

Self Actualization, Self Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence of Undergraduate Students

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Abstract—The purpose of the study is to investigate issues related with the identities, specifically self-related aspects such as self-actualization and self-efficacy and understand the emotional intelligence levels of undergraduate students in Turkey and analyze the relations of these aspects. The sample consists of 278 undergraduate students from Istanbul University Business Administration Faculty. Results reveal that emotional intelligence has significant and positive effect on self-actualization and self-efficacy. Self-actualization has also significant and positive effect on self-efficacy. Results are discussed.

Index Terms—identity, self-actualization, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

Identity has been an important concept of behavioral and social studies. Psychology explains identity related with the socialization process and sociology studies emphasize one's social positioning in society [1]. From a psychological perspective, the emergence of self in childhood is followed by the development of self in adolescence and adulthood by crisis and resolutions deriving from having new social environment, roles, and experiences.

The meanings related to self, refer to identity dimension whereas the value attached to the self refers to self evaluation dimension [2]. From a sociological stance, the identities of people exist before birth and continue after death, they are in the minds and memories of the people. They are part of a society and social relations beyond their physical existence. Throughout their lives, through social interactions and behaviors they have constructed their multiple identities.

The self internalizes the roles, culture, and reflects objective and subjective experiences, emotions, and thoughts. The self concept affects and affected by all these issues, and constitute identities [3].

Self actualization has been identified as the highest order need by Maslow. [4]. It has been defined as using one's capabilities in the most creative and effective way. Whereas self efficacy is described as belief in one's potential and capacity in order to overcome challenges and achieve goals. While past performances directly and positively correlated with self efficacy belief past failures

has a negative impact on the belief of self efficacy. [5]. Salovey and Meyer viewed emotions as organized responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the physiological, cognitive, motivational, and experiential systems. [6]. Emotional intelligence is defined one's capacity to realize, understand, deal with urges and emotions. [7]. All three aspects seem to be somehow related and each of the aspect seem to have significant impacts on the level of performance. Although performance is not considered as a variable in this study we are willing to investigate the intercorrelations among the concepts of self actualization, self efficacy and emotional intelligence.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Self

Self is the answer to the questions of who we are, how we define, categorize, what do we think about ourselves, and why do we think in that way [8]. Self is a system consists of eighty self-related phenomena due to three aspects as representing, effecting, and changing. Self is also interconnected in social, psychological, neural, and molecular levels of mechanisms [8]. The representing self has three sub-dimensions as self to oneself, self to others, and self evaluation. Self to oneself can be in described in general terms (e.g. self-discovery, self-image, etc.), and constituted due to experience (e.g. self-awareness, self-consciousness, etc.), and even due to false self-representation such as deception and delusion. Self-disclosure and self-expression are among the ways one's communicating one's self to others. One's self-evaluation is a process (e.g. self-assessment, self-monitoring, etc.) or a general result (e.g. self-esteem) and a specific response to a process (e.g. self-pity). The effecting self has two sub dimensions as facilitating activities for desirable consequences (e.g. self-actualization, self-verification, etc.) and limiting activities for aversive outcomes (e.g. self-alienation, self-discipline). The changing self describes the effect of incidents throughout life on self-representation (e.g. self-construction, self-development, etc.) [9]. Roger's explained the effort for an individual to build a self as one's willingness to have a purposeful and good life. [10].

B. Self-Actualization

Humanistic psychology focuses on subjective experience. Self-actualization is one of the aspects of subjective experience that Maslow examined in their studies. Maslow described self-actualization as striving for one's reaching and fulfilling own potential. The psychological profile of self-actualized people consists of two dimensions as openness to experience (being aware of one's emotions, having insight, empathy, and healthy interpersonal relations) and reference to self (being responsible for oneself, having a well-developed ethical understanding, and self-esteem, expressing oneself cognitively and emotionally and not being too much sensitive to other people's ideas, influences, and criticisms). Giving meaning to life is an attribute that is common in two dimensions [11].

The teachings of Maslow and career counseling experiences can be blended and career counselor can have facilitator role. Accordingly, Maslow's theorized the hierarchy of needs; physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization and emphasized eight ways for self-actualization. These ways are feeling trust with an open attitude, choosing development instead of fear and doubt, listening one's sound inner voices, being honest to oneself, taking necessary steps for being satisfied, not only focusing on ultimate goals but also discovering the process of self-actualization, living peak experiences, exploring one's secret psyche, and having courage to see and give up defense mechanisms [12]. Thus, by these ways people can enhance their well-being, personal and career development.

C. Self-Efficacy

Environment has critical effect on people's lives however their behavior can't only be explained by the effect of environmental events. Personality, intelligence, and other attributes have key importance on explaining human behavior and self-efficacy is one of these key concepts [13]. Self-efficacy is a belief in one's mental, motivational, emotional, and behavioral resources to put required effort to execute a certain task and demand [14]. Self-efficacy can be developed through experiences including practicing and gaining success, learning through modeling, hearing positive feedback, and arousing positive physiological and psychological states. As an example, in educational contexts, teachers with a high instructional self efficacy have positive effect on students' academic achievements. Self efficacy beliefs also have positive effect on career development and openness to career options, and health enhancing behavior. Bandura (2009) also mentioned that people with a collective self efficacy are less likely to demoralize and more likely to cope with changes [14].

Furthermore, Bandura's self-efficacy based on his social cognitive theory is also one of the components of psychological capital. There are specific comfort areas that person has mastered and is confident about. However, deriving from person's dreams and inspirations, people can develop their self-efficacy in other aspects of life. Self-efficacious people set challenging goals, motivate

themselves, put great effort to reach their aims and they persist when faced with difficulties. Thus even there is little resource in the environment they continue to perform well [15]. Based on these facts, developing self efficacy will foster well-being, personal and career development like self-actualization.

D. Emotional Intelligence

Human beings are not absolutely rational creatures, and emotions have an important role in decision and that can be explained neurologically [16]. Human brain processes information from five senses in two spheres, which are feeling brain and thinking brain. Feeling brain is quick, strong, and impulsive. It is effective dealing with recognizing, targeting, or avoiding to simpler things, situations, events, and/or people. Whereas thinking brain locates in outer part of the brain, is effective in dealing with understanding, problem solving, planning, and decision making processes, slow and considerate. After the reaction of the feeling brain, the thinking brain starts to function for the improvement of the conditions. However, on the condition that the perceived danger or pleasure increases, feeling brain might dominate and make destructive and irrational choices. Taking precautions for risks and external factors, not depending on only own knowledge and beliefs, thinking about other alternatives, and asking questions are important determinants for the history not to repeat itself [17]. Therefore, as related with the definition of emotional intelligence, in making decisions accepting the role of emotions, recognizing and reconciling with one's and others' emotions, empathizing, and achieving harmony of emotion and mind makes difference for living a developing, healthy, and fulfilling life.

E. Self-Actualization, Self-Efficacy, and Emotional Intelligence

In the literature review, regarding the variables of the research there are researches that was established in Turkey and abroad. There are studies in education field related with the self-efficacy [18-19], self-actualization [20], and emotional intelligence [21-22]. In addition, there are studies revealing the positive effect of emotional intelligence on self-efficacy [23] and self-actualization [24-25]. Related with the previous findings the hypotheses of the study are stated as; there are positive relations between emotional intelligence and self-actualization (H1), emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (H2), there is the positive effect of emotional intelligence on self-actualization (H3), on self-efficacy (H4). Another research question is about the positive relationship between self actualization and self-efficacy (H5) and the effect of self-actualization on self-efficacy (H6); in other words understanding and testing the two self related aspects for that was not found any previous research. Since the need fulfillment motivation aspect of self actualization and its sub-dimensions might enhance self efficacy there can be expected a relationship between two self-related constructs.

III. METHOD

The surveys were distributed to a total of 500 undergraduate students in Istanbul University Business Administration Faculty. 346 questionnaires were returned and after eliminating the uncompleted and inaccurate ones 278 questionnaires used for analysis.

Regarding self-efficacy, the scale that was developed by Sherer et al. [20] and adapted by Turetgen & Cesur [26] was used. Turetgen & Cesur found out that the scale was valid and reliable. Adapted scale consisted of 19 items and three factors; initiation and persistence, efficacy in the face of adversity, and social efficacy. The scale was found valid and reliable in our sample and factor structure was confirmed. (Cronbach's Alpha: 0,775). For initiation and persistence dimension the sample item is; "If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it" for efficacy in the face of adversity dimension "I avoid facing difficulties" and for social self-efficacy dimension "I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities for making friends." In this study, the items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (completely true) to 1 (completely wrong).

Self-actualization was measured by the Brief Index of Self-Actualization [19] developed from Sumerlin's Personal Attitude Survey (1995) that describes the features of self-actualized person in Maslow teachings. The 40-item brief index consists of 7 factors; core self-actualization, Jonah complex, curiosity, comfort with solitude, openness to experience, democratic character, and life meaning and purpose. Higher scores represent having more corresponding features for self-actualization. Core self-actualization consists of features such as "I'm happy." Jonah complex consists of reversed features such as "I regret that I am not doing all that I could toward my dreams." Curiosity sample item is "I look at a child and wonder what I could learn." Comfort with solitude sample item is "I have a special place that is just for me." Openness to experience, as "I want no part of the past." Democratic character includes features such as "I give of myself to others." Life meaning and purpose includes features such as "I don't put off work that would allow me to grow." [19]. In this study, the items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (completely true) to 1 (completely wrong). Scale was translated by researchers of the study, was found valid and reliable, and 7 factor model was confirmed. The scale was found valid and reliable in this study and factor structure was confirmed. (Cronbach's Alpha: 0,858).

Emotional intelligence was measured by Wong and Law [27] emotional intelligence self report scale that consists of 16 items and 4 dimensions; understanding one's own emotions, emotions of others, regulating and using them effectively. Sample item for self emotional appraisal is "I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time." other emotional appraisal is "I am a good observer of others' emotions" for use of emotions is "I set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them" for regulation of emotions is "I am able to

control my temper and handle difficulties rationally." In this study, the items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (completely true) to 1 (completely wrong). Scale that was applied to Turkish sample was found valid and reliable and 4 factor model was confirmed [28-29] and this study's analysis showed consistent results. (Cronbach's Alpha: 0,846).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE I. CORRELATION RESULTS FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

	Own Emotions	Other Emotions	Use of Emotions	Reg. of Emotions
Core Self Actualization	.35**	.27**	.55**	.11
Jonah Complex	.30**	.13*	.41**	.16**
Curiosity	.01	.15*	.14*	-.06
Comfort	.01	.06	.23**	-.04
Openness	.28**	.28**	.17**	.23**
Democratic	-.10	.29**	.01	.17**
Purpose	.09	-.03	.40**	-.07

According to the correlation results most powerful relations is between core self actualization and use of emotions ($r=.55$, $p<.01$). It is understandable that utilizing emotions is significantly and positively related with planning thoughts for future effectively. In addition, one of the other powerful relations is between Jonah Complex and use of emotions ($r=.41$, $p<.01$). It is coherent that lack of fear from development process and using emotions effectively for performance and development process are positively related with each other. Furthermore, the significant positive relation between purpose and use of emotions ($r=.40$, $p<.01$) shows that willing to reach for one's potential is positively related with his/her making use of emotions toward achieving this potential.

TABLE II. CORRELATION RESULTS FOR SELF EFFICACY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

	Own Emotions	Other Emotions	Use of Emotions	Reg. of Emotions
Initiation/Persistence	.14*	.08	.43**	.21**
Efficacy in the face of Adversity	.32**	.17**	.62**	.31**
Social Efficacy	.08	.14*	.43**	.29**

Most powerful relation is between efficacy in the face of adversity and use of emotions ($r=.62$, $p<.01$). In addition, other dimensions of self efficacy also have moderate positive relations with use of emotions ($r=.43$, $p<.01$). It can be said that high self efficacious people are more likely to use their emotions constructively.

TABLE III. CORRELATION RESULTS FOR SELF ACTUALIZATION AND SELF EFFICACY

	Initiation/ Persistence	Efficacy in the face of Adversity	Social Efficacy
Core Self Actualization	.54**	.50**	.40**
Jonah Complex	.50**	.57**	.38**
Curiosity	.31**	.16**	.22**
Comfort	.09	.05	-.04
Openness	.20**	.31**	.19**
Democratic	.10	.07	.05
Purpose	.30**	.32**	.19**

Core self actualization has positive moderate correlations with all dimensions of self efficacy; initiation and persistence ($r=.50$, $p<.01$), efficacy in the face of adversity ($r=.57$, $p<.01$) and social efficacy ($r=.40$, $p<.01$). This indicates that people with high self efficacy feel courage and are obliged to actualize one's purposes in life. In addition, Jonah complex has positive moderate relations with initiation and persistence ($r=.54$, $p<.01$), efficacy in the face of adversity ($r=.57$, $p<.01$), and social efficacy ($r=.38$, $p<.01$). Feeling power and obligation to achieve potential is positively related with task and social efficacy.

TABLE IV. REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON SELF-EFFICACY

Model Summary			ANOVA		
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	
.65	.42	.41	48.90	.00	
Correlations					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.48	.22		6.82	.00
Own Emotions	-.07	.05	-.08	-1.55	.12
Other Emotions	.04	.04	.05	.99	.33
Use of Emotions	.45	.04	.58	11.37	.00
Regulation of Emotions	.18	.03	.25	5.36	.00

The model summary table shows that emotional intelligence explains %42 of change in self-efficacy significantly ($p<.00$). From the coefficients table, it is clear that only use of emotions ($\beta=.58$, $p<.00$) and regulation of emotions ($\beta=.25$, $p<.00$) have positive and significant effects on self-efficacy. From this finding, it can be said that people's managing their emotions positively affects one's self-efficacy belief in accomplishing tasks and feel comfortable in social gatherings.

TABLE V. REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Model Summary			ANOVA		
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	
.55	.31	.30	30.29	.00	
Correlations					
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.47	.14		18.30	.00
Own Emotions	.00	.03	.00	.01	.99
Other Emotions	.12	.03	.24	4.65	.00
Use of Emotions	.20	.03	.45	8.06	.00
Regulation of Emotions	.02	.02	.05	1.04	.30

The model summary shows that emotional intelligence explains %31 of change in self-actualization significantly ($p<.00$). From the coefficients table, it is clear that only other emotional appraisal ($\beta=.24$, $p<.00$) and use of emotions ($\beta=.45$, $p<.00$) have positive effects on self-actualization. It can be inferred that understanding the emotions of others and using emotions effectively have effect on developing relations and own potential.

TABLE VI. REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR THE EFFECT OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION ON SELF-EFFICACY

Model Summary			ANOVA		
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	
.69	.47	.46	34.32	.00	
Correlations					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.21	.30		.69	.49
Core Self Actualization	.32	.07	.28	4.72	.00
Jonah Complex	.36	.05	.40	7.10	.00
Curiosity	.14	.06	.12	2.24	.03
Comfort	-.10	.04	-.12	-2.53	.01
Openness	.04	.04	.05	.97	.34
Democratic	.04	.04	.04	.91	.37
Purpose	.10	.06	.10	1.82	.07

Table VI shows that self-actualization explains %47 of change in self-efficacy significantly ($p<.00$). From the coefficients table, it can be assumed that core self actualization ($\beta=.28$, $p<.00$), Jonah complex ($\beta=.40$, $p<.00$), and curiosity ($\beta=.12$, $p<.05$) have positive, and comfort ($\beta=-.12$, $p<.05$) have negative effect on self-efficacy. Therefore, preparing for future and actualizing own potential (core self actualization), freeing oneself from fears that barrier developing oneself (Jonah complex), feeling enthusiasm for learning new things (curiosity) have positive effect on one's own belief for one's resources to behave effectively in life. Whereas comfort with loneliness, preferring own thoughts have negative effect on general self efficacy and social self efficacy which represent deliberate attempts to take on tasks to complete and make new friends and be in new social environments.

To conclude, all hypotheses were supported and plausible explanations were provided for these findings in the results part. These attributes as it was mentioned before in the literature were related to well being, personal and career growth and that's why they are important for further investigation. These students will enter global workforce after graduation, they will meet and work with people who have different attributes from various backgrounds. The attributes that were covered in this study e.g. self efficacy will determine their success within an environment with full of diversity and ambiguity [30]. In addition, emotional intelligence [31], peak experiences [32], and self efficacy development [33] contribute to and will be crucial in their leadership potential development process.

In future research, other self-related important aspects such as self-verification, self-monitoring can be studied. The research can be done in in other parts of Turkey and in other cultures. The self aspects can also be investigated in work life to understand their relations with work related outcomes also the concepts can be associated with performance scores like lecture grades.

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