



Life Values Inventory – An Indian Adaptation Study

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Introduction:

A value system is viewed as a relatively permanent perceptual framework which shapes and influences the general nature of an employee's behaviour. Values are similar to attitudes but are more ingrained, permanent and stable in nature. Likewise a value is seen as being more general and less tied to any specific object.

The term "values" is often used in a broad sense to mean simply, "things valued." But that is to define the term so broadly that it loses point, and it does, in fact, confuse the whole subject. It is better to restrict this term in the way Nadel (1992) suggested, 'to refer not to ends of practical or specific utility, but to the more autonomous worthwhileness which is believed to reside in certain classes of objects, and which consequently gives rise to principles that rule over behavior'. A value, then, is a generalized end that guides behavior toward uniformity in a variety of situations, with the object of repeating a particular self-sufficient satisfaction.

What are values? The literature gives an abundant number of definitions of values. Much cited is Rokeach (1973), who defines a value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence." Super (1980) defines a value as "an objective, either a psychological state, a relationship, or material condition, that one seeks to attain." Hofstede (1984) defines values as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others." A more elaborate definition is given by Schwartz (1992), who defines values as "desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behavior." An important merit of this latter definition is that it distinguishes values from attitudes by pointing at their generalised nature. Holders of values are not necessarily individuals but may also be collectivities, i.e. the people belonging to a certain occupational group, a firm, a subculture, a community, a national category, or a country. One might even speak of the values of people living in a certain geographical or geopolitical region.

The LVI is a trial to fill in the vacuum between work values inventories and general values inventories by creating a values inventory that can be used as a decision making aid by people who are debating with decisions regarding work, education, relationships, and leisure. The LVI above all is an effort to promote holistic thinking in the decision making process. It is long overdue that practitioners stop focusing on one role at a time as they assist people making career selections, dealing with marital problems or choosing among leisure activities. The use of LVI will helpfully assist the practitioners in the focusing in a holistic approach to role related decision-making.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The qualitative research in this paper is part of a larger study which combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand relational values overall and in the career role. Gender was one of the factors that has been suggested to influence values, were also examined in this study. The researcher wanted to use quantitative methods to understand

relational values overall and in the career role. After adapting the LVI, a preliminary study was carried out. This was done to rehearse the standardization conditions, namely the presentation of the instrument and its instructions, aiming to identify possible difficulties in understanding the items' contents and to verify the average time of response. Descriptive research design was used.

Research Sample

Sample from the study was drawn from two software firms in Mumbai, India. It was decided to choose employees from Mumbai offices of these companies, as the city is representative of an urban metropolis culture that is largely universal in nature, with relatively low cultural biases. The participation was voluntary. The researcher visited the two companies to conduct the study. The list of employees was given by the HR department, keeping in mind the necessary specifications required for the sample. 395 participated in the study and 344 completed forms were obtained. This instrument was used in a total sample of 344 participants - working employees i.e. junior management & middle management. 209 of the female gender and 135 of the male gender, in age groups between 24 and 35 years. Random stratified sampling was used. The age of the participants ranged from 24 to 35 years (Mean = 29.9, S.D = 3.6). Majority of participants were married (70%) with few of the participants identifying as single (30%). A small percentage of the sample had children (21%) with the majority of those having two children (44%). They were also classified as belonging to the junior management and middle level management, depending on their roles they performed in the organization.

Discussion of Results

Interpretation of results highlights the significance of relational meanings in the values that the sample hoped to have satisfied in their career role. The values hoped to have satisfied in their role included achievement, concern for others, responsibility, financial prosperity, belonging, concern for the environment, spirituality etc. Each of these values will be discussed revealing the relational themes that were embedded within the meaning of the value.

Table 1 - Distribution of Standard Scores (n=344)

Items	Mean	SD
Achievement	12.22	1.94
Belonging	12.25	2.38
Concern for Environment	10.26	2.38
Concern for Others	11	1.94
Creativity	10.5	2.65
Financial Prosperity	11.03	2.19
Health & Activity	11.25	1.93
Humility	9.45	1.93
Independence	10.25	2.18
Loyalty to Family or Group	11.25	3.42
Privacy	9.25	2.73
Responsibility	13.22	2.73
Scientific Understanding	8.26	3.45
Spirituality	9.41	7.75

Achievement

The relational theme in Achievement was evident in the desire

to help others or connect with others in some way through the job. Women mentioned such things as "making a positive impact on people's lives," "achieve good relationships with people and help them to lead happy, healthy lives," and "relating to and understanding individuals." Three employees stated that, "If I am able to help only one person or an entire community, I will feel the sense of achievement." Seven employees indicated that they would feel personal achievement through witnessing or learning of the achievements of her clients. Helping others to achieve their own goals and success seemed to be an important part of achievement for most women than men in the sample, particularly those in the junior management group. Most men (40 %) in the sample indicate that "I want to help others, and push myself to my limit" compared to 20 % of the women.

Concern for Others

Concern for Others was a value that appeared very frequently in the data and by definition would be expected to have relational meaning. Mentioned by women in both the junior and middle levels of management, it was most frequently appeared. The major way that Concern for Others was expected to be accomplished was through "Helping others." Men in the sample however exerted that within the theme with some less directly relational, such as "helping others by sharing knowledge". Both men and women in the junior managerial levels felt that Concern for Others is inherent in their job by virtue of the nature of the work. Some women (35 %) in both junior and middle level management indicated that nurturing, caring for, and comforting others, as well as helping others to attain hope, solace, happiness, and self-actualization. "My concern for others drives me and enables me to help people in that really personal help", a quote as indicated by one of the women sample. The desire to help others was also expressed on a macro level. Improving the quality of life of others was also mentioned, particularly of those who are less fortunate. An engineering student stated, More than 50 % of the sample and both levels indicated that "I hope to have a job that allows me to improve the quality of life for other people or animals or aspects of the environment." Men in the sample had scored relatively low on this count.

Responsibility

The majority of the women (65 %) and men (82%) in the study, who stated that they wanted the value of Responsibility to be satisfied in their career role, suggested that this would be possible through being "Trustworthy". It could be argued that by its very definition, the word "trustworthy" implies a relationship, whether this is with another person or a larger entity such as an organization or company. The responses comprising this theme, however, differed as to whether or not they explicitly mentioned demonstrating trustworthiness to someone else. Many executives in both groups noted that in their careers they would be relied upon and counted on by co-workers, supervisors and organizations. Trust seemed to be considered an important precursor to good relationships with others. 20 % of the women in the junior management wrote that "It is important to me to know my supervisors and co-workers consider me reliable, and can be trusted." Others (Males – 40 % in both levels) noted that being in a position of trust carried with it ethical and legal obligations. Another relational theme that appeared in the data was being responsible through "Making Contributions" to others or making a difference in another person's life. This theme was featured in 40% of males and 55 % of women in both the levels of management. More than 75 % of the married men in the sample indicated, "as part of a family, I am responsible for earning a living through working." whereas only 17 % of women felt the same.

Financial Prosperity

A theme within Financial Prosperity that emerged, "Provide for family," had obvious relational overtones where men at both levels were concerned. More than 85 % of men felt that making enough money in one's career to support one's family was a priority for them. This theme however, featured in only

35 % of the women in middle level of management.

Belonging

Feeling a sense of affiliation, inclusion, or acceptance in the workplace was a desire expressed by both men and women. Some commented on the desire to feel like a valued member of a work group or team, "Belonging would be satisfied by working as part of a team where I feel that my part on the team is important." Developing friendships, bonding with co-workers, and "fitting in" were all discussed as ways of cultivating a sense of belonging. This was largely felt by majority at both the levels. Few of the women (30%) felt that in order to enjoy work, it is important to get along with co-workers, however this does not feature in the middle level of management.

Concern for the Environment

Caring for the environment through protection of natural resources or improving existing conditions was important for majority of men and women at both the levels. Making the world a better place to live for humans, other animals, and plants was a priority. Few (18 %) of the respondents felt responsibility not only to humankind at present, but was also concerned about the future stating that it was "our duty to conserve the earth for the next generations."

Spirituality

A few women in both groups discussed the ways in which their religion or spirituality could influence their behavior and activities in their careers. Some women in the junior roles expressed the fact that Spirituality could be satisfied in their career through putting the needs of others before their own, and helping those who are suffering or in need. Sentiments regarding feelings of connectedness to God or a higher power and to others were common among both groups of women. 12 % of the Men on the other hand felt that is nothing like spirituality in this world. Majority, of the men felt that there is a strong force that exists, majority the presence of God, though a few indicated presence of some supernatural force.

Creativity

Both men and women felt that it was very important to come up and create new ideas and suggestions (63%), But, however only 35 % of both men and women in the sample felt that it was important to discover new ideas or things.

Health & Activity

Being strong or good in a sport. More than 80- % of both men and women felt that it was important to be in good physical shape and too take part in sport related activities. Around 24 % of men felt that taking care of their body was important, but close to 83 % of women felt that it was important for them.

Humility

Less than 30 % of men and women felt that they downplayed their compliments, most of them did not feel that they needed to be quiet about their success. So, humility per se were not really found for this particular sample.

Independence

Close to 75 % of both men and women felt that they should have better control over their time and little more than 60% of men and 35 % of women felt that they should have the independence to do things that they want to do.

Loyalty to family or group

At both levels and for both the genders, it was important to be accepted in their family or group, respecting the traditions and also making joint decisions with my family or group was considered of utmost importance with more than 70 %. This could be attributed to the fact that in India most families have a 'joint family concept' and decisions pertaining to family issues are also taken jointly.

Privacy

Almost 67 % of women and 42% of men wanted a break from

the hustle bustle of Mumbai life and preferred having some peaceful time to think and to be alone .

Scientific Understanding

45 % felt that science was an important factor for progress and felt that it was important to know more about science and math too.

Relational themes are present in both men and women expectations of having their career values satisfied, whether they belong to the junior or middle level of management. Relational themes are obvious within values, which have a "caring" or "concerned" connotation, such as Concern for Others. However, there are also relational themes present in values such as Achievement, where the traditional or "male lens" would generally not display a relational understanding.

Helping others was a major relational theme across the values; this was conceptualized both as helping individuals but also on a more global level of helping society. On an individual level, it included helping others by offering hope or solace but also by assisting them to achieve happiness and self-actualization. Helping others was a very strong theme in the value of Concern for Others and in Spirituality but also, perhaps surprisingly within the value of Achievement. The "usual" definition of career success includes factors such as "career advancement, stable occupational roles, and levels of status symbolized by power and money" not helping others (Hashizume & Crozier, 1994). They also noted that the traditionally male vision of career achievement, "getting ahead" in an organization may be "dated" due to the new realities of the workplace such as decreased job security and downsizing.

Conclusion

Values studies have been revealing themselves increasingly important in vocational research and practice; the LVI corresponds to a quantitative and qualitative approach in this area and presents an interesting new instrument in psychological assessment. This study was done with the goal of achieving an LVI Indian adaptation useful to several populations and can thereby also be related with similar studies done globally. To sum up, the LVI was developed for use in career counseling, retirement counseling and planning, leisure counseling, teambuilding and other activities in which decision making and/or interpersonal functioning are important.

Table 2 - Alpha of Cronbach Coefficients for American , Portuguese and Indian Samples (n=344): A Comparison

Items	American Sample	Portuguese Sample	Indian Sample
Achievement	0.74	0.63	0.69
Belonging	0.77	0.67	0.72
Concern for Environment	0.86	0.73	0.74
Concern for Others	0.69	0.73	0.73
Creativity	0.86	0.75	0.7
Financial Prosperity	0.84	0.85	0.79
Health & Activity	0.74	0.75	0.75
Humility	0.64	0.57	0.61
Independence	0.55	0.22	0.52
Loyalty to Family or Group	0.75	0.64	0.85
Privacy	0.83	0.79	0.65
Responsibility	0.68	0.78	0.75
Scientific Understanding	0.8	0.81	0.75
Spirituality	0.88	0.85	0.79

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