

## The Psychological Significance of Cultural and Religious Values Among the Arab Population

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Values, which are the guiding principles and beliefs of our lives, have an influence on one's psychological health. This study aims to investigate how Schwartz's four higher-order values (conservation, openness to change, self-transcendence, and self-enhancement) and religious values influence psychological health among the Arab population. Methods: A total of 1,023 respondents from nine Arab countries aged 18 to 71 filled out an online survey with measures of the following constructs: Schwartz's four higher-order values (Portrait Value Questionnaire-21), religious values (Sahin's Index of Islamic Moral Values), and general psychological health (General Health Questionnaire-28). Results: Two models of multiple regression were conducted to investigate the relationships between values and psychological health. Higher conservation, self-enhancement, and religious values were significantly associated with better psychological health, with conservation losing significance after adding religious values to the model. All of Schwartz's four values were found to have a significant relationship with religious values. More self-enhancement and conservation values were associated with higher identification of religious values, and the opposite was true for the other two values. Conclusion: The findings challenged existing assumptions that conservation values relate negatively to psychological health. This finding could be explained by the congruence of conservation values and the Arab culture. The most powerful relationships were those of self-enhancement and religious values, both of which were positively associated with psychological health. As such, therapists should be aware to reconsider biases against religious or conservation values and rather pay attention to their potential positive influence over one's psychological health.

**Keywords :** counseling psychology, counseling and cultural values, counseling and religious values, psychotherapy and Arab values

**Conference Title :** ICCPP 2024 : International Conference on Counseling Psychology and Psychotherapy

**Conference Location :** Tokyo, Japan

**Conference Dates :** August 15-16, 2024