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Self-Verification and Well-Being of University Students

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Abstract

This research aims to understand how self-evaluations and well-being are related with people's self-verifying preferences in relationships. The measures of the research include Oxford happiness questionnaire, global self-evaluation traits and self-verification items. We conducted multinomial logistic regression analysis. The research sample consisting of sixty university students mentioned that they welcome their either positive or negative attributes and they want other people to welcome and verify these attributes that they think compose their self-concept. They also emphasized that their well-being is high. We can conclude that self-verification, self-evaluations, and well-being are related with each other and so can be improved together.

Keywords: Self-Verification, Well-Being

1. Introduction

Self-works interconnected in molecular, neural, psychological, social levels of mechanisms and represents, effects, and changes itself in this process. (Thagard & Wood, 2015). Person has process-based i.e. self-appraisal, specific i.e. self-love, or results-based i.e. self-esteem in representing. Self's presentation to oneself can be general i.e. self-discovery, experience-based i.e. self-awareness, and false i.e. self-deception. Through self-disclosure and self-expression self-represent oneself to other selves. Communicative process is related with effecting, facilitation for desirable consequences i.e. self-verification and limitation for aversive consequences i.e. self-discipline. Thus, self-changes and develops through life (Thagard & Wood, 2015).

Well-being is about the people's attitudes towards oneself, life, and world. North & Swann, Jr. (2009) mentioned that self-verification relates to well-being. However, we didn't find much research in the literature about how people's self-evaluations and well-being affect self-verifying efforts. The aim of this research is to understand these aspects in detail.

1.1 Literature Review on Self-Verification and Well-Being

1.1.1. Self-Verification

According to the self-verification theory people want others to perceive them as they perceive themselves (Swann Jr., Stein-Seroussi & Giesler, 1992). The research of Swann, Jr., Stein-

Seroussi & Giesler (1992) showed that people with negative self-evaluations preferred to interact with people who appraised them unfavorably due to self-verification by getting valid confirmation about self-concept in epistemic terms, having a compatible and tender relationship in pragmatic terms and also showing a preference for an insightful partner.

In marriages, for example, when one partner demands and other partner withdraws himself/herself, both partners think their vision and what they deem important and valid are uncared, conflict is unresolved, feel themselves less understood and therefore self-ignored, less self-verified, and less satisfied with the marriage interaction (Weger, 2005). It was also noted that women's over-assertiveness have worse effect on husbands' feelings, withdrawal and satisfaction. On the other hand, it was also discussed that women might be dissatisfied to be compelled to be authoritarian and might feel sorry at the same time for husband's withdrawal. This study is also important to consider communication activities besides conflict; that are conversations related with compliance and support; however, in these types of marriages small talks are related with disconfirming communication. He lastly underlined that demand/withdrawal package needs to be opened and studied (Weger, 2005).

Relating with group behavior, Swann Jr., Polzer, Seyle, & Ko (2004) mentioned that self-verification theories explain an individual's need to consolidate in groups and his/her determination on choosing groups, behaving in groups relatedly with his/her personal and social self-views which will support and strengthen these views and relationships in return. London (2003) mentioned that people with accurate positive self-views will be verified in group relations, group learning and development. London (2003) added that people who are low at public self-consciousness, low self-monitor, high self-development orientation are more open to feedback for self-verification that means they are less impressing others, worrying about fitting in but better identifying with the group and negotiating at the same time. People are more comfortable with differences, listening and sharing and more intimate that facilitate leader behavior and group coaching/mentoring. According to the cultural dimension of self-verification, Ross, Heine, Wilson, & Sugimori (2005) found out that Canadians have higher self-enhancing motivation than Japanese have whereas Japanese are more critical about private selves but favorable about relational selves. They discussed that in East Asian culture self-criticism might function as suiting to the social group and accurate self-criticism might provide improvement.

Swann, Jr. & Brooks (2012) mentioned in their article that people try to check if their perceptions reflect reality, if they can protect their existence, and control their environment. They gave the example of vehicle driver that wants to be sure about the way/route is correct and everything is fine with himself/herself, the vehicle and external conditions such as land, sea or air traffic and weather that affect his/her drive to reach the destination. Relatedly with the sense of coherence (Lecky) and self-verification (Swann) literature, they noted that this sense of coherence when strengthened and balanced make up person's self-view to be verified. For people who have negative self-views positive packaged feedbacks, for people who have positive self-views negative packaged feedbacks and for people emotionally fused with progroup behavior positive and negative packaged feedbacks trigger compensatory activity because of challenge and/or deprivation of self-verification. For example, giving feedback to a person who thinks he/she is assertive as not so much assertive enough or placing an assertive person in a silent environment and cut off his/her voice will result in person's certainly not to be silent and be as much assertive as he/she can and put much more effort to self-verify, or vice versa for saying a person that he/she is assertive although he/she evaluates himself/herself as being unassertive/quiet. Also, for example, giving feedback to a person who is prosocially assertive but silent when he/she is alone, that he/she is assertive or silent will result in compensatory activity because his/her self-borders is intertwined with his/her prosocial self. In all these conditions, compensatory activity includes telling others that his/her self-view is correct and therefore changing others' lowering, elevating or non-inclusive view to maintain sense of self coherence and counteract the given feedback.

Furthermore, Swann Jr. & Brooks (2012) pointed out that self-enhancement framework explains self-serving biases that people attribute the reasons of positive outcomes for themselves and hold responsible and accountable others for the reasons of negative outcomes. Self-enhancement framework explains why people with positive self-views don't want to hear and tolerate negative feedback and compensate with positive self-view, however, self-enhancement framework cannot explain why people with negative self-views resist to positive feedback and insist on negative self-view communication. Another framework; uncertainty reduction explains how self-information uncertainty fall to the need of social support in various forms and also increases the emphasis in communication about justice, religion, and social attitudes to cope with uncertainty. Self-affirmation theory as a variation of uncertainty reduction, is due to confirmation of positive aspects in relations. Uncertainty reduction theory like self-enhancement theory is not liable or responsive to people with negative self-view compensation. System justification framework expresses how lack of control perception due to being out group, independently from being out group perception is unbiased or biased, according to gender, race, and school affiliation, or other kind of diversity is related to political participation, calling for divine intervention, and believing the miracles of supernatural beings' powers. This is different from self-enhancement that they try to be part of the other to justify oneself and being in-group member. Terror management theory explains how people are threatened by mortality that invalidates self to be verified and people try to be important social actors, enhancing oneself and being part of a whole. Meaning maintenance theory proponents explain overcoming death anxiety by preserving meaning in all connections that was developed (Swann, Jr. & Brooks, 2012). A similar-looking word, but opposite concept, self-effacement is related with self-sacrifice and transcendence for goodness that is also mentioned in the Bible (Wiederkehr-Pollack, 2007).

1.1.2. Well-Being

The "health" definition of World Health Organization is being and functioning physically good, feeling good, functioning psychologically good, functioning socially good in and contributing to social life (Huppert, 2009). Physical exercise (Biddle & Mutrie, 2008), positive social interactions especially with friends and family regardless of the frequency of interactions (Rook, 1984), job security (De Witte, 1999), sufficient performance monitoring, giving developing feedback and providing control and support (Holman, Chissick & Totterdell, 2002), having power through authenticity/own essence (Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, & Galinsky, 2013), work and life balance (Lunau, Bambra, Eikemo, Van Der Wel, & Dragano, 2014), collaborative organizational culture and problem solving and compromising conflict management styles (Özarallı, 2015), emotional intelligence, supervisor and coworker support, and less surface acting (Johnson, 2004), organizational citizenship behavior (Davila & Finkelstein, 2013), psychological capital (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010), meditative prayer (Maltby, Lewis & Dat, 2008), not perceiving imperfections as psychological weaknesses; instead appreciating virtue and social value of care (Haybron, 2007), intimacy through need fulfillment (Prager & Buhrmester, 1998), listening to pleasant music (Schellenberg, 2012), laughter yoga (Weinberg, Hammond & Cummins, 2014), music therapy i.e. sympathetic musicality in parent/baby and parent/infant relationships and communicative musicality (Trevarthen & Malloch, 2000), art therapy (Malchiodi, 2003), dance and sports (Gurley, Neuringer & Masee, 1984), maintaining trust in interpersonal relations while aging (Poulin & Haase, 2015), spirituality in aging (Jewell, 2004), self-efficacy beliefs in adolescence (Caprara, Steca, Gerbino, Paciello, & Vecchio, 2006), self-direction, achievement, benevolence, and universalism cross cultural value priorities in Turkish and American samples (Çalışkan & Lin, 2018), less shame, less emotional suppression, less aggression, higher self-esteem (Velotti, Botazzi & Caretti, 2017), stress reduction techniques such as quitting smoking, healthy diet, nonsedentary life (Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001), peace attitudes in terms of freedom, equality, tolerance of diversity and politics (Diener & Tov, 2007), harmonious passion (Philippe, Vallerand & Lavigne, 2009), harmonic flow (Carpentier, Mageau & Vallerand, 2012), recovering leisure time activities and low effort activities for people working in demanding jobs

(Sonntag, 2001), holiday (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2012), livable and healthier cities (Stibe & Larson, 2016) are among the emphasized relations in the well-being literature.

In addition, millennium ecosystem report (2005) expressed that well-being is also a very related concept with an ecosystem. Ecosystem is defined as continuous and interacting environmental system that their services maintain people's lives through providing fresh water, food, regulating climate, flood and disease, purifying waters, supporting nutrient cycling, forming soil, affecting production and social relations in other words; several aspects of well-being.

Diener, Sapyta & Suh (1998) emphasized the importance of subjective well-being; in other words, one's self-evaluation about functioning well in almost all aspects of life. Diener, Sapyta & Suh (1998) added that positive attributes like extraversion, and self-esteem don't always relate to well-being or the reasons for satisfaction and happiness may be culture-specific and individually subjective. Our social conditions and environment in early childhood and later life and our behaviors affect our well-being which relates with physical health and ways of thinking. Ryff, Singer & Love (2004)'s findings about the relationship between the two key types of well-being and biology showed that women having eudaimonic well-being that is related with psychological growth have lower salivary cortisol, pro-inflammatory cytokines, better cardiovascular symptoms, sleep quality and left side frontal activation and people having hedonic well-being related with positive affect has better HDL (good cholesterol). Bellinger (2018) emphasized that mortality, life expectancy indexes and health data and information for education, income, and human development are considered as other objective reports of well-being.

Besides the definitions, the relations of well-being with other phenomena, in the next paragraphs; the literature related with the ways to develop well-being is discussed. For example, Ryff & Singer (2008) explained that personal unity in admitting one's favorable and unfavorable aspects, compassion and empathy in relations, achieving potential, meaning making are important for well-being. Fava & Ruini (2003) explained well-being therapy sessions through the help of the therapist for counselee's figuring out one's own life events and internal psychological processes and achieving six features of Ryff's conceptualization of well-being; environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, autonomy, self-acceptance and positive relations with others. Zarb (2007) emphasized that past and present life problems, attitudes and coping patterns that make life difficult can be changed with how people approach and shape their lives with effective cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies. In addition, Herbert & Forman (2011) mentioned that getting aware of everything with acceptance and mindfulness will help us to create cognitive, emotional and behavioral well-being.

In addition, according to Fredrickson (2000) positive emotions cumulate, flex and broad thought ways and behavioral possibilities expand and build personal, physical, intellectual, social, etc. resources. Fredrickson's broad-and-build model leads to supportive networking, added value of positive emotions in relationships and/or marriages that automatically functions as inhibitory for escalating conflicts, stress, etc., not only less or absence of illnesses i.e. cardiovascular illnesses, but also health and well-being with boosting mindful emotions such as contentment, sparing more time with nature, to imagination, physical exercises and relaxation (Fredrickson, 2000).

Treleaven (2018) emphasizes that mindfulness exercises are useful for erasing silent suffering, healing, staying within the window of tolerable safety, integration, optimal arousal, mindful social engagement, and well-being. He used Medusa analogy referring to Levine's book "Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness". Accordingly, beautiful winged mortal creature from Gorgon family, Medusa with her hair is made up of poisonous snakes turns people whom looks at her to stone. Greek hero Perseus asked to goddess of knowledge, Athena how to defeat her. Athena advised Perseus to use shield reflecting Medusa's gaze and defeating her and that's what Perseus did. Accordingly, with the legend, sticking to look at her/symbol, hunt

lithe, freezes and dissolves like trauma features. Therefore, not to be caught by trauma/Medusa gaze, it is important to focus on mindfulness breathing. With mindfulness meditation people get aware of interceptors and at the same time see outside without the threatening and stressful trauma glasses and learn to listening both; inside and outside of comfort zone, looking from window of tolerance by making effective the personal boundary. Besides mindfulness, building safe places; well lit, with privacy protection, accessible exists, predictable schedule, optimum scent and simple smell free of cosmetic chemicals are crucial for adjusted social context, neutrality and comfort for differences and feeling well.

Sternberg (2009) expressed that even it is real or placebo effect, believing in healing and having hope for healing are effective and Sternberg gathered healing architectures heading under three components; patient safety (i.e. less infection, injury, and medical error), environmental stressors (i.e. less noise, more comfort, light, warmth, facilities, relaxing scents), and ecological health (i.e. green space, nature, and air quality, etc.) and noted that this is especially crucial in hospitals that has goal of saking for the patients', health professionals', staff' and caregivers' well-being, be like living in sweet home that may lead to more safety, less stressors, and more health in return, besides technological/robotic health equipment. Also, Sternberg added that healing in the open areas include walks in marketplaces, landmarks, theme parks, shopping centers, sport areas, etc. Sternberg gave Japanese and Chinese examples of harmonic landscape design on hills with waterfalls, soil, trees, stones, rocks, flowers, birds, and wooden bridges underneath full-of-fish ponds, etc. Sternberg emphasized that sun, sea, and pleasant memories, Crete villages have healing effect on and are special for her. With cognitions, chemicals in body, and conditioning and learning processes the healing effect circulates in the body and transfer the sense of well-being to the next visits to these healing places.

All in all, ways of well-being interventions may also be useful in the frameworks i.e. self-enhancement, uncertainty reduction, system justification, terror management, and meaning maintenance (Swann, Jr. & Brooks, 2012) as well as developing self-verification aspects in a healthy way (North & Swann, Jr., 2009).

2. Method

2.1. Sample

Sixty university students in Istanbul University were participated in the study, aged to 18 to 25 including postgraduates. Convenience sampling method was used for data collection and regarding demographics participants were %50 female and %50 male.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002) consists of twenty-nine items evaluating person's happiness towards life aspects. In our sample, we found out that general scores for well-being is high ($M= 3,41$, $S.D.= 0,51$) and reliability indicator Cronbach Alpha for these items was 0,88; very high. Due to highest order validity; that is construct validity (Hills & Argyle, 2002) and reliability checks, the measure was utilized in our study. Also, we found out that well-being scores don't change according to statistically significantly according to demographics sex.

2.2.2. Global Self-Evaluation Traits and Self-Verification

Global self-evaluation traits (Alicke, 1985) were studied for understanding global self-concept. Self-verification items; "Would you like others to evaluate your positive qualities in the same way?", "Would you like others to evaluate your negative attributes in the same way?", "Would you like your negative attributes to be better evaluated by others? were formed according to the all literature that was considered in the literature review. "Would you like others to evaluate your negative attributes" question was to understand whether they're certain about self-verification or

they prefer both verification and enhancement. In our sample, reliability indicator Cronbach Alpha for 3 items of measuring self-verification was 0.82; very high. We found out that self-verification scores don't change according to statistically significantly according to demographics sex.

For all the measures, we made translations of the scales and items and third parties checked the translation and comprehensibility of the scales and items. We hypothesized that how people evaluate themselves and how they feel about themselves affect self-verifying efforts.

3. Results

The analyses were conducted to understand the self-concept categories and well-being attributes that are statistically significant for self-verification. We tested this through appropriate statistical technique for multicategory variables; multinomial logistic regression (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). According to the multinomial logistic regression, "cooperative", "trustful", "sincere", "self-disciplined", "obedient", "persistent" attributes have the least point categories that they evaluated themselves; instead they think themselves as "considerate", "friendly", "respectful", "dependable", "resourceful", "polite", "pleasant", "loyal", "clean", "versatile", "persistent", "well-read/enlightened", "sensitive", "level-headed/calm and sensible", and "self-satisfied". Multinomial logistic regression model for self-verification for these positive self-evaluation categories were significant (Significance: 1.000, Chi-Square: 23.546, Cox & Snell: 0.325, Nagelkerke: 0.991, McFadden: 0.988). Multinomial Logistic regression model for self-verification for the negative evaluations were significant (Significance: 1.000, Chi-Square: 23.822, Cox & Snell: 0.328, Nagelkerke: 1000, McFadden: 1.000) (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). These results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Self-Verification for Self-Evaluation

I don't evaluate myself as...	I evaluate myself as...	Results
Cooperative	Considerate	Self-verification for negative evaluation traits is significant.
Trustful	Friendly	
Sincere	Respectful	Self-verification for positive evaluation traits is significant.
Self-disciplined	Dependable	
Obedient	Resourceful	
Persistent	Polite	
	Pleasant	
	Loyal	
	Clean	
	Versatile	
	Persistent	
	Well-read/Enlightened	
	Sensitive	
	Level-headed/Calm and	
	Sensible	
	Self-satisfied	

Related with the well-being; "I'm pleased with the way I am.", "I'm intensely interested in other people.", "I feel that life is very rewarding.", "I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone.", "I wake up feeling rested.", "I'm particularly optimistic about the future.", "I find most things amusing.", "I'm always committed and involved.", "Life is good.", "I think that the world is a good place.", "I laugh a lot.", "I'm well satisfied about everything in my life.", "I think I look attractive.", "There's a fit between what I would like to do and what I've done.", "I'm very happy.", and "I find beauty in things." items were statistically significant and meaningful. Multinomial logistic regression model for positive self-verification (Significance: 1.000, Chi-Square: 23.822,

Cox & Snell: 0.328, Nagelkerke: 1.000, McFadden: 1.000) was significant (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018). These results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Self-Verification for Well-Being

I evaluate myself as...	Results
I'm pleased the way I'm.	Self-verification for well-being is significant.
I'm intensely interested in other people.	
I feel that life is very rewarding.	
I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone.	
I wake up feeling rested.	
I'm particularly optimistic about the future.	
I find most things amusing.	
I'm always committed and involved.	
Life is good.	
I think that the world is a good place.	
I laugh a lot.	
I'm well satisfied about everything in my life.	
I think I look attractive.	
There's a fit between what I would like to do and what I've done.	
I'm very happy.	
I find beauty in things.	

4. Discussion and Conclusion

4.1. Discussion

The results showed that participants want other sides to verify them instead of enhancement. If they preferred mostly self-enhancement and disapproved self-verification, we would probably have different well-being results and discuss to optimize self-verification and self-enhancement with kinds of well-being interventions that we emphasized in the literature review.

However, related with the self-verification literature, the preference for self-verification might be related with wishing intimate relations or at least as Wright, King & Rosenberg (2014) found out feeling less lonely and stressed with satisfying social support. However, a dilemma lies here is that people want self-verifying feedback for developing intimate relations that might hold high rejection risk and make them vulnerable to be hurt and end the relationship. In fact, as Kwang & Swann, Jr. (2010) pointed out people prefer self-verification for low rejection risk relationships. The results of this research also showed that the sample less evaluated themselves in self-discipline which means they prefer limiting aversive consequences as Thagard & Wood (2015) mentioned. All in all, these reminded us about what Geçtan (2016) emphasized about living beings i.e. animals that they try to find the optimum distance to heat each other and not to disturb one another at the same time.

Besides candid relations, this also reminded us Goffman (2014)'s discussion about the asymmetry in communication process and visibility of the subject. According to him, the extent for one's self-expression (in a way ability to impress) has two different kinds of signals: the impression one gives and the impression one creates on social environment. The impression one gives involve communicating with representations that have symbolic meanings. The impression one creates on social environment has a broader scope of communication which includes different kinds of actions that the person has less control over. However, the person might give wrong information in both possibilities either through aware or unaware deception or acting. The people's responses might involve checking the accuracy between the person's uncontrollable behaviors with his/her controllable statements. This reveals the asymmetry in the communication process and witnesses are more advantaged than the subject. Thus, we can conclude that communication process helps

people to realize and understand representing self i.e. self-deception and effecting self i.e. self-verification, changing self in the process, and helps people to understand each other better. Also, for example, Robbins and Judge (2017) mentioned that people might select what to perceive, draw inferences from single dominant/preferable attributes, favor some attributes over others, and categorize and judge to test their social predictions, process and interpret this information to ease, shorten, and make the perception process more practical. However, self-verification might provide this through less biased and more accurate through communicating, recognizing, and negotiating.

Therefore, as North & Swann, Jr. (2009) mentioned psychological consistency, and better health are obvious bright effects and more predictable, compatible, qualified, close and trustful relationships are other bright side effect of self-verification. They also emphasized that lowering self-esteem to the levels of affecting the individual's adjustment and perpetuating depression through negative self-verification that is far from being accurate and through negative-affective crossfire for not meeting happiness needs are clear dark effects. Suffering relationships and tendency to accept psychological maltreatment are other dark side effects of self-verification. Therefore, as North & Swann, Jr. (2009) mentioned self-verification being an indispensable part of self-acceptance, it is only useful in the extent for providing positive change and reach "sukha". The sample of the research has the attributes of Y generation those born after 1980s and before millenium (Y) (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000). Reviewing the literature in Turkey, we found out that there are some, though not much, researches related with a sample of Y generation university students in Istanbul. As an example, Ordun & Akün (2017) mentioned that effecting self i.e. self-actualization has positive impact on specific self-representation i.e. self-efficacy through self-change and emotional intelligence have positive effects on self-presenting, affecting, and changing process. Since self-actualization is very related with eudaimonic well-being (Ryff, Singer & Love, 2004), we might expect that eudaimonic well-being affect changing self, however this needs further examination.

4.2. Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

The research sample might be more inclusive in terms of other generations, in other cities in Turkey, in other countries, in different organizations etc. As an example, in different organizations and contexts, the difficulty of being frank; being honest and straightforward in the sake of forming intimate and sincere relationships can be misunderstood and unagreeable according to the relativity of diversity of experiences and conditions. Thus, the importance of our subject; self-verification based on self and mutual recognition as we emphasized in detail is needed. Therefore, it can be wonderful to research how in different organizational lives and organizational formal and informal group processes people live through this intimacy and exclusion dilemma in self-verification process and how they develop their self-evaluations and create positive change for negative self-verification attributes that we lack this information for this research.

In addition, this research might be generalizable only to some extent and additional research might be needed for other universities' students. These reasons can explain why not all of the items in self-evaluations and well-being inventories were found statistically significant and we reported only the significant relations for our research report not to be confusing and be more simple. As an example, in the well-being inventory, the items related with motivation that weren't found statistically significant are important to consider developing well-being. Also, in the theoretical background of the concepts, we felt constrained to use the literature integrated with ways of developing well-being however due to our sample and many number of the questions we couldn't question about the ways that they heal themselves and develop well-being and how this affects self-verification and also we could not ask about how they form their self-concepts and create positive change for self-verified negative attributes.

Furthermore, for measuring self-verification we developed self-verification items inspiring by the literature, although they are valid and reliable, there might be other ways for measuring the concept. We also needed to give many self-evaluation trait options to take practical self-description in a palpable way. The same is true with well-being that might be studied another way. Thus, we measured with appropriate statistical method to test research model that is plausibly constructed by what we understood from literature review around the possible relationships between the concepts i.e. self-evaluations, well-being, and self-verification. Therefore, there might be other ways to measure and make analyses due to how one constructs the research model.

4.3. Conclusion

The research reveals the importance of self-verification in terms of self-evaluations and well-being. The sample preferred both positive and negative self-attributes' being accepted as they are in interpersonal relations. The sample emphasized that they have positive attitudes towards themselves and life. The literature and this research offer useful knowledge, implications, and ways of interventions for understanding how people's self-concepts, well-being, and what they expect in relationships i.e. verifying and/or enhancing are related with each other and so can be improved together.

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