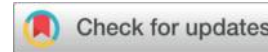




Value Transformations among University Youth: A Sociological Study in the Algerian University Environment



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Abstract

This article aims to examine the value transformations among Algerian university youth from a sociological perspective by analysing the changes that have occurred within the system of values in the university environment amid contemporary cultural and technological transformations. This study is grounded in the hypothesis that digital globalisation and the structural shifts experienced by Algerian society have contributed to reshaping students' value consciousness, leading to the emergence of new individualistic values such as self-fulfilment and personal freedom at the expense of specific traditional values such as obedience and collective discipline. The study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology and a qualitative approach through the use of guided interviews with a sample of students, lecturers, and administrative staff in three Algerian universities representing different regions. The findings revealed that the university environment has become a space of interaction between authentic local values and modern universal values, generating a state of “value reference pluralism” among university youth. The results also indicated that religious values remain present at the discursive level but have lost part of their behavioural influence, in parallel with the rise of values associated with autonomy, critical thinking, and cultural openness. This study demonstrates that value transformation at Algerian University does not represent a rupture with cultural heritage but rather a process of rebalancing between authenticity and modernisation within the social framework of university youth.

Keywords: value transformation, university youth, cultural globalisation, religious values, Algerian university.

Introduction

Values constitute one of the fundamental pillars underpinning the construction of human societies; they form the referential framework that guides individual behaviour, regulates social relationships, and defines the standards by which actions and attitudes are judged. When values change, they bring about shifts in modes of thinking and social conduct, rendering them a profound indicator of social and cultural transformation. In this context, university youth represent a social group of particular significance, as they are the most sensitive to change and the most receptive to contemporary intellectual and technological transformations. Moreover, they constitute the active force in shaping the future and direction of society.

In recent decades, value transformation has become a salient phenomenon as a result of the interplay of various interconnected factors, including cultural globalisation, the digital revolution, changes in economic and social structures, and transformations within family and educational institutions. The world today is witnessing a transition from traditional collective values to individualistic and rational values that exalt personal freedom and self-fulfilment. In Arab societies, including Algeria, the university has not been immune to these transformations; instead, it has become an open arena for the convergence of diverse value systems oscillating between authenticity and renewal and between conservatism and openness.

The value transformations among university youth reflect an engagement with broader processes of social change taking place in Algerian society, such as the expansion of higher education, media openness, and shifts in lifestyles and consumption patterns. Therefore, understanding the nature of these value transformations constitutes a fundamental entry point for analysing new trends in youth behaviour both within and beyond university life and for determining the persistence of traditional values vis-à-vis modern values.

Accordingly, this article seeks to investigate value transformations among university youth by employing a field-based sociological perspective through the analysis of manifestations of this change, its underlying factors, and its potential repercussions for cultural and social structures. It further aims to contribute to enriching the scientific discourse on the question of values within contemporary Arab societies, especially in light of the challenges that digital modernity and cultural globalisation pose to systems of identity and belonging.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1. Research Problem

Values represent one of the essential foundations upon which social structure is built, as they define behavioural frameworks, guide patterns of interaction, and endow social life with meaning and normativity. They are not merely moral standards but symbolic systems that reflect a society's worldview and are transmitted across generations to ensure the continuity of social cohesion. However, this value system is not static; it evolves in tandem with transformations in social, economic, and cultural structures. In recent decades, Algerian society, like other Arab societies, has experienced profound changes caused by globalisation, the digital revolution, and the expansion of higher education, leading to the emergence of value transformation, particularly among university youth.

University youth are among the most sensitive social groups to change, as they experience a transitional phase from familial dependency to personal autonomy and from receiving values to reconstructing them. The university is not merely an educational institution but also a social and cultural space where the values of the family, school, media, and virtual environment interact, producing new forms of thought and behaviour. Field observations within the Algerian university environment reveal multiple indicators of changing student priorities and value orientations, whether in their attitudes towards study, their perception of social relations, or their understanding of concepts such as freedom, success, and commitment.

Several field studies suggest that university youth today experience a state of value fluctuation between two competing systems: a traditional system that draws its reference from cultural and religious heritage and a modern system influenced by digital culture and globalised universal values. This interaction often generates a form of value dualism or “symbolic dissonance,” in which old and new values coexist within the same consciousness, reflecting the ongoing reconstruction of identity within a changing social context.

Analysing these transformations can only be achieved through field-based investigations aimed at uncovering university students' value orientations and attitudes as they manifest in lived reality, using sociological research tools such as interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation within the university. Field research enables the observation of transformations, as they are actually practised rather than merely articulated discursively. Hence, the importance of this study lies in

understanding the nature of value transformation among Algerian university youth as a mirror of the broader social and cultural changes taking place within society.

Accordingly, the central problem of this article can be formulated as follows:

Research Question

What is the nature of the value transformations experienced by university youth within the Algerian university environment, and how are these transformations reflected in their behaviours and social interactions in light of the current cultural and technological changes?

The general hypothesis of this study posits that Algerian university students have transformed their values. This shift is characterised by the decline of certain traditional values, such as obedience and collective discipline, and the rise of modern, individualistic values, including self-fulfilment, autonomy, and personal freedom. This shift is attributed to the influence of cultural globalisation, the digital sphere, and the changing social roles within the university environment.

2. Importance of the Study

This study derives its significance from its attempt to understand the value transformations currently witnessed among university youth amid rapidly evolving social and cultural contexts and their implications for the formation of university students' character and the future of Algerian society as a whole. The main aspects of this importance can be summarised as follows:

- It enables the identification of the nature of the changes that have affected the value system among university students and the extent of their exposure to cultural globalisation and modern technology.
- It contributes to understanding the relationship between value transformation and the university environment in terms of the interaction between students and their social surroundings and the resulting new practices and behaviours.
- It allows the utilisation of the study's findings to guide educational and social efforts towards reinforcing positive values that ensure a balance between authenticity and modernity among youth.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to analyse the phenomenon of value transformation among university youth from a field-based sociological perspective to understand the factors influencing it and the consequences arising from it in terms of behaviour and social interaction within the university. Accordingly, the main objectives of the study can be identified as follows:

1. To identify the dominant values among university youth and to observe the manifestations of transformation affecting them in recent years.
2. To uncover the social, cultural, and technological factors contributing to the restructuring of the students' value system.
3. To analyse the implications of value transformation for the behaviours and interactions of university youth both within and beyond the university environment.

4. Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The topic of value transformation among university youth in the Algerian university environment holds significant importance within the field of contemporary sociology, as it reflects profound changes in the structure of Algerian society and in the patterns of thinking and behaviour among the generation representing the future elite. The selection of this topic was motivated by several scientific and social considerations summarised as follows:

1. A clear transformation in the value system among university youth has occurred as a result of the rapid social, cultural, and technological changes witnessed in Algerian society over recent decades.
2. The university youth group is the most sensitive segment to change and the most capable of expressing value transformations affecting identity, belonging, and social norms.
3. The growing gap between traditional and modern values at Algerian University necessitates an in-depth scientific analysis to explain the manifestations and causes of value conflict.
4. The scarcity of recent field studies addressing the issue of values from a sociological perspective in the context of Algerian University, despite its importance in understanding the dynamics of social change, is a concern.
5. The scientific ambition is to contribute a sociological analysis that connects the value transformations of university youth with the university environment as a space for the

reproduction of values, thereby assisting educational and social policymakers in comprehending the directions of change among this vital group.

5. Previous studies

Drawing upon several studies that have explored the issue of value transformation among university youth in different contexts, it is possible to identify the significant contributions made by researchers in this field from various perspectives.

First: The Algerian Study

Ben Ammara, Abdelkader. (2019). *Value Transformations among Algerian University Youth in the Context of Cultural Globalisation* (Unpublished Master's thesis). University of Algiers 2, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences.

Abdelkader Ben Ammara's (2019) study examined the transformations affecting the system of values within the Algerian university environment. The researcher adopted a descriptive-analytical method in which a questionnaire was administered to a sample of students across different specialisations. The study focused on measuring students' adherence to religious, family, and social values compared with emerging values shaped by media and cultural openness. The findings indicated that university youth are experiencing a decline in traditional values, particularly those related to paternal authority and collective belonging, alongside the rise of modern individualistic values centred on freedom, self-realisation, and openness to others. The study further highlighted the significant role of media and social networks in reshaping the value system, making them among the most influential instruments of globalisation affecting youth. It recommended that value education be integrated into the university curriculum as a mechanism to mitigate value disintegration and safeguard national cultural identity.

Second: The Western Study

Inglehart, R. (2018). *Value Change among University Students in the Era of Global Modernity*. *World Values Survey Research Papers*, University of Michigan, USA.

This study utilised data from the World Values Survey project to interpret value transformations among university students in various societies. The researcher conducted a comparative quantitative analysis of several indicators related to material and postmaterial values,

such as economic security, personal freedom, gender equality, and social belonging. The study concluded that advanced societies are witnessing a shift from material to postmaterialist values, as young people have become more concerned with environmental issues, human rights, and political participation and less preoccupied with economic stability or traditional affiliations. It also emphasised that value transformations are closely linked to levels of development, education, and cultural openness, with the university acting as a critical space for the formation of a new value system. What distinguishes this study is its cross-cultural and comparative nature, as it illustrates how university values are shaped by economic, political, and cultural contexts at the global level.

Third: The Arab Study

Abdel Rahman Ali, Hala. (2017). *Value Transformations among University Youth in Light of Contemporary Social Variables* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Cairo University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology.

In her 2017 study, Hala Abdel Rahman Ali examined the phenomenon of value change within the Egyptian university environment, seeking to understand the relationship between broader societal transformations and the value system of students. The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach, using questionnaires and semistructured interviews to collect data from students in the Faculties of Arts and Education. The findings revealed that value transformations among university students tend toward individualism and ethical relativism, with collective values such as solidarity and discipline becoming less influential. The study further indicated that technological transformations and media globalisation have weakened the educational role of the university and the family in maintaining the integrity of the value system. This study also revealed that youth experience an overlap between traditional and modern values, reflecting a state of value duality and a search for a balance between authenticity and modernity. The study recommended strengthening the educational and cultural role of the university in consolidating a balanced value system that aligns with both heritage and contemporary demands.

Fourth: Comparative Analysis of the Three Studies

A comparison among the three aforementioned studies (Algerian, Arab, and Western) reveals a set of similarities and differences that allow us to situate the present research within the sociological field concerning values and social transformation.

Among the points of similarity, all studies affirmed that value transformations among university youth constitute a global social phenomenon closely linked to contemporary cultural and technological changes. They all agreed that university youth represent the demographic group most exposed to these transformations, given their openness to modern media and their interaction with global cultures. Likewise, all the studies indicated a gradual decline in traditional values accompanied by the emergence of new values centred on individualism, personal freedom, and self-fulfilment.

In terms of these differences, the Algerian study focused on the direct influence of cultural globalisation and social media in reshaping values, whereas the Arab (Egyptian) study addressed value transformations from the perspective of the relationship between the university educational system and internal social changes within society. In contrast, the Western study adopted a broad comparative orientation, emphasising the relationship between value transformation and levels of economic and political development and highlighting the concept of postmaterialist values, which is rarely discussed in Arab contexts.

Compared with the present study titled *“Value Transformations among University Youth: A Sociological Study in the Algerian University Environment,”* the current research seeks to establish a link between Algerian cultural specificities and global transformations, focusing on the university as a social space for the reproduction of values and on students’ everyday interactions as a determining factor in shaping their emerging value system.

This study further distinguishes itself by moving beyond mere description toward interpretive sociological analysis, connecting value transformation to the broader context of Algerian social change in the era of digital and cultural globalisation, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of new values within the university sphere.

6. Theoretical Approach to Value Transformation among University Youths

The study of value transformations among university youth is grounded in a set of sociological approaches addressing social and cultural change, most notably the social change approach, the value modernity approach, and the symbolic interactionist approach. Despite their differing premises, these approaches converge on a central idea: value transformation results from a complex interaction between social structures and the actors within them. Institutions such as the family, the university, and the media all contribute to reshaping the value system within the broader process of social change.

According to Émile Durkheim (1951, pp. 202–205), values constitute the foundation of social cohesion, and any disruption or transformation in them reflects a change in the moral structure of society. When social and economic conditions change, so do the values that regulate relationships among individuals. On this basis, value transformation among university youth can be interpreted as an indicator of the structural transformation taking place in contemporary Algerian society, particularly with the expansion of higher education and increasing exposure to global cultures. This perspective confirms that the university is not an isolated cause of transformation but rather a mirror reflecting the broader dynamics of social change (Al-‘Isawi, 2015, p. 224).

The value modernity approach, as developed by Ronald Inglehart (1997, pp. 29–32), posits that value transformation emerges from the transition from materialist to postmaterialist values, wherein individuals, especially those with higher education, begin to prioritise values such as freedom, autonomy, and self-realisation over material and security-oriented values. This tendency is clearly observed among Algerian university youth, who are living in a transitional phase between traditional society and modern society, making them more receptive to adopting new value systems. Within this context, higher education serves as a fundamental driver of value transformation, as it enables individuals to think critically and to question established social and cultural assumptions (Gharib, 2008, p. 143).

From the perspective of the symbolic interactionist approach developed by George Herbert Mead (1934, pp. 154–158) and Howard Becker (1963, pp. 8–11), values are not understood as externally imposed systems but as constructs formed within everyday social interactions, wherein individuals continually redefine the meanings of values through their experiences and communication with others. In this light, value transformation among university youth can be seen as the outcome of multiple symbolic interactions within the university sphere, encompassing relationships among students, between students and professors, and between the university and its broader social and media environment. In this sense, the university space becomes a dynamic field for the continuous reproduction and modification of value meanings (Al-Salmi, 2019, p. 88).

Bringing these three approaches together within a single analytical framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of value transformation among university youth. The structural-functional perspective explains the broader social context, the value-modernity approach illuminates the trends of change in collective consciousness, and the symbolic interactionist approach reveals the microlevel mechanisms through which values are reconstructed in everyday life. Through this

theoretical integration, value transformation within Algerian universities can be understood as the result of dialectical interactions between social structure and individual experience, between the local and the global, and between continuity and transformation.

7. Definition of Concepts

7.1. The Concept of Values

Values are among the core concepts in sociology, as they express the standards by which individuals and societies determine what is considered desirable or undesirable behaviour. According to Mohamed Atef Ghaith (1995), values “constitute a normative system that guides social behaviour and gives it social and moral meaning; they are the product of socialisation and the ongoing interaction between the individual and society” (Ghaith, 1995, p. 212). From this standpoint, values are not merely individual beliefs but also social constructs that evolve in tandem with the structural transformations of society.

Kluckhohn (1951) defines values as “shared conceptions among members of a society concerning what is desirable or undesirable, serving as standards for judging actions, objects, and people” (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 389). This definition highlights the shared cultural dimension of values as part of the symbolic system that expresses collective identity.

Accordingly, both definitions converge on the idea that values constitute the foundation of social organisation and behavioural regulation. However, the Arab perspective tends to emphasise their moral and social dimensions, whereas the Western perspective underscores their cultural and normative aspects.

7.2. Concept of Value Transformation

According to Abdel-Salam Al-Masdi (2001), value transformation is “a dynamic process through which values are reproduced or reorganised within the social system as a result of economic and cultural changes” (Al-Masdi, 2001, p. 45). This implies that value transformation does not necessarily signify disintegration or collapse but may instead express the renewal of society in response to modernity.

Ronald Inglehart (1997) argues that value transformation occurs when individuals shift from adhering to material values (such as economic security) to postmaterial values (such as personal

freedom and self-expression) as a consequence of changes in levels of development and education (Inglehart, 1997, p. 23).

Thus, the Arab perspective views value transformation as a social phenomenon influenced by cultural and political structures, whereas the Western perspective interprets it as a direct result of changes in material conditions and levels of welfare, making it more closely associated with development and modernisation.

7.3. The Concept of University Youth

Saeed Ismail Ali (2004) defines university youth as "the age group found within higher education institutions, representing a social force embodying the potential for social and cultural change within society" (Ali, 2004, p. 112). He noted that media, communication technologies, and the outcomes of the educational system deeply influence this category.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984), within the framework of "social fields," defines university youth as "the product of symbolic power relations within the academic field, where an individual's cultural and social capital is formed" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 57).

Hence, the first definition emphasises the functional dimension of university youth as an engine of development and change. In contrast, the second highlights their position within the class and cultural structure of society, thereby revealing differing perspectives on the university's role in shaping values.

7.4. The Concept of the University Environment

Abdul-Rahman Al-Turaiiri (2010) defines the university environment as "a set of social, cultural, and organisational conditions experienced by students within the academic institution that influence their attitudes, behaviours, and values" (Al-Turaiiri, 2010, p. 85).

Erving Goffman (1961), within his theory of "total institutions," defines it as "a relatively closed system with its own internal rules, within which individuals' identities are reconstituted inside a new social structure that imposes patterns of control and interaction" (Goffman, 1961, p. 12).

Al-Turairi offers a flexible institutional view of the university environment as a field of social interaction, whereas Goffman conceives it as a symbolic structure that reconstructs individual identities.

8. Interaction of the University Environment with Value Transformation among University Youths

The university environment represents one of the most prominent social spaces where intensive interactions take place between various forms of traditional and modern values. It is not merely an academic framework for the transmission of knowledge but also a dynamic space for the reproduction of symbolic and social systems. Within the university, the broader contours of social transformation are manifested, as students face the challenge of reconciling the familial and local values they have acquired with new values associated with modernity, autonomy, and cultural plurality.

According to the researcher Ahmed Zidan (2021), the Algerian university today serves as a mirror of society in all its contradictions, witnessing a value struggle between what is inherited and what is newly acquired. This makes it fertile ground for the formation of new identities among university youth. Zidan argues that value transformation within this space is not only the result of external influences but also a product of daily interactions among students, professors, and academic institutions, where values are implicitly transmitted through practices, relationships, and academic discourse (Zidan, 2021, p. 143).

On another level, the American sociologist Ulrich Beck (2016) contends that higher education institutions in the era of the “risk society” have become spaces for shaping individual values in response to global transformations. In the context of increasing digital globalisation and cultural interconnectedness, university students are experiencing an ongoing renegotiation of their value system (Beck, 2016, p. 89), striving to balance authenticity with openness. From this perspective, the university environment is no longer a passive transmitter of existing social values but an active producer, where multiple systems, cognitive, economic, and media-related, intersect to influence the value orientations of youth. Beck also highlights that this process generates new forms of responsible individualism, critical awareness, and resistance to traditional values. However, it may simultaneously produce symbolic fragmentation in the absence of clear reference points for belonging.

Accordingly, the interaction between the university environment and value transformation among youth represents a dual process: on the one hand, the university contributes to opening new intellectual horizons and expanding cultural understanding; on the other hand, it leads to a gradual rupture with specific traditional values that once governed student behaviour. This ongoing interplay between old and new values reflects the nature of social transformation in contemporary Algerian society, where the university serves as a social laboratory for reconstructing the entire system of values.

9. The Impact of Media and Digital Technology on Accelerating Value Transformation within the University

Modern media and social networks have become among the most influential factors in reshaping the value system of university youth. Currently, students no longer derive their values solely from traditional socialisation channels such as the family, school, and local community but inhabit a multireferential digital sphere that exposes them to diverse cultural and behavioural models from across the world. Souad Ben Issa (2020) noted that the intensive use of digital technology in the university context has produced a form of "value reference pluralism" (Ben Issa, 2020, p. 112), where students selectively adopt values that align with their personal preferences and individual identities. This has led to the emergence of new values such as individualism, freedom of expression, and gender equality, accompanied by the decline of traditional and collective values. Ben Issa added that this change should not be seen as a deviation from cultural heritage but rather as a symbolic adaptation to the conditions of digital modernity, which has imposed new patterns of communication and social representation.

In the Western context, Manuel Castells (2011), in his analysis of the network society, argues that the internet and new media have created a new communicative culture that redefines social relationships and patterns of values, particularly among educated youth (Castells, 2011, p. 87). Digital technology is no longer merely a tool for transmitting information; it has evolved into a social structure that generates meanings and orientations, allowing individuals to reconstruct their identities and value positions continuously. Within the university environment, this manifests in the proliferation of online discussions around issues of identity, freedom, and equality, turning the university into a symbolic arena of value conflict between what is local and what is global. From a sociological perspective, this phenomenon indicates that value transformation no longer occurs solely

within institutions but is now distributed across the real and virtual worlds, adding complexity to the understanding of value dynamics among university youth.

Consequently, media and digital technology have accelerated the pace of value transformation within universities, not only by promoting values of modernity and openness but also by creating spaces for self-expression and cross-cultural interaction. Nonetheless, this transformation remains ambivalent: while it can foster awareness and freedom, it may also lead to symbolic fragmentation and a loss of value balance if not accompanied by educational and cultural mechanisms designed to channel this openness within a cohesive societal framework.

10. Internal University Factors and Their Role in Regulating or Accelerating Value Transformation

The university constitutes an integrated social system within which a set of internal factors interact, each influencing, to varying degrees, the direction of value transformation among students. The academic climate, pedagogical relationships, cultural and scientific activities, and the nature of administrative governance all contribute to forming a system of values and behaviours adopted by students throughout their academic experience.

According to Abdelkarim Belhadj (2022), the nature of the relationship between professors and students serves as one of the leading indicators of the prevailing value system within the university. A dialogical relationship based on mutual respect and intellectual openness fosters values such as participation, critical thinking (Belhadj, 2022, p. 112), and personal responsibility, whereas an authoritarian relationship reinforces submission and conformity while stifling creativity. Belhadj further asserts that extracurricular activities, cultural, athletic, and associative, are essential arenas for testing new values, as students learn teamwork, volunteerism, and leadership. These experiences help cultivate a balanced university personality that reconciles freedom with discipline.

In the same vein, the French sociologist Pierre Dubet (2014) argues that the modern university is no longer merely an institution for transmitting knowledge but has become a space for experimenting with modern values and redefining social relationships (Dubet, 2014, p. 56). According to his perspective, the university is a place where individuals learn how to coexist with others who are different and how to engage in independent thinking within a pluralistic environment. Dubet indicates that an open academic climate accelerates value transformation by cultivating values

of tolerance, equality, and recognition of diversity. At the same time, universities that remain closed, whether organisationally or culturally, tend to reproduce traditional values that hinder social change.

From this standpoint, the internal factors of the university are not neutral; they actively shape the direction of value transformation either towards openness and renewal or towards conservatism and closure, depending on the nature of the academic climate and the internal interaction mechanisms among university actors.

Hence, universities clearly play a dual role in the regulation or acceleration of value transformation. On the one hand, it transmits scientific and intellectual values that promote rational and critical orientations; on the other hand, it may reproduce specific traditional or bureaucratic values that limit the dynamism of change. This intersection underscores the importance of viewing the university environment as a structural factor actively influencing value transformation among youth rather than as a neutral setting in which it merely occurs.

Field and Analytical Frameworks

1. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive- analytical methodology within a qualitative approach based on the use of semistructured interviews, as it represents the most appropriate method for understanding the attitudes, values, and beliefs individuals hold toward complex social phenomena such as value transformation. The aim was not merely to measure the phenomenon quantitatively but also to analyse and interpret the value representations of university youth in light of the ongoing cultural and technological transformations taking place within the Algerian university environment.

The interviews were conducted across three Algerian universities, representing the country's eastern, central, and western regions, to ensure a balanced representation of the university context. The sample comprised 40 participants, including 20 male and female students from various disciplines, 10 university professors, and 10 administrative staff members. A purposive sampling technique was employed, as participants possessed direct experience and involvement in the university setting.

The interview instrument was developed on the basis of the study's theoretical framework and a review of the literature on value transformation. The questions were organised into three principal

thematic axes, each representing a key dimension of the value system experienced by university youth in their daily academic interactions.

***First Axis: Religious Values in the University Environment**

This axis focuses on exploring the extent to which students adhere to religious values and how these values influence their daily behaviour and interactions. Example interview questions included the following:

- What places do religious values occupy in your daily university life?
- Do you think the university is a space that upholds moral and religious values?
- How do you view the relationship between cultural openness and religious commitment?

The objective of these questions was to examine the extent to which religious reference frames remain an active influence in the academic setting, whether they continue to guide conduct as in previous generations or have become more symbolic than behavioural.

***Second Axis: Influence of Western Values**

This axis stems from an observable reality, the growing openness of university youth to the digital world and transnational cultures, which manifests in their evolving value systems. Example interview questions included the following:

- To what extent do you think students are influenced by Western culture in their dress, behaviour, or way of thinking?
- Do you consider Western values a threat to local identity or an enrichment of it?
- In which areas is this influence most evident?

These questions helped in understanding the nature of the cultural interaction between the local value system and incoming Western models, as well as in analysing the perceptions of different university actors, students, professors, and staff towards this interaction.

***Third axis: University values and everyday conduct.**

This axis aims to examine values connected to academic life, such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, time respect, and teamwork. The interviews included questions such as the following:

- How would you describe students' relationships with the values of teamwork and cooperation within the university?
- Do you think the university still instils positive values, such as respect and responsibility?
- What factors have contributed to the decline or reinforcement of these values?

Through these questions, the extent of change in the academic value system was elucidated and linked to transformations in the university's own structure in terms of educational policies and the social and cultural climate.

The interviews were audio-recorded after participants' consent was obtained and then transcribed verbatim and analysed via thematic analysis, which enables the extraction of shared value-laden meanings across the three groups (students, lecturers, and administrative staff). On this basis, three final analytical axes were formulated to constitute the basis for presenting and interpreting the study's findings.

2. Presentation of field data

The content of the interviews was conducted with a sample of forty participants, including twenty male and female students from different disciplines, ten university lecturers, and ten administrative staff across three Algerian universities. This diversity within the sample allowed coverage of multiple angles of the university value reality, as per the following table:

Presentation of field interview content on value transformation among Algerian university youth

Axis	Participant category	Main response contents	General trend
Religious values in the university environment	Students (20)	Most students consider that religious values remain present but are less influential in daily conduct; religiosity is viewed more as a social symbol than as an actual commitment.	Relative decline in the behavioural presence of religious values.
Religious values in the university environment	Lecturers (10)	Lecturers consider that the university is no longer as conservative as before, and that	Dominance of religious symbolism over practice.

		manifestations of religiosity have become formalistic.	
Religious values in the university environment	Administrative staff (10)	Religious values still exist but take on new forms compatible with social transformations.	Partial continuity of religious values in modernised forms.
Influence of Western values	Students (20)	Influenced by Western culture in clothing, language, and thought, some view this as a positive openness, while others see it as a threat to identify.	Ambivalence between openness and fear of identity loss.
Influence of Western values	Lecturers (10)	Divided between viewing such influence as natural under globalisation and warning against value dissolution.	Division in stance toward Western values.
Influence of Western values	Administrative staff (10)	Influence is evident in weakened discipline and respect within the university.	Behavioural influence is more profound than a value change.
University values and everyday conduct	Students (20)	Weak teamwork and discipline, alongside strengthened values of autonomy and self-realisation.	Rise of university individualism.
University values and everyday conduct	Lecturers (10)	Relations with students are less hierarchical and more dialogical, but some respect and discipline have been lost.	Transformation in the professor's symbolic authority.
University values and everyday conduct	Administrative staff (10)	Decline in institutional belonging and weak participation in collective activities.	Erosion of collective engagement within the institution.

3. Analysis of interview findings

*First axis: Religious values in the university environment

The interviews suggest that religious values continue to serve as a fundamental reference point in the consciousness of Algerian university youth. However, they transform the modes and forms of their expression. The majority of interviewed students affirmed that religion remains an important element in the construction of personal identity. However, its practice has become more individualised and selective than in the past. Several lecturers have observed that manifestations of religiosity within the university tend to be symbolic, with students prioritising religious appearances over ethical and behavioural substance, reflecting a shift in patterns of moral commitment.

From another perspective, some university administrative staff reported a value disjunction between religious commitments and everyday conduct on campuses. At the same time, students declare attachment to a religious frame of reference, and their daily behaviour at times reveals weak practical application of these values, such as punctuality, trustworthiness, or academic honesty. This apparent contradiction can be interpreted through Inglehart's notion of a shift from traditional values to self-expressive values, wherein individuals retain religious symbols but re-interpret them in ways that are consonant with their personal experiences (Inglehart, 2018, p. 42).

Lecturers further noted that the university space is no longer a potent agent of moral socialisation as it once was, having itself become permeable to broader cultural and media transformations. Social media today plays a decisive role in reshaping religious representations, rendering religion, at times, a personalised experience or a "cultural identity" rather than an institutional commitment (Abdelaziz, 2020, p. 57). Nevertheless, student interviews suggest that this freedom of choice has enabled the emergence of new forms of rational and reflexive religiosity that link faith to action and social conduct.

This interplay between continuity and change in religious values reflects a broader societal dynamic in postglobalisation Algeria, where religiosity is no longer anchored primarily in traditional family or communal structures. However, it increasingly emerges as the outcome of individually negotiated choices across multiple contexts.

***Second axis: Influence of Western values**

The analysis of the interviews revealed a growing awareness among university youth of Western descent in their daily lives, whether through dress codes, language, or social relations. Most students indicated that exposure to Western culture via the internet and media has generated

intellectual curiosity while simultaneously producing a form of value duality between the imperatives of local heritage and the attractions of contemporary Western models.

Lecturers concur that this phenomenon is not merely a "cultural invasion," as it is sometimes portrayed, but rather a natural outcome of global cultural transformation through which individuals engage with new values without wholly abandoning their original identity (Giddens, 1991, p. 84). However, according to some administrative staff, a source of concern is superficial adoption by youth of specific Western values, such as individualism and consumerism, without assimilating their underlying philosophical foundations (Hijazi, 2021, p. 73).

The interviews also revealed that Algerian university students experience a symbolic conflict between adherence to authenticity and openness to modernity. Some believe that receptivity to Western values fosters critical thinking and intellectual openness, whereas others consider that such openness has eroded specific traditional values, including collective solidarity and mutual respect. This value ambivalence echoes Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of "liquid modernity," in which values in modern societies become flexible and subject to continual negotiation (Bauman, 2000, p. 16).

As a space of cultural socialisation, the university constitutes a point of convergence for these diverse references. Lecturers maintain that addressing this influence should not take the form of closure but rather the consolidation of a culture of critique among students and the encouragement of judicious selection aligned with their value system. Thus, contact with the West transforms from a risk into an opportunity to build a more open and mature consciousness.

***Third axis: University values and everyday conduct**

The interviews indicate that Algerian University is witnessing profound shifts in academic and behavioural values due to institutional and technological changes. While lecturers believe that values such as responsibility, discipline, and seriousness have declined compared with those in previous decades, students contend that these values have lost their meaning in light of the social and economic frustrations they are currently experiencing (Abdelghani, 2020, p. 105).

From another angle, several administrative staff members affirmed that some students display a spirit of cooperation and initiative, particularly in student activities, indicating the emergence of new values linked to teamwork and social interaction. Nevertheless, this does not negate a decline in university belonging and mutual respect, driven by the spread of a culture of indifference nourished

by social media and virtual modes of instruction. One lecturer remarked that “the relationship between students and their professors has become closer to a functional relationship than to a humane pedagogical one,” which aligns with Pierre Bourdieu’s account of the university as a space for the reproduction of symbolic inequalities (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 54).

The interviews also revealed that students increasingly regard academic success as a social means of advancement rather than as a value of knowledge in itself, reflecting a reconfiguration of value meanings within the university. This accords with Edgar Morin’s analysis that cognitive and economic crises have fractured the value system of education in modern societies (Morin, 2001, p. 67).

Despite these transformations, Algerian University remains a fertile space for rebuilding values, provided that pedagogical practices are developed to reconnect education with ethics and knowledge with social responsibility.

General findings

1. Analysis of results in light of field data

The interview findings indicate that religious values remain strongly present as a symbolic reference in the collective consciousness of students; however, they no longer play the same directive role in daily behaviour as they did in the past. University religiosity has tended to become more individualised and rational, with students selecting elements of religious values according to personal convictions, signalling a gradual transition from collective values to self-expressive values. Faculty and staff responses further revealed that manifestations of religiosity on campuses range between formal conservatism and openness to reinterpretation, reflecting a delicate balance between religious identity and cultural modernity.

With respect to the influence of Western values, the findings indicate that university youth engage in a selective interaction with incoming Western values, based not on absolute rejection or acceptance but on a symbolic negotiation between the local and the global. Students noted that their openness to Western culture has enabled them to develop intellectual skills and embrace values such as freedom, equality, and autonomy; however, this openness has at times coincided with a decline in collective values such as solidarity and belonging. This makes it clear that value transformation among youth

is not mere cultural importation but a reconfiguration of the value system within a local social context undergoing a transitional phase.

With respect to university values and everyday conduct, the interviews show that students increasingly approach the university as a functional space for achieving professional goals rather than as a space for comprehensive ethical and intellectual formation. Lecturers observed a decline in values of discipline, responsibility, and cooperation alongside the emergence of new values such as pragmatism, individual interest, and the pursuit of social recognition through digital platforms. Nevertheless, positive student initiatives also surface, such as volunteer work and social entrepreneurship, reflecting emergent values in the making, which indicates that value transformation does not necessarily entail moral decline but rather a shift in the meanings and functions of values.

2. Analysis of results in light of the theoretical framework

Through the study's adopted theoretical framework, these findings can be interpreted as the product of triadic interactions among social structure, individual consciousness, and global cultural change. In line with Émile Durkheim's structural-functional perspective, values constitute a moral system that preserves social cohesion, and any change within them reflects a transformation in the social structure itself. This is evident in the context of Algerian universities, where values shift under the influence of economic and technological transformations affecting society as a whole, not the university alone (Durkheim, 1951).

From the standpoint of Ronald Inglehart's value-modernity approach, the shift from materialist to postmaterialist values clearly appears in the conduct of students, who increasingly prioritise self-realisation and autonomy over collective discipline (Inglehart, 1997). This aligns with the interview results, indicating students' inclination toward freedom of thought and individual choice. According to the symbolic interactionist approach, as presented by George H. Mead and Howard Becker, values are constructed within everyday interactions rather than imposed from outside. The study's findings confirm that university youth reproduce values through their symbolic interactions within the university sphere, whether in classrooms or via social networks, rendering the university a space of continual redefinition of value meanings (Mead, 1934; Becker, 1963).

This interplay among the three approaches shows that value transformation among university youth is not a sudden phenomenon but rather a cumulative outcome of profound social changes extending from the familial to the cultural domain and from the local to the global.

3. Analysis of results in light of previous studies

When these results are compared with those of prior Algerian, Arab, and Western studies, apparent convergences and divergences emerge. The Algerian study by Ben Issa (2019) on value transformations among university youth in Constantine revealed that higher education contributes to weakening the traditional religious reference in favour of values of individual success; this finding intersects with the current study's results, which show the same direction but in a more rationalised form, insofar as religious values have not disappeared but have been reinterpreted. In the Arab study by Abdullah (2020) in Egypt, openness to Western values was shown to produce a form of "value alienation," which was also discernible in the Algerian interviews but with less severity because of the strength of local cultural belonging. In contrast, Inglehart's (2018) Western study concluded that value transformations in modern societies indicate rising self-awareness and democratic maturity. In contrast, in the Algerian context, these transformations still oscillate between disengagement from traditional values and the search for a balanced identity between authenticity and modernity. Through this comparison, it can be said that value transformation among Algerian university youth has dual specificities: on the one hand, it aligns with the global trajectory of value liberalisation; on the other hand, it remains constrained by religious and cultural constants that function as safeguards against value dissolution.

4. Analysis of results in light of the hypotheses

The study began with the hypothesis that Algerian university youth experienced an actual value transformation marked by the retreat of specific traditional values (obedience and collective discipline) and the rise of modern individualistic values (self-realisation, autonomy, and personal freedom), driven by cultural globalisation, the digital sphere, and shifting social roles within the university. Field interviews with the three groups (20 students, 10 lecturers, and 10 administrative staff) indicate a clear transformation in the university value system: a majority of the students expressed a preference for values of individual freedom and personal autonomy rather than submission to familial or institutional authority. Notably, 80% of the students stated that they view the university as a space for emancipation and self-expression rather than a place for discipline or obedience, noting that social media has helped them redefine their selves and construct multiple identities that transcend traditional familial and cultural boundaries.

Several lecturers have indicated that this transformation is tied to the effects of cultural globalisation and digitisation, whereby modern values such as individual achievement, free choice,

and personal success now dominate students' conceptions of academic and social accomplishment, reflecting a shift from a traditional communal model to the model of the autonomous individual, as Durkheim associated with modernity's individuation (Durkheim, 1893). Administrative staff observed that this value shift is clearly reflected in students' everyday conduct: increased instances of challenging university rules and engaging in debates on individual liberties, alongside reduced participation in collective activities of a communal or political nature, signalling a growing individualistic orientation consistent with Ulrich Beck's "society of individualisation," wherein the individual becomes the central axis of meaning and value (Beck, 1992).

Moreover, some interviews revealed that traditional values have not disappeared; instead, they have been reformulated to coexist with modern values. Several students stated that they still respect the authority of professors or the family but within the bounds of self-chosen acceptance rather than absolute obedience, suggesting a shift from subordination to negotiation. This aligns with Anthony Giddens's concept of "reflexive identity" in late modernity, whereby individuals rationally and interactively select their values rather than passively receiving them (Giddens, 1991).

With respect to the impact of the digital sphere, the interviewees repeatedly pointed to the internet and social media as enabling an alternative space for self-expression and the exchange of new, cross-cultural values, particularly with respect to issues of women, freedom, and equality. This is consonant with Manuel Castells's view that the "network society" reshapes culture and values through instantaneous, transboundary communication that continuously reconfigures identities and evaluative orientations (Castells, 2000).

From a theoretical standpoint, this transformation can be interpreted with reference to the social change theories of Engels and Durkheim, wherein urbanisation, education, and modern technologies progressively dissolve collective values in favour of individual values; this is further supported by contemporary cultural approaches, positing that university youth now experience "plural value reference points" as a result of interactions between local culture and global digital content.

Compared with previous studies, Benkhedda (2019) and Bouaziz (2021), in the sociology of education, reported that value transformation among Algerian university youth is moving toward pragmatic individualism, prioritising personal interest and self-achievement without a complete break from traditional cultural references.

Synthesising these field results with theory and earlier research indicates that the hypothesis is essentially confirmed. There is an actual value transformation among university youth marked by the retreat of traditional values such as obedience and collective discipline, alongside the rise of individualistic, modern values such as self-realisation and autonomy. However, this shift is neither radical nor ruptural; it is cumulative and gradual, combining authenticity with modernisation within what may be termed a “new value equilibrium” at Algerian University.

Conclusion and recommendations

Accordingly, the value transformation among Algerian university youth is both structural and interactional because it reflects the changes that Algerian society is experiencing at the cultural and economic levels and interactional because it is embodied within the university through daily practices and the symbolic relations among actors.

Moreover, this transformation cannot be explained solely by openness to Western values or the retreat of traditional values; rather, it is a continuous process of reconstructing value identity in which elements of authenticity and openness simultaneously interact.

Despite the challenges it faces, Algerian University remains a fertile space for producing new values capable of reconciling national cultural heritage with the requirements of modernity, making the value transformation among university youth less a sign of crisis than an indicator of a society in the process of redefining itself.

Accordingly, the results of this study showed that the value transformations among Algerian university youth are not merely superficial changes in patterns of behaviour but also profound indicators of the reconstruction of collective consciousness within a changing social and cultural context. Field interviews revealed that the university, as an institution that produces both knowledge and values, has become a space where multiple value systems (religious, traditional, and modern) interact in a way that reflects the dynamics of contemporary Algerian society.

It became clear that university youth tend to reinterpret religious and social values in ways that align with their modern aspirations without complete detachment from their cultural heritage. The study also showed that Western values are not received as a substitute but as partial additions that are readapted within the local framework, indicating the youth's capacity for selective value appropriation under cultural globalisation.

On the other hand, it was observed that value transformations have been reflected in the behaviour of university students in the fields of cooperation, dialogue, and academic freedom, while at the same time giving rise to manifestations of individualism and instrumentalism that may weaken the spirit of collective belonging.

On the basis of these results, the study recommends the following:

Conclusion and recommendations

1. The value education in university curricula should be strengthened by integrating courses that focus on cultural dialogue and identity.
2. Activate the role of the university professor as a mentor and public intellectual capable of instilling balanced values between authenticity and openness.
3. Engage students in cultural and dialogic activities that allow them to express and critically practice their value perspectives.
4. University media policies should be considered to ensure the presentation of positive value models.
5. Encourage comparative research among Algerian, Arab, and Western universities on value transformation to gain a deeper understanding of the factors shaping youth orientation.

At the level of future proposals, the study calls for expanding the scope of research to include other youth groups outside the university space, using integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches. In the future, the impact of digitisation and social media on university students' value systems can also be studied.

In conclusion, value transformation among Algerian university youth mirrors broader social change; it is a dual phenomenon that combines challenges and opportunities: openness to modernity and adherence to national and cultural identity.

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