THE INTERTWINED CASE OF AUTHENTICITY AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION FORMATION[*]

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ABSTRACT

Founders of social enterprises become the initiators of their institutions by prioritizing their missions, and dedicating their efforts and time. Their goals become real as a result of hard work of a group of people, who unite around their missions. Based on the literature of authenticity and authentic leadership (AL), and social entrepreneurial intention formation; it was realized that there is a high degree of intersection between some of the authenticity concepts and the previously proposed antecedents of social entrepreneurial intention. The purpose of this paper is to conceptually merge the relevant dimensions of AL with a previously suggested social entrepreneurial intention (SEI) model. The strength of SEs is often based on their values, resilience, and personal experiences of solving problems. Based on the Constructivist Self Development Theory, it is suggested in this paper that a reason why these people do their best to solve others' – often similar- problems, may be their increased levels of authenticity throughout their challenging life experiences.

OTANTİK LİDERLİK İLE SOSYAL GİRİŞİMCİLİĞE İLİŞKİN NİYET OLUŞUMUNUN KAVRAMSAL KESİŞİMİ

ÖZ

Sosyal girişimciler, misyonlarını ön planda tutarak, emeklerini ve zamanlarını ayırarak kurumlarını kurarlar. Hedefleri, misyonları etrafında birleşen bir grup insanın sıkı çalışması sonucunda gerçeğe dönüşür. Otantiklik ve otantik liderlik literatürüne dayanarak, bu kavramlar ile daha önce önerilen sosyal girişimcilik niyeti öncülleri arasında kavramsal olarak güçlü bir kesişme olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu makalenin amacı, otantik liderliğin ilgili boyutlarını, daha önce önerilmiş olan bir sosyal girişimcilik niyeti modeli ile birleştirmektir. Sosyal girişimcilerin gücü genellikle manevi değerlerine, problem çözme konusundaki kişisel deneyimlerine ve dayanıklılıklarına dayanır. Yapılandırmacı Kişisel Gelişim Teorisi'ne dayanarak bu makalede, sosyal girişimcilerin, başkalarının - genellikle kendilerininkine benzer olan- sorunlarını çözmek için ellerinden geleni yapmalarının bir nedeninin, zorlayıcı hayat tecrübeleri ile artan otantiklik seviyeleri olabileceği ifade edilmektedir.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The main goal of a genuine social entrepreneur (SE) is accomplishing a social mission. SEs also aim "to ultimately transform their social environment" (Mair et al., 2012:353). They do this because they are not satisfied with certain conditions in their society. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that most SEs are people from the "underserved" groups (Barendsen and Gardner, 2004). The norm of social responsibility is influential when the person is responsible for the faith of other(s) (Tevruz et al., 2012:172). When the person is the only one who is responsible, the cost of not helping -that is, the feeling of guilt- will be higher (Tevruz et al., 2012:181).

Social entrepreneurs are mostly people who thrive out of some hardships and decide to help other people in difficult situations. In that regard, major life challenges may be considered as opportunities for prospect social entrepreneurs. We can also say that, imperfections of systems may lead to growth of certain people, who may become valuable problem-solvers of our world. On the other hand, only if we can identify those SE candidates, who have genuine intentions and ways to solve important problems of our societies; we can support them. This is why it is important to conduct research investigating SEs' characteristics.

In our previous article we proposed a model that explains SEI formation based on an analysis of the personal details of a subset (consisting of 255 social entrepreneurs) of Ashoka fellows (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021). Specifically, we made a content analysis of "the person" heading of Ashoka's website that included the biographical information of those SEs. In that model, there were the following antecedents of SEI: major hardship, role model, radical change and encountering others' hardship. Major hardships (MHs) are major life challenges such as being the victim of discrimination; losing a beloved one, especially at an early age. Radical change (RC) includes moving from one basic condition to another, such as starting a boarding school in another city at an early age. Role model (RM) is a person who present a positive example-in terms of values, sensitivities, etc. A role model who helps others, enables the follower to detect the situation as one that requires help, and learn about how to provide help (Tevruz et al., 2012). Encountering others' hardship (EOH) means experiencing a situation where one realizes a major challenge of someone/ a group, and/or being in the support circle of a person having a hardship. As the previous three antecedents may act as antecedents to EOH, this is reflected in the way we position and show it (with dotted lines) in that model. Finally, we argued that "there is a potential influence between some of the pairs of antecedents and factors that lead to formation of SEI, namely attitude toward the behavior, perceived self-efficacy, and perceived social support" (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021:1070).

Harter (2002; cited in Ertenu Saracer et al., 2012:206) defined authenticity as "knowing oneself through personal experiences, thoughts and beliefs and behaving in accordance with the true self". Kernis and Goldman (2006:326) refer to a "fully functioning individual" while they conceptualize authenticity. The characteristics of such an individual are mentioned as: being open to experience, living fully in the moment, trusting their inner experiences to guide their behavior, freedom and being creative in her/ his approach to living (Kernis and Goldman, 2006:294). According to the developmental definition of AL (Northouse, 2016):

- Leadership can be nurtured and developed over a lifetime
- Can be triggered by major life events

- Leader behavior is grounded in positive psychological qualities and strong ethics.

Northouse (2016:205) mentions that "people attach insights to their life experiences (Shamir and Eilam, 2005)". Gardner et al. (2005) also emphasize the relevance of personal history and trigger events for AL formation. They point to potential inclusion of family, role models, early life challenges, educational and work experiences in personal history. They mention the trigger events as changes in a person's circumstances that lead to growth, and self-awareness. It is worth mentioning that there are significant conceptual commonalities between these notions and the previously proposed main antecedents of SEI (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021).

On the other hand, Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) provided a measure of the AL construct, which has four dimensions: self-awareness (SA), internalized moral perspective (IMP), balanced processing, and relational transparency. We think that two of these dimensions -SA and IMP- are appropriate to be merged with our previous SEI model. As we are elaborating on the personal antecedents of becoming an SE in this article, it is reasonable to leave the information- and relationship-related dimensions of AL (balanced processing and relational transparency, respectively) aside.

Self-awareness is explained by Walumbwa et al. (2008:95) as:"demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time. It also refers to showing an understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses and the multifaceted nature of the self, which includes gaining insight into the self through exposure to others, and being cognizant of one's impact on other people (Kernis, 2003)". Internalized moral perspective "refers to an internalized and integrated form of self-regulation (Ryan and Deci, 2003). This sort of self-regulation is guided by internal moral standards and values versus group, organizational, and societal pressures, and it results in expressed decision making and behavior that is consistent with these internalized values (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005)" (Walumbwa et al., 2008: 95-96).

The goal of this paper is to emphasize the potential relationship between the previously proposed antecedents of SEI, and SA and IMP dimensions of authentic leadership. This suggestion is made based on a reconsideration of the data of two co-authored, previous SE research; and through a conceptual revision of the previously suggested model. The contribution of this paper is merging the two -seemingly disconnected- constructs of AL and SEI, and enabling us to understand both of them deeper.

Constructivist self development theory (CSDT) provides support for the argument of this paper. CSDT "(McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995) is an integrative personality theory that describes the impact of a traumatic event (or traumatic context) on the development of self. ...CSDT explains "personality development as the interaction between core self-capacities (related to early relationships, secure attachments, and ego resources) and constructed beliefs and schemas (related to cumulative experiences and the attribution of meaning to those experiences) that shape perception and experience" (Saakvitne et al., 1998:282). The theory depicts "specific aspects of self that will be most affected by trauma. These same aspects are then altered and potentially strengthened as an individual heals from a traumatic event" (Saakvitne et al., 1998:282).

These aspects include frame of reference, self-capacities, central psychological needs, ego resources and perceptual and memory system. The frame of reference is defined as one's "usual way of understanding self and world, including spirituality" (Saakvitne et al., 1998:283). When it is influenced by a trauma, one may ask the following questions: "Who am I now? What do I believe about the world? How do my spiritual beliefs change as a result of this event?" (p.283). Self-capacities are defined as "the capacity to recognize, tolerate, and integrate affect and maintain a benevolent inner connection with self and others" (p.283). Central psychological needs include "cognitive schemas in five areas: safety, trust, control, esteem, and intimacy" (p.283). When they are influenced by a traumatic event, one may ask: "Is the world safe? Whom can I trust? Do I have any control? Whom do I respect now? Do I want to be connected?" (Saakvitne et al., 1998:284). We think that self-awareness and internalized moral perspective dimensions of AL may potentially be strengthened as a result of an influence of a trauma -named as MH and/or RC in our model- on one's frame of reference, self-capacities, and/or central psychological needs.

2. METHODOLOGY AND THE PROPOSED MODEL

It is clear how the explanations about some AL notions coincide with our previously proposed SEI model (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021). Specifically, parts of "trigger events" are similar to MH and/or RC in our model; and "personal history" directly includes "family influences and role models, early life challenges" (Gardner et al., 2005: 347). Another related concept, called positive psychological capacities or psychological capital – including characteristics of hope, optimism, resilience, and confidence- (Northouse, 2016; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis and Dickens, 2011) may support individuals in finding solutions for their MHs and/or RCs. These qualities may have a potential to directly influence attitude towards behavior. The processes of overcoming MHs and/or RCs may also lead to an increase in these positive capacities. Further, major hardship, and/or radical change experienced by an SE candidate (if it leads to individual growth and development), and/or a positive role model may lead to an increase in her/ his SA and IMP. This implies becoming more authentic as a result of experiencing the main antecedents of SEI.

In our previous SEI article, we suggested a list of alternative functions of the main antecedents (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021:1077), some of which - those that I regard as related with authenticity- are listed below. Selected functions of major hardship and -in parantheses- the potentially relevant dimensions of AL:

1. Responsibility for others (IMP)
2. Self-efficacy (SA)
3. Reorientation of goals and priorities (SA&IMP)
4. Resilience (SA)
5. Transformation (SA&IMP)

Selected functions of role models and -in parantheses- the potentially relevant dimensions of AL:

- Influence SE's fundamental values (IMP)
- Inspire a dedication to a cause (IMP)
- Raise them to value social responsibility (IMP)
- Encourage them to fight for their ideals (SA&IMP)

Selected functions of radical change and -in parantheses- the potentially relevant dimensions of AL:

- Responsibility for others (IMP)
- Paradigm shift (SA&IMP).

In that study, the following cases were also presented, which provide examples that support the current proposal of MH-IMP and RC-IMP relationships (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021:1077):

- "It was during these early experiences of isolation that he learned empathy for the isolation experienced by the deaf community in Japan." (MH-IMP)
- "Through his own financial struggles, he recognized that others also suffer in similar ways and became devoted to addressing the structural issues that perpetuate poverty." (MH-IMP)
- "During her 2 years in Thailand and particularly a summer spent at a Burmese refugee camp, Katie empathized with the suffering of Burma's refugee community." (RC-IMP)
- "He could not help feeling an urgent need and even a responsibility to share what he had learnt with his fellow citizens, to bring the benefits of agriculture back home." (RC-IMP)

It is important to note that these and the following examples are not the only ones that support the revised model; they are chosen to give the reader a better idea about the concepts. Our first, co-authored research about SEs utilized in-depth interviews with participants, to detect the factors in their backgrounds that may have contributed to their decisions to establish their institutions. In that study, the following examples were presented, which provide support for the current proposal of RM- IMP relationship (Asarkaya and Keles Taysir, 2019:161-162):

Case 1: "If a teacher misbehaved toward us my father would come to school immediately. As a result of this behavior I was convinced that injustice should be interfered with. Since my father was protecting me I started to protect my classmates against the teachers".

Case 10: "I have taken my father as a role model mostly… He was not only a teacher. He aimed for the betterment of his environment and civilization".

Case 12: "My moral codes were shaped by my father and grandfather. They had totally different worldviews. I learned to be ethical from my father. We had leftist brothers in our neighborhood, who were role models for us. They had an important influence on the development of my character. They emphasized equality and justice. They used to take us to school, back home, take care of us. We had equality-based relationships with them".

From the same study, the following example provides support for the current proposal of MH- IMP relationship (Asarkaya and Keles Taysir, 2019: 161):

Case 11: "My mother was having some health problems while I was at primary school. I thought that doctors did not care enough for her even though she was the wife of an army officer… While she had a problem with her kidney she was operated from her appendicitis. At that time, I was 9 and I realized what suffering is; and what could happen if a doctor did not care enough".

As some scholars state, "people differ primarily in the arrangements of their value priorities" (Schwartz, 1992; Williams, 1979 in Gehman, Trevino and Garud, 2013). When you know your motives, goals and value priorities better, they are reflected more strongly in your attitudes. Individual values also "matter to internal process of selecting issues for attention (Bansal, 2003)" (Howard-Grenville,

2006:68). Thus, higher SA may lead to a deeper perception about others' hardship. In addition, SA -as a concept- is closely related with the perceived self-efficacy in our SEI model. Further, according to Gardner et al. (2005), if one's emotional intelligence (EQ) is strong, her/his SA will be higher. People with higher EQ can also be influenced stronger when they encounter others' hardship. Relevantly, a subdimension of attitude towards behavior in our SEI model is "empathy". Finally, it is stated in the literature that when there are similarities between the one who needs help, and the potential helper, empathy and helping increase (Tevruz et al., 2012).

"It is in the presence of conflict that values are likely to be activated, to enter awareness, and to be used as guiding principles" (Schwartz, 1996 in Hitlin, 2003:120). Hardships may be regarded as examples of such situations, activating values and thus leading to strengthening of IMP. Role models may exemplify strong moral standing for those who take them as an example. Finally, a stronger IMP would lead to a more sensitive perception regarding others' hardships, and thus a more positive attitude toward behavior of being an SE. To summarize, we can say that MH, RC and/or RM may lead to higher SA and IMP, which are then positively reflected on self-efficacy and attitude. SE candidates' becoming SEs may be interpreted as another cornerstone in their authenticity journey. Therefore, authenticity of an SE may be regarded as a personal growth process that starts early in life, and is marked by MHs, RMs, RCs; increased SA and IMP; EOH and becoming an SE. Of course, this journey most probably continues after the establishment of the social institution.

There are a number of reasons why we preferred to utilize some dimensions of AL in Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) model rather than that of Kernis and Goldman (2006). First, it has a dimension of IMP, which openly refers to moral qualities. This is an important commonality with our proposed functions of the main antecedents of SEI; supporting the merging of AL-notions into our previous model (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021). Second, we regard the process of becoming an SE, as a process of becoming a leader; and Kernis and Goldman (2006) did not mention leadership in their paper. Third, personal history and trigger events are proposed as antecedents in an AL model (Gardner et al., 2005), which is another important intersection point with our model. Finally, Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) construct of AL is widely accepted in the literature.

Although we will continue with Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) subdimensions of AL, it is worth pointing out the significant positive correlations found by Kernis and Goldman (2006) between authenticity and problem-focused coping styles such as active coping and planning. These "aim toward solving the problem or modifying the source of threat (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980, 1985)" (Kernis and Goldman, 2006:314). The conceptual relevance of these correlations for our model is evident, as SEs are people who offer solutions for social problems.

Eventually, as proposed in our previous model (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021), attitude toward behavior, perceived self-efficacy, and perceived social support; will together influence the intention to become an SE. Let us note that perceived social support is not elaborated in this article, as it is not conceptually intersecting with the authenticity literature, and the conceptual overlap between the AL and SEI models is primarily based on the individual's 'inner' experiences and characteristics.

While merging the two dimensions of AL (Walumbwa et al., 2008) into our previous SEI model, the optimal part to place them is just after the antecedents of

MH, RM and RC. The revised model is provided in Figure 1. This figure is a simplified version of reality, as in fact, there are two different processes -becoming an SE and becoming an AL- that sometimes coincide and sometimes partially influence each other; as already explained in detail.
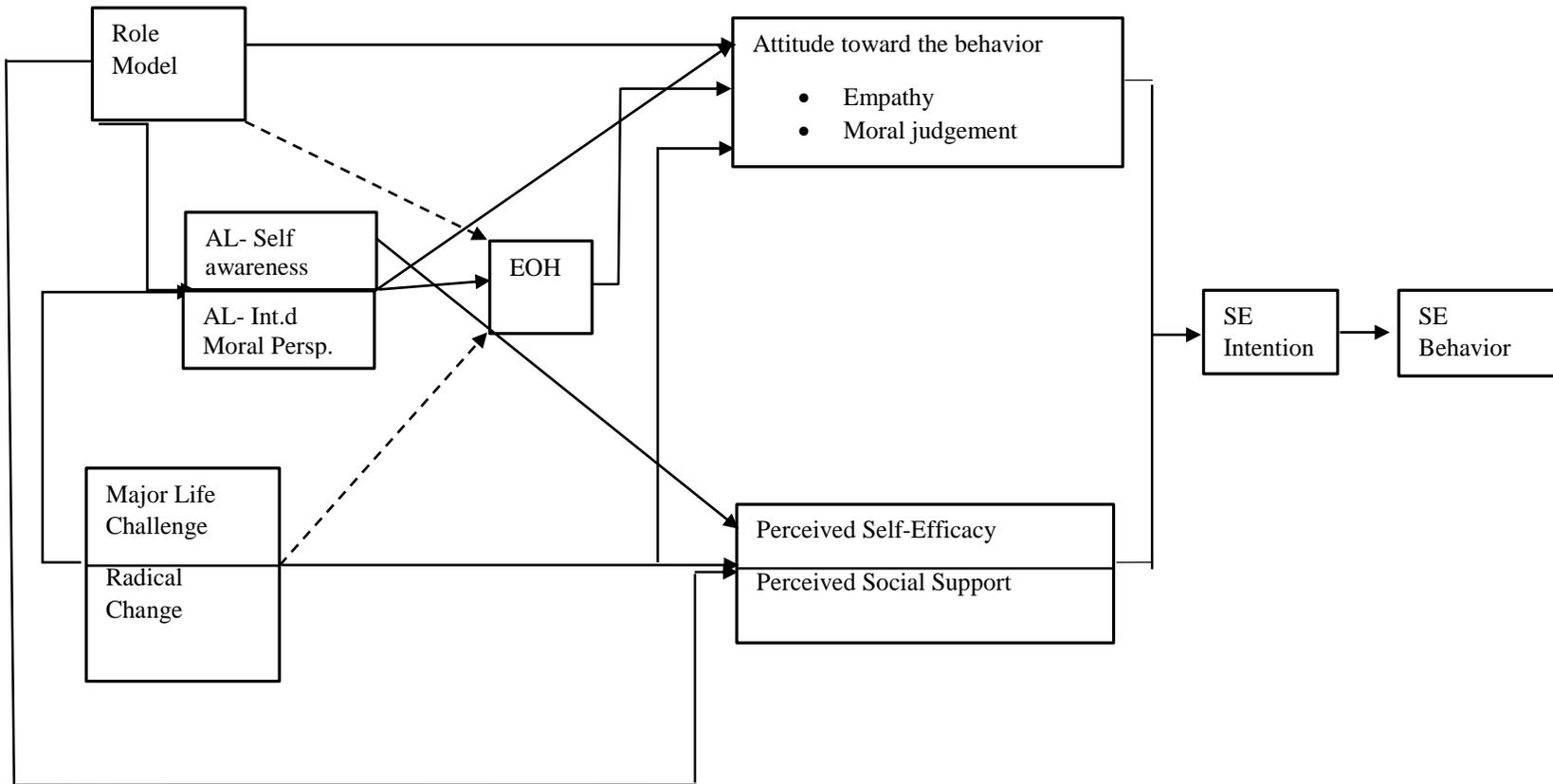
Figure 1. Model of SEI Formation Merged with the Relevant Authentic Leadership Dimensions

Source: Own work (Revised model based on Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021:1071)

The ideal method to detect the proposed relationships would be to measure the SA and IMP levels of SE candidates before experiencing MH, RC and/or RM, and re-measure them after these experiences. However, such influences often happen during childhood, and it is not feasible to identify SE candidates at those ages. Even if we could, they probably would not be mature enough to answer a survey about SA and IMP. Moreover, it takes time for people to develop SA and IMP after experiencing the antecedents of SEI; and the time period may change based on characteristics of the person and the experience. These factors complicate the empirical detection of antecedents' influences. Therefore, the intertwined case of AL and SEI notions is conceptually proposed, based on the author's knowledge and interpretation of previous research on SEI and AL.

3. CONCLUSION

Although there are studies about the relationship between AL and prosocial behavior (Hannah, 2011), and between AL and helping behavior (Hirst et al., 2016); the contexts of these research did not include institutions initiated by SEs. In addition, although our concepts are closely related with prosocial behavior, our focus is on SEI formation rather than behaviors. As far as we know, this is the first paper that focuses on the conceptual relationship between the particular AL notions and the antecedents of SEI.

The practical implication of the proposed relationships may be that we all can try to perceive the hardships we experience as a potential for becoming more self aware and ethical. This is especially important for entrepreneurs and supervisors, as they have a strong influence on their subordinates' wellbeing, quality of life, and performance.

This paper has its limitations, as it makes a proposal based only on the data generated by two previous SEI studies. The future measurement of SA and especially IMP of SEs and comparing these levels with that of –for instance- founders of for-profit organizations may provide support for our proposal. In addition, SA and IMP levels of a group of SE candidates may be measured, and compared with each other; to detect whether there is a reflection of these characteristics on becoming successful SEs.

We aim to add value to the development of the previously proposed model of SEI formation (Keles Taysir and Asarkaya, 2021) by suggesting an integration of this model with some of the authentic leadership (AL) dimensions. We propose that some important parts of these concepts are interrelated. In our opinion, by partially incorporating the AL concepts, this revised model offers a more complete picture of the SEI formation.

We can say that a person, who experiences a major hardship, goes all in to find a solution to her/ his problem. Based on years of research on both SE and AL, we suggest that a reason why a number of such people also do their best to solve other people's problems, may be their increased levels of authenticity throughout the way. Realizing their strengths, values and priorities, and having built an internalized moral perspective; they feel peaceful only when they share the solutions they find with those who need them.

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