



Are societal-level values still relevant measures in the twenty-first century businessworld? A 39-society analysis

David A. Ralston¹ · Craig J. Russell² · Jane Terpstra-Tong³ · Len J. Trevino⁴ · Prem Ramburuth⁵ · Malika Richards⁶, et al. [full author details at the end of the article]

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Abstract

Since the days of Hofstede (1980), cross-cultural comparisons of countries based on societal-level work values have been a norm. This approach has been represented more recently in Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) 11 clusters of country cultures. However, more contemporary research found within-country heterogeneity of values/behaviors is substantial and growing exponentially across today's twenty-first century businessworld. We investigated, across a sample of 39 societies, whether work values variance within societies was greater than work values variance across societies, and whether individual work values differences contributed more to predictions of behavioral performance criteria than the society in which the individuals lived. Both sets of analyses addressed how work values conceived at societal-levels are relevant in understanding the twenty-first century businessworld. Our findings revealed first that there was substantial within-society values heterogeneity, which resulted in the failure to replicate Ronen and Shanker's (2013) societal cluster aggregations. Second, we found individual-level values contributed significantly to the prediction of employees' behaviors, while societal-level values contributed substantially less. These findings strongly suggest that cross-cultural studies of work values predictive power are most relevant when conducted at the individual-level. Finally, we also make available for future investigators a 51-society database containing 11,780 individual-level records.

Keywords Individual-level analysis · Societal-level analysis · Business values dimensions (BVD) · Subordinate influence ethics (SIE) behaviors · Cluster analysis · Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM)

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