

## **INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMITMENT TO SELECTED CULTURAL VALUES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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**Abstrak** *Penyelidikan ini meninjau pegangan pelajar-pelajar universiti berketurunan Melayu, Cina dan India terhadap beberapa nilai budaya; ia-itu nilai-nilai 'kesejahteraan, progresif, liberal, yakin, pedantik, penyayang, kerajinan, pencapaian dan keruhanian'. Sampelnya terdiri dari 207 orang pelajar Melayu, Cina dan India dari jurusan Seni Halus, Kemanusiaan, Sains Tulen, dan Kejuruteraan. Mereka diminta menjawab soalselidik tentang nilai di atas yang dibina oleh penyelidik. Data soalselidik dianalisis menerusi pengiraan ANOVA dan ujian-t. Keputusannya menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan di kalangan pelajar-pelajar tersebut dari segi pegangan kepada nilai kesejahteraan, progresif, liberal, pedantik dan dan kerajinan. Bagi nilai-nilai lain terdapat perbezaan ras. Pelajar-pelajar Melayu dan India mendapat skor yang serupa bagi nilai keyakinan dan kedua-duanya lebih tinggi dari rakan Cina mereka. Pelajar-pelajar Melayu dan India juga mendapat skor yang serupa bagi nilai penyayang. Namun hanya skor pelajar-pelajar Melayu sahaja yang lebih tinggi dari pelajar-pelajar Cina. Dari segi nilai pencapaian pula, skor pelajar-pelajar Cina dan India didapati serupa dan kedua-duanya lebih tinggi dari pelajar-pelajar Melayu. Akhirnya bagi nilai keruhanian, pelajar Melayu dan India mendapat skor yang serupa dan kedua-duanya lebih tinggi dari pelajar-pelajar Cina. Kesimpulannya, penyelidikan ini menegaskan bahawa kerendahan dari sudut nilai penyayang dan keruhanian 'merabunkan' pandangan dalam mengharungi liku-liku hidup. Di sebaliknya kerendahan dari segi nilai keyakinan dan pencapaian boleh melemahkan keperkasaan diri ketika mengharungi gelora kehidupan. Dari segi ini ditegaskan pemerolehan nilai di kalangan pelajar-pelajar India nampaknya agak seimbang; tetapi di sebaliknya pelajar-pelajar Melayu memerlukan peningkatan nilai pencapaian dan pelajar-pelajar Cina pula peningkatan nilai keyakinan.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Psychologists studying the cultural determinants of personality tend to focus on culture-based characteristics of individuals across various cultures. They are guided by theories pertaining to limited personality domains and constructs such as the structure of traits, values, moods; individualism-collectivism; self-construals; basic emotions; subjective well-being; selected belief dimensions (Church, & Lonner, 1998), locus of control, achievement motivation, field-independence-dependence, and anxiety (Piker, 1994; 1998).

Trait psychology provides a theoretical basis for much of the recent cross-cultural research on personality and its measurement (Church, & Lonner, 1998). It has been argued in the Western world that personality traits can be well accounted for by a relatively small number of dimensions. McCrae and Costa proposed a five-factor model of personality traits containing the dimensions of Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness to Experience (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C) (McCrae & Costa, 1985, 1997; McCrae, Costa, del Pilar, Rolland, & Parker, 1998). Evidence for a certain degree of cross-cultural universality of human traits which includes those of the Malays (Mastor, Jin & Cooper, 2000) has been gathered in relation to the five-factor model of personality (Church & Lonner, 1998). Some evidence of cross-cultural universality has also been assembled in a limited number of basic emotions, higher-order mood dimensions and the content and

structure of values. Nevertheless, the universality of most key concepts and propositions of mainstream (western) personality theories is still inconclusive. For example Chinese samples averaged higher than U.S. samples on confusion, and work dynamism, which, however, may be highly culture-specific. Individuals in poorer countries have shown stronger beliefs that the world is an unjust place (Church & Lonner, 1998).

It is quite widely argued that cultures differ in their relative emphasis on the individual versus collective orientations (Triandis, 1990) or in their construals of self as more independent and autonomous versus more interdependent with others (Markus, & Kitayama, 1998). Based on a 50-nation study of values, Hofstede (1980) ranked the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western European nations as highest in individualism/independent. Asians (India, Singapore, Philippines and Hong Kong), Latin American, and Southern Europeans are generally viewed as collectivistic/interdependent (Hofstede, 1980). Malaysians (Malays, Chinese, and Indians) were indexed as collectivists on Hofstede's country individualism index of 20 (Bochner, 1994). Cultural psychologists proposed the following predictions about the traitedness of self-concepts, person descriptions, attributions, and behavior in different cultures: (a) Self-concepts and descriptions of others will be less traited in collectivistic as compared to individualistic cultures, that is, person description will be comprised less of trait attributes, at least of a more global noncontextual nature; (b) persons in individualistic cultures focus more on traits in their inferences about behavior, whereas individuals in collectivistic cultures focus more on contextual factors; (c) persons in collectivistic cultures will exhibit less temporal and cross-situational consistency in their behavior than will persons in individualistic cultures; and (d) behavior will be less predictable in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures from assessments of internal dispositions such as personality traits and more predictable from social roles and expectations (Church, & Katigbak, 2000).

Values upheld by individuals in a given culture provide one of the most enlightening descriptions of culture-based personality differences. Stable value differences among individuals of different cultures are reflective of personality differences among peoples of dissimilar cultures (Schultz, & Zelezny, 1998). Through several large-scale cross-cultural studies in 40 countries, Schwartz (1992) conceptualized the existence of 10 distinct value types derived from three universal requirements of human existence (biological needs, coordinated social interaction, and group functioning) and the dynamic relations of compatibility and conflict among the value types. Value types are organized along two higher order dimensions: that is, (a) Openness to change versus conservation. Openness to change reflects the degree to which a person is motivated to follow his or her own emotional and intellectual interests: e.g., stimulation, self-direction. Conservation reflects a motivation to preserve the status quo: e.g., security, conformity, tradition, and (b) Self-transcendence versus self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is an orientation toward self-interests: e.g., achievement, power. Self-transcendence is an orientation toward the welfare of others: e.g., universalism, benevolence. The 10th value type, hedonism, reflects both openness to change and self-enhancement. A set of 56 values exemplifies the 10 value types. Among them at least 44 appear to have comparable meanings across most cultures (Schwartz, 1992). Another classification of values is offered by Bond (1988). In a pan-cultural factor analysis of 21-cultures, Bond (1988) derived two individual-differences dimensions in values, that is, (a) Contrasting Social Integration versus Cultural Inwardness values, and (b) Reputation versus Social morality values. Bond's dimensions contain some conceptual overlap with Schwartz's (1992) value types.

In changing societies across many cultures there is some evidence for a coherent syndrome of values, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies characterizing the modern or innovating personality related to cultural change dynamism. An innovating personality is portrayed as being open to experience, ambitious and future-oriented, independent from authority figures, active with a strong sense of personal efficacy, confident and optimistic. Some researchers derived comparable descriptions along a single traditionalism-modernism continuum. The conception of modernity resembles McCrae and Costa's (1985) openness to experience dimension of the five-factor model and Schwartz's (1992) openness to change versus conservation dimensions of the value types construct (Church, & Lonner, 1998).

The culture of a community is a complex entity (Daud-Hamzah, 1993<sub>a</sub>). It is not difficult to imagine how complex it would be to describe cultures pertaining to different communities and to continue to interpolate values, which describe dimensions of personality groomed by these cultures. At this point the task would be greatly complicated because the personality characteristics of members of each community has to be identified, described, compared and contrasted. Following this the extent of within-culture stability for values in a cultural group is yet to be discerned. For example it has been discovered that compared to managers in the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong managers averaged lower on individualism and also individuals in developing countries (most of whom non-Protestant) tend to average higher on Protestant Work Ethic measures than individuals in developed countries (Church & Lonner, 1998). Only after these deliberations, then, a certain degree of insight is attained in comprehending the cultural basis of personality. Therefore, a feasible research strategy to study the cultural basis of personality should be deployed.

In conducting cross-cultural research there is a distinction between etic and emic strategies (Berry, 1969). Etic strategies typically involve the importation, testing, and perhaps adaptation of existing personality models or constructs in new cultures. Emic strategies attempt to identify and elaborate indigenous personality constructs first, and then, subsequently, these indigenous constructs may be related to constructs from other cultures in a search for true or derived etics or universals. There was some evidence of advantage in the discovery of indigenous concepts and fruitful integration of etic and emic concepts and approaches. Evidence from indigenous (emic) approaches would strengthen conclusions about universality of the cultural basis of personality (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992).

Previous works related to the cultural-basis of personality differences in Malaysian communities are in the tradition of the etic strategy (see for example Mastor, Jin & Cooper, 2000; Bochner, 1994). It is well appreciated that there are valuable strengths in this strategy; particularly the researcher has a ready-made model to refer. However, it employs Western models and would miss a lot of valuable cultural flavours, which would not be overlooked from the perspective of the emic strategy. For example, there are valuable cultural flavors related to the personality dimensions pertaining to Malaysian Malays, Chinese and Indians in the historically related cultural account of these three Malaysian communities.

The Malays created the earliest organised Malaysian settlement in 500 AD around Lembah Bujang, Kedah. The center of settlement shifted to Melaka in 1400 AD as an Islamic-based feudal state. Overpowered in turn by the Western colonial masters (Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and British) of whom the British was the longest reigning masters until Malaysia attained independence in 1957, the Malays were contained within various measures taken by

the British to maintain them as natives of Malaysia fit for engaging in planting and fishing in the Malaysian states with feudal Sultans at the apex of the Malay social structure in each state; heading the affairs of Islamic religion and Malay customs. The incomes of Malay aristocrats were regulated through royalty allowances. A few of the aristocrats were allowed some power in collecting taxes and resolving issues referable to Malay customary laws. Also a few of the commoners were granted some power status as policemen, soldiers, clerks and junior executives in the British administration. In this manner the Malays were generally contained as planters, fishermen and small petty traders in their communities throughout the Malay states to ensure that they would be crippled politically. The colonial motive was to weaken and subjugate the Malays and continuously syphon out the returns from Malay land. Hence around 1800 the colonial masters started to encourage an exodus of Indian and Chinese immigrants who would pose no political problems; but instead be ready to work in plantations, mining industries and related infrastructures (Daud-Hamzah, 1993<sub>b</sub>).

From India the southern Indians were mostly brought to Malaysia as labourers although there were also a few professionals and commercial undertakers who migrated on their own. The Malaysian Indians inherited Hindu values pertaining to the hierarchical cast system. In this system the highest level, Brahmin groups, were descendants of the Aryans who founded the Hindu religion. The second, Ksyatriyas, were the aristocrats. The third, Weisyas, were peasants and farmers. The lowest level, Sudras, were the commoners including slaves and those who were being religiously oppressed as dirty creatures. The cast system implied social designation of individuals in professional niches such as the monks, government officers, commercial enterprisers, and slaves. One's position in the cast system determined one's virtues and profession as well as the power invested in it. This was authorised through Hindu religion and every Hindu should adhere religiously. Religious professions and positions belong to the Brahmins and the others were not required to know the religion but be devoted wholeheartedly to the ritual acts and ceremonies under the leadership of the Brahmins. In the traditional Hindu society each individual knew his/her roles and functions. Political roles belong to the Ksyatriyas. The role of the Weisyas was to accumulated wealth, while the commoners were to work diligently in all supporting functions. Couched in the cast system, the Indians as a whole who were brought to Malaysia by the British colonial masters were labourer-designated commoners who would easily come to terms with any directives from their captains and the British masters with whatever virtues in store. Only those who migrate to Malaysia on their own as professionals and merchants engaged in professional and business enterprises (Daud-Hamzah, 1993<sub>b</sub>).

Most of the Chinese were drawn to settle in Malaysia to escape the political and economic pressures in communist China. So among them there were labourers, politicians, professionals and enterprisers. The departure from the communist nation of China in search of fortunes was a moral legitimization for the pursuit of economic and social mobility for every Chinese individual. Traditionally, Chinese culture maintained that the basis of harmony and stability in a family were effective management of human relations and effective ways of accumulating profits from an existing economic situation. The Chinese culture stressed on economic independence as the basic ingredient in the management of a successful nation: 'When the country is prosperous, children would be good. When the economy starts to depress, children would be bad' (Thiam, 1985). The history and philosophy of the Chinese people emphasized on the pursuits of enhanced economic and social mobility. Confucius described a family as a microcosm of the macrocosmic nation. Economic independence was the central value in a Chinese society. The proverb stated

literally: 'If you are rich, all your words are right and correct. If you are poor all your words are false' (Tham, 1985). The Chinese culture maintained that wealth was the basis for self-worth. Possession of wealth was the possession of power, where not only human but also the ghosts and satans could be subjugated. When one was rich one was a dragon. Even the blind gained his sights if he were rich. This was one of the main themes in the Chinese culture. It balanced wealth and interpersonal relations, which motivated people to pursue wealth and morally legitimized their thoughts and actions in the pursuit of wealth. This theme was integrated with values on how to gain wealth through industriousness and educational achievement. Hence one was required to be industrious at all time. Traditionally when a child started schooling he would be dressed in a very clean white attire and brought to the Temple of Confucius; for Confucius symbolizes wisdom, knowledge and intelligence. From here the child would sail toward wisdom, wealth and power (Daud-Hamzah, 1993<sub>b</sub>).

Different from that of the Chinese, the traditional cultural themes of the common Malays and Indians do not rationally emphasize achievement, education, social mobility, accumulation of wealth and economic power for every member of the communities as a whole. For example, traditionally the moral basis of seeking knowledge among the Malays is to become a virtuous scholar (*muallim*) or a respectable elderly. For the Indians it is to become a Brahmin. These are not tied up with being wealthy. On the other hand, for the Chinese, seeking knowledge is related to all aspects of achievement culminating in the possession of wealth and power. Thus there is a general motivation among the Chinese to gain achievement knowledge-wise, economy-wise and power-wise. This is lacking in the culture of the common Malays and Indians. This traditional cultural heritage of the Malays and Indians is one of the focal values to be changed by the government to bring them to parity with the Chinese partly through a variety of social and educational programs in the economic plans since 1980s, which sweep the whole nation into a currently industrial society. Malay, Chinese and Indian communities have been affected differently by the modern economy. For example the new economic policies have changed the attitude of Malays and Indians and stimulated their need to work hard for a better quality of life. Since 1980s many cultural manifests have been changed. However, there is a scarcity in psychological research pertaining to culture-based personality values related to the current cultural scenarios of the Malays, Chinese and Indians.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the present study is to describe the cultural basis of Malaysian Malay, Chinese and Indian university students' personality dimension of values from indigenous sub-cultures of cross-national sources. The delineation, organization, and cross-cultural comparison of specific values, are generally interpretable in terms of traditional cultural, historical, socioeconomic, political, or religious differences between groups (Church, & Lonner, 1998). A value is a belief pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct that transcends specific situations, guides selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events, and is ordered by importance relative to other values to form a system of value priorities (Schwartz, 1994). The present study seeks to investigate the presence of certain selected values among Malay, Chinese and Indian university students. The selected values are 'well being, progressive, liberal, confidence, pedantic, caring, diligent, achievement and divine-fulfillment'.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Each term is defined in a bi-polar dimensional range as follows:

**Well-being - affluence:** An orientation of mind towards procreating the welfare of individuals as opposed to grandiose materialistic indulgence

**Progressive – static:** Receptive to new, innovative and pragmatic practices in the conduct of life as opposed to a devotion for old ways of handling conduct.

**Liberal - Conventional:** A belief in openness, transparency and submissiveness versus strict following of normative principles

**Confidence – Misgiving:** Sense of efficacy, independence and self-worthiness as opposed to timidity, lack of daringness and self-pity

**Pedantic - Ignorance:** Regards for knowledge and possession of wisdom as opposed to simple-mindedness, witlessness and blissfulness

**Caring -- pitiless:** Values good feeling and sensitivity toward others versus being ruthless and merciless.

**Diligent -- Indolent:** Active striving toward industriousness and self-created opportunities as opposed to being lazy and waiting for help and opportunities to come by

**Achievement – Defeat:** Motivated and being persistent to toward excellent performance and results as opposed to recoiling and retreating in the face of challenges

**Divine-Fulfillment -- Self-fulfillment:** Paying regards on transformations toward spiritual loftiness as opposed to the embellishment of self-dignity

## **METHODOLOGY**

**Sample:** A total of 207 University of Science students form the sample for this study. They are students from the Fine Arts (18), Humanities (136), Pure Sciences (28), Engineering (19) and 6 missing values. There are 37 males and 170 females. In number the Malays constitute 89, Chinese, 87, Indians, 25, and 6 missing values. The students' age ranges from 19 to 41 years old; with a mean at 25.5 years old and a majority of below 31 years (19-25: 49.3%, 26-31: 32.3% = 81.6%). In terms of academic year there are 55 first-year, 67 second-year, 49 third-year and 36 missing-value students.

**Research Instrument:** The researcher constructed the instrument from an item pool of 80. A total of 35 items were originally from the researcher's previous work in collaboration with others (Haris-Jadi, Mokhtar-Ismail, Shukery-Mohamed & Daud-Hamzah, 1996). The rest were constructed during the present study. The items were constructed to contain a by-polar direction of value expressions to fit into the definition of values employed in this study. Both positive and negative items were created. They were written in Malay. From the item pool a total of 60 items have been pulled out after being face-validated by five Associate Professors of Education at the School of Education, University of Science. These items were turned into a questionnaire and administered to 95 Malay, Chinese and Indian university students in a reliability study. An alpha value of 0.87 was obtained. Examples of the items are provided below:

**Well-being -- affluence:**

[3] 4[a] Kita patut mencari harta-benda dan wang yang lumayan untuk menjamin kesejahteraan keluarga

[b] Kita patut mencari wang sekadar yang perlu dan menikmati hidup sepenuhnya untuk kesejahteraan keluarga

**Progressive -- static:**

[7] 10[a] Kita mesti berani meniggalkan pegangan dan pandangan lama yang menghalang kemajuan

[b] Kita mesti kekalkan pegangan dan pandangan lama walaupun bermakna kita kurang maju

**Liberal -- Conventional:**

[14] 19[a] Segala tindakan yang hendak dilaksana hendaklah melalui proses perbincangan

[b] Apa yang diarah oleh pemimpin patut dituruti kerana dia merancang untuk kebajikan kita

**Confidence -- Misgiving:**

[19] 26[a] Selalunya saya malas hendak memberi pandangan kerana tiada siapa yang akan mendengar

[b] Selalunya sama ada diterima atau tidak, saya tetap mengemukakan pendapat saya

**Pedantic --- Ignorance:**

[22] 30[a] Perbualan harian adalah bermanfaat jika mendatangkan pengetahuan

[b] Perbualan harian adalah untuk berseloroh tanpa mendatangkan pengetahuan

**Caring -- pitiless:**

[28] 39[a] Penagih dadah ialah sampah masyarakat yang patut dihukum mati sahaja

[b] Walaupun seseorang itu menagih dadah kita patut bertanggungjawab membantunya

**Diligent -- Indolent:**

[33] 47[a] Kerja yang amat mengembirakan saya ialah yang saya sendiri merekakannya

[b] Kerja yang amat mengembirakan saya ialah yang diarahkan kepada saya

**Achievement -- Defeat:**

[36] 4. Saya akan menanggung sesuatu kerja daripada terus menyudahkannya jika ramai orang menyaksikan saya membuatnya

[47] 47. Saya lebih bersedia menghadapi kemalangan untuk menjayakan sesuatu tugas yang merbahaya daripada menghadapi kegagalan dalam melaksanakannya

**Divine-Fulfillment - Self-fulfillment:**

[48] 52. Saya lebih gemar membayangkan kepintaran mempengaruhi orang lain menjayakan kerja untuk saya daripada memikirkan tentang keikhlasan saya

[55] 67. Saya lebih banyak berasa bangga dengan sesuatu kejayaan daripada merenung tentang rahsia dan hikmah Tuhan daripadanya

**Procedure:** The questionnaires were distributed to the samples through students taking a psychology course during the second semester of academic year 2000-2001. These students returned the completed questionnaires to the researcher. The extracted data was analysed for group differences using ANOVA computation and t-tests for pairwise mean differences.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results are summarised and displayed in table I. It reveals no significant difference among the university students of the three races on their commitment to values pertaining to Well-being, Progressiveness, Liberality, Pedanticity and Diligence. Valuing well-being over affluence implies students of the three races favour psychological shelter over materialistic indulgences. It seems that although most of us enjoy a wealthy life in Malaysia this does not carry the students of all races away from their moral obligation of emphasizing psychological consideration over wasteful conduct. Valuing progressiveness over static approach to life is an indication that students of all communities are similarly favorable to new, innovative and pragmatic practices in the conduct of life as opposed to devotion for old ways of handling conduct. This implies that there is a bright promise for favorable future development for the students in the present study. In valuing liberality one is convinced that students of all races are similarly flexible on normative principles and more prone toward openness and transparency in conduct. It is also commendable that university students of all races are similarly more committed to pedanticity than being lured by ignorance. Clearly the students take to their studies seriously and are not wasting their time in the university simple-mindedly, witlessly and blissfully. This is in line with the finding that students of all races are similarly diligent, actively striving toward industriousness and self-created opportunities as opposed to being indolent and lazy.

**Table I: Summary of Results**

VALUES	GROUP <sub>[n]</sub>	MEAN	SD	F-STATISTICS	p-value	t-test –for each significant findings: M C I
Well-being --	Malay <sub>[89]</sub>	26.47	3.07	F <sub>Df 2, 193</sub> = 0.98	NS	
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	25.73	4.00			
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	26.48	4.22			
Affluence --	Malay <sub>[88]</sub>	25.87	2.29	F <sub>Df 2, 192</sub> = 1.06	NS	
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	26.39	2.81			
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	25.76	2.68			
Static --	Malay <sub>[87]</sub>	27.73	2.45	F <sub>Df 2, 191</sub> = 1.35	NS	
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	27.15	2.86			

Conventional	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	27.92	2.41			
Confidence – Misgiving	Malay <sub>[87]</sub>	27.10	2.33	F <sub>Df2, 191</sub> = 10.06	S = < .001	M *
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	25.24	3.29			C *
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	26.88	2.35			I *
Pedantic --- Ignorance	Malay <sub>[87]</sub>	24.48	2.32	F <sub>Df2, 191</sub> = 0.82	NS	
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	24.91	2.66			
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	24.36	2.54			
Caring -- pitiless	Malay <sub>[86]</sub>	28.43	2.29	F <sub>Df2, 190</sub> = 5.88	S = < .003	M
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	26.98	3.07			C *
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	27.40	3.13			I
Diligent -- Indolent	Malay <sub>[86]</sub>	25.77	2.75	F <sub>Df2, 190</sub> = 1.04	NS	
	Chinese <sub>[82]</sub>	26.30	2.81			
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	25.56	2.97			
Achievement – Defeat	Malay <sub>[89]</sub>	4.62	2.22	F <sub>Df2, 198</sub> = 3.77	S = < .024	M *
	Chinese <sub>[87]</sub>	5.27	2.10			C *
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	5.80	1.87			I *
Divine-Fulfill – Self-fulfill	Malay <sub>[89]</sub>	12.66	2.45	F <sub>Df2, 198</sub> = 30.53	S = < .000	M *
	Chinese <sub>[87]</sub>	9.11	3.70			C *
	Indian <sub>[25]</sub>	11.96	2.57			I *

NS = not significant, S = significant, \* = difference is significant, M = Malay, C = Chinese, I = Indian

Other parts of the results as displayed in table I reveal significant racial differences on four values; that is, confidence, caring, achievement and divine-fulfillment. The Malay and Indian students are similar on being confident and significantly superior in this respect to their Chinese colleagues. The Malay and Indian students do not differ in caring. The Chinese and Indian students also do not differ in this value. However, the Malays students are significantly superior compared to the Chinese in their commitment to caring. In achievement striving, the Chinese and Indian students do not differ and both are significantly superior to the Malays. In divine-fulfillment the Malay and Indian students are similar and both are significantly superior to the Chinese. In terms of the mundane life, values such as caring and divine-fulfillment are enrichments, which make this mundane life more meaningful in interpersonal relations. When one is inferior in these values, one may find life a little 'fuzzy' but may not upset a successful progression in mundane and material life attainment. However, when one is inferior in confidence and achievement striving, a certain degree of defeat along this line of progression would be awaiting in life ahead. This manner of interpreting the results of the present study, therefore, posits a smooth flow in life journey for the Indian students; but the Malay and Chinese students may have to endure a rougher one. To avoid this, the present study implies that the Malay students are in need of enhancement in commitment to achievement striving and the Chinese students are in need of an escalating sense of confidence.

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