

Abstract

This study compared the rating of extrinsic, intrinsic, social, and prestige work values between undergraduate psychology students ($N = 61$) from high, middle, and low socioeconomic status (SES) families. This study sought to identify SES as a moderating factor on work values that can account for inconclusive results in research of generational differences. Most participants were Hong Kong locals, while a minority were international students. The study had more women than men, but no gender differences were found. Work values were measured using the Lyons Work Value Survey (LWVS). Previous findings suggest that SES has an effect on intrinsic and extrinsic work values, while no research has looked at social and prestige work values. Inclusion of data on gender, ethnicity, work experience, having done unpaid work, and age adds considerably to the explanation, while also controls for confounding variables. Most effect sizes were small, limiting the practical importance. Cross-sectional research makes it impossible to decide whether differences are a result of SES or other factors, such as varying life stages, career stages, maturation, or experience. Although most of the hypotheses were not supported, the results were able to justify SES as a direct and indirect moderating factor by analyzing the effects and developments of SES within the locality of Hong Kong.