

Chapter II

Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavior

Introduction

In three books on issues related to the construct of *value*, Rokeach (1969, 1973, 1979) contributed significantly to the overall understanding of *value* construct as a psychological phenomenon. In his first book, titled *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values: A Theory of Organization and Change*, Rokeach (1969) presented a philosophical argument for the importance and association of value to other psychological aspects such as beliefs and attitudes. In his second, book titled *The Nature of Human Values*, Rokeach (1973) presented his value theory and an instrument to assess value, known as Rokeach's Value Survey, or RVS, as well as the rationale and validity of his survey instrument. In a third book, titled *Understanding Human Values*, Rokeach (1979) discussed the validity of his value theory along with a review of research studies that employed his theory in different research fields. Rokeach (1969) discussed the differences between: values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. He suggested that values are underlying dispositions for individual's beliefs, attitude, and behavior.

In the following section, a review of such differences is presented in the context of information systems in general and e-learning systems in particular. Although the aim of this study is not to provide empirical evidence for such a sequence (i.e. value impacts on beliefs, attitude, and behavior), the relationships presented in literature among such constructs are valuable in developing a framework to assess e-learning systems' effectiveness that is built upon value theory. Furthermore, some IS scholars include attitudes and behaviors (or system usage) as constructs contributing to IS effectiveness. However, a review of these constructs in value theory literature is essential as it suggests these are mediating constructs rather than effecting constructs such as *value* and *satisfaction*.

Values and Beliefs

Rokeach (1969) defines belief as “any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does” (p. 113). He suggests that all beliefs are predisposition to action. Rokeach (1969) proposes three kinds of beliefs. The first kind is a *descriptive* or *existential* belief, which coincides with common facts. An example of such a belief is: I believe that the sun rises in the east. The second kind is called an *evaluative* belief, which coincides with an individual's evaluative judgment. An example of such a belief is: I believe this ice cream is good. The third kind of a belief is a *prescriptive* or *exhortatory* belief. Example of such a belief is: I believe it is desirable that children should obey their parents. Rokeach (1969) also proposes that individuals possess a belief system that includes the “total universe of a person's beliefs about the physical world, social world, and the self” (p. 123).

Rokeach (1969) considers a *value* to be a type of belief that is “centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave” (p. 124). By contrast, Feather (1975), in his book titled *Values in Education and Society*, criticizes Rokeach on equating values and beliefs. He claims that beliefs are considered to be “affectively neutral”; in other words, they are not related to a particular scenario or situation. However, values are not “neutral”; they are held with a slight degree of feeling (p. 4). Feather (1975) continues to criticize Rokeach by claiming that he argues that values may be classified as prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs rather than as a descriptive or evaluative belief (p. 4). Feather (1975) acknowledges that there is no sharp distinction between evaluative and prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs. As a

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