism	,700
Collectivism	,683
Normative Work Values	,700
Self-Oriented Work Values	,741

C. Results of Correlation Analysis

In order to investigate the correlations among variables we conducted a correlation analysis. Results of correlation analysis (Table III) indicate a significant and positive relationship between self-oriented work values and individualism ($r=.203$, $p<0,05$). Education level negatively correlated with both culture dimensions. The associations of individualism and collectivism with normative work values is significant at .10 value which warrants further investigations.

D. Results of Structural Equation Modelling

We utilized Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for testing the effects of individualism and collectivism on work values. Findings from the SEM demonstrates that individualism has a positive and significant effect (estimate =,22, $p < .05$) on self-oriented work values (considering conventional p value standards). Effects of individualism on normative work values (estimate =,20, $p = .67$) and effect of collectivism on normative work values (estimate =,21, $p = .96$) are significant at 0.10 level. Collectivism has no significant effect on self-oriented work values.

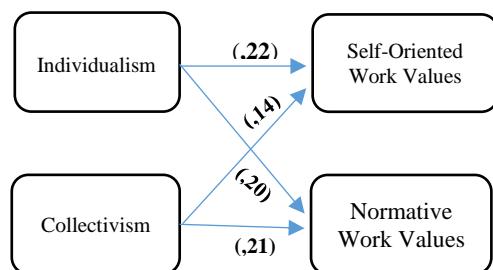


Figure 1. Results of SEM

TABLE III. RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR MEASURES AND SUB-DIMENSION

	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD
1. Age	1						31,18	10,43
2. Gender	-,101	1					1,35	,48
3. Education	,004	-,048	1				3,96	1,35
4. Individualism	-,007	,042	-,243***	1			3,70	,99
5. Collectivism	,107	,025	-,235***	,019	1		4,79	,83
6. Normative Work Values	,113	-,047	-,044	,158*	,144*	1	3,97	1,25
7. Self-Oriented Work Values	,111	-,004	-,049	,203**	,107	,690***	3,98	1,11

The variables were coded as follows: Gender (1 = male, 2= female), Education (1 = Primary school, 2 = secondary school, 3= High School, 4=Vocational School, 5 = university, 6= Master's Degree)

*** Correlations are significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed)

** Correlations are significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed)

* Correlations are significant at 0.10 level (two-tailed)

TABLE IV. RESULTS OF T-TESTS ANALYSIS

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Collectivism	Ghana	55	4,4	,80	-4,72	.000
	Turkey	79	5,0	,74		
Individualism	Ghana	55	3,8	,96	1,04	,300
	Turkey	79	3,6	1,0		
Normative Work Values	Ghana	55	4,4	1,1	4,24	.000
	Turkey	79	3,6	1,2		
Self-Oriented Work Values	Ghana	55	4,4	1,1	3,73	.000
	Turkey	79	3,7	1,0		

Given the small sample size ($N= 134$) and effect sizes, the effects of individualism and collectivism on

normative work values can be considered as suggestive of a significant effect although they are between p values of

0.05 and 0.10 (Fisher, 1923 [15]; Fisher, 1956 [16]; Figueiredo et al. 2013 [17]).

E. Difference Analysis

Results of the T-Test analysis demonstrate that Ghanaian participants' both normative and self-oriented work values are significantly higher than Turkish participants are. Turkish participants are significantly higher on collectivism. There is no significant difference between two groups for individualism scores. Mean scores of cultural dimensions indicate both culture demonstrate a structure that is higher on collectivism. This does not necessarily mean they do not have individualistic characteristics; they also carry individualistic elements but still, they are higher on collectivistic characteristics. Table IV depicts the statistics regarding the difference test.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Values are critical for determining how we perceive, feel and behave. Work values serve as a basis for various work behaviors and attitudes. Understanding the dynamics that shape our work values is very essential for organizational effectiveness. One antecedent for work values is hypothesized as culture in our study. We suggested that collectivism and individualism levels of employees would significantly predict their work values.

Study was conducted in Ghana and Turkey, which gave us more variation on culture dimensions and work values and a comparison opportunity. Findings on cultural dimension scores are in accordance with Geert Hofstede (2009 [9])'s findings as Turkey scored highly collectivist in both studies. Findings revealed that individualism had a positive and significant effect on self-oriented work values. Collectivism demonstrated no significant effect on self-oriented work values.

Effects of individualism and collectivism on normative work value are suggestive for a significant effect although they are between p values of 0.05 and 0.10. As there is no other study in the extant literature investigating the effects of individualism and collectivism on work values in Ghanaian and Turkish samples we did not directly eliminated the effects or relationships between study variables for suggesting further studies. Readers should interpret these results with caution.

This pattern of results emphasize and warrants further studies addressing the associations between individualism, collectivism and work values. We believe other cultural dimensions such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity/femininity may provide fruitful insights for understanding the social mechanisms that build our work values.

We suggest that understanding the cultural characteristics and the reflection of these characteristics on employees work values; may provide a very useful key for understanding their behaviors and attitudes in both work and personal lives. More collectivist employees value and seek for more normative work purposes, such as serving for the society, creating a peaceful society or contributing to national development

and economy. Employees who are higher on individualism seek more for joy, autonomy, freedom, meaning or satisfaction of personal pleasures and hobbies. Leaders analyzing the cultural norms and taking their followers' work values into account may better predict, direct and motive them.

Study results revealed that both cultural and work related variables might vary among countries. This necessitates leaders to develop their cultural awareness and cultural intelligence in our contemporary work environment that is characterized by high diversity and multinational workforce.

Further studies focusing on intercultural differences on different cultural dimensions and work values taxonomies can enhance our understanding on the relationships between culture and work values.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors conducted the research, collected and analyzed the data. Both authors contributed to the final version together with a collaborative effort.

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