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The Relationships between Alexithymia and Identity Functions: An Investigation through High School Students

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether alexithymia significantly predict the identity functions. Another aim of this article is that the studies on alexithymia Turkey are mostly in the field of psychiatry and the studies on non-clinical individuals are inadequate. 696 students (58% female, 42% male) attending various Anatolian High Schools in Konya, Kırşehir and Mardin provinces in the 2019-2020 academic year constitute the scope of this research and their ages are between 14-18 years old mean 15.38 ± 1.104 . Toronto Alexithymia Scale and Identity Functions Scale were used as a data collection tool. In the study, correlation analysis was carried out to address the relationships among variables. In addition, multiple regression analysis was applied to determine the level of Alexithymia dimensions. Research results have shown that there is a negative significant relationship between identity functions and difficulty in recognizing emotions and difficulty in expressing emotions. The results indicated that while high school students difficulty of recognizing emotions and the difficulty of expressing emotions increases, the level of function provided by the emotion of identity decreases.

Keywords: Alexithymia, Identity, Identity functions.

Aleksitimi ve Kimlik İşlevleri Arasındaki İlişkiler: Lise Öğrencileri Üzerinden Bir İnceleme

Özet

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı 14-18 yaşları arasında olan normal bireylerin aleksitimik özellikleri ile kimlik işlevleri arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Türkiye’de aleksitimi konusuna dair yapılan çalışmaların daha çok psikiyatri alanında gerçekleşmiş olması, klinik olarak tanımlanmamış bireyler üzerinde yapılan çalışmaların yetersiz olması bu makalenin yazılmasında bir diğer amacı oluşturmaktadır. 2019-2020 eğitim-öğretim yılında Konya, Kırşehir ve Mardin illerinde bulunan çeşitli Anadolu Liselerinde okuyan 696 (%58 kadın, %42 erkek) öğrenci bu araştırmanın kapsamını oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması 15.38 ± 1.104 ’tür. Veri toplama aracı olarak Toronto Aleksitimi Ölçeği ve Kimlik İşlevleri Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada, değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri ele almak için korelasyon analizi yapılmıştır. Ayrıca aleksitimi boyutlarının kimlik işlevlerinin hangi düzeyde yordadığını belirlemek amacıyla çoklu regresyon analizi uygulanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları; aleksitimi alt boyutlarından duyguları tanıma zorluğu ve duyguları ifade etme zorluğu ile kimlik işlevleri arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu sonucunu göstermiştir. Sonuçlar lise öğrencilerinin duyguları tanıma ve duyguları ifade etme zorluğu arttıkça kimlik duygusunun sağladığı işlev düzeyinin azaldığını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aleksitimi, Kimlik, Kimlik işlevleri

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INTRODUCTION

Emotions, which are an integral part of human life and provide meaningful experiences, are one of the important psychological components (Sarp and Tosun, 2011). As much as our emotions, being able to recognize and explain these emotions is very important in our lives. However, some reasons cause problems for many people to interpret and express their feelings. The concept of alexithymia appears as a term used for exactly such situations. Alexithymia, used to explain such problems, is a term of Greek origin and is found in Turkish as "absence of words for emotions" (Dereboy, 1990; Şahin, 1991). Şahin (1991), on the other hand, uses the concept of "emotional deadness", which means "mute" and "deaf" against emotions for alexithymia. Dökmen (2009) suggests the term of "slavery of thought" as alexithymia counterpart (Dökmen, 2009). As a result, the concept of alexithymia is a multidimensional structure, characterized by difficulties in identifying and explaining emotions and distinguishing the physical sense of emotional arousal (Taylor, Bagby and Parker, 1999; Casagrande et al., 2019).

Individuals who exhibit alexithymic characteristics do not feel anything against situations and events or cannot fully explain what they feel. In some cases, the problem is that individuals cannot express their feelings in different ways. Briefly, alexithymia is a concept that has emerged in the clinical field and is defined as the difficulty of recognizing emotions, realising emotions, distinguishing and expressing each other (Dökmen, 2009).

Sifneos brought the concept of alexithymia to the world of psychology (Lesser, 1981). The concept of alexithymia, accepted by the scientific world, is defined as difficulties in understanding the physiological symptoms of feelings, lack of emotional imagination and difficulty, difficulty in perceiving the feelings of the other party, and difficulty in perceiving the symbolic aspect of emotions (Taylor, 2000).

Individuals with alexithymic features can not use emotions, controlled by neural, hormonal and many other system, as a signal. The emotions of these individuals are not fully differentiated. For this reason, emotional reactions of alexithymic individuals are generally physiological and less word expressions. Individuals with alexithymic features cannot explain a particular sensation or feeling related to their physiological disorders. For example, they cannot express a disturbing sensation as hunger or insomnia (Krystal, 1988).

Alexithymia first emerged in the field of mental health as a concept specific to psychosomatic diseases, and later studies revealed that alexithymia can be aloseen in healthy individuals (Şahin, 1991). Especially in today's world with the rapid development of technology, the increase in the use of computers and the Internet has changed human relations, and led individuals to loneliness. Accordingly, alexithymic properties were observed to increase (Koçak, 2002).

The concept of alexithymia is accepted as a personality structure. The cold, dull-faced, and emotionless people who come across us in daily life are usually alexithymic.

These people handle events only at the level of thought and logic without giving emotional response to situations and events (Atasayar, 2011).

In the researches, there are different views that argue that alexithymia is a condition, a disease, a psychosomatic symptom, a cognitive disorder, a lack of skills, a kind of inadequacy and a neurological disorder caused by a personal orientation and lack of social support (Koçak, 2002; Şaşıoğlu, Gülol and Tosun, 2013). Heiberg (1977) states that alexithymia is related to heredity; they argue that alexithymia cannot be defined as present or absent and that the degree and measure can be evaluated as an attempt to determine. In the face of such different interpretations and explanations, it is useful to explain theories of different views that try to explain alexithymia.

According to the psychoanalytic point of view, alexithymia, emotional deprivation, can occur when we are exposed to events that affect our emotions negatively in childhood (Krystal, 1979). It also develops defense mechanisms such as denial, which will have a negative impact on individual development when individuals are exposed to adverse events and traumatic events in childhood. In these mechanisms, the individual may deny his / her emotions and cause alexithymia to detach from his / her feelings (Helmes, Mcneil, Holden and Jackson, 2008).

According to the neurophysiological approach examining brain functions and their relationship to the body, alexithymia may occur as a result of the absence of a coordinated bond in the left and right hemispheres (Larsen, Brand, Bermand and Hijman, 2003). As we can understand from here, alexithymia can occur when there is no compatible relationship between the limbic system in which the amygdala is responsible for emotions and the neocortex responsible for mental processes. Because the coordination that cannot be achieved in these two systems disrupts the harmony of feelings and mental processes and may cause feelings to be connected with experiences that are not relevant in real terms (Sifneos, 1996).

According to the cognitive approach, it is clear how we perceive and evaluate events on the basis of behavior and feelings that cause problems. According to the cognitive approach, individuals who exhibit alexithymia characteristics express their emotions nonverbally, imaginatively and symbolically. For this reason, these individuals try to express and live their feelings by severing their ties with their feelings without being aware of their feelings most of the time. Therefore, most of the time these individuals tend to consider emotional disorders as physical in other words, somatic complaints (Martin and Phil, 1986).

Alexithymia is expressed as a personality trait that exhibits its features together as a lack of empathy, inability to express emotions, limitation in the imagination and a tendency to concrete, introspection, (Nemiah 2000, Dudu and İsaac 2003). The concept of alexithymia and the personality traits that make up this concept suggest the connection of individuals with identity functions.

After Erikson (1950) conceptualized the link between identity acquisition and adolescence, identity is one of the most emphasized issues in the field of development

(Erikson, 1950; Demir, 2011). How the individual defines himself, and all the answers he gives to the question, " who am I? " can be defined as identity. Identity also includes a conceptual framework showing the individual how to behave in daily life and the individual acts within this framework (Morsümbül and Uçar, 2017). According to identity functions are to reveal what psychological gains a successfully structured sense of identity has for the individual (Serafini and Adams, 2002). Identity functions emphasize the consequences of identity acquisition rather than identity development. The results of said identity acquisition provide a sense of harmony, future orientation, structure, personal control, goal and is defined as the functions of identity.

The identity functions model is based on the ideal identity characteristics that Erikson created in psychosocial theory and integrates various and integrative features of identity and formed them within the framework of five basic functions (Adams and Marsall, 1996).

The first of these functions is the function of providing structure that includes subjects related to the self. The individual's acceptance of himself, high self-esteem, positive perceptions of his body and self play a part within forming this structure (Serafini and Adams, 2002). The positive formation of this structure is associated with high self-esteem and self-perception, low adolescent self-centeredness and contributes to the formation of a healthy identity by avoiding high concerns about these issues (Meuss, Iedema, Helsen and Vollebergh, 1999).

The second identity function is the adaptation function, which includes coordination and co-operation in relation to the values, aims, beliefs and commitment chosen by individuals (Adams, Berzonsky and Keating, 2006). In the adaptation function, the social environment and work, which often involves the immediate environment, also includes the achievement of academic adjustment (Serafini and Adams, 2002). Individuals with high adaptive functions are less likely to apply defense mechanisms than other individuals and their psychological phenomena are considered to be higher (Cramer, 1995).

The third of the identity functions is the function of providing a future that includes life possibilities and options, academic success potentials, future plans, future careers and goals. In addition, individuals who make this function in their lives in a healthy way have positive expectations for the future and are highly likely to succeed in their future lives. Future orientation creates integrity and continuity for individuals between their present time and future time (Crocetti, Sica, Schwartz, Serafini and Meeus, 2010).

The fourth of the identity functions is the function of establishing goals within the framework of values and loyalties adopted by individuals. Individuals with high goal-oriented identity functions are more willing and successful in focusing their behaviors, thoughts and feelings consciously on their goals compared to individuals with low goals. Objective orientation provides integrity between values and commitment and goals in individuals (Crocetti et al., 2010).

The fifth of the identity functions is the personal control function. This function provides individuals with free will and personal control while organizing their behavior towards their future goals, experiencing their personal experiences, striving to achieve their goals, and creating their own perceptions. In addition, individuals who form a healthy identity of the control function tend to solve their problems by feeling sufficient without losing their personal balance when they encounter any problems (Serafini and Maitland, 2013).

In literature surveys, it was found that studies dealing with the issue of alexithymia in Turkey increased in recent years. However, these studies are mostly in the field of psychiatry and the number of studies with normal individuals is quite low. Especially in the Turkish and foreign literature, there are no studies examining the relationship between alexithymia and identity functions. The aim of this study is to investigate whether alexithymia significantly predict the identity functions. For this purpose, the following hypotheses were tested.

1-The difficulty in recognizing emotions has a negative effect on identity functions.

2- The difficulty in expressing emotions has a negative effect on identity functions.

METHOD

This study is a descriptive study and shows the current situation. A cross-sectional research design was used in the data collected from secondary school students of different ages.

Research Group

Participants in this study consist of high school students studying in different provinces in 2019-2020 academic year. High school students who participated in the study consisted of 696 students, 404 (58%) female and 292 (42%) male. 206 of the total students participated in the study have education in Anatolian High School (132 female, 74 male) in Kırşehir, 233 of them in Anatolian High School (123 female, 110 male) in Konya, and 257 of them in Anatolian High School (149 female, 108 male) in Mardin. The age range of the participants is 14-18 mean 15.38 ± 1.104 .

Measures

In the study, the personal information form was used to learn the personal information of the participants. The Identity Functions Scale (IFS) to evaluate the score obtained from various functions of identity, and the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS 20) to measure the level of alexithymia were used.

Personal Information Form: A personal information form developed by the researchers was used to collect information about the participants' age, gender, class, socio-economic level, and their relationship with parents.

Identity Functions Scale (IFS): In order to determine identity functions, the Identity Functions Scale, developed by Serafini et al. (2006) and adapted to Turkish by Demir

(2011), was used. Identity Functions Scale, which was developed to investigate the psychological results of a successful identity, consists of a total of 15 items and there are 5 items in each item. Items are scored between 1-5. This self- assessment type scale consists of structure, harmony, goal, future orientation and individual control sub-dimensions. In the Turkish adaptation studies of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient of the adaptation dimension was 0.77, the internal consistency coefficient of the building dimension was 0.80, the internal consistency coefficient of the objective dimension was 0.80, the internal consistency coefficient of the individual control dimension was 0.65, and the internal consistency coefficient of the future dimension was 0.82. For this research, internal consistency of subscales; The internal consistency coefficient of the harmony dimension was 0.68, the internal consistency coefficient of the structure dimension was 0.66, the internal consistency coefficient of the goal dimension was 0.76, the internal consistency coefficient of the personal control dimension was 0.69, and the internal consistency coefficient of the future orientation dimension was 0.69.

Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS 20): It is a self-assessment scale developed by Taylor et al. (1985) to measure alexithymic structure. The scale consists of 26 items totally and it is a likert type scale which is graded between 1-5. Later, The Toronto Alexithymia Scale, often used today and consisting of 20 items and 3 sub-dimensions, was developed by Bagby et al. with removal of the dimension of " limitation in imagination ". The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Dereboy (1990). In this study, internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale were calculated as follows; the difficulty in recognizing emotions was 0.77, the difficulty in expressing emotions was 0.64, and the extrinsic thought was 0.30. This dimension was not used in the study because the internal consistency coefficient of the extrinsic thought dimension, which is the sub-dimension of the scale, was low.

Procedure

In the study, necessary permissions were obtained from the necessary institutions for the application of the measurement tools. In the study, which was based on volunteering, brief information was given to the participants about why the study was conducted, the purpose and the scales before the scales were applied. It took for about 30-35 minutes for the scales to be completed by the participants.

Data Analysis

The normality test was applied to determine whether the data were suitable for the analyzes. For this purpose, skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed. As a result of these values, it was observed that the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were between +1 and -1. The kurtosis coefficient is between -0.02 and 0.92 and the skewness coefficient is between -0.06 and 0.66. In addition, VIF (between 1.00 and 1.58) and Tolerance (between 0.63 and 0.99) values were analyzed in order to determine the multicollinearity problem between variables. As a result of the analysis, it was found that there is no multi-connection problem. In this study, correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between variables. In addition, multiple

regression analysis was applied to determine whether alexithymia significantly predict the identity functions.

RESULTS

Relations Between the Dimensions of Alexithymia and Identity Functions

When the results in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the difficulty of recognizing emotions from the alexithymia sub-dimensions has a negative significant relationship with all identity functions ($r = -0.44$ for structure dimension, $r = -0.25$ for harmony dimension, $r = -0.24$ for goal dimension, and for future orientation dimension, $r = -0.29$ and for the personal control dimension $r = -0.26$). The difficulty in expressing emotions, which is the other sub-dimension of alexithymia, is also found to be negatively related to all identity functions ($r = -0.37$ for structure dimension, $r = -0.26$ for harmony dimension, $r = -0.26$ for goal dimension, $r = -0.30$ for future orientation dimension and $r = -0.20$ for personal control dimension).

Table 1. Relations of Alexithymia Dimensions with Identity Functions

	Structure	Harmony	Goal	Future Orientation	Personal Control
Difficulty to Recognize Feelings	-0.44 **	-0.25 **	-0.24 **	-0.29 **	-0.26 **
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.37 **	-0.26 **	-0.26 **	-0.30 **	-0.20 **

** $p < 0.01$

Regression analysis results

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive role of alexithymia sub-dimensions on identity functions. Table 2 shows that the alexithymia sub-dimensions significantly explain the structure dimension ($R = 0.46$, $R^2 = 0.21$, $F = 93.69$, $p < 0.001$). According to the results of the t-test for independent variables, the difficulty in recognizing emotions in the structure dimension ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < 0.01$) was the most powerful predictor, whereas the difficulty in expressing feelings ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.01$) was another predictor.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results (Structure)

Model	Non-standardized		Standardized			
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	R	R ²
Constant	4.87	0.10		48.17		
Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	-0.37	0.05	-0.34	-8.12**	0.46	0.21
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.18	0.05	-0.15	-3.84**		

**p<0.01

Table 3 shows that the alexithymia subscales significantly explain the adaptation dimension ($R = 0.28$, $R^2 = 0.08$, $F = 30.13$, $p < 0.001$) from identity functions. According to the results of the t-test for independent variables, the dimension of difficulty in expressing emotions ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.01$) was the most powerful predictor of adaptation, whereas the difficulty of recognizing emotions ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.01$) was another predictor.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results (Harmony)

Model	Non-standardized		Standardized			
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	R	R ²
Constant	4.49	0.10		43.10		
Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	-0.16	0.05	-0.15	-3.34**	0.28	0.08
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.17	0.05	-0.16	-3.55**		

**p<0.01

Table 4 shows that the alexithymia sub-dimensions significantly explain the objective dimension of identity functions ($R = 0.28$, $R^2 = 0.08$, $F = 29.95$, $p < 0.01$). According to the results of the t-test for independent variables, the difficulty in expressing emotions in the objective dimension ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.01$) was the most powerful predictor, whereas the difficulty in recognizing emotions ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$) was another significant predictor.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results (Goal)

Model	Non-standardized		Standardized			
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	R	R ²
Constant	4.64	0.11		42.40		
Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	-0.14	0.05	-0.13	-2.91**	0.28	0.08
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.20	0.05	-0.18	-3.94**		

**p<0.01

Table 5 shows that the alexithymia subscales significantly explain the orientation dimension ($R = 0.33$, $R^2 = 0.11$, $F = 41.87$, $p < 0.001$) from identity functions. According to t-test results for independent variables, the difficulty of expressing emotions in the future orientation dimension ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < 0.01$) was the most powerful predictor, whereas the difficulty in recognizing emotions ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.01$) was another predictor.

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis (Future Orientation)

Model	Non-standardized		Standardized			
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	R	R ²
Constant	4.42	0.11		40.05		
Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	-0.18	0.05	-0.16	-3.60**	0.33	0.11
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.22	0.05	-0.20	-4.50**		

**p<0.01

Table 6 shows that one of the sub-dimensions of alexithymia significantly explain the future orientation dimension ($R = 0.26$, $R^2 = 0.07$, $F = 25.85$, $p < 0.001$) from identity functions. According to the results of the t-test for independent variables, the difficulty in recognizing emotions ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$) was the most powerful predictor of the personal control dimension, whereas the difficulty in expressing emotions ($\beta = -0.08$, $p > 0.01$) was not significant.

Table 6. Regression Analysis Results (Personal Control)

Model	Non-standardized		Standardized			
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	R	R ²
Constant	4.51	0.10		43.68		
Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	-0.21	0.05	-0.21	-4.46**	0.26	0.07
Difficulty to Express Feelings	-0.08	0.05	-0.08	-1.80**		

**p<0.01

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the relationship between alexithymia levels and identity functions of secondary school students was investigated. When the findings of the study were examined, it was concluded that there was a negative significant relationship between identity functions and difficulty in recognizing emotions and difficulty expressing emotions in the sub-dimensions of alexithymia. Based on this result, it can be said that as the difficulty of recognizing emotions and the difficulty of expressing emotions increases, the level of function provided by the emotion of identity decreases.

Although it is not clear that the concept of alexithymia is a personality trait, it is seen that alexithymia significantly explains the functions of identity, which are structure, adaptation, future orientation, goal and individual control.

The structure dimension of identity functions enables the individual to accept himself / herself, to perceive himself / herself positively and to respect himself / herself (Serafini and Adams, 2002). Individuals with high levels of alexithymia may not be fully aware of the difference between their own identities and their identities among other individuals (Taylor et al., 1999). For this reason, alexithymia negatively affects individuals' self-perception and structure of identity functions. Individuals with high levels of alexithymia develop a negative perception towards themselves by showing depressive symptoms and may have low self-esteem (Honkalampi, Saarinen, Hintikka, Virtanen and Viinamäki, 1999). In the study of Oktay and Batıgün (2014), it was found that there was a relationship between the levels of alexithymia and self-perception of individuals and alexithymia scores decreased with increasing self-esteem (Oktay and Batıgün, 2014). According to this study, it is seen that the two sub-dimensions of alexithymia explain the structure dimension significantly. It is thought that the recognition and expression of emotions will enable the individual to accept himself / herself and that his / her self-esteem will increase.

The harmony dimension of identity functions expresses individuals' value, goal, belief coordination and a consistent sense of identity (Serafini and Adams, 2002). The anxiety levels of individuals with high alexithymia levels are also high, these individuals are experiencing social despair and therefore have difficulty in developing a harmonious identity (Martin and Pihl, 1986). It was also revealed that adolescents with high alexithymia level had various discrepancies in their interpersonal relationships by having problems in terms of being aware and expressing their emotions (Powell, Coll, Trotter, Thobro and Haas, 2011). In her study Taylor (2000) also states that alexithymia prevents the individual's identity to form in a compatible way (Taylor, 2000). According to this study, it was seen that the two sub-dimensions of alexithymia explained the harmony dimension significantly. Individuals who can recognize and express their emotions are thought to be successful in creating a consistent sense of identity.

The dimension of future orientation from identity functions provides the individual with an entrepreneurial motivation to achieve her goals (Serafini and Adams, 2002). It is stated that individuals with high levels of alexithymia have problems in setting targets within the framework of the values adopted and as a result of this, their life satisfaction is low (Shibata et al., 2014). According to this study, it is seen that the two sub-dimensions of alexithymia explain the future orientation dimension significantly. This dimension is thought to be related to the recognition and expression of the emotions that make up the individual's self, because it expresses self-confidence and looking at the future with hope.

The purpose of identity functions enables the individual to focus his / her emotions, thoughts and behaviors consciously on the target and offers the individual a sense of direction (Serafini and Adams, 2002). It is seen that the two sub-dimensions of alexithymia explain the goal dimension significantly. It is thought that recognizing and expressing the emotions of the individual will increase the motivation of success and target orientation.

The dimension of personal control from identity functions provides the individual with the ability to express herself and autonomy (Serafini and Adams, 2002). Self-regulation skills of alexithymic individuals with low emotion regulation skills are also low due to the diffusion of emotions (Taylor et al., 1999). In another study, individuals with high levels of alexithymia were found to be more vulnerable to risky behaviors such as depression and substance addiction (Speranza et al., 2014). In this context, the high level of alexithymia negatively affects the control skills of an individual's behavior. In this study, it was found that the difficulty of recognizing emotions in the sub-dimensions of alexithymia was significant in the self-control of the individual, whereas the difficulty in expressing emotions was not significant on the personal control dimension.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is important because it is the first study to reveal the relationship between alexithymia and personality functions. In the study, it was revealed that the dimensions of alexithymia explained the identity functions in a meaningful way. In short, the increase in the level of alexithymia, which is defined as inability to express emotions, makes it difficult to provide identity functions, which are structure, harmony, future orientation, goal and personal control. As a result of the analyzes conducted in the research, it was seen that being able to recognize themselves and express their emotions are effective for individuals in order to be able to accept oneself, to form a coherent personality, to have positive expectations for the future, to act in accordance with their goals and to maintain individual control.

This study has some limitations. First of all, the sample of this study is limited to secondary school students. The application of this study to students and adult individuals at other levels will be useful for generalizing the results. In addition, self-report type scales were used in the study. In particular, individuals with alexithymia have difficulties in reflecting themselves and expressing their emotions. Therefore, it would be useful to support the measurements (observation, interview etc.) with other evaluation techniques.

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