

Original Article

The Correlation between the Inclination to Ethical Values and Self-Actualization among University Students and the Associated Factors

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Abstract

Background: Educational institutions have an important role in training the individuals who have ethical values, are aware of their responsibilities, and are self-realized.

Objective: This study was conducted to determine the correlation between the inclination to ethical values and self-actualization among university students and the associated factors.

Methodology: A correlational descriptive design was used in this research. This study was conducted with 1643 students. In the study, the descriptive questionnaire form, the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale, and the Self-actualization subscale of the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile were used.

Results: In the study, it was found that both the ethical disposition and the self-actualization mean scores of those who were female, were studying in the department of midwifery, were living their department, were living with their families, took the course of ethics and gave reaction towards the events that were not their concern were high.

Conclusion: The demographic characteristics affect both ethical inclination and self-actualization and this effect is mostly provided by studying in the department willingly. There is a need of improving the infrastructure of the educational institutes in order to train the self-confident students who are aware of the ethical values.

Keywords: Ethics, self-actualization, ethical inclination, ethical values, university student

Introduction

Ethics are the rules that are used together with morals but are deeper than morals and determine the behaviors required to be obeyed in a certain field by defining the good-bad and the right-wrong (Akkaya & Yildirim, 2017). Ethics deals with the aim of life, mentions about an ethical life, examines ethical problems in the society,

and forms universal rules (Gök, 2002; Kaya, 2015) Professional ethics are the ethical principles and standards shaping the behaviors in professional life and guiding about what should and should not be done (Baysan Araaci & Mutlu, 2018). The ethics in nursing is to protect the rights of patients, provide benefit and make good and correct decisions with patients (Tazegun & Celebioglu, 2016). The fact that nurses perform

their practices in accordance with the ethical principles and treat sensitively in ethical issues will lead to an effective and quality health service and a more productive working in an ethical environment (Yilmaz & Yildirim, 2019). Ethical sensitivity ensure that healthcare professionals understand the individuals they provide care and provide them a better care (Dikmen, 2013). The nurses working in a more sensitive institution in terms of ethics will provide more qualified patient care (Khorshid, 2017).

In a study conducted in South Korea, it was determined that the ethical sensitivity for patient-oriented care was higher in the final-year students compared to the first-year students and the ethical sensitivity of students increased as a result of increasing the ethical content in nursing education. And in the study conducted with the nursing students in Turkey, it was determined that the nursing students had medium-level ethical sensitivity, there are statistically significant differences between the grades of the students, the state of taking ethics classes, the state of experiencing ethical dilemma, satisfaction with nursing department, and their ethical sensitivity levels (Boz & Ince, 2019).

As the individuals have an effort of doing the best and competence by their nature, there is a potential of self-actualization and self-development all the time. The concept of self-actualization includes the efforts for the competence, actualization, and development of the individual (Aydin, Yilmaz, & Altinkurt, 2013).

Özkan and Yilmaz stated in their study that the self-actualization levels of the nurses increased as they got older. It was stated in another study that the nurses having a bachelor's degree undergraduate degree had higher self-actualization levels compared to the nurses having an associate degree and being graduated from vocational school of health. The fact that nurses reach to the self-actualization level is important in terms of their individual and professional motivations and keeping pace with developments and changes (Unsar, Akgun, Seda, & Özgul, 2011).

Methodology

Study design and sample: The population of this correlational and descriptive study was composed of the students studying in Malatya

Inonu University Faculty of Health Sciences, Nursing Faculty and Adiyaman University Health High School. As the whole population was aimed to be included in the study, no sampling method was used. The study was completed with 1643 students (Inonu University 1202, Adiyaman University 441 students) and 95% of the population was reached. Adiyaman is located in the Southeastern Turkey and Malatya is located in Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. There are differences between the placement scores of these universities in these cities located close to each other. In order to determine whether or not there were other differences between the students studying in these universities, the students of these two universities were selected for the sample.

Data collection and instruments: The descriptive questionnaire form prepared by the researchers using the related literature and including 12 close-ended questions, the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale, and the Self-actualization subscale of the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile were used as the data collection tools.

The Inclination to Ethical Values Scale:The validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Kaya in 2015 and this scale is a 5-point likert type scale with 16 items in total. The scale is composed of 3 subscales: Love (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8), Justice (9,10,11,12,13), and Cooperation (14,15,16). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.90.(Kaya, 2015). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.89 in the present study.

Self-Actualization Subscale of the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile: Walker et al., developed the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile in 1987 and Esin conducted the validity and reliability study of its self-actualization subscale in 1999. The self-actualization subscale is a 4-point likert scale including a total of 13 items. Its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.77 (Esin, 1999). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.87 in the present study.

Data Analysis: SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 17.0 packaged software was used for data analysis. Number, percentage, mean, analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples t-test, correlation and regression analysis were used in the data assessment. In the study, the significance level was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Approval: In order to conduct the study, a written permission was received from Inonu University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (2018/3-14). Also, verbal consent was received from the faculty deans of Inonu University and the director of the High school of Adiyaman University.

Results

It was determined that the average age of the participants was 20.72 ± 1.92 , most of them were females (73.2%), received education in Inonu University (73.2%), studied in nursing department (55.4%), were the first-year students (29.3%), liked their department (40.8%), lived with their families (47.0%), did not give reaction to the events that were not their concerns (52.2%) and took the course of ethics (57.0%) (Table 1).

In the study, it was determined that all subscale and total mean scores of the inclination to ethical values scale were higher in women compared to men and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. The self-actualization mean score of women was higher than the mean score of men but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was found that all the subscale and total mean scores of the inclination to ethical values were higher in the students studying in Adiyaman University compared to the students studying in Inonu University and the difference was significantly significant between the groups in terms of all the subscales, except for cooperation subscale, and the total score. The self-actualization subscale mean score of the students studying in Inonu University was higher but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total mean scores of inclination to ethical values scale were higher in the students studying in Midwifery department compared to the students studying in the other departments and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. The self-actualization mean scores of the students studying in midwifery department were higher compared to the others and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total mean score of the inclination to ethical values scale, except for its cooperation

subscale, were higher in the 1st -year students compared to the other students but there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups except for the justice subscale. The self-actualization mean score of the 2nd -year students was higher compared to the others but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total mean scores of the inclination to ethical values scale were higher in the students who liked their departments compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. The self-actualization mean score of the students who liked their department were higher compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total mean scores of the scale of the inclination to ethical values scale were higher in those living with their families compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. The self-actualization mean score of the students living with their families was higher than the score of the others but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total mean scores of the inclination to ethical values scale of the students who reacted to the events that were not their concern were higher compared to the students who did not react and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. It was determined that the self-actualization mean scores of the students who reacted to the events that were not their concern were higher than the students who did not react to the events that were not their concern and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2).

In the study, it was determined that mean scores of all the subscale of the inclination to ethical values scale, except for the justice subscale and its total mean score were higher in the students who took the course of ethics than those who did not take but the difference between the groups were not statistically significant. The self-actualization mean score of the students who took the course of ethics was higher compared to those who did not take the course of ethics but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2).

It was determined that there was a positive significant correlation between the subscales and total scores of the inclination to ethical values scale and the self-actualization subscale (Table 3). It was determined that the socio-demographic

characteristics of the participants had a significant effect of 54% in the inclination to ethical values and 90% in self-actualization (Table 4).

Table 1. The Distribution of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the University Students (n: 1643)

Characteristics		N	%
Gender	Female	1202	73.2
	Male	441	26.8
University	Inonu University	1202	73.2
	Adiyaman University	441	26.8
Department	Nursing	911	55.4
	Midwifery	356	21.7
	Audiology	191	11.6
	Physiotherapy	185	11.3
Year	1	482	29.3
	2	397	24.2
	3	391	23.8
	4	373	22.7
The status of liking your department?	Yes	670	40.8
	A little	661	40.2
	No	312	19.0
Who do you live with?	Alone	40	2.4
	Family	772	47.0
	Friends	164	10.0
	Dormitory	667	40.6
Giving reaction to the events that are not your concern?	Yes	785	47.8
	No	858	52.2
Taking the course of ethics?	Yes	937	57.0
	No	706	43.0
Age		X±SD 20.72±1.92	

Table 2. Comparison of the Socio-demographic Characteristics with the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale and the Self-Actualization Subscale

		Inclination to Ethical Values				Self-actualization
		Love X±SD	Justice X±SD	Cooperation X±SD	Total X±SD	X±SD
Gender	Female	34.38±4.43	20.95±3.45	11.37±2.35	66.72±8.59	36.56±6.57
	Male	33.44±5.06	20.31±3.94	10.98±2.71	64.74±9.76	35.98±6.91
t		3.688	3.218	2.878	3.994	1.549
p		.008	.009	.000	.002	.254
University	Inonu	33.98±4.77	20.60±3.61	11.23±2.52	65.82±9.20	36.43±6.73
	Adiyaman	34.53±4.18	21.27±3.52	11.37±2.28	67.18±8.21	36.32±6.52
t		-2.116	-3.358	-1.010	-2.719	.297
p		.034	.001	.313	.007	.766
Department	Nursing	33.89±4.91	20.72±3.75	11.26±2.45	65.88±9.49	36.11±6.87
	Midwifery	34.64±4.02	21.51±3.13	11.61±2.30	67.76±7.61	37.43±6.57
	Audiology	33.87±4.38	20.26±3.35	10.64±2.72	64.78±8.52	35.49±5.93
	Physiotherapy	34.58±4.39	20.22±3.68	11.30±2.44	66.11±8.75	36.81±6.35
F		3.014	7.834	6.392	5.616	4.827
p		.029	.000	.000	.001	.002
Year	1	34.25±4.20	21.02±3.46	11.21±2.40	66.38±8.24	36.32±6.18
	2	33.84±5.27	20.91±3.68	11.42±2.60	66.18±9.97	36.61±7.11
	3	34.14±4.65	20.77±3.51	11.18±2.44	66.23±8.86	36.51±6.68
	4	34.14±4.38	20.35±3.74	11.27±2.42	65.77±8.83	36.19±6.81
F		.729	2.680	.743	.441	.316
p		.534	.046	.526	.724	.814
The status of liking your department?	Yes	34.72±4.51	21.24±3.53	11.62±2.39	67.59±8.79	38.42±6.57
	A little	34.09±4.22	20.73±3.27	11.26±2.30	66.09±8.08	35.70±6.12
	No	32.94±5.40	19.90±4.18	10.54±2.78	63.39±10.34	33.56±6.89
F		16.048	15.231	20.747	24.091	67.766
p		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Who do you live with?	Alone	31.07±7.68	18.82±5.76	10.40±2.85	60.30±14.49	35.42±7.77
	Family	34.52±4.40	21.15±3.36	11.44±2.43	67.13±8.49	36.82±6.61
	Friends	33.94±4.62	20.22±4.03	11.23±2.51	65.40±9.22	36.15±6.85
	Dormitory	33.91±4.56	20.61±3.52	11.13±2.44	65.65±8.81	36.05±6.90
F		8.372	8.679	3.764	9.980	2.003
p		.000	.000	.010	.000	.112

The status of giving reaction to the events that are not your concern?	Yes	34.42±4.49	21.01±3.54	11.66±2.28	67.10±8.72	37.07±6.77
	No	33.86±4.73	20.57±3.64	10.91±2.57	65.35±9.10	35.80±6.52
t		2.431	2.476	6.257	3.966	3.861
p		.015	.013	.000	.000	.000
The status of taking the course of ethics?	Yes	34.25±4.73	20.77±3.67	11.37±2.41	66.40±9.15	36.42±6.86
	No	33.97±4.48	20.79±3.50	11.14±2.53	65.91±8.70	36.39±6.41
t		1.195	-.100	1.891	1.097	.084
p		.232	.920	.059	.273	.933

Table 3. The Correlation between the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale and the subscale of Self-Actualization

Inclination to Ethical Values	Self-actualization	
	r	p
Love subscale	.429**	.000
Justice subscale	.345**	.000
Cooperation subscale	.404**	.000
Total	.472**	.000

**p<0.001

Table 4. Regression Analysis of Inclination to Ethical Values and Self Actualization with the Characteristics of the University Students

Model	Inclination To Ethical Values					Self-actualization				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	sig	B	Std Error	Beta	t	sig
(Constant)	76.760	1.762		43.555	.000	44.731	1.287		34.743	.000
Gender	-1.625	.496	-.080	-3.273	.001	-.148	.363	-.010	-.409	.682
University	1.457	.509	.072	2.864	.004	-.175	.372	-.012	-.471	.637
Department	-.072	.223	-.008	-.324	.746	-.159	.163	-.025	-.976	.329
Year	-.394	.219	-.050	-1.799	.072	.019	.160	.003	.117	.907
Liking your	-1.897	.301	-.157	-6.303	.000	-2.558	.220	-.284	-11.630	.000

department										
Who do you live with?	-.567	.226	-.062	-2.511	.012	-.503	.165	-.074	-3.051	.002
Giving reaction to the events that are not your concern	-1.830	.435	-.102	-4.208	.000	-1.118	.318	-.084	-3.519	.000
Taking the course of ethics?	-1.032	.502	-.057	-2.058	.040	.028	.366	.002	.078	.938
	R= .233 R²= .054 F= 11.701 p= 0.000					R= .299 R²= .090 F= 20.081 p=.000				

Discussion

The results of the study conducted to determine the correlation between the inclination to ethical values and self-actualization among university students and the associated factors were discussed with the relevant literature.

In the study, it was determined that all the subscale and total score of the inclination to ethical values scale were higher in women than men and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. In the studies conducted by Langlais and Bent, Sari et al., and Uzum and Sivrikaya, it was determined that the ethical mean scores of women were higher the ethical mean scores of men (Langlais & Bent, 2014; Sari, Baysal, Celik, & Eser, 2018; Uzum & Sivrikaya, 2018). It is considered that the ethical inclination of women is higher as women think more elaborately. It was determined that the self-actualization mean score of women was higher compared to men but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant. Heydari et al., determined in their study that the self-actualization scores of women were higher than those of men (Heydari, Madani, & Rostami, 2013).

It was found that the inclination to ethical values mean scores of the students studying in Adiyaman University were higher than those of the students studying in Inonu University and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. The self-actualization mean score of the students studying in Inonu University was higher but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant. It was thought that

the self-actualization scores were also higher as the university placement scores of the students, who were entitled to enter Inonu University, are higher than those of the students of Adiyaman University.

It was determined that the inclination to ethical values mean score of the students studying in the midwifery department was higher compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2). Jafari et al. found in their study that the ethical attitude mean scores of the midwifery students were higher than those of the nursing students (Jafari, Khatony, Abdi, & Jafari, 2019). It was considered that as the gynecology and obstetrics clinics have a higher risk of being exposed to unethical behaviors, the midwives who would work primarily in these departments gave higher importance to ethical values so their scores were higher. It was determined that the self-actualization mean scores of the students studying in the midwifery department were higher compared to the students studying in the other departments and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. Doren and Ju Kang determined in their study that the students participating in the social activities at school and obtaining professional knowledge and skills had high self-actualization scores (Doren & Kang, 2016). It is thought that the self-actualization scores of the students studying in the midwifery department were high as all of the students were female.

It was determined that the first-year students had higher scores of inclination to ethical values compared to the students studying in the other

class but this difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2). Iorga et al. determined in their study that the second-year students had higher unethical behaviors compared to the students studying in the other grades (Iorga, Ciuhodaru, & Romedea, 2013). In the study, it was considered that the first-year students had higher ethical inclination as they have fear about making mistakes. It was determined that the second-year students had higher self-actualization mean scores but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant.

It was determined that the inclination to ethical values mean scores of the students who liked their departments were higher compared to the others and the difference between the groups was statistically significant. Cho and Hwang found in their study that the ethical awareness levels of the students who were satisfied with the nursing profession were higher (Cho & Hwang, 2019). As loving a labor (job, university department) brings more responsibilities for the individuals, it decreases the rate of making a mistake. For this reason, it was considered that people behaved more ethically in the jobs they love doing.

It was determined that the self-actualization mean score of the students who liked their department were higher compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2). It was considered that the self-actualization scores of the students liking their department were high as loving a job increases the motivation of the individuals and brings more success.

In the study, it was determined that the mean score of inclination to ethical values the students living with their families was higher compared to the other students and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2). As living with the family brings more responsibility and rules, it was thought that this situation increased the inclination to ethical values.

It was found that the self-actualization mean score of the students living with their families was higher compared to the others but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2). It was considered that their self-actualization scores were high as the students living with their families made less effort for meeting their individual requirements (physiological needs, safety, love etc.).

In the study, it was determined that the mean scores the scale of inclination to ethical values of the students who reacted to the events that were not their concerns were higher compared to the students who did not react and the difference between the groups was statistically significant (Table 2). It is thought that the students behaving in accordance with the ethical values had higher mean scores as this brings the skill of being objective to the events and improves their sensitivity. It was determined that the self-actualization mean score of the students who gave reaction to the events that were not their concern were higher than the students who did not react to the events that were not their concern and the difference between the groups was statistically significant.

It was found that the inclination to ethical values and self-actualization mean score of the students who took the course of ethics was higher compared to the students who did not take the course of ethics but the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (Table 2). Namadi et al., found in their study that the ethical training increased the knowledge level of the students on ethics (Namadi, Hemmati-Maslakpak, Moradi & Ghasemzadeh, 2019). It was considered that the students taking the course of ethics had higher ethical inclination and self-actualization scores as this brings some advantages such as increasing the self-confidence, improving the problem solving skills, knowing the ethical principles, and making positive contribution to the decision making processes by experiencing less dilemmas.

In the study, it was determined that there was a positive significant correlation between the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale and self-actualization subscale (Table 3). It was thought that the self-actualization levels of the individuals increased as they have more self confidence by behaving ethically.

In the study, it was determined that the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants influenced the inclination to ethical values and self-actualization and this was associated with the status of liking the department (Table 4).

Conclusion: In the study, it was determined that the inclination to ethical values and self-actualization scores of the students, who were female, were studying in the department of midwifery and the first year, were liking the

department, were living with family, and took the course of ethics, were higher. It was found that the demographic data were important especially in inclination to ethical values and self-actualization. It is recommended for the students to take the course of ethics in their education and to prepare the curriculums supporting their self-development.

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