

ARE ATTITUDES TOWARD TRAITS AND VALUES THE SAME?

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Introduction

Recently one of us proposed a construct of attitudes toward traits (Shchebetenko, 2014, 2016). It is a bipolar evaluation of a given trait, without reference to a particular person. It has been demonstrated that attitudes toward traits can produce incremental contribution to various life outcomes such as online social networks behavior, academic achievement, or art preferences (Shchebetenko, 2016) while controlling for respective personality traits. An obvious problem with this construct is its discriminant validity. One may hypothesize that attitudes toward traits are no more than values which people hold. Values represent what is important for us (Schwartz, 2012). In this respect, having a positive attitude toward, say, agreeableness is “simply” to appreciate benevolence or conformity.

Another threat for validity of attitudes toward trait is their discrimination from traits themselves in possible outcomes. In particular, to be a sensible construct, possible associations between attitudes toward traits and values should not be fully mediated by respective personality traits.

Method

Participants

906 undergraduates aged from 17 to 25 years ($M = 19.27$, $SD = 1.09$), including 592 women (65.3%).

Questionnaires

Traits. The Russian version (Shchebetenko, 2014) of the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John et al., 1991, 2008), $\alpha = .84, .70, .81, .83, .80$ (for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness, respectively).

Attitudes toward traits. The Attitudes toward Traits BFI (Shchebetenko, 2014) showed acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .68, .71, .72, .69, .77$.

Values were measured with a Russian version (Karandashev, 2004) of the 57-item Schwartz Value Survey (SVS, Schwartz, 1992) showed weak to moderate internal consistency, $\alpha = .58, .56, .65, .76, .61, .56, .74, .66, .72, .63$, taking into account, however, the small number of items in subscales of SVS: for Conformity (4 items), Tradition (5), Benevolence (5), Universalism (8), Self-Direction (5), Stimulation (3), Hedonism (3), Achievement (4), Power (4), and Security(5), respectively).

Results

1. Attitudes toward traits and values were not the same

Table 1. Correlations between attitudes toward traits and values ($N = 906$).

Values	Attitudes toward traits				
	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Affectivity	Open-Mindedness
Power	.29 [.23; .36]	.15 [.08; .22]	.23 [.16; .29]	.15 [.08; .22]	.23 [.16; .29]
	.23 [.16; .30]	.08 [.01; .15]*	.23 [.17; .29]	.16 [.10; .22]	.13 [.05; .19]
Achievement	.16 [.08; .23]	.19 [.12; .26]	.06 [-.01; .12]	-.05 [-.12; .02]	.05 [-.02; .11]
	.02 [-.05; .09]	.14 [.06; .21]	-.01 [-.07; .06]	-.12 [-.10; -.05]	-.15 [-.21; -.08]
Hedonism	.13 [.06; .21]	.03 [-.04; .10]	.07 [-.00; .14]*	.07 [-.00; .14]*	.28 [.22; .34]
	-.02 [-.09; .06]	-.12 [-.18; -.05]	.01 [-.06; .07]	.06 [.00; .13]	.20 [.13; .26]
Stimulation	.14 [.07; .20]	.07 [-.00; .14]*	.04 [-.03; .10]	-.02 [-.09; .05]	.25 [.19; .31]
	.01 [-.06; .07]	-.03 [-.10; .03]	-.03 [-.09; .04]	-.06 [-.12; .00]	.16 [.09; .22]
Self-Direction	.01 [-.06; .09]	.19 [.12; .27]	-.00 [-.08; .07]	-.04 [-.12; .03]	.08 [.01; .15]*
	-.17 [-.23; -.10]	.14 [.06; .22]	-.09 [-.15; -.02]*	-.10 [-.16; -.03]**	-.08 [-.15; -.02]*
Universalism	.29 [.23; .36]	.02 [-.05; .09]	.12 [.06; .19]	.10 [.03; .17]**	.14 [.07; .20]
	.23 [.16; .29]	-.11 [-.18; -.05]**	.09 [.02; .15]**	.10 [.03; .17]**	-.02 [-.08; .05]
Benevolence	.20 [.13; .27]	.21 [.14; .27]	.13 [.06; .20]	.07 [-.00; .13]*	.07 [-.00; .15]*
	.09 [.02; .17]**	.16 [.10; .23]	.10 [.03; .16]**	.06 [-.01; .11]	-.11 [-.18; -.05]**
Conformity	.02 [-.05; .10]	.18 [.11; .25]	.08 [.00; .14]*	-.08 [-.15; -.01]*	-.05 [-.11; .02]
	-.15 [-.22; -.08]	.13 [.06; .19]	.03 [-.05; .09]	-.14 [-.21; -.08]	-.25 [-.32; -.20]
Tradition	.11 [.04; .17]**	-.15 [-.21; -.09]	.10 [.03; .17]**	.09 [.03; .15]*	.06 [-.01; .13]
	-.02 [-.07; .04]	-.29 [-.35; -.23]	.07 [.00; .13]	.09 [.02; .15]*	-.08 [-.15; -.01]*
Security	.05 [-.02; .12]	.13 [.07; .20]	.08 [.01; .14]*	.00 [-.07; .07]	.09 [.03; .16]**
	-.15 [-.22; -.09]	.05 [-.03; .12]	.02 [-.04; .08]	-.04 [-.10; .02]	-.10 [-.15; -.03]**

Note. CIs were calculated for r s obtained from 2,000 bootstrap samples. Second rows are partial correlations controlling for the mean ratings of 57 value scores for each participant (MRAT; Schwartz, 2012). Correlations at $p < .001$ are bolded.

Table 2. Correlations between personality traits and values ($N = 906$).

Values	Traits				
	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Affectivity	Open-Mindedness
Power	.23 [.17; .30]	.09 [.02; .15]**	.16 [.09; .23]	.01 [-.06; .08]	.15 [.09; .22]
	.09 [.02; .15]**	-.01 [-.07; .06]	.08 [.01; .14]*	-.07 [-.13; .00]	.08 [.01; .14]*
Achievement	.25 [.19; .30]	.24 [.17; .30]	.19 [.13; .25]	.05 [-.02; .11]	.03 [-.03; .10]
	.09 [.03; .16]**	.20 [.13; .26]	.11 [.04; .17]**	-.02 [-.09; .04]	-.10 [-.14; -.04]**
Hedonism	.19 [.13; .25]	.03 [-.04; .10]	.09 [.02; .16]**	.09 [.02; .15]**	.23 [.17; .29]
	-.00 [-.07; .06]	-.12 [-.19; -.05]	-.04 [-.10; .02]	.03 [-.03; .10]	.18 [.12; .24]
Stimulation	.21 [.15; .27]	.10 [.03; .16]**	.06 [-.01; .13]	.07 [-.00; .14]*	.26 [.20; .32]
	.05 [-.02; .11]	-.00 [-.07; .07]	-.06 [-.13; .00]	.01 [-.06; .08]	.22 [.16; .28]
Self-Direction	.13 [.07; .20]	.21 [.14; .27]	.14 [.07; .21]	.04 [-.02; .11]	.10 [.03; .16]**
	-.06 [-.13; .01]	.15 [.08; .22]	.05 [-.03; .12]	-.02 [-.09; .04]	-.00 [-.07; .06]
Universalism	.29 [.23; .35]	-.01 [-.07; .06]	.10 [.03; .17]**	.09 [.02; .16]**	.07 [.01; .14]*
	.16 [.09; .23]	-.16 [-.22; -.09]	-.02 [-.08; .05]	.03 [-.04; .10]	-.04 [-.11; .03]
Benevolence	.22 [.15; .28]	.16 [.09; .23]	.21 [.13; .27]	.04 [-.02; .10]	.00 [-.06; .07]
	.05 [-.02; .11]	.09 [.01; .15]*	.13 [.06; .20]	-.03 [-.09; .03]	-.15 [-.21; -.08]
Conformity	.11 [.04; .17]**	.24 [.18; .30]	.27 [.20; .32]	.07 [.00; .13]*	-.08 [-.14; -.01]*
	-.09 [-.16; -.02]**	.20 [.13; .26]	.22 [.15; .28]	.01 [-.06; .08]	-.23 [-.29; -.17]
Tradition	.11 [.04; .17]**	-.16 [-.22; -.09]	.05 [-.02; .11]	.04 [-.03; .11]	.00 [-.07; .07]
	-.06 [-.13; .01]	-.30 [-.36; -.24]	-.06 [-.12; .01]	-.01 [-.08; .05]	-.11 [-.18; -.04]**
Security	.13 [.06; .20]	.15 [.08; .21]	.19 [.13; .26]	.07 [.01; .14]*	.08 [.02; .14]*
	-.10 [-.17; -.04]	.06 [-.01; .13]	.11 [.05; .18]**	.01 [-.05; .08]	-.05 [-.10; .02]

Attitudes toward traits correlated at best weakly with values, all $|r_s| < .30$ (Table 1), average r (SD) = .105 (.069). Traits also correlated with values weakly, all $|r_s| < .31$ (Table 2), average $r = .086$ (.071). Average correlations did not differ statistically, Welch t -test = 1.30, $p = .197$.

2. Traits did not mediate the links between attitudes toward traits and values (with few exceptions).

Among 19 correlations (those at $p < .001$) between attitudes toward traits and values, only three showed a full mediation by respective traits (see the mediational analyses at the back of the poster’s printed version).

Conclusions

If the attitudes toward traits and values were the same or at least similar constructs, one would expect to find strong correlations between them. We have found at most the weak associations here.

Given that full mediations were found to be rare, attitudes toward traits may have their own explaining potential beyond that of personality traits when it comes to values. These results also correspond to the previous findings on the incremental role of attitudes toward traits (see Introduction).

Therefore, attitudes toward traits probably differ from values. Moreover, the associations between these two constructs cannot be boiled down to the associations between personality traits and values.

References

- Shchebetenko, S. (2014). “The best man in the world”: Attitudes toward personality traits. *Psychology. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*, 11(3), 129–148.
- Shchebetenko, S. (2016). Reflexive characteristic adaptations within the five-factor theory: Between basic tendencies and external outcomes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 101, 35–41. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2016.05.055

Table 3. Indirect associations between attitudes toward traits and values via traits ($N = 906$).

Effects (B (SE), t, p), N = 906			
a	b	c	c'
At Extraversion -> Extraversion -> Power, IE B (SE) = -0.01 [-0.06; 0.05] (0.02)			
0.76 (0.06), 13.79	-0.01 (0.03), -0.25	0.36 (0.05), 6.82	0.36 (0.06), 6.30
At Extraversion -> Extraversion -> Self-Direction, IE B (SE) = 0.01 [-0.05; 0.09] (0.04)			
0.76 (0.06), 13.79	0.02 (0.04), 0.37	-0.37 (0.07), -4.97	-0.38 (0.08), 4.67
At Extraversion -> Extraversion -> Universalism, IE B (SE) = 0.06 [0.00; 0.12] (0.03)			
0.76 (0.06), 13.79	0.07 (0.03), 2.11, .035	0.39 (0.06), 6.84	0.34 (0.06), 5.35
At Extraversion -> Extraversion -> Conformity, IE B (SE) = -0.03 [-0.09; 0.03] (0.03)			
0.76 (0.06), 13.79	-0.04 (0.04), -0.92	-0.28 (0.06), -4.45	-0.26 (0.07), -3.66
At Extraversion -> Extraversion -> Security, IE B (SE) = -0.03 [-0.08; 0.02] (0.03)			
0.76 (0.06), 13.79	-0.04 (.03), -1.21, .226	-0.24 (0.05), -4.59	-0.21 (0.06), -3.67
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Achievement, IE B (SE) = 0.14 [0.08; 0.20] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	0.24 (0.05), 4.59	0.23 (0.06), 4.06	0.09 (0.06), 1.41, .159
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Hedonism, IE B (SE) = -0.06 [-0.11; -0.01] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	-.10 (.05), -2.25, .025	-0.17 (0.05), -3.43	-.11 (.05), -1.95, .051
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Self-Direction, IE B (SE) = 0.10 [0.04; 0.18] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	0.18 (0.06), 3.02, .003	0.27 (0.06), 4.20	0.16 (0.07), 2.27, .024
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Benevolence, IE B (SE) = 0.10 [0.04; 0.18] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	0.01 (0.05), 0.28, .781	0.24 (0.05), 4.91	0.23 (0.06), 4.18
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Conformity, IE B (SE) = 0.14 [0.08; 0.21] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	0.25 (0.05), 4.88	0.21 (0.06), 3.75	0.06 (0.06), 1.01, .313
At Agreeableness -> Agreeableness -> Tradition, IE B (SE) = -0.16 [-0.22; -0.10] (0.03)			
0.57 (0.03), 16.34	-0.28 (0.05), -5.93	-0.46 (0.05), -9.04	-0.30 (0.06), -5.26
At Conscientiousness -> Conscientiousness -> Power, IE B (SE) = 0.01 [-0.02; 0.04] (0.02)			
0.46 (0.05), 8.45	0.02 (0.03), 0.46, .643	0.40 (0.06), 7.01	0.40 (0.06), 6.62
At Affectivity -> Affectivity -> Power, IE B (SE) = -0.02 [-0.04; -0.01] (0.01)			
0.25 (0.06), 4.27	-.09 (.03), -2.81, .005	0.26 (0.05), 5.00	0.28 (0.05), 5.36
At Affectivity -> Affectivity -> Achievement, IE B (SE) = -0.00 [-0.02; 0.02] (0.01)			
0.25 (0.06), 4.27	-.01 (.04), -0.21, .832	-0.22 (0.06), 3.57	-0.22 (0.06), 3.50
At Openness -> Openness -> Power, IE B (SE) = 0.01 [-0.05; 0.08] (0.03)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	0.02 (0.04), 0.44	0.20 (0.05), 3.75	0.19 (0.06), 2.96
At Openness -> Openness -> Achievement, IE B (SE) = -0.04 [-0.12; 0.04] (0.04)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	-.05 (.05), -0.95, .340	-0.28 (0.06), -4.33	-0.24 (0.07), -4.33
At Openness -> Openness -> Hedonism, IE B (SE) = 0.09 [0.03; 0.16] (0.03)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	0.12 (0.04), 2.78, .006	0.33 (0.06), 5.96	0.23 (0.06), 3.62
At Openness -> Openness -> Stimulation, IE B (SE) = 0.18 [0.11; 0.26] (0.04)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	0.22 (0.04), 4.96	0.28 (0.06), 4.68	0.10 (0.07), 1.41, .159
At Openness -> Openness -> Conformity, IE B (SE) = -0.14 [-0.22; -0.06] (0.04)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	-0.18 (0.05), -3.65	-0.48 (0.06), -7.72	-0.34 (0.07), -4.68
At Openness -> Openness -> Security, IE B (SE) = -0.14 [-0.22; -0.06] (0.04)			
0.80 (0.04), 18.66	0.01 (0.04), 0.18	-.15 (.05), -2.83, .005	-.16 (.06), -2.50, .013