

Identity, Relationship, and Behavioral Values in Relation to Resilience and Stress



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Background

Personal values and their clarification is an important element in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and other Contextual Behavioral Science approaches, but assessment of values has traditionally been focused across a broad array of domains, which may lose some sensitivity to different types of values.

In thinking about the utility of clarifying personal values, there may be an advantage to classifying values into separate domains, rather than assessing across all domains together (e.g., Wilson & Murrell, 2004).

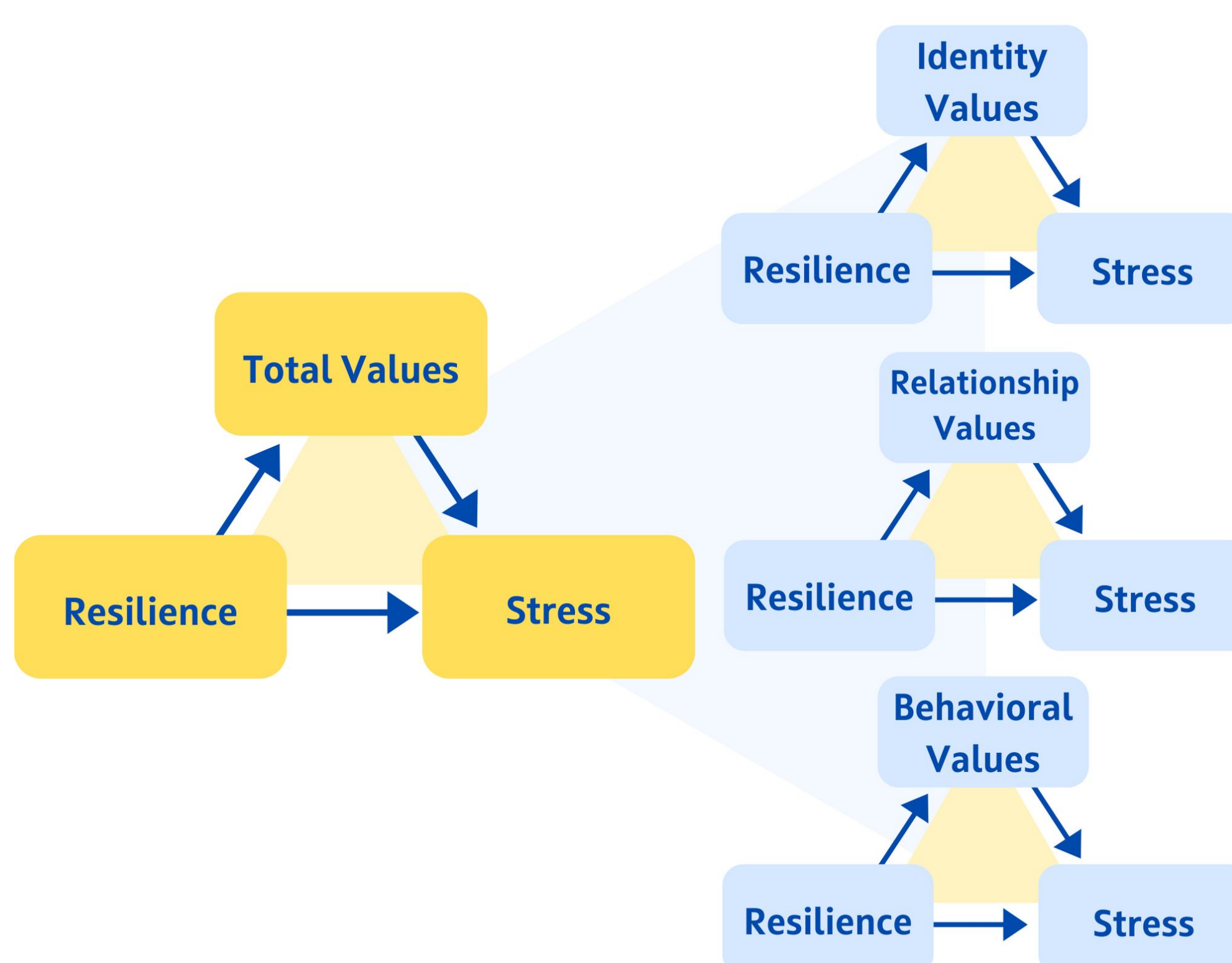
Previous research has shown that values-related behavior may have a relationship with resilience in college students (Ceary et al., 2019). Additionally, this relationship may be influenced by factors related to stress (Ceary et al., 2019).

The present study explored the relationship between identity, relationship, and behavior values and resilience and stress, to determine whether these subcategories of values offer better mediating value than values overall.



Hypothesis

We hypothesized that adding values, and specifically separated-out values domains, such as **identity values**, **relationship values**, and **behavioral values** will reduce the predictive value of resilience on stress.



Methods

Participants

- N = 183 (53% males)
- Average age was 34 years old
- Participants identified themselves as:
 - White Caucasian (62%), Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander (19%), African American/Black (11%), Hispanic (5%), Biracial (1%) & Other (2%)

Measures

- **Personal Values - Valued Living Questionnaire (VLQ):** 20-item questionnaire measuring importance and consistency in living values within 10 valued domains (Wilson & Murrell, 2004). Domains were then categorized into the following domains:
 - **Identity Values:** Spirituality, citizenship/community life
 - **Relationship Values:** Romantic, family, social, parenting
 - **Behavioral Values:** Work, education, recreation, and physical self-care
- **Resilience - Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC):** (Connor & Davidson, 2003) The CD-RISC purports to measure an individual's ability to "thrive in the face of adversity." The CD-RISC consists of 25 items on a 5 point likert scale. Resulting in a score between 0-100; higher scores indicate more resilience.
- **Stress - Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** (Cohen et al., 1983) The Perceived Stress Scale is a 10 item scale examining perceived stress during the last month. Items are scored on a 5 point likert scale. Resulting in a score between 0-40; with higher scores indicating more perceived stress.

Procedures

- Recruitment via Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk)
 - Previous studies utilizing mTurk data had acceptable psychometric quality and higher demographic diversity compared to college samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011)
- Participants followed a link to Qualtrics survey
 - Assigned random identification number to ensure confidentiality
 - Incorporated manipulation checks throughout the survey to ensure accuracy
- After survey completion, participants were paid through mTurk

Results

Mediation analyses included a four-step process (Baron & Kenny, 1986):

- Step 1: predictor significantly predicts outcome
- Step 2: predictor significantly predicts mediator
- Step 3: mediator significantly predicts outcome
- Step 4: In order to demonstrate mediation, the fourth step requires a significant reduction in the predictive power of the predictor on the outcome when controlling for the mediator variable via a Sobel test.

Four potential mediators were tested.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Resilience	-					
2. Stress	-.602*	-				
3. Identity Values	.192*	-.096	-			
4. Relationship Values	.446**	-.300**	.623**	-		
5. Behavioral Values	.455**	-.292**	.719**	.719**	-	
6. Total Values	.443**	-.277**	.815**	.912**	.898**	-

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$

Table 2. Mediation analysis with total values predicting stress.

Mediation Test				
	β	se β	p-value	
1. Resilience predicts Stress	-.602	.035	< .001	
2. Resilience predicts Total Values	.443	.085	< .001	
3. Total Values predicts Stress	-.010	.034	.894	
4. Resilience (+ Total Values) predicts Stress	-.595	.040	< .001	

Table 3. Mediation analysis with identity values predicting stress.

Mediation Test				
	β	se β	p-value	
1. Resilience predicts Stress	-.602	.035	< .001	
2. Resilience predicts Identity Values	.192	.026	.16	
3. Identity Values predicts Stress	.023	.107	.738	
4. Resilience (+ Identity Values) predicts Stress	-.604	.036	< .001	

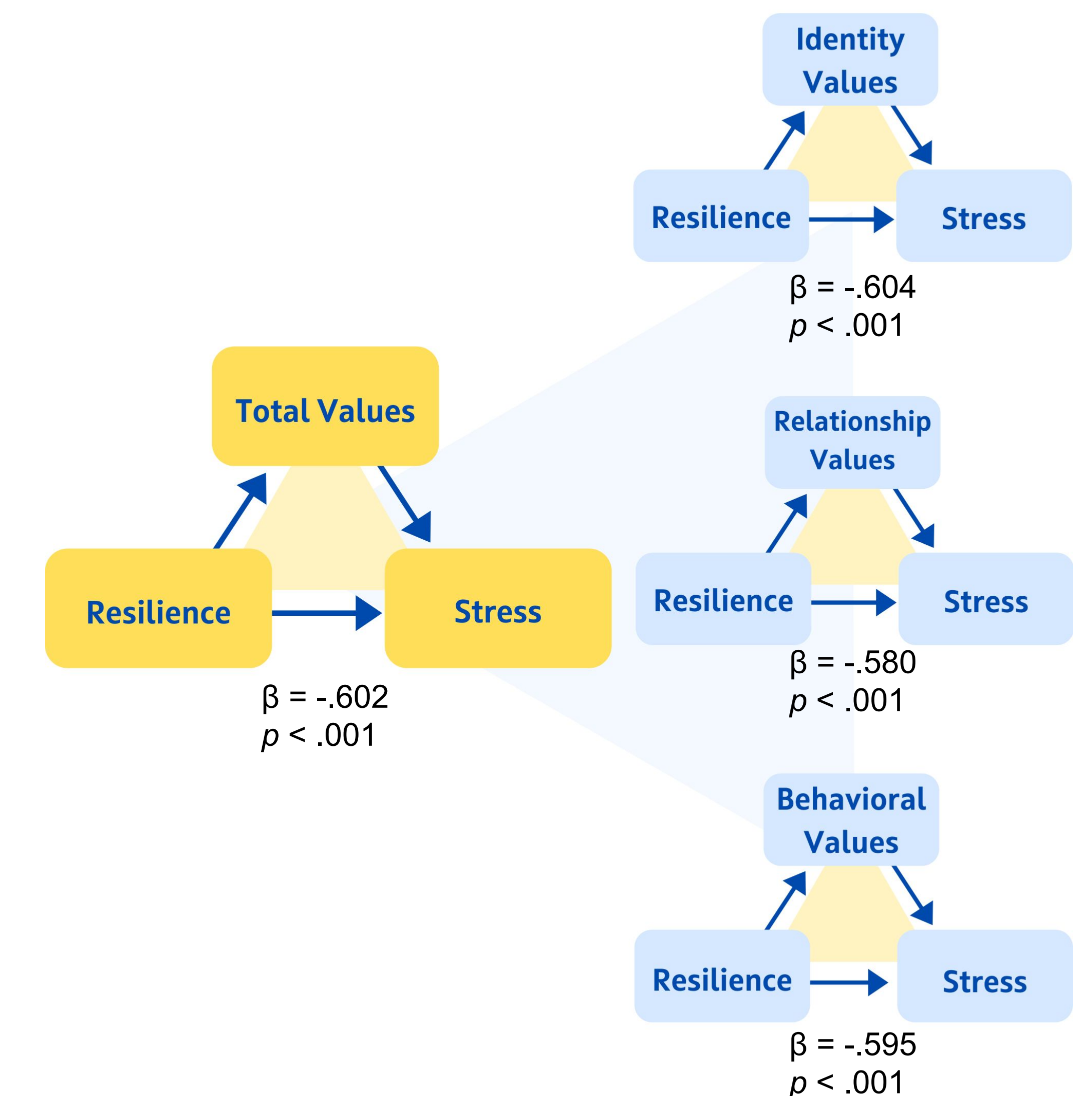
Table 4. Mediation analysis with relationship values predicting stress.

Mediation Test				
	β	se β	p-value	
1. Resilience predicts Stress	-.602	.035	< .001	
2. Resilience predicts Relationship Values	.446	.037	< .001	
3. Relationship Values predicts Stress	-.046	.076	.534	
4. Resilience (+ Relationship Values) predicts Stress	-.580	.039	< .001	

Table 5. Mediation analysis with behavioral values predicting stress.

Mediation Test				
	β	se β	p-value	
1. Resilience predicts Stress	-.602	.035	< .001	
2. Resilience predicts Behavioral Values	.455	.034	< .001	
3. Behavioral Values predicts Stress	-.018	.085	.805	
4. Resilience (+ Behavioral Values) predicts Stress	-.595	.040	< .001	

Results



Discussion

- The present study demonstrated that, for these participants, **modifying values domains into more specific areas such as Identity Values, Relationship Values, and Behavioral Values did not increase mediational relationships between resilience and stress.**
- Additionally, the present study demonstrated that **Values overall did not mediate the relationship between resilience and stress.** In other words, individuals high in resilience demonstrated lower levels of stress, and individuals lower in resilience demonstrated higher levels of stress, and the construct of values did not relate to lower stress in lower resilience individuals.
- As noted by Reilly et al. (2018), proper identification of values and values-related behavior is a key element of contextual behavioral science interventions such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and there are currently multiple ways values are assessed in clinical work and research.
- Future studies may explore other values domains beyond those examined in our study to determine the usefulness of more precise values measures.

References

- Wilson, K. G. & Murrell, A. R. (2004). Values work in acceptance and commitment therapy: Setting a course for behavioral treatment. In S. C. Hayes, V. M. Follette, & M. M. Linehan (Eds.), *Mindfulness and acceptance: Expanding the cognitive behavioral tradition* (pp. 120-151). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Ceary, C. D., Donahue, J. J., & Shaffer, K. (2019). The strength of pursuing your values: Valued living as a path to resilience among college students. *Stress and Health, 35*(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2886>