EVALUATING RELATIONSHIP AMONG RELIGIOSITY, SELF-ESTEEM, AND   IDENTIFICATION WITH TURKISH IDENTITY THROUGH STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is commonly used in social psychology field since the late 1970s for explaining the person's sense of who I am. It provides a theoretical approach to identification with Turkish identity as national identity. Conservatism and religiosity are main values/norms of Turkish culture (Cagaptay, 2006; Imamoglu, 2002; Hofstede, 2001), and they influence social behaviors of Turkish population. Also, according to social identity theory, identification with a positive social group, and internalizing its norms or values have a positive effect on the person's self-concepts (Tajfel, 1978). Therefore it can be said, this identification will increase the self-esteem level of group member. Moreover, the effects of demographic variables on individual's social behaviors cannot be ignored as political affiliation, ethnic identity, education, age, sex and income. In this study, authors have analyzed relationship among these variables in different way, and have tested predictive power of religiosity, and self-esteem on identification with Turkish identity. Study has been performed with Middle East Technical University students (N=341) and Religious Attitude Scale (Ok, 2011), Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Social Identity Scale (Cinnirella, 1998) are main materials. In order to figure out the effects of religiosity, and self-esteem on identification with Turkish identity, authors have created a structural equation model. Firstly, they have tested their measurement model. Confirmatory factor analysis has yielded good fit of the confirmatory model in the data [χ^2 (24, N = 341) = 30.23, p=.17, RMSEA = .03, GFI = .98, AGFI = .96, CFI =1, NNFI = .99]. In addition, the structural model has yielded good fit of the structural model in the data [χ^2 (17, N = 341) = 19.19, p=.32, RMSEA = .02, GFI = .99, AGFI = .97, CFI =1, NNFI = 1]. Religiosity, and self-esteem have significantly predicted identification with Turkish identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Identity

Social Identity Theory – SIT – (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is commonly used in social psychology field since the late 1970s for explaining the person's sense of 'who I am'. Through this theory, Tajfel (1972) theorizes how people conceptualize or define themselves in social contexts, and he describes social identity as ''the part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance to that membership'' (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63).

Psychological well-being of person is based on his in-group which defines self (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009); identified groups may provide stability, meaning, purpose, and direction. Meaning-making in life, and stability between self and society have a positive effect on person's well-being, sense of self-worth, and self-efficacy (Baumeister, 1991; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002).

Not only social identification, but also social categorization, social comparison, and group distinctiveness are main psychological processes of social identity. Through these processes in-groups, and out-groups are created (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). 'Us' versus 'them' distinctions help group members define themselves, and evaluate their self-worth. People evaluate their own personal self-efficacy, and value through out-groups. In order to have a positive social identity, group members try to improve the position of their in-groups with a self-centered and subjective perspective (Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979). Because of positive intergroup comparisons, in-group's perceived superiority over out-groups strengthens and improve self-esteem, and psychological well-being of member. This association indicates that social identity is more than a demographic label, and it influences psychological self-description of members.

At the next section, in the light of this theoretical information, national identity and its association with person's self-descriptions, and social behaviors will be presented. The meaning of being Turk will be evaluated through Turkish culture.

1.2 Form of Social Identity: National Identity

National identity is defined as ''a collective sentiment based upon the belief of belonging to the same nation, and of sharing most of attributes that make it distinct from other nations'' (Guibernau, 2007, p. 11). Definition of national identity includes same psychological processes with social identity as identification, social categorization, and social distinctiveness; so it is evaluated as a larger form of social identity (Cingöz-Ulu, 2008).

Cultural norms, values, and beliefs of nation (in smaller scope, of group) simplify categorization process, and are used for comparison of nations, and for increasing distinctiveness among them (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963); because nations gain their meaning through others. In other words, culture represent the identity of nation, and is defined as ''the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others'' (Hofstede, 2011, p. 3).

In order to understand national identity of Turkey, and to explain collective behaviors of Turks, sub-dimensions of Turkish culture should be evaluated; religiosity is one of the main components of Turkish culture (Hofstede, 2001).

1.3 One of the Main Components of Turkish National Identity: Religiosity

According to Pew Research Center, and Turkish government records, about 73.500 Muslim live in Turkey; it represents 98% of total population. Islamic beliefs are inseparable part of Turkish identity, and shape opinions, and behaviors of Turkish people (Cagaptay, 2006).

Strong association between identification with in-group and accepting values/beliefs/characteristics of group was found in the literature (Sherif, 1966); because it is necessary for feeling as a real member, and satisfying need of belongingness. When important place of religiosity in Turkish identity is considered, association between identification with Turkish identity and supportive religious attitude should be expected. Distinctive characteristics of nation as religiosity are glorified by high identified members for highlighting the differences among nations. Through these differences or distinctiveness, they answer the question of 'who I am' or 'who I am not'.

In Turkey, religiosity, and conservatism walk hand in hand (Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & İmamoğlu, 2002). Both of these constructs are associated with respect to tradition and conformity to society's expectations / norms (Roccas, 2005;

Schwartz, 1994). Moreover, religious individuals may have a pragmatic, and self-centered approach, and they may use religion for social acceptance of society (Allport & Ross, 1967). Therefore, religiosity as a main part of Turkish national identity may predict identification to national identity.

1.4 Self-esteem

According to Tajfel and his colleagues, people identify themselves with groups and evaluate their own group as more superior than others. Also, they maintain their self-esteem partly through their groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social Identity Theory claims that the group identity affects self-esteem. However, in present study, we try to demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and social identity.

1.5 Overview of the current study: Hypothesis

In present study, the main purpose was to figure out the relationship among religiosity, self-esteem, and identification with Turkish identity. Contrast to the literature, authors tested predictive power of religiosity, and self-esteem on identification with Turkish identity for indicating two-way association.

Hypothesis 1: Age, and education level would negatively; but income, and political affiliation (rightists) would positively affect main variables as identification with Turkish identity, self-esteem, and supportive religious attitude.

Hypothesis 2: Self-esteem, and religiosity would significantly and positively predict identification with Turkish identity.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

Three hundred forty one Middle East Technical University students participated this study. There were 217 females (63.6%), and 124 males (36.4%) in the sample. Their age changed from 18 to 34, with a mean age of 23.24 (SD=3.24). The average age of females was 22.18 (SD=2.46), and of males was 25.10 (SD=3.61). Among 341 participants, 296 (87%) of them identified themselves as a Turk, and there were 45 (13%) participants who came from other ethnic identities as Kurdish, Armenian or Jewish. However, the identification level of participants with Turkish identity was more important than their actual ethnic identities.

When education levels of participants were evaluated, there were 262 (77%) undergraduate students, 70 (21%) master students, and 9 (2%) doctorate students. Moreover, when their income was asked, 197 (58%) of participants came from middle socio-economic class, 31 (9%) were in lower class, and 113 (33%) were in higher class. In addition, political affiliation of sample was tested, and there were 162 (48%) leftists, and 79 (23%) rightists. Also, 100 (29%) participants defined themselves as neutral. Moreover, traditionalism, conservatism, and religiosity levels of participants were measured, and a normal distribution was found.

2.2 Instruments

Participants filled out Turkisness-Social Identity Scale (Cinnirella, 1998), Religious Attitude Scale (Ok, 2011), and Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) with informed consent form. At the last part of questionnaire, participants also responded demographic information form.

2.2.1 Turkishness-Social Identity Scale

In order to measure in-group identification, and collective identity, Social Identity Scale was preferred. Unidimensional scale (7-item; 1 reverse) was developed with the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and used for testing European identities by Cinnirella (1998). Turkish version of Social Identity Scale was used by Hüsnü (2006) for master thesis study, and explained 44.03% of variance with 3.63 eigenvalue (α=.85).

In the present study (N=341), findings were same with study of Hüsnü (2006). According to eigenvalue (>1), single factor was extracted with 5.35 eigenvalues, and intended 7-item loaded on this factor. Scale explained 76.44% of variance, and factor loadings were ranging from .57 to .82. When reliability of scale was tested, its item-total correlations were between .69 and .86 (α=.95). 7-point Likert type response set was used for this scale (1 stands for totally disagree, and 7 stands for totally agree). Higher scores indicated more identification or emotional, and cognitive bond with Turkish national identity.

2.2.2 Religious Attitude Scale

Religious Attitude Scale (in an Islamic tradition) was developed by Ok (2011). Scale includes 8 items, and 4 sub-scales; these sub-scales measure different dimensions of religious attitude as cognitive, emotional, behavioral, relational. Each sub-scale has 2 items, and items of cognitive sub-scale are reverse. Cronbach's Alpha scores were found satisfactory in different studies (.81; .91).

In this study (*N*=341), analysis was forced into four sub-factors like study of Ok (2011), and intended items were loaded their own sub-scales as original study. Behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and relational religiosity sub-scales explained 93.49% of variance, and factor loadings were between .82 and .93. When reliability of sub-scales were evaluated, Cronbach's Alpha scores of Religious Attitude Scale, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and relational religiosity sub-scales were .96, .94, .92, .92 and .93, respectively, which were satisfactory. Similarly, 7-point Likert type response set was used for this scale (1 stands for totally disagree, and 7 stands for totally agree). Higher scores showed stronger, and more supportive religious attitudes. In other words, when participants have higher scores, they behave or shape their daily life according to necessities of religion (behavioral), because of religious activities they feel more positive (emotional), they evaluate religion as useful or beneficial (cognitive), and there is a close relationship between person and God (relational).

2.2.3 Self-Esteem Scale

Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Rosenberg (1965). Unidimansional scale (10-item) contains 5 negatively, and 5 positively worded items. Alpha scores of scale were between .78, and .90.

In this present study (*N*=341), because of original study (Rosenberg, 1965), analysis was forced into single factor. This unidimansional scale explained 52.14% of variance with 5.21 eigenvalue. Its factor loadings were between .29 and .66. When its reliability was tested, item-total correlations were ranging from .45 to .75 (*α*=.88). 7-point Likert type response set was used again (1 stands for totally disagree, and 7 stands for totally agree). Higher scores indicated more positive self-evaluations as 'I am competent' or 'I am worthy'.

2.2.4 Demographic Information Form

In order to collect demographic information about participants, demographic information form was used. This form included some questions as sex, age, ethnic identity, education level, income, perceived socio-economic status, political affiliation. Also, perceived traditionalism, conservatism, and religiosity levels of respondents were asked with one question, and 7 point Likert type response set.

2.3 Procedure

After permission of METU UEAM (Human Participants Ethics Committee), questionnaire was conducted to 341 Middle East Technical University students in classroom situation, and because of their participation, they received bonus point for their final grades. They were informed about aim, and content of research via informed consent form, and they filled out questionnaire with necessary instructions. Participants rated each item of scales on a 7 point Likert type response set, where 1 stands for totally disagree, and 7 stands for totally agree.

Lastly, they responded demographic information form, and in order to provide anonymity, they did not note their name or student ID number. Then questionnaires were collected randomly by researchers, and questions of participants about study were answered. Each data collection session lasted about 10-15 minutes. Data of this research was collected in two weeks.

3. RESULTS

3. 1 Testing Main Variables (Identification with Turkish Identity, Self-Esteem, and Religiosity) with Demographic Variables

In order to test associations among variables of study, Pearson bivariate correlations were performed. Table 3.1 shows correlations among main variables (identification with Turkish identity, self-esteem, religiosity), and demographic variables (sex, age, education, income, political view).

As can be seen in Table 3.1, identification with Turkish identity was negatively associated with age (r=-.15, p<.01), and education (r=-.34, p<.01); but positively correlated with income (r=.19, p<.01), and political view (r=.39, p<.01). Religiosity had negative correlations with age (r=-.13, p<.05), and education (r=-.24, p<.01); but positive associations with income (r=.14, p<.05), and political view (r=.54, p<.01). It meant that younger, less educated, rightist people, and individuals who have higher income showed more identification with Turkish

identity, and had more supportive religious attitude. However, self-esteem was not significantly correlated with demographic variables.

When associations among main variables were tested, identification with Turkish identity was positively associated with self-esteem ($r=.14$, $p<.01$), and religiosity ($r=.65$, $p<.01$). Also positive correlation was found between self-esteem and religiosity ($r=.21$, $p<.01$). It meant that individuals who have higher self-esteem, and more supportive religious attitude show more identification with Turkish identity.

Table 3.1 *Pearson Correlations among Variables*

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Id w/TI	-------										
2	Sex	-.03	-------									
3	Age	-.15**	.43**	-------								
4	Edu	-.34**	.09	.49**	-------							
5	Income	.19**	-.06	-.16**	-.13*	-------						
6	Pl.view	.39**	.09	-.15**	-.19**	.12*	-------					
7	S-est	.14**	.04	.11	.01	.00	-.03	-------				
8	Relig	.65**	-.05	-.13*	-.24**	.14*	.54**	.21**	-------			
9	Rel_b	.62**	-.05	-.16**	-.25**	.10	.56**	.01	.92**	-------		
10	Rel_e	.56**	-.01	-.12*	-.23**	.13*	.59**	-.01	.91**	.86**	-------	
11	Rel_c	.18**	-.02	.05	.01	.03	-.04	.88**	25**	.03	.00	---
12	Rel_r	.60**	-.06	-.12*	-.22**	.14*	.43**	.05	.90**	.78**	.77**	.07

Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
Note: Id w/TI= identification with Turkish identity, Edu=education, Pl.view=political view, S-est=self-esteem, Relig=religiosity, Rel_b= behavioral religiosity, Rel_e= emotional religiosity, Rel_c= cognitive religiosity, Rel_r= relational religiosity.

According to t-test findings, gender differences could not be found among main variables of study. However, as can be seen in Table 3.2, one-way between subjects ANOVA results indicated that there was significant effect of political affiliation on identification with Turkish identity $F(2,338)= 31.46$, $p<.01$, and religiosity $F(2,338)= 70.93$, $p<.01$; but not on self-esteem. Post hoc Tukey test indicated that leftists ($M=4.63$, $SD=1.86$) showed less identification with Turkish identity than neutrals ($M=5.67$, $SD=1.48$), and rightists ($M=6.25$, $SD=1.03$). Also, rightists ($M=6.25$, $SD=1.03$) and neutrals ($M=5.67$, $SD=1.48$) differed significantly on this variable. In addition, leftists ($M=4.05$, $SD=1.35$) had less supportive religious attitude than neutrals ($M=5.24$, $SD=1.26$), and rightists ($M=5.90$, $SD=.73$). Moreover, rightists ($M=5.90$, $SD=.73$) and neutrals ($M=5.24$, $SD=1.26$) differed significantly on this religiosity level.

Table 3.2 *ANOVA Results of Identification with Turkish Identity, Self-Esteem, and Religiosity according to Political Affiliation*

Variables		Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Mean	Std. Deviation
Id. with TI	Between Groups	158.97	2	79.48	31.46**		
	Within Groups	853.84	338	2.53			
Self-Esteem	Between Groups	.84	2	.42	.43		
	Within Groups	331.95	338	.98			
Religiosity	Between Groups	206.25	2	103.13	70.93**		
	Within Groups	491.42	338	1.45			
Id. with TI	Leftists					4.63	1.86
	Neutrals					5.67	1.48
	Rightists					6.25	1.03
	Total	1012.81	340			5.31	1.73
Self-Esteem	Leftists					5.78	.91
	Neutrals					5.81	1.14
	Rightists					5.68	.96
	Total	332.79	340			5.76	.99
Religiosity	Leftists					4.05	1.35
	Neutrals					5.24	1.26
	Rightists					5.90	.73
	Total	697.67	340			4.83	1.43

**p<.01

3.2 Explaining the Effect of Religiosity and Self-Esteem on Identification with Turkish Identity through Structural Equation Model

In our analysis, we used LISREL 8.51(Jöreskog ve Sörbom, 2001). When we constructed our model, we used Covariance Matrix and Maximum Likelihood Estimation. Model fit to data was based on Chi-Square ($\chi2$), Chi-Square Goodness of Fit, Goodness of Fit and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). (Kline, 1998). In order to figure out the effects of self-esteem and religiosity on Turkishness, we created a structural equation model. Firstly, we tested our

measurement model. Confirmatory factor analysis yielded good fit of the confirmatory model in the data [$\chi 2$ (24, N = 341) = 30.23, p=.17, RMSEA = .03, GFI = .98, AGFI = .96, CFI =1, NNFI = .99]. In addition, the structural model yielded good fit of the structural model in the data [$\chi 2$ (17, N = 341) = 19.19, p=.32, RMSEA = .02, GFI = .99, AGFI = .97, CFI =1, NNFI = 1]. As hypothesized, Turkishness had association with Self-esteem and Religiosity. Self-esteem explained 14% of variance and Religiosity explained 71% of variance (Figure 1.1).
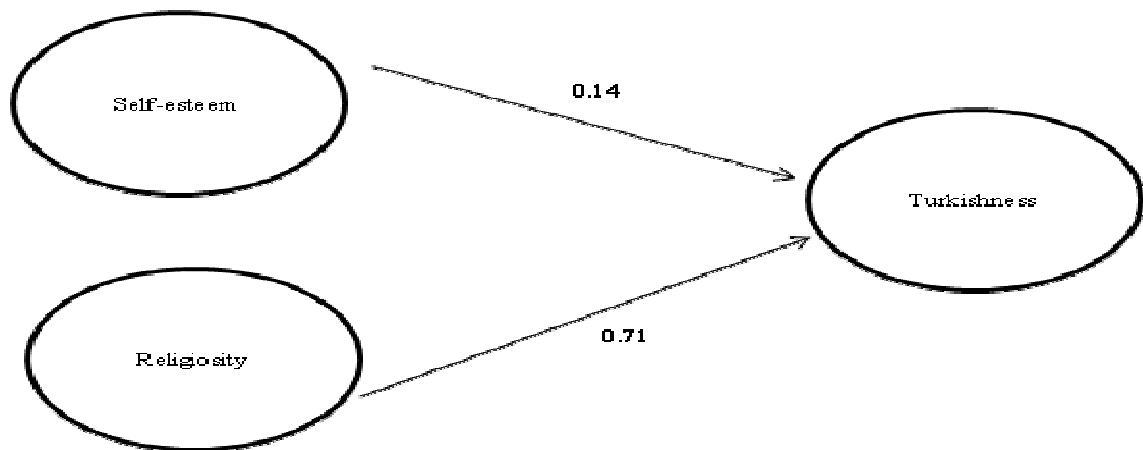

Figure 3.1. Structural Equation Model of Turkishness

4. DISCUSSION

In the literature, there are different studies which show the predictive power of identification with group identity (in larger form as national identity) on accepting its norms/values as religiosity (Cagaptay, 2006; Sherif, 1966; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Also, identification with a social group positively influences self-esteem of individual (Baumeister, 1991; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009). However, these associations should not be one-way, and two-way interaction should not be ignored. The main purpose of this study was to show the predictive power of self-esteem, and religiosity on identification with Turkish identity.

The first hypothesis was verified partially. Demographic variables were associated with identification with Turkish identity, and religiosity; but not with self-esteem. Reason can be insufficiency of Self-Esteem Scale; because Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) has been criticized and evaluated as insufficient for measuring self-esteem exactly; because defining/measuring self-esteem should be more complicated (Kernis, 2003). The second hypothesis was verified with a scientific approach, and proved two-way interaction among variables; religiosity, and self-esteem significantly predicted identification with Turkish identity.

Literature needs more study which show reciprocal association among socio-psychological variables. Through this way, holistic approach can strengthen its effectiveness on psychology field, and relationships among variables can be explained better.

However, this study has some limitations which should be taken in consideration. Research was conducted in students of Middle East Technical University; so findings can be generalized for only college students. In order to have more reliable, and valid generalizations, study should be performed again with different participant profiles.

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