

Ch. 16: Nature, Importance, and Assessment of Needs and Values

The primary focus areas of this chapter are the correlation between work and values and needs and how they shape or affect one another. The authors indicate that few work value assessments have adequate empirical reliability to be used widely and confidently. Career work research typically focuses on high school and college age groups. The authors share that work values tend to develop as one works; often, it is post-college work. Being after the age group when most research occurs on careers is believed to cause a gap in the research data. There is some discussion regarding the changes that develop over time. Another area of variation in the work values discussion is among age, gender, ethnic, and cultural groups, yet these differences are not firmly identified. Some perceived differences diminish when researchers account for factors such as education, income level, etc.

The chapter jumps to a discussion of needs and says this is how a person feels, behaves, or reacts (which never makes the connection but sounds a lot like CBT in a nutshell, skipping the thinking). It also shares that some consider needs and values interchangeably (Maslow). In contrast, others see need as biological and value as being shaped by social influences (sex vs love) (Rokeach). Another view ties need to survival but believes the environment can influence one's understanding of need (Super). Super describes the needs-values connection as liking stuff as potentially leading a person to seek wealth to obtain their desired possessions. The general view is needs drives a person to strive to meet their perceived needs (motivation). Maslow identified five categories of needs: physiological, security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

There seems to be some confusion in the research about values and their place in life. One set of authors say life values and work values are different, but work is built up from life events (Elizur and Saige), whereas others are unsure of the difference. Those who see some variation wonder if the work values are fulfilled through the life values or vice versa. Dawis put forward that interest involves liking and disliking where values are importance and unimportance. The authors see value and interest as being intertwined from a counseling perspective. Similarly, Super and Holland see activities of interest lead to satisfaction of needs and values. One consideration was whether work shapes values or if values shape where and how people work. Another area is the difference between life values and work values and their correlation to each other (if any).

This chapter shows that the counseling/research world needs to come up with a unified definition of terms. I may have overlooked it, but the chapter talked noncongruently about values and how or where the term fits in the career discussion with specificity. After reading the chapter, I wonder what the authors mean by values. Do they mean values, as in how they align with one's worldview (e.g., Am I conflicted by what we are doing or producing at my workplace?), or do they mean how it aligns with my desires, such as the balance between work/home, effort/remuneration, cohesion with coworkers, will the work help me to grow and increase my employability, is the work stimulating or boring and repetitive, etc. The chapter may have been mixing work values with work interests in certain areas. As stated above, the field needs to reach a consensus of terms.

The writers stated that values can be traced to Spranger's (1928) six areas: theoretical, economic, esthetic, social, political, and religious. I suppose people interacting with this material

who do not have a Christian Worldview may not see the folly of this statement! First, values were established by our Holy God long before 1928. Second, the "religious" or, more specifically, the Christian Worldview is the foundation for what values are and determining how they are to be applied. There are undoubtedly different aspects of life where values are involved; however, values must be established on a firm, unchangeable foundation from which to work. Otherwise, you are working with an ever-changing target that shifts with the wind (do not be tossed to a froe (Ephesians 4:14)). Allport is quoted as saying, "Value is a belief upon which a man acts by preference." I cannot help but see values as demonstrating a person's preference (i.e., what is right and wrong, etc.), whether discussing work or life in general. The difference is if the value system has a firm foundation or is built on sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-29).

When working with master's students, it would be an excellent time to help them consider how ambiguous terms can convolute a conversation. There are many ways people tend to see the world. If working with a secular school, a professor will need to discuss values from a much broader context than if the professor is at a Christian university. The broad path will also need to be addressed at a Christian university. However, discussing values as being applied when living according to the Christian or Biblical Worldview will be essential. It is crucial because life becomes far more stressful when claiming adherence to a standard but living out of balance with that values system. If looking at values from this perspective, it is a singular system of values that drive all aspects of life. For example, to work at an abortion clinic while professing to be a Christian (who values human life greatly) should, by necessity, cause great internal conflict. If an individual who sees the world from a Christian Worldview considers a career that aligns with their values, they can then ask if it could also meet their needs and align with their areas of

interest. Needs and interests can be more fluid for the person living by a Christian Worldview, where values are established on a firm foundation who is the uncaused cause of the universe.