Cultural influences on motivational issues in students and their goals for studying at university

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Introduction

During the last 20 years, higher education opportunities have increased for Emirati students: unlike their parents' generation, both boys and girls are encouraged to continue their studies at a college or university. However, informal discussions with female students at Zayed University (ZU) highlighted some motivation issues. Due to the rapidly changing face of higher education and emerging employment opportunities for local women, it was felt that an exploration into the fundamental motivations of these young women for learning beyond school in a University context was necessary to address some of the issues our students had raised.

Research into motivation "is categorized by a confusing plethora of competing theories with little consensus" (Dörnyei, 2001, p.1) and to further confound the difficulties and lack of consensus, research into motivation in general has been carried out in Western contexts. As a result, terms used in discussions of motivation tend to carry Western interpretations. Indeed, the language used to explore concepts may also be significant: students' attitudes can be "connotatively distinct" (Findlow, 2006, p.27) depending on whether these attitudes are expressed in Arabic (most students' mother tongue) or in English (usually their second language). We were aware that our teaching and learning context, both historically and culturally, was significantly different to that of most motivation studies. Rather than impose an already established set of interpretations of terms, we decided that if we were to understand our students' motivation, then we needed firstly to explore such concepts and values from the students' perspectives in order to better understand the discourse of motivation in our particular social and cultural context.

Our students come from families where often the mother has not studied beyond high school. In 2008, just 24% of ZU students' mothers had a High School Diploma, and 14% of their mothers had a Bachelors degree or higher (Office of Student Life, 2008). In this respect, the present generation of university students are creating new norms; thus it is essential that we explore the values of our students and how these impact on their motivation (Parks and Guay, 2009), as well as exploring cultural values in terms of individualistic and collectivism cultural norms (Triandis, 1995). Our aim was to investigate how cultural and educational context influences to what extent our students' motivation is self-determined (Ashcraft, 2007).

Literature review: motivation and goals

Motivation has been defined, at a general level, as "an energizing force that induces action" (Pinder, 1998, cited in Parks & Guay, 2009, p.679). The *context* of the force and of the action are also integral to an understanding of motivation in a particular social, cultural and educational setting. Recent research

has examined motivation within the framework of socio-cultural theory (Ushioda, 2006), thus valorizing the specific context and history of the participants, as well as emotional aspects of motivation. Such an approach is relevant to this study as we believe the UAE is a unique cultural context, having experienced rapid socio-economic growth over the last thirty years that is without parallel anywhere in the world (Davidson, 2008). Ashcraft (2007) found that the Self-Determination model of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) with its categories of intrinsic motivation (coming from the activity itself) and extrinsic motivation (coming from external sources), was applicable to a study of motivation in the Gulf. Ryan & Deci (ibid) suggest that there are four types of extrinsic motivation requiring varying levels of self-determination. The level requiring the least self-determination is *external regulation*, that is, motivated by rewards and punishments provided by others. The second level is *introjected regulation*, which is when an action is performed to avoid feeling pressure or anxiety. The third level is *identification regulation*, where the learner has identified a goal as being important to them in a personal sense. The type of motivation requiring the most self-determination is *integrated regulation*, where the learner wants to achieve a goal because it represents their sense of self, their values and beliefs.

Motivation as a cultural construct

Ushioda (2006) reminds us that in a European context there is a need to re-evaluate conceptual tools for exploring motivation in a fast-changing Europe. We would argue that this applies also to studying academic motivation in the rapidly developing context of the Gulf, specifically the UAE. Ushioda (ibid) rightly points out that a socio-cultural perspective focuses our attention on motivation as a socially-evolved construct: "motivation is not located solely within the individual but is socially distributed, created within cultural systems of activities involving the mediation of others" (Rueda & Moll, 1994, p. 131, cited in Ushioda, 2006, p. 154). Thus, motivation is no longer an individual construct, but one that is shaped by the cultural, social and educational context in which the learner is operating. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) therefore needs to be considered with reference to particular contexts, within which intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will be influenced. As Salili & Hoosain (2007) point out, "different cultures attach different meanings to achievement and are motivated to achieve for different reasons, have different goals for achievement and go about achieving their goals in different ways" (preface). Dörnyei's (1994)framework of L2 motivation includes a *learning situation* level, which hints at the need to consider factors beyond the learner themselves, and Williams & Burden (1997) emphasize the need to examine motivation with regard to external factors related to family, environment, significant others and society.

Individualism vs collectivism

Learners may be operating with reference to a *collectivist* or an *individualist* culture. The type of cultural influence can be seen in the variables of what is to be achieved, by whom, and for what purpose (Triandis, 1995). For example, an individualist culture will encourage people to be motivated by personal goals, whereas a collectivist culture will focus on group goals which are to be achieved for the common good. Kumar and Maehr (2007) suggest that constructs in motivation in the literature in this area have been defined from a primarily Western, individualist perspective, and that we need to reconsider how we examine motivation from a more culturally sensitive perspective. They point out that in Eastern culture, motivation is more socially directed and aimed at advancing group goals. Culture impacts on values, as does extent of religiosity (Saroglou et al., 2004). Thus, in order to understand our students' motivation, it is essential that their cultural, religious and historical context be first examined.

Motivation in the Gulf

The results of our literature review appear to suggest that there has been little research on motivation with specific reference to the Gulf. Ashcraft (2007) researched the stated motivations of trainee Emirati women English teachers at an English-medium University in the UAE. Her results suggest that Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory comprising intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is a suitable construct for studying motivation in the Gulf context. Findlow (2006) reports that appropriacy and service to one's country, as well as status in society and family, were key factors in decisions to study at tertiary level in the UAE. Due to the collectivist nature of the culture in the Gulf (Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998), it is predicted that extrinsic motivation is likely to emerge as a stronger motivator than intrinsic motivation, similar to results found by Ashcraft (ibid).

Thus, this research goes some way to re-addressing the interpretations of concepts found in the literature on motivation. Notions of values (Parks and Guay, 2009) are examined here from the students' perspective, as are the constructs of motivation, success, failure and goals: all key concepts in the study of motivation (Kumar & Maehr, 2007). As Salili & Hoosain (2007) point out in their call for more exploration of motivation from specific cultural perspectives, "A fundamental assumption of all socio-cognitive theories of achievement motivation is that individuals have an inherent need for independence, personal agency, responsibility, control" (p.45): hence the need for an examination of values and their impact on motivation. Similarly, building on the work in Self-Determination Theory and its application to a Gulf perspective (Ashcraft, 2007), this research aims to examine pre-sessional students' motivations for entering university in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The culmination of both the cultural exploration and categorization of motivational influences will go some way to addressing the current motivational issues of female students in our university context.

Focus of the study and research questions

The context for this study is an English-medium University in the United Arab Emirates. Our participants were females students aged between 18 and 20 who were studying in their English pre-sessional courses.

Our preliminary research questions were:

1. What do students understand by the terms *motivation*, *goals*, *success* and *failure*?

2. How does this understanding impact on their motivation and expectations of their experience of study at university?

Methods

We studied a convenience sample of six intermediate students (Group A) and six low-intermediate students (Group B) from the pre-sessional English programme in May 2011. Students were given an information sheet about the research in Arabic and asked to sign a consent form in Arabic; it was emphasized that they were free to withdraw at any time of the study. Two focus group sessions were held, one for each group.

Two Arabic speakers, who hold administrative positions in the university, were the interviewers for the focus groups. The two assistants were presented with the aims of the research and the research questions prior to the discussion. The assistants had time to read through the questions and translate them into Arabic. The term "motivation" was translated as "Haafiz" (حافز) and the term "values" translated as "qiyam" (قيم) and also as "mabaadi" (مبادئ).

As Dörnyei (2001) points out, motivation cannot be directly observable, and must therefore be inferred from self reports and personal accounts. Thus the research tools used were a discussion and a ranking activity (see Appendix A). The values listed in the ranking exercise were taken from Schwartz's Value Circumplex (in Parks and Guay, 2009). According to Schwartz and Boehnke (2004), values are placed on a circumplex (see Figure 1), and are situated according to their correlation. More highly correlated values are close to each other: the suggestion is that if a person endorses one value, its opposite on the circumplex will not be endorsed.
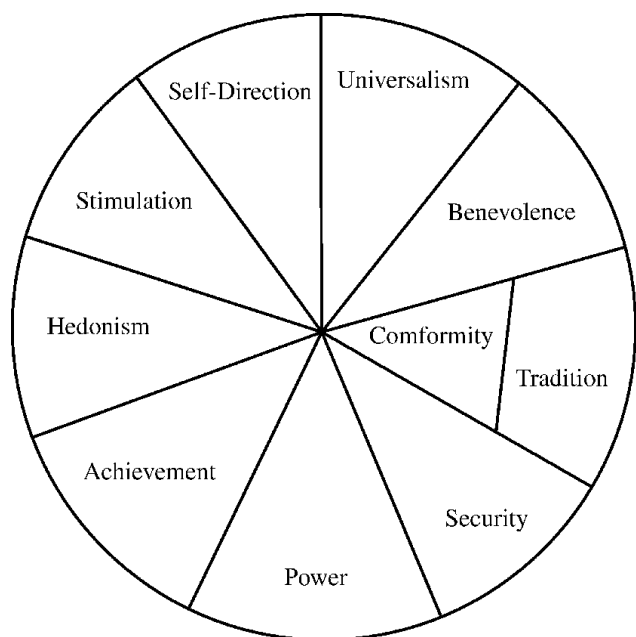
Source: Schwartz and Boehnke (2004)

Figure 1:Value Circumplex.

Students individually ranked the values on their paper, without any discussion. The instructions state that for ranking, 1 is the most important and 10 the least important. The papers were anonymous, and handed in to the researchers at the end of the discussion session.

The discussion was based on short, open questions on cultural interpretations of certain key terms. Students did not have a copy of the questions. The discussion was structured around the questions, and since English was a second language to all the participants, all discussion took place in Arabic in order to give the students maximum opportunity to communicate and explain their interpretations. The aim of the question, "Why did you come to University?" was to explore in general terms the motivation of students. These responses were categorized according to Ryan and Deci (2000). The categories relate to intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, the latter being sub-categorised into external, introjected, identified and integrated regulation The other questions are more specific and ask students to explain their understanding of the main concepts.

The discussion took place in a recording room, for quality and reliability purposes. The students and assistants sat at a round table, and the assistants took notes. One researcher sat in the room and observed, while the other sat in the recording studio listening through headphones. Each discussion

lasted 30 minutes. The ranking activity was part of the discussion: with group A, the ranking was the last activity, and with group B it was the first activity.

Findings

Ranking

As explained above, students received a list of 10 values from Schwartz's values circumplex. Students ranked the values according to importance: 1 as the most important, 10 as the least important. The average rankings per group are given below.

Group A: The highest ranked value at 2.5 was *Tradition*. This contrasted with *Conformity* which was the lowest ranked value at 8.83. The second most important value was *Achievement* at 3.5.

Group B: The most important value was *Pleasure* at 3. The least important value was *Variety* at 7.5. The values of *Tradition* and *Conformity* both received an average ranking of 6.8. Table 1 summarizes this information (see also Appendix B for individual ranking results).

Table 1: Mean ranking of values.

Group/ Importance	A	B
Most important	*Tradition* (2.5)	*Pleasure* (3)
Least important	*Conformity* (8.83)	*Variety* (7.5)
Equal		*Tradition* and *Conformity* (6.8)

Focus discussion group

As explained above, participants were asked a series of questions in Arabic. The first questions were about the concepts outlined in the literature review section, and the second question was a general question about motivation for studying at university. Interviewers took notes in Arabic and subsequently translated them into English. Individual comments can be seen in Appendix C. The results from both groups to the question "Why did you come to university?" are collated and categorized in The question "what does the word motivation mean?" elicited the following responses related to external motivation: " we get our motivation from ourselves and others", I become excited when people motivate me", "I get my motivation from outside myself, not from myself".

In responses to the question "What do values mean?" it was clear that obligation to the family and society was an important value, students using the word "should" in definitions such as "We should follow our values", "We should keep it and it should be our priority".

The question relating to their goals prompted responses indicating further altruistic, external, introjected regulation. Students responded with "to be unique", "to prove that UAE nationals can do a lot and achieve more", "to prove that girls can do it".

Table 2.

The question "what does the word motivation mean?" elicited the following responses related to external motivation: " we get our motivation from ourselves and others", I become excited when people motivate me", "I get my motivation from outside myself, not from myself".

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Table 2: Motivation in student comments.

Type of motivation	Student comment
A. Intrinsic	I love learning
	To better understand live *[sic]*
	Success and education are important to me
B. Extrinsic 1. External	To get higher certificate
	For an important position in society
	To get a job
	To be more educated
2. Introjected	Because of my family
	To be the first girl to do so
	Publicity
	I wish to please my parents
3. Identified	No girl in my family completed her studies after high school and I wanted to be the first one to do so
	To help building my country (*sic*)
	Role model
	To be unique and have an important position in society
4. Integrated	Because of my family
	My family value education

Discussion

In this section, we shall discuss the results of both the ranking and the discussion. We shall refer to the current literature and place our results within the current field on values and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Ranking

Allthough *Conformity* and *Tradition* are so closely correlated that they share the same pie piece in the circumplex, Group A highly endorses one (*Tradition*) but not the other (*Conformity*). This contrasts with

the findings of previous researchers (Parks and Guay, 2009; Saroglu et al., 2004). Group B, however, does show correlation in their endorsement of the two values.

Group B highly endorses the value of *Pleasure (Hedonism)*, which is situated next to *Variety* (*Stimulation*) in the circumplex. According to Parks and Guay (2009), the first 5 values on the circumplex (*Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction*) relate to openness to change and self enhancement. Group B demonstrates higher endorsement overall of these values and attitudes than group A, although they do not endorse the value of *Variety (simulation)*, again contrasting with the findings of previous researchers.

Values consistent with a collectivist culture are values such as equality, honesty, conformity and tradition, whilst an individualist culture emphasizes values such as self-direction, pleasure, achievement and power (Triandis 1995). Thus, Group A endorses values from both cultures, such as a high importance for tradition, as well as on achievement. One reason for this could be that achievement may be seen as a collective achievement (that of a student body, or a people) rather than an individual one.

Group B displays higher endorsement of values in line with an individualist culture rather than a collectivist one, with consistently high importance given to power, achievement, pleasure and self-direction. This is interesting from several perspectives. Firstly, according to Saroglou et al. (2004) religious people tend to place low value on self-direction and to dislike hedonism. On the other hand, although a culture may be considered religious, the values held by individuals are also influenced by socio-economic factors, such as democratization and the development of a country (Saroglou et al., 2004). It could be argued that the level of religiosity may be high in UAE, but the socio-economic status is also high, prompting a diversity of conflicting values. Thus students may value conformity and tradition, in line with their collectivist and religious culture, but at the same time, due to the rapid socio-economic growth, highly endorse pleasure. As Khalaf observes "the speed and scope of development that has occurred in the post oil period have been so dramatic that they have affected every aspect of Emirati culture and society, creating a rupture in local life pattern" (Khalaf, 2002, cited in Bristol Rhys 2010). Again, it is clear that the UAE (or perhaps, more broadly, the Arab Gulf region) represents a unique cultural, economic, social and educational context which has been hitherto largely ignored in studies on motivation.

Although there are some differences between the two groups, the sample of 6 students in each group is too small to make generalizations. Nevertheless, it may be salient to point out that Group A were nearing the end of the pre-sessional programme. They had only two weeks left until they could take their final exam and move on to start the University College programme. The goal of completing the pre-sessional programme was tangible and in sight. This could explain the high importance given to achievement. In contrast, Group A would be in the programme for a further academic year, thus their final goal was not in the foreseeable future. This may explain why pleasure (as opposed to serious achievement) was their most salient value.

Group discussion

As The question "what does the word motivation mean?" elicited the following responses related to external motivation: " we get our motivation from ourselves and others", I become excited when people motivate me", "I get my motivation from outside myself, not from myself".

In responses to the question "What do values mean?" it was clear that obligation to the family and society was an important value, students using the word "should" in definitions such as "We should follow our values", "We should keep it and it should be our priority".

The question relating to their goals prompted responses indicating further altruistic, external, introjected regulation. Students responded with "to be unique", "to prove that UAE nationals can do a lot and achieve more", "to prove that girls can do it".

Table 2 above shows, the students are more extrinsically motivated than intrinsically. What may be specific to this culture and context is the importance of family and society as a motivator. Students want to "prove themselves" and to help develop Emirati society, both an altruistic goal as well as fitting in with the current discourse on Emiratization. To what extent these goals are realistic needs further exploration. Nevertheless, this unique context of extremely rapid social and economic development has pulled along female students in its wake, with an apparent desire to represent their country and work towards building it. Findlow (2006) also found that "status in society" (p. 27) and service to the country were reasons respondents gave for studying at tertiary level in the UAE. The word "unique" was used several times by students, and was used in a way to suggest that they were the "first" and "different" from other generations. This would appear to be how many of them feel about their position in society, their opportunities and their duty to the country and family.

It is clear from the data that the students are mostly motivated extrinsically, and specifically by significant others. Motivation is viewed as a force which comes from outside, rather than from their own goals, desires or self-direction guiding their decisions and actions. Although, as can be seen from their response in the discussion task, students have strong collectivist and individualistic values, their motivation generally fits into notions of group hegemony: despite the democratization and development of the country, and despite their own individual values, the major motivator is family and the wider society. This is also confirmed by observations by one of the authors in mock job interviews with students in another department in the university. The ideals of a greater UAE, country and powerful role models are all strong motivators for our female students. These factors are strongly related to some aspects of Dornyei's 'learning situation' level of motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). More generally, as discussed above, such ideals represent external factors of motivation suggested by Williams and Burden's (1997) framework of external factors in terms of the broader context of family networks, cultural norms and societal expectations and attitudes.

"Failure" was seen from both a personal and societal point of view. Some students regarded failure as something that would demotivate them ("I lose my interest when I fail"), whereas others saw it as an opportunity to learn from mistakes ("It gives us an opportunity to go back and see our mistakes"). These are all factors relating to students themselves. However, as mentioned above, society and significant others are significant influences on motivation, success and failure: one student said "[Failure]'s a shame", suggesting that the opinion of others is the most important criteria of success.

Recommendations

In the light of the results discussed, we suggest a number of recommendations which could both maximize learning opportunities and leverage the strong extrinsic motivation of family and culture. Firstly, the pre-sessional course can incorporate more projects on personal and professional goals of students, and their family members (see Goodliffe (2005) for a study on such a project). This could be extended then to projects involving research, through multimedia and print, into role models in the UAE, both female and male. Students can be encouraged to analyze the achievements and the steps taken to fulfill these achievements. Students should also be encouraged to assess realistically the extent to which their own goals are achievable in their cultural and educational context. Within this theme of country, culture and role models, students could carry out projects on values, e.g. values held by family members, values held by past and present leaders of the UAE, values held by students in other regions.

Although the pre-sessional courses are language- and skills-focused, the programme could develop content courses at pre-sessional level that explore the past and future of the UAE in the context of the roles and identity of UAE women: e.g. "My Country, Myself, Our Future."

In terms of roles, students need to be aware of where they are in society and what role they play. Students can be encouraged to analyze their role in the immediate classroom context and in the wider university and UAE contexts, and how they can use available resources to be more successful. Related to roles and responsibility, teachers could take more time at the beginning of a term to elicit preferred ways of learning. Students could be given more responsibility for participating in the class, e.g. student-taught lessons in order to foster their sense of participation in their community. Students should be made to feel an integral part of the immediate learning environment, and take a more active role in their own learning and in others'. Teachers should also encourage both the individual and the collective orientations through various modes of learning such as group and pair work.

Areas for further research

There is clearly a need for further research into students' long-term goals and whether/how they believe they can achieve them. Only then can we better understand how the pre-sessional courses fit into the students' life and future beyond their University career. It is evident that students at this stage of their studies are mostly extrinsically motivated, not so much by external rewards such as job prospects and a good salary, but by others and society. University education is seen as a goal in itself, as opposed to the Western notion of university being a stepping stone to a career and promotion. Thus, there can be further research into how we can bring this very significant motivator into the students' daily work.

Based on the data from the discussion, it is clear that there some areas which would benefit from further research. A questionnaire may shed light on some conflicting issues which emerged from the ranking exercise. This could be followed up by individual interviews. In addition, bearing in mind that this research was carried out in the last few weeks of the academic year, it would be revealing to follow a few students as case studies throughout the academic year. Observing and talking to the students about their short-term and long-term goals at different times of the academic year may give a deeper insight into their motivational issues. Such case studies will also allow the researchers to gain a more holistic picture of an Emirati student and her/his values, motivators, as well as the impact of culture and society on their motivation. Using a variety of different research methods will ensure a strong voice and presence of female Emirati students in exploring their own motivations.

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Appendix A

Prompts for focus groups

Interview structure:

1. What do the following concepts mean to you? (ask students to explain them, and to give a word that comes to mind when they hear these words):

    a) Achievement

    b) Success

    c) Failure

    d) Motivation

    e) Goals

    f) Values

2. Why did you come to university?

3. What are your long-term goals (e.g. where do you see yourself in the next five years?)

4. Why are these important to you?

5. How do you plan to achieve them?

6. Do you think you can achieve these goals? Why / why not?

7. What motivates you to come to university?

8. Please rank the list of values in terms of importance (see below – to be given on a piece of paper to the students).

Values

- Power (your public image or authority)
- Achievement (ambition)
- Pleasure
- Variety
- Self-direction (independence)
- Equality
- Honesty
- Conformity
- Tradition
- Security (safety, stability)

Appendix B

Students' rankings of values

Group A

							Total	Av
POWER	6	5	3	2	5	5	26	4.3
ACHIEVE	2	8	2	3	4	2	21	3.5
PLEASE	5	4	9	4	8	1	31	5.16
VARIETY	8	6	6	6	9	9	44	7.3
SELF-DIR	3	9	5	7	6	7	37	6.16
EQUALITY	4	3	8	9	7	8	39	6.5
HONESTY	7	7	7	8	3	6	38	6.3
CONFORM	10	10	10	10	10	3	53	8.83
TRADITION	1	1	1	1	1	10	15	2.5
SECURITY	9	2	4	5	2	4	26	4.3

Group B

							Total	Av
POWER	3	5	9	2	5	4	28	4.6
ACHIEVE	4	7	3	6	3	2	25	4.16
PLEAS	1	3	5	1	2	6	18	3
VARIETY	7	8	4	9	7	10	45	7.5
SELF-DIR	2	1	7	5	9	1	25	4.16
EQUALITY	6	2	6	8	6	9	37	6.1
HONESTY	9	4	1	3	1	8	26	4.3
CONFORM	5	9	10	4	10	3	41	6.8
TRADITION	10	10	2	10	4	5	41	6.8
SECURITY	8	6	8	7	8	7	44	7.3

Appendix C

Notes on students' responses

1. What do these words mean to you: Achievement	• Desire, Patience, Determination, Ambition, Success, Happiness. • We have to it • It gives me a good feeling • It motivates me to achieve more • It gives me a motive to continue
Success	• Good feeling • We work hard to achieve it • We should do it • It's my main goal
Failure	• Depression • I hate myself and my course when I fail • I lose my interest when I fail • We learn when we fail • It's a nightmare • It's a shame • It gives us an opportunity to go back and see our mistakes • It's a shock!
Motivation	• Very important • Without it , we can't do anything • We get our motivation from ourselves and from others • I prefer to be motivated by my friends rather than my parents because my friends think the same way I do • I need motivation to move on in my life • I become excited when people motivate me • It's an important reason to achieve more and be successful • I get my motivation from outside not from myself (from the university and from my family) • People opinions are very important to us • It helps me to decide
Goals	• Without goals we can't do anything. • Every person should have a goal • We work very hard to achieve it • We plan our lives when we have goals • My goals keep growing as I'm growing. • When I have goals I become an important person • We live to achieve it

Values	• Everything have a value • My values play an important role in my decision making, sometimes it helped me in making a decision, sometimes it stood on my way ex: I wanted to complete my studies abroad ,but our family values was a barrier to achieve that dream (a lady cant travel by her own) • Our values are defined by our family, and we have different values because we have different family names. • Values are traditions. • My values define my personality. • I was born with my values • We should follow our values • We should keep it, and it should be our priority • Every person regardless of his position should have values and he/she should keep them to achieve his/her goals.
Why did you come to university?	• To get a higher certificate • Because of my family • I had a bad experience and I came to the university to refresh my mind and change my mood • I came here because I have goals and I love learning • To be unique, and have an important position in the society • No girl in my family completed her studies after high school, and I wanted to be the first one to do so. • I came here to get a job • To be more educated • To help in building my country • I want to be a role model (educated, help other family members to join university as well, and be someone they want to be) • Publicity (I want everyone to look at me as the only daughter who entered the university) • I came to the university to better understand life • Because success an education is very important to me. • My family value education and support me so I wish to please them.
What are your long term goals?	• Good position (Job) • Masters degree and higher certificate in a different field than my bachelor degree • I want to have a unique position • I want to be a nurse • I want to work in Media • I want to have a good family and I don't want to work, I've never thought of having a job, having a husband and a family is enough.
Why are these important to you?	• To show everyone that I can do it, they think that I can't be successful but I will be, and I'll show them. • In order to be successful.

	• To be unique • To prove that UAE nationals can do a lot, and achieve more • To prove that girls can do it.
How do you plan to achieve them?	• We should follow our religion, traditions, and values(Especially for us as girls), if my goal conflicts with these three points, I am welling to change it. • Working hard, step by step. • Desire • Accepting challenges • Study hard • I plan to achieve them by reaching level 8
Do you think you can achieve them?	• My biggest difficulty is waking up early • I can achieve them • We hate the boring routine in the university (everyday in the same classroom, doing the exact thing, having the same reading subject every day. • Traditions sometimes stand on my way to achieve my goals. • Traditions, Family values, sometimes are barriers. • My father didn't complete his studies, but he has an open mind, so I think no matter what your family think, you can fulfill your goals if you decided to. • We need to change the way we study, we want more trips to colleges inside ZU, we don't know anything about what's happening inside ZU, it's like we are in a different world. • If I have motivation and if I know what is like to be majors' students, I would work hard to achieve them, once I saw an Art students showing her work, and when I talked to her, I was motivated to work hard and be like her, other students need to know that, they know nothing about colleges and colloquy, we still feel like high school students.

Engin, M. & McKeown, K. (2012). Cultural influences on motivational issues in students and their goals for studying at university. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives, 9*(1). http://lthe.zu.ac.ae   page 15