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Labovitz School of Business & Economics, University of Minnesota Duluth, 11 E. Superior Street, Suite 210, Duluth, MN 55802

Values and Self-Esteem

Fredric Kropp, Monterey Institute of International Studies

This exploratory study examines the relationships between values, using the List of Values (Kahle 1983) and Tafarodi and Swan's (2001) two-dimensional conceptualization of self-esteem. Based on a sample of 311 students at a major Canadian university, the self-liking and self-competency components of self-esteem are positively correlated to the internal and interpersonal dimensions of values. Neither component of self-esteem is correlated to external values. People who place a higher weight on internal values tend to have higher self-liking and self-competency. This pattern was not found for external or interpersonal values. Study limitations, implications for marketers and future research directions are discussed.

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examines the relationships between values, using the List of Values (Kahle 1983) and Tafarodi and Swan's (2001) two-dimensional conceptualization of self esteem. Based on a sample of 311 students at a major Canadian university, the self liking and self competency components of self esteem are positively correlated to the internal and interpersonal dimensions of values. Neither component of self esteem is correlated to external values. People who place a higher weight on internal values tend to have higher self liking and self competency. This pattern was not found for external or interpersonal values. Study limitations, implications for marketers and future research directions are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Substantial research has been conducted over the past two decades to determine the role that values plays in marketing, especially in attitude formation and in consumer behavior. As higher order social cognitions, values shape consumer attitudes and behaviors (Homer and Kahle 1988). Researchers have established relationships between values and food consumption, fashion, brand choice, gift-giving, mall shopping, car ownership, travel and tourism, pet ownership, and risky consumer behaviors (Kropp 2003). Values also influence salesperson performance (Swenson and Herche 1994), ethics (Rallapalli, Vitell, and Szeinbach 2000), and international business (Soutar, Grainger, and Hedges 1999).Kropp, Lavack, and Silvera (2005) found that values were significantly associated with consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. Batra, Homer, and Kahle (2001) also found that values were associated with general susceptibility to normative influence. Both Kropp et al. (2005) and Batra et al. (2001) call for further exploration of values and other psychological constructs that could be antecedents to consumer attitudes and behavior. This paper is part of an ongoing research stream to explore the relation between values and other psychological correlates.

As there is an increasing large exploration of self esteem and a variety of consumer behaviors --- e.g., self esteem and materialism, self esteem and conformity, and self esteem and impulsive/compulsive behaviors --- we explore the relationship between values and self esteem. Tafordi and Swann's (2001) two-dimensional construct self liking and self competence is used. Self liking is defined as the "the valuative experience of the self as a social object" (Tafordi and Swann 2001, p. 655). Self competence is defined as "the valuative experience of one as a causal agent, an intentional being that can bring about desired outcomes" (Tafordi and Swan 2001, p. 654).

The research question addressed in this paper is the relationship between values and self esteem. The List of Values (Kahle 1983, 1991) is used to measure values. Self esteem is measured using the Self Liking and Competence-Revised Version (Tafordi and Swann 2001). A better understanding of the relationship between values and self esteem can potentially help marketers understand of consumer attitude formation and consumer behavior.

Values

Values are cognitive representations of universal human requirements (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). Rokeach described values as "enduring beliefs that a particular mode of behavior or end-state of existence is preferable to opposite modes of behavior or end-state," (Rokeach 1973, p. 5) and operationalised behavioral modes with 18 instrumental values and end-states with 18 terminal values. Since values provide an abstract set of behavior-guiding principles, values can explain and predict attitudes and subsequent behavior (Rose et al. 1994; Williams 1979).

As a higher order social cognition, values shape attitudes and consumer behaviors (Kahle 1983). Relationship between values and consumer behaviors include brand choice (Dibley and Baker 2001), food consumption (Goldsmith, Freiden, and Kilsheimer 1993; Homer and Kahle 1988), clothing and fashion (Rose et al. 1994), gift-giving (Beatty et al. 1993), mall shopping (Swinyard 1998), car ownership (Sukhdial, Chakraborty, and Steger 1995), travel and tourism (Madrigal 1995; Madrigal and Kahle 1994), and pet ownership (Kropp et al. 1992). In the social marketing domain, values affect smoking behavior (Lavack and Kropp 2003a), drinking behavior (Kropp, Lavack, and Holden 1999), cause-related marketing (Kropp, Holden, and Lavack 1999; Lavack and Kropp 2003b), and ethics (Nonis and Swift 2001; Rallapalli et al. 2000). Values also affect stereotyping in international business (Soutar et al. 1999) and salesperson performance (Swenson and Herche 1994; Weeks and Kahle 1990).

Kahle (1983) developed the List of Values (LOV) as a parsimonious alternative to the 36 values contained in the Rokeach Value Survey. LOV contains nine basic values: sense of belonging, fun and enjoyment in life, warm relationships with others, self fulfillment, being well-respected, excitement, security, self respect, and sense of accomplishment. These values can be grouped into three categories. Internal values --- self fulfillment, self respect, and sense of accomplishment --- are internally validated and do not require the real or imagined presence of an "other" (Madrigal and Kahle 1994; Swenson and Herche 1994). External values --- security, sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, and being-well respected --- generally require the presence, judgments, or opinions of others (Homer and Kahle 1988; Kahle 1983; 1991). Interpersonal values—fun and enjoyment in life and excitement—combine aspects of internal and external values, focusing upon interactions between people (Kahle 1991).

Kropp, Lavack, and Silvera (2005) explored values and collective self esteem as predictors of the normative component of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII). They found that both external and interpersonal values are positively related to the normative component of CSII and that internal values are negatively related to the normative component of CSII. Batra, Homer, and Kahle (2001) also examined the relation between values and individual susceptibility to normative influence (SNI). They conceptualise external and interpersonal values as a positively related antecedent to SNI, and internal values as a negatively related antecedent to SNI.

SELF ESTEEM

Self esteem refers to a personal judgment of one's own worth (Rosenberg, 1965). Although the concept of self esteem is over 100 years old (Cooley 1902), substantial research over the last 20 years identifies self esteem as a two-dimensional construct. Harter (1990), amongst others, conceptualised one dimension of self esteem being derived from positive regard from one's social environment, with a second dimension derived from assessment of one's own abilities. Tafarodi and Swann (1995) developed the Self

Liking and Competence Scale (SLCS) to measure these two dimensions. They describe the first dimension, *self liking*, as "the valuative experience of the self as a social object (Tafarodi and Swann 2001, 655)." The second dimension, *self competence*, is defined as "the valuative experience of oneself as a causal agent, an intentional being that can bring about desired outcomes" (Tafarodi and Swann, 2001, p.654). Subsequent research (e.g., Silvera et al. 1998) reinforces the utility of this distinction. In response to psychometric problems with the initial scale, Tafarodi and Swann (2001) developed a revised version of the scale, the Self Liking and Competence Scale-Revised Version (SLCS-R), which is used in the present research.

Self esteem has been well researched in psychology, e.g., its relation to depression (Dori and Overholser 1999), reactions to success and failure (Dutton and Brown 1997), and adult attachment (Roberts, Gotlib, and Kassel 1996). Self esteem is also examined in the marketing literature, e.g., its relation to susceptibility to influence from others (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989; Cox and Bauer 1964), the purchase of specific esteem-enhancing products (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser, and Sheldon 2004), a positive association and satisfaction with material possessions (Jackson 1979), and how increasing the salience of mortality can induce esteem building behaviors (Ferraro, Shiv, and Bettman 2005). Low self esteem relates to impulse buying (Verplanken et al. 2005) and to compulsive buying behavior (O'Guinn and Faber 1989; Roberts and Martinez 1997).

VALUES AND SELF ESTEEM

The research question of this exploratory research is what is the relationship between values and self esteem? Although hypotheses or preliminary propositions could be developed intuitively, this study represents the first stage in a multi-stage research process. As exploratory research, no research hypotheses are developed at this point. Rather, the results are analysed, findings are presented, and implications discussed.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were collected from a convenience sample of 311 undergraduate students at a major English-speaking Canadian university. The questionnaire, administered during class time, took approximately 15 minutes to complete. It contained the 9-item LOV scale, and the 16-item Tafarodi and Swann (2001) Self Liking and Competence Scale-Revised Version (SLCS-R), 8 of which measure self liking (e.g., "I have a negative attitude toward myself") and 8 of which measure self competence (e.g., "I am highly effective at the things I do"). The survey contained demographic questions (e.g., age, sex, and income) and measures not related to the current study.

Although respondents could opt out of the survey, all of the subjects completed the surveys. In terms of age, 79.4% of the sample was under 25, 20.6% over 25. The sample was evenly split with 50.4% males and 49.6% females. As students, 73.7% of the sample had an income under $20,000 and 80.3% of the sample was single. Approximately 88% of the sample was born in Canada, and the 12% coming from other countries had a high level of English proficiency.

MEASURES

A composite index was constructed for both the self liking and self competence dimensions of the Tafarodi and Swann (2001) of the SLCS-R scale. Each item was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, with semantic markers corresponding to 1 ("strongly disagree") and 5 ("strongly agree"). Where appropriate reverse items were recoded and the 5-point Likert-like aspect of the scale was maintained, therefore, a higher number indicates higher self liking or self competence. The self liking scale has a mean of 3.82 (s.d. = 0.71, α = 0.88). The self competence scale has a mean of 3.57 (s.d. = 0.57, α = 0.88). The Cronbach alphas for both scales indicate high reliability.

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to determine that self liking and self competency are measuring different dimensions of self esteem. As is common for a measurement model with a large sample, the Chi-square of 386.49 has a probability of .000 which is most probably a function of the sample sise. Notably, normed-χ^2 was 3.75, lower than the level of 5.0 advocated by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998). Additionally, both IFI and CFI were .85, which are at the marginal level of acceptability. Finally, although the RMSEA of .09 exceeds .08, it still satisfies the upper threshold of 0.1 (Hair et al. 1998). Given that some of the fit measures are at marginal levels of the acceptable range and that the correlation between the two dimensions was .565, the discriminant validity of the two scales was assessed. A 99% confidence interval for the correlation coefficient of the two dimensions was constructed. The confidence interval {.49 - .74} did not include the value of 1.0, providing support to the two dimensions' discriminant validity. Therefore, the two dimensional construct of self liking and self competency is used in this paper.

Three indices for the internal values (self fulfillment, self respect, and sense of accomplishment), external values (security, sense of belonging, warm relationships with others, and being-well respected), and interpersonal values (fun and enjoyment in life and excitement) dimensions of LOV were developed based on theory (Kahle 1983). The mean for the internal dimension is 7.57 (s.d. = 1.59, α = 0.81), the external dimension is 6.76 (s.d. = 1.60, α = 0.86), and the interpersonal is 7.09 (s.d. = 1.69, α = 0.68). All the alphas exceed or are close to the .70 criteria for reliability specified by Nunnally (1978).

RESULTS

The results were developed using correlation analysis, independent sample t-tests, and covariance analysis. The self liking and self competency components of self esteem both had significant positive correlations with the internal dimension of LOV, r =.277 (sig. = .000) and r = .243 (sig. = .000), respectively (see Table 1).

Next, in order to further flesh out the relationships a series of independent sample t-tests were conducted. An approximate median split for each of the three dimensions of LOV was created, where the mean for low internal values is 6.38 (s.d. = 1.70, n = 124) and the mean for high internal values is 8.54 (s.d. = 0.39, n = 152); the mean for low external values is 5.97 (s.d. = 1.72, n = 124) and the mean for high external values is 7.44 (s.d. = 1.04, n = 152); and the mean for low interpersonal values is 6.36 (s.d. = 1.94, n = 124) and the mean for high interpersonal values is 7.72 (s.d. = 1.10, n = 152). T-tests were then conducted for the self liking and self competency components of self esteem.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION MATRIX

	Self liking	Self comp.	Internal	External
Self liking				
Self competency	.565**			
Internal Values	.227**	.243**		
External Values	.096	.105	.726**	
Interpersonal Values	.155*	.122*	.738**	.636**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Neither self liking nor self competency were significantly correlated with the external dimension of LOV, r = .096 (sig. = .114) and r = .105 (sig. = .082), respectively (see Table 1). Both self liking and self competency were, however, significantly and positively correlated to the interpersonal dimension of LOV, r =.155 (sig. = .010) and r = .122 (sig. = .044), respectively (see Table 1).

Both the self liking and self competency dimensions were statistically different for high- versus low-internal values. For self liking, $\overline{X}_{low}$ = 3.66 (s.d. = 0.63), $\overline{X}_{high}$ = 3.97 (s.d. = 0.73), p = .000; for self competency, $\overline{X}_{low}$ = 3.46 (s.d. = 0.55), $\overline{X}_{high}$ = 3.68 (s.d. = 0.59), p = .002. In other words, people who rate internal values more highly tend to have higher self liking and higher self competency.

The pattern was different for external values and interpersonal values. There were differences in self liking for external values, [$\overline{X}_{low}$ = 3.73 (s.d. = 0.63), $\overline{X}_{high}$ = 3.92 (s.d. = 0.75), p = .015], and for interpersonal values, [$\overline{X}_{low}$ = 3.72 (s.d. = 0.72), $\overline{X}_{high}$ = 3.91 (s.d. = 0.69), p = .028]. There were no significant differences for self competency, for both external values, (p = .077) and for interpersonal values (p = .144).

A multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to determine if the were effects for gender and for age. The model was not significant (Wilks' Lambda F_{age} = 1.086, d.f. = 2, p = .339; Wilks' Lambda F_{gender} = 1.971, d.f. = 2, p = .141). Furthermore, both ANOVA models were not statistically significant (p > 0.08). Given that both age and gender were not multi- or uni-variate significant, we did not proceed to examine the two ANOVA models and concluded that neither demographic variable was associated with the outcome variables. Accordingly, the discussion below is based on the results reported earlier.

DISCUSSION

The research question for this exploratory study involves the relationships between values and self esteem. The analysis indicates that there are relationships between these constructs. There are significant positive correlations between internal and interpersonal values and the two components of self esteem, there are no significant correlations between external values and self esteem. The results are promising and further research is indicated.

It is especially interesting to see the differences in the relationships between internal values and external values with self esteem. By their nature, internal values do not require a real or imagined other for validation whereas external values require external validation. People who place a higher weight on internal values have higher self esteem and self competency than people who place a lower weight on internal values. These relationships are not mirrored in external values. As interpersonal values can be viewed as a combination of internal and external values, it is not surprising that there is a relationship with self esteem.

An understanding of the relationships between the constructs potentially offers marketers strategic insights in developing product offerings and promotional approaches. It may be possible to use self esteem as part of a segmentation scheme for ego-expressive products, i.e., products that appeal to high internal values, and target the high self esteem segment. Firms can then position their product offerings and develop synergistic promotional campaigns congruent with both internal values and self esteem. The positioning and campaigns would emphasise internal rather that external validation. For example, a promotional campaign for a *self esteem* product could stress the intrinsic attributes of the product or service, coupled with a message like, "you enjoy what you do, you're good at it, and you don't need to show anyone else, do it for yourself." This type of campaign would also be in line with previous findings that consumer who stress internal values are less susceptible to interpersonal influence than consumers who stress external values (Batra, Homer and Kahle 2001; Kropp, Lavack, and Silvera 2005).

In the realm of social marketing, several destructive consumer behaviors have been associated with low self esteem. Although pleasurable in low to moderate levels, in the extreme, impulse behavior can be harmful or even self destructive (Verplanken et al. 2005). Similarly, alcohol consumption can be destructive in the extreme. A better understanding of the relationships between values and self esteem can lead to the development of more effective campaigns to limit the destructive behaviors.

LIMITATIONS/FUTURE RESEARCH

The research has several limitations. First, a convenience sample of university students from a major English-speaking Canadian university was used. It is important to use a wider and more representative sample in future research. This would include both more representative samples in English-speaking Canada and in French-speaking Canada, as well as samples from other countries and cultures.

Second, it would enhance understanding if relationships with other conceptually related psychological constructs were examined, for example, subjective well-being, satisfaction with life, social identity and consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. As was shown in this study, internal and interpersonal values are related to both the self liking and self competency dimensions of self esteem. A structural equation model could not be developed to link these constructs because the values did not explain enough of the variance in the structural relationship. In simple terms, it appears that there are missing explanatory variables. Inclusion of other psychological constructs would enhance the explanatory power of the model and increase the probability of constructing a structural equation model.

In order to develop a more thorough understanding of the relationships between values and self esteem, attitudinal measures and consumer behaviors also need to be modeled. In the *normal* marketing domain, possible behaviors could include, brand loyalty, value expressive versus utilitarian purchase, and reward programs, to name a few. In the social marketing domain, impulse or compulsive buying, stereotyping, alcohol and tobacco consumption, and unsafe sexual behaviors are interesting possibilities.

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