Work Values

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Research has identified TV series and, also more recently social media, as different actors in vocational socialization, providing individuals with career-related information (Levine & Aley, 2022; Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2022). Individuals have even indicated observing information about one particular type of career-related information, i.e., “work values”, in both media outlets (Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2022). Work values refer to job qualities “that individuals believe should be satisfied as a result of their participation in the work role” (Brown, 2002, p. 49). Various types of work values exist, i.e., (1) intrinsic work values (i.e., inherently satisfying job qualities like performing interesting tasks), (2) extrinsic work values (i.e., material job benefits, such as earning potential), (3) social work values (i.e., social qualities of work such as having good working relationships), and (4) prestige work values (i.e., prestigious job qualities such as having job impact; Ros et al., 1999). It remains unclear which type of work values prevail most often in TV series and social media. More precisely, the limited amount of quantitative and qualitative content analyses on job portrayals in TV series studied such portrayals from the perspective of professional success and counter-stereotypes (Devos et al., 2024; Warren et al., 2016). When reading the results of these studies from a work value perspective, it seems that work value messages occur in popular TV series (Devos et al., 2024; Warren et al., 2016). Content analytical research on job portrayals in a social media context is even more scarce. The existing studies largely focused on counter-stereotypical job portrayals (Heizmann & Liu, 2022; Steinke et al., 2024). Therefore, systematic quantitative insights that document how and which types of work values appear most often in TV series and on social media remained overall lacking. Understanding which work values prevail in popular media is a prerequisite for hypothesizing the potential effects of exposure to such content (Slater, 2015). We, therefore, conducted two quantitative content analyses that examined portrayals of work values among characters in popular fiction series (Vranken, 2023) and work values among workers in public feed posts on Instagram (Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2023).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
Social Cognitive Theory (SCT, Bandura, 2009) has been dominantly applied in media research to understand the links between exposure to work value messages in TV series/social media and individuals’ work value endorsement (defined as the extent to which individuals attach importance to certain work values in a job; Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2022; Wenhold & Harisson, 2019). According to SCT (Bandura, 2009), media users may learn about the importance of work values via mediated role models, which may subsequently affect individuals’ work value endorsement. Evidence from some qualitative and cross-sectional studies supports that adolescents and emerging adults learn about work values through TV series and social media role models (Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2022; Wenhold & Harisson, 2019). Yet, systematic insights into the prevalence of various work value messages remained lacking (Vranken, 2023; Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2023). Such insights could help researchers gain a more nuanced understanding of the potential of TV series and social media to socialize work values that might negatively impact media users’ well-being. More precisely, research has
demonstrated that endorsing extrinsic and prestige work values is linked to negative outcomes, like job dissatisfaction, while the endorsement of intrinsic and social work values is associated with positive career development and positive well-being outcomes (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007).

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
So far, only two quantitative content analyses exist that examined portrayals of work values in TV series and social media. Two separate content analyses were conducted because TV series and social media were considered as two distinct media outlets that have unique features (i.e., verbal and visual portrayals in TV series vs. textual and visual references in a social media context), and also differ in media production processes and motivations for consumption (Vranken, 2023; Vranken & Vandenbosch, 2022).

Example Studies: Vranken (2023); Vranken & Vandenbosch (2022)

INFORMATION ON VRANKEN (2023)
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Research question: How frequently are different intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige work values portrayed as being violated vs. mixed vs. upheld among characters in TV series popular among adolescents (RQ1)? Does the nature of portrayals of different intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige work values (i.e., violation vs. mixed portrayal vs. upholding) depend on characters’ job types (RQ2), gender (RQ3), and ethnicity (RQ4)?
Object of analysis: The codes were applied to explore the prevalence of work value portrayals among characters who had a clearly defined job (n = 334) across six fiction series that were popular among adolescents (i.e., You, CSI, The Big Bang Theory, The Good Doctor, Spinning Out, Dynasty). All episodes of the final season that aired during coding were included.

Information about variables: A novel codebook was developed. First, various intrinsic work values (i.e., skill utilization, achievements, the possibility for creative input, job satisfaction, possibility to learn, freedom, job variety, intellectual stimulation), extrinsic work values (i.e., job advancement, extra job benefits, job recognition, feedback opportunities, safe work environment, physically non-demanding job, well-equipped work environment, job hour stability, earning potential), social work values (i.e., altruism, good working relationships, the chance to work with people, the chance to help others), and prestige work values (i.e., leadership, having a respected job, job impact, decision-making) were coded as absent (= 0) or present (= 1). References included visual and verbal portrayals of a work value.

Second, for each work value that was present, the nature of a work value portrayal was considered in terms of a violation vs. mixed portrayal vs. upholding of a work value. A violation occurred when a character attached importance to a work value but was mostly portrayed as not achieving a work value (e.g., not being able to use one's skills because the job does not allow it). An upholding occurred when the character attached importance to a work value and was mostly portrayed as achieving this work value (e.g., being able to use one's skills because the job allows it). Mixed portrayals occurred when a character was portrayed with both the upholding and violation of a work value in an equal amount of scenes. To determine the upholding vs. violation vs. mixed portrayal of a work value, we created a score per character. For each character, the total number of scenes that included a work value portrayal was divided by the total number of scenes in which a work value was portrayed as upheld. If this score indicated that more than 60% of the scenes included an upholding, the work value was coded as upheld among a character. The same calculations were made for violations of work values.

Level of analysis: Character-level
Scale level: Ordinal
Values: First, the presence of a work value was coded (0 = absent, 1 = present). Afterward, the nature of a work value was coded (1 = violation, 2 = mixed portrayal, 3 = upholding). The latter coding categories were used in the study.

Reliability: Two coders coded work values messages of characters in the six selected series. Krippendorff’s alpha ranged from 0.73 to 1 (skill utilization .84, achievement .78, possibility for creative input .97, job satisfaction .73, freedom .91, intellectual stimulation .79, extra job benefits .79, job recognition .94, job security .85, feedback opportunities .79, safe work environment .92, physically non-demanding job .93, well-equipped work environment .88, job hour stability 1, earning potential .87, altruism .90, good working relationships .87, chance to work with people .85, chance to help others .90, leadership .81, having a
respected job .83, job impact .79, decision-making .87).

**Codebook:** The full codebook with all coding categories and definitions can be found on OSF: [https://osf.io/jzsg3/](https://osf.io/jzsg3/)

**INFORMATION ON VRANKEN & VANDENBOSCH (2023)**

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**Research interest:** The study aimed to document the prevalence of various intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige work values on a textual and visual level in job-related public Instagram feed posts and whether such portrayals differed according to sex and ethnicity of the poster and gender typicality and status levels of their jobs. On a textual level, the study also distinguished whether an upholding or violation of different work values occurred most frequently and whether these portrayals differed according to the sex and ethnicity of the poster, and gender typicality and status levels of their jobs.

**Object of analysis:** The codes were applied to 1,260 public Instagram feed posts of workers that included a hashtag in the caption referring to various jobs in terms of gender typicality (i.e., female job, male job, gender-neutral job) and status levels (i.e., low-, medium-, high status). Status levels of jobs were determined based on the ISEI-08, which is an international tool that assigns status scores to careers ranging from 10 to 89 (Ganzeboom & Treiman, 2010). A list was compiled of jobs that fell in the low (10-36), medium (37-63), and high (64-89) status categories. Based on this list, and numbers regarding the sex distribution in these jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), we selected two professions within each status category combined with each classification of gender typicality (i.e., female job, male job, gender-neutral job). This resulted in a final selection of hashtags related to 18 different professions (e.g., #surgeon, #highschoolteacher, #graphicdesigner, #bartender).

Only publicly available posts were selected by entering the chosen hashtags in a search of Instagram posts from March-April 2022. Multiple inclusion criteria were applied: (1) the caption was written in English (i.e., posts with captions in other languages were excluded), (2) the information was posted by an individual, not by a commercial enterprise, (3) the information was posted by a person pertaining to their job or related lifestyle (e.g., posts of a party where somebody dresses up as a surgeon were excluded), and (4) videos and memes were excluded.

**Information about variables:** On a visual and textual level, references to five intrinsic- (i.e., skill utilization, creative abilities, having a satisfying job, learning new things, job variety), seven extrinsic- (i.e., job recognition, leisure time outside of work, job security, earning potential, feedback, job advancement, extra job benefits), five social- (i.e., the opportunity to work with people, good working relationships, helping others, fun workplace, contributing to people/society) and three prestige work values (i.e., leadership, prestigious job, job impact) were coded. References to other intrinsic- (i.e., intellectual stimulation, being oneself in the job, independence), extrinsic- (i.e., job security, safe work environment), and prestige work values (i.e., decision-making) were solely coded on a textual level because these values were difficult to capture visually.

If a work value was present on a textual level, we also coded the type of reference. More precisely, references to the upholding of a work value (i.e., the poster “achieved” a work value such as being satisfied in the job) or the violation of a work value (i.e., the poster did not “achieve” a work value, such as feeling dissatisfied in the job) were coded. While Vranken (2023) also coded a mixed reference of work values in the TV series content analysis, this study coded the upholding and violation separately. Mixed references can be examined when a post includes both a reference to an upholding and a violation of a work value.

**Level of analysis:** Work values were coded on a textual (i.e., caption/hashtags) and visual level (i.e., picture) in public Instagram feed posts of workers. The textual level included the hashtag and related caption text. Emoticons were omitted. The visual level included one picture. If a post included multiple pictures, only the first picture was selected.

**Scale level:** Nominal

**Values:** On a textual and visual level, general references to the different work values were coded (0= absent, 1= present). If a work value was present textually, references to the upholding (0= absent, 1= present) and violation (0= absent, 1= present) were coded.

**Reliability:** Two coders coded the Instagram posts. Krippendorff’s alpha ranged from .71 to 1.

**Codebook:** The codebook can be found on OSF: [https://osf.io/pjru8/](https://osf.io/pjru8/)