

# The value in values: Relationships between personal values, and depressed mood and subjective wellbeing



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Research Goal

The goal of this research was to identify possible relationships between values and depressed mood, and values and subjective wellbeing.

## The Problem

- Contemporary discourse, usage and endorsement of values is easily detectable in academic domains and applied disciplines. However, the study of values is almost non-existent within psychology, especially in the areas of clinical and positive psychology.
- Leading theorists have asserted that psychology has had much difficulty engaging with values (Davis, 2001; Kasser, 2002; Rohan, 2000), with very little known about what values are or their influence.
- The developing field of positive psychology has showed an interest in values, however the current status regarding values is one of confusion, uncertainty, and ambiguity.

## The Research

- Three empirical studies used Schwartz's model of values (Schwartz, 1992) to investigate relationships between personal values, depressed mood and subjective wellbeing.



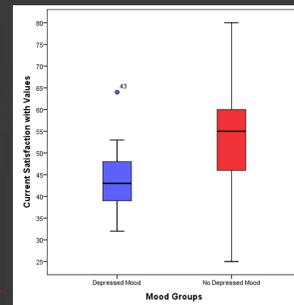
## Pilot Study

### Procedure and Participants

- A 25 minute in-person survey ( $n = 103$ ).
- Measured depressed mood (BDI - II: Beck *et al.*, 1996), life satisfaction (SwLS: Diener *et al.*, 1985), emotional wellbeing (HM: Fordyce, 1988), global subjective happiness (SHS: Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), personal values (SVS: Schwartz, 1992; SSVS: Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; PVQ: Schwartz *et al.*, 2001) and current satisfaction with personal values (CS-SSVS: new scale).

### Sample of key findings

- The three different ways of measuring personal values (SVS, SSVS, & PVQ) are highly correlated, and all reflect Schwartz's model in the data.
- Greater **current satisfaction with values** as a whole was associated with lower depressed mood:
  - Moderate negative correlation between total BDI - II scores and total CS-SSVS scores,  $r = -.34, p < .01$ .
  - Statistically significant independent samples *t*test between current satisfaction with values and those with depressed mood ( $M = 44.14, SD = 8.12$ ) and those without depressed mood ( $M = 53.20, SD = 13.55, t(97) = 2.423, p = .017, d = .81$ ).
- Greater **current satisfaction with values** as a whole associated with higher SwLS scores ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ) and SHS scores ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ).
- The **importance of values as a whole** was not associated with depressed mood or subjective wellbeing.



## Study 1

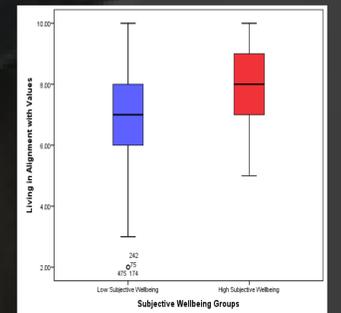
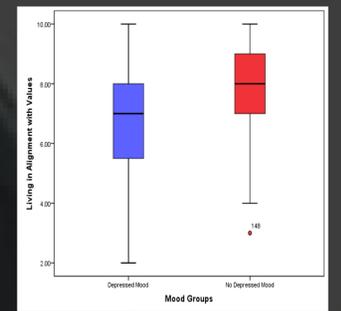
### Procedure and Participants

- A 20 minute online survey ( $n = 492$ ).
- Measured depressed mood (CES-DS: Radloff, 1977), life satisfaction (SwLS), emotional wellbeing (HM), personal values (PVQ) and relational values questions (knowledge of values, living in alignment with values).

### Sample of key findings

- The **importance of values as a whole** not associated with depressed mood, but greater importance associated with greater life satisfaction and emotional wellbeing.
- Greater **depressed mood** was associated with lesser importance of **Stimulation, Self-Direction and Hedonism**.
- Greater **subjective wellbeing** was associated with greater importance of **Stimulation, Self-Direction, Hedonism and Benevolence**.

- The **coherence of values** systems not related to mood or subjective wellbeing – assessed with multidimensional scaling.
- Greater **depressed mood** was moderately associated with lower knowledge of values and strongly associated with lower living in alignment with values:
  - Moderate negative correlation between knowledge of values scores and total CES-DS scores,  $r = -.21, p < .01$ , and a strong negative correlation between living in alignment with values scores and total CES-DS scores,  $r = -.45, p < .01$ .
  - Statistically significant independent samples *t*test between living in alignment with values and those with depressed mood ( $M = 44.14, SD = 8.12$ ) and those without depressed mood ( $M = 53.20, SD = 13.55, t(490) = 2.423, p = .017, d = .81$ ).
- Greater **subjective wellbeing** was moderately associated with greater knowledge of values and strongly associated with greater living in alignment with values:
  - Moderate positive correlations between knowledge of values scores and SwLS scores,  $r = .26, p < .01$ , and knowledge of values scores and HM scores,  $r = .17, p < .01$ .
  - Moderate positive correlations between living in alignment with values and SwLS scores,  $r = .48, p < .01$ , and living in alignment with values and HM scores,  $r = .41, p < .01$ .
  - Statistically significant independent samples *t*test between knowledge of values and those with low subjective wellbeing ( $M = 7.86, SD = 1.35$ ) and those with high subjective wellbeing ( $M = 8.40, SD = 1.16, t(490) = -4.456, p = .001, d = .43$ ).
  - Statistically significant independent samples *t*test between living in alignment with values and those with low subjective wellbeing ( $M = 7.17, SD = 1.70$ ) and those with high subjective wellbeing ( $M = 8.08, SD = 1.09, t(490) = -6.288, p = .001, d = .64$ ).



## Study 2

- This study explored how relational aspects of values (knowledge of values, living in alignment with values) relate to changes in depressed mood and subjective wellbeing over time.

### Procedure and Participants

- A 15 minute online survey of participants from Study 1 six months later ( $n = 173$ ).
- Measured depressed mood (CES-DS), life satisfaction (SwLS), emotional wellbeing (HM), personal values (PVQ) and relational values (knowledge of values, living in alignment with values).

### Sample of key findings

- The direction of effect model showed that reciprocal relationships were observed between living in alignment with values and knowledge of values, and between **living in alignment with values** and **life satisfaction**.
- Emotional wellbeing** was predicted by both **living in alignment with values** and life satisfaction.
- Knowledge of values** at time one did not predict either life satisfaction or emotional wellbeing at time two.
- Depressed mood** at time two was not predicted by either knowledge of values or living in alignment with values at time one.

