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Values and well-being – how are individual values associated with subjective and eudaimonic well-being?

Abstract: Schwartz created a circle of values reflecting people’s individual systems of goals and motivations. These values can be grouped into different dimensions: self-protection versus self-growth and concentration on others versus concentration on self. In the present study, we analysed how these dimensions are related to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being; $N=747$ participants, representative of the general Polish population, completed the Portraits Value Questionnaire, Satisfaction with Life Scale and Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-being (online study). A series of models were tested using structural equation modelling. We found that concern for self and self-protection values were related to higher hedonic well-being, whereas concern for others and growth values were related to its lower levels. However, growth and concern for others were positively linked to eudaimonic well-being, but they may also positively and indirectly impact hedonic well-being (suppression effect). These results suggest that some values are associated with a feeling of self-realisation at the cost of current hedonic well-being.

Keywords: values, hedonic well-being, eudaimonic well-being, individual wealth.

Introduction

Schwartz’s conception of values suggests that values may be related to well-being (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). It is likely that this relationship can be traced back to the fact that values determine individual goals, which in turn govern behaviours and so may impact well-being. Values are also connected to specific beliefs and attitudes concerning the world and other people. Furthermore, values may also influence the way that a person forms relationships (e.g. a person valuing power may lean towards domination in relationships, while a person valuing benevolence may aim to be empathetic), which are one of the most important determinants of human happiness (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2015). A review of current literature on the subject suggests that there is a significant void in our understanding of these relationships. Additionally, most studies focus on the subjective (hedonic) aspect of well-being, such as life satisfaction, but few studies have been devoted to the role of values for self-realisation dimensions, such as those expressed in eudaimonic well-being (conceptualised by Waterman et al., 2010). In this study, we will analyse how values, as conceptualised by Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz, 2007; Sortheix & Schwartz, 2017), are related to eudaimonic well-being (Waterman et al., 2010) and to hedonic well-being (Diener, 2000¹). We aim to answer

whether particular value dimensions are ‘healthier’ (related to higher well-being) and if these individual values are related similarly or differently to distinct aspects of well-being: hedonic (subjective) and eudaimonic.

Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being

Well-being can be understood as a combination of hedonia and eudaimonia. These two aspects of well-being are interrelated (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener & King, 2008), but each covers a unique aspect of human functioning, especially in relation to potentially significant value-related pursuits. Hedonic well-being is usually expressed by the subjective well-being theory, which includes a cognitive and an affective component (Diener, 2000). The cognitive component refers to a person’s general assessment of his/her life. This is done “subjectively”, meaning that a person uses his or her subjective criteria to indicate their level of satisfaction. The affective component expresses the intensity of positive and negative emotions in daily life. In the present study, we include only the cognitive aspect, as the emotional aspect seems to be rooted strongly in human physiology and is determined by temperament traits (Bojanowska & Zalewska, 2018).

¹ In this text, we equate the term hedonic well-being with subjective well-being. We use satisfaction with life to represent the subjective well-being dimension; in turn, the subjective well-being dimension represents the hedonic perspective. This should help contrast the hedonic versus eudaimonic perspectives included in this study.

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Contrastingly, eudaimonic well-being is defined as living well or actualising one’s potential (Deci & Ryan, 2008). From this perspective, well-being is not merely a subjective state, but a process of fulfilling a person’s “daimon” or true nature. Waterman and colleagues (2010) describe aspects of eudaimonic well-being such as self-discovery, a sense of purpose and meaning in life, intense involvement in activities, and the investment of significant effort. Despite these two aspects being correlated, they are conceptually different and may form unique relationships with value dimensions. Eudaimonia is often conceptualised as a process, while hedonia is the outcome state; indeed, it seems that it is eudaimonic well-being that impacts hedonic well-being and not the other way round (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2006).

Schwartz’s circumplex of values and well-being

According to Schwartz, values direct a person’s behaviour and determine which goals or undertakings are important (Schwartz, 2007; Schwartz et al. 2012). They are formed in the process of socialisation and are dependent on the context in which a person lives (e.g. family, society, culture; Martinez & Garcia, 2008). Schwartz listed a set of values, which he placed on a circular continuum (Schwartz et al. 2012). Values that are close to one another may be realised simultaneously because their underlying motivations are similar. A recent modification of Schwartz’s list contains 19 values. These can be calculated separately or grouped into four dimensions: openness to change, conservation, self-enhancement, and self-transcendence. Additionally, pairs of these dimensions can be further grouped into *Concern for others* (self-transcendence and conservation) versus *Concern for self* (openness to change and self-enhancement) or into *Growth* (self-transcendence and openness to change) versus *Self-protection* (conservation and self-enhancement; Sortheix & Schwartz, 2017). Table 1 presents how the values are grouped into both four higher-order values and dimensions.

There is some indication that values are linked to well-being, but there is still insufficient data to determine the precise connections between them (Sortheix & Schwartz, 2017), especially in terms of the possible relationships between values and different conceptualisations of well-being, such as hedonic and eudaimonic. Value-related behaviours and beliefs predict well-being but there are inconsistent results across various aspects of well-being (Bobowik et al., 2011; Bojanowska & Piotrowski, 2017; Cohen & Shamai, 2009; Joshanloo & Gahedi, 2009; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Sortheix & Lönnqvist, 2015). Sortheix and Schwartz (2017) described the mechanisms by which values can be associated with subjective well-being. They stated that achieving healthy values can lead to assessments, attitudes and behaviours that promote well-being. For instance, values promote well-being directly when a value is linked to positive perceptions (e.g., other people are kind), attitudes (e.g., tolerance), and behaviours (helping) and deteriorate well-being when a value is linked to negative perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (e.g., the world is dangerous and I need to protect myself from it). These direct consequences of values are likely to generate positive or negative events and, in turn, generalised favourable or unfavourable beliefs about life. For example, people for whom benevolence is important think that people are nice, they tend to be tolerant of others and committed to helping them and these convictions and behaviours would lead to an enhanced well-being.

Studies are partly consistent with the aforementioned suppositions. In general, *Concern for self* tends to be correlated positively with eudaimonic and with hedonic well-being, while *Concern for others* is related negatively (Joshanloo & Ghaedi, 2009; Sortheix & Schwartz, 2017). *Self-growth* is related positively with subjective well-being, while *Self-protection* has negative correlations (Bobowik et al., 2011; Bojanowska & Piotrowski, 2019; Joshanloo & Ghaedi, 2009; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). It seems that people who

Table 1. Higher order dimensions of values

Openness to change	Concern for self	Self-growth	Self-direction-thought Self-direction-action Stimulation Hedonism
Self-enhancement		Self-protection	Achievement Power-dominance Power-resources
Conservation	Concern for others		Face Security-personal Security-societal Conformity-rules Conformity-interpersonal Tradition
Self-transcendence		Self-growth	Universalism – societal concern Universalism – nature Universalism – tolerance

focus on their own needs and are driven by more self-oriented goals are happier. Similarly, those who reach for more and tend to try new things and ideas also experience higher well-being.

Moreover, it seems that the differences between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being suggest how they could be related to values. People high in eudaimonia tend to be more prosocial (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2006) so this aspect of well-being would be more strongly related to *Concern for others* and to *Self-growth*. On the other hand, hedonic well-being is an expression of a state of pleasure that can be achieved through many different activities but from among the dimensions presented in Schwartz's theory, *Concern for self* seems to express a pleasure seeking orientation most directly (e.g. it includes stimulation, hedonism, and more).

Based on these studies and theoretical assumptions, we expect a positive relationship between *Self-Growth* and subjective well-being, and a negative relation of *Self-protection* to subjective well-being (H1), but we do not know how the *Self-growth* and *Self-protection* dimensions are related to eudaimonic well-being (Q1). We also do not know how *Concern for others* and *Concern for self* is related with subjective and with eudaimonic well-being (the extant theory suggests a positive relationship, whilst studies tend to show an inverse effect) (Q2) and with eudaimonic well-being (Q3).

The significance of wealth for the value and well-being relationship

As noted by Sortheix and Lönnqvist (2014), the correlations between values and well-being may be moderated by social contexts and they may also be different in highly developed countries, where cooperation brings forth well-being more as opposed to underdeveloped countries where people have to compete for resources. This mechanism may be even more pronounced when wealth is measured at an individual level – individually perceived material situation may moderate relationships between values and well-being. We therefore decided to control for the impact of individually perceived levels of individual wealth (satisfaction with one's financial situation).

Method

The data were collected in an online study (CAVI) conducted by a professional panel. The study was carried out on a random-quota sample based on socio-demographic criteria such as age, gender, and level of education. Participants were informed that their individual data was confidential, that the study was anonymous and voluntary, and they provided informed consent.

Participants

The participants all voluntarily registered in the panel's database and were contacted with the offer to participate in the study in exchange for points that they could later

exchange for items offered by the panel (small "gifts", household appliances, accessories, etc.). The sample was representative of Polish society with regard to age, gender, population size, and education. $N=747$ people participated in the study, ($n=401$ women; $n=346$ men); aged 18 to 72 ($M=42.81$, $SD=14.11$); $n=274$ lived in rural areas, $n=92$ in towns up to 20 thousand inhabitants, $n=151$ in towns up to 99 thousand inhabitants, $n=138$ in cities with between 100 and 500 thousand inhabitants, and $n=92$ in cities larger than 500 thousand inhabitants (respectively: 37%, 12%, 20%, 19%, 12%); $n=100$ had primary or basic occupational education, $n=342$ had high-school education (also with additional courses but no university degree), and $n=314$ had a bachelor or master level degree.

Measures

Schwartz's Portraits Value Questionnaire - Revised (PVQ-RR, Polish adaptation by Ciecuch, 2013) was used to assess 19 individual values. Respondents indicated whether they are similar to the person described in each item (from 1-not like me at all to 6-very much like me). The scale consists of 57 items, 3 items per value (e.g. 'He goes out of his way to be a dependable and trustworthy friend'; 'It is important to him to have a good time'). These items are then grouped to calculate higher order dimensions: *Self-protection* and *Growth*, *Concern for others* and *Concern for self*. High scores express that a particular value or a particular dimension is important for the respondent.

Satisfaction with Life Scale - SWLS (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) was used to assess the hedonic aspect of well-being (Polish version adapted by the authors). Respondents reported whether they agreed with general statements about their lives (e.g. 'In most ways my life is close to my ideal'; 'The conditions of my life are excellent') on a scale from 1 (I definitely disagree) to 7 (I definitely agree). Higher scores express higher Life Satisfaction.

General eudaimonic well-being was measured with the Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-being (Waterman et al., 2010), adapted to Polish by Kłym, Karaś, Najderska and Ciecuch (2014). The questionnaire consists of 21 items (e.g. 'I believe I know what my best potentials are and I try to develop them whenever possible'; 'I can say that I have found my purpose in life') on a scale from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree). Higher scores express higher well-being.

Individual wealth was measured with a single item 'What is your financial situation?' ranging from being unable to afford basic things to being able to buy almost anything that a person desires. Objective income was not obtained, because specific salaries are rarely discussed in Polish society and people tend to avoid answering direct questions about their income.

Analyses

We used SPSS Statistics 20.0 software and AMOS graphics to conduct the analyses. All questions and hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation

Modelling. We used the maximum likelihood estimation method because the distribution of variables was similar to normal (skewness is between -0.7 and +0.7; kurtosis between -0.5 and +0.5). The final versions of the models were created after a number of modifications, including the removal of irrelevant paths. Since the model seems to be well-grounded in theory, we only had to make minor modifications to achieve a good fit.

We built one model with *Self-protection* and *Growth* as predictors and one model with *Concern for others* and *Concern for self* as predictors. These models reflect theoretical assumptions about the positive relationship between the two aspects of well-being, leading from eudaimonic to hedonic well-being (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008; Waterman et al., 2010). They also reflect assumptions about the effects of one’s individual financial situation on well-being. In the models, we assume that values impact hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (but not the other way round). Financial situation is inserted into the model as a controlled variable, therefore all paths and covariances between it and other variables remain (even if they are small and non-significant). The *CMIN/DF*, *GFI*, *AGFI*, and *RMSEA* were adopted as key indices of model fit. We used the cut off criteria suggested by Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2008): model fit was satisfactory when the *CMIN* value (χ^2) was not significantly different from the saturated model, *CMIN/DF*<10, *GFI* and *AGFI*>0.90, and *RMSEA*<0.1. Models presented in Figure 1 and 2 all reached good or very good fit..

Results

We first calculated basic descriptive statistics and correlations between the main variables (as illustrated in Table 2).

Subsequently, models of the relationship between values and both types of well-being were prepared. Self-transcendence and Conservation express *Concern for*

others, while Openness to change and Self-enhancement express *Concern for self*. These two dimensions are included in the first model (Figure 1). This model fits our data very well and it shows that hedonic well-being is impacted by both value dimensions, while eudaimonic well-being is only impacted by one of them. *Concern for others* strengthens eudaimonic well-being and weakens hedonic well-being. *Concern for self* strengthens hedonic well-being. Interestingly, hedonic well-being (satisfaction) path coefficients are significant but weak, while eudaimonic well-being path coefficients are strong. Life satisfaction is linked to four variables: both value dimensions (weak correlation), eudaimonic well-being (strong correlation) and financial satisfaction (controlled variable, strong correlation). On the other hand, eudaimonic well-being has only two predictors: *Concern for others* (strong correlation) and financial satisfaction (controlled variable, weak correlation). Interestingly, there are no direct or indirect paths from *Concern for self* to eudaimonic well-being. Evidently, these two types of well-being are impacted by different sets of predictors.

The second model includes dimensions of values grouped to express *Self-protection* and *Growth* (Figure 2). *Growth* consists of Self-transcendence and Openness to change, while *Self-protection* consists of Conservation and Self-enhancement. The model fits our data well.

Both of these value dimensions impact hedonic well-being, while eudaimonic well-being is impacted only by *Growth*. This pattern is similar to the pattern we found in the first model. *Growth* strengthens eudaimonic well-being but weakens hedonic well-being, whereas *Self-protection* strengthens hedonic well-being alone. General patterns of relationships are similar to those in model one, but the strength of these relationships is different. Similarly to model one, Life satisfaction is impacted by four variables: both value dimensions, eudaimonic well-being, and financial satisfaction (strong correlations),

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations between well-being indices, value dimensions and financial satisfaction

		Intercorrelations									
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Hedonic well-being	4.16	1.16	.84		.43***	.13***	.28***	.13***	.23***	.44***
2	Eudaimonic well-being	4.65	.67	.84			.47***	.30***	.46***	.26***	.12**
3	Concern for others	4.49	.59	.89				.74***	.88***	.78***	.00
4	Concern for self	4.16	.57	.95					.79***	.82***	.06
5	Self-protection	4.49	.66	.91						.55***	-.02
6	Growth	4.20	.57	.93							.08
7	Financial satisfaction	5.55	2.30	-							-

Note: ****p*<0.001

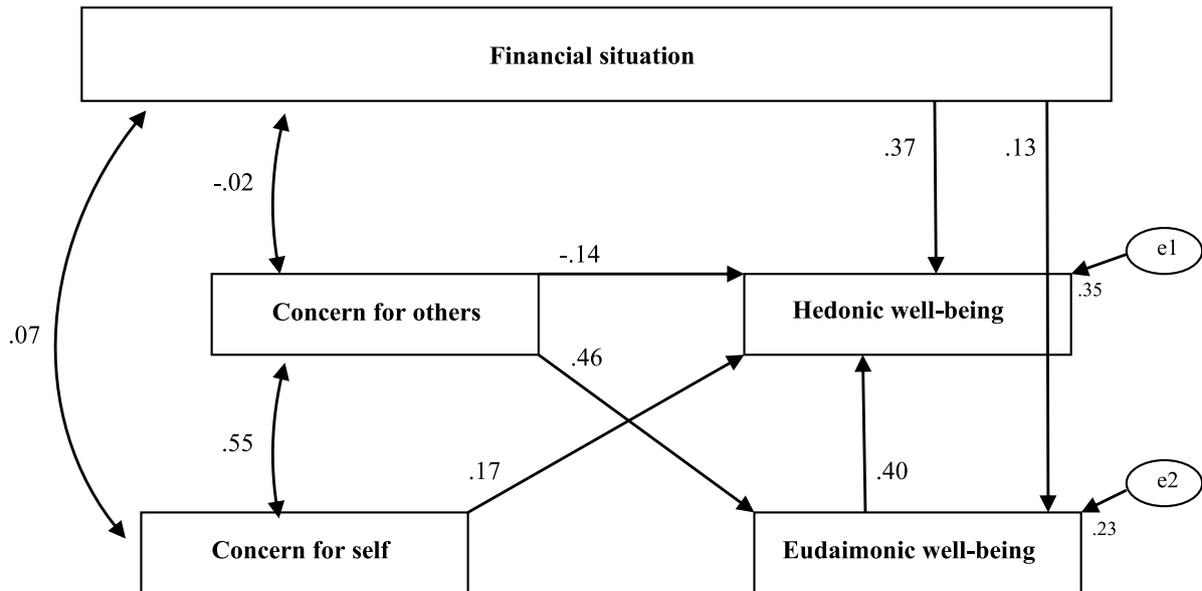
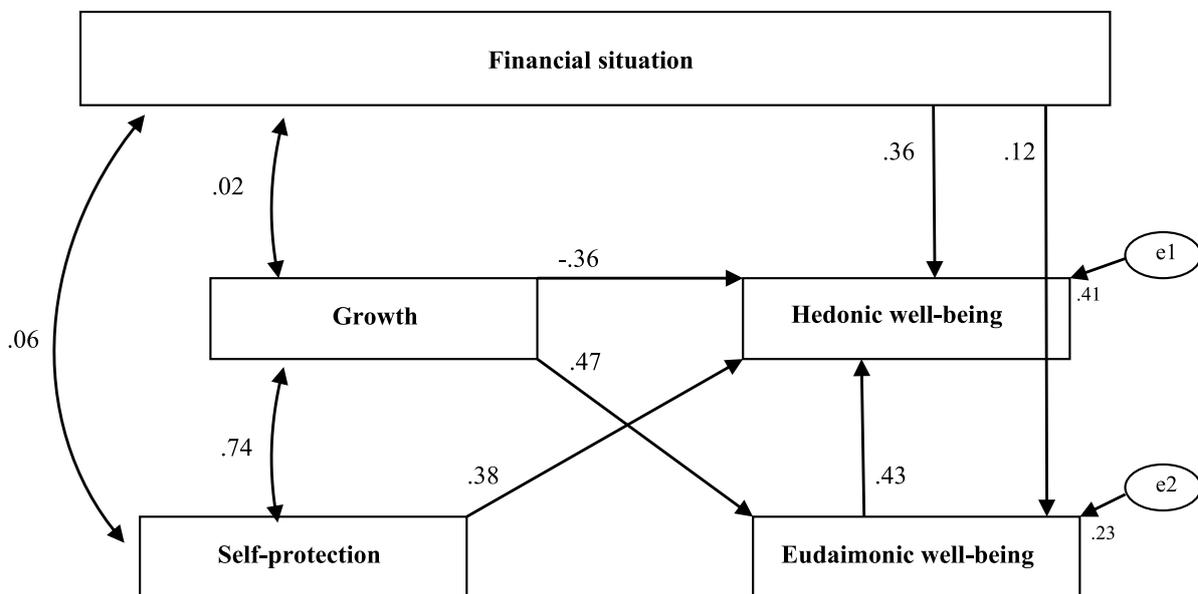


Figure 1. Relationships of values Concern for others and Concern for self with both types of well-being.

while eudaimonic well-being has only two predictors: *Growth* (strong correlation) and financial satisfaction (weak correlation). In this model, it is also evident that the patterns of impacts are different for the two aspects of well-being.

Importantly, the two models are analogous in terms of the number and directions of the relationships between variables. In both models, the two considered values are associated with the hedonic measure (one positively and

the other negatively) and only one of them is associated with eudaimonic well-being. Additionally, the relationship between the two well-being categories turned out to be identical in both models. Significant path leads only from eudaimonic to hedonic well-being; however, the opposite direction turned out to be irrelevant. Such a result seems to be consistent with the theoretical assumptions about the relationship between the two types of well-being and with research data (Czerw. 2017).



CMIN/DF=5.79
 GFI=0,997 ; AGFI=0,954
 RMSEA=0,08

Figure 2. Relationships of values Self-protection and Growth with both types of well-being.

The financial situation was controlled in the models. The respondents rated their satisfaction with the financial situation on a 10-point scale (1 - I lack money for basic things, and 10 - I can buy anything I want). This characteristic was chosen firstly due to the fact that it was a subjective measurement related to the level of satisfaction from one of the areas of life. The second reason was related to the insufficiently explained relationship between wealth (personal and country of residence) and perceived well-being (Reyes-García et al., 2016).

Discussion

It seems that one of the more important conclusions of this study is that high eudaimonic well-being may sometimes occur at the cost of satisfaction. Our findings suggest that the values that are related positively to eudaimonic well-being are, at the same time, related to lower current life satisfaction. We identified this pattern for *Concern for others* and *Growth*, both of which are associated with higher eudaimonic well-being but are linked to lower hedonic well-being. On the other hand, we also found that value dimensions of *Concern for self* and *Protection* are related to higher hedonic well-being, but not to lower eudaimonic well-being.

The effects of *Concern for others* are much weaker for hedonic well-being than for eudaimonic well-being. Nevertheless, the pattern is clear: valuing *Concern for others* is linked to lower satisfaction and to higher eudaimonic well-being. As stated in the introduction, Sortheix and Schwartz (2017) suggest that *Concern for others* may be related negatively to subjective well-being, while *Concern for self* is related to it positively. In our study, this pattern was confirmed for the hedonic aspect of well-being, but for eudaimonic well-being we recognised an additional, positive effect of *Concern for others*. This demonstrates that the investigations of well-being may yield skewed results if only the hedonic aspect is taken into account.

The effects linked to *Self-Growth* and *Self-Protection* also appear to be fairly interesting. Valuing *Self-Growth* was associated with lower satisfaction and higher eudaimonia, while valuing *Self-Protection* was linked with higher satisfaction. Conserving resources through values of security or power seems to be associated with a pleasurable, satisfying life, but striving to fulfil one's own potential is related to higher value placed in *Self-Growth*.

These effects can be explained by classical theories on stress and resource management (Hobfoll, 1989). According to Hobfoll, stress is experienced when resources are threatened, and this may translate into lower hedonic well-being. In reference to our results, this explains why *Self-Growth* (expressed through values of self-direction, universalism, and stimulation) is related to lower satisfaction. The hypothetical underlying mechanism would mean that engaging in activities that require strain and, consequently, use up resources and cause stress may be associated with lower satisfaction with life. On the

other hand, these same activities can be interpreted as an investment of resources that use them up in the short term but lead to long-time rewards (expected in the future) and therefore despite current stress they evoke hope for positive future outcomes. Hobfoll's theory also explains how valuing *Protection* and *Concern for Self* is related to higher hedonic well-being. These value groups lead to activities aimed at the protection and conservation of resources, such as maintaining the status quo, engaging in activities that are familiar, easy to interpret, and safe (expressed through conformity, tradition, and concern for safety) or those that are aimed directly at gathering and protecting individual resources (e.g. through power values, as it may be easier to obtain resources when one has power). This is also in line with Baumeister's ego depletion theory (2002), which states that when a person is in a difficult situation (e.g. realises ambitious goals attached to values of *Self-Growth* or *Concern for others*) he or she uses up psychological resources.

These results may also be referred to individual differences in preferred time perspectives (Bonniwell & Zimbardo, 2004; Şimşek, 2009). Studies carried out so far in this area have revealed that well-being is positively related to present and future time perspectives (Bonniwell & Zimbardo, 2004; Şimşek, 2009). Our results suggest that the present time perspective may be expressed through *Self-Protection* and *Concern for self* and positively linked to hedonic well-being, while a future time perspective may be expressed through *Self-Growth* and *Concern for others*, which are positively linked to eudaimonic well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Processes related to *Self-Growth* and *Concern for others* seem to express a future perspective, related to the hope of rewards delayed in time, while *Self-Protection* and *Concern for self* seem to express a present time perspective, facilitating immediate and automatic positive emotional reactions and cognitive evaluations (such as those related to realising the value of hedonism, one of the *Concern for self* values). This interpretation explains how engagement in goals that yield delayed results presented in our models is positively linked to eudaimonic well-being and negatively linked to hedonic well-being. Such differentiation of the functions of present and future time perspectives would, however, require more direct verification.

Future directions and practical implications

Understanding the relationship between a person's values and perceived level of well-being has vital practical implications for the construction of intervention or prevention programmes for people at risk of reduced well-being. Numerous studies have identified (e.g. Huppert, 2009; Vittersø, 2016) that the level of well-being is determined in part by individual features or activities that a person engages in. Some of those are stable and cannot be changed, while others can be shaped or enhanced through interventions. Because values are human characteristics that can be changed to some extent (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011; Sagiv, Roccas, Cieciuch

& Schwartz, 2017), creating interventions focusing on values can contribute to increasing well-being. This is in line with modern clinical practices, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) and with coaching practices in the organisational context that often focus on personal values. It also seems possible to use such knowledge in educational processes directed, for instance, at children and adolescents, and aimed at promoting specific values. The implementation of such activities obviously requires further research in this area.

This was a correlational study, so causal conclusions of the effects or directions of influence cannot be made. The discussion should be understood as ideas for potential interactions of the different values and well-being dimensions. It is possible that future longitudinal studies could be helpful in understanding the causal relationships between values and well-being. There are also several limitations regarding our interpretations of the results, especially those referring to person-group congruence. In future research, this can be avoided by computing a congruence index for each respondent and analysing how this congruence translates into well-being. This can be performed using comparisons of group-person congruence analysed at different levels - comparisons of countries and comparisons of smaller communities or social groups. These directions are consistent with a recent summary of value and well-being relationships published by Schwartz and Sortheix (2018). However, the authors only concentrate on subjective well-being, whereas we propose that future studies also include the eudaimonic aspect. As shown in our study, the relationships between values and eudaimonic well-being are unique and require further investigation and exploration.

The results of this study also cause the emergence of new areas for exploration. These largely concern considerations for eudaimonic well-being predictors. Satisfaction research has a long-standing tradition, so significant research exists regarding the many determinants of satisfaction (satisfactions from various life domains, e.g. work and family), but also stress, own health, financial situation, etc (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2018). In contrast, eudaimonic well-being has far fewer conclusions in this context because of the existence of many definitions and measuring methods. Eudaimonic well-being is defined quite broadly in terms of the fully functioning person and has been operationalised in many ways – for example, as a set of a few dimensions (by Ryff or Waterman), as happiness plus meaningfulness (by McGregor and Little), or as a set of variables such as self-actualisation and vitality (by Ryan and Deci) (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It is extremely interesting to what extent the diverse operationalisation of eudaimonic well-being also changes its predictors.

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the SWPS University Research Ethics Committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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