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## Self, Identity, and Emotional Well-Being Among Turkish University Students

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**ABSTRACT.** The aim of the present study was to identify *indigenous* or *emic* domains of self-descriptions and to investigate identity orientations among urban middle-upper socio-economic status Turkish university students. The relationships between emotional well-being, self-descriptions, and identity orientations, as well as the gender differences in these variables, were also explored. The 205 participants (mean age of 20.35) found independent and relational-interdependent aspects of the self and identity more descriptive than the collective or interdependent aspects. Significant gender differences were found between independent and collective-interdependent aspects of the self. Specifically, women reported more Personal Identity and more Social Influencability and less Traditionalism and Openness and Creativity-related self-definitions than did men. Finally, emotional well-being was positively associated with all types of identity orientations as well as with independent and relational-interdependent domains of self-descriptions. The results are discussed with reference to the studies of self-concept in the literature and the existing social change in Turkish society.

**Key words:** emotional well-being, identity orientation, self-description, Turkish university students

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THE STUDY OF SELF has attracted a considerable amount of attention within the field of psychology. Recent studies have focused on the variations of the self across cultures and have identified a basic dimension that differentiates how people construe themselves: a sense of being interconnected with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). This dimension refers to the degree to which social elements (e.g., relationships, group memberships) are included in the self. Thus, the *independent* construal of self is defined as constellations of individual attributes, values, attitudes, and abilities that differentiate one from others. In

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contrast, the *interdependent* construal of self is characterized by social roles, relationships, and connectedness of human beings to each other.

In line with this theoretical approach to self, my aim in the present study was to identify the components and aspects of self associated with independence and interdependence among urban middle-upper socioeconomic status (SES) Turkish youth. Most Turkish research in this area has focused on the general tendencies, attitudes, and values of Turkish people in line with individualism–collectivism (Göregenli, 1995, 1997; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002) but has lacked a systematic study of self-conceptions. Thus, empirical research is needed to determine the domains of self among Turkish people in line with recent cultural approaches to the self in the literature.

With this aim, in the present study I sought to uncover the *emic* dimensions of self-descriptions among urban educated youngsters in Turkey, a country that has been undergoing a rapid social change from traditionalism to increased individualism since the 1980s. It seemed likely that the shifts in values, world views, and self-perceptions of Turkish people in times of social change would be verbalized in individuals' self-descriptions toward more independence in recent years. Such a social change toward individualism appears to be more prominent in metropolitan areas, especially among young and educated individuals with middle-upper SES backgrounds (Imamoğlu, 1987; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2002). As a matter of fact, Marshall (1997) showed that SES plays an important role in predicting individualistic values in a culture. Inglehart (1997) claimed that younger generations are the primary carriers of these social transformations in a culture.

With these points in mind, in the present study I explored (a) the indigenous domains of self-descriptions associated with independence and interdependence among urban middle-upper SES Turkish youth; (b) the importance of personal, social, and collective identity orientations (Cheek, Tropp, Chen, & Underwood, 1994); (c) the relationships among self-descriptions, identity orientations, and emotional well-being; and (d) whether there were differences between men and women in terms of self-descriptions, identity orientations, and emotional well-being in a sample of educated Turkish youth.

The extent to which the self-concept is defined as independent or interdependent depends on the culture within which individuals live. In general, individuals from Western, individualistic cultures have been shown to have independent, idiocentric, autonomous, and private self-concepts and an identity emphasizing internal traits, preferences, and abilities. Individuals from non-Western, collectivist cultures tend to have interdependent, relational, and collectivist construals of self-identity that emphasize social roles and group memberships (Bond & Cheung, 1983; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Kashima et al., 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 1993; Rhee, Uleman, Lee, & Roman, 1995; Triandis, 1989; Watkins et al., 1998).

### *The Sociocultural Context in Turkey*

The traditional Turkish sociocultural context has been characterized by an emphasis on interpersonal relationships and close ties with family, relatives, and neighbors (Imamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1973, 1984). These traditional socialization processes emphasize family integrity, harmony in relationships, and closeness, loyalty, duties and obligations to family and in-groups. Family, group membership, and social roles are among the major influences in defining one's self and identity. However, because of the free market economy and trends toward liberalization and globalization in the world, Turkey has been undergoing a very rapid social change since the 1980s. As a result, Turkish people tend to express more Western views and show more individualism in their attitudes, values, and self-construals, especially in the 1990s and later (Çileli, 2000; Göregenli, 1995, 1997; Imamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996a, 1996b; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2002). For example, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün and Imamoğlu (2002) and Imamoğlu and Karakitapoğlu-Aygün (1999) showed that the individualistic value domains of autonomy, self-respect-achievement, self-enhancement, and the relational value domain of benevolence were among the most emphasized value types in the late 1990s.

These researchers also found that the strength of traditional collectivist values restricting individual autonomy tends to decrease with social change, although relatedness and benevolence values are still important. Therefore, the newly emerging individualism does not necessitate a decrease in relatedness and emotional interdependencies (Imamoğlu, 1987, 1998; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996a, 1996b; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2002; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002). Rather, several recent studies referred to a co-existence of traditional relatedness tendencies with new individualistic ones in self-construals (Imamoğlu, 1998; Karadayı, 1998; Kurt, 2002; Uskul, Hynie, & Lalonde, 2004) in Turkish culture. According to these studies, both independent and interdependent themes exist in self-conceptions of Turkish youth. In line with these previous findings, Turkish university students in the present study were expected to equally value both independence and interdependence-related aspects (especially relatedness ones) of self and identity. In other words, modern urban Turkish youth in this study were expected to hold and combine both independent and interdependent elements in their self-definitions.

### *Gender and Self-Identity*

Gender-related expectations and social roles may also play a crucial role in self-representations. Research has shown that men and women tend to differ in their conceptions of self and identity (see Cross & Madson, 1997 for a review; Gilligan, 1982; Lykes, 1985). Theoretical arguments and empirical research generally have suggested that women are more likely than men to have interdepen-

dent and relational construals of self, emphasizing relatedness and embeddedness with others. Generally, women have been found to describe themselves as more relational; they have higher scores on relational self-construal and show more emotional experiences in association with relationships. Men are more likely to show a greater independence that emphasizes personal agency, instrumentality, uniqueness, and differentiation. Thus, there is clear evidence that gendered socialization and gender-specific social roles and expectations encourage women toward relational, interdependent construals of self and men toward independent construals of self.

Gender roles are consistent with gender stereotypes in the Turkish family. Generally, men are expected to be more independent, autonomous, and achievement-oriented, and women are expected to be more interdependent, relational, and emotional. However, as women achieve higher levels of education and SES, they tend to show more autonomy and independence in their attitudes and values (Erkut, 1984; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1986; Kandiyoti, 1978; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2002; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002). They are also more likely to have self-selected marriages, to participate in decision making processes in the family, and to favor status equalization with increasing SES (Imamoğlu & Yasak, 1997). In line with these previous findings, I expected the men in the present study to find independence-oriented domains of self and identity to be more descriptive than the interdependent ones, and I expected the women to find both independent and interdependent (especially relational) features equally descriptive. More specifically, I expected gender groups not to differ much on independent aspects of the self and identity but to differ on relational and interdependent ones, with women valuing relational attributes more than men.

### *The Link Between Self-Identity and Well-Being*

The relationships between self-construal, identity orientations, and positive and negative emotions are rarely studied. The related literature has focused mainly on the relationships between self-construal and ego- and other-focused emotions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Other research on well-being (examining mainly cognitive components of well-being rather than the affective component) has shown that affirmation of one's sense of individuality and autonomy is associated with well-being for individuals with an independent construal of self, whereas affirmation of one's relationships with others and group membership is associated with well-being for individuals with an interdependent construal of self (Diener & Diener, 1995; Kitayama & Markus, 2000; Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997; Ratzlaff, Matsumoto, Kouznetsova, Raroque, & Ray, 2000; Tafarodi, Lang, & Smith, 1999; Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clack, 1985).

Although these studies focus on different processes, many of them suggest that well-being is related to self-concepts that are appropriate in the larger social

and cultural milieu. Therefore, because both independent and relationally interdependent elements are widespread in the recent urban sociocultural Turkish context and because both have positive effects on well-being (Imamoglu, 1998; Kurt, 2002), I expected that both independent and interdependent (especially relational) aspects of the self and identity would be correlated with emotional well-being in the present study.

### *Gender and Emotional Well-Being*

Gender roles and stereotypes may also influence the well-being and emotional experiences of individuals. Gender-specific roles may lead to more emotionality and sensitivity to emotions in women. Researchers generally have reported more intense and frequent negative internalizing emotions among women than among men (Brody & Hall, 1993; Fujita, Diener, & Sandvik, 1991; Manstead, 1992; Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999). Moreover, Lucas and Gohm (2000) demonstrated that women reported higher levels of pleasant affect than men in a 41-country sample (World Value Survey) and higher levels of unpleasant affect than men in both the World Value Survey and in a 39-country sample (International College Student Survey). Lucas and Gohm concluded that the greater negative affect experienced by women does not necessarily lower their experience of positive affect. Therefore, I expected the women in the present study to experience both more positive emotions and more negative emotions than the men, in line with the studies just mentioned and gender role expectations in the Turkish culture.

In sum, I first explored the basic domains of self-descriptions associated with independence and interdependence among urban middle-upper SES Turkish youth. While doing so, I sought to identify culture- and SES-relevant domains of self-descriptions in the Turkish culture, using an *indigenous* or *emic* perspective to study self-concept. In line with the related literature, I expected aspects of the self associated with both independence and (especially relational) interdependence to be equally descriptive among Turkish university students.

Second, I examined the importance of personal, social, and collective identity orientations. Similar to self-descriptions, I expected both personal and social or collective aspects of identity to be equally important. Third, I examined whether there are gender differences in the domains of self-descriptions, identity orientations, and emotional well-being. In line with recent trends in Turkey, I expected men and women to report similar patterns in independence-related aspects of the self and identity but different patterns in interdependent (especially in relational) aspects, with women emphasizing interdependent features more than men. Moreover, in terms of emotional well-being, I expected women to experience both more positive and negative emotions than men would in accordance with gender roles in Turkish culture. Finally, I tried to ascertain the relationships between emotional well-being, self-descriptions,

and identity orientations. As mentioned before, because the sociocultural Turkish context is characterized by a co-existence of individualistic and relational tendencies, I expected both independent and interdependent aspects of self and identity (especially relatedness aspects) to be highly correlated with emotional well-being.

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants were 205 university students (96 men, 109 women) from various departments of the Middle East Technical University (in Ankara, an urban city and capital of Turkey), one of Turkey's most prestigious universities. The mean age of the sample was 20.35 ( $SD = 1.61$ ). Most of the participants were from middle and upper-middle SES families. Specifically, 58.5% of their fathers and 34.6% of their mothers were university graduates or post-graduates, 28.8% of mothers and 19% of fathers were graduates of high school, and 36.6% of mothers and 17.5% of fathers were primary or junior high school graduates. Most of the mothers (nearly 60%) were homemakers. The rest were government officials (32.7%), professionals or high-level bureaucrats (6.8%), and workers (5%). Most of the fathers were government officials (50.7%), followed by professionals or high-level bureaucrats (35.1%) and workers or farmers (14.1%).

### *Instruments*

*Self-descriptions.* Items or phrases had been generated in a previous pilot study, for which I asked 15 psychology master's students to generate as many adjectives or phrases describing hypothetical independent and interdependent persons as they could. Specifically, they were asked to generate items on the basis of Imamoglu's (1998) model of Balanced Differentiation–Integration (BDI), which differentiated between two kinds of self-orientations: individuational and interpersonal. According to the BDI, *individuational orientation* emphasizes self-development in line with personal inclinations and capabilities rather than external sources and social expectations. *Interpersonal orientation*, on the other hand, involves having close and meaningful relationships with significant others rather than separatedness.

The students were informed that there would be no time constraint. I emphasized that the adjectives could be both positive and negative as well as from different domains, such as social, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and general. To reduce any social desirability effect in the selection of descriptors, the attributes and characteristics of hypothetical persons were preferred to spontaneous self-descriptions by individuals. It was also thought that such an approach would

allow a more extensive and wide-ranging list of person descriptors unique to the modern urban Turkish context. Unambiguous and conceptually meaningful items were chosen as long as they were not idiosyncratic. Items were reviewed with colleagues to ensure clarity. The resulting scale consisted of 50 frequently mentioned items (the number of independent and interdependent items were approximately equal).

In the present study, I asked respondents to rate each description in this final scale on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all descriptive of me* (1) to *very descriptive of me* (6). The 6-point scale was preferred to a 7- or 5-point scale to reduce neutrality bias in the answers.

*Identity orientations.* The Cheek et al. (1994) Aspects of Identity Questionnaire was used to assess identity orientations. These authors had conceptualized identity orientations as consisting of three subscales: Personal, Social, and Collective. The Personal Identity subscale emphasized the importance of personal ideas and feelings. It included 10 items, such as “my dreams and imagination,” “my personal goals and hopes for the future,” and “my emotions and feelings,” and had an alpha coefficient of .65.

Social Identity emphasized the importance of social roles and relationships. It consisted of 7 items, such as “my social behaviors, such as the way I act when meeting people” and “my reputation, what others think.” Internal consistency for this subscale was .83. Finally, Collective Identity emphasized the importance of belonging to a collective such as a religious, national, or ethnic group. It contained 8 items such as “my race or ethnic background” and “my religion.” The alpha value of the scale was .62. Participants were asked to rate the importance of each item on a 7-point scale ranging from *not at all important for the sense of who I am* (1) to *very important for the sense of who I am* (7).

*Negative and positive emotions.* Participants used a 28-item list of emotion adjectives to rate the extent to which they had been feeling each emotion during the past 2 weeks on a 5-point scale ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Some of the items for this list were gathered during the pilot study and some were culled from the literature. Factor analysis with varimax rotation revealed two dimensions (explaining about 40% of the variance) comparable to well-validated factors of Positive and Negative Affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

Positive emotions (explained variance = 12.46%) consisted of 11 items (joy, pride, sympathy, happiness, contentment, excitement, surprise, comfort, pleasure, trust and satisfaction with life). Negative emotions (explained variance = 27.16%) included 17 items (anger, distress, frustration, guilt, shame, regret, sadness, fear, alienation to one's self, worry, constraint, feelings of rejection, anxiety, agitation, upset, timidity, and depression). These subscales had alphas of .87 and .83, respectively. As with all other variables, indices of positive and negative emotions were computed by averaging the items under each category.



### *Procedure*

Students completed the survey (in Turkish) during class sessions that lasted about 25–35 min. Identity orientation items and the emotions culled from the literature were translated into Turkish and checked through back translations. Respondents were asked to read the instructions carefully and to answer all questions frankly. It was emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that the best answer was each individual's own personal opinion. Confidentiality of responses was assured.

## **Results**

### *Factor Analysis: Domains of Self-Descriptions*

Data obtained using the Self-Descriptions Scale was subjected to a factor analysis (with principal components extraction and varimax rotation) to identify the domains of self-descriptions. After preliminary analyses, I deleted 9 items with lower item-total correlations and low reliabilities. The final number (41 items) ensured a 5-to-1 item-to-subject ratio. Because a factor scree test suggested a 6-factor solution, items were forced to six factors. This 6-factor solution accounted for 49% of the total variance. Item loadings, explained variances, eigenvalues, and alpha values of these factors are shown in Table 1. The first factor was labeled Inner–Outer Harmony because it included both independent and relational elements. It was associated with being a self- and other-peaceful, optimistic, self-reliant and self-expressive person but not a lonely, introverted, or emotionally detached person. The second factor, Relational Concern, included seven items related to maintaining harmony in relationships as indicated by items such as helpful, self-sacrificing, sharing, friendly, honest, trustworthy, and so forth. The third factor, Achievement, included items related to being ambitious, self-contained, and realizing one's wishes and ideals. The fourth factor was labeled Traditionalism because it seemed to be associated with being religious, fatalist, obedient, and traditional. Another factor was Social Influencability, which was associated with other-orientedness and being easily influenced by others' views. Finally, the sixth factor, Openness and Creativity, emphasized openness to different ideas, creativity, and uniqueness of oneself.

### *Gender Differences in the Variables*

*Gender differences in domains of self-descriptions.* To explore gender differences in self-descriptions, I conducted a 2 (gender)  $\times$  6 (self-descriptive domains) analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on the last variable. The self-description main effect was significant,  $F(5, 1015) = 276.70$ ,  $\eta^2 = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ . Undergraduates rated Relational Concern, Openness and Cre-

**TABLE 1. The Results of Factor Analysis on Self-Descriptions**

Factors (variance explained: 53.14%)	Loading	Communality
Inner-Outer Harmony (19.37%, $\alpha = .82$ , eigenvalue = 7.94)		
Lonely <sup>a</sup>	-.71	.55
Introverted <sup>a</sup>	-.68	.52
Other-peaceful	.66	.67
Emotionally detached <sup>a</sup>	-.65	.49
Self-peaceful	.63	.49
Not self-expressive/self-assertive <sup>a</sup>	-.61	.47
Optimistic	.57	.41
Not self-reliant <sup>a</sup>	-.50	.48
Relational Concern (10.46%, $\alpha = .83$ , eigenvalue = 4.29)		
Helpful	.77	.63
Self-sacrificing	.75	.62
Sharing	.74	.59
Modest	.69	.55
Friendly	.57	.57
Trustworthy	.57	.53
Honest	.54	.53
Achievement (7.03%, $\alpha = .77$ , eigenvalue = 2.88)		
Ambitious	.70	.54
Fighter	.68	.61
Responsible	.58	.51
Knowledgeable-about-one's wishes	.57	.51
Realizing-one's-ideas	.49	.43
Self-contained	.46	.40
Curious	.37	.39
Traditionalism (6.28%, $\alpha = .82$ , eigenvalue = 2.57)		
Traditional	.82	.67
Religious	.79	.64
Fatalist	.72	.67
Identified-with-the-societal-thoughts		
Inflexible-in-thoughts	.64	.57
Obedient	.63	.44
Social Influencability (5.41%, $\alpha = .80$ , eigenvalue = 2.22)		
Easily-influenced	.78	.64
Quickly-affected-by-others'-views	.76	.63
Expecting-social-approval	.74	.57
Influenced-by-others-in-choosing-goals	.66	.53
Not self-decisive	.60	.50

(table continues)

**TABLE 1. (Continued)**

Factors (variance explained: 53.14%)	Loading	Communality
Openness and Creativity (4.59%, $\alpha = .78$ , eigenvalue = 1.88)		
Different from others	.67	.48
Intelligent	.65	.53
Creative	.64	.46
Having-perspective-taking	.59	.46
Humorous	.57	.55
Courageous	.45	.53
Strong	.43	.50
Broad-minded	.43	.47

<sup>a</sup>Reverse scored when creating factor.

activity, Achievement, and Inner–Outer Harmony domains as more self-descriptive than the domains of Social Influencability and Traditionalism (see Table 2). The differences between these self-description domains were significant,  $p < .05$ , except for the differences between Openness and Creativity and Achievement. Moreover, the Gender  $\times$  Self-Description interaction was significant,  $F(5, 1015) = 5.98$ ,  $\eta = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that women had higher scores on Social Influencability and lower scores on Traditionalism and Openness and Creativity than did men. Means and univariate  $F$  tests are contained in Table 2.

*Gender differences in domains of identity.* To explore gender differences in identity orientations, I conducted a 2 (gender)  $\times$  3 (identity: personal, social, collective) ANOVA with repeated measure on the last variable. The identity orientation main effect was significant,  $F(2, 406) = 188.05$ ,  $\eta = .48$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants emphasized Personal Identity ( $M = 5.97$ ) the most, followed by Social Identity ( $M = 5.04$ ) and Collective Identity ( $M = 4.46$ ). The differences between means were significant at  $p < .001$ . Furthermore, the Gender  $\times$  Identity orientation interaction was marginally significant,  $F(2, 406) = 2.50$ ,  $\eta = .01$ ,  $p = .08$ . The differences between men and women were only significant for Personal Identity. Women ( $M = 6.12$ ) tended to rate Personal Identity orientation as more descriptive of the self than did men ( $M = 5.79$ ),  $p < .001$ .

*Gender differences in positive and negative emotions.* To explore gender differences in emotions, I conducted a 2 (gender)  $\times$  2 (emotions: positive, negative) ANOVA with repeated measure on the last variable. The main effect for emotion

TABLE 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate *F*s for the Variables With Respect to Gender

Variable	Entire sample		Women		Men		<i>F</i> <sup>a</sup>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Self-description							
Relational Concern	4.99	.66	5.06	.52	4.90	.79	2.86
Openness and Creativity	4.56	.64	4.47	.67	4.66	.58	4.93*
Achievement	4.55	.72	4.61	.72	4.48	.72	1.72
Inner–Outer Harmony	4.25	.88	4.19	.97	4.32	.77	1.05
Social Influencability	2.94	.96	3.11	.99	2.75	.90	7.21**
Traditionalism	2.78	1.06	2.60	.94	2.98	1.15	6.85**
Identity orientation							
Personal Identity	5.97	.61	6.12	.52	5.79	.67	15.86***
Social Identity	5.04	1.14	5.07	1.12	5.00	1.16	.21
Collective Identity	4.46	.98	4.46	.98	4.46	.98	.00
Emotional well-being							
Positive emotions	3.46	.52	3.56	.52	3.34	.51	9.29**
Negative emotions	2.60	.55	2.66	.59	2.53	.49	3.07

<sup>a</sup>Degrees of freedom = 1 and 203.\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

was significant,  $F(1, 202) = 189.42, \eta = .48, p < .001$ . Participants reported positive emotions ( $M = 3.46$ ) more often than negative emotions ( $M = 2.60$ ),  $p < .001$ . Moreover, there was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 202) = 19.28, \eta = .09, p < .001$ . Women ( $M = 3.11$ ) reported more emotional experiences than did men ( $M = 2.93$ ). The Gender  $\times$  Emotion interaction was not significant.

*Intercorrelations Among Self-Descriptions, Identity Orientations, and Emotions*

As shown in Table 3, correlational analyses regarding self-descriptions indicated that there were significant intercorrelations among Relational Concern, Inner–Outer Harmony, Openness and Creativity, and Achievement domains. Social Influencability was positively associated with Traditionalism and negatively with Openness and Creativity and Achievement. Among identity orientations, the most significant association was found between Social Identity and Collective Identity.

Correlations regarding the relationships between self-descriptions and identity orientations showed that Personal Identity was most significantly related to Openness and Creativity and Achievement. Social Identity, on the other hand, was associated with the Social Influencability and Traditionalism. Finally, Collective Identity showed significant correlations with Traditionalism, Achievement, and Inner–Outer Harmony.

**TABLE 3. Intercorrelations Among Variables ( $N = 205$ )**

Variable	1	2	3	4
Self-description				
1. Relational Concern	—			
2. Inner–Outer Harmony	.33***	—		
3. Openness and Creativity	.27***	.38***	—	
4. Achievement	.37***	.43***	.53***	—
5. Social Influencability	-.08	-.17*	-.32***	-.26***
6. Traditionalism	.06	-.02	-.20**	-.08
Identity orientation				
7. Personal Identity	.20**	.05	.22**	.22**
8. Social Identity	.05	.20**	.07	.15
9. Collective Identity	.15*	.24**	.02	.21**
Emotional well-being				
10. Positive emotions	.23***	.59***	.32***	.48***
11. Negative emotions	-.12	-.66***	-.33***	-.31***

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

There were significant positive correlations between positive emotions and all identity orientations, thereby implying that having a strong sense of Personal, Social, or Collective Identity is associated with positive feelings. In a similar vein, the correlations between positive and negative emotions and the self-descriptive domains of Openness and Creativity, Achievement, Inner–Outer Harmony and Relational Concern (only with positive emotions) were significant. Interestingly, there was a significant positive correlation between the negative emotions and Social Influencability, thereby indicating that negative feelings are associated with being influenced by others' ideas and thoughts.

I examined intercorrelations among the variables separately for men and women. Overall, the results yielded similar patterns of relationships for men and women except for a few differences. Because the differences were small, the correlations are not reported for men and women separately in the tables. First, Openness and Creativity was correlated with Relational Concern for men ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ), but not for women ( $r = .11, p > .05$ ). Rather, negative correlations were found between Openness and Creativity and Traditionalism ( $r = -.36, p < .001$  for women,  $r = -.08, p > .05$  for men). Second, positive and negative emotions showed significant associations with Relational Concern for women, but not for men. Specifically, the correlations for women were  $.26, p < .01$  for positive emotions ( $r = .18, p > .05$  for men) and  $-.20, p < .05$  for negative emotions ( $r = -.10, p > .05$  for men).

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
—						
.31***	—					
.00	-.07	—				
.31***	.27***	.15*	—			
.08	.48***	.23**	.46***	—		
-.11	-.05	.16*	.21***	.33***	—	
.27***	.12	.01	-.02	-.08	-.37***	—

## Discussion

In the present study, I identified six domains of self-descriptions that are indigenous to modern urban middle-upper SES Turkish youth. Those domains were Relational Concern, Inner–Outer Harmony, Achievement, Openness and Creativity, Social Influencability, and Traditionalism. The domains of Openness and Creativity and Achievement showed significant associations with Personal Identity orientation and can be said to represent independent aspects of the self. Social Influencability and Traditionalism were highly correlated with Social and Collective Identity orientations and can be said to represent collectivist-interdependent aspects of the self. Relational Concern and (in part) Inner–Outer Harmony can be said to represent the relational-interdependent aspects of the self.

Among these, Relational Concern showed the highest correlation with Personal Identity orientation. This was an interesting finding, which pointed to the importance of relationships in defining personhood in Turkish culture. In other words, personal thoughts, values, feelings, dreams, and goals were closely linked to relationships in this sample of Turkish university students. The other relational domain, Inner–Outer Harmony, displayed significant associations with Social and Collective Identity orientations, implying that harmony in relationships is key to identity in an urban Turkish environment.

In terms of self-descriptions, the independence-oriented domains of Openness and Creativity and Achievement and the relational-interdependent domain of Relational Concern were more descriptive of the self than the collectivist-interdependent domains of Social Influencability and Traditionalism. In a similar vein, among the identity orientations, the individualistic Personal Identity orientation had the highest scores, followed by Social Identity and Collective Identity, both of which had low scores. In other words, independent and relational-interdependent domains of self and identity were most descriptive of the self and identity, whereas collective-interdependent domains were least descriptive in our university student sample.

First, these findings confirm the new emerging trends of individualism along with social change in Turkey that have been noted in recent studies (Çileli, 2000; Göregenli, 1995, 1997; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2002; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002). Second, they reflect the continuing importance of social relationships in Turkish culture during times of rapid social change from traditionalism to modernism, as recent studies have suggested (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu). Third, they point to a need for reconceptualization of the collectivist or interdependence dimension. Results of the present study suggest that there should be a distinction between relationship-based interdependence (as represented by the Relational Concern domain and partly by Inner–Outer Harmony) and group- or norm-based interdependence (as represented by Traditionalism and Social Influencability). It is quite clear that, at least for this young and

educated Turkish sample, relationship-based interdependence is more prominent than group- or norm-based interdependence.

Actually this distinction between the relational and collective self has already been proposed by many other researchers in which the *relational self* is defined as interpersonal aspects of the self that are crucial in forming and maintaining relationships with others, whereas the *collective self* is defined as belongingness to larger social in-groups (e.g., ethnic, religious, national; Kashima & Hardie, 2000; Kashima, Kashima, & Aldridge, 2001; Kashima et al., 1995; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001). More research is needed to investigate the nature of the relational self and the collective self in Turkish culture.

### *Gender Differences in the Variables*

Our predictions with regard to gender differences in the self and identity domains were not supported. Contrary to our expectations, women defined themselves more in personal terms and less in traditional terms than did men. Self-reports of being less traditional and more personal in self and identity by our young and modern Turkish women compared with men may indicate the impact of sociocultural change in women's roles in Turkey. With more education and higher rates of employment, Turkish women apparently are becoming less traditional and more autonomous (Erkut, 1984; Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Imamoğlu & Yasak, 1997; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1986; Kandiyoti, 1978; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002; Kurt, 2002). Pursuing a university education may require more independence on the part of women to be successful in a competitive environment.

The only collectivist domain that women found self-descriptive was Social Influencability. In line with traditional gender roles, women reported more Social Influencability descriptions than did men. Why do women and men show opposite tendencies on the two collectivist domains of Traditionalism and Social Influencability? It can be said that items under the Traditionalism domain represented much stricter and more demanding traditional views and expectations of the Turkish culture, constraining personal and individual interests. Items endorsing these rigid normative views of Turkish culture might have caused a negative reaction in modern educated Turkish women, which might have led them to define themselves as less traditional in relation to conforming behavior (religious, fatalist, obedient, identified-with-the-societal thoughts, etc.). Social Influencability, on the other hand, represents an indulgence, a more lenient kind of collectivism. It implies being swayed by opinions and decisions of other people with whom one is in frequent contact. It therefore appears that Turkish women may be more open than men to the influences of others in relationships. For men, however, being an autonomous and self-determined person may characterize resistance to influences from others or even to acknowledging that they are influenced by others.



Another interesting finding was the greater tendency among men toward Openness and Creativity than among women. As mentioned previously, men also reported greater Traditionalism in their self-definitions than did women. These findings imply that it is possible for men to combine both individualistic and traditionally collectivist elements simultaneously in their self-construals. Actually, our correlational findings showed no significant association between Traditionalism and Openness and Creativity for men but a significant association among women. Men may be more likely to assert individuality and at the same time develop belongingness within larger societal contexts of community and maintain the traditional value systems.

In fact, the Turkish culture has patrilineal characteristics emphasizing the importance of male roles over female roles. It is men's responsibility to ensure the continuity of their family and lineage and to provide support to their family. In such a sociocultural context, traditional values ought to serve better for women than for men. But women, especially urban and educated women, tend to resist the traditional structure in Turkey because it hinders autonomous and individual development for them. This special status of modern women in urban Turkey might have led to strong negative associations between Traditionalism and Openness and Creativity for the women in the present study.

In addition, and contrary to the initial hypotheses and the studies carried out in the Turkish context (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 1999; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Imamoğlu, 2002) and elsewhere (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Gilligan, 1982; Kashima & Hardie, 2000; Kashima et al., 1995), the women in the present study did not report a more relational self (as represented by the self-descriptive domains of Relational Concern and Inner-Outer Harmony) than did the men. This finding supports the Watkins et al. (1998) findings that women emphasize family values and social relationships more than men do in individualistic cultures but not in collectivist cultures. Therefore, it appears that in a sociocultural environment, in which having and maintaining relationships with others is a main concern, women and men may equally conceptualize themselves in relational terms.

Finally, the experience of more negative than positive emotions among women than among men is consistent with the hypotheses of the study and other studies indicating that women report more intense and frequent negative and (to some degree) positive emotions than men (Brody & Hall, 1993; Lucas & Gohm, 2000; Manstead, 1992; Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999). This result suggests that gender and social roles fulfilled by women and men in the Turkish culture vary significantly in terms of emotional experiences. This difference between men and women may be explained by women's internalization of social values emphasizing interpersonal orientation in the traditional Turkish culture. Perhaps women experience both the negative impact of negative life events that happen to close others and the positive impact of sharing in the positive emotions and successful outcomes of these others more than men do, as suggested by Cross and

Madson (1997). Actually, supporting this interpretation, we found significant associations between emotional well-being and Relational Concern for women but not for men in the present study.

*The Relationships Among Emotional Well-Being and Self-Descriptions and Identity Orientations*

The predictions about the relationships between emotional well-being and self-identity domains were partially supported. In terms of identity orientations, a strong sense of Collective, Social, and (to a lesser degree) Personal Identity were associated with experiencing more positive emotions but not with experiencing negative emotions. As expected, the correlations of Collective and Social Identity with positive emotions were higher than the correlations between Personal Identity and positive emotions. These findings may point to the important role of social relationships and group belongingness in well-being in the Turkish sociocultural context.

Moreover, supporting our predictions, both individual (Openness and Creativity and Achievement) and relational (Relational Concern and partly Inner–Outer Harmony) self-description domains showed significant associations with emotional well-being. Among these, Inner–Outer Harmony included items similar to the Neuroticism and to some extent the Extraversion items of the Big-Five (Costa & McCrae, 1995; Goldberg & Somer, 2000), and revealed the highest correlation with emotional well-being. This relationship is a well-established finding across cultures (see Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000, and De Raad & Kokkonen, 2000, for reviews).

Among the collective self domains, Social Influencability, but not Traditionalism, was correlated with emotional well-being. It is interesting that there was a positive relation between Social Influencability and negative affect. This finding points to university students' dissatisfaction with not being self-determined and with being easily swayed by others' opinions and decisions. These results suggest that personal and independent aspects of the self and identity were so salient for our educated, middle-upper SES student sample that social practices and pressures restraining the pursuit of the independent self might lead to negative feelings. In support of this finding, Oishi (2000) found a negative relation between conformity or vertical collectivism and well-being among people from individualistic cultures (e.g., United States, Denmark), but not among people from hierarchical collectivist cultures such as Japan, Korea, and China. Thus, it can be said that newly emerging tendencies toward individualism in urban Turkey tend to replace older traditional social forms, resulting in dissatisfaction with the traditional outlook, especially among younger generations from middle-upper SES segments.

Overall, these findings suggested that both affirmation of one's sense of individuality and autonomy and relationships with others as well as group memberships seem to be important indicators of emotional well-being. These results

support other research claiming that attaining personal goals and accomplishments is conducive to well-being within independence, and having close relationships and group memberships is conducive to well-being within interdependence (Bettencourt & Dorr, 1997; Diener & Diener, 1995; Kitayama & Markus, 2000; Kwan et al., 1997; Ratzlaff et al., 2000; Sinha & Verma, 1994; Tafarodi et al., 1999; Triandis et al., 1985). Thus, in a rapidly changing sociocultural context in which both asserting individuality and maintaining relationships and group memberships are functional, psychological well-being is strongly linked to both of these factors.

### *Limitations and Concluding Remarks*

The most important limitation of the study is that traditional lower SES individuals were not consulted in the selection of self-descriptive items and gathering the main data. Rather, the samples represented urban middle-upper SES Turkish youth. The sampling of independent and interdependent selves may vary among individuals with different SES (Marshall, 1997) and also among different age groups (Berzonsky, 1990). Possibly, the fact that our participants were urban, educated, and young contributed to more independence-related tendencies in the present study. In a more representative sample including older and less educated participants from rural parts of Turkey, interdependent tendencies would perhaps have been more emphasized. Thus, there are limits to the generalizability of the results to the Turkish people at large.

To further grasp SES-related effects, 12 less well educated, lower SES urban youth (juniors or high school graduates) were interviewed in addition to graduate students in the pilot study. In contrast to our educated sample, this lower SES group produced fewer overall items, although there were no substantial differences in the number of independent and interdependent items. They had difficulty in understanding the instructions and generating abstract adjectives. They also attributed more negative characteristics to individuated and independent individuals. For instance, when referring to an independent person, they used terms such as selfish, stubborn, rebellious, aggressive, not easy-going, distant, self-centered, megalomaniac, being in conflict with others, and so forth, and they regarded these characteristics as negative. Finally, they referred to more positive characteristics to define an interdependent person and used the attributes such as consulting with others, conformist, and obedient in a more positive light than did our better educated upper-middle class SES group. Although these findings and observations are preliminary, they give some idea about the potential SES differences in individualism–collectivism in Turkey.

In addition, there are limitations to the cross-cultural generalizability of the results because only the Turkish society was studied. Future studies should compare Turkish people with people from other collectivist and individualist cultures. Moreover, self-descriptions do not represent spontaneous self-definitions. That is, items

were gathered in the pilot study and respondents in the main study were not asked to provide their own self-descriptions. One may question the indigenous nature of items unless the participants are allowed to choose their own self-descriptions. Future research asking for spontaneous self-descriptions may contribute to the study of self in Turkey.

Self-descriptions were also measured in a more abstract and static manner in the present study. Cousins (1989) suggested the existence of a more dynamic self-concept that changes according to the social context in which the self is described (e.g., academic, social, home-related contexts). It may be advisable for future investigators to consider self-concept in different social situations and to assess its dynamic nature. Finally, in my study I focused only on the affective component of well-being, namely, emotional well-being. In the future, researchers should examine the relationships between self, identity, and cognitive components of well-being, such as life-satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 1995).

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the current literature on self in three ways. First, it adopts an emic approach and presents evidence (i.e., domains of self-descriptions indigenous to urban Turkish university students) from Turkey for the view that self is a sociocultural product and is interdependent with the characteristics of particular sociocultural contexts, supporting other research (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 1993). Second, it questions a fundamental assumption that individualism–collectivism is a unidimensional construct. Rather, the results of this research point to the co-existence of independent and interdependent perspectives on personhood and the self, at least, among urban educated Turkish youth. Moving beyond this, these results suggest a distinction between relational and collective aspects of self and identity.

Finally, I examined the relationships between self-conceptions, identity orientations, and emotional well-being, which is rarely done in the literature. The findings imply that both independent and interdependent aspects of self and identity are related to emotional well-being. However, it is clear that much work needs to be done to identify the domains of self and relationships among self, identity, and emotional well-being in Turkey and in other cultures.

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