

Feeling Ambivalence Towards Values

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Abstract : Values are abstract ideals that serve as guiding principles in one's life. As inherently positive and desirable concepts, values are seen as motivators for actions and behaviors. However, research has largely ignored the possibility that values may elicit negative feelings despite being explicitly important to us. In the current study, we aim to examine this possibility. Four hundred participants over 18 years ($M=41.6$, $SD=13.7$, Female=178) from the UK completed a questionnaire in which they were asked to indicate their level of positive/negative feelings towards a comprehensive list of values and then report the importance of these values to them. The results support our argument by showing that people can have negative feelings towards their values and that people can feel both positive and negative emotions towards their values simultaneously, which means feeling ambivalence. We ran a mixed-effect model with ambivalence, value type, and their interaction as fixed effects, with by subject random intercept and by subject random slope for ambivalence. The results reveal that values that elicit less ambivalence predicted higher ratings for value importance. This research contributes to the field of values on multiple levels. Theoretically, it will uncover new insights about values, such as the existence of negative emotions towards them and the presence of ambivalence towards values. These findings may inspire future studies to explore the effects of ambivalence on people's well-being, behaviors, cognition, and their affect. We discuss the findings and consider their implications for understanding the social psychological mechanisms underpinning value ambivalence.

Keywords : emotion, social cognition, values., ambivalence

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