

## **Work values of human resources in Jordan: A vocational approach for predicting student success in the workplace**

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*Abstract:* The main purpose of this study was to explore work values of university students in Jordan. The study surveyed 825 students from various academic disciplines who were enrolled in the “Educational Culture” and “Vocational Education” courses at the Hashemite University. Descriptive analyses and a T-test were used to analyze the data collected. Results of the study indicated that university students possess important and essential work values that enable them to succeed in their future jobs. Moreover, the results indicated that male and female university students place great importance on all seven work values investigated. This article ends by offering a number of recommendations for practice and research that may help advance the fields of business and education.

*Keywords:* work values; human resources, vocational approach, university students, Jordan

### **Introduction**

The new world system is characterized by globalization, industrialization, economic shifts, downsizing, and the emergence of international joint ventures that require that the new generation workforce should be better educated, more skilled, more adaptable, and more capable of working collaboratively. However, an accelerating rate of change in the work environment calls for more than workplace competence (Brown & Brooks, 2002). This change obligates academics, researchers, and practitioners to do a better job of passing on to the next student generation important work values such as business ethics, and personal work preferences including pay, enjoyment, achievement, advancement, compassion, and personal responsibility (Dose, 1997; Fey & Beamish, 2001). Universities are more frequently being called upon to supply a well-trained and competent workforce that is sensitive to the needs of society and businesses. As well, employers are demanding graduates with work-related values and not just the traditional interests, abilities, and personality competencies (Brown & Brooks, 2002). In brief, no nation can remain strong and succeed unless it passes on to the next student cohort essential work values necessary for success in the work environment (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993).

Work values, a sub-set of values, are regarded by Zytowski (2004) as personal preferences for selected outcomes and rewards of working. Work values refer to what a person wants out of work in general and also which components of a job are important to their work satisfaction (Dawis, 2001). Being aware of key work values allows individuals to understand and evaluate

their own behavior and action (Hultman & Gellerman, 2002), which in turn, may make an impact on the actions of a business and determine its ultimate success.

Several researchers recognized that values play an important role in the career decision-making process (see Dawis, 2001; Holland, 1997; Super, 1980). Hall and Wilby (1995) stated that understanding values can assist organizations in reducing conflicts and building team-work and collaborative relationships among individuals. These values provide a framework for evaluating beliefs and attitudes that influence practice behavior such as critical thinking and decision-making (Huitt, 2004; Weis, 1978). Moreover, research suggests that work values can influence a variety of cognitive and affective outcomes such as motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Iverson & Maguire, 2000; Putti, Aryee & Liang, 1989; Rounds, 1990). There are also indications that work values can influence work-related behaviors such as performance, absenteeism, burnout, psychological, mental, and physical stress, and safety behavior (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Leiter & Harvie, 1998; Shapira & Griffith, 1990).

There have been a number of investigations of the work values that students should be equipped with prior to graduation. For example, Super (1969) identified 15 work values including altruism, aesthetics, creativity, intellectual stimulation, independence, achievement, prestige, management, economic returns, security, surroundings, supervisory relations, associates, variety, and way of life. Mietus (1977) identified eight specific work values including economic, altruism toward society, altruism toward employer, status, achievement, skill development, personal satisfaction, and work avoidance. Wu (1985) factor-analyzed Mietus's (1977) survey items and identified seven work values. The present study uses the work values identified by Mietus (1977) and refined in Wu's (1985) study. The seven work values include: satisfaction and accomplishment (the extent to which work is valued because it provides a feeling of accomplishment); money and prestige (the extent to which work is valued because it provides financial rewards and social esteem); contribution to society (the extent to which work is valued because it positively aids society); status with employer (the extent to which work is valued because it increases the employees' esteem in the employer's eyes); need for work (the extent to which people need work for financial security); avoidance (the extent to which people work to avoid unpleasant consequences of not working); and job advancement (the extent to which people work to be rewarded with a more prestigious or higher paying job).

An extensive search in the literature including national and international databases revealed some research studies related to work values of university students. For example, Grosjean (2001) found that students in vocational

programs valued contribution to society more than academic students. A qualitative study by Archambault (1996) examined the work values of 22 university students. Results of the study showed that students felt that task challenge and variety in work assignments were the most important factors in being satisfied with their workplace. Burke (1994) studied the values of a group of 216 Canadian undergraduate business students and found that students valued money, prestige, risk, and advancement opportunities. Shapiro (1991) investigated work values of undergraduate university students. The results of the study indicated that university students have high rating for work values such as job security, associates, prestige, independence, variety, and economic returns. Finally, Helliwell's (1981) study found that vocational students have a complete understanding of the meaning of work, an intrinsic value of work, and, overall, positive work attitudes.

Work values have also been found to relate to the demographic variable of gender. Wu's (1985) study of the work values of university students found that female students were significantly more likely to value contribution to society than male students. In his study, Murphy (2000) found that female students scored higher on the work value inventory than did male students. In other studies, male students typically rate values related to prestige, responsibility, challenging tasks, and pay as more important than do female students who tend to value social responsibility, contribution to society, and human relations (Eccles, 1994; Perrone, Sedlacek, & Alexander, 2001). Bridges' (1989) work examined gender differences in occupational values of 157 students at New England State University. The results indicated that women rated enjoyment of work, personal rewards from work, personal challenge, and opportunity to help others higher than male students who valued materialistic rewards such as salary increase and advancement in work.

In conclusion, exploring work values of university students is an important research topic for academics and practitioners. On one hand, academics can gain a clear picture of the level of existing work values students possess and how it might relate to their expected future career. On the other hand, practitioners in national and international organizations may develop an advanced picture of the type of graduates they can expect to receive.

### **Statement of the problem**

Studying work values in the Jordanian context is especially important. First of all, Jordan is underrepresented in the literature because there has been little or no empirical research published focusing on work values of university students. By studying work values we can better prepare students for the work environment which may ultimately affect their success in their future work.

Secondly, individuals are attracted to, choose to work for, and tend to stay with organizations that practice values that are in keeping with their employees' individual values. At the same time, organizations attempt to attract, select and keep employees with work values similar to their values (Schneider, Goldstein & Smith, 1995). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the more a person's values are similar to an organization's values, the more likely positive consequences will result (Finegan, 1995). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the work values of a sample of Hashemite University students in Jordan. Another purpose for the study was to determine the effect of gender on students' work values.

### **Research objectives**

The following research objectives were formulated to achieve the purposes of the study:

1. To explore work values of some Hashemite University students in Jordan.
2. To determine differences in work values among university students according to gender.

### **Significance of the problem**

By conducting this study, the education and business community will gain a better understanding of the work values of today's Jordanian university students. Information gathered from this study will add to the existing body of knowledge, serve as a foundation for the development of programs and services which will help students prepare for and adapt to the changing world of work, and provide employing organizations with a clear picture of the work values of university students. Therefore, organizations will be able to attract, select, and hire workers who have both the educational preparation and the necessary work values needed to succeed in the workplace. Moreover, Jordan is considered an attractive investment country for global and international organizations because of its competent human resources. Therefore, the results of this study will provide organizations with information about the work values of the Jordanian workforce.

## **Methodology**

### **Organizational context**

The present study took place at the Hashemite University, a state university in Jordan. Teaching began at the Hashemite University in the academic year

1995/1996. Presently the Hashemite University includes ten faculties. It also includes the Deanery of Scientific Research and Higher Studies, the Deanery of Student Affairs, the Computer Center, the Center of Studies, Consultations, and Community Service, and King Abdullah Center for Vocational and Career Development and Guidance. Each semester, the Faculty of Educational Sciences offers the “Educational Culture” class to all university students. Students are required to enroll in some elective university courses, and the educational culture course is one of the most frequently-chosen courses. Over the years, it has been noticed that almost an equal representation of all majors and both genders are included within this class. However, because this course is not required by all students in the Faculty of Educational Sciences, randomly selected subjects from this faculty were also included in the sample for the present study.

### **Population and sample**

The target population for this study was defined as all the Hashemite University undergraduate students. The accessible population consisted of a total pool of approximately 1072 students enrolled in the Educational Culture course with 11 sessions and the “Vocational Education” course from the Faculty of Educational Sciences with two sessions which is offered during the second term of the academic year 2007/2008. The sample for this study consisted of a total of 1000 subjects who volunteered to participate. A total of 825 students completed the survey (a response rate of 83%). The resulting sample included 303 males (36.7%) and 522 females (63.3%). There were 155 freshman (18.8%), 189 sophomore (22.9%), 290 juniors (35.2%), and 191 seniors (23.2%). The mean age of the sample was 19.5 years ( $SD = 0.89$ ; range = 18 to 22). Based on their majors, students were classified into ten faculties as follows: 134 students (18.8%) from the Faculty of Economics; 70 students (8.5%) from the Faculty of Sciences; 63 students (7.6%) from the Faculty of Arts; 89 students (10.8%) from the Faculty of Engineering; 74 students (9.0%) from the Faculty of IT; 60 students (7.3%) from the Faculty of Allied Health; 83 students (10.1%) from the Faculty of Educational Sciences; 87 students (10.5%) from the Faculty of Nursing; 67 students (8.1%) from the Faculty of Tourism and Heritage; and 98 students (11.9%) from the Faculty of Childhood.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used to collect data in this study was a two-part questionnaire named “The Maryland Work Values Inventory” (MWVI), which was developed by Mietus (1977) and later modified by Wu (1985). The first part of the questionnaire included seven dimensions related to each work value.

The 48 items for all sub-scales were rated on a Likert-type scale ranged as follow: 1 "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Neutral", 4 "Agree", and 5 "Strongly Agree". These dimensions were: satisfaction and accomplishment (13 items); money and prestige (9 items); contribution to society (4 items); status with employer (5 items); need for work (5 items); avoidance (5 items); and job advancement (4 items). The second part of the questionnaire collected demographic information related to students' gender, age, undergraduate educational level, and academic major.

### **Validity and reliability of the instrument**

The original English version of the MWVI was developed through an extensive review of the literature by Mietus (1977), which resulted in a 110-item instrument. This instrument was administered to 2000 university students and was factor analyzed resulting in a revised instrument with a total of 75 items. Additional pilot studies and validation of the MWVI by a panel of content judges produced the 48 item inventory used in this study. The pilot studies and the validation panel of judges indicated that the instrument has both content and face validity. Wu (1985) established the construct validity of the instrument by performing a factor analysis on the instrument which resulted in seven scales with 48 items. For indication of reliability, the coefficient of reliability of the instrument was analyzed by the test/retest study conducted by Mietus (1977) involving 45 subjects. The Pearson product correlation coefficients for each of the seven subtests ranged from .78 to .91.

### **Instrument translation process**

To ensure equivalence of meaning of the items and constructs between the Arabic and English versions of the MWVI, a rigorous translation process was used that included forward and backward translation, subjective evaluations of the translated items, and pilot testing. The goal of the translation process was to produce an Arabic version of the MWVI with items that were equivalent in meaning to the original English version (Lomi, 1992; Sperber, Devellis, & Boehlecke, 1994). One translator (a faculty member) bilingual in English and Arabic translated the English version of the MWVI into Arabic (forward translation). This translator was instructed to retain both the form (language) and the meaning of the items as close to the original as possible but to give priority to meaning equivalence. When the Arabic translation was finalized, the MWVI was then back-translated (from Arabic to English) by another faculty member, also bilingual in English and Arabic.

The back-translated items were then evaluated by a group of five faculty members to ensure that the item meanings were equivalent in both the original English versions and the back-translated version. If differences in meaning were found between items, those items were put through the forward and back-translation process again until the faculty members were satisfied there was substantial meaning equivalence. The Arabic version of the MWVI was then pilot tested with a group of 25 students and ten faculty members to collect feedback about instrument content and usage. The feedback from the students did not lead to any substantive changes. The feedback from the faculty members emphasized that the instrument had both face and content validity.

### **Instrument standardization**

The instrument was pilot tested with a group of 57 students who were enrolled in the "Educational Culture" and "Vocational Education" courses. These students were excluded from the main sample of the study. Changes recommended by the validation panel and those identified as needed during the pilot test were incorporated into the instrument. These changes occurred in the wording of items and in the instructions for completing the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the same group of students used in the pilot study. The calculated coefficient alpha reliability for the seven dimensions was as follows: satisfaction and accomplishment ( $\alpha = .92$ ); money and prestige ( $\alpha = .89$ ); contribution to society ( $\alpha = .80$ ); status with employer ( $\alpha = .76$ ); need for work ( $\alpha = .78$ ); avoidance ( $\alpha = .81$ ); and job advancement ( $\alpha = .75$ ). The standards for instrument reliability for Cronbach's alpha by Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman (1991) were used to judge the quality of the seven scales in the instrument: .80 – 1.00 – exemplary reliability; .70 - .79 – extensive reliability; .60 - .69 – moderate reliability; and < .60 minimal reliability. The figures suggest that the instrument had exemplary reliability and that the instrument is suitable to assess work values of university undergraduate students in Jordan.

### **Data collection**

The data collection took place during the second term of the academic years 2007/2008 from students ( $n = 1072$ ) enrolled in the "Educational Culture" course with 11 sessions and the "Vocational Education" course with two sessions. The researchers met with instructors of the classes chosen as the sample of the study, explained the nature and purpose of the study, and answered questions regarding the administration process. After approval for the collection of data was obtained from the classroom instructors, the assessment instrument was distributed and collected by the researchers during scheduled

class meetings. Students in attendance were informed of the purpose of the study by the researchers and also were assured of the confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the study. Students took approximately 20 minutes to complete answering the instrument items. After completion, 825 students returned the completed instruments to the researchers.

### **Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 11.5) was used to analyze the data. To achieve the first research objective, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were utilized. Mean scores within each sub-scale were obtained by summing all of the items in each sub-scale and then dividing by the number of items, with higher scores indicating that the respondents' placed greater importance on that work value. To accomplish research objective two, an independent t-test was used to compare if differences exist in the level of work values based on the demographic characteristic of gender. An alpha level of .05 was set *a priori*.

### **Results**

First, descriptive statistics of all the variables in this study were determined by using the SPSS analysis option. Next, checks were conducted for out-of-range values and missing data. None were detected. Finally, diagnosis of the data did not reveal any violations of t-test assumptions. With regard to the instrument classification, the following descriptors, described by Khasawneh, Khasawneh, Hailat, & Jawarneh (2007), were used to determine the importance of the seven work values under study: 1 - 1.99: very low importance; 2 - 2.99: low importance; 3 - 3.99: moderate importance; and 4 - 4.99: high importance.

#### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 1: Satisfaction and accomplishment**

The first work value was about students' perceptions about satisfaction and accomplishment regarding their future careers. To measure how they considered the importance of this work value, students were asked to rate their responses on 13 items. The mean values and standard deviations for students' responses to these items are presented in Table 1. According to the table, the overall mean score for all items was 4.12, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. Items 1 and 2 had the highest mean values (4.50 and 4.47 respectively), whereas items 12 and 13 had the lowest mean values (4.00). It is noticeable that all of the 13 items had mean values above 4.00



Table 1  
*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (1):  
 Satisfaction and accomplishment (n = 825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. Work can provide me with a feeling of accomplishment.	4.50	.81
2. Work can provide me with the chance to acquire new skills.	4.47	.64
3. Life would be very dull if I did not work.	4.24	.69
4. work can provide me with a sense of accomplishment when I develop my skills to the fullest extent possible.	4.19	.84
5. Work can provide me with a sense of accomplishment when I have used my time so as not to waste it.	4.18	.84
6. A job which offers me the opportunity to display my talents is important because it will increase my desire to learn new skills.	4.16	.68
7. A job which offers me the opportunity to display may talents is important because I will feel personally fulfilled if I am able to do this.	4.09	.82
8. Working is especially enjoyable for me when I feel I am improving my job-related skills.	4.07	.81
9. For me, an important aspect of taking on challenging work is the pride I will feel after taking on the challenge.	4.04	.82
10. For me, an important aspect of taking on challenging work is the contribution I will make to the organization by completing challenging tasks.	4.04	.82
11. I consider a job to be worthwhile when it enables me to use my abilities.	4.01	.79
12. An important kind of satisfaction that a job can provide me with is the personal satisfaction I will feel after completing a day's job	4.00	.87
13. An important kind of satisfaction that job can provide me with is the satisfaction I will feel by using my job-related skills.	4.00	.81
Average	4.12	.29

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 2: Money and prestige**

The second work value was about the money and prestige that university students value in their future careers. Students were asked to rate their responses to nine items. Table 2 provides the mean values and standard

deviations for students' ratings of these items. The overall mean value for all items was 4.11, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. The highest mean values were for items 1 and 2 (4.27 and 4.26 respectively) whereas the lowest mean value was for item 9 (4.00). The remainder of the items had mean values above 4.00.

Table 2

*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (2): Money and prestige (n=825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. Work can provide me with the money to enjoy my leisure time.	4.27	.81
2. Work will provide me with a sense of accomplishment when I earn enough from a job to live comfortably.	4.26	.81
3. A job which offers me the opportunity to display my talents is important because I will make more money.	4.20	.75
4. A job which offers me the opportunity to display my talents is important because this is the best way to me to achieve prestige in the field I chose to work in.	4.13	.76
5. Working is especially enjoyable for me when people close to me recognize me with added respect.	4.11	.82
6. For me an important aspect of taking on challenging work is the economic rewards I may receive.	4.03	.68
7. Completing challenging tasks will probably enable me to increase my status within the company.	4.01	.74
8. An important kind of satisfaction that a job can provide me with is the satisfaction I will feel from being about to buy things I want with my earnings and savings.	4.01	.85
9. Being given extra responsibilities by my employer will be important to me because extra pay may go along with these extra responsibilities.	4.00	.61
Average	4.11	.32

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 3: Contribution to society**

The third work value concerned whether university students consider contribution to society as an important value in their work lives. Students were asked to rate their responses to four items. The mean values and standard deviations are presented in Table 3. The overall mean score for all items was 4.12, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. All items exhibited mean values above 4.00.

Table 3

*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (3):  
Contribution to society (n=825).*

Item	Mea	SD
1. Work can provide me with an opportunity to help society.	4.22	.83
2. Working is especially enjoyable for me when I feel I am providing an important service to society.	4.17	.73
3. I consider a job to be worthwhile when it enables me to make contribution to society.	4.07	.70
4. An important kind of satisfaction that a job can provide me with is The satisfaction of knowing I am making a contribution to society	4.03	.78
Average	4.12	.40

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

#### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 4: Status with employer**

The fourth work value was related to whether university students valued status with their employer as a component of their future careers. Students were asked to rate their responses to five items. Table 4 displays the mean values and standard deviations for students' ratings of these items. The overall mean value for all items was 4.10, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. While item 1 had the highest mean value (4.25), item 5 had the lowest mean (4.06). The remainder of the items had mean values above 4.06.

**Table 4**  
*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (4):  
 Status with employer (n=825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. I consider a job to be worthwhile when it provides me with opportunities to gain status in the company.	4.25	.69
2. An important kind of satisfaction that a job can provide me with is the satisfaction I will obtain from a high level position in an organization.	4.10	.74
3. Being given extra responsibilities by my employer will be important to me because being chosen over others for this Work will be personally satisfying.	4.07	.73
4. Being given extra responsibilities by my employer will be important to me because this will enable me to make a greater contribution to my employer.	4.07	.72
5. Being given extra responsibilities by my employer will be important because carrying out these responsibilities successfully may lead to a job-position advancement for me.	4.06	.78
Average	4.10	.36

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 5: Need for work (job security)**

The fifth work value was related to university students' need for work for job security in their future careers. Students were asked to rate their responses to five items. The mean values and standard deviations for students' responses to these items are presented in Table 5. The overall mean score for all items was 4.16, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. While item 1 had the highest mean value (4.53), item 5 had the lowest mean value (4.00).

Table 5

*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (5): Need for work (job security) (n=825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. The benefit of having a job that I know will be permanent is the financial security that is assured by permanent work.	4.53	.70
2. The benefit of having a job that I know will be permanent is the opportunity for me to make a long-term contribution to a company.	4.12	.99
3. The benefit of having a job that I know will be permanent is the satisfaction I will feel by knowing that I will always be working.	4.08	.90
4. The benefit of having a job that I know will be permanent is knowing that I will not have to be troubled with finding a job at a later time.	4.06	.93
5. The benefit of having a job that I know will be permanent is the chance I will have to develop my skills to the fullest extent possible.	4.00	.73
Average	4.16	.52

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 6: Avoidance**

The sixth work value concerned avoidance. Students were asked to rate their responses to five items. The mean values and standard deviations for students' responses to these items are presented in Table 6. The overall mean value for all items was 4.07, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. While item 1 had the highest mean value (4.14), item 5 had the lowest mean value (4.02).

**Table 6**  
*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (6):  
 Avoidance (n=825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. A job which offers me the opportunity to display my talents is important because if I am not able to do this, I will probably quickly become bored with work.	4.14	.77
2. Working is especially enjoyable for me when I feel I am not made to do “unimportant tasks”.	4.08	.75
3. For me, an important aspect of taking on challenging work is that this will enable me to avoid doing routine “non-challenging” work.	4.06	.84
4. I consider a job to be worthwhile when it enables me to avoid feeling “being left out” or having little value as a person.	4.06	.84
5. Being given extra responsibilities by my employer will be important to me because being chosen for this extra work will help to eliminate the monotony of everyday work.	4.02	.56
Average	4.07	.37

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Results pertaining to work value dimension 7: Job advancement**

The final work value measured in this study was related to whether university students value job advancement in their future careers. Students were asked to rate their responses to four items. Table 7 displays the mean values and standard deviations for students’ ratings of these items. According to the table, the overall mean value for all items was 4.12, indicating that students place high importance on this work value. While item 1 had the highest mean value (4.22), item 5 had the lowest mean (4.00).

Table 7

*Means and standard deviations for the items of work value dimension (7): Job advancement (n=825).*

Item	Mean	SD
1. For me, an important aspect of job advancement is the advancement in the skills I acquire.	4.22	.73
2. For me, an important aspect of job advancement is when I have shown my coworkers and friends that I have abilities.	4.20	.72
3. For me, an important aspect of job advancement is the advancement in my satisfaction with work.	4.06	.81
4. I consider a job to be worthwhile when it allows me to accomplish a lot, according to my own standards.	4.00	.73
Average	4.12	.43

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

### **Work values and university students' demographics**

The second research objective in this study concerns gender differences in work values. A T-test for independent samples was used to examine the difference in means between the male and female students. Table 8 shows that there were no significant differences at the 0.05 level between the male and female university students with regard to the work value dimensions of satisfaction and accomplishment ( $p=.09$ ), money and prestige ( $p=.48$ ), contribution to society ( $p=.68$ ), status with employer ( $p=.69$ ), need for work (job security) ( $p=.26$ ), and avoidance ( $p=.54$ ). However, Table 8 illustrates that there were significant differences at the (0.05) level between male and female university students in the work value dimension of job advancement ( $p=.003$ ). Female university students in the present study scored this dimension more highly than did the males.

Table 8  
*The differences between male and female university students in each dimension of the MWVI scale*

Dimension	Gender	N	Means	Std. Deviations	t	p
1. Satisfaction and accomplishment	M	303	4.10	.30	-	.09
	F	522	4.13	.29	1.71	
2. Money and prestige	M	303	4.10	.33	-	.48
	F	522	4.11	.31	.69	
3. Contribution to society	M	303	4.11	.39	-	.68
	F	522	4.12	.40	.40	
4. Status with employer	M	303	4.10	.36	-	.69
	F	522	4.11	.37	.39	
5. Need for work (job security)	M	303	4.13	.53	-	.26
	F	522	4.17	.51	1.11	
6. Avoidance	M	303	4.10	.38	-	.54
	F	522	4.08	.35	.60	
7. Job advancement	M	303	4.06	.44	-	.003
	F	522	4.16	.43	3.00	
MWVI overall	M	303	4.09	.23	-	.08
	F	522	4.12	.22	1.75	

### Discussion

This study was conducted to explore the work values of some university students in Jordan with regard to their future careers. Specifically, the seven work values proposed by Mietus and later modified by Wu (1985) were used in this study. These work values are: satisfaction and accomplishment; money and prestige; contribution to society; status with employer; need for work (job security); avoidance; and job advancement. After the process of instrument translation, standardization, and distribution, data were collected from 825 students with a response rate of 83%. Descriptive statistics and independent t-test were used to analyze the collected data. University students were asked to rate their responses to 48 items that measured their perceptions toward the importance of the seven work values in their future careers.



The analysis of students' responses indicated the high importance they place on a number of work values. The university students in the present sample believe that they have the capacity to acquire, develop, and accomplish new skills to the fullest extent. They also plan to: demand a job that helps them display their talents; enjoy work that offers challenging tasks to help the organization prosper; avoid wasting time during work; and complete a day's job to gain self-satisfaction.

The students want a job that provides money and prestige to live with comfort and to gain respect from others. However, they consider that they need to earn this money and recognition as a result of their displayed talents and abilities. Furthermore, this future workforce wants extra responsibilities and challenging tasks because they come with extra pay and more prestige.

The results of the study indicated that students enjoy jobs that can help them contribute or give back to society. They feel satisfied and worthwhile if they can help others in the community. In addition, the students value jobs that help advance their careers and maximize their potential. They also value jobs that offer extra responsibilities because they can then contribute to the organization and take opportunities for job and position advancement. The students like permanent jobs because they provide financial security, allow for long-term contribution to the organization, and provide relief from worrying about unemployment. On the other hand, the students do not like jobs that have routine, unimportant, and non-challenging tasks. They wish also to avoid being left out or to have little value in the organization, but, instead, prefer to advance in their skills, abilities, satisfaction, and accomplishments.

Gender differences were not found between male and female university students on six of the work values. However, female students were found to value the advancement work value dimension more than male students.

The results of the present study show that this sample of university students in Jordan value economic security more than any other work value, perhaps because of the economic uncertainty that our world is facing. The data in the present study are consistent with the views of Burke (1994), Shapiro (1991), and Tulgan, (1995) who mention that university students, as a result of hard economic times, tend to value money, prestige, permanent jobs, and advancement opportunities in order to live comfortably, work with satisfaction, and maximize human potential. However, students understand that hard work and commitment is what helps them gain these economic and individual securities. In other words, these Jordanian students see themselves as hard workers who deserve respect, advancement, and recognition in various ways.

Results also showed that university students in the sample do not like routine, unimportant, and non-challenging tasks. They value variety in job assignments and extra job responsibilities to satisfy their talents and abilities.

These results are consistent with the views of Archambault (1996) who emphasized that task challenge and variety in work assignments are important factors in job satisfaction.

Finally, the students who contributed to the present study believe that they should contribute and give back to society and employing organizations. They believe that they have the qualities of loyalty and commitment to better advance individual and organizational success. Grosjean (2001) supports the notion that organizations and societies do not prosper unless they have the loyalty and commitment of their employees.

Another strand of results concerned gender differences. Male and female university students have the same work values on all dimensions except for the advancement dimension. Females value advancement in skills, abilities, satisfaction, and accomplishment more than male university students. These results are inconsistent with the views of Murphy (2000) and Wu (1985) who found that there are more differences between the work values of males and females. They note that men tend to value money, prestige, and challenging tasks more than women, who value contribution to society more highly. The present results can be justified in the light of the hard economic times that face Jordan and other countries which necessitate both genders working hard to earn a living. Also, the equal opportunities that are given to male and female students throughout the education system may be changing views of the roles of male and female students in the world of work. However, female students still value personal rewards such as advancement in skills, satisfaction, and accomplishment more than male students. As Bridge (1989) indicates, and as argued by the present authors, these personal rewards may be important to females because of the gendered culture of society that still places females at a level below males in the corporate world.

### **Conclusion**

The major findings of this study show that sampled students at the Hashemite University in Jordan believe that they possess important and essential work values that will enable them to succeed in their future jobs. The Hashemite University in Jordan must continue to effectively prepare future workforces with job-related work values that are in congruence with organizational values. These work values will enable future generations to succeed in their prospective organizations and can result in higher reputation and economic return for the Hashemite University as well as the employing organizations. Based on that, the study offers a number of recommendations for action.

Business organizations in Jordan should hold seminars and workshops in local universities to convey what they understand to be appropriate business practices. For example, human resources professionals can explain to students that workers are no longer regarded as part of the organizational machinery and that they value the importance of employees to the success of the organization. Employers should also emphasize the fact that work is challenging, rewarding, and satisfying for hard workers; advancement opportunities are available to all competent employees; contribution to the organization and the society is rewarded; employees are provided with new skills and abilities; and jobs are secure.

Jordanian universities should continue to incorporate essential work values in their curriculums to meet the changing world of business. Meetings between the university administration and the business community should be held regularly to monitor the important work values needed for the future workforce. University students should be provided with long-term internships to better understand the world of work and to connect back to the academic world.

The study also offers recommendations for further research. The study should be replicated in all universities in Jordan to determine their value systems and how they are connected to organizational value systems in the world of paid work. In addition, future studies should use a mixed methodology design incorporating qualitative investigation to provide a better picture of value systems and to uncover other work-related values based on student and organizational perceptions. As well, comparative studies between Jordanian and regional and international students should be conducted to determine similarities and differences in the work value systems that each hold.

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