Organizational Culture: A Case Study Measuring the Importance and Presence of Organization Values at a Higher Education Organization in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a study that was conducted to investigate the levels of organizational culture values that are present in students and instructors in a higher education organization in Saudi Arabia. A Survey was prepared and conducted to obtain primary data from students and instructors perception of thirty two basic and common values that are relevant to the study of organizational culture. The study findings gives valuable insights into how students and instructors see the importance and presence of organizational values and beliefs in the organization. Moreover, the enthusiasm of instructors and students gave a clear indication of how significantly important the surveys were to them. Higher education organizations may look at this paper's findings and may choose to apply its methodology to their organization and utilize its outcomes to better understand and then improve their organizational culture. Finally, this study provide a thorough investigation of a higher education organization culture by ranking the thirty two common values and measures their presence in the students and instructors community. The study will hopefully open an area of interest that could provide considerable insight for researchers interested in this topic.

Keywords: organizational culture, organizational behavior, higher education, value measurement, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Higher education institutes and organizations are considered key stone and corner base of any society since they provide the higher education needed for all classes of people in a country. The majority of the workforce in any facilities, institutions, companies, or government organizations have workers whom they graduated from a college or at least had some sort of a higher education experience.

Workers who does not have a post-secondary education are usually have far less job options than if they earned a college degree. They typically work in the services, manufacturing, or construction jobs that does not requires high educational and analytical capabilities.

College education traditionally equip students with many skills in various subject areas which enables them to make better choices in their personal and professional life. In addition it provide them with the tools necessary for improving their personal and social skills for self-discipline and effective interaction with others which will help them to achieve career advancement.

It is only logical to say that improving higher education organizations will benefit not only society but the whole world at large. It is an important subject that never stops to continue developing. It is in this context that this study is conducted to measure the importance and presence of organizational values in a higher education organization (Reda, 2001).

2. Literature Review

The organizational culture can be defined as the set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that are shared by the constituents of a given organization. Its importance stems from its influence on organizational performance as it derives the organizational members actions and subsequently its outcomes. Therefore, studying and understanding organizational culture enables the organization leaders to effectively manage and improves their organization performance (Cameron & Ettington, 1988).

Understanding the culture of an organization is a major key for effective management practices in universities. Organizational culture can further be defined as a system of shared meanings, beliefs, and values held by organizational members that determines how they act toward each other and outsiders. In other word, organizational culture can be considered as a pattern way of thinking, feeling, and reacting that exists in an organization. Organizational culture is descriptive; it is concerned with how members perceive the organization, not with whether they like it. It describes rather than evaluate (Crispen & Bulelwa, 2017). It is a crucial element in every organization to study their current culture and determine how it influences its members, in order to improve current values and beliefs not to mention introducing new values that will influence student positively and provides them with good academic behaviors (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

2.1 Layers of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is multi-layered. It is expressed in an organization's core values, mission, strategic objectives, and policies and procedures.
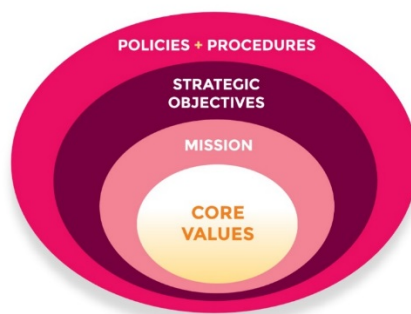

Figure 1. Layers of organizational culture

An organization's core values and mission lie at the centre of its culture. These, in turn, influence the direction of the organization's strategic objectives and the policies and procedures that it puts in place to support them. In the context of a non-profit merger, cultural integration requires the creation of a new culture that draws from the best aspects of each constituent organization's culture. This means starting at the centre, with a shared mission and core values, and working outward (Fralinger & Olson, 2007).

2.2 Importance of the Organizational Culture Study

There are four foreseeable benefits of studying organizational culture. First, it gives the organization a good reputation with a higher level of standards in values and beliefs. Second, it helps the organization to attract new students (customers). Third, it helps the organization to understand its culture, and fourth, it encourages the members of the organization to be more committed to organization values (Vasyakin et al., 2016).

2.3 Study Objectives

The objectives of the organizational culture study can be specified as follows:

First, to measure the most important values and beliefs that exist in the organization. Second, to measure how important are these values and beliefs to the targeted sample. Third, to measure how committed are the targeted sample to these values and beliefs. Fourth, to provide the organization administration with better understanding of how to deal with the members of the organization based on their values and beliefs. Fifth, to locate important values that don't exist or are lacking. Sixth, to increase general awareness of the organization culture. Finally, to provide a deeper insight of how the targeted sample behaves with member of university and outside visitors (William, 2016).

3. Methodology

According to previous studies on organizational culture, and literature search on the topic, thirty two values and beliefs that are crucial in most organizations were selected. It was believed that the listed values are the most common in higher education organizations. Subsequently, the survey structure was based on measuring three aspects of each value. First, its relevant importance to the organization. Second, its existence in the members of the organization. And finally, its existence in the evaluator themselves. Each aspect is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 represent the least presence and 5 the most.

The study of the organizational culture included a sample of 130 participants including 95 students and 35 instructors.

3.1 Organizational Culture Survey

The purpose of the survey was to measure the importance and presence of organizational ethics and values in the educational organization.

In the survey, thirty two of the most important and common values and beliefs that exist in organizations are selected. The participants are asked to evaluate their importance and presence using a scale of (1 – 5), where 5 represent the highest ranking and 1 is the lowest. There thirty two values are:

Truthfulness, Honesty, Devotion, Commitment - Respect for Time, Creativity, Stereotype - Impression, Affiliation, Cooperation/Teamwork, Competition, Confidence, Taking Initiatives, Clean Appearance, Responsibility, Self-censorship, Freedom of Expression, Forgiveness, Planning, Achievement - Time Management, Seriousness, Justice, Positivity, Privacy, Firmness and rigor, Directing, Sacrifice - Altruism, Harmony, Communication, Enthusiasm, Interest, and Carefulness.

4. Results of the Survey

The following tables (1, and 2) and figures (2, 3, and 4) show the overall findings of the survey as reported by the students and the instructors**.**

Table 1. Findings of the survey as reported by students

Values	Points			Ranking			Number of Participant
	Importance	Presence in others	Presence in individual	Importance	Presence in others	Presence in individual	
Truthfulness	4.73	3.57	4.13	3	5	12	94
Honesty	4.83	3.58	4.53	1	7	2	93
Devotion	4.7	3.33	4.26	5	18	8	93
Commitment– time respect	4.68	2.97	3.84	6	32	21	93
Respect	4.73	3.65	4.37	3	2	4	92
Creativity	4.03	3.26	3.73	28	22	25	92
Stereotype– Impression	3.92	3.38	3.63	30	15	31	87
Affiliation	4.07	3.54	3.66	27	9	29	90
Cooperation– Teamwork	4.27	3.38	3.97	23	15	16	90
Competition	3.84	3.45	3.64	32	12	30	94
Confidence	4.58	3.58	4.15	11	5	11	92
Initiative	4.31	3.27	3.81	22	21	23	89
Clean appearance	4.62	3.65	4.54	7	2	1	92
responsibility	4.59	3.36	4.2	9	17	9	94
Self-censorship	4.36	3.14	4.12	20	29	13	94
freedom of expression	4.34	3.4	3.93	21	14	18	93
The etiquette of	4.61	3.45	4.28	8	12	7	95

listening						
forgiveness	4.48	3.56	4.39	16	8	3	91
Planning	4.54	3.2	3.71	14	27	26	94
Achievement - Time Management	4.56	3.14	3.7	13	29	27	93
Seriousness	4.43	3.21	3.96	17	25	17	93
Justice	4.74	3.48	4.29	2	11	6	93
Positivity	4.59	3.5	4.18	9	10	10	92
Privacy	4.57	3.75	4.34	12	1	5	93
Firmness and rigor	3.89	3.17	3.39	31	28	32	92
Directing	4.24	3.24	3.87	24	24	20	91
Sacrifice – altruism	3.95	3	3.7	29	31	27	94
Harmony	4.12	3.21	3.77	26	25	24	94
Communication	4.43	3.65	3.82	17	2	22	94
Excitement	4.19	3.28	3.9	25	19	19	93
Interest	4.49	3.28	4.09	15	19	14	94
Carefulness	4.39	3.26	4.04	19	22	15	95

Table 2. Findings of the survey as reported by instructors

Values	Points			Ranking			Number of Participant
	Importance	Presence in others	Presence in Individual	Importance	Presence in others	Presence in Individual	
Truthfulness	4.91	3.54	4.44	1	6	5	34
Honesty	4.91	3.77	4.62	1	2	1	34
Devotion	4.8	3.43	4.56	5	11	3	34
Commitment–time respect	4.83	3.26	4.55	3	17	4	33
Respect	4.82	3.97	4.62	4	1	1	34
Creativity	4.29	2.73	3.76	23	32	29	33
Stereotype–Impression	3.74	3.49	3.68	32	7	32	34
Affiliation	4.12	3.33	4.06	26	16	18	33
Cooperation–Teamwork	4.41	3.37	3.79	17	12	26	34
Competition	4.4	3.23	3.76	18	21	29	34
Confidence	4.57	3.34	4.24	13	13	13	34
Initiative	4.31	3.14	3.76	21	25	29	34
Clean	4.71	3.6	4.44	7	4	5	34

appearance

|							
responsibility	4.66	3.2	4.35	10	22	7	34
Self-censorship	4.63	3.09	4.29	11	27	11	34
freedom of expression	4.31	3.06	3.94	21	28	23	34
The etiquette of listening	4.74	3.63	4.32	6	3	9	34
forgiveness	4.54	3.49	4.32	15	7	9	34
Planning	4.71	3.17	4.06	8	24	19	34
Achievement/ Time Management	4.63	3	4.06	11	29	19	34
Seriousness	4.57	2.88	4.34	13	31	8	32
Justice	4.69	3.26	4.18	9	17	15	33
Positivity	4.4	3.49	4.03	18	7	21	34
Privacy	4.26	3.57	4.09	25	5	17	34
Firmness/ rigor	3.97	3.34	3.82	30	13	24	34
directing	4.09	3.26	4.26	27	19	12	34
Sacrifice - altruism	4.09	2.97	3.79	27	30	26	34
harmony	3.86	3.2	3.81	31	22	25	32
Communication	4.29	3.46	4	24	10	22	34
Excitement	4	3.11	3.79	29	26	26	34
interest	4.49	3.34	4.18	16	13	16	34
Carefulness	4.34	3.26	4.24	20	19	13	34
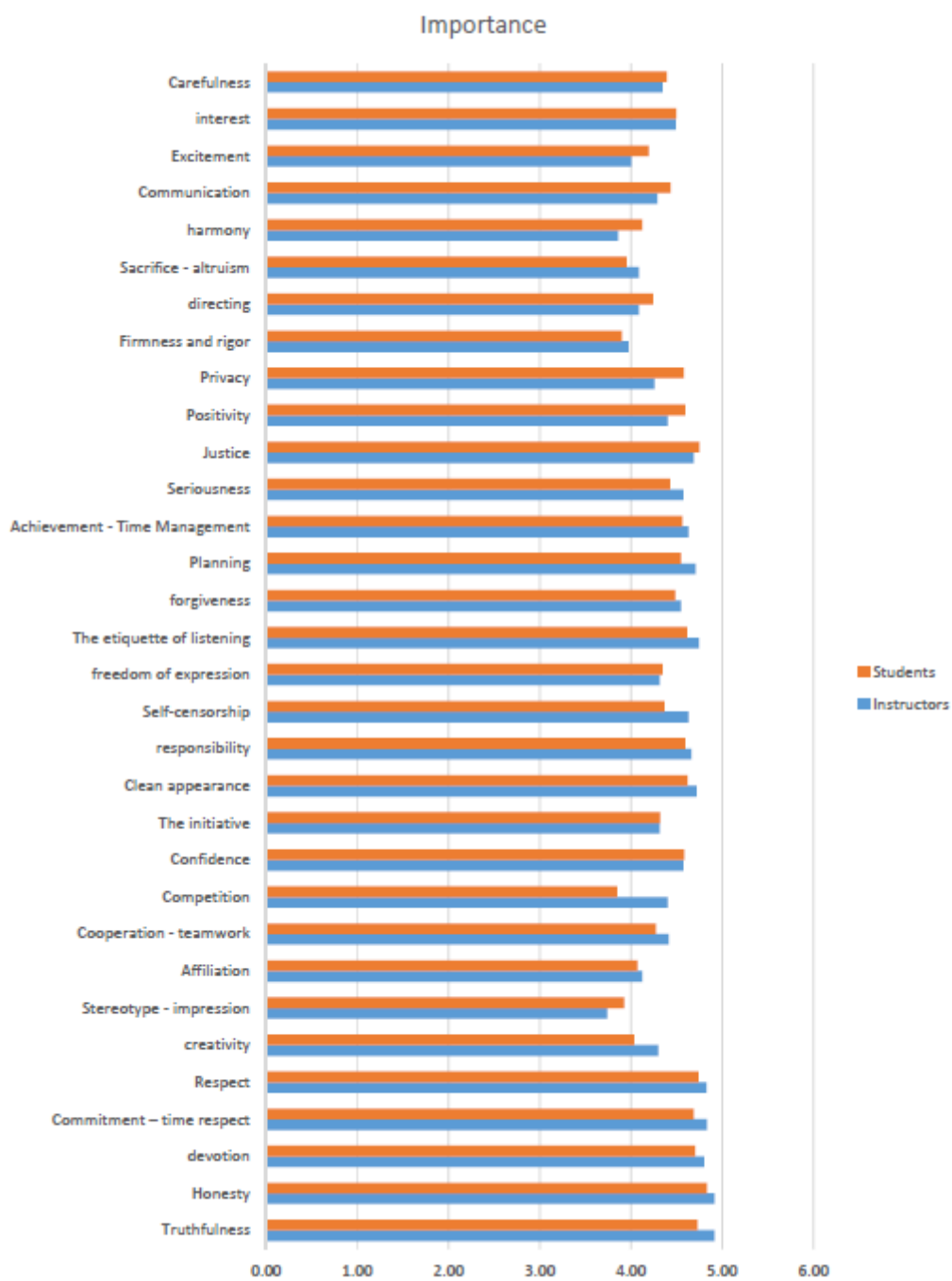
Figure 2. Importance of the vaues
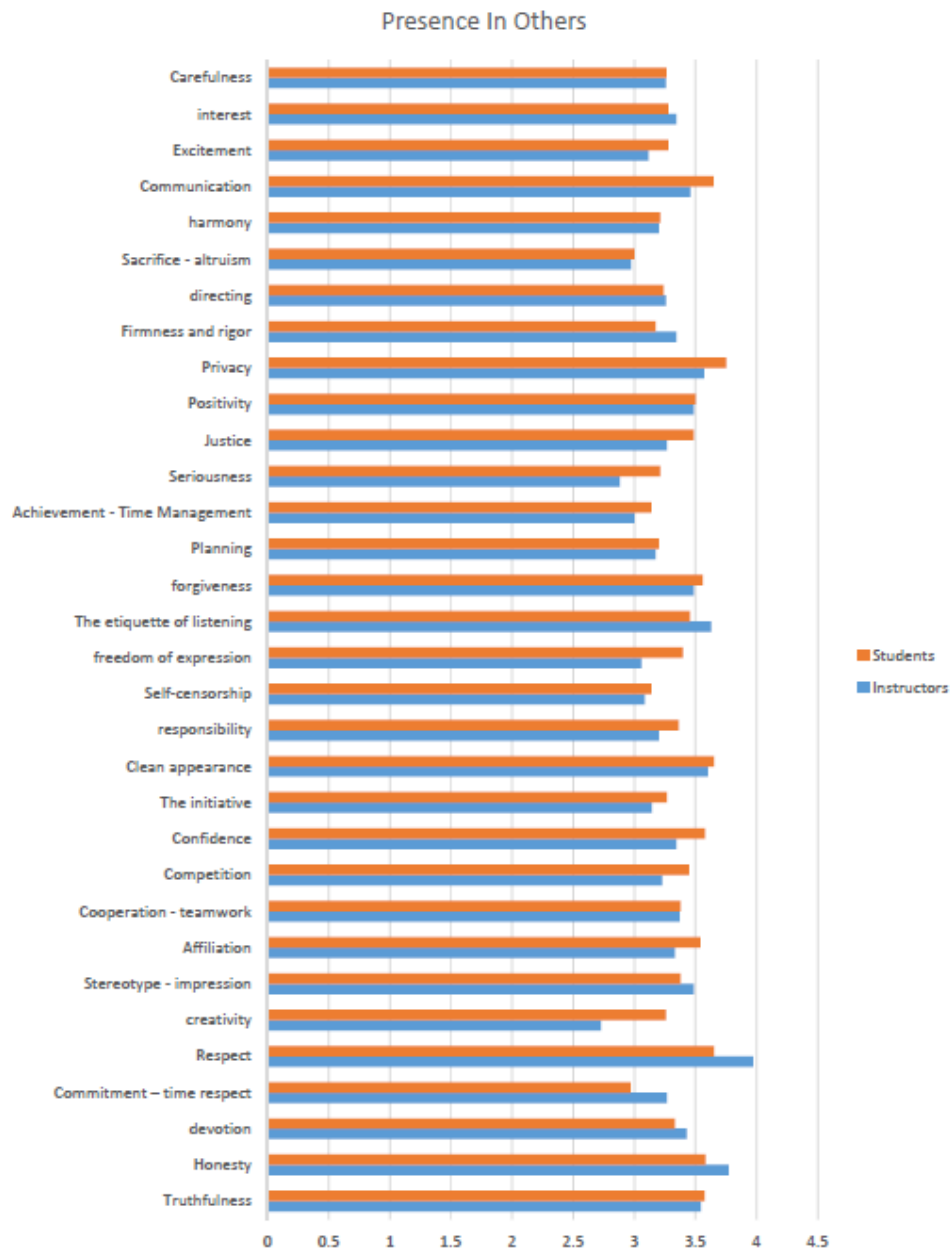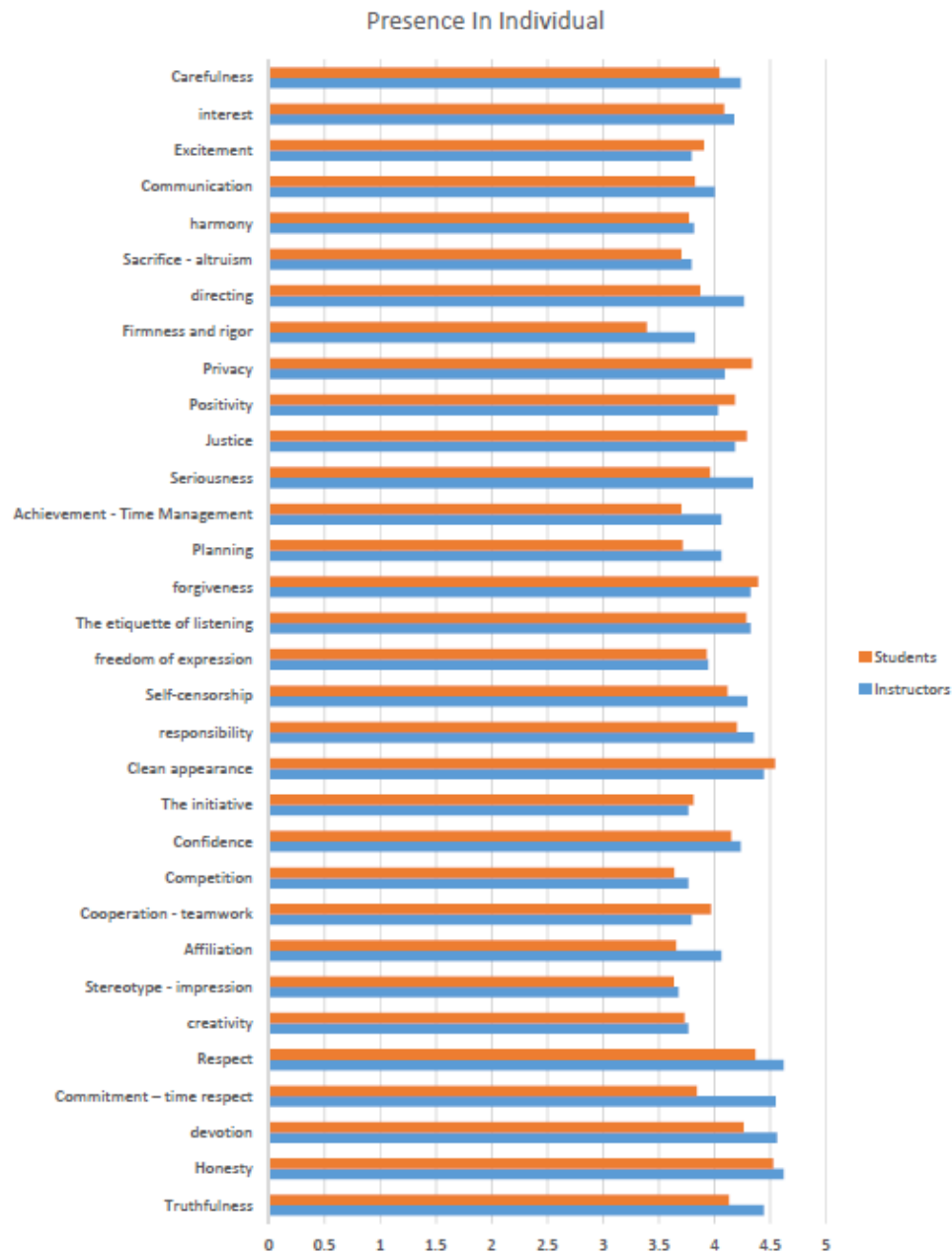
Figure 3. Presence of the values in others

Figure 4. Presence of the values in individuals

4.1 Reliability of Survey

In order to measure how reliable our survey, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated and it was 99%. Most of the values fall within 0.75 to 0.85 interval.

4.2 Analysis of Instructors Responses

It was found from the survey that was handed to instructors that the five most important values are shown in the following tables.

4.3 The Five Most Important Values

Table 3. The five most important values

Truthfulness	Honesty	commitment	Respect	Devotion
4.9143	4.9143	4.8286	4.8235	4.8

As seen in Table 3 the most important values to the instructors are Truthfulness and Honesty with both scoring 4.9143. This indicates how vital these two values are that they both had the same importance. It is clear from the table that the values instructors perceive most important are the same values organizations are more likely to implement.

4.4 The Five Least Important Values

Table 4. The five least important values

Sacrifice	Enthusiasm	Firmness	Harmony	Stereotype
4.0857	4.0	3.9714	3.8571	3.7353

As seen from Table 4, even though these are the five least important values its score still high and above 3.5; this shows how committed the instructors are about these values.

4.5 Presence in Others

This part of the organization culture survey measures the values that are perceived to be present in the other members of the organization.

4.6 The Most Five Perceived Values Present in Others

Table 5. The most five perceived values present in others

Respect	Honesty	Etiquette of Listening	Clean appearance	Privacy
3.971	3.771	3.629	3.60	3.571

From Table 5, the two most perceived values are respect and honesty and this indicate a positive feedback from instructors regarding the values that are seen to be present in the organization.

4.7 The Least Five Perceived Values in Others

Table 6. Least five perceived values in others

Freedom of speech	Achievement	Sacrifice	Seriousness	Creativity
3.057	3.0	2.971	2.879	2.727

From the instructors' point of view, table 6 shows the values that scored the least presence in others. Thus, it direct attention to its need for improvement and better awareness of how important these values are in the organization.

4.8 Presence in Individual

This part of the survey evaluation shows the presence level of the values in the individual instructors themselves.

4.9 The Five Most Perceived Values in Individuals

Table 7. The five most perceived values in individuals

Honesty	Respect	Devotion	Commitment	Truthfulness
4.618	4.618	4.559	4.545	4.441

From Table 7, the most perceived values evaluators see in themselves are Honesty and Respect since they both scored the same high score. It is noted that these most perceived values are the same values that are ranked most important and this shows a high degree of consistency regarding instructors organisation values.

4.10 The Least Five Perceived Values in Individuals

Table 8. The least five perceived values in individuals

Enthusiasm	Creativity	Competition	initiative	Stereotype
3.794	3.765	3.765	3.765	3.676

Table 8 shows the least perceived values present in the evaluator themselves.

4.11 The Five Most Important Values

It was found from the survey that was handed to students that the most five important values the students perceive are shown in following table.

4.12 The Five Most Important Values

Table 9. The five most important values

Honesty	Justice	Respect	Truthfulness	Devotion
4.83	4.74	4.73	4.73	4.7

As seen in Table 9 the most important value to students is Honesty. The rest of the most important values have very close scores and this shows how they are all highly important in the point of view of students.

4.13 The Least Five Important Values

Table 10. The least five important values

Creativity	Sacrifice	Stereotype	Firmness	Competition
4.03	3.95	3.92	3.89	3.84

It is clear from Table 11 that even though these values are the least important, they are all still very close to scoring 4 out 5, and this gives a clear indication of how important all the values listed in the survey to the students.

4.14 The Most Five Perceived Values in Others

Table 11. The most five perceived values in others

Privacy	Respect	Clean Appearance	Communication	Honesty
3.75	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.58

Table 11 shows that the most perceived values that is present in the students is privacy, and that gives an impression about the behaviour of the students.

4.15 The Least Five Perceived Values in Others

Table 12. The least five perceived values in others

Firmness	Achievement	Self-censorship	Sacrifice	Commitment
3.17	3.14	3.14	3.00	2.97

Table 12 shows the values in that scored the least perceived to be present according to the students perspective. This in turn direct attention to the values that needs improvement and better awareness of how important these values are to the students.

4.16 Presence in Individual

This part of the survey evaluation shows the ranking of the values that are present in the individual students themselves.

4.17 The Five Most Perceived Values in Individuals

Table 13. The five most perceived values in individuals

| Clean Appearance	Honesty	Forgiveness	Respect	Privacy
4.54	4.53	4.39	4.37	4.34

From Table 13 the most perceived value students see in themselves is Clean Appearance. However, the values Honesty and Respect are second most important values in the student's organisation values.
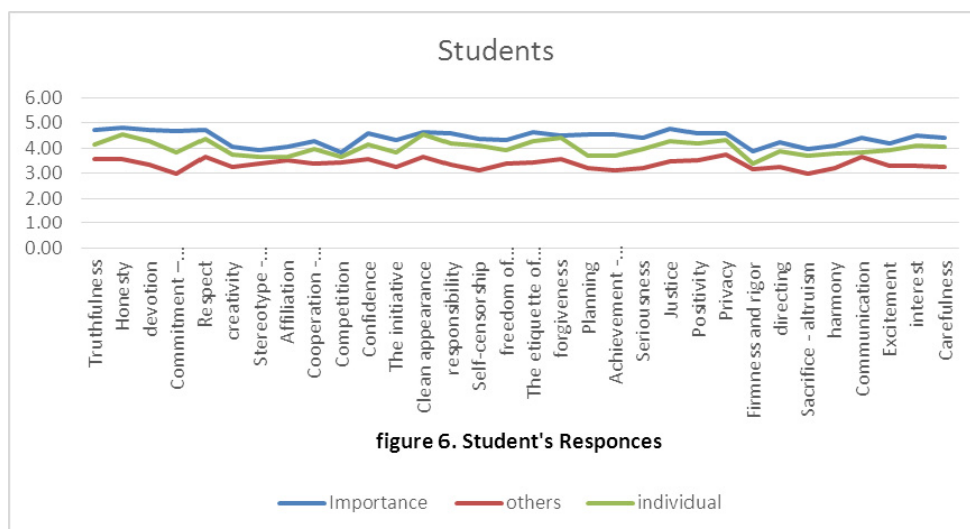
4.18 The Least Five Perceived Values in Individuals

Table 14. The least five perceived values in individuals

Sacrifice	Affiliation	Competition	Stereotype	Firmness
3.70	3.66	3.64	3.63	3.39

Table 14 shows the least perceived values present in the student's as they evaluated themselves.

Figure 5. Instructor's Responces
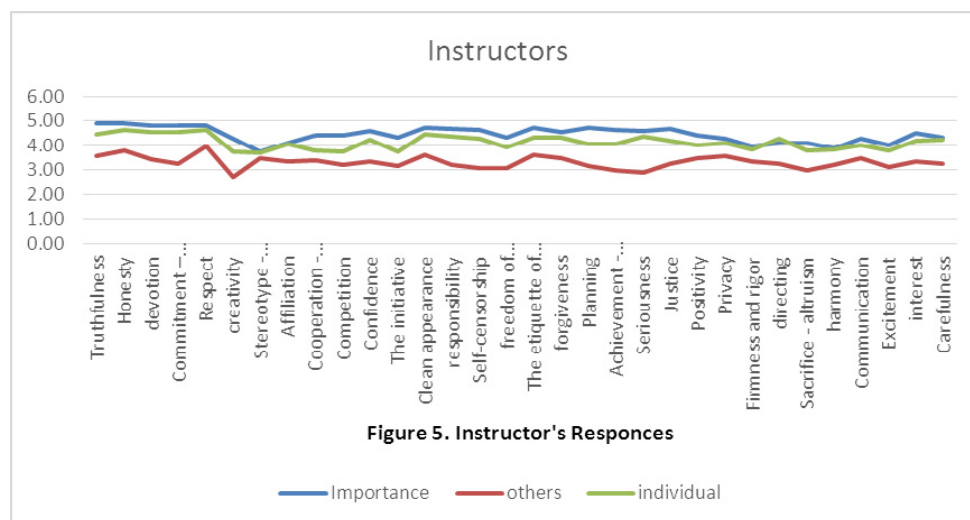
Figures 5, 6. The Relationship between importance, presence in others, and presence in individual for Instructors and Students

From Figures 5 and 6, it can be see that importance of the values has scored the highest level on the graph. While the presence of these values in others scored the lowest.

5. Conclusion

The study results and analysis shows that both instructors and students see these values with significant importance since the average scores for all listed values were above 3.7. On the other hand, presence in others measures scores were about 2.7. A reason for this drop in score is that some of these values might not be visible from the evaluator point of view. That's why another part was added to measure these values presence in individuals, where the lowest scores was 3.39 which is higher than the 2.7 score in Presence in others part.

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