

Value Profiles, Religiosity, and Subjective Well-being among Students in Jesuit Business Education

How do Jesuit universities form students not only to succeed, but to flourish and to lead in ways oriented toward the service of others? This question is increasingly salient in higher education, especially in institutions tasked with forming graduates who are not only professionally competent, but also ethically grounded, socially responsible, and capable of responding meaningfully to complex human problems.

The university years represent a critical stage in this formative process, during which students not only acquire knowledge and technical skills, but also consolidate values, shape their identities, and develop frameworks of meaning that influence their well-being, aspirations, and future professional conduct (Fischer and Luiz, 2024). However, students do not enter university as blank slates; they bring with them pre-existing value orientations and meaning frameworks that may shape how they engage with this formative project (Banda, 2025).

In Jesuit higher education, this formative journey is particularly significant, as education is understood as the development of the whole person, oriented toward reflection, responsibility, solidarity, and the common good. Despite this emphasis, research on university students has focused predominantly on academic adjustment, persistence, and performance, paying comparatively less attention to students' value orientations, religious self-understandings, and the ways in which these relate to subjective well-being (Peng, 2022).

This study addresses this gap by examining the diversity of value profiles among undergraduate students in Jesuit universities and exploring how these profiles relate to religious orientation and subjective well-being. More specifically, it pursues three objectives: first, to identify value profiles based on the higher-order dimensions of Schwartz's theory of values; second, to analyze whether these profiles vary according to gender, academic year, and area of study; and

third, to examine the association between these profiles, religious orientation, and subjective well-being.

By adopting a person-centered approach, this study seeks to capture how values, religiosity, and well-being co-occur within distinct student configurations, rather than treating these dimensions in isolation (Ouassif et al., 2025). In doing so, it contributes to ongoing conversations on integral human development and human flourishing in Jesuit higher education, while also offering insights into the diverse starting points from which students engage in processes of professional and ethical formation. More broadly, by focusing on students' internal value structures and sources of meaning, the study shifts attention from education as performance alone toward education as a process shaped by pre-existing orientations that may influence how formation unfolds.

A quantitative, ex post facto, cross-sectional design was employed. The sample comprised 5,981 undergraduate students enrolled at five Spanish Jesuit universities. Of these, 62% were first-year students and 38% were in later years of study, representing a broad range of disciplinary fields.

Values were assessed using the 21-item version of Schwartz's Values Questionnaire (Schwartz, 2003) which enables the ten basic values to be organized into four higher-order dimensions: openness to change, conservation, self-transcendence, and self-enhancement. Religious orientation was measured through a single self-identification item distinguishing among institutional religiosity, personal spirituality, agnosticism, and atheism. While this measure captures broad patterns of identification, it does not fully reflect the multidimensional nature of religiosity. Subjective well-being was assessed using Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Preliminary psychometric analyses were conducted to examine the reliability of the measures. A two-step cluster analysis followed by k-means clustering was used

to identify distinct student profiles, combining statistical criteria with interpretability considerations. Subsequently, chi-square tests and ANOVA were conducted to examine differences across profiles, with effect sizes reported (Mohamed et al., 2022).

The findings identify five differentiated value profiles. The first profile, *unaligned* (n = 734), is characterized by low scores across all value dimensions, particularly in self-transcendence and openness to change. Students in this group report the lowest levels of life satisfaction and show lower levels of engagement across value orientations.

The second profile, *balanced* (n = 1,614), is characterized by comparatively high scores across all value dimensions. Students in this group report the highest levels of life satisfaction and show a strong presence of religiosity and spirituality.

The third profile, *social innovator* (n = 1,153), combines high openness to change with high self-transcendence. These students tend to show lower levels of institutional religiosity while maintaining moderate life satisfaction.

The fourth profile, *individualistic* (n = 1,347), shows high self-enhancement and low self-transcendence. Students in this group report moderate levels of life satisfaction.

The fifth profile, *conservative-altruistic* (n = 1,133), is marked by high conservation and high self-transcendence and is associated with strong religious identification and moderately high life satisfaction.

Across the five clusters, statistically significant differences emerge according to gender, field of study, religiosity, and satisfaction with life, highlighting the heterogeneity of value configurations within the student population.

Taken together, these findings suggest that students differ not only in the values they prioritize, but also in how they integrate potentially competing orientations, such as personal achievement

and concern for others, or stability and openness to change. These differences propose that students may engage differently with formative experiences depending on their value configurations, pointing to the need for pedagogical approaches that are responsive to diverse motivational and meaning frameworks. This diversity has important implications for Jesuit higher education and, more specifically, for Jesuit business education. If business schools aim to form leaders for and with others, they must attend not only to what students learn, but also to the value configurations and meaning frameworks they bring into the educational experience (Meana Peon, 2023).

From a pedagogical perspective, the results point toward the need for differentiated approaches to formation. Students with profiles oriented toward self-enhancement may require more explicit engagement with ethical reflection and social responsibility, while those combining openness to change and self-transcendence may benefit from educational spaces that connect their orientation toward social impact with broader frameworks of meaning. In this sense, formation cannot be understood as a uniform process, but as one that interacts with diverse student starting points.

The findings also raise questions regarding the relationship between religiosity and value-driven engagement. In particular, the presence of profiles characterized by strong social orientation alongside lower levels of institutional religiosity suggests that commitment to the common good may be articulated through diverse frameworks, not all of which are explicitly religious. This has implications for how Jesuit institutions understand and accompany students' processes of meaning-making.

The central contribution of this study lies in providing empirical evidence on the co-occurrence of values, religious orientation, and subjective well-being within a large sample of students in Jesuit higher education. By adopting a person-centered approach, the study shows that these

dimensions are organized in distinct configurations rather than operating independently. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing discussions of human flourishing by highlighting that student well-being is associated not only with academic adaptation, but also with deeper frameworks of identity, meaning, and value commitment.

More broadly, this study suggests that student development may be better understood as a process shaped by pre-existing orientations that influence how individuals engage with formative experiences. From this perspective, the challenge for Jesuit business education is not only to provide knowledge and skills, but to engage with how different value configurations shape students' understanding of responsibility, purpose, and their future professional roles. In this sense, student formation is not only a matter of what universities offer, but of how students interpret and integrate that experience through their existing value frameworks.

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