



Finding An Association Between Values And Work Motives

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Abstract

Employees are motivated by different values to work: seeking communion, rising in status, and accomplishing goals (Barrick et al.). This project sought to find an association between Shalom H. Schwartz's Theory of Basic Values and Barrick et al.'s values from the Motivational Orientation Inventory in the context of a work environment. By finding a correlation, our research could help employers learn more about the motivations of their current employees. It was hypothesized that a work motive of communion is associated with the value of benevolence and universalism (transcendental values) (H1), a work motive of status is associated with the value of power (H2), and a work motive of accomplishment is associated with the value of achievement (H3). It was also hypothesized that women are more motivated by communion at work than men are (H4). A survey was taken by 68 Gator Management and MTurk participants. The survey gathered participants' responses on values, personality traits, and work motivation. We found that H2 was supported, whereas H1, H3, and H4 were not.

Keywords: values, work motivations, gender

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine if the personal values people have are associated with the motivations they have at work. There were three personal values from Shalom H. Schwartz's Theory of Basic Values (2012) and work motivations from Barrick et al.'s (2002) Motivational Orientation Inventory (MOI) that were of interest in finding an association between.

Shalom H. Schwartz's Theory of Basic Values (2012) identifies ten universal basic values. Values are what individuals believe are important to them in life (Schwartz, 2012). The theory specifies six main features of values. Values are beliefs, refer to desirable goals, transcend specific actions and situations, serve as standards, are ordered by importance, and relative importance of them guides actions (Schwartz, 2012). The ten values identified in the theory are self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism (Schwartz, 2012). The ten values express broad goals ranging from self-direction, or valuing independence, to tradition, or valuing one's cultural customs

(Schwartz, 2012). Although values are universal, individuals will differ in the relative importance they attribute to those values (Schwartz, 2012). The importance of the values to individuals can be measured by Schwartz's Value Survey (SVS) (2012). The SVS presents lists of items that express aspects of the motivational goals of the values (Schwartz, 2012). The importance of a value to an individual is given as a score of the individual's average rating of the group of items measuring that value (Schwartz, 2012).

The three personal values chosen from the Theory of Basic Values and measured by the SVS were transcendence, power, and achievement. Transcendence include the values of benevolence and universalism. Benevolence values preserving and enhancing the welfare of those whom one is frequently in contact with, like friends and family (Schwartz, 2012). Universalism values having concern for all people (Schwartz, 2012). Power values status and control over people and resources in society, such as wealth (Schwartz, 2012). Achievement values being accepted by finding personal success that is based on societal standards (Schwartz, 2012).

Barrick et al.'s Motivational Orientation Inventory (2002) identifies three work motivations. Motivations are basic goals that regulate personal behavior (Barrick et al., 2002). The three motivations of the MOI are communion striving, status striving, and accomplishment striving (Barrick et al., 2002). Those who strive for communion are motivated by getting along with others, whereas those who strive for status are motivated by obtaining positions of power over others (Barrick et. al., 2002). Those who strive for accomplishment are motivated by achieving tasks (Barrick et al., 2002).

Work motivations are predicted by the personality traits identified by the Five-Factor Model (FFM): extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience (Barrick et al., 2002). Work motivations are also predicted by the characteristics of an individual's job (Barrick et al., 2013). The work motive of communion is predicted by agreeableness (Barrick et al., 2002). The work motive of status is predicted by extraversion and conscientiousness (Barrick et. al., 2002). The work motive of accomplishment is also predicted by conscientiousness (Barrick et. al., 2002). The MOI uses three psychological processes to measure the work motivations of an individual: arousal, intensity, and persistence (Barrick et al., 2002). The MOI includes thirty-one items to assess the processes and work motivations of an individual (Barrick et. al, 2002).

A meta-analysis found that there is a correlation between values and personality traits (Parks & Guay, 2009). Personality traits predict work motivations. Therefore, it is postulated that if values can predict personality traits, they can also predict the work motivations associated with those personality traits. Parks and Guay found that the value of power was correlated with the personality trait of extraversion, which predicts the work motivation of status (2009). The value of achievement was correlated with the personality trait of conscientiousness, which predicts the work motivation of accomplishment (Parks & Guay, 2009). The values of universalism and benevolence were correlated with the personality trait of agreeableness, which predicts the work motivation of communion (Parks & Guay, 2009).

It was hypothesized that a work motive of communion is associated with the value of benevolence and universalism (transcendental values) (H1), a work motive of status is associated with the value of power (H2) and a work motive of accomplishment is associated with the value of achievement (H3). It was also hypothesized that women are more motivated by communion at work than are men (H4).

Methods

Data for this study was taken from a larger collection of data from the online survey, “Leader and Personal Values Survey”. Data taken from the survey measured the values and work motivations of participants through multiple sections of questions to see if there was an association between the items of interest. undergraduate students enrolled in a management course at the University of Florida

Procedure & Participants

Data was collected from two sources. One of the sources was Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). (MTurk) is a crowdsourcing website in which remote “crowdworkers” are hired to participate in studies and other tasks for monetary compensation. The survey was published to MTurk for crowdworkers to participate in exchange for a monetary compensation of \$6. The other source was undergraduate students enrolled in a University of Florida introductory management course. These students participate in studies in exchange for extra credit. The survey received 68 responses. Participants were 33.8% males and 66.2% females with an average age of 29 years.

Measurements

values.

The Schwartz's Values Survey (SVS) was used to measure the values of participants (Schwartz, 1992). Participants responded to questions about each of the ten values, but the data of only three of the values were used in this study: power, achievement, and transcendental. Participants were asked to rate how important a set of characteristics were to them on a scale ranging from 1 = "not important at all" to 7 = "of supreme importance". The importance of a value to a participant was calculated as the individual's average rating of the group of items measuring that value. Power was measured by the characteristics of social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image, and social recognition. Achievement was measured by the characteristics of successful, capable, ambitious, influential, intelligent, and self-respect. Transcendence was measured by the values of universalism and benevolence. Universalism was measured by the characteristics of protecting the environment, a world of beauty, unity with nature, broad-minded, social justice, wisdom, equality, a world at peace, and inner harmony. Benevolence was measured by the characteristics of helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible, true friendship, a spiritual life, mature love, and meaning in life.

work motives.

The Motivational Orientation Inventory (MOI) was used to measure the work motives of participants (Barrick et al., 2002). Participants were asked about their experiences at work, or school, if they did not have prior work experience, and to rate their agreement to the 31 provided statements about those experiences on scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree". The statements measured the attention and direction, intensity and persistence, and arousal of the motivation strivings of accomplishment, status, and communion. The level of a person's motivation for each of the types of motivation was calculated as a score of the individual's average rating for that motivation. For example, participants were asked to rate the statement, "I frequently think about getting my work done.", to measure the attention and direction of their accomplishment striving. Participants were asked to rate the statement, "I care a lot about being the best at my job.", to measure the arousal of their status striving. Participants were asked to rate the statement, "I expend a lot of effort developing a reputation as someone

who is easy to get along with.”, to measure the intensity and persistence of their communion striving.

Results

Pearson correlations were run for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 to test if there was a significant linear relationship between the values and work motivations. A t-test was run for hypothesis 4 to test if there was a statistically significant difference between the means of motivation by communion at work for men and women.

Table 1 includes the descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations, of the values and work motivations.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Communion	3.4641	0.8076
Transcendental (Universalism & Benevolence)	5.5219	0.7650
Status	3.445	0.905
Power	3.975	1.213
Accomplishment	4.0856	0.5764
Achievement	5.676	0.889

Note. N = 68.

As shown in Table 2, the correlations used to test hypotheses 1 and 3 indicated no significant relationship between communion and transcendental values (H1) or accomplishment and achievement (H3) ($p > .05$). However, also shown in Table 2, the correlation for hypothesis 2 did indicate a significant moderate linear relationship between status and power ($r = .56, p < .001$).

Table 2

Pearson Correlations of Values and Work Motives

Variable	Transcendental (Universalism & Benevolence)	Power	Achievement
Communion	0.153	-	-
Status	-	0.560***	-
Accomplishment	-	-	0.222

Note. $N = 68$.

The mean for the motive of communion was higher for women ($M = 3.491$, $SD = 0.866$) than men ($M = 3.441$, $SD = 0.695$), but t-test indicated that the difference is not statistically significant, as seen in Table 3 ($t(66) = -0.39$, $p > .05$).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics, T-Value, and P-Value of Males and Females' Communion Work Motivation

Gender	Mean	SD	T-Value	P-Value
Males	3.441	0.695	-	-
Females	3.491	0.866	-	-
			-0.39	0.700

Note. $N_{\text{Males}} = 23$; $N_{\text{Females}} = 45$.

Discussion

The correlation results suggest that the value of power is associated with a work motive of status. But the results also suggest that a work motive of communion is not associated with the value of transcendence and a work motive of accomplishment is not associated with the value of achievement. The t-test results suggest that women are not more motivated by communion at work than are men.

There are three key possible reasons for why not all of the hypotheses were supported. First, the theory held could be incorrect. The association between values and work motivations might not exist or personal values might not be important in a work environment. Second, the sample

included those who have never been employed. These participants used their experiences at school as the foundation for what their motives at work might be. Work motives are predicted by the nature of the work done by an individual, so the difference between the nature of school and work might have affected the reported motives of the participants. Future research might benefit from a sample of only participants who have been employed. Third, the sample size was small, which can make it more difficult to find smaller effects that might exist. Future research could also benefit from a larger sample size. If future research found that the association between personal values and work motivations does exist, it could be beneficial information to employers. For instance, employers might have difficulty changing their employees' work motives because they are formed on core beliefs, or values, that individuals have.

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