



Universiteit Utrecht

Faculty of Social Sciences

Master Social and Organizational Psychology

Academic Year 2015 - 2016

Value priorities and relationship functioning: Whether and how they matter

Janneke de Boer, 4188845

Master thesis

16 June 2016

Word count: 8.953

Supervisor: Reine van der Wal

Second supervisor: Tom Frijns

Abstract

Why do some romantic relationships fail whereas others thrive? The present research proposes human values as a distal explanation to romantic relationship functioning. Four studies were conducted. In Part 1, we focused on the association between value priorities and relationship functioning. First, a secondary data analysis (Study 1, $N = 229$) revealed negative associations between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning, and positive associations between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning. Interestingly, these effects seem to be partially mediated by growth beliefs, such that growth beliefs partially explained the effect of value priorities (self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values) on relationship functioning. In Study 2 ($N = 125$) we addressed the issue of causation. Against predictions, no effects of value priorities on relationship beliefs were found. In Part 2, we focused on the association of values with relationship stability; in Study 3 ($N = 335$) and Study 4 ($N = 142$) we investigated whether individuals who experienced a divorce versus individuals who are married differed on value priorities, relationship functioning, and relationship beliefs. Merely on self-transcendence values a difference between divorced and married individuals was found. Furthermore, divorced individuals reported less relationship quality, and lower growth beliefs as compared to married individuals. Implications for the extant literature on values and interpersonal relationships are discussed.

Keywords: value priorities, relationship functioning, relationship beliefs, divorce

The development and maintenance of romantic relationships appears to be an important contributor to both psychological (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999) and physical well-being (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). Individuals who are closely connected to others live happier, healthier and longer lives than when they are on their own (Koball et al., 2010). Indeed, romantic relationships are reflected by many theorists as a basic human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and some even argue it is required for human survival (e.g. Buss, 1994; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). However, maintaining romantic relationships with others seems to be difficult. Previous research helping explain why some relationships thrive whereas others fail, primarily focused on proximal factors, such as Big Five personality traits, (e.g. Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly & Conley, 1987; McCrae & John, 1992) and self-control capacity (e.g. Finkel & Campbell, 2001; Righetti, Finkenauer, & Finkel, 2013). However, less research is conducted on the influence of more distal factors on romantic relationship functioning, such as basic human values. Hence, in the present research, we explore the role of value priorities on the maintenance of romantic relationships.

Basic human values

Values are often defined as *guiding principles in life*, used to characterize individuals and explain the motivational bases of attitudes, decisions and behaviours (Schwartz et al., 2012). Each individual holds various values with varying degrees of importance. Schwartz redefined theory of basic human values describes 19 values, which are depicted in a circular motivational continuum (see Figure 1). Each of these 19 values are restructured into four higher order values; self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change, and conservation. These four higher order values consist of two motivational dimensions; the first illustrates the contrast between self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values, referring to values that underline pursuing one's own interest versus values that underline concern for welfare and interests of others. The second dimension opposes openness to change and conservation, emphasizing the willingness for new ideas, actions and experiences versus self-restriction, order and avoiding change (Schwartz et al., 2012). Individuals in all cultures recognize these values and they are structured in an identical way (Schwartz, 2012), and thus, human motivations seem to be organized universally. Furthermore, prioritizing higher order values seems to be extremely stable (Milfont, Milojevic, & Sibley, 2016).

Given the stability of values both cross-culturally and within individuals over time, it may not be surprising that many psychological researchers underscore the importance of values for predicting a range of human behaviour (e.g. Allport, 1961; Grouzet et al., 2005; Rokeach, 1973; Steele, 1988). For example, pro-self and non-environmental friendly attitudes share their motivational basis with self-enhancement values (Urien & Kilbourne, 2011) whereas pro-social and pro-environmental attitudes share their motivational basis with self-transcendence values. In addition, political and religious attitudes share their motivational basis with conservation values (Boer & Fischer, 2013). Hence, value priorities relate to various attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and background characteristics (for an overview see Schwartz, 2013).



Figure 1. “Circular motivational continuum of 19 values with sources that underlie their order” (Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 669).

Value priorities and relationship functioning

When and how are value priorities associated with romantic relationship functioning? There is some literature that has tended to focus on the extent to which relationship partners share the same values (e.g. Lee et al., 2009; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Specifically, Lee et al. (2009) demonstrated that individuals tend to think that their values are shared by those with whom they have romantic relationships, and tend to develop relationships with those whose values are equal to their own. Moreover, according to Heider’s (1958) balance theory, individuals should feel attracted to others who share their own values. Indeed, some studies documented that individuals search for potential partners who are similar to themselves to some degree (Figueredo, Sefcek, & Jones, 2006). Similarity in personality, attitudes, and

values should benefit attraction and relationship satisfaction (Burleson & Denton, 1992; Byrne, 1971). However, it remains unknown whether the content of people's values affect romantic relationships. For example, do people who prioritize self-enhancement values have qualitatively different relationships than people who prioritize self-transcendence values? And if so, why? The current research addresses this basic question.

There is some empirical evidence that may help to create expectations on which value types are associated with relationship functioning. First, Van Lange, Agnew, Harinck and Steemers (1997) conducted research on social value orientation and the willingness to sacrifice in romantic relationships. Social values orientation is a personal disposition that presumed to reflect pre-existing preferences for certain patterns of outcomes for self and others (McClintock, 1978). They found that highly committed individuals with pro-social value orientations are highly concerned about their romantic partner's well-being, and therefore more willing to sacrifice in their relationship (Van Lange et al., 1997). Individuals with pro-self value orientations, however, care more about their self (De Cremer & van Lange, 2001), and therefore only behave in a pro-social manner if there are long-term reasons for doing so (Van Lange et al., 1997). These pro-self and pro-social value orientations, correspond in some way with Schwartz' higher order values, in particular with self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values.

Other empirical evidence comes from Arthaud-Day, Rode, & Turnley (2012) who conducted research on value priorities and behaviour in an organizational context, and in particular, the relationship between individual values and organizational citizenship behaviour in teams. Self-enhancement values, in particular, achievement, positively affected citizenship behaviours directed toward individuals. In contrast, self-transcendence values, in particular, benevolence, positively affected citizenship behaviour directed towards the group. Put differently, self-enhancement values are directed to the individual, which shows their personal focus. Whereas self-transcendence values are directed to the group, which shows their social focus. Based on these findings, it seems that the endorsement of self-enhancement values may hinder relationship functioning, whereas the endorsement of self-transcendence values may promote relationship functioning.

In addition to self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values, there is another motivational dimension, which contains openness to change values and conservation values. Previous research provides ideas about the possible association between openness to change values and conservation values and relationship functioning. For example, the Big Five personality traits showed that openness, which is comparable with openness to change values,

is negatively related to marital stability and satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Conscientiousness, which is comparable with conservation values, is a predictor of marital satisfaction, intimacy and passion (Engel, Olson, & Patrick, 2002). Thus, these personality traits suggest that prioritizing openness to change values may be negatively associated with relationship functioning, while prioritizing conservation values may be positively associated with relationship functioning. Hence, in the current studies is expected that openness to change values related negatively to relationship functioning, whereas conservation values relate positively to relationship functioning.

The role of relationship beliefs

How do values influence romantic relationships? One potential way in which values may be associated with relationship functioning is through relationship beliefs. Beliefs are ideas about how things influence each other (Schwartz, 2012). Unlike values, beliefs refer to the subjective idea that something exists or is true without it is proven, not to the importance of objectives as *guiding principles in life* (Schwartz, 2012). Values may affect beliefs and various types of behaviour (Schwartz, 1994). Therefore, we expect that values activate particular relationship beliefs, which in turn influences relationship functioning. Individuals have different beliefs about the nature of relationships, such relationship beliefs partly determine the goals and motivations of an individual in a relationship (Knee, 1998; Knee, Nanayakkara, Vietor, Neighbors, & Patrick, 2001), and are embedded in implicit relationship theories (IRT) (Knee, 1998). There are two types of relationship beliefs: a belief in romantic destiny and a belief in relationship growth. Destiny beliefs are specified as the belief that potential relationship partners are either meant to be or they are not. These beliefs are associated with attempts to determine the status and potential success of the relationship. Growth beliefs are specified as the belief that relationship obstacles can be overcome. These beliefs are related to attempts of relationship maintenance (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003). For example, individuals that hold a destiny belief are more inclined to give up when the relationship is imperfect, whereas individuals that hold a growth belief are more motivated to actively work on their relationship with the assumption that it will continue to grow (Weigel, Lalasz, & Weiser, 2016). Research has shown that destiny beliefs are negatively related to various relationship processes such as relationship satisfaction and relationship commitment, whereas growth beliefs are positively related to these processes (Burnette & Franiuk, 2010; Franiuk, Pomerantz, & Cohen, 2004). Therefore, it is hypothesized that individuals who prioritize self-enhancement values endorse destiny beliefs, which relate negatively to

relationship functioning, whereas individuals who prioritize self-transcendence values endorse growth beliefs, which relate positively to relationship functioning.

The Present Research

The central hypothesis guiding this research is that individual's value priorities are associated with relationship functioning. Specifically, we expect that individuals who prioritize self-enhancement values experience lower relationship functioning, whereas individuals who prioritize self-transcendence values experience higher relationship functioning. Furthermore, we expect that individuals who prioritize self-enhancement values show stronger endorsement of destiny beliefs and weaker endorsement of growth beliefs. In contrast, self-transcendence values are related to stronger endorsement of growth beliefs and weaker endorsement of destiny beliefs. On the other dimension, openness to change values and conservation values, we expect to find negative results between openness to change values and relationship functioning and positive results between conservation values and relationship functioning. Moreover, we expect to find less or no effect between relationship beliefs and openness to change and conservation values.

To test these predictions, we measured individual differences in value priorities and their relationship functioning with indicators such as relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment and relationship quality. In addition, we measured individual's relationship beliefs. These variables are measured across four studies, which were divided into two parts. In Part 1, we focused on relationship functioning. In particular in Studies 1 and 2, we tested if individual's value priorities are associated with relationship functioning and if this association is mediated by relationship beliefs. Furthermore, we examined whether individual's value priorities causally predict relationships beliefs. Manipulating self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values gives us insight into the nature of the relation. In Part 2, we focused on relationship stability. Specifically, in Studies 3 and 4, we investigated whether individuals who experienced a divorce versus who did not, differ on value priorities, relationship functioning, and relationship beliefs. The four studies together should provide insight into the question when, why and how values are related to relationship functioning.

Study 1

To provide evidence for the proposed model, in Study 1, we examined the association between basic human values and relationship functioning with a special focus on relationship

beliefs. Based on findings of previous research, we expected that destiny beliefs positively mediated the relation between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning, whereas growth beliefs negatively mediated this association. In contrast, destiny beliefs negatively mediated the relation between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning, whereas growth beliefs positively mediated this association.

Method

Participants

A total of 244 participants took part in the online study. The questionnaire included five trick questions, to determine whether participants completed the questionnaire seriously (e.g. "Place a tick in the box "2""). In total, 25 participants were deleted before analysis (because of their given answers on the trick questions, $N = 12$, because they did not complete the survey, $N = 3$). Hence, the final sample consisted of 229 participants (102 males and 127 females). Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 73 years ($M = 37.29$, $SD = 11.64$). More than half of the participants were Caucasian (Caucasian 86.9%, Black or African American 4.4%, Asian or Pacific Islander 4.4%, Hispanic 3.5%, Other 0.9%). Having children was distributed almost equal to having no children (children 48.9%, no children 51.1%). The sample was religiously diverse (Christian 33.6%, none 17.9%, Atheist 17.5%, Catholic 12.7%, other 6.6%, Protestant 4.8%, Jewish 3.5%, Buddhist 1.7%, Hindu 1.7%). Most participants reported to be heterosexual (heterosexual 91.7%, bisexual 7.0%, homosexual 1.3%), and graduated at some college or obtained their bachelor degree (did not complete high school 1.7%, completed high school 14.8%, completed some college 40.2%, obtained bachelor degree 37.1%, obtained higher degree 6.1%).

Procedure

The data for this study was collected online through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in spring 2014. Participants were assured that their input would be kept anonymous. To take part in the study, participants had to meet the following inclusion criteria; they were located in the United States, had a HIT approval rate greater than or equal to 97%, approved greater than 500 HITs, and were involved in a relationship. After completing the questionnaires participants receive a reward of \$1,50. The survey took approximately 17 minutes to complete.

Measures

Values. To measure personal values, participants completed the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) (Schwartz et al., 2012). The PVQ consists of short verbal portraits of 57

different individuals, gender-matched with the participant. Each portrait illustrates an individual's goals, aspirations, or wishes that point implicitly to the importance of a value. An example item of the PVQ is "He/ she likes to do things in his own original way". This example item illustrates the importance of self-direction values. For each portrait, participants answered: "How much like you is this person?" the answers were ranked on a 6-point scale ranged from 1 (*not like me at all*) to 6 (*very much like me*). All 19 values were measured with three different items. The reliability of the 19 values was sufficient for almost all of them except for humility (see also Schwartz et al., 2012). For the analyses, we used the four higher order values self-enhancement (power-resources, power-dominance, achievement), self-transcendence (benevolence-dependability, benevolence-caring, universalism-concern, universalism-nature, universalism-tolerance), openness to change (self-direction-thought, self-direction-action, stimulation), and conservation (security-personal, security-social, tradition, conformity-rules, conformity-interpersonal). Although the values hedonism, face, and humility belong to two different higher order values, based on recommendations by Schwartz et al. (2012), we added hedonism to openness to change values and humility and face to conservation values. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics of all values.

To create a score for the four higher order values, we took the mean of the raw ratings for the values items that belong to the values of specific higher order value as stated above. Individuals differ in the way they use the response scale, therefore individual's mean response to all value items was subtracted of the response to each separate value item. Subsequently the mean score of the value was calculated by the average of the mean value items. Then the higher order values were composed by the average of the mean values (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Relationship satisfaction. The Investment Model Scale was used to measure relationship satisfaction (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998), which consists of two types of items (1) facet items, which measure specific exemplars of each construct, and (2) global items, or common measures for each construct. The facet items activate thoughts about the construct making it easier for the participant to answer the global items accordingly. The satisfaction level items determine the degree to which the relationship satisfies the individual's specific needs for intimacy, companionship, sexuality, security and emotional involvement. The answers of the facet items were given on a 4-point scale ranged from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 4 (*agree completely*). Global items were ranked on a 9-point Likert scale ranged from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*). Higher scores point to greater levels of satisfaction. The reliability for both the global satisfaction level items and the facet satisfaction level items were sufficient (see Table 2).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics 19 values Study 1

Value	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Self-direction-thought	4.86	.87	.66
Self-direction-action	4.93	.79	.70
Stimulation	4.10	1.13	.87
Hedonism	4.34	1.00	.82
Power-resources	2.96	1.35	.86
Power-dominance	2.91	1.15	.78
Achievement	3.82	1.20	.77
Face	4.35	.92	.66
Security-personal	4.79	.88	.72
Security-social	4.33	1.09	.77
Tradition	3.46	1.43	.90
Conformity-rules	3.91	1.30	.87
Conformity-interpersonal	4.25	1.12	.82
Humility	4.48	.86	.39
Benevolence-dependability	4.98	.82	.66
Benevolence-caring	5.19	.86	.86
Universalism-concern	4.84	.97	.81
Universalism-nature	4.29	1.13	.90
Universalism-tolerance	4.39	1.01	.78

Relationship commitment. To measure relationship commitment seven items of the Investment Model Scale were used (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998). An example item is “I want our relationship to last for a very long time”. Responses were given on a 9-point Likert scale ranged from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*) for each item. Higher scores point to greater levels of commitment. The reliability for the commitment level items was sufficient¹ (see Table 2).

Relationship quality. The Perceived Relationship Quality Component (PRQC) was used to measure relationship quality (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000). Participants were asked to rate their current partner and their relationship on each item. The questionnaire is divided into six scales, relationship satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion and love; each scale consists of three questions. However, the scales for relationship satisfaction

¹ Additionally, the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS) (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) was measured. However, no statistical significant effects were found between IOS and the other study variables. This might be due to first measuring commitment. Both variables were measured in a similar manner, which could lead to a ceiling effect while measuring IOS.

and relationship commitment of the PRQC were not used to measure relationship satisfaction and relationship commitment because the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998) was used to measure these variables. An example item of this questionnaire is “How dependable is your partner?” this item is part of the trust scale. Each item was answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*). The reliability of the used scales was sufficient (see Table 2).

Relationship functioning. Given that both items of relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, and relationship quality were strongly correlated with one another, $r's = >.63$, we gathered these three measures together in one composite score: relationship functioning. We did this by standardizing the three measures first so that they were on the same metric and then we took the average. Cronbach’s alpha for the composite score of the three independent measures was sufficient (see Table 2).

Relationship beliefs. The Implicit Theories of Relationships Scale (ITR) (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003) measured destiny beliefs and growth beliefs. The ITR contains of 22 items; half of them measures destiny beliefs and the other half measures growth beliefs. An example item for destiny beliefs is “Potential relationship partners are either compatible or they are not.” An example item for growth beliefs is “The ideal relationship develops gradually over time.” Both destiny beliefs and growth beliefs were answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 7 (*agree completely*). For both subscales reliability was sufficient (see Table 2).

Religious commitment. In order to determine if the findings were a result of individuals’ values priorities we controlled for religious commitment. To measure religious commitment the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) was used (Worthington et al., 2003). The RCI-10 scores would be used as control variables in analyses. This questionnaire consisted of 10 items; participants rated to what extent they recognized themselves in the given statements. An example item of this questionnaire is “My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life”. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 5 (*totally true of me*). Higher scores point to greater levels of religious commitment. The reliability for the religious commitment items was sufficient (see Table 2).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics variables Study 1

Measure		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Relationship satisfaction	Facet items	3.47	.64	.91
	Global items	7.58	1.58	.96
Relationship commitment		8.08	1.22	.86
Relationship quality	Intimacy	6.01	1.08	.93
	Trust	6.15	1.06	.94
	Passion	5.26	1.42	.90
	Love	6.25	1.06	.95
Relationship functioning		6.26	1.01	.95
Relationship beliefs	Destiny beliefs	3.66	1.13	.91
	Growth beliefs	5.52	.77	.84
Religious commitment		2.14	1.24	.97

Results

First, we conducted a correlation analyses to examine whether value priorities correlated with relationship functioning. We found that self-enhancement values and relationship functioning were significantly negatively associated with each other, whereas self-transcendence values were significantly positively associated with relationship functioning. For openness to change values and conservation values no significant correlations were found with relationship functioning. Additionally, growth beliefs were positively correlated with relationship functioning, whereas destiny beliefs were not correlated with relationship functioning. These results remained the same after controlling for religious commitment, sex, and age in the partial correlation analysis. See Table 3 for an overview of the correlations.

It is important to note that we found no sex differences for the significant associations between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning, and self-transcendence values and relationship functioning. However, we did find that openness to change values and conservation values were significantly associated with relationship functioning in males. For openness to change values and conservations values no significant correlations were found with relationship functioning for females.

In short, most findings were in line with the hypotheses, self-enhancement values were negatively correlated with relationship functioning, whereas self-transcendence values were positively correlated with relationship functioning.

Table 3

Correlations of Study 1 among both sexes

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Sex	-	-.05	-.20**	-.32**	.19**	-.16*	.21**	.02	.07
2. Relationship functioning		-	.58**	-.20**	.27**	.12	-.12	-.09	.32**
3. IOS			-	-.04	.09	-.01	-.03	-.07	.11
4. Self-enhancement values				-	-.63**	.04	-.29**	.13*	-.16*
5. Self-transcendence values					-	.01	-.28**	-.23**	.30**
6. Openness to change values						-	-.72**	-.01	.04
7. Conservation values							-	.10	-.08
8. Destiny beliefs								-	-.35**
9. Growth beliefs									-

Note. Sex was coded with male as 0 and female as 1. The correlations are measured by using the z-scores of all variables except for sex; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Since we did not find any significant correlations between destiny beliefs and relationship functioning (see Table 3), we focused on growth beliefs as the potentially mediating variable. The Baron and Kenny steps (Baron & Kenny, 1986) were used to examine whether growth beliefs were a mediating variable on the association between value priorities (i.e. self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values) and relationship functioning. We first checked whether self-enhancement values were associated with relationship functioning. We regressed self-enhancement values on relationship functioning. This analysis yielded a significant effect of self-enhancement values on relationship functioning ($\beta = -.20$, 95%CI [-.33, -.08], $t(229) = -3.12$, $p < .01$). Next, we analysed whether self-enhancement values were associated with growth beliefs. Again, we performed a regression analysis in which self-enhancement values were regressed onto growth beliefs. We found that self-enhancement values were negatively associated with growth beliefs ($\beta = -.16$, 95%CI [-.29, -.03], $t(229) = -2.37$, $p < .05$). Third, and most importantly, a regression analysis with both self-enhancement values and growth beliefs on relationship functioning revealed that, as expected, the association between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning reduced in strength ($\beta = -.16$, 95%CI [-.28, -.03], $t(229) = -2.48$, $p < .05$). A Sobel test revealed that this mediation was significant ($Z = -2.12$, $p < .05$). Hence, these findings seem to suggest that growth beliefs partially mediate the effect of self-enhancement values on relationship functioning (see Figure 2).

In a similar way, we examined whether there was a mediation effect of growth beliefs on the association between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning. A linear

regression revealed a significant effect of self-transcendence values on relationship functioning ($\beta = .27$, 95%CI [.14, .39], $t(229) = 4.16$, $p < .000$). Regressing self-transcendence values onto growth beliefs yielded a significant effect ($\beta = .30$, 95% CI [.17, .42], $t(229) = 4.67$, $p < .000$). Finally, a linear regression of self-transcendence values and growth beliefs on relationship functioning revealed that, as expected, the association between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning reduced in strength ($\beta = .19$, 95%CI [.06, .32], $t(229) = 2.89$, $p < .01$). A Sobel test revealed that the mediation was significant ($Z = 3.09$, $p < .01$). Hence, these findings seem to suggest that growth beliefs partially mediate the effect of self-transcendence values on relationship functioning (see Figure 3).

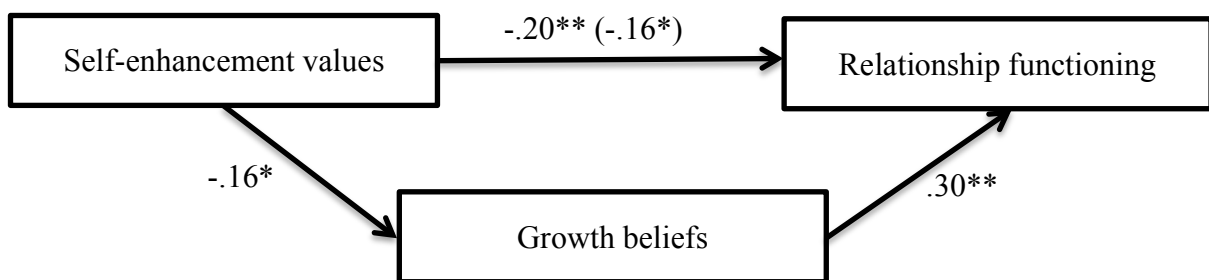


Figure 2. The standardized regression coefficient for the association between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning. The standardized regression coefficient between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning, controlling for growth beliefs, is between brackets; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

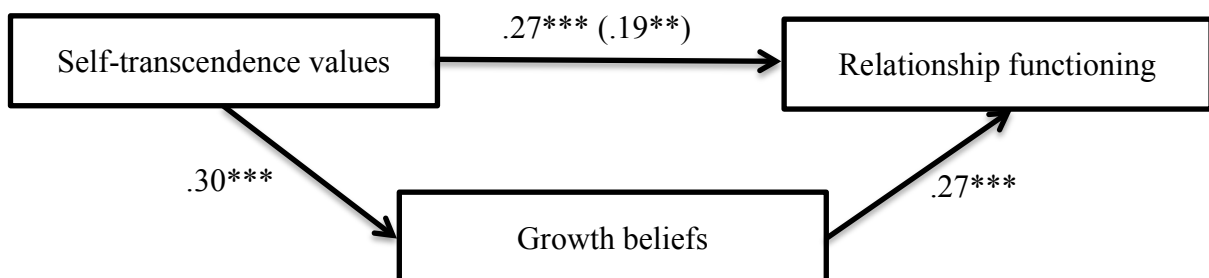


Figure 3. The standardized regression coefficient for the association between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning. The standardized regression coefficient between self-transcendence values and relationship functioning, controlling for growth beliefs, is between brackets; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Study 2

The results of Study 1 showed that self-enhancement values seem to be negatively related to relationship functioning and self-transcendence values seem to be positively related to relationship functioning. Also, this relationship appears to be mediated by growth beliefs, and not by destiny beliefs.

Study 2 was conducted to extend the findings of Study 1. Based on the findings of Study 1, in Study 2 we focused only on self-enhancement and self-transcendence values. Moreover, we addressed the issue of causation. Specifically, we manipulated self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values. We expected that individuals who were primed with self-enhancement values reported higher destiny beliefs and lower growth beliefs than individuals who were primed with self-transcendence values. Moreover, individuals who were primed with self-transcendence values were expected to report lower destiny beliefs and higher growth beliefs than individuals who were primed with self-enhancement values.

Method

Participants

A total of 253 participants took part in the online study. In total, 128 participants were deleted before the analyses (because of missing data, $N = 118$, because participants did not complete the manipulation questions seriously, $N = 3$, or because of a programming error in the survey, $N = 7$). Hence, the final sample consisted of 125 participants (20 males and 105 females). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 68 years ($M = 26.44$, $SD = 10.71$), 57.6% were involved in a relationship, and 42.4% of the participants were not involved in a romantic relationship. Their relationship length ranged from 2 months to 36 years ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 9.55$). Having children was unequally distributed to having no children (children 16.7%, no children 83.3%). Most participants graduated at high school (completed high school 39.2%, completed intermediate vocational education 8.0%, completed university of applied sciences 18.4%, completed university 34.4%).

Design and Procedure

Participants were recruited using Facebook, the university lab system, flyers, and email. The data for this study was collected online through Qualtrics software in spring 2016. Participants were assured that their input would be kept anonymous. Participating in this study was completely voluntary. After receiving informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three between subjects conditions: self-enhancement value prime ($N = 43$), self-transcendence value prime ($N = 39$) or control group ($N = 43$), after

which they received a manipulation check. Accordingly, participants' relationship beliefs and relationship commitment and relationship functioning were assessed. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Measures

Value prime manipulation. For manipulating self-enhancement values a manipulation of power was used (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003). Participants received the following instructions: "Describe the situation in which you had power" and "Describe how this situation contributed to your personal success". By power, we meant a situation in which the participant controlled the ability of another individual or individuals to get something they wanted, or were in a position to evaluate those individuals. Participants came up with answers such as, deciding for someone what he/ she is or is not allowed to do, designating someone's faults, or evaluating someone.

For manipulating self-transcendence values, participants imagined how it would be to have a child (Foad, Maio, Karremans, Van der Wal, & Gebauer, 2016). Participants received the following instructions: "Describe what it would be like to have a child" and "Describe how your child would look like". Participants mentioned that having a child is a big responsibility, that they are not yet ready for parenthood, and that having a child enriches your life.

Participants in the control condition received the following instructions: "Describe the breakfast you had this morning" and "Describe how your breakfast looked like".

Manipulation check. As a manipulation check, participants rated the importance of self-enhancement values (power and achievement) and self-transcendence values (benevolence and universalism), based on the Short Schwartz's Value Survey (SSVS) (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005). A 9-point Likert scale ranged from 0 (*opposed to my principles*), 1 (*not important*), to 8 (*of supreme importance*) was used. The reliability was not sufficient (see also Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005)).

Previous used measures. For Study 2, we used some of the same measures as in Study 1. That is, to assess participants' relationship beliefs we used ITR (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003), for relationship satisfaction (only the global items) and relationship commitment we used the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998). The different components of relationship functioning again strongly correlated $r = .66$, the same composite score was gathered as in Study 1. For the descriptive statistics of all measures see Table 4.

Control question. Individual's considerations towards having children was assessed, because the self-transcendence prime focused on having children. At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they had children. If their answer was "no" they rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranged from 1 (*certainly not*) to 7 (*certainly*), whether they think they might want children in the future.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics variables Study 2

Measure		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Relationship beliefs	Destiny beliefs	3.36	.94	.88
	Growth beliefs	4.79	.69	.75
Relationship satisfaction		7.62	.96	.83
Relationship commitment		7.60	1.14	.88
Relationship functioning		7.61	.96	.91

Results

First, a manipulation check was conducted to find out whether the value prime manipulation caused the intended effects. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with the between subjects manipulation as predictor and self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values as dependent variables. The MANOVA showed that there were significant differences between groups on the endorsement of self-enhancement values, $F(4, 242) = 2.51, p < .05$; Wilk's $\Lambda = .92$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Participants who received the self-enhancement prime endorsed self-enhancement values ($M = 5.67, SD = .23, 95\%CI [5.23, 6.12]$) indeed significantly more strongly than participants who received the self-transcendence prime ($M = 4.71, SD = .24, 95\%CI [4.23, 5.18]$), or were in the control group ($M = 5.12, SD = .23, 95\%CI [4.67, 5.57]$), $F(2, 122) = 4.41, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. However, no effects between groups on self-transcendence values were found, $F(2, 122) = .70, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These results remained even after controlling for the willingness to have children in a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA).

Next, a MANOVA with prime as independent variable and growth and destiny beliefs as independent variables was conducted. No effects were found between the different groups on either destiny beliefs, $F(2, 122) = .01, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$, nor growth beliefs, $F(2, 122) = .92, p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, which suggests that the value prime did not cause temporary differences on destiny beliefs or growth beliefs.

Although no effects of the value prime manipulation on relationship beliefs were found, we conducted some exploratory analyses, in order to examine whether the value prime had an effect on relationship functioning. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with value prime manipulation as between subjects factor and relationship functioning as dependent variable revealed no significant effects, $F(2, 69) = 1.30, p = .28$, which suggests that the value prime manipulation also did not change participants' self-reported relationship functioning.

Although the value prime manipulation did not lead to differences on relationship beliefs or relationship functioning, we conducted some exploratory analyses, in order to find out whether we are able to replicate the findings of Study 1. Specifically, we performed a correlational analysis between the manipulation check items, relationship beliefs (destiny beliefs and growth beliefs), and relationship functioning, while controlling for value prime manipulation. This analysis revealed only a significant positive correlation between self-transcendence values and growth beliefs, $r = .20, p < .05$, which partly replicates the findings of Study 1.

Study 3

In Study 2, we aimed to explore the underlying causal mechanisms of the association between values and relationship beliefs. Since we found no effects of the value prime on relationship beliefs at this point, we cannot confirm a causal relation.

As our primary aim of the present research was to explore the association between individual's value priorities and relationship functioning in Study 3, we turned to the question whether value priorities are associated with relationship stability. Specifically, in Study 3, we investigated whether individuals who have been divorced versus individuals who are married, have different value priorities and respond differently to questions about relationship beliefs. Besides answering questions about value priorities and relationship beliefs, participants completed different questionnaires in which their relationship stability was measured.

We expected that individuals who experienced a divorce prioritize self-enhancement values more strongly and have less stable relationships, versus individuals who did not experienced a divorce. At the same time, it was expected that individuals who did not experienced a divorce prioritize self-transcendence values more strongly and have more stable relationships than individuals who experienced a divorce. Furthermore, we hypothesised that individuals who experienced a divorce have higher destiny beliefs and lower growth beliefs. For individuals who did not experienced a divorce we hypothesised that they have lower destiny beliefs and higher growth beliefs.

Method

Participants

A total of 360 Amazon MTurk participants took part in the online study. The questionnaire included four trick questions, to determine whether participants completed the questionnaire seriously (e.g. "Please tick the box "a little like me""). In total, 25 participants were deleted before analysis (because of their given answers on the trick questions, $N = 20$, because they did not complete the survey, $N = 5$). Hence, the final sample consisted of 335 participants (175 males and 160 females). Participants were mainly Caucasian (Caucasian 83.9%, Black or African American 6.3%, Asian or Pacific Islander 5.1%, Hispanic 3.6%, Other 1.2%). Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 74 years ($M = 36.88$, $SD = 12.16$). Most of them were involved in a romantic relationship (69.3% in a relationship, 30.7% no relationship), and their relationship length ranged from 0 to 52 years ($M = 10.06$, $SD = 10.56$). Moreover, 31.9% of the participants experienced a divorced, which took place from 0 to 39 years ago ($M = 10.21$, $SD = 9.82$). Having children with your current partner was unequally distributed to having no children with your current partner (children 30.7%, no children 38.5%). Most of the participants who experienced divorced do not had children with the person from whom they divorced (no children 20.3%, children 11.6%). The sample was

religiously diverse (Christian 33.1%, none 22.4%, Atheist 16.1%, Catholic 12.2%, Protestant 5.7%, other 5.4%, Jewish 1.8%, Muslim 1.5%, Buddhist 1.2%, Hindu 0.6%). Most participants reported to be heterosexual (heterosexual 92.2%, bisexual 3.9%, homosexual 3.0%, Asexual 0.9%), and obtained their bachelor's degree (did not complete high school 0.6%, completed high school 14.0%, some college 27.8%, bachelor degree 43.9%, higher degree 13.7%).

Procedure

Data for this study was collected through MTurk in spring 2016. The inclusion criteria were the same as in Study 1 except for the HIT approval rate greater than or equal to 95%. After completing the survey participants received a reward of \$1,00. The survey took approximately 14 minutes to complete.

Measures

For Study 3, we used the same measures as in Study 1. That is, to assess participants' value priorities we used the PVQ (Schwartz et al., 2012), for relationship satisfaction (only the global items) and relationship commitment we used the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998), for relationship quality we used the PRQC (Fletcher, Simpson &

Table 5

Descriptive statistics 19 values Study 3

Value	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Self-direction-thought	4.88	.77	.57
Self-direction-action	4.89	.72	.63
Stimulation	4.24	1.04	.81
Hedonism	4.43	.95	.72
Power-resources	3.16	1.43	.85
Power-dominance	2.93	1.18	.84
Achievement	3.85	1.12	.72
Face	4.19	.84	.48
Security-personal	4.70	.88	.69
Security-social	4.46	1.01	.73
Tradition	3.48	1.48	.88
Conformity-rules	3.88	1.20	.85
Conformity-interpersonal	4.23	1.02	.71
Humility	4.46	.85	.38
Benevolence-dependability	4.77	.79	.51
Benevolence-caring	5.01	.78	.74
Universalism-concern	4.77	.97	.78
Universalism-nature	4.44	1.05	.78
Universalism-tolerance	4.35	.98	.75

Table 6

Descriptive statistics variables Study 3

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Relationship satisfaction	7.28	1.68	.96
Relationship commitment	7.33	1.62	.94
Relationship quality			
Intimacy	5.96	1.20	.94
Trust	6.07	1.22	.93
Passion	5.08	1.47	.89
Love	6.13	1.25	.94
Relationship functioning	6.80	1.37	.93
Relationship beliefs			
Destiny beliefs	3.92	1.24	.92
Growth beliefs	5.28	.85	.86
Religious commitment	2.17	1.28	.98

Thomas, 2000), and for relationship beliefs we used ITR (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003). The different components of relationship functioning again strongly correlated r 's = $>.74$, the same composite score was gathered as in Study 1. Furthermore, as in Study 1 religious commitment was used as control variable. For the descriptive statistics of all measures see Table 5 and Table 6.

Results

First, we examined whether there is a difference for participants who experienced a divorce versus participants who are married on value priorities (self-enhancement values, self-transcendence values, openness to change values, and conservation values), relationship functioning and relationship beliefs (destiny beliefs and growth beliefs). An independent T-test showed that there was a marginal significant difference for divorced and non-divorced participants on self-transcendence values, $t(333) = 1.71$, $p = .09$, with participants who experienced a divorce scoring higher, and on openness to change values, $t(333) = -1.90$, $p = .06$, with participants who experienced a divorce scoring lower. Additionally, a statistical significant difference for divorced and non-divorced participants was found on relationship functioning, $t(92.22) = -2.84$, $p = .01$, and growth beliefs, $t(333) = -2.82$, $p = .01$, with participants who experienced a divorce scoring lower on both variables (see Table 7).

In summary, divorced individuals seemed to prioritize self-transcendence values more strongly, and openness to change values less strongly, as compared to non-divorced individuals. Moreover, we found that divorced individuals experienced lower relationship functioning in their current relationship, and had less growth beliefs, as compared to non-divorced individuals.

Table 7

Means of Study 3 for divorced and non-divorced participants

	Divorced ($N = 107$)	Non-divorced ($N = 228$)
Self-enhancement values	-.94	-.89
Self-transcendence values	.47*	.37*
Openness to change values	.27*	.38*
Conservation values	-.06	-.07
Relationship functioning	6.35*	6.99*
Destiny beliefs	4.03	3.86
Growth beliefs	5.09*	5.37*

Note. Divorce was coded with divorced as 0 and non-divorced as 1. For relationship functioning the N 's were divorced ($N = 67$), non-divorced ($N = 165$); * $p < .05$.

In addition, we examined whether we were able to replicate the findings of Study 1. That is, we conducted a correlational analysis between relationship functioning and relationship beliefs. In support of the findings of Study 1, this analysis revealed a significantly negative association between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning. However, self-transcendence values and relationship functioning showed no significant association. Additionally, both relationship beliefs were correlated to self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values. Furthermore, destiny beliefs were not correlated with relationship functioning, whereas growth beliefs positively correlated with relationship functioning. These findings partly replicate the findings of Study 1. See Table 8 for an overview of the correlations of Study 3.

Table 8

Correlations of Study 3 among both sexes

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Sex	-	-.17**	.10	-.08	-.05	.07
2. Self-enhancement values		-	-.60**	-.16*	.22**	-.11*
3. Self-transcendence values			-	.11	-.34**	.11*
4. Relationship functioning				-	-.08	.39**
5. Destiny beliefs					-	-.21**
6. Growth beliefs						-

Note. Sex was coded with male as 0 and female as 1. The correlations are measured by using the z-scores of all variables except for sex; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

It is important to note that we found no sex differences for the effects between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning, and self-transcendence values and relationship functioning. In addition, when controlling for age and religion the significant effect between self-enhancement values and relationship functioning disappeared, p 's $> .05$. Hence, the found correlation in Study 3 replicated the findings of Study 1.

Study 4

Whereas the data for Study 3 were collected among American participants, Study 4 aimed to replicate the findings of Study 3 among Dutch participants. The hypotheses for Study 4 were similar to the hypotheses of Study 3.

Method

Participants

A total of 266 participants took part in the online study, 99 of them did not complete the questionnaire and were therefore deleted before analyse. The questionnaire included three trick questions, to determine whether participants completed the questionnaire seriously (e.g. “Please tick the box “not like me””). Based on the given answers on the trick questions another 25 participants were deleted before the analyses. Hence, the final sample consisted of 142 participants (30 males and 112 females). Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 70 years ($M= 37.89$, $SD= 14.85$). Most of them were involved in a romantic relationship (79.6% in a relationship, 20.4% no relationship), their relationship length ranged from 1.5 weeks to 46.0 years ($M= 14.08$, $SD= 12.11$). In addition, 19.7% of the participants had ever been divorced. Having children was distributed almost equal to having no children (53.5% children, 46.5% no children). Most of the participants graduated at university of applied sciences or at university (14.1% completed high school, 15.5% completed secondary vocational education, 35.2% completed university of applied sciences, 35.2% completed university).

Procedure

The data for this study was collected online through Qualtrics software in spring 2016. Participants were assured that their input would be kept anonymous. After completing the survey participants could win a gift voucher of €10,00. After we collected all the data, 16 gift vouchers were randomly given to the participants who signed up for the lottery. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Measures

For Study 4, we used the same measures as in Study 1. That is, to assess participants’ value priorities we used the PVQ (Schwartz et al., 2012), for relationship satisfaction (only the global items) and relationship commitment we used the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998), and for relationship beliefs we used ITR (Knee, Patrick, & Lonsbary, 2003). The different components of relationship functioning again strongly correlated $r = .70$, the same composite score was gathered as in Study 1. For the descriptive statistics of all measures see Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9

Descriptive statistics 19 values Study 4

Value	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Self-direction-thought	4.83	.72	.63
Self-direction-action	5.08	.63	.71
Stimulation	3.76	.95	.71
Hedonism	4.66	.74	.66
Power-resources	2.16	.92	.81
Power-dominance	2.81	.97	.73
Achievement	4.05	.93	.66
Face	3.96	.89	.59
Security-personal	4.35	.74	.50
Security-social	4.16	1.00	.75
Tradition	3.13	1.10	.83
Conformity-rules	3.63	1.09	.84
Conformity-interpersonal	4.17	1.04	.79
Humility	4.08	.95	.64
Benevolence-dependability	5.23	.51	.63
Benevolence-caring	5.05	.70	.74
Universalism-concern	4.84	.79	.66
Universalism-nature	3.59	1.13	.89
Universalism-tolerance	4.85	.71	.65

Table 10

Descriptive statistics variables Study 4

Measure		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Relationship satisfaction		7.42	1.42	.92
Relationship commitment		7.66	1.22	.94
Relationship functioning		7.54	1.22	.83
Relationship beliefs	Destiny beliefs	3.61	1.03	.86
	Growth beliefs	4.84	.78	.77

Results

First, we investigated whether there was a difference for participants who experienced a divorce versus participants who did not experience divorce on value priorities (self-enhancement values, self-transcendence values, openness to change values, and conservation

values), relationship functioning, and relationship beliefs (destiny beliefs and growth beliefs). An independent T-test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between divorced and non-divorced participants on self-enhancement values, $t(140) = -2.02, p = .05$, with participants who experienced a divorce scoring lower on self-enhancement values (see Table 11). For all other study variables no significant difference between divorced and non-divorce participants was found.

Table 11

Means of Study 4 for divorced and non-divorced participants

	Divorced ($N = 28$)	Non-divorced ($N = 114$)
Self-enhancement values	-1.30*	-1.03*
Self-transcendence values	.70	.56
Openness to change values	.46	.45
Conservation values	-.18	-.20
Relationship functioning	7.57	7.53
Destiny beliefs	3.74	3.58
Growth beliefs	4.71	4.88

Note. Divorce was coded with divorced as 0 and non-divorced as 1. For relationship functioning the N 's were divorced ($N = 21$), non-divorced ($N = 92$); * $p < .05$.

Table 12

Correlations of Study 4 among both sexes

Measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Sex	-	-.02	.07	.09	.01	.14
2. Self-enhancement values		-	-.63**	-.13	.11	-.02
3. Self-transcendence values			-	.11	-.18*	.03
4. Relationship functioning				-	-.22*	-.06
5. Destiny beliefs					-	-.09
6. Growth beliefs						-

Note. Sex was coded with male as 0 and female as 1. The correlations are measured by using the z-scores of all variables except for sex; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Moreover, we examined whether we were able to replicate the results of Study 1. Therefore, a correlation analysis was conducted on value priorities, relationship functioning, and relationship beliefs. The results showed that self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values negatively significantly associated with each other. In addition, self-

transcendence values and destiny beliefs were negatively correlated (see Table 12). These results partly replicate the findings of the previous studies. Furthermore, we found a positively significant correlation between relationship functioning and destiny beliefs. However, in the previous studies no significant correlation between these variables was found.

General Discussion

Previous research attributed the reason why some relationships thrive whereas others fail to proximal factors. The current studies focused on distal factors, specifically value priorities, of relationship functioning. Their general aim was to investigate whether value priorities were associated with relationship functioning. The conducted studies were divided into two parts. Part 1 (Study 1 and Study 2) investigated the association between values priorities and relationship functioning and whether this association was mediated by relationship beliefs. Part 2 (Study 3 and Study 4) investigated the role of value priorities in relationship stability, specifically whether divorced individuals and married individuals differed on value priorities, relationship functioning and relationship beliefs. In general, it was hypothesized that prioritizing self-enhancement values hindered relationship functioning, and that this was associated with higher endorsement of destiny beliefs and lower endorsement of growth beliefs. Contrarily, prioritizing self-transcendence values was hypothesized to promote relationship functioning, and expected to be associated with lower endorsement of destiny beliefs and higher endorsement of growth beliefs. Secondly, it was expected that divorced individuals endorsed self-enhancement values more strongly and had higher destiny beliefs and lower growth beliefs compared to married individuals.

The current studies provided new insights on the association between value priorities and relationship functioning. The findings of Part 1 showed that self-enhancement values were associated with lower relationship functioning, whereas self-transcendence values were associated with higher relationship functioning, in both associations was the effect partially explained by growth beliefs. These findings were in line with our hypothesis, although no causal association between value priorities and relationship beliefs was found. Whether this association was causal was investigated by manipulating self-enhancement values and self-transcendence values. It was the first time self-enhancement values were primed; we used a power prime, which seems to be efficient. Nevertheless, Part 1 provided a distal interpretation for the functioning of romantic relationships. The findings of Part 2 showed that divorced individuals prioritized self-transcendence values more strongly, which was contrary to our

hypothesis. An explanation might be the motivational basis of self-transcendence values because these values were consistent with social desirable behaviour. Thus, all individuals score probably high on these values, including divorced individuals. Furthermore, divorced individuals had lower growth beliefs and experienced lower relationship functioning in their current relationship. These findings were in line with our hypothesis, which showed that experiencing a divorce affects future romantic relationships. Moreover, replications that were found in the current studies were in line with the findings of Study 1.

Theoretical implications

Previous research has shown that individuals search for potential partners who are equal to themselves (e.g. Figueredo et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2009; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Additionally, similarity in personality, attitudes and values should benefit attraction and relationship satisfaction (Burlison & Denton, 1992; Byrne, 1971). This set of studies shed a new light on factors that affect romantic relationship functioning. The current research showed that the importance of individuals' values, specifically self-enhancement values versus self-transcendence values, affects individual's relationship functioning in an interpersonal context.

As discussed above, we found an association between value priorities and relationship functioning. However, the mechanism underlying the relation between value priorities and relationship functioning remains ambiguous, despite the current attempts to uncover it. In the current studies, findings of Part 1 pointed to relationship beliefs as underlying mechanism, considering the partial mediation of growth beliefs that was found. This mediation suggested that beliefs stem from values, which, in turn were associated with relationship functioning. Research has shown that values may influence beliefs and several types of behaviour (Schwartz, 1994). However, in the current studies, a causal association between values and beliefs could not be proven, which may be due to lacking power (see limitations and future directions). Previous research showed that relationship beliefs impact the extent to which individuals maintain their relationships (Knee et al., 2003; Weigel et al., 2015). Nonetheless, the found mediation in Part 1 was not consistently found in other presently presented studies. Contrary to the other studies we used the SSVS (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005) to measure value priorities in Study 2. For participants it is more difficult to identify themselves with the values by the questions used in this measure. This could explain why no replication of the mediation effect was found.

Apart from the effect of relationship beliefs on relationship functioning, it seems that relationship beliefs were associated with relationship stability. The results of Study 3 and

Study 4 showed that individuals who experienced a divorce reported lower growth beliefs and lower relationship functioning in their current relationship compared to married individuals. Furthermore, they endorsed self-transcendence values more strongly than married individuals. For the other values no differences between divorced and married individuals were found. Although this finding stands in contrast with the hypotheses, a possible explanation may be that personal values react on changing social circumstances, but as time passes, these personal values return to their baseline levels (Lönnqvist, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Verkasalo, 2013). On average participants in our study experienced a divorce 9.82 years ago. It therefore is likely that these participant's values returned to their baseline levels. This explains why no differences were found.

Finally, the association between value priorities and relationship functioning is presumably not merely mediated by relationship beliefs. Other mechanisms such as an individual's motivation could also mediate this association. First, as described by Kasser and Ryan (1996) extrinsic motivation contains a focus on power and self-image, which corresponds with self-enhancement values. Whereas intrinsic motivation contained a social focus, which corresponds with self-transcendence values. Intrinsically motivated individuals reported greater couple happiness and more active coping strategies (Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007), which is probably reflected in higher relationship functioning (Papp & Witt, 2010). Moreover, individuals who engage in direct relationship maintenance responses are more likely to have longer and more satisfying relationships (Gottman, Driver, & Tabares, 2002).

Limitations and future directions

This set of studies had several limitations, which should be addressed in future research. The findings were based on correlational research; therefore we could not argue but only suppose that beliefs stem from values. In Study 2 we addressed the issue of causation, but no effects were found may be due to lacking power. Another explanation why no effects were found was because the questions about relationship beliefs were asked at the end of the questionnaire, whereby the prime has been worn off.

Furthermore, the data collection method had some limitations. All data was collected through online questionnaires that were completed at home. This method can suffer from lower reliability than for instance data collection in the lab or field.

Another limitation is that the current data were collected using self-report measures that may suffer from various biases, such as social desirability (e.g. Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le, & Schmitt, 2005). Future research is encouraged to further extent on our

findings by measuring our variables in a different way, because this prevents social desirability. For instance, future research could measure these variables using diary studies. Another possibility is investigating actual behaviour in romantic relationships like sacrifice, forgiveness, or infidelity to prevent social desirability.

Conclusion

The current research focused on the association between distal factors, such as value priorities, and relationship functioning. Four studies were conducted and divided into two parts; the samples were diverse on age and nationality. Part 1 found that individuals' value priorities, are associated with relationship functioning. Part 2 found that divorced individuals prioritized self-transcendence values more strongly, and experienced lower growth beliefs and relationship functioning in their current relationship. The current research provided new information about factors that affect relationship functioning. Distal factors, specifically value priorities, were associated with relationship functioning. However, these findings were preliminary. Future research on this topic is needed to extend our knowledge about whether and how distal factors have an effect on relationship functioning. With this knowledge we can help individuals maintaining their relationship.

References

- Allport, G. W. (1961). *Pattern and growth in personality*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 63(4), 596-612.
- Arthaud-Day, M. L., Rode, J. C., & Turnley, W. H. (2012). Direct and contextual effects of individual values on organizational citizenship behavior in teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(4), 792-807.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497–529.
- Boer, D., & Fischer, R. (2013). How and when do personal values guide our attitudes and sociality? Explaining cross-cultural variability in attitude–value linkages. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(5), 1113-1147.
- Burleson, B. R., & Denton, W. H. (1992). A new look at similarity and attraction in marriage: Similarities in social-cognitive and communication skills as predictors of attraction and satisfaction. *Communication Monographs*, 59, 268–287.
- Burnette, J. L., & Franiuk, R. (2010). Individual differences in implicit theories of relationships and partner fit: Predicting forgiveness in developing relationships. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 48(2), 144-148.
- Buss, D. M. (1994). *The evolution of desire: Strategies of human mating*. Allport New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Byrne, D. G. (1971). *The attraction paradigm*. New York: Academic Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227–268.
- De Cremer, D., & van Lange, P. A. M. (2001). Why prosocials exhibit greater cooperation than proselves: The roles of social responsibility and reciprocity. *European Journal of Personality*, 15, 5–18.

- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress—1967 to 1997. *Psychological Bulletin*, *125*, 276–302.
- Engel, G., Olson, K. R., & Patrick, C. (2002). The personality of love: Fundamental motives and traits related to components of love. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *32*(5), 839-853.
- Figueredo, A. J., Sefcek, J. A., & Jones, D. N. (2006). The ideal romantic partner personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *41*(3), 431-441.
- Finkel, E. J., & Campbell, W. K. (2001). Self-control and accommodation in close relationships: an interdependence analysis. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *81*(2), 263-277.
- Fletcher, G. J., Simpson, J. A., & Thomas, G. (2000). The measurement of perceived relationship quality components: A confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*(3), 340-354.
- Foad, C. F. M., Maio, G. R., Karremans, J. C., Van der Wal, R. C., & Gebauer, J. (2016). The salience of children can enhance prosocial values. *Unpublished data*.
- Franiuk, R., Pomerantz, E. M., & Cohen, D. (2004). The causal role of theories of relationships: Consequences for satisfaction and cognitive strategies. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *30*(11), 1494-1507.
- Galinsky, A. D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Magee, J. C. (2003). From power to action. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *85*(3), 453-466.
- Gottman, J. M., Driver, J., & Tabares, A. (2002). Building the sound marital house: An empirically derived couple therapy. In A. S. Gurman & N. S. Jacobson (Eds.), *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (3rd ed., pp. 373-399). New York: Guilford.
- Grouzet, F. M., Kasser, T., Ahuvia, A., Dols, J. M. F., Kim, Y., Lau, S., ... & Sheldon, K. M. (2005). The structure of goal contents across 15 cultures. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *89*(5), 800-816.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hofmann, W., Gawronski, B., Gschwendner, T., Le, H., & Schmitt, M. (2005). A meta-analysis on the correlation between the Implicit Association Test and explicit self-report measures. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *31*(10), 1369-1385.
- House, J. S., Landis, K. R., & Umberson, D. (1988). Social relationships and health. *Science*, *241*, 540–545.
- Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1995). The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: a review of theory, method, and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *118*, 3–34.

- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1996). Further examining the American dream: Differential correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(3), 280-287.
- Kelly, E. L., & Conley, J. J. (1987). Personality and compatibility: a prospective analysis of marital stability and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 27-40.
- Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., & Newton, T. L. (2001). Marriage and health: His and hers. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 472-503.
- Knee, C. R. (1998). Implicit theories of relationships: Assessment and prediction of romantic relationship initiation, coping, and longevity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(2), 360-370.
- Knee, C. R., Nanayakkara, A., Vietor, N. A., Neighbors, C., & Patrick, H. (2001). Implicit theories of relationships: Who cares if romantic partners are less than ideal? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 808-819.
- Knee, C. R., Patrick, H., & Lonsbary, C. (2003). Implicit theories of relationships: Orientations toward evaluation and cultivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 7(1), 41-55.
- Koball, H. L., Moiduddin, E., Henderson, J., Goesling, B., & Besculides, M. (2010). What do we know about the link between marriage and health? *Journal of Family Issues*, 31, 1019-1040.
- Lee, K., Ashton, M. C., Pozzebon, J. A., Visser, B. A., Bourdage, J. S., & Ogunfowora, B. (2009). Similarity and assumed similarity in personality reports of well-acquainted persons. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 96(2), 460-472.
- Lindeman, M. & Verkasalo, M. (2005). Measuring values with the Short Schwartz's Value Survey. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 85(2), 170-178.
- Lönnqvist, J. E., Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., & Verkasalo, M. (2013). Rebound effect in personal values: Ingrian Finnish migrants' values two years after migration. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1-5.
- McClintock, C. G. (1978). Social values: Their definition, measurement and development. *Journal of Research & Development in Education*, 12(1), 1978, 121-137.
- McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P. (1992). An introduction to the five-factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*, 60, 175-215.

- Milfont, T. L., Milojev, P., & Sibley, C. G. (2016). Values Stability and Change in Adulthood: A 3-Year Longitudinal Study of Rank-Order Stability and Mean-Level Differences. *Personality & social psychology bulletin*, *42*(5), 572-588.
- Papp, L. M., & Witt, N. L. (2010). Romantic partners' individual coping strategies and dyadic coping: implications for relationship functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *24*(5), 551.
- Patrick, H., Knee, C. R., Canevello, A., & Lonsbary, C. (2007). The role of need fulfillment in relationship functioning and well-being: a self-determination theory perspective. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *92*(3), 434.
- Righetti, F., Finkenauer, C., & Finkel, E. J. (2013). Low self-control promotes the willingness to sacrifice in close relationships. *Psychological Science*, 1–8.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.
- Rusbult, C. E., Martz, J. M., & Agnew, C. R. (1998). The investment model scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. *Personal relationships*, *5*(4), 357-387.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the structure and contents of human values? *Journal of Social Issues*, *50*, 19–45.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, *2*(1).
- Schwartz, S. H. (2013, May). Value priorities and behavior: Applying a theory of integrated value systems. *The psychology of values: The Ontario symposium* (Vol. 8). Psychology Press.
- Schwartz, S. H., Vecchione, M., Fischer, R., Ramos, A., Cieciuch, J., Davidov, E., Beierlein, C., Verkasalo, M., Lönnqvist, J. E., & Konty, M. (2012). Redefining the theory of basic individual values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*(4), 663-688.
- Shaver, P., Hazan, C., & Bradshaw, D. (1988). Love as attachment: The integration of three behavioral systems. In R. J. Steinberg & M. L. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 68–99). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sprecher, S., & Regan, P. C. (2002). Liking some things (in some people) more than others: Partner preferences in romantic relationships and friendships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *19*(4), 463-481.
- Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *21*(2), 261-302.

- Uchino, B. N., Cacioppo, J. T., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. (1996). The relationship between social support and physiological processes: A review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological Bulletin*, *119*, 488–531.
- Urien, B., & Kilbourne, W. (2011). Generativity and self-enhancement values in eco-friendly behavioral intentions and environmentally responsible consumption behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, *28*(1), 69-90.
- Van Lange, P. A., Agnew, C. R., Harinck, F., & Steemers, G. E. (1997). From game theory to real life: How social value orientation affects willingness to sacrifice in ongoing close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(6), 1330-1344.
- Weigel, D. J., Lalasz, C. B., & Weiser, D. A. (2016). Maintaining relationships: The role of implicit relationship theories and partner fit. *Communication Reports*, *29*(1), 23-34.
- Worthington Jr, E. L., Wade, N. G., Hight, T. L., Ripley, J. S., McCullough, M. E., Berry, J. W., ... & O'Connor, L. (2003). The Religious Commitment Inventory-10: Development, refinement, and validation of a brief scale for research and counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *50*(1), 84.