

## Work Values in a Changing Global Environment: Comparing Chinese and U.S. Students

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**Abstract:** This study explored differences in work values among Chinese and U.S. students, examining both cultural and gender differences. Significant cultural and gender differences in work values were found with Chinese students reflecting more collectivist values and U.S. participants reflecting more individualistic qualities in their work values. Chinese students tended to emphasize relationships at work (social values) while U.S. students used primarily instrumental values (extrinsic values). Significant gender differences were found across both U.S. and Chinese students. Overall, findings in the present study reinforce the balance between conservatism and openness to change, as well as the balance between self-enhancement and transcendence, with increasing development encouraging more change and self-enhancement. Our study also contributes to an understanding of the complexity of work values, supporting a position of crossvergency, with some values convergent while others remain divergent (Ralston et al., 1997). This study further underscores the importance of learning, developmental opportunities, empowerment and diversity, outlined by Bolman and Deal (2008) as significant motivators in the workforce. Finally, this study explored gender and culture as interacting influences on workplace values, a relatively unexplored area of research. Gender concerns will become increasingly important worldwide as more women enter the workforce.

**Keywords:** Work values, crossvergency, U.S. students, Chinese students, culture, gender

### 1. Introduction

In today's global interconnected economies, government, organizational and interpersonal connections have increased across cultures. International conflict, multinational corporations, NGOs, tourism and other forces have necessitated an increased understanding of cultural diversity as well as similarities. Furthermore, the pace and change engendered by globalization has increased the pressure for effective intercultural adaptation across cultures. Increasingly, cultures experience change as a result of encounters with other cultures and the inherent contradictions within their own cultures (Fang, 2012).

Cultural values influence a variety of organizational dynamics, such as career choice, commitment, satisfaction, work values, and attitudes toward teamwork (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006; Sagie, Elizur & Koslowsky, 1996). Cultural differences also influence both the macro- and micro-level aspects of organizations, including the general structure and functioning of organizations. In addition, culturally diverse workforces provide complex motivational challenges (Zheng & Lamond, 2010). Both individual characteristics (such as age, gender, rural or urban environment) and cultural values (such as power distance and tolerance of ambiguity) influence work values and attitudes (Kulich, 2008; Xu, 2005).

Schwartz (1999) argues that values "that characterise a culture are imparted to societal members

through everyday exposure to customs, laws, norms, scripts, and organizational practices that are shaped by and express the prevailing cultural values.... Shared cultural values in a society help to shape the contingencies to which people must adapt in the institutions in which they spend their time” (pp. 25-6). Schwartz (1999; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) suggests that two underlying, higher order basic value dimensions characterize cultural values: conservation vs. openness to change, and self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement. When applying these value dimensions to work, Schwartz and his colleagues suggest that cultural values may influence work centrality (its importance to life), societal norms about working (e.g., entitlement or obligation) and various work goals (e.g., challenging work and compensation). As Scharzt (1999) notes, work values are consistent with the main cultural values of a country and thus work goals and attitudes are likely to vary across cultures. Work values are defined as the “goals or rewards people seek through their work, and they are expressions of more general human values in the context of the work setting” (1999, p. 141). Consistent gender differences have been found in individual level values with women regarding benevolence and security as most important while men valued self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement and power more (Prince-Gibson & Schwarz, 1994).

While globalization is creating cultural shifts worldwide, these social and cultural shifts are particularly critical in China, given its size and complexity, as the society transforms itself into a major global competitor with significant internal adjustments necessitated by this process (Kulich & Henry, 2013). Because of the large markets and economic expansion in China, many other countries are interested in strengthening economic ties with China; successful relationships will require understanding the cultural and organizational values present in China and the cultural variation within China (Kulich, 2008). Froese (2013) notes that large scale studies of work and cultural values were completed in the 1970s through the 1990s and need to be updated given the rate of dynamic change in Asian countries. Liu (2011), for example, argues that for Western businesses to succeed as sustainable ventures in China, they need to understand Confucian values and hierarchy, how they impact Chinese organizations and how they are reflected in Chinese communication. In the Chinese context, with political control exerted by the Chinese Communist Party, organizations need to develop hybrid identities, “drawing elements from shareholder primacy and stakeholder theories, along with a dose of socialist values and a pinch of traditional Chinese culture thrown in for good measure” (Hawes, 2012, p. 135).

In order to interact and adapt effectively to rapidly changing, complex environments, an appreciation of how cultural values influence work values is critical for effective workplace encounters (Wallace & Leicht, 2004). Egri and Ralston (2004) note that the workplace is an excellent context in which to explore cultural values because they influence work relationships and attitudes.

As part of enhancing our understanding of cross-cultural work settings, this study will explore work values and attitudes among Chinese and U.S. students. This study will also further our understanding of how globalization influences changes in cultures and the workplace, and explore how such influences play out in an industrialized, developed country and a country experiencing rapid modernization. In addition, gender differences in workplace values will be explored as more women enter the workforce in both countries.

## **2. Cultural Values and the Workplace**

One of the most well-known scholarly efforts to assess cultural values is the work of Hofstede (1980; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), whose research documents four cross-cultural value dimensions: power

distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism/individualism, and masculinity/femininity. Of these, the dimension of collectivism/individualism has been the most widely researched and is regarded as a fundamental dimension for comparing cultures. Because of the variability within a particular culture, an individual's self-construal (how individuals view themselves as independent or interdependent) has been used to link cultural orientation with individual values and behaviors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oetzel, 2001; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 1998). In addition, work by Schwartz and Ros (1995) found that individualistic cultures (Western Europe and the U.S.) were characterized by significant differences, with the U.S. giving greater priority to mastery, hierarchy and harmony values. The factors of individualism, collectivism, money orientation, uncertainty avoidance/willingness to take risks, and work orientation were found to be very relevant to work motivation and work attitudes (Froese, 2013). Such findings suggest that indigenous and contextual factors need to be explored in future research (Kulich, 2008).

Schwartz and his colleagues have also looked more specifically at work values (those desired goals, such as high pay, or desired behaviors, like working with others). Based on their theory, and a reanalysis of some earlier research results, Ros and Grad (1991) suggest four basic dimensions of work values: extrinsic values (security and material rewards), intrinsic values (self-actualization goals), social values (relationships with others) and prestige values (power and recognition). Factor analyses of a 55 country sample confirmed these four factors or dimensions of work values. Extrinsic work values had a significant positive correlation with conservation, and a significant negative correlation with openness to change. Social values had a significant positive correlation with self-transcendence and a significant negative correlation with self-enhancement. Finally, prestige work values had a significant negative correlation with self-transcendence and a significant positive correlation with self-enhancement values. A follow-up study by Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999) found that the importance of work had a significant positive correlation with self-transcendence and conservation.

Additional studies exploring cross-cultural differences in work values have focused primarily on contrasting individualism vs. collectivism. Hartung, Fouad, Leond and Hardin (2010) found that collectivist values were associated with work values emphasizing relationships and interdependence with others; interestingly, collectivism was not negatively associated with the work values of independence and personal gain. Significant main effects were found for gender and ethnicity: Men supported a cultural pattern of independence, dominance and intrinsic work values, and African Americans meshed their vocational plans with personal goals and extrinsic work values.

Another significant research trend has been in the analysis of the meaning of work (MOW, 1987) which looks at the centrality and importance of work in people's lives. Three categories of work goals were found—expressive, instrumental and social (England & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1994). Jahoda (1981) found that work helps structure time, enables social contact, promotes social goals, provides regular activities and confers status and rewards. An eight country survey found all respondents ranked work centrality as first or second among values for family, leisure, religion and community (Hattrup, Ghorpade & Lackritz, 2007). The centrality and importance of work appears to vary across cultures (Ros, Schwartz & Surkiss, 1999).

Thus far, we have seen that basic cultural values influence people's work values, including desired work goals and behaviors. Gender and ethnicity also influence work and cultural values. While international studies of work values have established some etic (universal) models of work values, such studies do not explore the changes and shifts brought about by globalization, immigration, migration,

shifts in jobs, and so forth that impact specific nation states. Because of globalization and societal changes, it is necessary to more specifically investigate work values in particular countries and examine how differences and similarities in values impact work, particularly in multinational corporations.

In what follows, we shall look more closely at Chinese and U.S. values, especially focusing on the transitional cultural shift in China, and exploring the evolution of work values in the U.S. Individualist characteristics are most often associated with Western cultures. Likewise, those societies with less emphasis on individual goals and ambitions are often associated with Eastern cultures. Such a contrast involves two countries differentially impacted by globalization, with the established U.S. culture challenged by increased competition and China challenged by a developing economy and a rapidly changing culture in transition. These contrasts offer an interesting perspective on work values in the context of globalization.

### **3. Cultural Differences in Work Values**

#### **3.1. Chinese Orientation to Work Values**

Chinese cultural values (Confucian dynamism, individualism, masculinity and power distance) significantly influence work values (Jaw, Ling, Wang & Chang, 2007). Their study demonstrated a relationship between cultural values and work values, and found that Confucian dynamism was significantly related to self-enhancement. Confucian dynamism is a cultural dimension that reflects thrift, perseverance, respect for tradition and honoring face (2007, p. 129) and is similar to Schwartz's conservatism value. Individualism and Confucian Dynamism were positively related to stability and rewards, while high masculinity and power distance were related to high power and status. High Confucian dynamism was also positively related to societal contribution and openness to change.

Bond and Hwang (1986) view Chinese social behavior as "doing the proper things, with the right people, in the appropriate relationships" (Thomas & Liao, 2010, p. 687; see also Cheng, Lo & Chio, 2010). A study of managerial values in China found four basic dimensions underlying managerial work values: a basic factor (reflecting security, benefits, and the like); processes (recognition and evaluation), teamwork, and actualization (autonomy and contribution to the organization) (Shenkar & Ronen, 1987).

Redding and Wong (1986) suggest that Chinese work values in overseas Chinese organizations stem from serious purpose and diligence, which is socialized in the family and educational systems; valuing the collective, believing in the naturalness and rightness of hierarchy, and complementary relationships (see also, Redding, 1990). As such, fairness and equity are built into organizations and institutions (cited in Kulich & Henry, 2013). Such values are so widespread, that "its universality is sufficient to make it an expectation of those dealing with them" (Redding, 1990, p. 70). Kao and Ng (1995) found that Chinese work values influenced workplace organization, organizational change and development, and the nature of informality and personalized trust.

Hierarchy thus plays an important role in Chinese culture and influences how organizations are run; these hierarchies are constructed and reinforced by communication (Liu, 2011). Liu argues that international businesses engaged with the Chinese need to acknowledge that China is strongly collectivist and influenced by Confucian values. While Westerners tend to prefer task-oriented, direct communication styles, Chinese business people are relationally oriented and prefer indirect communicative styles (Liu, Volcic & Gallois, 2011).

Kulich and Zhang (2010) suggest that Chinese values coalesce around collectivism, relational orientation, the group and respect for hierarchy, although there are marked differences in value orientations across the geographic regions of Chinese societies (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore). The GLOBE research (Inglehart, 1997) suggested that China's Confucian heritage of bureaucratic authority represents a major component of modern cultures and facilitates China's transition to a modern economic state (pp. 95-96). Leung (2010) concluded that Chinese culture is characterized by a strongly hierarchical culture, with individuals expected to fulfill their obligations to the group. Chinese collectivism is viewed as relational; "each person is involved in a web of social obligations to particular others, but society as a whole is woven together by many networks made of the same types of role relations" (Liu, Li & Yue, 2010, p. 582). In sum, Asian collectivists are "sensitive to his or her position as being above, below, or equal to others...in essence, a person can never separate him or herself from obligations to others" (Gao, 1996, p. 83).

*Guanxi*, viewed as a "distinctive pattern of trusting relationships" (Chua, Morris & Ingram, 2009, p. 420), has been studied extensively in Chinese interpersonal and business behavior. One's interpersonal connections are believed to be an effective way to accomplish tasks (Hwang, 2000) as well as influencing the effectiveness of one's work in teams (Chou, Cheng, Huang, & Cheng, 2006). Ma (2011) argues that *guanxi* is an important cultural practice that can both benefit all as well as lead to abuses. As practiced, *guanxi* often consists of long-term, ever-expanding networks of reciprocal relationships and obligations. Some of the dialectical tensions noted by Ma include nepotism vs. equal opportunity, loyalty vs. performance, and factionalism vs. professionalism as played out in different organizational and interpersonal settings. Chen and Peng (2008) found that prior relationships among coworkers influenced *guanxi* with prior close relationships becoming more distant with negative incidents, and distant relationships becoming closer with positive incidents. Team agreeableness and cooperative goals can help develop constructive controversy in Chinese work teams (Wang, Chen, Tjosvold & Shi, 2010). While *guanxi* remains an important part of Chinese culture and relationships, Luo (2008) has pointed out that *guanxi* relationships can be abused and result in corruption and demoralization.

The concept of face, *mainzi*, is closely related to *guanxi*. *Mainzi* refers to achieved reputation while *lian* refers to a consistent compliance with societal norms (Thomas & Liao, 2010). In studying facework, Oetzel (2001) found that people from collectivist, high-power distance countries (China) used more other-face, avoidance and less dominating facework strategies than people from individualist cultures. In a factor analysis of Hong Kong negotiators' facework statements, Leung and Chan (2003) found that dimensions of facework included reciprocity, reputation, respect and response. Kim and Nam (1998) conclude that face supported high cooperation and motivation in workers.

Achieving harmony is also an important Chinese cultural value. Paradoxical integration is coexistence, in which two opposites can be incorporated without losing their inherent qualities (the middle way harmony or *zhong yong*). Chen (2002) notes, for example, that collectivist duties can be balanced with entrepreneurship and in crisis, adversity and opportunity are linked. Chen points out that many Chinese, despite living in a largely collectivist society, can be successful business entrepreneurs possessing an individualistic quality (2002, p. 179). According to Chen, "a system is harmonious only when it has achieved a balance between paradoxical tendencies," using the Chinese term *zhong yong* ("middle way harmony") to describe such a system (p. 183). The implication here is that paradoxical integration is coexistence, in which two opposites are incorporated without losing their inherent

qualities. Thus, yin and yang both contain the “seed of their opposition” (p. 184). The Chinese “both/and” view replaces the Western “either/or” mindset (p. 189). On a grander scale, Chen sees paradoxical integration as a bridge between the entrenched positions of the West and of the East; in effect, the “middle way” emphasizes that “individualism and collectivism are not necessarily fundamental opposites” (p. 192). Fang (2012) notes that despite rapid change and globalization, China has retained one of its key cultural characteristics, that of integrating contradictions and mastering change. (See also Cheng, 1990 and Cheng, Lo & Chio, 2010).

Kulich and Henry (2013), reviewed a number of studies examining Chinese work values. The following values appeared across the studies reviewed: interpersonal relationships at work, realizing achievement, career development opportunities, secure work environment, internal value of work, fun and stability, self-actualization or self-growth, social prestige and status, and a position of power and status (Table 21.4, p. 394). Wenquam and Bai (1999) found that the following work values were most important: use of full capacities, interest in work, equality of opportunity, funded training opportunities and a “fat/big income” (as reported in Kulich & Henry, 2013).

Within-culture variation also reflects the complexity and value changes within China. Xin and Jin (2006), on the basis of an open-ended questionnaire among college students and professionals, developed a work values scale that reflected individually-oriented dimensions (self-development, safeguards and material benefits, esteem and reputation) and group-oriented dimensions (family-orientation, sense of contribution, collectivism and social relationships) (as reported in Kulich & Henry, 2013). Kulich and Henry suggest that this incorporates the complexity and shifts in values. This blend of values might also be consistent with the Chinese middle way, which incorporates values from diverse perspectives. Faure and Fang (2008) note that despite change and evolution, China has maintained its ability to manage paradox and adapt new strategies into its basic character. (See also Kao and Ng (1995) who argue that key Chinese values such as loyalty and trust enable China’s successful transition to a modernizing economy).

Another study by Xu (2005) reflected the changing values of job prestige, job preferences and acceptance of mobility. According to Kulich and Henry (2013), Xu’s study concluded that “(1) differentiation of elite stratification sets in motion changes in Chinese social relations and the reorganization of social structure; (2) these changes accelerate social mobility which, in turns, leads to increasingly stronger market orientation (more respondents come to consider entrepreneurship as an indicator of success); and (3) all these factors bring about changes in Chinese cultural values (construed from a national character perspective)” (p. 32).

In addition, generational shifts in work values have also been noted. Egri and Ralston (2004) found that the three Chinese generations following the “Republican Era Chinese” were “significantly more open to change and more self-enhancing but less conservative and self-transcendent,” suggesting a waning trend to traditional Confucian values (p. 217). The authors argue that the “societal instability of the Great Cultural Revolution engendered modernist survival values such as the pursuit of personal power and status” (p. 217), resulting in a “generation gap” similar to the one that exists in the United States (p. 218).

Tjosvold et al. (2004) suggest that the relevance of applying traditional values to the workplace is based on current research inquiries, most notably those positing that “managers and employees are mutually dependent,” as managers rely on employees for information and resources (p. 319). Mutual benefit is ultimately achieved through cooperative relationships, managers eventually “breaking

away” from trying to “control and direct” (p. 319). Their study argued that “the more enhancing the interaction between the managers and the employees, the more effective the leadership” (p. 326). Tsui, Schoonhoven, Meyer, Lau and Milkovich (2004) suggest that research into Chinese organizations and their substantial changes needs to reflect the complexity of such changes in context, being particularly sensitive to cultural and interpersonal contexts (see also Faure & Fang, 2008). Foese (2013) found that Chinese students rated their careers, career advancement and occupation as very important.

### **3.2. Gender Differences in Work and Work Values**

Gender is marked by all societies (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) and thus it is appropriate to look at the influence of gender in the workplace, especially given women’s increasing participation in the workplace. One of Hofstede’s (1980) major dimensions of culture, femininity/masculinity, suggests that cultures vary in the role flexibility assigned to women and men. Gender differences are thus framed by each culture, and provide differing frames of experience and interpretation for women and men (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Wilmot & Hocker, 2014) as well as providing a basic component of individual identity (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Wood, 2012). As Townsley notes, “Gender relations are produced and sustained at multiple levels of production...they produce global effects on labor that reflect local and regional meanings. The complex network within a gendered political economy are continually being remade” (2006, p. 145).

While globalization influences cultural values generally, research has documented that women tend to be more affected by such changes because education increases opportunities for women. Increased levels of education support more egalitarian gender attitudes. In China, gender stereotypes and traditional gender attitudes are still prevalent and limit women’s employment opportunities and flexibility (Tang, Chua & O, 2010). Women tend to be concentrated in the rural agricultural areas and in the service sector in cities: women are a minority in managerial and administrative positions. About 50% of Chinese women are expected to be employed outside the home, but this depends upon their marital status, family life cycle and childcare/eldercare responsibilities (Cheung & Tang, 2008). Family roles are central among women’s social roles (Tang & Tang, 2001), and work functions as a way of providing long-term benefits for the family. As Tang, Chua and O note, “The support of extended family and the contribution to the family through work may facilitate commitment and satisfaction of both family and work roles” for women (pp. 537-538).

With this brief view of a nation in flux, having specifically examined Chinese work values, and some of the factors influencing those values, we next turn to a brief overview of U.S. work values.

### **3.3. U.S. Work Values**

The United States is characterized as an individualistic, post-modern nation (Inglehart, 1997). Applying Hofstede’s (2001, Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) dimensions of cultural variability also provide insight into general U.S. cultural values. North Americans evaluate themselves as an individualistic culture and value independence, individual effort, and achievement with individuals often pursuing their own goals, often in competition with others. As a moderately feminine culture, North Americans are flexible in their roles and supportive of others (cooperative as well as competitive). In addition, North Americans cope with ambiguity and uncertainty, and, in fact, anticipate change and a fast-paced environment. With

low uncertainty avoidance, U.S. individuals are comfortable in ambiguous situations, tolerate deviant behavior and dissent, and experience relatively low anxiety. The U.S. culture is also predominantly a low power distance culture, which views individuals as equals and emphasizes legitimate power and interdependence between supervisors and subordinates (House, et. al., 2004).

More recent work by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) incorporates a dimension measuring time-orientation, and the U.S. culture reflects a short-term time orientation. Short-term time orientations value freedom, thinking for yourself, and achievement. A 1975 survey found that a mix of both the Protestant and Personality Ethic is present in work values. The most desirable work outcome was a feeling of pride in work followed by money, thus demonstrating a dialectical tension between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Cherrington, 1980, pp. 41-44).

Schwarz and Ros (1995), in their analyses of Western values, suggested that the U.S. has a high emphasis on Mastery values and a de-emphasis on harmony values. The U.S. emphasis on individualism rejects authority and tradition, and individuals look to others to confirm their views (conformism). Egalitarian and intellectual autonomy values are supported by a view of work as impersonal and separate from family.

Michael Maccoby (1995) argued that in the U.S., early formative experiences influenced the perception of work values. In the 1960s and 1970s, the challenges of Vietnam, the Feminist movement and economic abundance fostered consumerism. During the 1980s and 1990s, as real family income declined, significant numbers of women, with preschool children, were entering the workforce and dual career families became commonplace. As a result of technology and different modes of work, the 80s and 90s also saw an increase of jobs in the service sector: These positions depended upon enhanced interpersonal skills, technological skill and knowledge, and the ability to deal with increased information. As Wallace and Lecht (2004) noted, the constructs of social equality, social freedom, multiculturalism and gender equity “penetrated the discourse of workplace politics and shifted perceptions of workers’ job property rights” (p. 4). Job insecurity and economic uncertainty shaped perceptions of labor markets, and the more vulnerable the workers, the more they supported job entitlement.

For the U.S. workforce, quality of work life is related to the quality of existence (Bernstein, 1997; Cheney, Zorn, Planalp & Lair, 2008). A Gallup poll on job satisfaction (Jones, 2006) found that U.S. workers preferred doing what is fulfilling, interacting with and helping others, job flexibility, flexibility in work hours and good pay. Most important dislikes included a heavy work schedule, low pay, too much politicking, boring work and poor management/supervisors. Women rated social interaction as more important for liking their jobs than men did.

Gender influences work in the U.S., as it does internationally, with women being paid less for comparable work, having fewer opportunities for advancement, and experiencing glass ceilings and glass walls (Wood, 2012). Despite recent research on gender and work, particularly in the context of globalization (Townsend & Stohl, 2003), surprisingly little attention has been given to work values and attitudes toward work among women (for excellent coverage of broader issues see Dow & Wood, 2006). This study will make a contribution to further understanding the impact of gender on work values and attitudes.

In summary, national cultural values clearly impact workers’ attitudes and values about work. Given increasingly intertwined global economies, as well as geographic mobility among workers, outsourcing, and other forces creating a turbulent, rapidly changing workplace, it is important to begin to understand workers’ values because their commitment and participation in organizations is key for

organizational survival. It is also important to understand the influence of gender on work values and attitudes, both within and across cultures.

China, an emerging economic and political power, reflects a culture in transition as it modernizes, with young workers challenging traditional expectations in some areas. In contrast, the U.S. represents a modern industrial economy coping with the challenges of worldwide competition. Both countries together provide a broad view of workplace values and preferences. Egri and Ralston (2004) note that a cross-cultural comparison of the U.S. and China provides a “strong test of the relative influence of national culture and generation subculture” as well as a benchmark for modernization in China (p. 210).

In what follows, we shall closely examine several studies that compare U.S. and Chinese cultural values, particularly work values. These studies, however, do not address gender as an issue or explore the trend toward convergence or divergence in work values as does this investigation.

### 3.4. Chinese/U.S. Cultural Differences

Individualism and collectivism is one of the best discriminators of Eastern vs. Western cultures (Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Hui & Villareal, 1989J). The U.S. is higher on individualism, and China higher on collectivism. As measured by Hofstede’s dimensions, China is higher on power distance, and lower in masculinity than is the U.S. On a national cultural level, Smith and Schwartz (1997) found the dimensions of culture-level values were conservatism vs. autonomy, hierarchy vs. egalitarianism, and mastery vs. harmony. East Asian nations were high on hierarchy and conservatism, favoring “ascribed, unequal, role obligations and maintenance of the traditional order... Western European nations showed exactly the opposite pattern of priorities” (p. 105). The U.S. fell between these two clusters with “an emphasis on active self-assertion and emotional expression” (p. 105). Smith and Schwartz conclude that preferences for individual-group relations (autonomous vs. embedded) and encouraging social behavior (egalitarian vs. hierarchy) were among the strongest, clearly defined dimensions. They suggest that national cultural values will encourage different goals, and that no single work goal is likely to be an effective motivator across cultures. (See also additional value studies by Schwartz, 2004, 2007 and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). These studies suggest that China and the U.S. may differ in work arrangements (individual vs. group), autonomy of work (creativity), the presence and strength of hierarchy, and other workplace dynamics.

Because of globalization, there is increased contact among culturally diverse workers. Workers experiencing multiple cultural influences, such as working in a multinational corporation, will likely experience some modification of work values. For example, Jaw, Ling, Wang and Chang (2007) found that Chinese with Western cultural exposure (living/working in the West) had significantly higher values for Confucian dynamism, individualism, self-enhancement and stability and rewards than those Chinese having no Western exposure. Chu (1993) found that Chinese who experienced Western cultural values were more aggressive and ambitious than other Chinese who did not have that experience.

Trust is an important component of workplace cooperation and effort. Chua and Morris (2006) examined differences in trust in U.S. and Chinese social networks. Two aspects of trust, cognition-based and affect-based trust, operated differently for each culture. The two aspects were more interrelated for the Chinese, and friendship ties were more related to trust for North Americans than for the Chinese. Chinese received economic resources from affect based trust. When studying a social dilemma situation, affective based trust increased cooperation for the Chinese while cognition based

trust did not (Ng & Chua, 2006).

A study by Egri and Ralston (2004) not only explored cultural differences between the U.S. and China, but also examined generational shifts in both countries. The most recent generation in China, the Social Reform generation, encouraged individual achievement, materialism, economic efficiency and entrepreneurship. Their cohort generation, Gen Xers in the U.S., experienced both economic prosperity and suffering, having learned to be self-reliant and individualistic, valuing personal freedom and challenging work, and learning to take risks (pp. 212-213). Such contrasts will be of special interest because these generations served as subjects in the current study.

For both Chinese and U.S. participants, significant generational differences were found across Schwartz's value dimensions of openness to change, conservation, self-enhancement and self-transcendence. Both the Chinese and U.S. youngest generations valued more openness to change than previous generations did. This is consistent with the finding that young people value openness values (stimulation and hedonism) more and conservation values less than do older people in many countries (Schwartz, 1992). In comparing cohort generations, young Chinese valued conservation and collectivism whereas young U.S. participations valued self-enhancement and less conservation. Both Chinese and U.S. participants supported benevolence, although in the U.S. self-transcendence was more important than in China: This latter finding is consistent with Inglehart's suggestion that self-transcendent values are found in industrialized countries, across all ages (Inglehart, 1997).

Egri and Ralston (2004) suggest that younger generations might be more similar because of greater exposure to other cultures and more opportunities to interact with other cultures. However, while the younger generations are similar in their openness to change, they differ markedly in conservation. Urban residents also display more individualistic values, less conservation values, and view openness to change and universalism as more important than do rural residents (Mishra, 1994). The implications of these studies suggest that managers need to utilize flexible strategies to accommodate differing generational as well as cultural values. They also call for cross-cultural studies across a wider array of values.

A study by Elizur, Borg, Hunt and Beck (1991) found that U.S. participants rated job interest, achievement, advancement, personal growth and esteem as their highest rated values. For Chinese respondents, achievement, use of ability, contribution to society and esteem were highly valued. Chinese participants valued interaction, recognition and hours at work as least important.

An Eastern approach to workplace values was employed by Ralston et al. (1992), contrasting Chinese and U.S. work values through using the Chinese Value Survey (CVS, which is based on the Chinese Cultural Connection, 1987). This value survey is based on Eastern thought rather than Western concepts. In a 22 country survey, four underlying dimensions were found: **Integration** (emphasizing social stability, with values such as industry and trustworthiness); **Confucian Work Dynamism** (reflecting Confucian thought, with values such as persistence, personal steadiness and stability); **Human Heartedness** (emphasizing values such as attention to the task, compassion, courtesy and patience), and **Moral Discipline** (focusing on self-control, with values such as prudence and adaptability). Ralston et al. found that U.S. managers scored significantly higher on integration than Chinese managers. There were no significant differences on Moral Discipline between U.S. and Chinese managers. On all four dimensions, HK (Hong Kong) managers fell between U.S. and PRC (People's Republic of China) managers, suggesting that the HK managers were influenced by their contact with the West, given their decades long educational and business influences from the West.

A study by Schwartz (1999) explored the influence of culture on work values. His study found three underlying value dimensions: autonomy vs. conservatism, hierarchy vs. egalitarianism, and mastery vs. harmony. Conservatism essentially supports the status quo while autonomy encourages uniqueness, with both intellectual autonomy and affective (expressive) autonomy. Hierarchy focuses on the unequal distribution of wealth while egalitarianism is a commitment to others' welfare. Finally, mastery reflects active self-assertion while harmony focuses on unity with the environment and social non-assertiveness. Both U.S. and China scored high on mastery, emphasizing power and prestige. Chinese participants also emphasized hierarchy, viewing work as a reciprocal obligation, fitting into ascribed roles regardless of personal satisfaction. Chinese subjects also scored high on conservatism, valuing politeness, family, security and respect for tradition. For the Chinese, Schwartz noted that mastery, when combined with valuing hierarchy, might mean that one was actively striving for the betterment of their group, rather than for themselves as individuals. U.S. participants also valued work as central to their lives.

Considering that similar processes may be occurring in the work environment with regards to convergence of Eastern and Western work values (Ralston, Gustafson, Cheung, & Terpstra, 1993), these studies suggest that the values of U.S. and Chinese students may have become more analogous over time. If culture is an essential determinant of work values, convergence would suggest that Eastern and Western societies are becoming homogenized. However, other research has also demonstrated a crossvergence of values, demonstrating some cultural integration over some countries, but also finding some values reflecting cultural distinctions across nation-states (Ralston, Holt, Terpstra & Yu, 1997). For example, U.S. managers significantly favored individualistic values while PRC managers preferred collectivist values; however, their values converged on benevolence and power distance. As Ralston, Egri, Stewart, Terpstra and Kai-Cheng (1999) noted, the new generation of Chinese managers are becoming more individualistic (being independent and taking-risks), yet these managers still retain aspects of collectivism. Thus, shifting values, especially work values, appear to be a function of culture and generational context.

In sum, cross-cultural research suggests some enduring, significant differences across cultural values, especially those influencing work. However, research demonstrates some convergence of work values as well, especially among those workers engaging in cross-cultural work environments. This blend of both divergence and convergence has been termed crossvergence (Ralston, 2008, p. 28). Some generational and gender differences have also been found. More understanding of cultural differences in work values is needed if we are to flourish economically, socially and politically. This study will contribute to our knowledge about work values as we explore differences in work values between U.S. and Chinese students utilizing a broad range of values. Froese (2013), for example, has criticized past work value research as having too narrow a focus. In addition, this study explores gender differences—a particularly important issue as more women enter the workforce globally—as well as gender and culture interactions in workplace values.

The following research questions have been formulated:

- RQ1:** Are there significant cultural differences across work values between Chinese and U.S. students?
- RQ2:** Are there significant gender differences across work values between Chinese and U.S. students, and among Chinese and U.S. students?

**RQ3:** Are there significant gender and culture interactions in work values?

#### **4. Methods**

Schwartz (1994) argued that much of culture is covert, and thus not directly observable. He suggests that cultural products (like folktales, legends, proverbs, movies and so forth) “reflect assumptions about the desirable that are built into institutions of the society and are passed on through intentional and unintentional socialization” (1994, p. 2). In the current study, in addition to surveying the extant research literature on work values, we wished to examine people’s lay or intuitive knowledge of work values. A sample of U.S. workers and students were asked to identify their top ten work values—what were the most important, desirable aspects of work to help develop a work value survey.

##### **4.1. Survey Instrument**

The survey identified ninety work values which were developed through interviews and focus groups with both students and working professionals (see also Xin & Jin, 2006, in which he developed a work values questionnaire through interviews with Chinese students and professionals). This list was then administered to two different undergraduate classes, in which students rated these values for their significance in the work place. The fifty-one highest rated values (with one tie ranking, and thus resulting in 51 work values) were included in the final survey. This survey instrument was then pilot-tested in a third class; internal reliability was .85.

Work values were expressed as Likert type statements (for example, “Sharing ideas and information is not very important in getting the task done well” or “I do not like having sole responsibility for a job”) with a five point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. These statements were alternated so that some were positive (“I like...”) and some negative (“Flexible hours are not very important to me”). Although these scale items were generated by naïve participants, these scales are consistent with other scales exploring work values in China, the U.S. and other countries (Kulich & Henry, 2013; Schwartz, 1999; Shenkar & Ronen, 1987; Xin & Jin, 2006) and reflect intrinsic, extrinsic, social and prestige values (Ralston et al., 1992). The survey instrument was translated into Chinese for the Chinese respondents by a Chinese graduate student and then checked for accuracy and meaning consistency by a Chinese colleague.

##### **4.2. Subjects**

Participants filled out an online form of the survey. A total of 551 participants took the survey: 247 Chinese students and 304 U.S. students. Chinese students attended a university in Northern mainland China and the U.S. students attended a large Northeastern university. Analyses of variance were conducted to test for gender and cultural differences across work values.

#### **5. Results**

##### **5.1. Cultural Differences across Work Values**

Significant cross-cultural value differences between U.S. and Chinese students appeared to reflect

collectivist and individualistic cultural differences. Creativity and personal satisfaction were valued by U.S. students significantly more which may reflect the individualistic values of autonomy and risk-taking. Our study found that Chinese students did not value recognition or interaction as highly, which is consistent with collectivist cultures and the Chinese style of communication which does not emphasize verbal communication. Indirect conflict has been found to be a stressor for Chinese while direct conflict is a stressor for North Americans (Liu, Spector & Shi, 2007)—this is consistent with communicative and interaction patterns in both cultures. Nor were Chinese subjects concerned about hours at work. U.S. participants valued fair treatment significantly more than Chinese students; this may reflect the greater emphasis on hierarchy and fitting in appropriately among Chinese students.

Overall, among the values that differed significantly between Chinese and U.S. students, U.S. students rated almost all of those values as more important than Chinese students. Work values such as the importance of high quality work, the value of diversity, the importance of work/family balance and trust were among those differing significantly across cultures. Chinese students preferred to work alone more, although they disliked sole responsibility for a task more; valued sharing information less, and valued open communication between superiors and subordinates less than U.S. students did. Chinese students valued influencing others, working alone, open cooperation and variety at work as more important than U.S. students.

Table 1. Cultural Differences between the U.S. and Chinese Students' Work Values\*

Work Values	Means		Level of Significance
	U.S.	Chinese	
Flexible Hrs. Unimpt.	2.65	3.33	0.000
High Quality Work	4.37	4.10	0.003
Influence Others Unimpt.	2.88	2.47	0.000
Hrs. at Work Unimpt.	2.70	3.00	0.004
Prefer Working Alone	3.00	3.43	0.000
Creativity/Originality Unimpt.	2.88	4.13	0.000
Fair Treatment	4.37	4.08	0.002
Personal Satisfaction	4.37	3.71	0.000
Cooperation Not Necessary	2.23	2.57	0.019
Prefer Others Who Compromise	4.08	3.23	0.000
Presence Women/Minorities Impt.	3.92	3.46	0.000
Adequate Compensation	4.33	3.73	0.000
Respect Unimpt.	2.21	2.61	0.000
Clear Sex Harassment Policies	4.21	3.63	0.026
Good Health Benefits	4.25	4.00	0.058
Sharing Info. Unimpt.	2.41	4.06	0.000
Dislike Sole Responsibility	3.06	3.40	0.001
Work/Family Balance	4.47	4.29	0.032
Supportive Boss	4.38	4.22	0.045
Open Comm. Sup/Subordinate	2.23	2.60	0.003
Variety at Work	4.20	4.92	0.008
Prefer Informal Wk. Environment	3.71	3.41	0.001

Values Diversity	4.05	3.87	0.005
Job Security	4.18	3.99	0.018
Trust	4.54	4.41	0.030

\*ANOVA, df = 1, 453.

## 5.2 Gender Differences across Work Values

Significant gender differences across work values were found. Interestingly, women rated almost all work values as significantly more important than men did. Of particular note, women valued recognition and respect more highly than men which may reflect the lesser status, fewer opportunities and rewards given women at work worldwide (Wood, 2012). Liking by others was also more valued by women which may reflect gender socialization (Wood, 2012).

Table 2. Significant Gender Differences in Work Values\*

Work Values	Men	Women	Level of Significance
Interaction Impt.	3.83	4.27	0.001
Clear Directions	3.65	4.18	0.002
Significant Contribution	3.76	4.24	0.000
Enjoy Challenging Tasks	3.80	4.07	0.023
High Quality Work	3.82	4.37	0.000
Work/Family Balance	4.08	4.47	0.006
Supportive Boss	4.00	4.41	0.005
Well-designed Task	3.88	4.43	0.000
Cooperation Not Necessary	2.23	2.57	0.007
Personal Development	3.91	4.40	0.000
Liked by Coworkers	3.42	4.10	0.000
Fair Treatment	3.99	4.47	0.000
Personal Satisfaction	3.65	4.43	0.000
Fast Pace	3.29	3.73	0.022
One Task At a Time	3.21	3.78	0.001
Job Security	3.79	4.24	0.000
Structured Orderly Comm.	3.62	4.33	0.001
Civil/Courteous	3.91	4.32	0.003
Prefer Variety At Work.	3.83	4.23	0.004
Teamwork	3.93	4.30	0.006
Develop Social Skills	3.80	4.33	0.000
Presence of Women/Minorities	3.45	3.93	0.003
Adequate Compensation	3.80	4.26	0.005
Clear Sex Harassment Policies	3.70	4.32	0.000
Being Innov. Unimpt.	2.60	2.20	0.030
Trust	3.69	4.44	0.000
Value Diversity	3.54	4.05	0.001
Good Health Benefits	3.91	4.34	0.004

Enjoy New Clients/Jobs	3.71	4.00	0.023
Like Freedom to do Job	3.80	4.07	0.002
Adeq. Space/Privacy	3.38	3.70	0.034
Rely on Self	3.43	3.82	0.010
Being Mentored at Work	3.58	3.80	0.031
Prefer Others' Compromise	3.76	4.00	0.028
Recognition Unimpt.	2.76	2.47	0.039
Respect Unimpt.	3.65	2.08	0.000
Dislike Sole Respon.	3.07	3.20	0.049
Work Impt. to Identity	3.66	3.87	0.058

\*ANOVA, df= 1,541.

On twenty-one value statements, Chinese women rated work qualities and conditions more importantly than men: They valued high quality work, work/family balance, feedback, the opportunity for personal development, a fast-paced, varied work environment, diversity, social skills and self-reliance more than Chinese men. U.S. women rated work qualities as significantly more important than U.S. men on forty-three qualities (out of fifty-one qualities). Qualities that were not evaluated as significantly different included flexible work hours, influencing others, number of hours worked, working alone, creativity or originality, working on one task at a time, risk-taking and having sole responsibility for a task.

### 5.3. Significant Culture by Gender Differences in Work Values

Ten work values differed significantly as a result of gender and culture. A preference for *working at one task at a time* was valued most by Chinese women and least by Chinese men, with U.S. respondents falling in the middle range. U.S. women valued a civil, *courteous workplace* most highly, followed by Chinese women, Chinese men, and U.S. men respectively. *Making a significant contribution through work* was most valued by U.S. women, and then by Chinese women, Chinese men and U.S. men respectively. The *sharing of information* was valued most by U.S. women, then U.S. men and Chinese women and men respectively. The presence of women/minorities was most valued by women, and ranked as most important by U. S. women, then Chinese women, U.S. men and Chinese men respectively. *Flexible hours* were ranked, from most valued to least valued, by U.S. women, U.S. men, Chinese men and Chinese women. *Creativity and originality at work* was most valued by U.S. participants, with men rating it as more important than women: Chinese men also rated it as more important than Chinese women. With respect to *disliking working alone*, Chinese women disliked it the most, followed respectively by U. S. men, U. S. women and Chinese men. *On site day care* was ranked as most important by U.S. women, then Chinese men, Chinese women and U.S. men respectively. *Disliking sole responsibility* was rated most highly by Chinese women, followed by U.S. men, U.S. women and Chinese men.

Two other values approached significantly different levels across their means. Interaction was most valued by U.S. women, Chinese women, Chinese men and U.S. men respectively ( $p = .08$ ). And influencing others was viewed as most important by Chinese women, Chinese men, U.S. men and U.S. women respectively ( $p = .09$ ).

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Cultural Differences

Influencing others was rated as more important by the Chinese (although the mean difference was only .41 between U.S. and Chinese respondents). Influencing others might be increasingly important in the Chinese business environment because of globalization and a changing culture as well as reflecting the importance of *guanxi* and networks of reciprocal relationships. Given the increasing individualism among Chinese students and an orientation to career advancement (Froese, 2013), influencing others might be highly valued as an opportunity to enhance one's abilities and gain more advancement and monetary gains.

Given the importance of group harmony and fitting into the group, it is not surprising that Chinese students would dislike having sole responsibility for a task (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). A study by Earley (1993) found that Chinese students performed lower in an individual or out-group context than in an in-group context—thus demonstrating a preference for working with others (Shenkar & Ronen, 1987) and in-group status appears to facilitate performance. Chen's suggestion (2002) that Chinese family values may transfer to work settings would also explain the value of working together and sharing responsibility. When the values in the present study were categorized as being intrinsic, extrinsic, social or prestige values (see Ros, Schwartz & Surkiss, 1999), survey values were relatively evenly distributed across those categories and significant cultural differences were found across all value categories.

For the Chinese, open communication and information sharing might not be viewed as important because of shared implicit, indirect communication (*hanxu*) and shared insider communication and knowledge (Fang & Faure, 2011). Business relationships are frequently viewed as family-like because of the benevolent paternalistic reciprocal bonds between Chinese superiors and their subordinates. Responsibility for a task is typically shared in collective cultures, yet working alone might become an increasingly comfortable option in modern global economies.

### 6.2. Gender Differences

The gender differences were striking in their pattern of similarities: Both U.S. and Chinese women identified more with work and valued many aspects of work significantly more than U.S. and Chinese men respectively. For U.S. participants, gender significantly influenced 43 out of 51 work values (84%) and for the Chinese, 26 out of 51 (51%). Even among those variables which did not significantly differ, the women's scores were higher (that is, values were rated as more important) than for men. Significant gender differences in cultural values, consistent with sex-typed socialization, and roles have been found in a number of studies (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1994) as well as the present study.

Gender differences found in the present study also reflect women's more communal orientation and men's more agentic orientation (Eagly, 1997; Wood, 2012). One explanation might be that women are more appreciative of the opportunity that work provides than men who have been the traditional "breadwinners." Women also may emphasize values of balancing work/family, building supportive relationships at work, and opportunities to help support the family. Convergence might be an additional factor: women are converging on work values and work philosophies characteristic of developed,

industrialized nations and internalizing those values. Finally, in general, women are more collectivist than men in their workforce values (Richards, et al, 2012) and thus favor working together, preserving group harmony, and the like.

### 6.3. Culture and Gender Interaction Effects

On valuing diversity (the presence of women and minorities at work), women valued it more than men, and U.S. students more than Chinese students. Women might value diversity more because it directly influenced them and their work opportunities. In addition, diversity is an issue that receives significant attention in the U.S. but may be less of an issue in China. Civility and courteousness at work was also valued by all respondents, but as significantly more important for women than men, and for Chinese students more than U.S. men. For the Chinese this may reflect the cultural emphasis on harmony and appropriate behavior, such as elders being respected for their wisdom (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998) while for women it may reflect their qualities of support and nurturing at work (Prince-Gibbons & Schwartz, 1994). However, it is again worth noting that China, in particular, is experiencing strong cultural shifts and balancing the paradoxes of *guanxi* vs. professionalism, face vs. self-expression and directness, family vs. individuation, hierarchy vs. creativity and competence, and traditional vs. modern approaches in the workplace (Faure & Fang, 2008). More research into the nuances of business contexts and interpersonal behavior is needed to fully explore these tensions.

The sharing of information was viewed as more important by U.S. students and may reflect the U.S. low-context culture and a communicative style of being direct, open and explicit about their views (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Hui and Luk (1997) also note that in a collectivist, paternalistic culture, like China, workers may be uncomfortable with participation because it may suggest that the superior does not know what she/he is doing and that accepting direction from authorities is quite legitimate and does not create resentment. Chinese students may also be relying on beliefs that are widespread in their culture as a source of information on work values and behaviors (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Smith, Peterson & Schwartz, 2002). Chen (1995) also notes that while talk is a principal way for North Americans to build relationships, for the Chinese “speech is considered not an effective way of communication. . . . it is the ‘act,’ based on the sincerity of mind, that accounts for the development of interpersonal relationship (p. 88). Women may also view sharing of information as a way of being helpful and cooperative in the workplace rather than taking the more masculine view that sharing information represents a loss of power.

A related work value—the importance of interaction—approached significance (.08) with women viewing interaction as more important than men, which would support an interest in sharing information. Interestingly, the value of influencing others (which approached significance at .09) was more highly rated among the Chinese students. This may reflect the importance of appropriate behavior, honoring face and fitting in that characterizes the Chinese emphasis on harmonious group relations. Promoting interpersonal harmony and assisting colleagues (both privately and on-the-job) was found as a dimension of organizational citizenship behavior among Chinese workers (Fahr, Zhong, & Organ, 2004): our findings on workplace and group harmony are consistent with their findings. In addition, the Chinese culture, as a high-context culture, values group orientation, indirect communication and context-driven interaction (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). Influencing others becomes very important because these relationships (with others viewed as close) are relationships of mutual

obligation and respect. Hui, Lee and Rosseau (2004) found that organizational commitment among Chinese was based on a high-quality, close relationship with their supervisor. As noted earlier, Chinese cultural values emphasize the importance of in-group relationships; however, colleagues may be considered either in-group or out-group depending upon the interpersonal ties between them (Elizur et al., 1991; Hui, 1988; Smith, Peterson & Schwartz, 2002).

Creativity and originality also differed significantly as a function of culture and gender. Not surprisingly, U.S. students viewed this as more important than Chinese students; this may reflect individualistic qualities of risk-taking and self-enhancement versus the collectivist, conservative emphasis on fitting in and appropriate behavior among Chinese students. For the Chinese, to take risks and to be creative might involve violating norms and thus being viewed as deviant. For men, creativity and originality was viewed as more important than for women and this may reflect the masculine qualities of assertiveness and aggressiveness.

In terms of making a significant contribution at work, all students viewed this as important (all mean ratings indicated strong to very strong agreement with that statement). This finding is consistent with the importance of mastery and achievement for both Chinese and U.S. respondents (Schwartz, 1999) and the high centrality of work found by Hattrup, et al., 2007

In sum, our study has documented significant cultural and gender differences in work values generally with Chinese students reflecting more collectivist values and U.S. participants reflecting more individualistic qualities in their judgments. Chinese students tended to emphasize relationships at work (social values) while U.S. students used primarily instrumental values (extrinsic values). Generally our results were consistent with Hofstede's distinctions among collectivist and individualistic cultures. These findings also underscore the importance of values related to learning, developmental opportunities, empowerment and diversity, outlined by Bolman and Deal (2008) as significant motivators in the workforce. Overall, the work values in the present study also reinforce the balance between conservatism and openness to change, as well as self-enhancement and transcendence, with increasing development encouraging more change and self-enhancement. Our study also contributes to an understanding of the complexity of work values, supporting a position of crossvergence, with some values convergent while others remain divergent (Ralston et al., 1997). Finally, this study explored gender and culture as interacting influences on workplace values, a relatively unexplored area of research. Gender concerns will become increasingly important worldwide as more women enter the workforce and work/life balance will become increasingly important as well.

This research contributes to a better understanding of what motivates people at work, and how they view their relationships with co-workers. As the world becomes more globally intertwined, and people from distinct cultural backgrounds work together, such differences are critical to understand so that work and workplace relationships are both satisfying and productive for workers. In particular, appreciating communicative differences will help minimize and resolve conflict at work as well as enhance appreciation of the multiple considerations people use in selecting a given communicative style (Fang & Faure, 2011).

It is important to note that the findings here, given the limited geographic sampling, must be qualified and more research is needed to fully understand regional differences particularly within China. Although the work values survey was developed by focus groups of students as well as working professionals, the survey was only administered to students in the current study. This is a limitation on the findings of this study. Future research could administer the survey to working professionals and

thus add to the generalizability of research findings. It would also be of interest to contrast students' values with those of individuals having work experience to see if the value ratings change with work experience.

Values research will also be useful in providing guides for managers in motivating and training employees (Smith, Peterson & Schwartz, 2002). More research needs to be done on values themselves, and their contributions to quality relationships and processes at work. In particular, given the generational differences across work values and attitudes already uncovered, more research needs to be done on those differences, especially their cross-cultural implications. Although beyond the scope of the present study, it is important to have indigenous studies of work values, so that they can inform international models of work values and capture the rich variety of work values worldwide (Kulich & Henry, 2013) as well as the value diversity within particular societies (Faure & Fang, 2008).

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