March 2022

An Analysis of Most Important Values Among Low-Income, High-Ability Middle School Students

Jennifer Riedl Cross
College of William and Mary, jrcross@wm.edu

Article

An Analysis of Most Important Values
Among Low-Income, High-Ability
Middle School Students

Jennifer Riedl Cross, Ph.D. ⓘD

Abstract

Value orientations based on Schwartz's theory of human values were collected from low-income, high-ability middle school students (*N* = 215; 87.4% Black, Hispanic, or Mixed) through a values affirmation activity in the 7th and again in the 8th grade. Students ranked "Being successful" highest in 7th grade, "Being safe and secure" highest in 8th grade. Most important values in the Conservation and Self-Transcendent quadrants predominated and were most stable from 7th to 8th grade. Analysis of essays on their most important values identified the significance of Others in their lives, including the desire to be successful for others. Reflecting on their values led them to be Future Oriented in their thinking about the values that should guide them. Fear/Death-Awareness was another significant theme, as students described their desire to be free from danger and to live a good life, short as it may be. As educators build supportive environments in schools for economically disadvantaged students, they can benefit from considering the importance of students' values, which will be motivating factors in their engagement.

Keywords: *values • low-income • underrepresented • moral development • mortality salience • motivation • beliefs • middle school • disadvantaged*

In a study of more than 300 supporters of gifted education—researchers, teachers, administrators, and parents—there was nearly 100% agreement that the primary purpose of gifted education is "to help students with gifts and talents achieve their maximum potential" (Cross et al., 2010, p. 241). Exactly what is meant by "potential," however, is a value-laden question. Is the wealthiest person the one who has achieved maximum potential? Or the kindest, most generous person? Is the person who cunningly avoids barriers to their own prosperity (e.g., paying taxes, following rules, etc.) maximizing their potential? Is the mountain-climber or extreme athlete who spends a lifetime attempting to achieve a personal goal maximizing their potential? These are examples of individuals on different ends of motivational continua, which Schwartz (1992) describes as part of a circumplex of values. Individuals are motivated by the importance they place on four opposing value orientations: self-enhancement/self-transcendence and conservation/openness to change (Schwartz, 1992). Which of these orientations underpins our notion of maximized potential will determine how the task is approached.

Value orientations have been largely neglected in research on students with gifts and talents (SWGT), as researchers have focused on more narrow motivational constructs, such as attribution (e.g., Snyder et al., 2013), achievement goals (e.g., Fletcher & Speirs Neumeister, 2012), or personality (e.g., Mammadov et al., 2018), for example. The long history of values research (e.g., Allport et al., 1960; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2012) provides a broader framework within which

to consider the motivations of SWGT, opening the door to new directions for the support of their psychosocial development. As significant motivators of behavior, it is important to understand the value orientations of high-ability students. This may have particular significance among underrepresented populations, whose value orientations may be questioned by educators and decisionmakers. For example, educators may create punitive policies based on their assumption that parents of students from low-income backgrounds do not value academic achievement, when this is not at all the case. Misperceptions of others' values are frequent (Hanel et al., 2018) and may be the source of discord or ineffective policy implementation. The present study is the first of its kind to explore the values of low-income, high-ability middle school students, who may benefit most from our greater understanding of their value orientations.

Values in Psychological Research

Values are "cognitive representations of basic motivations" (Sagiv & Roccas, 2017, p. 3). They are abstract ideas of what is desirable and important to an individual, and are relatively stable, once established, although they can change in response to cultural shifts, such as immigration (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011), or major events, such as the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center towers (Murphy et al., 2004). Changes in value hierarchies occur with development, as well (e.g., Cieciuch et al., 2016; Vecchione et al., 2020). One's values are not specific to one situation or another, but guide behavior and evaluations across situations (Schwartz, 1992). Values are guiding principles that underpin our judgments and justifications for behaviors. These characteristics distinguish values from attitudes, traits, or interests, all of which may be affected by values.

People assign varied importance to their values and those deemed more important will be most likely to determine behaviors (Sagiv & Roccas, 2017).

Hitlin (2003) proposed that values are at the core of one's personal identity, determining what behaviors, including those necessary to attain possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman, et al., 2006), are desirable and, therefore, "'feel' right" (Hitlin, 2003, p. 124). Schwartz (1992; Schwartz et al., 2012) proposed that values exist in an integrated system of motivations, represented by a circumplex of interrelated value types. The 10 values in Schwartz's (1992) circumplex—self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism—represent conflicting desires for openness to change or conservation and for self-transcendence or self-enhancement. When self-enhancement (e.g., being ambitious, influential, capable, etc.) is the most desirable goal, there will be at least some degree of conflict with values of self-transcendence (e.g., equality, social justice, benevolence). After two decades of research based on the circumplex model, Schwartz and colleagues (2012) included enhancements to the model. They identified the openness to change and self-enhancement dimensions as having a personal focus, whereas the conservation and self-transcendence dimensions represent a social focus. Conservation and self-enhancement values would be most likely to take precedence when a person faces threats to security or self-preservation. Holding self-protection and anxiety-avoidance values would be adaptive in the face of such threats. In the absence of those threats, one may be better able to focus on the growth and anxiety-free values of self-transcendence and openness to change.

The development of values among children is a relatively new area of research. There is some evidence that children develop values through socialization processes (Döring et al., 2017), while other research has identified genetic factors, particularly for self-transcendence, self-enhancement, and conservation values (Uzefosky et al., 2016). In a longitudinal study of values among children ages 7 to 11, Cieciuch et al. (2016) found consistency in the structure of their values along the Schwartz (1992; Schwartz et al., 2012) circular model, but changes in the priority of values occurred as they matured. As they approached adolescence, the children became less focused on security and conformity (conservation values) and more open to change. The hierarchy of self-transcendence and self-enhancement values fluctuated in this period, increasing and decreasing, presumably as the children developed an increasing awareness of their relationship to others and a stronger personal identity (Hitlin, 2003). Vecchione et al. (2020) found increases in openness to change and self-enhancement value priorities among Italian early adolescents (ages 10-12), but conservation and self-transcendent values remained stable over the two years of the study. The exception to this latter trend was in a decline in the importance of tradition. In contrast to these adolescent changes in value hierarchies, adults tend to become more oriented toward conservation and self-transcendence with age (Schuster et al., 2019).

Numerous studies have found females more highly value self-transcendence than males, whereas males place a higher value on power, achievement, and stimulation, although there are cultural differences (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009). Age-related patterns of change in the importance of different values were similar for both boys and girls in Cieciuch et al.'s (2016) study.

Values are motivating beliefs and, as such, affect behavior. Voting preferences were structured around value orientations (Barnea & Schwartz, 1998) and attitudes toward war and support for right-wing authoritarianism and social inequality could be predicted by basic values (Cohrs et al., 2005). Despite being stable beliefs (Schuster et al., 2019), values are cognitions, meaning that they can be changed. Confronting people with challenges to the consistency of their preferred values and that of peers can effectively provoke changes (Rokeach & Cochrane, 1972). Maio et al. (2009) were able to induce changes in value orientations through priming for specific values. After completing word tasks that primed self-direction or security in one experiment and achievement and benevolence in another, subjects behaved in ways that were measurably different based on the primed value (i.e., more volunteering after being primed for benevolence, greater success in a word search task after being primed for achievement). In some studies, value change lasted for up to four weeks (Arieli et al., 2014). These studies have important implications for educators whose objective is to encourage learning or achievement values.

Value Affirmation Interventions

Values are a part of one's identity. Their desirability implies an "ought" guide (Maio et al., 2009) for the ideal self. Reflecting on what value one holds as "most important" clarifies for that person the dimension of behaviors that holds the strongest motivational attraction. We believe our values are desirable, therefore the values we hold are a positive aspect to our identity. As such, they can provide an important buffer when a threat to the self is encountered. Instead of responding defensively or attempting to dismiss the threat, a reminder of that deeply held conviction of what is "right," becomes a mechanism to restore a sense of self-integrity (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988). A substantial research base has found positive effects of affirming one's values (see McQueen & Klein, 2006 and Yeager & Walton, 2011 for reviews). For example, smokers who wrote about their most important value were more likely to accept health information than smokers who wrote about their least important value (Crocker et al., 2008). Overweight women who wrote

Table 1: Sample Demographics

	7th Grade			8th Grade		
Ethnicity	Female n (%)	Male n (%)	7th Total n (%)	Female n (%)	Male n (%)	8th Total n (%)
Hispanic	32 (26.4)	2 (2.2)	34 (15.9)	22 (24.7)	1 (2.0)	23 (16.5)
Black	63 (52.1)	69 (74.2)	132 (61.7)	46 (51.7)	39 (78.0)	85 (61.2)
Mixed	11 (9.1)	10 (10.8)	21 (9.8)	8 (9.0)	6 (12.0)	14 (10.1)
White	11 (9.1)	4 (4.3)	15 (7.0)	9 (10.1)	2 (4.0)	11 (7.9)
Other	2 (1.7)	2 (2.2)	4 (1.9)	2 (2.2)	1 (2.0)	3 (2.2)
Missing	2 (1.7)	6 (6.5)	8 (3.7)	2 (2.2)	1 (2.0)	3 (2.2)
Total	121 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	214 (100.0)	89 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	139 (100.0)

about their most important value lost more weight and kept it off longer than overweight women who wrote about another person's most important value (Logel et al., 2019). Women in a college physics course who wrote about their most important value had higher grades than non-affirmed women in the same classes (Miyake et al., 2010). The intervention resulted in a significant reduction in the gender performance gap.

Most significant for the present study is research with middle school students, particularly minority students, who saw long-term benefits from values affirmation interventions. African American middle school students who affirmed their most important value upon entering the 7th grade had higher GPAs in core classes through their 8th grade year and fewer African American students were identified as at-risk or placed into remediation during the study (Cohen et al., 2009). European American students did not benefit from the intervention, presumably because they are not as threatened by the "chronic evaluation" (p. 400) of the school environment. A sense of belonging in the school environment was higher among African American middle school students who affirmed their most important value in the first days of the school year than among those who had the same intervention four weeks later (Cook et al., 2012). Effects were most beneficial to low-performing African American students.

The Present Study

Based on this strong evidence, a values affirmation activity has been a staple of a personal development course in a summer academic STEM camp for low-income, high ability middle school students. The purpose of the personal development course is to help students develop an awareness of the requirements and challenges of achieving their academic and career goals, and to direct their personal agency toward meeting those goals by building on psychological concepts, such as goal setting, developing a growth mindset, and recognizing their internal and external resources. For some of these students, the camp was their first visit to a college campus. They would now be living in the dormitories and taking high-level academic classes. The affirmation activity is an attempt to ameliorate negative effects of this potentially threatening environment.

One goal of the camp is to foster the development of a scholarly identity (Cross et al., 2016) in the hopes these students will be successful college students. The values affirmation activity is intended to boost students' self-integrity as they meet the new challenges of the camp. It offers an additional opportunity to learn more about the belief systems of this unique population, which is the aim of the present study.

Method

Participants

Participants were rising 7th grade students (N = 215) from school districts with greater than 50% National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participants within a 75-mile radius of a mid-sized university in the Southeastern United States. A foundation-funded, two-week summer residential science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) camp provided free tuition to eligible students, those with family incomes of less than $45,000 per year who were identified by their school district as having scored in the upper 10th percentile on a nationally normed aptitude, creativity, or achievement test. Students who did not meet the upper 10th percentile criteria, or for whom no test scores were available, were deemed eligible if teacher, gifted education coordinator, or caregiver recommendation and evidence of performance were provided. The majority of participants were female (56.3%) and African American (61.4%; see Table 1 for sample demographics). A subset of the sample returned in the subsequent summer as rising 8th graders (65%; n = 139).

Instrument

A 10-item online survey was adapted from the values proposed by Schwartz (1992; Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994), including language at a level appropriate for middle school students (ages 11-14). Table 2 includes the 10

Table 2. Value Mean Ranks

Value dimension	Value	7th Rank	7th Mean Rank	8th Rank	8th Mean Rank
Self-Enhancement	Being successful at what I do (ambitious, influential, capable, successful, self-respect)	1	3.81	2	4.04
Openness to Change	Making choices for myself (freedom, creativity, independent, choosing own goals, curious, self-respect)	2	4.22	3	4.32
Conservation	Being safe and secure (family security, national security, sense of belonging, knowing one's place, healthy, clean)	3	4.39	1	3.91
Self-Transcendence	Being kind (helpful, responsible, forgiving, honest, loyal, true friend)	4	4.68	4	4.76
Conservation	Doing what is expected of me (obedient, self-disciplined, being polite, honoring parents and older people)	5	5.36	6	5.09
Openness to Change/ Self-Enhancement	Having a good time (pleasure, enjoying life)	6	5.44	7	5.60
Self-Transcendence	A peaceful, just world (equality, a world of beauty, social justice, open-mindedness, protecting the environment	7	5.71	5	5.03*
Openness to Change	Doing lots of different and exciting things (an exciting life, a varied life, daring)	8	6.39	9	6.88
Conservation	Respecting tradition (being religious, doing what I am supposed to because it's always been that way	9	6.55	8	6.52
Self-Enhancement	Being popular and influential (social power, wealth, authority, making sure I don't look foolish)	10	8.43	10	8.85**

*Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test p = .030
**Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test p = .015

items. Students were instructed as follows:

> To do the activity, you should rank-order the 10 statements, with your highest, most important value at the top (Number 1). This is the value you believe is the most important guiding principle in your life. The value that is least important to you will be at the bottom (Number 10). You can put the values in the order you want by selecting the item and dragging it up or down on the list.

After completing the ranking, students were shown a timer and asked to write for five minutes about why their most important value "is important and meaningful to you."

Procedure

As part of a personal development class designed to help students in planning for the future and build their personal agency, all students in the camp participated in a values affirmation activity in the first or second day of class. The teacher introduced the activity by emphasizing the personal nature of the values activity:

> In this activity, you will be thinking about your personal beliefs. The purpose of the activity is for you to have a clear idea in your mind of your most important values. Values are the beliefs you have about what is important in life.

They guide you in making choices. People develop their values based on their life experiences and from what they are taught. Everyone believes that some values should be a guiding principle in her or his life and other values are not as important.

Students then completed the online survey. Previous administrations with this population indicated more than five minutes of writing was unsustainable, with students rapidly becoming bored or acting out. The same procedure was followed in both 7th and 8th grade years. Data was collected each summer from 2015 to 2020.

Analysis

The analysis addressed the numerical rank ordering for the full sample using a nonparametric mean rank calculation. Differences in the ranking of values between 7th and 8th grade were determined by a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The frequencies of students' most important values were analyzed with the Pearson chi-square test. Content analysis of the students' written comments included open coding (Strauss, 1990) for each value, drawing codes directly from the students' words. A codebook describing the codes for each value was developed. Two coders had high percentage agreement on codes for each value, averaging

Table 3. Most Important Value Frequencies

Value Dimension	Value	7th Sex			8th Sex		
		Female n (%)	Male n (%)	7th Total n (%)	Female n (%)	Male n (%)	8th Total n (%)
Openness to Change	Making choices for myself	13 (10.7)	20 (21.5)	33 (15.4)	9 (10.1)	7 (14.0)	16 (11.5)
Openness to Change	Doing lots of different and exciting things	1 (0.8)	3 (3.2)	4 (1.9)	2 (2.2)	2 (4.0)	4 (2.9)
Openness to Change/ Self-Enhancement	Having a good time	13 (10.7)	11 (11.8)	24 (11.2)	8 (9.0)	6 (12.0)	14 (10.1)
Self-Enhancement	Being successful	18 (14.9)	16 (17.2)	34 (15.9)	13 (14.6)	10 (20.0)	23 (16.5)
Self-Enhancement	Being popular and influential	2 (1.7)	2 (2.2)	4 (1.9)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)
Conservation	Being safe and secure	22 (18.2)	13 (14.0)	35 (16.4)	20 (22.5)	10 (20.0)	30 (21.6)
Conservation	Doing what is expected of me	9 (7.4)	6 (6.5)	15 (7.0)	7 (7.9)	2 (4.0)	9 (6.5)
Conservation	Respecting tradition	8 (6.6)	6 (6.5)	14 (6.5)	5 (5.6)	3 (6.0)	8 (5.8)
Self-Transcendence	Being kind	16 (13.2)	7 (7.5)	23 (10.7)	6 (6.7)	1 (2.0)	7 (5.0)
Self-Transcendence	A peaceful, just world	19 (15.7)	9 (9.7)	28 (13.1)	18 (20.2)	9 (18.0)	27 (19.4)
	Total	121 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	214 (100.0)	89 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	139 (100.0)

Note: No sex differences, 7th χ^2 (1, N = 214) = 9.56, p = .39; 8th χ^2 (1, N = 139) = 4.52, p = .87

well above 80% agreement. Cohen's kappa interrater reliability, a more robust analysis (McHugh, 2012), ranged from minimal (κ < 0.4) to strong (κ > 0.80) for the codes within each value. Raters evaluated all poorly rated codes and reached agreement on discrepancies, redefining any problematic codes and correcting misinterpretations. In a second round of axial coding, similarities in the codes led to the identification of patterns or themes in the data (Miles et al., 2014).

Results

An analysis of the mean ranks identified "Being successful" as the most important value in the full sample (see Table 2) and "Being popular and influential" as the least important. Among the 65% of students who participated in the 8th grade, the rankings differed, although statistically significant changes only occurred for "A peaceful, just world," which moved up in the rankings to a higher level of importance, and "Being popular and influential," which moved even farther down in students' rankings (see Table 2). The top-ranked value among 8th graders was "Being safe and secure," replacing "Being successful," the top-ranked 7th grade value. Aggregated mean ranks provide a picture of the full set of rankings. A focus on the value students chose as their most important, however, offers different insights, particularly when we examine students' explanations of why their most important value is meaningful to them.

The Conservation (CO) values of Security, Conformity, and Tradition were the most frequently chosen as most important (30%; See Table 3). Any apparent differences in frequencies of most important value by sex were no greater than chance, χ^2 (1, N = 214) = 9.56, p = .39. Seventeen percent of students chose its opposing value dimension of Openness to Change (OC; Stimulation "Doing lots of different and exciting things," Self-Direction "Making choices for myself"). Hedonism ("Having a good time"), which falls between the dimensions of Openness and Self-Enhancement, was the top value of 11% of students. Self-Enhancement (SE) values ("Being popular," "Being successful") were selected as the most important value of 18% of students, in contrast with Self-Transcendence (ST; "Being kind," "A peaceful, just world") at 24%. Figure 1 portrays the proportion of responses in each dimension.

If we consider the opposing dimensions SE and ST, achievement ("Being successful") was chosen often as most important. The reasons tended to focus on a desire for a bright future. Only one student mentioned power over others as a benefit of being successful (FB15689)[1], and two students (MO16300, FB18297) commented on wanting to show other people they could do more than expected. Very few chose "Being popular" (power) and those who did offered reasons that were not about power or authority over others. Instead, they were about friendships or helping others through their influence and building confidence in themselves. To these students, achievement ("Being Successful") has positive outcomes for the self,

---

[1]Identification codes for students indicate sex (M=Male, F=Female, ethnicity (B=Black, W=White, M=Mixed, O=Other, N=Missing, year in 7th grade, and a 3-digit random number. For example, FB16102 is a female, Black student in 7th grade in 2016.

Figure 1: Proportional Visualization of 7th Grade Students' Most Important Values by Dimension
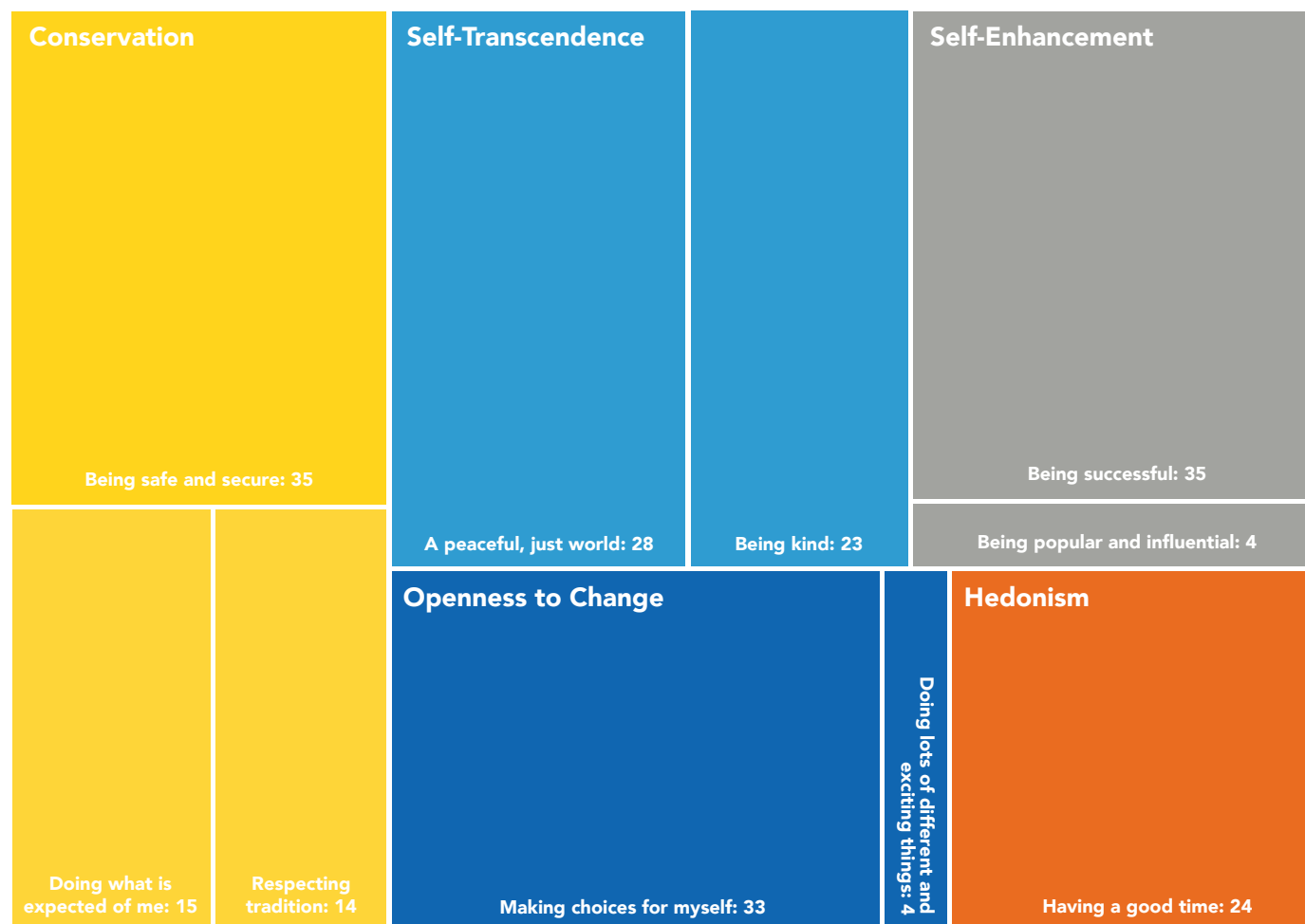
in terms of self-esteem or sense of competence (e.g., accomplishment, self-sufficient) and in the possibility of a positive future. Family pride is important to some, and several see their success as a way of giving back to their communities or others (e.g., "I want to be successful in my life so I can improve my life and the lives of others because you can't help other people be successful if you aren't yourself" [MB19232]). Wealth and material possessions were only mentioned by two students (6% of those who chose being successful). Five (15%) indicated they want recognition for their success (e.g., "I really have a huge imagination, and I want to show it off!" [FB16464]).

Patterns

Three themes emerged from an analysis of students' comments: Others, Fear/Death Awareness, and Future Oriented. Exemplar statements from each theme are available in Table S1 of the supplemental material. The theme of Others was predominant, especially in the Conservation values (Security, Conformity, and Tradition). These young adolescents were learning their place in society and were keenly aware of others' expectations.

Others are watching their choices, "I want to have a good reputation and to be known as a nice person." (FB18928); expecting them to be successful, "I would love to go to college and be successful there and out of college because that is something my family expects from me" (FB16712); taking pride in them, "I want to be successful because I want to be proud of what I do and what I spend my time on and I want to make my mom proud of me and prove that she raised me right" (MB19437); and expecting them to be kind, "I put being kind above everything because if you don't be kind you could be alone in this cruel world and because my mom always tells me to be kind and make new friends" (FB18676). The students understood that others rely on them to be safe,

> "I live with my grandparents and I know that they need me to be there. And, I know that I need them a lot so if I wasn't safe and something would happen to me, there would be no one to take care of them so being safe is a big part of my life. Cause by me being safe it gives me a chance to keep someone else safe." (FB16612)

Students commented on how others have made sacrifices for them: "Your elders try everything they can

to make you happy. The least you can do for them is at least show them some respect and do what they say" (FH17817). They were aware of others' influence on them, "Because my dad told me that - to respect my religion" (FM15974), and their influence on others as a role model, "It is good to be good at what I do then you would know what you are doing. And you would not mess up and you can teach it to other people who want to learn how to do it and be great at it like yourself." (MB15551); and in keeping others safe, "I think this is the most important value because I don't want anybody to get hurt. I think this value should be taught before anybody does anything that might be a little daring or are unsafe. I just don't like seeing people getting hurt" (MM16251).

Fear and an awareness of death was another common theme. Students wanted to have a good time, because they knew life is short and they only live once. They wanted safety and security, because the alternative is dangerous. A peaceful and just world is desirable, in part, "because it is not safe around here with people shooting and kidnapping ...etc." (FB17408); "I would love to live in a world that I could go out or something and not think of getting killed or kidnapped" (FB18163). Fear of the afterlife was the reason Respecting Traditions was the most important value for some students: "If I don't live or worship the exact way that the bible says I should then I will spend eternity in hell. But if I do the exact opposite I will spend my life in heaven with God for all eternity" (FB18626).

Many students framed their most important value as having an impact on their future or on the future of society. Respecting traditions held the key for one student:

> I want to be the most religious I can so I can learn about me in general. When I do something I want to do it my best and what I think is right. after finding myself I will find my talents and I will use that to my advantage. so my career will be successful as possible. When people look up to me they will hopefully find a handsome man with the world on his shoulders. After that they will want to be like me and I will be the true leader that I want to be in my lifetime. (MB16577)

A peaceful and just world would mean a bright future for everyone, as this student wrote,

> It's most important to me because it will also help everyone around me. If everyone in the world was equal then we wouldn't have wars and we could have world peace. If the environment was protected then we wouldn't have holes in the ozone layer and gas that shouldn't be there in the air. If everyone had an open mind then we wouldn't have the shootings that we have and the fights we have had. A world of beauty would be amazing because then the world would just be amazing. Then no one would fight and we could have world peace. (FW16842)

Patterns of Change Over Time

Demographics and mean rank values of the 7th graders who also participated in the 8th grade ($n = 139$) mirrored those of the full sample, indicating the subsample was a good representation of the full sample. Only 19% (n = 41) of 8th grade students had the same most important value as in the 7th grade and only 26% ($n = 57$) of 8th grade most important values were in the same dimension as in the 7th grade. Students who had chosen socially focused CO or ST values as most important in the 7th grade were more likely to choose values in the same dimension in the 8th grade, χ^2 (1, $N = 139$) = 46.45, $p < .001$. Seventh graders who had chosen the personal focus values of SE or OC chose 8th grade values from across the spectrum. There was a slight tendency for 8th grade most important values to be in the CO dimension, with 34% of 8th graders versus 30% of 7th graders (see Table 3). There were not statistically significant differences in the proportion of girls and boys who kept or changed their most important values from year to year (χ^2 (1, $N = 139$) = .762, $p = .38$). In addition to improved writing quality, the 8th grade comments indicate increasing maturity, particularly among the females. The same themes of Others, Fear/Death Awareness, and Future Oriented were present in the 8th grade comments, but two new themes rose to prominence. Several students wrote about their values as being part of their identity—part of who they are or their purpose in life (see Table S2 in Supplemental Materials). Failure, which had been mentioned infrequently by 7th graders, was a more common concern for the 8th graders who most valued being successful. According to the mean rank analysis, "A peaceful, just world" increased in importance in the 8th grade sample (see Table 2). This abstract value became most important to more of the 8th graders than 7th (19.4%, 13.1% respectively; see Table 3). "Being popular and influential" was most important to only one 8th grader, who gave an other-oriented reason: "Because people need to know that like I'm here and that they can come to me but they will only know unless [*sic*] I make myself known" (FM17833).

Discussion

This study sheds light on the thought processes of a little studied population: middle school students from low-income backgrounds who have been identified for their high ability. These students are often underrepresented in gifted education programs and are, therefore, also underrepresented in the literature of the field. A deeper understanding of their values offers insights that may lead to effective means of support.

No efforts were made through the program to prime students' values, as is done in some interventions (e.g., Maio et al., 2009). Therefore, students' responses should reflect their extant values upon entering the program. The purpose of the values affirmation activity was solely to

support the students in what was a potentially threatening environment (Cook et al., 2012; Steele, 1988): attending a two-week residential, STEM-related, advanced academic camp on a college campus.

Value Rankings

In 7th grade, these middle-school students consider values across the circumplex (Schwartz, 1992) more or less important, with no emphasis on one dimension. The top and bottom four ranked values (see Table 2) represent each of the dimensions SE, OC, CO, and ST. The rise in the mean rank of the ST value "A peaceful, just world" in the 8th grade may be related to the high ranking of "Being safe and secure." The move from childhood egocentrism is accompanied by a greater awareness of the outside world. Based on students' written responses, that world seems like a dangerous place to many of them. The increasing independence that comes with adolescence may make these middle school students feel a greater responsibility for their own safety, increasing the importance of "Being safe and secure."

The lowest ranked value in both 7th and 8th grade was "Being popular and influential," which dropped significantly lower in the mean rankings in the second year. This is consistent with Piirto's (2005) finding among gifted adolescents (ages 14-17) that social recognition was considered unimportant. Sagiv and Roccas (2017) pointed out, however, that all values are desirable to some degree; none are viewed as undesirable. Rank ordering minimizes our ability to discriminate just how desirable popularity may have been to the students in this study. As a guiding principle in life, they did not consider it very important.

Sex differences in value preferences are strongly supported by research, with males preferring SE and OC values and females preferring ST and CO values (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). Döring et al. (2015) found significant sex differences in the value preferences of the 7- to 11-year-old children in their cross-cultural study. ST and CO values were more important among the girls and SE values were more important among the boys and OC values were not different. In the present study, however, no sex differences were found in value preferences. Sex differences of values in a gifted sample were attenuated in Lubinski et al.'s (1996) longitudinal study. Future research is needed to clarify whether the lack of sex differences in this study is associated with students' high-ability, economic disadvantage, or another factor.

Most Important Value Frequencies

The value dimensions most frequently identified as most important were ST (24%; see Table 3) and CO (30%). Economic status plays an important role in the development of values. Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz (2009) point out that, "Greater wealth, individual freedom, and cultural autonomy make it easier to pursue values like self-direction and hedonism successfully, and they make it

less necessary to pursue anxiety-based values like power, security, and conformity" (p. 172). In this low-income sample, environmental pressures may foster conservation values. There is not comparable research among other, less economically disadvantaged middle school students to know whether they would also express fear and an awareness of death as commonly as the students in this study. These students have exhibited the potential for exceptional accomplishments, offering an advantage that could temper the need to pursue conservation values. Many students (16%; see Table 3) considered the self-enhancement value of "being successful" most important, but we must acknowledge the presence of the theme of Others in their explanations of why it is most important to them. In their study of values among young children, Benish-Weisman et al. (2019) found that benevolence was related to conservation values. They interpreted this to mean that the social focus among children is motivated by a desire to conform, by keeping social norms and obeying rules. The low-income, high-ability students in this study may be representing either of these positions—conservation values in response to environmental threats to their security or conservation values to maintain social connections.

At middle school age, these students are in the process of developing their values, in concert with other developmental changes of adolescence. As their identities are coming into focus, the values that motivate their behavior become increasingly important, as several 8th grade students commented. In Cieciuch et al.'s (2016) longitudinal study, CO values became less important to the 11-year-olds, replaced by OC values, but the 8th graders in this sample did not exhibit this pattern. There was an increase in CO values, instead. Those who had selected CO values as most important in the 7th grade were more likely to choose a most important value in that dimension a year later. The available data does not suggest that the values of the subset of students who returned to the camp for a second summer were different from those who did not. This trend of increased importance of CO values may be an impact of economic disadvantage. The students were from a variety of schools and were 7th and 8th graders at different times, so it is unlikely a single event would have caused this trend (e.g., the 9/11 attacks; Murphy et al., 2004). Rather than a move toward OC, the ST value of "A peaceful, just world" gained importance in this sample.

An Awareness of Others

The themes of Others, Fear / Death Awareness, and Future Oriented indicate the importance of values as a reflection of socialization processes. Many students commented on the importance of others in one's life and the need to behave in ways that support others' well-being. Benevolence (self-transcendent) values can be evoked through planned interventions (Arieli et al., 2014), but many of these students have likely developed an awareness

and concern for others through their social experiences. Social embeddedness was a major theme in another study of students in this population (Cross et al., 2018), who felt supported in their communities by family members, friends and teachers. This was a stark contrast to the high-income students of that study, who experienced conflict and frustration with their peers and teachers, who they perceived to be barriers to their achievement.

Values develop in part through socialization processes. Davis and Carlo (2020) proposed socialization of low-income adolescents to have strong moral convictions and to be prosocial may have protective effects. The adolescents in their study reported high levels of altruistic prosocial behaviors, in keeping with the emphasis on self-transcendence values of many students in the present study. In their longitudinal study of achievement values and peer relations from second to seventh grade, Taylor and Graham (2007) found low-SES African American and Latino adolescent boys, but not girls, were increasing likely to select peers who placed a low value on achievement. Toughness and being "cool" were associated with popularity among African American youth (Juvonen et al., 2003). The socialization away from academic pursuits may have more to do with the environmental pressures to be safe (i.e., tough) than an actual dislike of learning or school (Richardson & Vil, 2016). How such changes are associated with the students' values has not been explored. Affirmation of one's values may support an academic focus, but even such wise interventions cannot alter a dangerous reality.

Caring relationships with others and a sense of belonging are basic human needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Maslow, 1987). In high poverty environments, they can be critical to survival. The CO values of conformity and tradition "derive from the need to inhibit behavior that might disrupt social relations and undermine group solidarity" (Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009, p. 174). The students in this study are keenly aware of the needs and expectations of family and community members. Attempts to encourage independence or to prioritize individual achievement above relational needs are likely to cause dissonance in many of these high-ability students. Such efforts may do real harm to their well-being. This suggests the need for educators to acknowledge and similarly prioritize their students' relationships with others.

The Appearance of Fear and Death Awareness

Death awareness is common in child's play, even at an early age (Corr, 2010), so it should not be surprising that it influences the values these young adolescents hold as most important. Children are often aware of death and neglecting to talk about it with them can be detrimental to their well-being. "So often parents and other adults realize only in retrospect that children have been aware of what they perceive as important events in their lives." (Corr, 2010, p. 21). Without adult guidance, children will

reach their own conclusions about the events transpiring in their surroundings. It is critical that adults communicate effectively about death or risk the child's own interpretation of their risk and the meaning of death (Corr, 2010). The United States is a dangerous place, especially for African American males (Reeves et al., 2020), but also for all those living in low-income environments (American Psychological Association, 2010; Finch & Finch, 2020; Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2020). It makes sense that the very real fears of the high-ability, low-income middle schoolers in this study surface in the values they consider paramount guiding principles.

Students who feel a part of their school and believe they are safe and supported there are more likely to engage and persist (Eccles & Roeser, 2009). Although most individuals have little power to affect high-poverty environments, working towards a supportive school environment where their needs are met may foster engagement and persistence. Students in the same academic program as the students in this study reported on their school climate, including the victimization that occurs (Frazier et al., 2021). While all students in the Frazier et al. study reported high levels of identification with school, those who reported higher levels of bullying, less trust in adults to respond to victimization, and feeling less safe had lower pride and feelings of belonging at the school. Low-income, high ability students in earlier years of the same summer camp reported "mayhem" in their schools, with disruptive peer behavior, frequent fighting, and an intimidating police presence (Cross et al., 2018). In such settings, a value of safety could overtake a value of achievement as most important. Societies should be able to ensure their students feel safe and secure, at least during their time at school.

Envisioning a Bright Future

One foundational component of values is that they "pertain to desirable end states or behaviors" (Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). As such, thinking about their most important value primes these students to consider their future. The values they hold will help them achieve a desirable future. For some, this will come through conforming to others' expectations. For others, it will come through being successful at what they do. Each "most important" value has implications for their future. Focusing these students on a future that includes academic success is a stated goal of the summer program and, in the two weeks following the values affirmation activity, they were exposed to stimulating STEM coursework, professional role models, and guidance in academic planning. Students in wealthy families likely receive such exposure through family connections (Cross et al., 2018). The values affirmation activity encourages forward thinking and has the potential for long-lasting effects on this low-income, high-ability population (Cook et al., 2012). In combination with

other activities during the camp, students are given a powerful opportunity to consider different possible selves (Oyserman et al., 2006) in their futures.

Maturing Values

Value orientations among the students who participated in the 8th grade indicate their developmental nature. The greatest stability was seen in the CO and ST dimensions. Students who valued CO and ST dimensions as most important in the 7th grade were more likely than their peers to have a similar most important value in the 8th grade (see Table 3). Many students, however, were less fixed on what values should be their guiding principle. Helping middle schoolers explore their values may support their identity development and, subsequently, their success in school.

Some eighth graders appeared to be internalizing their values, describing their pursuit as part of who they are or their purpose in life. Several 8th graders expressed a desire to avoid failure in their activities (see Table S2 in Supplemental Materials), suggesting an increasing awareness of their competence and its effects on reputation, perhaps in response to greater competition or rigor in school. Failure is not altogether a negative experience, as resilience develops from risk-taking. A focus on personal growth over successful outcomes can have positive effects on students' approach to new, more challenging material (Blackwell et al., 2007). Middle school students may benefit from growth mindset interventions (Walton & Wilson, 2018) before a fear of failure becomes established.

Conclusion

We are all in the business of socialization, educators included. Care must be taken, however, that we do not fall into the indoctrination trap. Critical thinking, a paramount value in education (Kuhn, 2005) requires an open mind, which may conflict with values of conformity. Conformity, however, may be necessary for survival in a hostile environment. A teacher who has not experienced poverty may have difficulty understanding the value orientations of students whose basic needs are not always met. There is danger in presuming we can know what values others hold (Hanel et al., 2018). Desirable end states fit within a frame that is shaped by experience and socialization. Supporters of gifted education may agree that maximizing potential is the goal of their field (Cross et al., 2010), but what is the frame through which they define "maximizing"? If individual achievement is the primary orientation of a gifted education program, these other-oriented students are likely to find a poor fit.

The circumplex model of human values (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2012) offers an important perspective for educators and decisionmakers. Pursuit of values in one dimension attenuates or even precludes pursuit of values in the opposing dimension (Maio et al., 2009). Achievement is a self-enhancing value, bringing success and material goods to the achiever. The more one focuses on enhancing the self, the less able they are to support the well-being of others; to transcend the self. The circumplex describes continua, however, not dichotomies. One may hold "Being successful at what I do" as their most important value, while simultaneously giving a high priority to the needs, expectations, and desires of others. The high-ability, low-income students of this study exhibit just such a nuanced value orientation.

Can schools, which so highly prioritize individual achievement, especially in an age of accountability, support students' self-transcendence? Schools can have an impact on students' values. Principals' values directly impact school climate and the values of students who attend their schools are influenced by those adults' values (Berson & Oreg, 2016). The beliefs of adults in schools create an ecosystem within which students are being socialized. A better understanding of which values are given the highest priority and how that affects students may lead to more responsive environments. Although the sample of this study is limited to a relatively small group of students in one region, the findings suggest high-ability, low-income middle school students will thrive in schools where there is respect for their relationships with others, where their fears are addressed through improved safety structures, and where opportunities are provided that enable them to achieve the future they envision.

References

Allport, G. W., Vernon, P. E., & Lindzey, G. (1960). *Study of values* (3rd ed.). Houghton Mifflin.

American Psychological Association. (2010). Violence & socioeconomic status. https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/violence

Arieli, S., Grant, A. M., & Sagiv, L. (2014). Convincing yourself to care about others: An intervention for enhancing benevolence values. *Journal of Personality, 82*, 15-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12029

Bardi, A., & Goodwin, R. (2011). The dual route to value change: Individual processes and cultural moderators. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42*, 271-287. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022110396916

Barnea, M., & Schwartz, S. H. (1998). Values and voting. *Political Psychology, 19*, 17-40.

Benish-Weisman, M., Daniel, E., Sneddon, J., & Lee, J. (2019). The relations between values and prosocial behavior among children: The moderating role of age. *Personality and Individual Differences, 141*, 241-247. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.01.019

Berson, Y., & Oreg, S. (2016). The role of school principals in shaping children's values. *Psychological Science, 27*, 1539-1549. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797616670147

Bilsky, W. & Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Values and personality. *European Journal of Personality, 8*, 163-181. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2410080303

Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development, 78*, 246-263. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.00995.x

Cieciuch, J., Davidov, E., & Algesheimer, R. (2016). The stability and change of value structure and priorities in childhood: A longitudinal study. *Social Development, 25*, 503-527. https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12147

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009). Recursive processes in self-affirmation: Intervening to close the minority achievement gap. *Science, 324*, 400-403. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1170769

Cohrs, J.C., Moschner, B., Maes, J., & Kielmann, S. (2005). Personal values and attitudes toward war. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 11*, 293-312. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac1103_5

Cook, J. E., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., & Cohen, G. L. (2012). Chronic threat and contingent belonging: Protective benefits of values affirmation on identity development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*, 479-496. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026312

Corr, C. A. (2010). Children's emerging awareness and understandings of loss and death. In C. A. Corr & D. E. Balk (Eds.), *Children's encounters with death, bereavement, and coping.* (pp. 21-37). Springer.

Crocker, J., Niiya, Y., & Mischkowski, D. (2008). Why does writing about important values reduce defensiveness? Self-affirmation and the role of positive other-directed feelings. *Psychological Science, 19*, 740-747. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02150.x

Cross, J. R., Bugaj, S. J., & Mammadov, S. (2016). Accepting a scholarly identity: Gifted students, academic crowd membership, and identification with school. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 39*, 23-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353215624162

Cross, J. R., Cross, T. L., & Finch, W. H. (2010). Maximizing student potential versus building community: An exploration of right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and preferred practice among supporters of gifted education. *Roeper Review, 32*, 235-248. https://doi.org/10.1080/02783193.2010.508155

Cross, J. R., Frazier, A. D., Kim, M., & Cross, T. L. (2018). A comparison of perceptions of barriers to academic success among high-ability students from high- and low-income groups: Exposing poverty of a different kind. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 62*, 111-129. https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986217738050

Davis, A. N. & Carlo, G. (2020). Maternal warmth and prosocial behaviors among low-SES adolescents: Considering interactions between empathy and moral conviction. *Journal of Moral Education, 49*, 226-240. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2019.1573723

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. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Döring, A. K., Makarova, E., Herzog, W., & Bardi, A. (2017). Parent-child value similarity in families with young children: The predictive power of prosocial educational goals. *British Journal of Psychology, 108*, 737-756. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12238

Döring, A. K., Schwartz, S. H., Cieciuch, J., Groenen, P. J. F., Glatzel, V., Harasimczuk, J., Janowicz, N., Nyagolova, M., Scheefer, E. R., Allritz, M., Milfont, T. L., & Bilsky, W. (2015). Cross-cultural evidence of value structures and priorities in childhood. *British Journal of Psychology, 106*(4), 675-699. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12116

Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. (2009). Schools, academic motivation, and stage-environment fit. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 404-434). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470479193.adlpsy001013

Finch, W. H., & Finch, M. A. (2020). Poverty and Covid-19: Rates of incidence and deaths in the United States during the first 10 weeks of the pandemic. *Frontiers in Sociology, 5*, 47. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00047

Fletcher, K. L., & Speirs Neumeister, K. L. (2012). Research on perfectionism and achievement motivation: Implications for gifted students. *Psychology in the Schools, 49*, 668-677. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21623

Frazier, D., Cross, J. R., Cross, T. L., & Kim, M. (2021). "The spirit is willing": A study of school climate, bullying, self-efficacy, and resilience in high-ability low-income youth. *Roeper Review, 43*, 7-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02783193.2020.1840465

Hanel, P. H. P., Wolfradt, U., Coelho, G. L. de H., Wolf, L. J., Vilar, R., Monteiro, R. P., Gouveia, V. V., Crompton, T., & Maio, G. R. (2018). The perception of family, city, and country values is often biased. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 49*(5), 831-850. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022118767574

Hitlin, S. (2003). Values as the core of personal identity: Drawing links between two theories of self. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 66*, 118-137. https://doi.org/10.2307/1519843

Juvonen, J., Graham, S., & Schuster, M. (2003). Bullying among young adolescents: The strong, the weak, and the troubled. *Pediatrics, 112*, 1231-1237. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.112.6.1231

Kuhn, D. (2005). *Education for thinking.* Harvard University Press.

Logel, C., Kathmandu, A., & Cohen, G. L. (2019). Affirmation prevents long-term weight gain. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 81*, 70-75. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2018.07.005

Lubinski, D., Schmidt, D. B., & Benbow, C. P. (1996). A 20-year stability analysis of the study of values for intellectually gifted individuals from adolescence to adulthood. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 443-451. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.4.443

Maio, G. R., Pakizeh, A., Cheung, W.-Y., & Rees, K. J. (2009). Changing, priming, and acting on values: Effects via motivational relations in a circular model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*(4), 699-715. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016420

Mammadov, S., Cross, T. L., & Ward, T. J. (2018). The Big Five personality predictors of academic achievement in gifted students: Mediation by self-regulatory efficacy and academic motivation. *High Ability Studies, 29*(2), 111-133. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598139.2018.1489222

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves: The interface between motivation and the self-concept. In K. Yardley & T. Honess (Eds.), *Self and identity: Psychosocial perspectives,* (pp. 157-172). Wiley.

Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.

McHugh, M. L. (2012). Interrater reliability: The kappa statistic. *Biochemia Medica, 22*, 276-82. https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2012.031

McQueen, A., & Klein, W. (2006). Experimental manipulations of self-affirmation: A systematic review. *Self and Identity, 5*, 289-354. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860600805325

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Miyake, A., Kost-Smith, L. E., Finkelstein, N. D., Pollock, S. J., Cohen, G. L., & Ito, T. A. (2010). Reducing the gender achievement gap in college science: A classroom study of values affirmation. *Science, 330*(6008), 1234-1237. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1195996

Murphy, E. F., Gordon, J. D., & Mullen, A. (2004). A preliminary study exploring the value changes taking place in the United States since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York. *Journal of Business Ethics, 50*, 81-96. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:BUSI.0000020879.93654.86

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2020). Poverty. https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/poverty

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 188-204. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.1.188

Piirto, J. (2005). I live in my own bubble: The values of talented adolescents. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education, 16*, 106-118. https://doi.org/10.4219/jsge-2005-472

Reeves, R. V., Nzau, S. & Smith, E. (2020, November 19). The challenges facing Black men—and the case for action. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/11/19/the-challenges-facing-black-men-and-the-case-for-action/

Richardson, J. B., & Vil, C. S. (2016). 'Rolling dolo': Desistance from delinquency and negative peer relationships over the early adolescent life-course. *Ethnography, 17*(1), 47-71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138115609624

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values.* Free Press.

Rokeach, M., & Cochrane, R. (1972). Self-confrontation and confrontation with another as determinants of long-term value change. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2*, 283-292. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1972.tb01280.x

Sagiv, L., & Roccas, S. (2017). What personal values are and what they are not: Taking a cross-cultural perspective. In S. Roccas & L. Sagiv (Eds.), *Values and behavior: Taking a cross cultural perspective* (pp. 3-13). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-56352-7_1

Schuster, C., Pinkowski, L., & Fischer, D. (2019). Intra-individual value change in adulthood: A systematic literature review of longitudinal studies assessing Schwartz's value orientations. *Zeitschrift Für Psychologie, 227*(1), 42-52. https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000355

Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 1-65). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6

Schwartz, S. H., Cieciuch, J., Vecchione, M., Davidov, E., Fischer, R., Beierlein, C., ... Konty, M. (2012). Refining the theory of basic individual values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 103*, 663-688. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029393

Schwartz, S. H., & Rubel, T. (2005). Sex differences in value priorities: Cross-cultural and multimethod studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 1010-1028. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.1010

Schwartz, S. H., & Rubel-Lifschitz, T. (2009). Cross-national variation in the size of sex differences in values: Effects of gender equality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 171-185. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015546

Sherman, D.K., & Cohen, J.L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. In M.P. Zanna (Ed.), A*dvances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183-242). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38004-5

Snyder, K. E., Barger, M. M., Wormington, S. V., Schwartz-Bloom, R., & Linnenbrink-Garcia, L. (2013). Identification as gifted and implicit beliefs about intelligence: An examination of potential moderators. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 24*(4), 242-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X13507971

Steele, C. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology,*

21, 261-302. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60229-4

Strauss, A. L. (1990). Systematic coding in qualitative research. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology / Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique,* *27*, 52-62 https://doi.org/10.1177/075910639002700103

Taylor, A. Z., & Graham, S. (2007). An examination of the relationship between achievement values and perceptions of barriers among low-SES African American and Latino students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*, 52-64. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.1.52

Uzefovsky, F., Döring, A. K., & Knafo-Noam, A. (2016). Values in middle childhood: Social and genetic contributions. *Social Development, 25*, 482-502. https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12155

Vecchione, M., Schwartz, S. H., Alessandri, G., & Marsicano, G. (2020). Stability and change of basic personal values in early adolescence: A 2-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality, 88*, 447-463. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12502

Walton, G. M., & Wilson, T. D. (2018). Wise interventions: Psychological remedies for social and personal problems. *Psychological Review, 125*(5), 617-655. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000115

Yeager, D. S., & Walton, G. M. (2011). Social-psychological interventions in education: They're not magic. *Review of Educational Research, 81*, 267- 301. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311405999

Author Information

Jennifer Riedl Cross, Ph.D. is Director of Research at the William & Mary Center for Gifted Education. She is co-editor, with Tracy L. Cross, of the *Handbook for Counselors Serving Students with Gifts and Talents*, now in its second edition. Her research in the field emphasizes social and psychological aspects of gifted education.