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AUTHENTICITY AS A PREDICTOR ON HOPE IN TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

AKIN Ahmet, Associate Prof. Dr.[1], AKIN Umran, Assistant Prof. Dr.[2]

Abstract

Authenticity is associated with adaptive psychological characteristics and may be predictive of hope. The aim of this study is to investigate the associations of authenticity with hope. The study was conducted with 382 university students (171 men, 211 women; M age = 20.4 yr.). Participants completed the Turkish version of Authenticity Scale and the State Hope Scale. Hope was correlated negatively with two sub-factors of authenticity: accepting external influence and self-alienation and positively with the authentic living factor of authenticity. Self-alienation and accepting external influence predicted negatively and authentic living predicted positively to hope, accounting for 16% of the variance collectively. The results were discussed in the light of the related literature and dependent recommendations to the area were given.

Keywords: *Authenticity, hope, multiple regression analysis*

Most of the cultures treating congruent with feelings and thoughts and "be oneself" has been perceived as a moral necessity (Bialystok, 2009), which is called often as authenticity. Its roots stem from recommendations of the ancient Greek philosophy; such as "Know thyself" and "To thine own self be true" (Harter, 2002). Similarly, in Anatolian perspective, the very well-known Turkish teologist, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, has highlighted the importance of to be an authentic person by saying; "Either appear as you are or be as you appear".

Authenticity has been defined in various ways such as "accordance between how someone presents himself and what he actually is" (Bialystok, 2009) and "being emotionally sincere, having self-attunement, and psychological depth, and behaving candidly and without having hidden intentions" (Sheldon, 2009). Snyder and Lopez (2007) enlarged the description of the concept and defined authenticity as representing one's true values, beliefs, and behaviors to oneself and others sincerely, behaving faithfully, and taking responsibility for one's own emotions and actions (Peterson & Park, 2004).

In recent times Wood and his colleagues developed a three-dimensional authenticity model. The first dimension is self-alienation which involves an inadequate sense of identity because of not knowing oneself thoroughly and discrepancy between the conscious awareness and real experience. Authentic living, the second dimension, refers to being true to oneself and behaving consistent with one's own beliefs and values. The last dimension is accepting external influence includes a belief that the individual must adjust to the expectations of others. While these three components have been experienced differently at the phenomenological level, they interact mutually each other. For instance people who do not accept external influence behave more authentically while people who accept

[1] Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance; e-mail: aakin@sakarya.edu.tr

[2] Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance; e-mail: umranovec@gmail.com

external influence are more likely to behave with more self-alienated. In Wood's model authentic living is an indicator of authenticity, whereas self-alienation and accepting external influences show inauthenticity (Pinto, Maltby, Wood & Day, 2012; Wood et al., 2008).

Research on authenticity generally showed that authenticity is a strong and positive predictor of mental health. In these studies it was proved that authenticity is related positively to psychological well-being, self-esteem, subjective well-being (Wood et al., 2008), conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness (Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997), well-being at work (Ménard & Brunet, 2011), and autonomy (Bublitz & Merkel, 2009). On the other hand authenticity was found negatively associated with psychological symptoms such as anxiety, stress, depression (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; Theran, 2010; Wood et al., 2008), and neuroticism (Ryan et al., 1997).

Hope

Hope was defined by Snyder (2000) as a sum of perceived abilities to produce routes to desired goals along with the perceived motivation to use these routes (Halama, 2010). Hope involves four components: (a) an elaborately balanced approach to distressful life events, (b) a feeling of interconnectedness with other people, (c) a reliance on one's spiritual nature, and (d) the ability to maintain a rational or mindful approach to these life events (Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995; Tae, Heitkemper, & Kim, 2012). Hope is a key factor in planning for the future, in help-seeking (Edey & Jevne, 2003), and in coping with challenging life situations successfully (Kylma & Juvakka, 2006; Hughes et al., 2010). Hope also influences goal achievement, goal-oriented thinking, optimal well-being, emotions, (Farran, et al., 1995; Fitzgerald Miller, 2007) and strengthens the belief that difficulties can be managed (Ebright & Lyon, 2002; Tae et al., 2012).

Hope has become a crucial psychosocial factor in religious theology and also was found to have a healing impact in psychotherapy, medicine, nursing, and rehabilitation field, in coping with pain and loss, predicting job performance and goal attainment (Feldman, Rand, & Kahle- Wrobleski, 2009; Hartey, Vance, Elliott, Cuckler, & Berry, 2008; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Waynor, Gao, Dolce, Haytas, & Reilly, 2012), and remedying for individuals living with serious mental illness (Jacobson & Greenley, 2001; Young & Ensing, 1999). In general, studies proved that hope is positively related to a reduction of symptoms, a decline in suicidality, better psycho-social functioning, increased empowerment, active coping strategies, and better treatment outcomes (Barbic, Krupa, & Armstrong, 2009; Litterell, Herth, & Hinte, 1996; Lysaker, Campbell, & Johannesen, 2005; Waynor et al., 2012). In an earlier study of Korean women with breast cancer, Tae et al. (2009) found that hope was significantly and inversely related to depression. In other studies it was proved that hope positively related to agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, life satisfaction (Halama, 2010), self-esteem (Tae et al., 2012), family support, general well-being (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999), economic status, and meaning in life (Halama & Dedova, 2007), and negatively to fatigue (Tae et al., 2012).

Present Study

Although research conducted with the authenticity is encouraging, to date, however, no empirical research has examined whether authenticity predicts hope. This study has been conducted to examine the predictive role of authenticity on hope. Authenticity is a basic human feature which influences both cognitive and psychological processes. Since authentic people treat openly, honestly, and according to their innate feelings and intentions authenticity is accepted as a key characteristic of healthy functioning and psychological well-being (Harter, 2002; Wood et al., 2008). Also authentic living may protect individual against psychological disorders. Similarly Similarly individuals who have higher levels of hope seem to have more positive thoughts, have more energy, and see themselves in a more favorable light, (Snyder, 1995). They are also less likely to have psychological symptoms and more likely to have a healthy psychological and social life and active coping strategies. Therefore there may

be a positive association between authenticity and hope. Based on the above relationships of authenticity and hope, in the current research the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Accepting external influence will be negatively associated with hope.

Hypothesis 2. Self-alienation will be positively associated negatively associated with hope.

Hypothesis 3. Authentic living will be positively associated with hope.

Method

Participants

In this study, participants were 382 university students (211 women, 171men). Students were selected from five different undergraduate programs: primary school education (*n*= 51), science education (*n*= 66), social science education (*n*= 43), psychological counseling and guidance (*n*= 96), Foreign Language education (*n*= 67), and mathematics education (*n*= 59). Of the participants, 98 were freshman, 86 were sophomores, 104 were juniors, and 94 were seniors. Their ages ranged from 17 to 27 years old (*M* = 20.4, *SD* = 0.8). Convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants.

Measures

Authenticity Scale. This concept was measured using the Authenticity Scale (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph 2008). This scale is a 12-item self-report inventory. Items were rated on a 7-point scale with anchors 1: Does not describe me at all and 7: Describes me very well. The scale has three sub-dimensions: Accepting external influence (e.g., "Other people influence me greatly"), Self-alienating (e.g., "I don't know how I really feel inside"), and Authentic living (e.g., "I live in accordance with my values and beliefs"). A Turkish adaptation of this scale by Akın and Dönmezogullari (2010) with 528 Turkish university students (288 women, 242 men), has three factors explaining 57% of the total variance. Internal consistencies were .73, .72, and .75 and three-week test-retest reliability estimates were .89, .86, and .79 for the three factors, respectively.

The Integrative Hope Scale. Hope was measured using the Integrative Hope Scale (Schrank, Woppmann, Sibitz, & Lauber, 1982). Turkish adaptation of this scale was done by Akın, Akın, Gediksiz, Saricam and Arslan (2012). The Integrative Hope Scale is a 23-item self-report inventory and consists of four sub-scales: Trust and confidence, Lack of perspective, Positive future orientation, and Relations and personal value. Each item was rated on a 6-point scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 6=*strongly agree*). This scale is a summative scale, with items 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 20, 22, and 23 being reversed scored. All answers given will be totaled to indicate the level of self-handicapping, with a high number indicating a greater incidence of self-handicapping. Language validity findings of the Turkish version indicated that correlations between Turkish and English items ranged from .69 to .98. The internal consistency reliability coefficient was .90 and the three-week test-retest reliability coefficient was .84.

Procedure

Permission for participation of students was obtained from related chief departments and students voluntarily participated in research. Completion of the scales was anonymous and there was a guarantee of confidentiality. The scales were administered to the students in groups in the classrooms. The measures were counterbalanced in administration. Prior to administration of measures, all participants were told about purposes of the study.

Statistical Analysis

In this research, multiple linear regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to investigate the relationships between authenticity and hope. The variables which were entered in multiple regression analysis were measured by summing the items of each scale. These analyses were carried out via SPSS 11.5.

Results

Descriptive Data and Correlations

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables. Preliminary correlation analysis showed that Accepting external influence (r= -.14) and Self-alienation (r= -.23) were related negatively to Hope. Authentic living (r= .25) was positively associated with Hope. Independent samples t tests indicated no statistically significant sex differences for scores on authenticity and hope.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlations Among Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Hope	35.10	7.98			
2. Accepting External Influence	14.20	5.41	-.14**		
3. Self-alienation	13.25	5.47	-.23**	.40**	
4. Authentic Living	21.29	5.25	.25**	-.07	-.25**

**p<.01.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Before applying regression, assumptions of multiple regression were checked. The data were examined for normality by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated normality of distributions of test scores for all tests in the current study. Outliers are cases that have data values that are very different from the data values for the majority of cases in the data set. Outliers were investigated using Mahalanobis distance. A case is outlier if the probability associated with its D^2 is .001 or less (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Based on this criterion, fourteen data were labeled as outliers and they were deleted. Multi-collinearity was checked by the variance inflation factors (VIF). All the VIF values were less than 10 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), which indicated that there was no multi-collinearity.

Multiple regression analysis was performed in which the dependent variable was hope and the independent variables were dimensions of authenticity (Table 2). As many of those predictor variables were dependent on each other, forward stepwise procedure, which includes one new explanatory variable at each step, specifically the most associated with the dependent variable while being, at the same time, independent of the explanatory variables already included in the model. The criteria to include the variables from the regression model were: criterion probability-of-F-to enter <=.05.

Table 2

Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Variable Predicting Hope

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficents	t	R	R^2	F
	B	SE_B	β				
Step 1							
Self-alienation	-.28	.04	-.36	-7.51	.36	.13	56.398*
Step 2							
Self-alienation	-.23	.04	-.30	-5.73			
					.39	.15	33.543*
Accepting External Influence	-.13	.04	-.16	-3.07			

Step 3

Self-alienation	-.21	.04	-.26	-4.99			
Accepting External Influence	-.13	.04	-.16	-3.18	.41	.16	24.721*
Authentic Living	.10	.06	.12	2.48			

*$p<.001$

Three stepwise multiple regression analysis has applied to assess which dimensions of Authenticity were the best predictors of Hope. Table 2 showed the results of multiple regression analysis where the independent variables were Authenticity scores and the dependent variable was Hope. Self-alienation entered the equation first, accounting for 13% of the variance in predicting hope ($R^2=.13$, adjusted $R^2=.13$, $F(1, 380)=56.398$, $p<.01$). Accepting external influence entered on the second step accounting for an additional 2% of the variance ($R^2=.15$, $\Delta R^2=.02$, adjusted $R^2=.15$, $F(2, 379)=33.543$, $p<.01$). Authentic living entered on the third step accounting for an additional 1% of the variance ($R^2=.16$, $\Delta R^2=.01$, adjusted $R^2=.16$, $F(3, 378)=24.721$, $p<.01$). The standardized beta coefficients indicated the relative influence of the variables in last model with Self-alienation ($\beta= -.26$, $p<.01$), Accepting external influence ($\beta= -.16$, $p<.01$), and Authentic living ($\beta= .12$, $p<.01$) all significantly influencing hope and Self-alienation was strongest predictor.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the predictive role of authenticity on hope. To our knowledge, this is the first study investigating the relationships between authenticity and hope. As predicted, results demonstrated that hope related to accepting external influence and self-alienation negatively and to authentic living positively. In interpreting the results of the present findings, several plausible explanations exist. First of all these findings are in line with the research that has shown that authenticity is closely associated with the indices of psychological adjustment such as self-esteem and life satisfaction (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Findings of the present study are also consistent with the literature which demonstrated that hope is related the psychological strengths such as increased empowerment, better psycho-social functioning, active coping preference (Barbic et al., 2009; Litterell et al., 1996; Lysaker et al., 2005), extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, life satisfaction (Halama, 2010), self-esteem (Tae et al., 2012), and meaning in life (Halama & Dedova, 2007). Second hope provides optimal well-being and a balanced approach to distressful life events, and a sense of interconnectedness (Farran, et al., 1995). Thus, people who high in hope can feel themselves more authentic and the positive associations between hope and flourishing are not surprising and people who high in hope can feel themselves more authentic.

This study had many limitations. Firstly, it was correlational and based on a convenience sample. Secondly, the present sample's results are limited to university students so generality is restricted and more population-representative samples need to be used in future studies to examine the relationships between authenticity and hope. Also explicit investigation of mediating or latent variables is important.

Consequently, the present research provides important information about the predictors of hope and would further our understanding of the psychological process of hope. The implication is that tendency to accept external influence and self-alienation may indicate a risk for low hope. Nonetheless it is important to note that scientific research on authenticity is still in its nascent phases and more

research will need to be done before any implications can be drawn. Also there are enough positive indicators from to suggest that more research on authenticity would be a worthwhile.

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