Overseas Experience and Value Changes in Malaysian Students

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.12120046

Received: 21 December 2025; Accepted: 26 December 2025; Published: 03 January 2026

ABSTRACT

Individuals' experiences in adapting to their environments and the demands arising from them are believed to be capable of shaping, to varying degrees, human perspectives on various matters, including personal values. Values are important entities that guide human life. University students are no exception, as they have been reported to undergo significant value changes influenced by the inherently challenging experiences encountered in higher education institutions. Based on this premise, the present study was conducted to examine whether value change functions as an outcome of overseas learning experiences.This study involved a total of 605 students who were pursuing their studies at either overseas or local universities. A set of questionnaire, comprising participants' demographic background and Schwartz's Short Value Scale, consisting of 10 items measuring both "value importance" and "value satisfaction," was administered at Time 1 and Time 2. The findings revealed that both the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values remained unchanged and were not associated with overseas study experiences. In contrast, self-transcendence values showed a declining trend over time, which simultaneously suggests that self-enhancement values began to exert a stronger influence on these students. The results of this study indicate that embeddedness values are deeply embedded in the psyche of Malaysians, regardless of whether they have studied abroad or remained in their home country. Meanwhile, self-enhancement values are considered highly significant in facilitating the internalization of academic cultural principles within the demanding context of higher education. Overall, the findings highlight the complex interplay between cultural values and educational experiences, particularly in challenging academic environments.

Keywords: Personal values; Value importance; Value satisfaction; Malaysian students; Overseas learning;

INTRODUCTION

Although values are generally considered to be stable over time, research has demonstrated that they are not entirely fixed and can shift under certain conditions. Empirical evidence consistently suggests that individuals adapt their values in response to opportunities and demands within their environment. One well-documented factor influencing value change is age. As individuals grow older, pleasure-seeking values tend to decline in importance, whereas younger individuals often place greater emphasis on achievement-related values, reflecting the developmental priority of career establishment during early adulthood (Shoham et al., 1998).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature distinguishes between two primary forms of value change: mean-level change and rank-order change (Bardi et al., 2009). Mean-level change refers to shifts in the average importance of particular values across a population, typically driven by broader socio-cultural influences such as economic growth or educational reforms. In contrast, rank-order change—also referred to as intra-individual change—describes changes in the relative priority of values within an individual over time (Bardi et al., 2009).

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue XII December 2025

To examine these two types of change, Bardi et al. (2009) conducted a series of longitudinal studies across varied contexts, populations, time intervals, and measurement tools. The first study involved 811 adolescents from Germany and nearby countries, with data collected at two points separated by a nine-month interval. Participants completed the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-40; Schwartz et al., 1999) and the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992). Schwartz's higher-order value framework served as the theoretical reference. Findings revealed significant declines in benevolence and universalism, alongside increases in power and achievement, indicating systematic value shifts over time. Nonetheless, strong correlations between value ratings at both measurement points ($r > .50$) suggested substantial stability.

Furthermore, a two-factor structure—openness to change versus embeddedness, and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence—accounted for 36% of the variance. Minor deviations were observed in the positioning of certain values, such as achievement and power, as well as universalism and benevolence, but these differences were minimal and consistent with prior research. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) analyses further confirmed the robustness of Schwartz's (1992) value structure.The second study replicated this design with 129 university students in England using the 56-item SVS. Data were collected at the start of the first and second academic years. The results mirrored those of the initial study, particularly regarding changes in power and benevolence. However, achievement did not load clearly onto any value dimension. MDS analyses again supported the theoretical model of value change proposed by Schwartz (1992). A third study investigated whether similar patterns would emerge over a shorter timeframe. Three months after entering university, 119 first-year students in England completed the SVS online. Results indicated significant increases in universalism and power, while longitudinal correlations continued to demonstrate value stability. Although benevolence and universalism followed expected patterns, the value of stimulation appeared in an unexpected position, closer to tradition and conformity than to hedonism. Despite this anomaly, MDS analyses showed that rank-order changes remained consistent with Schwartz's theoretical framework.

The fourth longitudinal study extended this investigation to an adult sample to determine whether value change patterns persisted later in life and whether life events influenced the extent of change. This study included 135 Australian adults from an online consumer panel, with an average age of 39. Values were assessed using the Schwartz Value Best–Worst Survey (SVBWS; Lee et al., 2008), while life changes were measured using the Holmes and Rahe (1967) scale. Over a two-year period, mean-level change was observed only for hedonism, and value stability was lower than in the previous studies. In their discussion, Bardi et al. (2009) argued that intra-individual value change generally aligns with Schwartz's (1992) value model. The consistency of findings across diverse samples, contexts, time intervals, and measurement instruments suggests that the observed patterns are broadly generalisable. Importantly, the results indicate that adapting to major life changes may exert a stronger influence on values than age alone.

Mechanisms Of Value Change

Value change can occur through both automatic and deliberate processes (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). Initially, change may be triggered automatically by environmental cues that activate previously stored schemas. These cues prompt individuals to interpret and respond to situations using familiar cognitive frameworks, potentially leading to shifts in value priorities. For instance, a Malaysian student studying in the UK who participates in a themed birthday celebration by wearing a costume may unconsciously activate hedonistic values. This experience may initiate a negotiation between enjoyment and traditional norms, particularly when attempting to integrate into a new cultural setting. Such automatic processes can lead to initial value change, especially when resistance is low (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011).

Value change may also arise through more effortful processes in which individuals consciously reflect on and reassess their values. Experimental research indicates that when people are made explicitly aware of value conflicts, change may occur if adjustment is perceived as necessary. However, values that are strongly supported cognitively are often resistant to change, as individuals are capable of defending them. Moreover, direct challenges to deeply held values may provoke rejection rather than acceptance, particularly if individuals feel threatened (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). Because values are closely tied to self-identity, persuasion attempts alone are often insufficient to produce lasting change.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue XII December 2025

Sustained value change is more likely to occur through repeated exposure to situations that consistently activate new schemas, eventually making them central to perception and behaviour (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). For example, frequent use of a host country's language by immigrants may facilitate cultural understanding and gradual value adjustment. According to Bardi and Goodwin (2011), five key mechanisms facilitate value change: priming, adaptation, identification, maintenance of consistency, and direct persuasion.

Empirical Evidence Of Value Change Over Time

Previous research has demonstrated that values evolve across time and contexts (Sheldon, 2005; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Sheldon (2005) reaffirmed earlier findings (e.g., Arnett, 2000) showing that students tend to shift from extrinsic toward intrinsic values over the course of their university education. In a longitudinal study of 109 students at the University of Missouri, data were collected during participants' freshman year and again approximately 3.7 years later. Results indicated a significant reduction in extrinsic value orientation and a near-significant increase in intrinsic values. Among the intrinsic values, only emotional intimacy showed a significant increase, while personal growth and community contribution remained stable. These changes were associated with improvements in psychological well-being and greater self-determination.

Research also suggests that threatening circumstances can alter the hierarchy of values guiding individuals' lives. Sheldon and Kasser (2008) found that psychological threats increase the emphasis placed on extrinsic goals relative to intrinsic ones. Across three experimental studies with college students, participants were exposed to existential, economic, or interpersonal threats. In the first study, participants reflected on their own mortality; in the second, they imagined future economic security or insecurity. Both studies supported the hypothesis that threat alters perceived priorities. In the third study, interpersonal threat was induced through the concept of conditional positive regard (Rogers, 1964), whereby acceptance depends on meeting unrealistic standards. Participants exposed to this condition similarly showed a shift toward extrinsic goals. Collectively, these studies demonstrated that threats lead individuals to prioritise goals such as wealth, status, and appearance over personal growth, relationships, and community involvement (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). The authors highlighted the importance of both the intensity and frequency of threats in shaping long-term value orientations.

Research by Bardi, et.al. (2014) indicates that individuals often adopt values central to new life contexts even before transitions fully unfold. Across three longitudinal studies examining self-initiated transitions into vocational training, education, and migration, participants consistently reported entering these transitions with values aligned to their personal motivations, supporting the concept of value-based self-selection. Nonetheless, evidence of value socialisation emerged during educational transitions, suggesting that environmental influences also play a role. Migration was associated with the most extensive life changes, providing the strongest support for value socialisation during cultural adaptation. Overall, Bardi et al. (2014) concluded that value socialisation is most likely when individuals encounter situations that demand significant adjustment.

Research Questions And Hypotheses

"Do importance and satisfaction of values change over time as a function of overseas/home country experiences?"

Values may not easily change over time, but under certain circumstances, people may look at things in different perspectives than before (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). In an acculturation process, new values may be adopted or original values may diminish as immigrants engage in acculturation strategies that are suitable to the foreign society they are settling in (Berry, 1997). By distancing themselves from their original culture, these immigrants may adopt most of the host's cultural values, or may probably choose to acquire a balance between the two cultures by maintaining their original culture, and at the same time, accommodating the host's cultural values in their existing values. For Malaysian students who have been studying overseas, the exposure which they have obtained from overseas experience could change their perception on certain things to some degree in life. Therefore, it is probable that the overseas Malaysian students in this study have experienced some degree of value changes after being a couple of months abroad. However, as embeddedness values are strongly upheld in the Malaysian society, it is suspected that these values will not be easily dismissed even if

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being abroad. For the home country students in Malaysia, the transitional experience to the university life may not affect much of their values as they still live under the same cultural rules and expectations. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

H1: The importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values for overseas students remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H2: The importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values for overseas students increase over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H3: The importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values for home country students remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H4: The importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values for home country remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The study had been designed as a quantitative survey using paper-based and online survey methods.

Sampling

In the follow-up study, 30.05% of the previous samples of 2090 were retained. Six hundred and twenty-eight (628) of them turned up for this follow-up study, comprising 244 overseas students and 384 home country students. The home country students answered the paper-based questionnaire, whilst the overseas students answered the online questionnaire. Among the 1118 overseas students, 1062 of them provided their email addresses at Time 1. After sending the email to the respective students, 189 of the email were bounced back, leaving 873 of them being successfully sent. In the end, only 21.82% (n=244) of the overall overseas students responded to the online questionnaire.

For the home country students, the questionnaires were distributed in the classes of which were assumed to have high possible number of students who had responded to the first questionnaire (at Time 1). Out of the 650 questionnaires collected, only 384 were found to match with the previous responses, which was approximately 39.51% of the return rate of the home country students. Gender distribution showed that 208 (33.12%) of the participants were males and 420 (66.88%) were females. Overall, almost 36% of them reported that they had been travelling abroad. In comparison to the home country students, more that 60% of the overseas students claimed that they had been to overseas before. In terms of parents' educational level, the overseas group had the highest number of fathers with a degree qualification, whereas for the home country students, the highest number of the fathers' academic qualification fell in the category of secondary education. Both of the groups had the highest number of mothers with secondary education background. The overall mean for the duration of enrolment at the university was about 6.5 months.

Measures

A set of questionnaire that comprised of two sections was used, i.e. the demographic background and measurement for personal values. The measurement for personal values can be divided into two different phases. The first phase contains a 20-item Schwartz's Short Value Scale (SSVS) (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; Schwartz, 1992), of each 10 items measuring the importance and satisfaction of values. In the second phase of the study or the follow-up, the same measurement was conducted on the same participants.

The SSVS contains a single item that measures each of the following 10 values; power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and safety, as a guiding principle in life. For example, the participants were asked to rate the importance as a life-guiding principle of "*Power that is, social power, authority, wealth*" and *"Achievement, that is, success, capability,*

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ambition, and influence on people and events." A similar phrasing was used for all 10 values. Hence, the SSVS included 10 items, each of which indicated one original value and the related original value items as descriptors. The 10 value items were rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*opposed to values*), 1 (*not important*), 4 (*important*), to 8 (*of supreme importance).* Higher scores on this scale indicate greater importance of values.

Schwartz's theory of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992) conceptualizes values as being organized in a circumplex structure defined by two overarching dimensions: embeddedness versus openness to change, and self-transcendence versus self-enhancement. The first dimension reflects a tension between maintaining existing social arrangements and the security gained from adherence to social norms (high embeddedness), and pursuing personal autonomy, curiosity, and emotional expression (low embeddedness) (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005). The second dimension captures the contrast between prioritizing the well-being of others (high self-transcendence) and emphasizing personal success and individual interests (low self-transcendence) (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005).

To investigate whether this two-dimensional value structure could also be identified in the Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS), Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) conducted a multidimensional scaling analysis. This method examines the distances between values in a spatial representation, where shorter distances indicate greater conceptual similarity and stronger correlations in importance ratings. Values that share similar correlation patterns with other values appear closer together, whereas values with opposing patterns are positioned farther apart in the multidimensional space. The findings demonstrated that the value configuration of the SSVS closely corresponded to the circumplex model originally proposed by Schwartz (1992, 1994). In addition, moderate to strong positive correlations between the SSVS and the full Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) were observed (ranging from .45 to .70), suggesting that the two instruments are largely comparable. Given that the SSVS demonstrates validity similar to that of the original SVS, its shorter format offers practical advantages for research by reducing respondent burden. Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) also introduced formulas for calculating the importance of the two value dimensions using both 7-point and 9-point response scales; the present study adopts the 9-point scale approach.

The followings are the equation formulas used in this research:

Self-transcendence importance/ satisfaction =
-.60 – (.19 x Power) - (.14 x Achievement) – (.09 x Hedonism) – (.11 x Stimulation) + (.01 x Self-direction) + (.10 x Universalism) + (.13 x Benevolence) + (.07 x Tradition) + (.06 x Conformity) + (.02 x Security)
Embeddedness importance/satisfaction =
.82 + (.05 x Power) + (.06 x Achievement) – (.04 x Hedonism) – (.09 x Stimulation) – (.18 x Self-direction) – (.16 x Universalism) + (.03 x Benevolence) + (.16 x Tradition) + (.18 x Conformity) + (.11 x Security)

Based on the original SSVS, following the same sequence of items and structure, another value scale was adapted in order to measure satisfaction felt when goals related to each of the values are achieved. Answers were scaled on a 9-point scale, ranging from 0 ('*not relevant to my values'*) to 8 *('completely satisfied')*. Higher scores on this scale indicate higher satisfaction of values.

The demographic section, includes the types of studying they are undergoing, the length of being at the university, and the educational background of their parents. Other information had already been provided at the Time 1 survey, including gender, ethnic groups, age, the institution they were enrolling in, overseas travelling experience, and whether or not they were the government scholarship holders. In order to connect the data at Time 1 with the data from this follow-up study, under this section, they were again asked to provide the same email address and the unique code invented at Time 1.

Ethics

The study had been granted the ethics approval by the Board of Ethics Committee of the universities involved.

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Procedure

A follow-up study was conducted based on a previous survey, beginning with the control group. Participants from the earlier study were identified according to their faculty programmes with assistance from university academic staff. Due to limited internet access and missing email information, a paper-based questionnaire was used for the control group. The researcher coordinated with programme coordinators and lecturers to administer the questionnaire during the final 30 minutes of class, providing participants with information about the study, anonymity, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw. To enable data matching between Time 1 and Time 2, participants were asked to provide the same self-generated code and email address as in the initial survey. Questionnaire administration took approximately 20 minutes, and data collection lasted three weeks.

For overseas participants, data were collected via an online survey. Participants were first informed of the follow-up study by email and later sent a survey link. Before participation, they reviewed an introduction outlining ethical assurances and provided informed consent. Participants were required to re-enter their self-generated identification code and email address to match responses across time points. The online survey included safeguards to prevent multiple submissions and allowed participants to skip questions if desired. Responses could not be altered after submission, and a debriefing section was provided upon completion.

RESULTS

"Do importance and satisfaction of values change over time as a function of overseas/home country experiences?"

A 2 (Time 1 embeddedness importance and Time 2 embeddedness importance) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA showed no significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention in embeddedness importance, *F(1, 612)= 3.46, p=.06*, partial eta squared = .01. The main effect of the time period in embeddedness importance was not significant, *F(1. 612)= 2.11, p = .15*, partial eta squared = .00; whilst, the main effect of overseas study intention was significant, but rather weak F(1. 612)= 4.13, p = .04. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 1). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 1, and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 2.

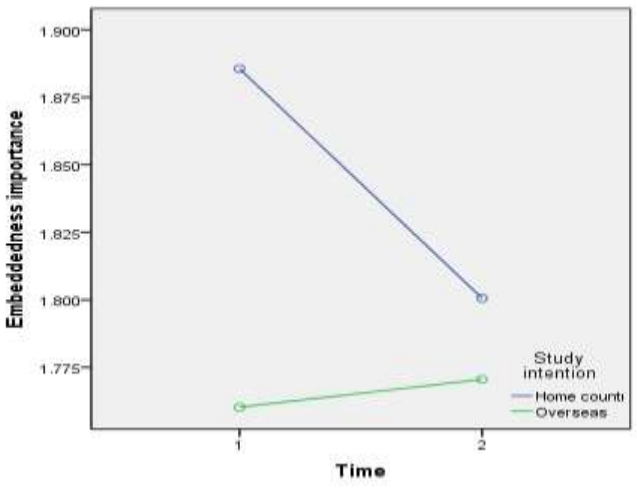

Figure 1: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for embeddedness importance

Table 1 The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for embeddedness importance at Time 1 and Time 2.

	Student types/groups	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Embeddedness importance at	Home-country students	1.89	.51	378

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Time 1	overseas students	1.76	.65	236
	Total	1.84	.57	614
Embeddedness importance at Time2	Home-country students	1.80	.52	378
	overseas students	1.77	.57	236
	Total	1.79	.54	614

Table 2 Pairwise comparisons for embeddedness importance

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.08*	.04	.04	.00	.15
Overseas	Home country	-.08*			-.15	-.00
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.04	.03	.14	-.01	.09
Time 2	Time 1	-.04			-.09	.01

$p<.05$

A 2 × 2 mixed-design ANOVA was conducted with time (embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2) as the within-subjects factor and student group (home country vs. overseas students) as the between-subjects factor. The analysis revealed no significant interaction between time and overseas study intention in relation to embeddedness satisfaction, $F(1, 603) = 0.77$, $p = .38$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$. However, significant main effects were found for time, $F(1, 603) = 14.61$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$, as well as for overseas study intention, $F(1, 603) = 12.25$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. The interaction pattern is illustrated in Figure 2, with descriptive statistics reported in Table 3 and pairwise comparison results shown in Table 4. As depicted in the figure, both groups of students exhibited a decline in embeddedness satisfaction over time, suggesting that the importance of embeddedness values may be reduced as other values become more salient or reinforced within the new environment.

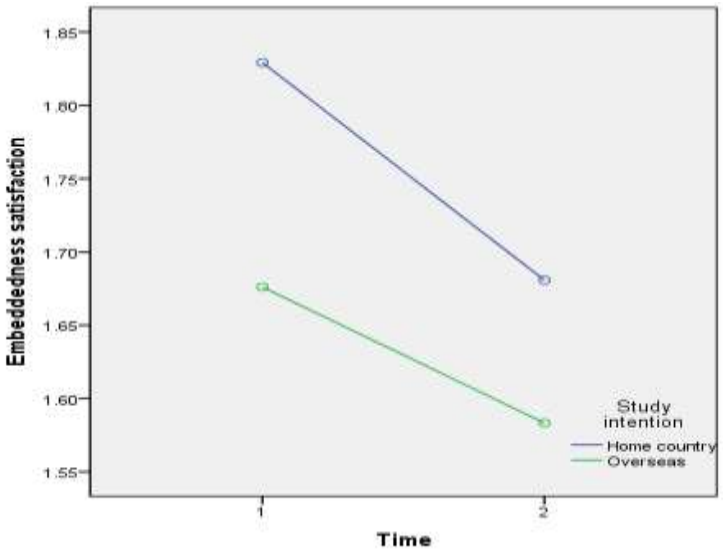

Figure 2: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for embeddedness satisfaction

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Table 3 The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	M	SD	N
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1	Home-country students	1.83	.63	367
	overseas students	1.68	.62	238
	Total	1.77	.63	605
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time2	Home-country students	1.68	.51	367
	overseas students	1.58	.51	238
	Total	1.64	.51	605

Table 4 Pairwise comparisons for embeddedness satisfaction

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.13*	.04	.00	.06	.20
Overseas	Home country	-.13*			-.20	-.06
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.12*	.03	.00	.06	.18
Time 2	Time 1	-.12*			-.18	-.06
*$p<.05$						

A 2 (Time 1 self-transcendence importance and Time 2 self-transcendence importance x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA results showed a significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention, F(1, 612)= 11.75, p= .00, partial eta squared = .02, in self-transcendence importance. There were significant main effects for time period, F(1. 612)= 28.69, p = .00, partial eta squared = .05, and overseas study intention, F(1, 612) = 6.14, p = .01, partial eta squared = 0.01). The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 3). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 5 and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 6.

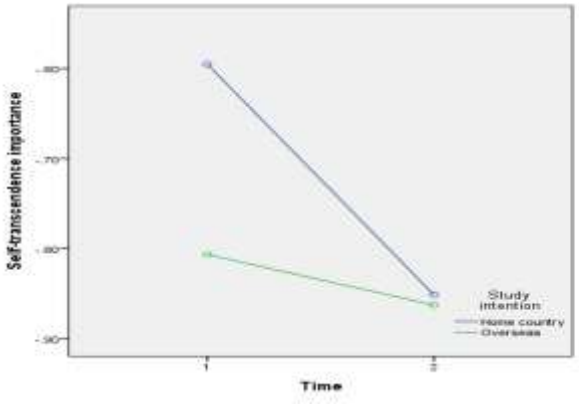

Figure 3: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for self-transcendence importance

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Table 5 The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for self-transcendence importance at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1	Home-country students	-.60	.69	378
	Overseas students	-.81	.70	236
	Total	-.68	.70	614
Self-transcendence importance at Time 2	Home-country students	-.85	.59	378
	Overseas students	-.86	.60	236
	Total	-.86	.59	614

Table 6 Pairwise comparisons for self-transcendence importance

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.11*	.05	.01	.02	.20
Overseas	Home country	-.11*			-.20	-.02
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.16*	.03	.00	.10	.21
Time 2	Time 1	-.16*			-.21	-.10

**p<.05*

A 2 (Time 1 self-transcendence satisfaction and Time 2 self-transcendence satisfaction x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA results showed a significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention in self-transcendence satisfaction, F(1, 603)= 4.20, p= .04, partial eta squared = .01. There were significant main effects of time period, F(1. 603)= 31.70, p = .00, partial eta squared = .05, and overseas study intention, F(1, 603) = 5.18, p = .02, partial eta squared = 0.01) in self-transcendence satisfaction. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 4). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7 and the pairwise comparisons can be seen in Table 8. The downward trend of satisfaction in self-transcendence values indicate that the students in this study may be driven more by values that are opposite to self-transcendence (i.e. self enhancement values).

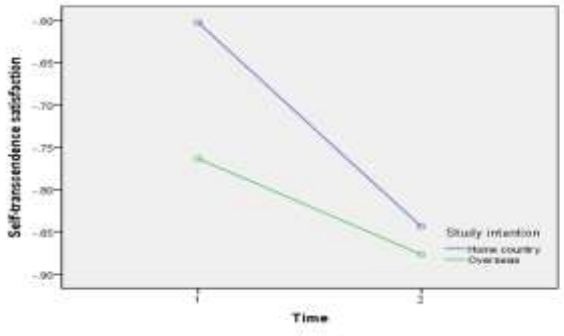

Figure 4: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for self-transcendence satisfaction

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Table 7 The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for self- transcendence satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1	Home-country students	-.60	.69	367
	Overseas students	-.76	.65	238
	Total	-.67	.68	605
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2	Home-country students	-.85	.59	367
	Overseas students	-.88	.59	238
	Total	-.86	.59	605

Table 8 Pairwise comparisons for self-transcendence satisfaction

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.10*	.04	.02	.01	.18
Overseas	Home country	-.10*			-.18	-.01
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.18*	.03	.00	.12	.24
Time 2	Time 1	-.18*			-.24	-.12

**p<.05*

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that neither the perceived importance nor the level of satisfaction associated with embeddedness values showed significant variation over time as a result of studying locally or abroad. Nevertheless, students pursuing their studies overseas consistently assigned lower importance to embeddedness values compared to those studying in their home country. This pattern may suggest that students who choose to study abroad already possess value orientations that align more closely with those prevalent in their intended host countries. As these students are largely exposed to Western higher education systems, values that emphasize openness, adaptability, and receptiveness to change may be prioritised over more traditional orientations.

In contrast, both the importance and satisfaction related to self-transcendence values appeared to decline across time for students in both groups, signalling a gradual shift towards self-enhancement values. Universities' emphasis on academic excellence and well-rounded achievement may foster stronger achievement-related motivations among students. Additionally, the university setting may introduce new forms of personal gratification, which could encourage greater endorsement of hedonistic tendencies. For students studying locally, such excitement may stem from participation in compulsory co-curricular courses that contribute to academic credit. Although these courses are mandatory, the wide range of available activities may generate

enthusiasm and enjoyment. Universities also serve as environments where leadership skills are developed, which may further reinforce self-enhancement orientations.

For students studying overseas, the novelty of living abroad for the first time may contribute significantly to increased enjoyment, as they are exposed to a range of self-indulgent experiences that differ from those available in their home country. Such distinctive experiences during the approximate six-month study period may therefore play a role in shaping value change. These findings contrast with those reported by Caprara, Alessandri, and Eisenberg (2011), who observed an increase in self-transcendence values among Italian young adults over time. However, their study examined value change over a four-year interval, suggesting that major life transitions, rather than age alone, may be more influential in shaping values—an explanation that may also apply to the Malaysian student context.

CONCLUSION

The results indicated that Malaysian students' importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values changed significantly over time as a function of overseas versus home-country experience. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in changes in the importance or satisfaction of embeddedness values across the two groups. The findings also revealed that both groups demonstrated an increasing inclination toward self-enhancement values, which may play an important role in enabling students to pursue optimal opportunities for academic excellence.

Several limitations of the study should be acknowledged. First, the substantial attrition rate among both overseas and home-country students may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore prioritize strategies to reduce attrition and to achieve more balanced response rates between the two groups in order to enhance the robustness of the data. Second, the relatively short time interval of approximately six months may be insufficient to capture deeper or more enduring changes in values. Accordingly, the use of mixed-method approaches—such as interviews or reflective journals—could provide richer insights into the processes underlying value change. Finally, as the concept of "value satisfaction" is relatively new, further conceptual refinement is needed. Clarifying value satisfaction in terms of effort investment or goal attainment would help strengthen and advance the theoretical framework.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia for funding this research, as well as to the university authorities and all participants involved.

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ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XII Issue XII December 2025

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