VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

Florencio Vicente Castro
Departamento de Psicología y Antropología. Universidad de Extremadura.
Avda. De Elvas, s/n 06071 BADAJOZ. fvicente@unex.es

Jose Carlos Sanchez
Facultad de Psicología. Universidad de Salamanca
Avda. de la Merced, 109. 37005 Salamanca, ESPAÑA. jsanchez@usal.es

Silvio Manuel da Rocha Brito
Instituto Politécnico de Tomar, Portugal. Quinta do Contador – Estrada da Serra
2300-313 Tomar. Telefone 00351 249328 100 ext. 2242. Silvio.brito@ipt.pt

Valeria Caggiano
Universitá Degli Studi Roma Tre. VCaggiano@Uniromatre.It

Fecha de recepción: 11 de febrero de 2012
Fecha de admisión: 15 de marzo de 2012

ABSTRACT

Several studies demonstrate that Schwartz’s (2006) theory of human values is valid in cultures previously beyond its range. We measured the 10 value constructs in the theory with the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ), a new and less abstract method. This study explores the influence of values in a professional choose, focusing on the associations between social and professional background. The findings support the construct validity of the test. The results suggest, there is a matching between values and occupational choose, there are evident differences between gender and age. These results confirm the international literature about different gender and value system’s. Its theoretical meaning in the context of Schwartz’s culture-level value theory is discussed.

Keywords: Values; occupational choose; professional and social work.

RESUMO

Vários estudos demonstram que a teoria dos valores humanos de Schwartz (2006) é válida em culturas previamente fora do seu alcance. Medimos 10 construtos de valor na teoria com o Questionário de Portabilidade de Valores (PVQ), um método novo e menos abstracto. Este estudo explora a influência dos valores numa escolha profissional, focando as relações entre as origens social e profissional. Os resultados apoiam a validade de construto do teste. Os mesmos sugerem, que há uma coincidência entre
VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

There is no universal agreement on the meaning, origins and functions performed by the values, in particular, the values can be defined as beliefs or beliefs about ideal of conduct modes, relatively stable over time (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 2003). They are cognitive representations of what is important and right in life and provide the standards by which their actions and those of others are relatively abstract and ordered sense of importance (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). People pursue goals and standards that assign value and the achievement of which no reason to take pleasure and satisfaction, and avoid conduct which are associated with feelings of blame, shame and guilt (Schwartz, 2003). The value-priorities can influence the course of individual life, the goals to be achieved and the reasons that guide behavior. Some values are universal because most likely connected to the basic needs of our human nature. Other values, however, relate to particular areas of action, such as work, politics, education, and develop and are derived from fundamental values. These values divided into two basic types: instrumental and terminal, in reference to the type of objective which they pursue. He defines value as: “... conviction for which a permanent one particular lifestyle (instrumental value) or purpose of existence (terminal value) is preferable to other ways of life and purpose (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5) Terminal values (ends) are connected with the objectives or end states of existence that we want to achieve (such as a comfortable life, family security). The instrumental values (means) but these are the ways in which we aim to achieve terminal values (such as ambition, courage). Once acquired by the individual, the values can be defended, justified, supported and encouraged as personally and socially desirable. The major limitation of the arguments is that of Rokeach do not analyze the existence of a super ordinate structure that will take into account relationships between different values. This however assumes a central role in the theory proposed by Shalom Schwartz. The theory of the ten basic values of Shalom Schwartz (1992) provides a taxonomy that has been empirically confirmed by numerous studies and in cultural contexts very different language. This author has conducted several studies on cross-cultural values assuming the existence of a superordinate structure that will take into account relationships between different values, and elaborated the theory of universal psychological structure of values (Schwartz e Bilsky, 1987) This theory provides a framework for way in which they tend to be located both with respect to the individual values is the value system as a whole (Schwartz, 1992). According to Schwartz, “... A value is a concept that an individual has a purpose transitiutonal and (terminal vs. instrumental) expressing interests (individualistic vs. collectivist) domains linked to motivational and evaluated on a continuum of importance as a guiding principle of his life” (Schwartz e Bilsky, 1987, p. 553). The assumption of the model proposed by Schwartz in the nature and origins of the values that are referred to as cognitive representations of three types of universal human needs: a) the needs of a biological organism, b) the demands of nature required for the coordination of social exchanges, c) socio-institutional obligations that ensure the common good and survival of the company. He affirms the existence of ten values derived from three universal human needs. The Table 1 shows the ten values and a brief definition of each value (Capanna, Vecchione Schwartz, 2005).
Table 1

POWER: Social status and prestige control of resources and dominance over other people.

SUCCESS: achievement of personal success through the demonstration of its competence, in accordance with social standards.

HEDONISM: personal pleasure and gratification of the senses.

STIMULATION: excitement, novelty and exciting challenges.

SELF-DIRECTION: independent thought and action - choosing, creating, exploring.

UNIVERSAL: understanding, tolerance, respect and protect the welfare of all people and nature.

BENEVOLENCE: Maintenance and improvement of the welfare of the people with whom you are in direct contact.

TRADITION: Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that belong to the cultural tradition or religious.

CONFORMITY: limitation of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to disturb or harm others and violate social norms and expectations.

SAFETY: safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of person.

The direction and magnitude of the relationship between values is a function of their distance, with "similar" values placed in adjacent positions (eg. benevolence and universalism) and the more "different" in opposite positions (for example, universalism and power). The set of ten values is due to two larger bipolar: 1. Openness to change (self-direction and stimulation) vs. The Conservatism (Tradition, Conformity and Safety) - this dimension reflects a conflict between the emphasis on the independence of their thinking and actions and the preference for a submissive self-restraint, for the observance of the practices dictated by tradition and for the protection stability; 2. Assertiveness (Success and Power) vs. self-transcendence (Universalism and Benevolence) - this dimension reflects a conflict between the pursuit of personal success and dominance over others and acceptance of others and commitment to their well-being (Schwartz, 1992). The value Hedonism does not seem to take a definite position in space, while in some studies was associated with self-direction and stimulation values, in other, tends to be associated primarily with the values of Power and Success. For this reason, in figure 1, the space occupied by the Hedonism is represented in dashed lines.

Figure 1. THE STRUCTURE OF PROTOTYPES value systems (Schwartz, 1992)
VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of the study presented here was to analyze, from a differential, the relationship between the ten values measured by the PVQ, the instrument recently introduced by Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, 2001), with the choice of employment, gender and age (Rokeach, 1973; Feather, 1975; Schwartz, 1992; Gibson e Schwartz, 1998; Ryckman, Houston, 2003; Capanna, Vecchione, Schwartz, 2005; Lyons, Duxbury and Higgins, 2005; Schwartz e Rubel, 2005). To examine this report, we used the taxonomy proposed by Schwartz that goes beyond the distinction between nominal values, specifying a set of dynamic relationships that are based on the similarity and compatibility of the objectives that each motivational value expresses. The motivations underlying the career choices are many and vary from person to person depending on their needs, their personal characteristics, their culture and their own ideals. Often we are faced with questions like, “I move or change employment with the family? (Success and Stimulation vs. that. Safety and Benevolence), some work to help others, who for a career, some for economic security, some to express their creativity, who for social approval. The role of values may be essential because they provide the criteria to select the behavior in different situations (Capanna, Vecchione, Schwartz, 2005), influence behavior in a wide range of situations, justify past behavior and determine what future (Braithwaite e Scott, 1991), The relationship between values and choice of work has so far received little attention in the literature (Judge and Bretz, 1992). And likely, however, that values play a not insignificant role on this decision. Certainly the factors involved are (Rynes, Schwab e Heneman, 1983), such as the role of security, salary and benefits at work. Individuals seeking to pursue a variety of purposes and values in their work: an economic return, identity, social status, a self, and more, studies by Donald Super (1974, 1981), and then several other authors (cfr. Trentini, 1995, 1999; Castelli, 1996; Bellotto 1997), put the emphasis on importance of professional values and the primary role they play in the interaction of the individual with the social context in which it is inserted, which may facilitate or render more difficult the processes of socialization and job placement. The organizational role of personal values (such as success, altruism, honesty and justice) has often been examined in relation to aspects such as organizational culture, job satisfaction and commitment (eg. Locke, 1976; Meglino, Ravlin e Adkins, 1989; Arciniega e Gonzalez, 2006). Each of us gives to his work, sometimes unconsciously; a deep meaning that characterizes it and makes it a source of personal satisfaction. This meaning is based on their values or of what they believe is worth working.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURES

Participated in the study 250 participants, aged between 20 and 70 years (mean age = 42.34, SD = 12.14), of which 170 males (68.2%) and 74 females (31.8%), residents in the provinces of Siracusa and Catania. According to the hypothesis of the research data were collected in a group of individuals belonging to 4 occupations: 72 (30.1%) workers (61 males and 11 females) aged between 20 and 67 years (mean = 38, 04, SD = 12.67), 82 (34.3%) employees (54 males and 28 females) aged between 20 and 70 years (mean = 42.96, SD = 11.73), 45 (18 , 8%) entrepreneurs and professionals (40 males and 5 females) aged between 21 and 70 years (mean = 42.64, SD = 12.16) and 40 (16.7%) teachers (8 males and 32 females) aged between 27 and 66 years (mean = 47.83, SD = 9.40). As regards the educational level of 5.1% of the sample has an elementary school, middle school to 15.7%, 63.4% a
college degree and 15.3% a college degree. This sample was collected as part of a larger study that aims to collect data on a regional basis in order to have complex and differentiated picture of the Italian, and so to be compared with the findings from surveys conducted in various other European countries. The questionnaire was administered individually. Subjects were instructed by an interviewer, and for completing the questionnaire took on average 15-30 minutes.

TOOLS

The values were measured using the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ), the instrument recently proposed by Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, 2001) for the measurement of the ten values postulated by the theory of universal psychological structure of values. The PVQ, valid also in Italy (Capanna, Vecchione and Schwartz, 2005), consists of 40 statements, each of which provides a brief description of a person’s type and its goals, aspirations or desires, so as to describe all types value-in the different facets of each of the ten values proposed by Schwartz. The basic personal values that are evaluated are (see Table 1) power (sample item is: "It's important to him/her to be in charge of others and tell them what to do"), success (sample item is "Having a lot of success is important for him/her"), hedonism (example item is: "have a good time is very important to him/her"), the self-direction (example item is: "Do you think it’s important interest in things"), universalism (example item is: "He wants everyone to be treated justly, even people who do not know"), goodwill (example item is: "it is very important to him/her help people around him"), tradition (example item is: "Do you think it is better to do things the traditional way"), conformity (example item is: "Do you think people should do what he is told") and safety (sample item is: "it is very important to him/her that his country is safe"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from a low of .56 (tradition) to a maximum of .81 (Success). All sizes meet the criteria commonly accepted standards in the literature (Nunnally, 1968).

THE SET OF TEN VALUES IS DUE TO TWO LARGER BIPOLAR

1. Openness to change (self-direction and stimulation) vs. The Conservatism (Tradition, Conformity and Security): the independence of their thinking and actions vs. compliance with the practices dictated by tradition and the protection of stability. 2. The self-affirmation (Success and Power) vs. self-transcendence (Benevolence and Universalism): the pursuit of personal success and dominance over their fellows vs. the acceptance of others and a commitment to their welfare. The statements were preceded by an initial part designed to detect the sociodemographic characteristics of participants, such as gender, age, educational level and occupational category. To calculate the importance that each individual attaches to the ten values identified by the PVQ were used the average scores calculated considering all the items designed to measure the same value.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Were carried out a series of one-way analysis of variance to investigate the presence of differences attributable to different occupational groups examined (workers, employees, professionals and teachers) and membership of the subjects to sociodemographic variables (gender and age) and the ten categories of value-PVQ and within the two-dimensional space (vs. openness to change, conservatism, and assertiveness vs. self-transcendence). It is, therefore, analyzed the effects univariate discriminating value-to see what size of the groups considered. Found significant differences were explored using post hoc comparisons performed using Tukey's test (p <0.05).
VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

DIFFERENCES ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY

Comparisons between the means on the dimension of values measured by the PVQ

Figure 2 shows the mean values of the ten dimensions considered separately for the professional category. The results of analysis of variance showed significant differences in the presence of stimulation \([F(3, 232) = 3.64, p < .05]\) and in hedonism \([F(3, 231) = 4.84, p < .01]\). A comparison made with Tukey’s test scores show that teachers have the lowest values in research-related adventures (3.28 vs. 4.12 and 3.51 and 3.36) and pleasure (3.17 vs. . . . 4.34 and 3.54 and 3.26).

![Fig.2 Mean values of ten dimensions of values, separately for the professional category](image1)

Note: the dotted lines and letters indicate significant differences between groups. The average values were calculated on 235, 235, 235, 235, 235, 235, 235, 232, 235, 235, 235 subjects for the ten dimensions.

The figure 3 presents the averages for the two larger bipolar separately for the professional category. The results of one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference in the self (Success and Power) \([F(3, 234) = 3.01, p < .05]\). The self-employed have higher scores in the self (Success and Power) (3.73 vs. 3.25 and 3.23 and 3.16). In the case of freelance research seems the success combining this with the spirit of initiative, independence and autonomy, all key components in the success of this category.

![Fig.3 Average values of the two larger pairs, separately by professional category](image2)
DIFFERENCES ATTRIBUTABLE TO GENDER
Comparisons between the averages in the dimension of values measured by the PVQ

Fig.4 Average values of the ten value-size, separately by gender

Note: the dashed lines indicate significant differences between groups. The average values were calculated on 235, 235, 235, 235, 235, 233, 232, 235, 235, 235 subjects for the ten dimensions.

The one-way analysis of variance conducted separately for each dimension shows significant differences in value-stimulation \[ F(1, 232) = 5.25, p < .05 \], in hedonism \[ F(1, 231) = 6.30, p < .05 \] and security \[ F(1, 234) = 5.17, p < .05 \]. While males scored significantly higher in stimulation values (3.79 vs. 3.40) and hedonism (3.84 vs. 3.43), females obtained higher scores in the security value (4.59 vs. 4.32). While the men were assigned higher scores in values aimed at novelty and pleasure, women tend to assign greater importance to values related to the harmony of relationships and of person. The figure 5 presents the averages for the two larger bipolar separately by gender. The results of one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference in Conservatism (Tradition, Conformity and Security) \[ F(1, 234) = 4.54, p < .05 \].

Fig.5 Average values of the two larger pairs, separately by gender
VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

Note: the dashed lines indicate significant differences between groups. The average values were calculated on 233, 235, 235, 235 subjects for the two bipolar dimensions (Openness to Change vs. Conservatism and assertiveness vs. Self-transcendence). The females (4.30 vs. 4.10) appear to have higher scores in this dimension than men in expressing a preference to do things the traditional way, to maintain its current condition, for appropriate behaviours and living in a secure environment. For the other remaining dimensions are not significant differences between men and women, whose scores can be considered equivalent.

DIFFERENCES ATTRIBUTABLE TO AGE

Comparisons between the averages in the dimension of values measured by the PVQ

The figure 6 shows the average values of ten-dimensional value-separately for different age groups. The one-way analysis of variance conducted separately for each dimension showed a significant difference in the stimulation \[ F(2, 232) = 8.38, p <.001 \], in hedonism \[ F(2, 231) = 17, 92, p <.001 \] and security \[ F(2, 234) = 4.47, p <.05 \].

Comparisons were made with Tukey’s test showed that the younger subjects aged between 20 and 36 years tend to assign greater importance to values such stimulation (4.12 vs. 3.51 and 3.36) and hedonism (4.34 vs. 3.54 and 3.26) that assign priority to the search for novelty and pleasure than the other two groups, while those aged between 37 and 50 years tend to assign greater importance values related to safety, harmony and stability of society, relationships and themselves (4.56 vs. 4.17 and 4.46). The figure 7 presents the averages for the two larger bipolar separately for age groups. The results of one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference in receptiveness to change (self-direction and stimulation) \[ F(2, 232) = 6.93, p <.001 \] and Conservatism (Tradition, Conformity and Security) \[ F(2, 234) = 4.15, p <.05 \].

Fig.7 Average values of the two larger pairs, separately for different age groups

Note: the dotted lines and letters indicate significant differences between groups. The average values were calculated on 233, 235, 235, 235 subjects for the two bipolar dimensions (Openness to Change vs. Conservatism and assertiveness vs. Self-transcendence).

Comparisons were made with Tukey’s test showed that the younger subjects aged between 20
and 36 years are more involved in research and challenges of the new and exciting (4.34 vs. 3.89 and 3, 83) and give less importance to values related to compliance with the practices dictated by tradition and the protection of the stability (3.98 vs. 4.26 and 4.24). There were no significant differences in other dimensions, and the scores can therefore be considered equivalent in the three groups considered.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.**

In conclusion, in this paper we emphasize the importance of understanding their own value-priority, as is likely to know and express their values and permits them to make conscious and more motivated his choice of profession, ensuring that the work is in harmony with our attitudes and our deepest preferences.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

VALUES AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOOSE

- Chicago: Rand McNally.