

Sonia Roccas · Lilach Sagiv
Editors

Values and Behavior

Taking a Cross Cultural Perspective

 Springer

Preface

Why do some people regularly show kindness to others whereas others react aggressively even to minor provocations? Why do some people consider their work mainly as a means to achieve personal success, whereas others consider it a means to contribute to society and an opportunity for self-fulfillment? Personal values play a crucial role in such behaviors. The chapters in this book address these and other questions regarding the relations of values to behavior, taking a cross-cultural perspective.

The construct of values is central to many fields in social sciences and humanities. After years of little attention to values, the last two decades have seen a substantial body of psychological research, investigating the content, structure and consequences of personal values in many cultures. Personal values are defined as abstract desirable goals that are relatively stable over time and across situations, serving as guiding principles for individuals (Kluckhohn 1951; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). The structure of relationships among values is dynamic, representing their compatibilities and conflicts (Schwartz 1992). The more importance a person attributes to a value, the more motivated s/he is to act in ways that promote the attainment of that value. The meaning of the 10 value types is similar across cultures. Thus, when people from different cultures reflect on the importance of a value (e.g., loyalty), they have in mind a similar construct. This feature of values makes them an invaluable tool for conducting integrative research across cultures.

The conceptualization and measurement of personal values typically focuses self-reports; that is, values represent what people report that they consider to be important. Researchers and laymen hence often question whether value statements are merely “cheap talk”. A growing body of research points to relationships between values and behavior. The current book focuses on the value-behavior link, reviewing past literature and presenting new conceptual models. The first part of the book (Chap. 1–3) discusses the construct of values and how they are studied. The second part reviews the content of the relationships between values and behavior in different domains: pro-social behavior (Chap. 4), aggression (Chap. 5) work life (Chap. 6) and close relationships (Chap. 7). Finally, the third part of the book (Chap. 8–10) address some of the processes and mechanisms through which values

affect behavior. Chapter 11 is an integrative commentary of the issues addressed in the previous chapters.

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