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RESEARCH REPORT

Measuring What Matters

Validation of the Values Bridge Assessment

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Executive Summary

The Values Bridge is a psychological assessment designed to measure what people value most in life — and how fully their current lives reflect those priorities. Unlike most values instruments, which capture aspirational priorities alone, the Values Bridge measures values across sixteen specific life domains along two dimensions simultaneously: what an individual's ideal life looks like, and what their current life actually reflects. The discrepancy between those two profiles is called the Authenticity Gap — a central feature whose empirical consequences are documented in a companion paper in this series.

This report addresses a different question: is the Values Bridge a sound measurement tool? Does it measure what it claims to measure, hold together as designed, and produce results consistent enough over time to be trusted? Three independent studies were conducted to answer those questions, with designs, hypotheses, and analysis plans preregistered on the Open Science Framework — a standard of scientific transparency that guards against selective reporting of favorable results.

Study 1 — Does the structure hold? Data from 35,947 platform users and an independent Prolific sample of 830 U.S. adults confirmed that the Values Bridge measures 16 genuinely distinct constructs. All items clustered cleanly onto their intended value factors with no meaningful overlap. The 16 factors accounted for 72.54% of total variance, and internal consistency was strong across the board, with a median Cronbach's alpha of .906 across both dimensions — well above conventional standards.

Study 2 — Does it measure the right things? A third independent sample of 426 U.S. adults completed both the Values Bridge and the Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire — the most rigorously validated values instrument in the academic literature. Correlations aligned closely with theoretical predictions across all four of Schwartz's motivational regions: moderate and meaningful where overlap was expected, near zero or negative where independence was. No Values Bridge scale correlated strongly enough with a Schwartz domain to suggest redundancy, confirming the instrument adds genuine granularity. Notably, Belovedness — the prioritization of deep romantic partnership — showed weak associations across all Schwartz domains, suggesting it occupies motivational territory not captured by existing frameworks.

Study 3 — Are results consistent over time? Among 1,022 users who retook the assessment at intervals from two weeks to six months, not a single value fell in the poor reliability range at any time point. Mean intraclass correlation coefficients were .708, .687, and .692 across the three intervals — a flat pattern indicating no meaningful decay in stability. The median participant retained 4 of their top 5 core values at retest, far exceeding chance, and median within-person profile correlations exceeded .80 across all intervals.

Taken together, the three studies support the Values Bridge as a psychometrically grounded instrument: internally coherent, theoretically positioned, and temporally stable. For individuals, this

means their profile reflects something real and durable — not a snapshot that shifts with mood. For coaches and counselors, it means the instrument can anchor conversations in evidence and track genuine change over time. For researchers, it offers a validated tool for studying values alignment. For organizations, it opens rigorous investigation of how values fit relates to engagement, performance, and retention.

Limitations and future research directions are also discussed. Becoming You Labs welcomes collaboration with qualified researchers. Inquiries may be directed to research@becomingyoulabs.com.

Introduction

The Values Bridge is an assessment designed to measure what people value most in life — and how closely their current lives reflect those priorities. It does this in two ways that together make it distinctive. First, it measures values not as a single overall profile but across sixteen specific life domains — areas such as family, authentic expression, financial security, and place — capturing the texture of what matters to a person rather than reducing their priorities to a handful of broad categories. Second, for each of those domains, it gathers two separate readings: what an individual's ideal life looks like, and what their current life actually reflects. This dual lens — aspirational and enacted, side by side — is what allows the Values Bridge to do something most values tools cannot: measure not just what people care about, but how fully they are living it.

The gap between those two readings is called the Authenticity Gap. It is not a secondary feature of the instrument — it is one of its central contributions, and the empirical evidence for what it predicts about meaning, happiness, and decision-making is substantial enough that it deserves a dedicated paper of its own available at Becoming You Labs. This paper has a narrower focus: to present the evidence that the Values Bridge itself — its structure, its measures, its consistency — meets the standards of a sound psychological instrument.

That question matters more than it might initially seem. The marketplace of personal and professional development tools is crowded with assessments that are intuitive, engaging, and widely used — but that were never subjected to rigorous independent testing. An instrument that feels insightful is not the same as one that is demonstrably reliable and valid. Without validation, there is no way to know whether a tool is measuring something real or measuring noise — and without that assurance, it cannot responsibly support consequential decisions about careers, relationships, or life direction, or serve as the basis for research.

Validation, in the language of measurement science, is the process of building a cumulative case that an instrument does what it claims to do. Researchers in this tradition — from foundational work on values measurement by Rokeach (1973) and Schwartz (1992) to contemporary standards in psychological assessment — have established that this case must rest on multiple forms of evidence. Does the instrument hold together internally: do the items measuring each value actually cluster the way theory predicts? Does it relate appropriately to established measures in the field — capturing what it should, and remaining distinct from what it should not? Are its results consistent enough over time to be meaningful? Each question requires a different kind of study to answer.

Three studies were conducted to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Values Bridge against these standards, with a fourth addressing the Authenticity Gap specifically. The designs, hypotheses, and primary analysis plans were preregistered on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/gx3sf/overview) prior to data collection — a standard of transparency that guards against the selective reporting of results. The full journal manuscript is forthcoming in peer review. What follows here is an accessible summary of what was tested, how, and what the evidence shows.

The Values Bridge — What It Measures and How

How the Values Were Identified

The 16 values assessed by the Values Bridge were not chosen arbitrarily or derived from a single existing framework. Their identification followed a two-track process. The first track was empirical: open-ended exercises in which individuals described the principles guiding their life and career decisions were analyzed for recurring themes, and candidate values were drawn inductively from those patterns. The second track was theoretical: that emerging set of values was reviewed against the foundational taxonomies in the academic values literature — principally the work of Rokeach (1973), Schwartz (1992), and Reiss (2000) — to ensure scholarly grounding and motivational distinctiveness. The full account of that theoretical lineage, including a value-by-value mapping across legacy frameworks, is documented in the companion paper *Theoretical Roots of the Values Bridge*, available on our research page.

Values were retained as distinct constructs when they met three criteria: they captured a clearly identifiable driver of decisions and priorities; their language was accessible and free from moral overtones or academic jargon; and they influenced real choices across daily life and long-term goals in tangible ways. This process yielded 15 initial values. A sixteenth — Belovedness, defined as the prioritization of deep romantic partnership as a central organizing force in life — was added after repeated qualitative observation across coaching and teaching contexts suggested it represented a motivational priority not captured by the original set.

The 16 Values

The resulting values, and their plain-language definitions, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Values assessed by the Values Bridge

Value	Definition
Achievement	Drive for success, accomplishment, and demonstrated competence
Affluence	Prioritization of wealth and financial security
Agency	Desire for autonomy and self-determination over life decisions
Beholderism	Importance placed on aesthetics in one's environment, possessions, and appearance
Belonging	Investment in friendship, community, and social connection
Belovedness	Prioritization of romantic partnership as a central organizing force in life
Cosmos	Desire for spiritual or religious faith to guide decisions and provide meaning
Eudemonia	Orientation toward pleasure, leisure, recreation, and present-moment enjoyment
Familycentrism	Prioritization of immediate family in shaping life decisions and time allocation
Luminance	Desire for fame, public visibility, and widespread recognition
Non Sibi	Commitment to helping others through direct, personal impact
Place	Attachment to a specific location or type of environment as a life priority
Radius	Aspiration to contribute to systemic change at a societal or global scale
Scope	Desire for a broad life characterized by stimulation, novelty, and exploration
Voice	Drive for creative self-expression and authentic personal visibility
Workcentrism	Centrality of work as an organizing principle of identity and daily life

How the Assessment Works

The Values Bridge is administered online. For each of the 16 values, respondents complete a set of behaviorally anchored items — statements describing concrete actions and experiences associated with that value — rated on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The total instrument contains 50 Ideal Life items and 51 Current Life items, completed across both dimensions: once for Ideal Life, capturing the degree to which respondents wish to

prioritize each value, and once for Current Life, capturing the degree to which each value is expressed in their actual lived experience. Items in each dimension are tailored to their purpose, reducing the repetition effects that can distort results when identical items are used across contexts.

The decision to use behaviorally anchored items rather than direct value endorsement was deliberate and evidence-driven. Early pilot testing of a direct self-report format revealed ceiling effects and limited differentiation among values: when asked how important something is in the abstract, most people rate most things fairly highly. Behavioral anchoring grounds responses in what people actually do and experience, producing more discriminating and meaningful profiles.

Upon completing the assessment, respondents receive a ranked profile of their values across both dimensions — a side-by-side picture of their ideal and current life priorities — along with a measure of the gap between them. That gap, and what the data reveal about its causes and consequences, is the subject of a dedicated companion paper. What the validation studies reported here address is the more fundamental question: whether the instrument itself — its structure, its measures, its consistency over time — performs as a sound psychological assessment should.

Study 1 — Do the 16 Values Hold Together as Distinct Measures?

The first question any assessment must answer is structural: do the items designed to measure each value actually cluster together the way the instrument's design predicts — and do they stay cleanly separate from items measuring different values? If Agency items and Scope items blur together, or if Cosmos items scatter across multiple clusters, the 16-value structure is not holding up empirically. Study 1 examined this question using two complementary approaches — exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis — with two independent samples.

A Note on the Two Approaches

Factor analysis is a statistical method for identifying whether a set of items clusters into distinct underlying constructs — in this case, whether the Values Bridge items organize into 16 coherent, separable value dimensions. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) examines how items cluster within a theoretically specified structure, testing whether the data are consistent with it. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a more demanding test: it takes the structure identified in one sample and asks whether it holds up in a completely independent group, with strict model-fit criteria evaluated against established benchmarks. Using both approaches in sequence — EFA in a large naturalistic sample, CFA in an independently recruited validation sample — is considered methodologically rigorous because it reduces the risk that findings are sample-specific.

Sample 1: 35,947 Platform Users (EFA)

The exploratory analysis drew on responses from 35,947 individuals who completed the Values Bridge through the Becoming You platform in 2025, spanning a wide range of professional and demographic backgrounds. A 16-factor solution was specified in advance, consistent with the instrument's theoretical design. The question being asked was not "how many factors naturally emerge?" but rather "do the items behave as the framework predicts?" — a test of whether the data are consistent with the proposed structure.

The answer was clearly yes. All 52 items loaded most strongly on their intended value factor, with no item crossing over meaningfully onto a different value's cluster (no cross-loadings exceeding . 30). The majority of factor loadings (numerical indicators of how strongly each item belongs to its intended value cluster, where values above .50 are generally considered acceptable and above .70 strong) exceeded .60, and 34 of 52 items loaded at .70 or higher. Together, the 16 factors accounted for 72.54% of the total variance in responses, indicating that the value structure captures the large majority of what the instrument is measuring. Two reverse-scored items were subsequently removed — one each from Belonging and Familycentrism — because they reduced the reliability of their respective scales, producing the final instrument of 50 Ideal Life and 51 Current Life items used in all subsequent studies.

Sample 2: 830 Independent U.S. Adults (CFA)

The confirmatory analysis used an independent sample of 830 adults recruited through Prolific, a research platform widely used in academic psychology, selected to approximate U.S. national distributions for age, gender, and geographic region. This analysis was preregistered on the Open Science Framework before data collection began — meaning the hypotheses and analysis plan were publicly committed to in advance, a standard of transparency that guards against selectively reporting favorable results.

The 16-factor model demonstrated excellent fit for the Ideal Life dimension (CFI = .969; TLI = .964; RMSEA = .031; SRMR = .031) and acceptable fit for the Current Life dimension (CFI = .928; TLI = .916; RMSEA = .050; SRMR = .063). Every item loaded significantly on its intended factor. For the Ideal Life dimension, standardized loadings ranged from .663 to .980, with 96% of items loading at .75 or above. Internal consistency — assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), where values above .70 are acceptable, above .80 good, and above .90 excellent — was strong across all 16 values. A summary is presented in Table 2.

Full factor loadings and reliability statistics are provided in the peer-reviewed manuscript.

Table 2. Internal consistency of Values Bridge scales (*N* = 830)

Value	Ideal Life α	Current Life α
Achievement	.929	.879
Affluence	.929	.659*
Agency	.893	.810
Beholderism	.929	.882
Belonging	.893	.844
Belovedness	.913	.913
Cosmos	.985	.921
Eudemonia	.902	.881
Familycentrism	.893	.807
Luminance	.951	.934
Non Sibi	.909	.905
Place	.837	.808
Radius	.961	.947
Scope	.930	.920
Voice	.923	.805
Workcentrism	.893	.903
Median	**.921**	**.906**

Cronbach's alpha (α) measures how reliably items within each value scale measure the same underlying construct.
*Affluence Current Life α fell below .70 due to a reverse-scored item; composite reliability (ω = .706) was acceptable.

What This Means

Across two independent samples — 35,947 real platform users and 830 independently recruited U.S. adults — the Values Bridge demonstrated a clean, coherent 16-factor structure with strong internal consistency. Each value held together as a distinct, reliable construct, and no item crossed over meaningfully into another value's territory. The median internal consistency across both dimensions exceeded .90, well above conventional standards. This structural foundation is the prerequisite for all subsequent validity claims: an instrument whose items do not cohere cannot support meaningful interpretation of scores, comparison across individuals, or detection of the Authenticity Gap.

Study 2 — Does the Values Bridge Measure the Right Things?

Establishing that the Values Bridge holds together internally is necessary, but not sufficient. A well-structured instrument could still be measuring the wrong things, or measuring constructs already captured by existing tools. Study 2 addressed this by examining how the Values Bridge relates to the most rigorously validated values framework in the academic literature: Schwartz's Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-21; Schwartz, 2003). The goal was to determine whether the Values Bridge demonstrates convergent validity — meaningful association with conceptually related constructs — and discriminant validity — appropriate independence from constructs it was not designed to measure.

What Was Tested and Why the Schwartz PVQ

Shalom Schwartz's theory of basic human values is the closest thing the field has to a gold standard. Decades of cross-cultural research have established its motivational circumplex — a circular model organizing 10 broad value domains, from Power and Achievement through Benevolence and Universalism to Self-Direction and Stimulation — as a reliable map of human motivational priorities. The PVQ-21 is the most widely used instrument for measuring those domains.

The Values Bridge was designed to operate within this motivational landscape but at a different level of resolution — differentiating within Schwartz's broad categories into more specific, domain-level life priorities. Importantly, strong correlations were not the goal. If Values Bridge scales correlated too highly with Schwartz domains, the instruments would be measuring the same constructs, and the Values Bridge would add nothing new. The target was moderate, theoretically predicted associations — evidence of conceptual relatedness without redundancy.

Who Participated

A new independent sample of 426 U.S. adults was recruited through Prolific, approximating national distributions for age, gender, and geographic region. All participants completed the Values Bridge Ideal Life dimension and the PVQ-21. This sample was entirely separate from both the EFA and CFA samples used in Study 1.

What Was Found

Correlations were predicted in advance for each Values Bridge scale based on its theoretical location within the Schwartz motivational circumplex. The pattern of results aligned closely with theoretical expectations across all four of Schwartz's higher-order motivational regions.

Self-Enhancement values — those reflecting status, accomplishment, and material success — showed the strongest and most theoretically coherent associations. Achievement correlated strongly with Schwartz Achievement (r = .51) and Power (r = .47). Affluence showed its largest association with Schwartz Power (r = .64) — the single strongest correlation in the entire matrix. Luminance converged with Schwartz Achievement (r = .50) and Power (r = .45).

Conservation values — those reflecting stability, tradition, and social order — produced equally coherent results. Familycentrism correlated most strongly with Schwartz Tradition (r = .33) and Security (r = .32). Cosmos showed its strongest association with Tradition (r = .49), reflecting the established finding that religious meaning-making functions as a conservative, identity-anchoring orientation in U.S. samples (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995).

Self-Transcendence values aligned with Schwartz's prosocial domains. Non Sibi showed its strongest association with Benevolence (r = .59) — the largest correlation in this region. Radius converged with Universalism (r = .40).

Openness to Change values also confirmed predictions: Scope showed its dominant association with Stimulation (r = .59), Agency correlated most strongly with Self-Direction (r = .33), and Voice converged with Self-Direction (r = .37).

Two findings merit specific comment. Belovedness — the prioritization of deep romantic partnership — showed relatively modest correlations throughout the matrix (strongest: Benevolence r = .26, Security r = .24), despite its strong psychometric properties in Study 1. Rather than indicating a weakness, this pattern suggests that deep romantic partnership as a life-organizing priority represents a motivational domain not well represented within the Schwartz framework — a gap the Values Bridge addresses. Values like Agency and Voice showed negative or near-zero associations with Conservation domains (Agency–Conformity: r = –.02), confirming appropriate discriminant validity: these constructs are genuinely independent where theory predicts they should be.

Figure 1 maps all 16 Values Bridge values onto the Schwartz motivational circumplex, providing a visual summary of where each value sits within the motivational landscape based on its pattern of correlations. The full correlation matrix is presented in Table 3.

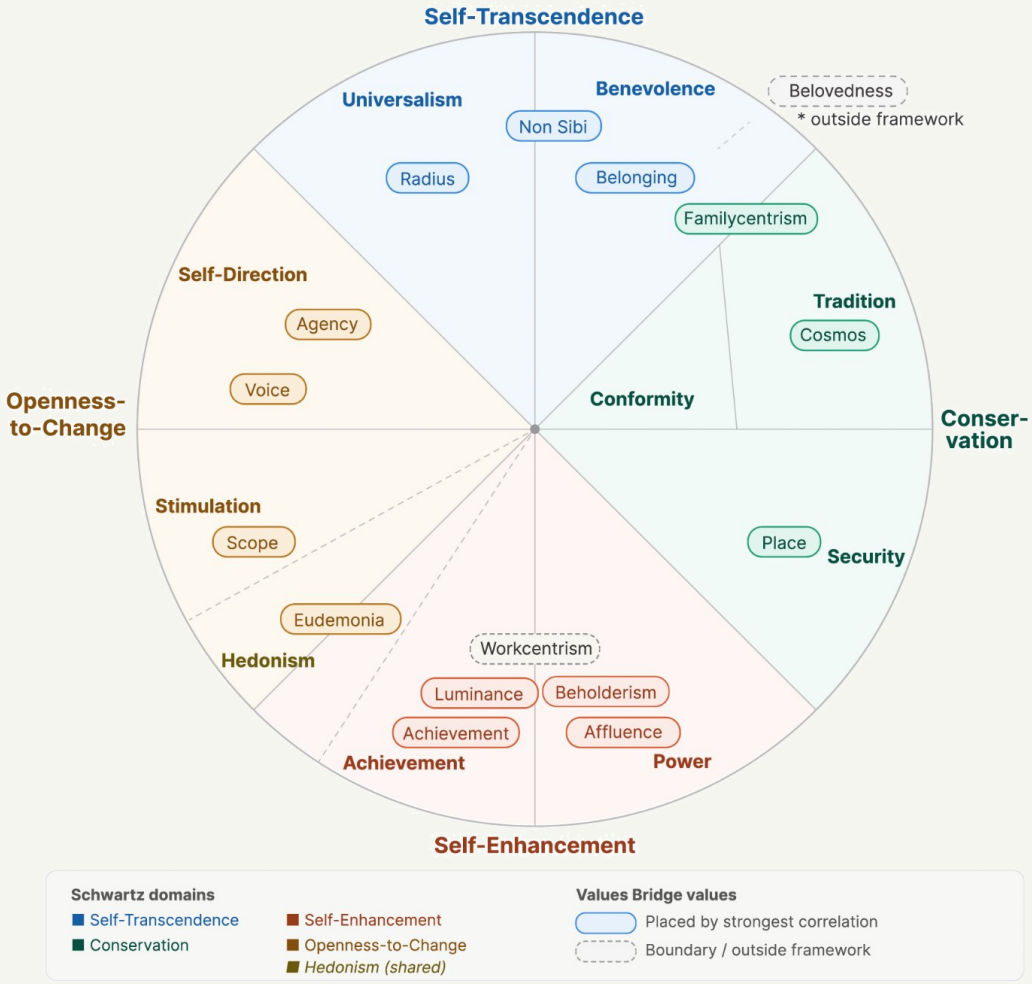

Figure 1. The 16 Values Bridge values mapped onto the Schwartz circumplex

Pill-shaped labels indicate the approximate motivational region of each value based on convergent validity correlations from Study 2 (*N* = 426). Values are color-coded by higher-order region: Self-Transcendence (blue), Conservation (green), Self-Enhancement (coral), and Openness-to-Change (amber). Workcentrism (dashed outline) straddles the Self-Enhancement/Conservation boundary. Belovedness (dashed outline, outside ring) occupies motivational territory not well represented within the Schwartz framework.

Table 3. Pearson correlations between Values Bridge Ideal Life scales and Schwartz PVQ domains (*N* = 426)

Values Bridge	CON	TRA	SEC	BEN	UNI	SD	STI	HED	ACH	POW
Achievement	.24**	.15**	.28**	.25**	.11*	**.33****	**.32****	.28**	**.51****	**.47****
Affluence	.20**	.12*	.29**	.10*	-.00	.17**	.20**	**.34****	**.50****	**.64****
Agency	-.02	-.04	.13**	-.05	.01	**.33****	.10*	.20**	.11*	.19**
Beholderism	.15**	.07	.27**	.18**	.17**	.23**	.17**	**.35****	**.37****	**.45****
Belonging	.19**	.11*	.18**	**.38****	.26**	.08	.27**	.29**	**.35****	.28**
Belovedness	.14**	.17**	.24**	.26**	.11*	.06	.07	.11*	.10*	.16**
Cosmos	.28**	**.49****	.18**	.21**	.05	.08	.15**	.01	-.05	.04
Eudemonia	.03	-.08	.17**	.15**	.17**	.21**	.23**	**.52****	.25**	.22**
Familycentrism	.24**	**.33****	**.32****	**.33****	.18**	.05	.07	.02	.05	.08
Luminance	.18**	.15**	.14**	.12*	.02	.16**	**.31****	.29**	**.50****	**.45****
Non Sibi	.24**	.29**	.25**	**.59****	**.43****	.10*	.18**	.12*	.09	.01
Place	.24**	.25**	**.31****	.29**	.22**	.05	-.06	.02	.03	.03
Radius	.14**	.10*	.24**	.25**	**.40****	.25**	.26**	.23**	.27**	.25**
Scope	-.00	.04	.02	.19**	.23**	.29**	**.59****	**.45****	**.30****	**.31****
Voice	-.17**	-.01	.03	.12*	.19**	**.37****	.23**	.20**	.06	.10*
Workcentrism	.20**	.14**	.14**	.15**	.12*	.19**	.22**	.03	**.34****	.28**

Correlations are sign-reversed to reflect convergent associations. Bolded correlations $|r| \geq .30$. CON = Conformity; TRA = Tradition; SEC = Security; BEN = Benevolence; UNI = Universalism; SD = Self-Direction; STI = Stimulation; HED = Hedonism; ACH = Achievement; POW = Power. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

What This Means

The pattern of correlations confirms that the Values Bridge occupies a coherent and theoretically meaningful position within the established landscape of values measurement. Where conceptual overlap was predicted, associations were moderate and meaningful. Where independence was predicted, correlations were near zero or negative. No Values Bridge scale correlated so strongly with a Schwartz domain as to suggest redundancy — the highest single correlation in the matrix was .64 (Affluence–Power). The finding that Belovedness sits largely outside the Schwartz framework is not a weakness of the Values Bridge — it is a demonstration of its purpose.

Study 3 — Are the Results Consistent Over Time?

A valid assessment must not only measure the right things — it must measure them consistently. Study 3 examined the temporal stability of the Values Bridge across a range of real-world time intervals, using three complementary methods to build a comprehensive picture of reliability.

What Was Tested and How

Temporal stability was evaluated using data from 1,022 users of the Becoming You platform who chose to retake the Values Bridge assessment on their own initiative — no incentives were offered, and no retest was scheduled. Retest intervals ranged from 14 to 186 days, with a median of 55 days. Participants were grouped into three time windows: 2–4 weeks (n = 253), 1–3 months (n = 479), and 3–6 months (n = 281).

Stability was assessed three ways. The primary method used intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) — a statistical measure of agreement between two sets of scores from the same person across time, accounting for both the rank ordering of individuals and the actual level of their scores. ICC benchmarks are well established: values below .50 indicate poor reliability, .50–.75 moderate, .75–.90 good, and above .90 excellent (Koo & Li, 2016). Two additional analyses examined core value retention — how many of a person's top five values remained in their top five at retest — and whole-profile stability.

What Was Found

Across all three time windows, not a single value fell in the poor reliability range. Mean ICCs were .708 at 2–4 weeks, .687 at 1–3 months, and .692 at 3–6 months — a flat pattern indicating minimal decay in stability over time. Full ICC results are presented in Table 4.

Values tied to deep identity commitments — Cosmos (.829 mean ICC), Beholderism (.774), Familycentrism (.770), and Affluence (.771) — showed consistently good to strong reliability. Values more naturally responsive to shifting life circumstances — Voice (.562), Non Sibi (.607), Place (.618), and Belonging (.620) — showed moderate but acceptable stability. This gradient reflects genuine construct behavior: an instrument that showed identical stability for Voice and Cosmos would actually be more suspicious.

Participants retained an average of 3.49 to 3.53 of their top 5 core values across all time windows, with a median overlap of 4 out of 5. Chance alone would predict only 1.56. Whole-profile stability — the correlation between a person's full 16-value ranking at Time 1 and Time 2 — showed median correlations of .824, .825, and .806 across the three intervals, with no meaningful attenuation over time.

Table 4. Test-retest intraclass correlation coefficients across three time intervals (*N* = 1,022)

Value	2–4 Weeks ICC [95% CI]	1–3 Months ICC [95% CI]	3–6 Months ICC [95% CI]
Cosmos	.828 [.785, .863]	.792 [.754, .824]	.866 [.832, .894]
Beholderism	.763 [.706, .810]	.776 [.738, .809]	.783 [.733, .825]
Familycentrism	.781 [.727, .825]	.739 [.693, .778]	.789 [.740, .829]
Affluence	.738 [.676, .789]	.775 [.735, .810]	.799 [.750, .840]
Luminance	.772 [.705, .823]	.719 [.670, .762]	.725 [.575, .814]
Scope	.759 [.701, .807]	.700 [.651, .743]	.715 [.653, .768]
Workcentrism	.751 [.692, .800]	.667 [.614, .714]	.682 [.611, .741]
Achievement	.747 [.687, .797]	.669 [.616, .716]	.741 [.683, .789]
Belovedness	.740 [.679, .791]	.679 [.627, .724]	.693 [.627, .749]
Radius	.734 [.629, .805]	.715 [.653, .765]	.676 [.598, .740]
Eudemonia	.701 [.632, .759]	.652 [.598, .701]	.600 [.520, .670]
Belonging	.644 [.566, .711]	.617 [.556, .672]	.598 [.474, .691]
Place	.637 [.557, .705]	.602 [.542, .656]	.614 [.536, .682]
Non Sibi	.608 [.524, .681]	.641 [.584, .692]	.573 [.479, .653]
Agency	.591 [.505, .666]	.656 [.602, .704]	.657 [.585, .719]
Voice	.531 [.436, .614]	.588 [.526, .644]	.568 [.477, .646]
Mean	**.708**	**.687**	**.692**

ICC benchmarks: below .50 = poor; .50–.75 = moderate; .75–.90 = good; above .90 = excellent (Koo & Li, 2016). Values sorted by mean ICC across intervals.

What This Means

Three independent indicators — scale-level ICCs, core value retention, and whole-profile correlations — converged on the same conclusion: the Values Bridge produces stable, consistent results across intervals ranging from two weeks to six months. The instrument captures enduring personal priorities rather than transient states or moods. The differential stability across values adds nuance rather than concern — identity-anchored values show stronger stability than circumstance-sensitive values, which is consistent with how values are theorized to function.

Open Questions and an Invitation to Researchers

The three studies summarized in this paper establish a strong psychometric foundation for the Values Bridge. But science is cumulative, and the most credible research programs are ones that are transparent about what they have not yet tested — and eager to find out. This section describes the questions that remain open, why they are worth asking, and what answering them might reveal. Researchers interested in pursuing any of these directions are invited to reach out directly; Becoming You Labs is open to sharing data and instruments with qualified investigators under appropriate use agreements.

Does reducing the Authenticity Gap improve wellbeing over time?

The most consequential unanswered question is whether a narrowing Authenticity Gap — a current life that comes to more closely reflect what someone values most — produces measurable improvements in meaning, happiness, and purpose. The evidence in Study 4 (reported in the dedicated Authenticity Gap paper) establishes that the gap predicts these outcomes cross-sectionally, but cross-sectional data cannot establish causality. Longitudinal studies tracking individuals over months or years, ideally in coaching or career transition contexts, would clarify directionality and establish whether the Authenticity Gap is a meaningful intervention target.

Does the 16-value structure hold across cultures?

The validation studies were conducted primarily with U.S. adults. Values are not culturally neutral — Schwartz's decades of cross-cultural research demonstrated that both the relative importance of values and the relationships among them vary meaningfully across societies. Some Values Bridge constructs — Familycentrism, Agency, Cosmos — are particularly likely to carry different connotations in non-Western samples. Cross-cultural validation would substantially broaden the instrument's reach and relevance.

Can the Values Bridge predict organizational outcomes?

The instrument has been extensively used in professional and organizational contexts — MBA programs, coaching practices, corporate talent development. The relationship between Values Bridge profiles and organizational outcomes — job satisfaction, engagement, turnover intention, team cohesion, culture fit — has not yet been formally studied. Given the instrument's applied reach, this is a natural and promising extension.

An invitation

The questions above are not weaknesses of the existing research — they are the natural horizon of a first program of validation studies, and some of the most interesting ones to pursue next.

Becoming You Labs is committed to an open research posture. Qualified researchers interested in collaborating, accessing the dataset, or using the Values Bridge instrument in independent studies are encouraged to contact research@becomingyoulabs.com.

What Validated Measurement Makes Possible

There is a meaningful difference between a tool that feels true and one that has been shown to be true. The feelings-based version is not worthless — intuition matters in assessment, and an instrument that does not resonate with users will not be used regardless of its psychometric properties. Indeed, data from the Becoming You Labs 2025 Impact Survey (available here) show that users' immediate reactions to their Values Bridge results are strongly positive, suggesting the instrument achieves both resonance and rigor. But resonance alone cannot tell you whether a tool produces consistent results across time, whether it measures what it claims to measure rather than something adjacent to it, or whether two people's scores can be meaningfully compared. Validation is what makes those things knowable — and knowable things enable a different quality of action.

For individuals. A validated instrument changes the nature of self-knowledge. When someone receives their Values Bridge profile, they are receiving a measurement — one that has been shown to hold together across tens of thousands of users, to relate appropriately to established science, and to remain stable over time. The Authenticity Gap in particular becomes a genuine diagnostic rather than a rhetorical device — a quantified signal of where life design work most needs to happen.

For coaches and counselors. Validated measurement shifts the coaching conversation from impression to evidence. A coach can point to convergent validity evidence when explaining why the instrument captures something real, explain with empirical backing why the gap between Ideal Life and Current Life matters for meaning and wellbeing, and track change across sessions with confidence that shifts in scores reflect genuine change rather than measurement noise.

For researchers. The Values Bridge now offers the field something it previously lacked: a psychometrically grounded instrument for measuring life values at domain-specific granularity, with a validated measure of values-behavior alignment built in. The 16-factor structure established in Study 1, the convergent validity evidence in Study 2, and the temporal stability in Study 3 collectively position the Values Bridge as a research instrument capable of supporting rigorous empirical work on the questions that matter most in applied psychology.

For organizations. A validated instrument opens different possibilities than intuitive frameworks: group-level profiles that can be compared across teams or roles, structured assessment of values fit between individuals and organizational culture, and rigorous tracking of how values alignment relates to engagement, performance, and retention.

Validation is not a bureaucratic hurdle or a credential to display. It is the process by which a promising instrument becomes a trustworthy one — and trustworthy tools make it possible to ask harder questions with more confidence in the answers. The Values Bridge was designed to help people understand what they care about and how fully they are living it. The evidence summarized in this paper supports the conclusion that it does so with the rigor those questions deserve.

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