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# The Value System Of University Students In Light Of The Current Cultural And Social Transformations - A Field Study On A Sample Of Students At The University Of Blida 2-

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## Abstract

The aim of the current study is to shed light on the value system of university students and to uncover the gap existing within this value system, particularly in the context of the cultural and social transformations witnessed in Algeria in recent years. To achieve this goal, a descriptive approach was adopted, and a sample of 200 male and female students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Blida 2 was selected. In order to reveal the ranking of the value system according to its importance on one hand, and its degree of alignment with actual behavior of students on the other hand, Abdelatif Mohamed Khalifa's (2006) values discrepancy scale was applied. After statistical analysis of the data, the study concluded that there is a clear difference in the ranking of dimensions of the values discrepancy scale according to their importance and their degree of alignment with actual behavior. Moreover, it was found that there are differences among the study sample individuals in the value system according to its importance and its degree of conformity with behavior, favoring significance.

**Keywords:** Value system; Cultural transformations; Social transformations; University student.

## Introduction

Algerian society has been distinguished throughout its long history by fundamental cultural traits that have imprinted its noble human trajectory, imbued with values of liberation, justice, and determination to confront existential crises amidst major global transformations. In this phase of ongoing transformations experienced worldwide, it is

essential for us to critically examine the content of this phase and its requirements in order to comprehend and transcend them securely. The ongoing global transformations, involving international powers including soft power and global networks, raise significant concerns for us, including the assertion of Algeria's presence in the global cultural arena to contribute to shaping the contours of the future. Therefore, a critical examination of the cultural situation and its ability to be present in national life and to undertake the responsibility for the future is necessary.

An overview of the current cultural situation and its status in previous stages through the lens of transformations is essential to identify major features in the structure of culture or in the general context framing the general cultural discourse to draw general outlines based on practical observations where possible, with a preliminary proposal for a future national cultural project.

**1/ Research Problem:** Today's societies witness numerous transformations that affect social structures. Algerian society has responded to these transformations with noticeable dynamism in recent years, leading to changes in the structures, social systems, and cultures. These changes have been associated with various factors, reflecting on the nature of Algerian society.

The overall changes that have occurred in Algerian society have led to a clear change in its various structural frameworks, especially in its social and cultural structure. However, these transformations do not proceed at a steady pace. Among the most significant transformations witnessed by Algeria are demographic and urban transformations, characterized by demographic shifts and urban expansion, which have introduced a new pattern to society through the emergence of new practices that have altered the characteristics of the original society. Additionally, social construction undergoes transformation in terms of functions, values, roles, and relationships, representing a transition of the society from one state to another, regardless of the size and form of this transition, as it encompasses various aspects affecting its relationships with various social and cultural structures.

The credit for these cultural and social transformations can be attributed to the significant technological advancements witnessed by the world during the twentieth century. This progress wasn't isolated from human values and beliefs but accompanied by a clear change in the value system, making it one of the most important issues that sparked significant debate and opened up a vast field for research and study in various scientific fields.

Discussing values is a discussion of the general cultural dimensions that form the social and cultural structure of humanity as a whole, as well as the specific dimensions that underlie human activity. They guide individuals' behavior, judgments, and tasks regarding what is desirable and undesirable, often extending beyond the direct goals of behavior to multiple optimal goals in life, thus serving as an important indicator, according to Rokeach, of the quality of life and the level of advancement or development in any society.

Researchers have approached the topic of values differently; some have linked values to individual behavior and actions, considering them as indicators of this behavior, while others have viewed values through indicators of interest. Ralph Perry believes that value is anything of importance, with interest being the basis and the primary property in all values. Expecting individual behavior is a difficult task, considering that values are one of the main avenues contributing to our understanding of human personality and enabling us to interpret differences in behavior. This raises many questions about the consistency between what individuals verbally profess and what they manifest in actual behavior, especially among university youth who grapple with the waves of globalization and the accompanying rapid scientific and technological revolution, prompting them to reshape their knowledge and concepts about themselves and the external world. This social reality has created new criteria and values, leading youth to oscillate between conflicting choices, either clinging to the authentic inherited values from the traditional social system or adopting new values resulting from social change, resulting in a value conflict or discrepancy manifested in the inconsistency between values and behavior or between words and actions, as they adhere to certain values (perceived value system) while practicing behaviors that reflect other values (actual value system).

This prompted us to address the topic of the effects of cultural and social transformations on the value system of university students through the following questions:

- Is there a difference in the ranking of the value system according to its importance (perceived value system) among students of the University of Blida 2 in light of the current social and cultural transformations?
- Is there a difference in the ranking of the value system according to its alignment with actual behavior (actual value system) among students of the University of Blida 2 in light of the current social and cultural transformations?
- Is there a difference between the mean scores of the study sample on the perceived value system and the actual value system?

To answer these questions, the following assumptions were made:

## **2/ Study Hypotheses:**

- We expect there to be a difference in the ranking of the value system according to its importance (perceived value system) among students of the University of Blida 2 in light of the current social and cultural transformations.
- We expect there to be a difference in the ranking of the value system according to its alignment with actual behavior (actual value system) among students of the University of Blida 2 in light of the current social and cultural transformations.
- We expect there to be a difference between the mean scores of the study sample on the perceived value system and the actual value system.

**3/ Study Objectives:** The current study focuses on a main objective, which is to uncover the effects of cultural and social transformations on the value system of university students by achieving the following sub-objectives:

- To reveal the ranking of the value system according to its importance (perceived value system) among students of the University of Blida 2.
- To reveal the ranking of the value system according to its alignment with actual behavior (actual value system) among students of the University of Blida 2.
- To reveal the difference between the mean scores of the study sample on the perceived value system and the actual value system.

**4/ Study Significance:** The significance of this study is evident in its focus on the characteristic of cultural and social change, which is a characteristic of societies subject to varying degrees of social forces contributing to this change. Thus, social and cultural change is a fundamental change in the lives of societies, affecting society at all levels. The era we live in witnesses a comprehensive revolution in its societies due to the accumulation of knowledge, which reflects on the value system in any society. Therefore, keeping up with these developments and changes may generate conflicts within individuals regarding their value system.

**5/ Definition of Study Terms and Concepts:** First: Cultural and Social Transformations:

- Cultural Transformations: Cultural transformations refer to changes in values, systems, thoughts, and habits resulting from ongoing developments in society.
- Social Transformations: Social transformations entail fundamental changes in social structures, including patterns of social behavior, as well as the associated outcomes, reflected in changes in values, standards, cultural products, and various symbols.

**Secondly:** Value System: Also known as the value system, it is a set of organized values hierarchically arranged according to individual or societal needs, which play a crucial role in shaping individual and societal beliefs and behaviors. The value system is characterized by relative stability, and there are multiple value systems, including instrumental and end values, as well as primary systems that encompass individuals' biological needs and secondary systems that include social and moral values, among others (Abdellatif Mohamed Khalifa, 1992, pp. 52-53).

Thus, it can be said that the value system, or the value pattern, is the integrated and interactive whole of the set of values chosen or adopted by individuals and even societies consciously or unconsciously, either by free personal choice or by compulsion through the prevailing pattern in society. However, this whole may include contradictory values based on the means of choice, meaning that they are not chosen by will, which explains the existence of fragile and rapidly changing value systems.

**6. Study Methodology:** The researcher in this study deliberately adopts the descriptive methodology, which aims to study and interpret the phenomenon by identifying its characteristics and dimensions. This methodology studies the phenomenon as it occurs

in reality without any attempt by the researcher to influence the causes and factors of the phenomenon in order to achieve a comprehensive scientific description. The descriptive methodology is one of the most common methods and is not limited to identifying the features of the phenomenon and determining its causes but also includes data analysis, interpretation, and reaching an accurate description of the phenomenon and its results (Hamed Khaled, 2008, p. 43).

**7.Study Boundaries:** The case study was limited to students of the University of Ali Lounici (University of Blida 2), where the field study extended from January 20 to February 5 for the academic year 2023-2024.

**8.Study Sample:** The selection of the research sample is one of the main steps in data collection, and the researcher's thinking from the outset in determining the research problem, objectives, and questions is considered a crucial stage in scientific research. The researcher begins to think about determining the research sample and the method of selection from the beginning of scientific research, and attention to accuracy during sample selection is necessary because any error in the execution of procedures will affect the quality and accuracy of the results (Khemis Taamallah, 2004, p. 75).

**9.Study Tools:** The researcher must use a set of procedures and tools to collect information and data that align with the nature of the subject. In this study, the Value Contradiction Scale developed by Abdellatif Mohamed Khalifa (2006) was used. This scale includes 40 items, each representing a specific value. The scale is applied in two stages: the first stage determines the importance of the value for the respondent, and the second stage determines the extent to which that value matches the respondent's actual behavior. Each stage assigns scores from (01) to (05), representing (01) the least importance of the value and its match with actual behavior, while (05) represents high importance of the value and its match with actual behavior. After obtaining the individual's score in the first stage, it is subtracted from the score obtained in the second stage, resulting in value contradictions.

- **Psychometric Properties of the Study Tool:** The reliability of this scale was assessed using the internal consistency method with Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is based on estimating the average variance of the items for the entire scale, as shown in the following table:

**Table No. (01)** shows the reliability of the Value Contradiction Scale using Cronbach's alpha.

Number of statements	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	<b>The scale as a whole</b>
40	0.837	

Based on the table above and considering the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was estimated for the entire scale at 0.83, it can be said that this scale exhibits high reliability. This is indicated by the positive value of Cronbach's alpha, suggesting a strong internal consistency and correlation among the items of the scale exceeding 0.50 and approaching perfect correlation (1).

Secondly, regarding the validity: The validity of this scale was assessed by estimating the correlations between the score of each item and the total score of the scale as a whole, as shown in the following table:

**Table No. (02)** illustrates the correlation matrix of the items with the total score of the scale as a whole.

Correlation	Phrases	Correlation	Phrases	Correlation	Phrases	Correlation	Phrases
0.625**	B31	0.501**	B21	0.523**	B11	0.596**	B1
0.531**	B32	0.619**	B22	0.428*	B12	0.347*	B2
0.608**	B33	0.455**	B23	0.381*	B13	0.489**	B3
0.358*	B34	0.601**	B24	0.346*	B14	0.440*	B4
0.549**	B35	0.423*	B25	0.438*	B15	0.475**	B5
0.415*	B36	0.383*	B26	0.497**	B16	0.484**	B6
0.420*	B37	0.399*	B27	0.754**	B17	0.362*	B7
0.593**	B38	0.418*	B28	0.559**	B18	0.511**	B8
0.434*	B39	0.447**	B29	0.454**	B19	0.423*	B9
0.473**	B40	0.539**	B30	0.392*	B20	0.406*	B10
*The connection is significant at(0.05)				**The connection is significant at(0.01)			

Based on the table above and considering the Pearson correlation coefficients, we notice that most of them are statistically significant at the alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ), with a total of 22 items. The correlation values ranged between 0.75, which was the highest correlation observed between item 17 and the total score of the scale, and 0.44, which was the lowest correlation observed between item 29 and the total score of the scale. Additionally, there were 18 items that were statistically significant at the alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), with correlation values ranging between 0.43 (the highest correlation observed between item 15 and the total score of the scale) and 0.34 (the lowest correlation observed between item 14 and the total score of the scale). Overall, it can be concluded that this scale is valid since all its items demonstrate consistency both among themselves and with the total score.

**10.Data Analysis Methods for Study Instruments:** The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was utilized to analyze the data obtained from the instruments used in the study. The methods applied align with the study hypotheses as follows:

**Firstly,** regarding reliability and validity:

- Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the study instrument through variance analysis.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to validate the study instrument by assessing internal consistency.

**Secondly**, concerning the study hypotheses:

- The distribution nature of the data derived from the instrument was verified using tests of normality such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests.
- Friedman's Rank test was utilized to verify the first and second hypotheses by examining differences in the ranking of values in terms of their importance or application in reality.
- The values ranking of the hypotheses was represented using column charts in Excel.
- The third and final hypothesis was examined using the significance test (t-test) for two correlated samples to detect differences in the scores of values based on their importance and their application to actual behavior.

**11.Study Results:** Firstly, presenting and interpreting the results of the first hypothesis: The first hypothesis of this study stated: "We expect differences in the ranking of the value system based on its importance (the perceived value system) among the students of Blida 2 University amidst the current social and cultural transformations." To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Friedman Rank coefficient was utilized to rank the values measured by the scale. The focus was on the top ten values, and the results are presented in the following table:

**Table No. (03)** Illustrates the Friedman test for ranking the perceived value system.

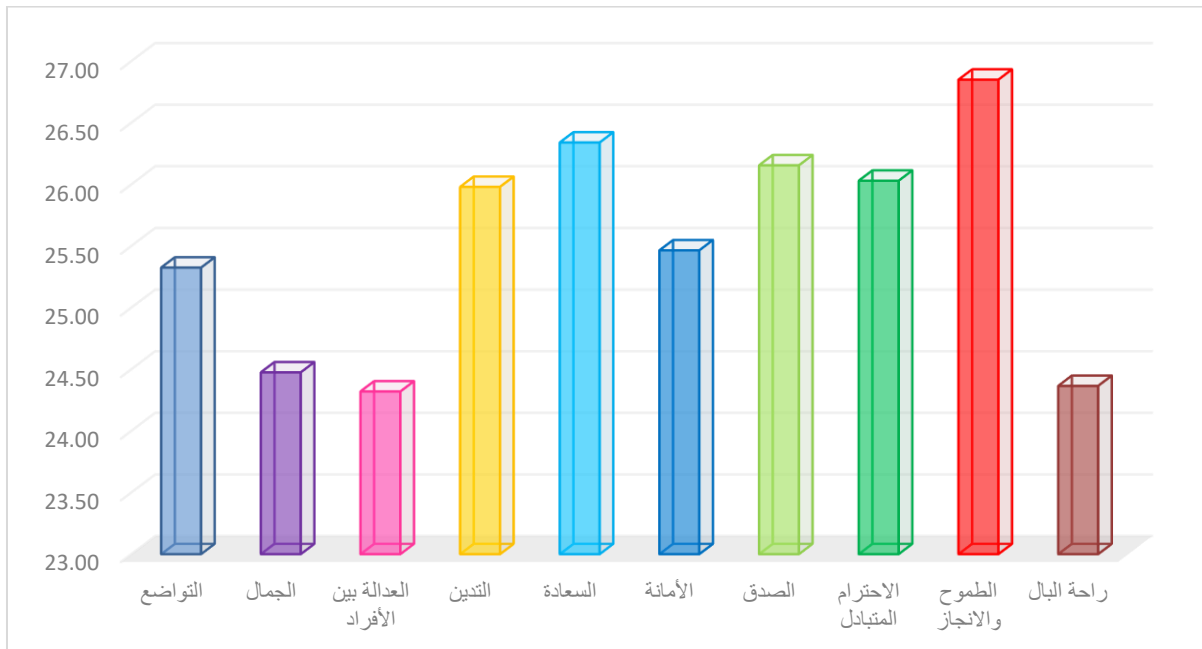
Decision	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Khi-deux	The average rank	The perceived value system	Number <sup>1)</sup>
Significant at 0.01	0.000	39	1053.204	25.33	Humility	<b>01</b>
				24.48	beauty	<b>02</b>
				24.32	Justice between individuals	<b>03</b>
				25.98	Religiosity	<b>04</b>
				26.34	Happiness	<b>05</b>
				25.47	Honesty	<b>06</b>
				26.16	Honesty	<b>07</b>
				26.03	Mutual respect	<b>08</b>

				26.85	Ambition and achievement	09
				24.37	Peace of mind	10

Based on the results outlined in the table above, we observe, according to the mean ranks generated by the Friedman rank sum test for the values (the hypothetical value structure), which came in the following descending order:

1. (Ambition and achievement) ranked first with a mean rank of 26.85.
2. (Happiness) ranked second with a mean rank of 26.34.
3. (Honesty) ranked third with a mean rank of 26.16.
4. (Mutual respect) ranked fourth with a mean rank of 26.03.
5. (Religiosity) ranked fifth with a mean rank of 25.98.
6. (Trustworthiness) ranked sixth with a mean rank of 25.47.
7. (Humility) ranked seventh with a mean rank of 25.33.
8. (Beauty) ranked eighth with a mean rank of 24.48.
9. (Peace of mind) ranked ninth with a mean rank of 24.37.
10. (Justice among individuals) ranked tenth with a mean rank of 24.32.

The following figure illustrates this:



**Figure No. (01):** Graphic columns showing the arrangement of the perceived value system

Based on the value of  $\kappa^2$  which amounted to 1053.20, we notice that it is a statistically significant value at the alpha level ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Consequently, it can be said that there are



statistically significant differences in the ranking of the value system (the hypothetical value structure) among students, and that this difference was in favor of "Ambition and achievement" primarily. Thus, this result supports our hypothesis of the study, which states the existence of differences in the ranking of the value system according to its importance (the hypothetical value structure) among students of the University of Blida 2, in light of the current social and cultural transformations, and in favor of ambition and achievement.

This can be explained in the context of the era we live in, characterized by speed, technologies, inventions, and other factors, all of which push individuals to raise their aspirations and exert maximum effort to achieve their goals, and thus reach the achievements they plan for. It is also worth noting that the same factors mentioned have led to rapid and tremendous cultural and social changes. If we do not utilize them wisely, we may lose our identity as a whole.

Secondly, presenting and interpreting the results of the second hypothesis: The second hypothesis of this study stated: "We expect differences in the ranking of the value system according to its compatibility with actual behavior (the real value structure) among students of the University of Blida 2 in light of the current social and cultural transformations." To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Friedman rank sum test was used to rank the values measured by the scale, focusing on the top ten values only. The results are as follows, as shown in the following table:

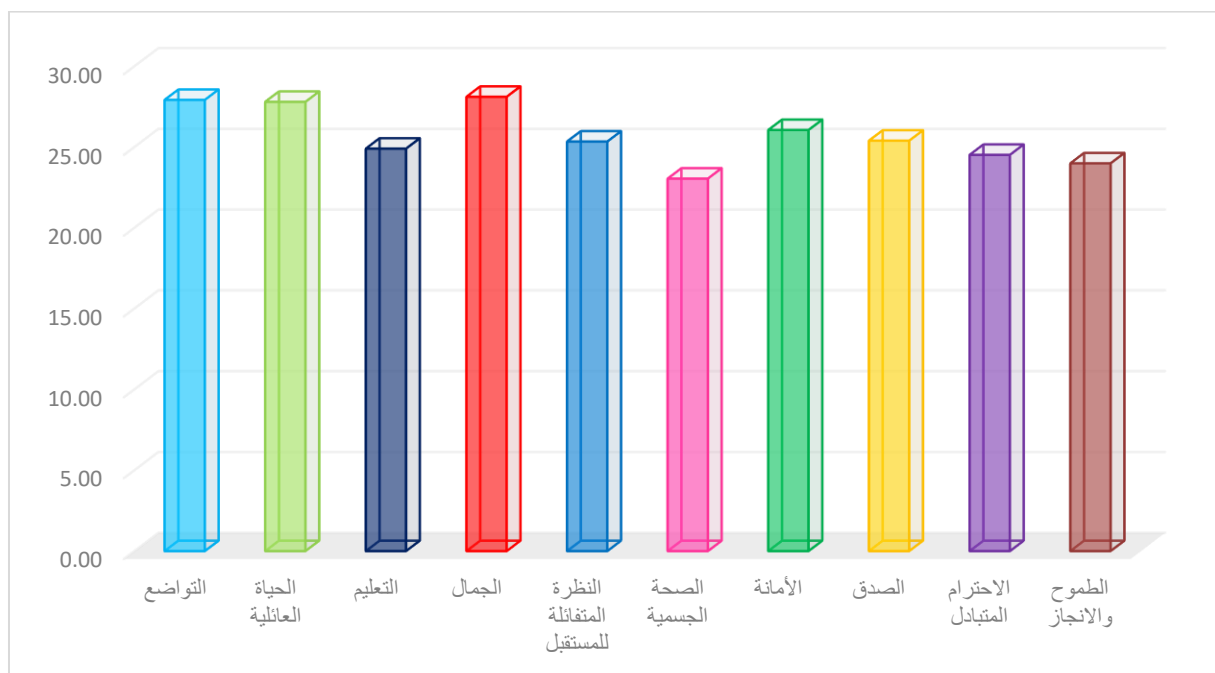
**Table No. 04.** Illustrates the Friedman test for the ranking of the real value structure.

Decision	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Khi-deux	متوسط الرتب	Realistic value system	Number
Significant at 0.01	0.000	39	585.394	27.92	Humility	01
				27.80	beauty	02
				24.90	Justice between individuals	03
				28.11	Religiosity	04
				25.34	Happiness	05
				23.05	Honesty	06
				26.06	Honesty	07
				25.40	Mutual respect	08
				24.52	Ambition and achievement	09
				23.99	Peace of mind	10

Based on the results shown in the table above, we observe, according to the mean ranks generated by the Friedman rank sum test for the values (the real value structure), which came in the following descending order:

1. (Beauty) ranked first with a mean rank of 28.11.
2. (Humility) ranked second with a mean rank of 27.92.
3. (Family life) ranked third with a mean rank of 27.80.
4. (Honesty) ranked fourth with a mean rank of 26.06.
5. (Optimistic outlook on the future) ranked fifth with a mean rank of 25.40.
6. (Education) ranked sixth with a mean rank of 25.34.
7. (Mutual respect) ranked seventh with a mean rank of 24.90.
8. (Ambition and achievement) ranked eighth with a mean rank of 24.52.
9. (Physical health) ranked ninth with a mean rank of 23.99.
10. (Physical health) ranked tenth with a mean rank of 23.05.

The following figure illustrates this:



**Figure No. (02):** Graphic columns showing the arrangement of the realistic value system

Based on the value of  $\kappa^2$ , which amounted to 585.39, we observe that it is a statistically significant value at the alpha level ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Thus, it can be said that there are statistically significant differences in the ranking of the value system (the real value structure) among students, and that this difference was in favor of "Beauty" primarily. Therefore, this result supports our hypothesis of the second study, which suggests that there is a difference in the ranking of the value system according to its compatibility with actual behavior (the real value structure) among students of the University of Blida 2, in light of the current social and cultural transformations, and in favor of beauty.

Explanation:

Thirdly, presenting and interpreting the results of the third hypothesis: The third hypothesis of this study stated: "We expect there to be a difference between the means of the study sample on the hypothetical value structure and the real value structure." To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the statistical significance test (T-test) was used for the two correlated samples. After the statistical analysis, the result was obtained as shown in the following table:

**Table No. (05)** Shows the difference between the average scores of the sample in the perceived and realistic value system

Decision	Significance Level	T" " Value	Degree of Freedom	Difference in deviation	Difference in Mean	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Mean	Sample Size	Value Paradox	
Significant at 0.01	0.000	36.558	99	9.686	35.41	16.515	166.55	100	Importance	Value
						18.396	131.14		reality	

Based on the table above and considering the arithmetic means in the value discrepancy scale, which were 166.55 for the sample individuals in the hypothetical value structure and 131.14 for the sample individuals in the real value structure, we notice a difference between them amounting to 35.41 as the average difference. The statistical significance test (T-test) value, which was 36.55, confirms that it is a positive and statistically significant value at the alpha level ( $\alpha=0.01$ ). Thus, we can conclude that this result supports the hypothesis of the third study, which suggests that there is a difference between the means of the study sample on the hypothetical value structure and the real value structure. This difference was in favor of the mean scores of the study sample on the hypothetical value structure, with a confidence level of 95%, with a possibility of error at 5%.

Furthermore, this difference also confirms the noticeable disparity in the ranking of values according to their importance and their conformity with actual behavior, as observed in the results of the previous two hypotheses. This indicates that the perceptions and concerns of the study sample regarding the value system are quite different from their actual behaviors or the values that are actually embodied in their real behaviors. This underscores the clear impact of cultural and social changes witnessed by the Algerian society on their value system.

### Conclusion:

This study addressed the concept that values have been ingrained in human life since he began to change himself and his horizons, transitioning from merely living his actions to being conscious of these actions. He distinguished means from ends, turning values into blueprints for actual behavior rather than external regulations imposed by the authority of reason, religion, or social tradition. Values are present in human behavior, shaping their orientations and choices. In this manner, it can be said that we have moved from the level of assimilating values and learning them to the level of applying them and realizing them in our behaviors. This paradox, which we sought to uncover in this study, concluded that most of the values included in the value discrepancy scale, according to the orientations and responses of the study sample, tend to the hypothetical structure more than the real one. In other words, the ranking of values by their importance to the individual does not align with the arrangement of values in real life and is not reflected in their behaviors. Undoubtedly, this is attributed to the influence of cultural and social transformations witnessed by Algerian society.

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