

CONSUMPTION OF SELF HELP IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY:
THE CASE OF YOUNG PROFESSIONAL TURKISH WOMEN

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**PROFESYONEL KİMLİK İNŞAASINDA KİŞİSEL GELİŞİM TÜKETİMİNİN ROLÜ:
GENÇ PROFESYONEL TÜRK KADINLARI**

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- 1) Kültürel Tüketim
- 2) Profesyonel Kimlik
- 3) Kadın Bilgi İşçileri
- 4) Maneviyat'ın metalaşması
- 5) Özyardım

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Cultural Consumption
- 2) Professional Identity
- 3) Female Knowledge Workers
- 4) Commodification of Spirituality
- 5) Self-help

ABSTRACT

The self-help phenomenon grows more popular throughout the entire world. The current endeavor sought out to assess the consumption of self-help materials among young professional women in Turkey. The approach taken was a qualitative one, implemented through the combination of thematic analysis of self-help books and interviewing of a sample of fifteen professional women in Turkey. The results revealed some existent connections between the variables involved in the consumption of self-help, yet an absolute conclusion was not validated. This outcome supports the need for additional research in the field.

ÖZET

Kişisel gelişim fenomeni tüm dünyada gün geçtikçe daha da popüler hale gelmektedir. Bu çalışmada kişisel gelişim ile ilgili materyallerin Türkiye’deki genç profesyonel kadınlar tarafından tüketiminin sunulmaktadır. Araştırma, kişisel gelişim kitaplarının tematik analiz ve 15 profesyonel kadınla yapılan mülakatlaradayan nitel bir yaklaşımla yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar kişisel gelişim tüketiminde yer alan değişkenlerin aralarında varolan bazı bağlantıları aydınlatır da, mutlak bir sonuç sunmamaktadır. Bu alanda daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The societies of today co-exist in a complex context, in which paradoxes represent constant presences. While the focus of political and economic agents seems to fall on the creation of an open international community, the desires of social and cultural communities continue to be different. Discrepancies occur in the approach to divinity, to life or death, to the way in which life is lived, to the means in which human rights are respected or to the simple means in which people across the world spend their leisure time. But what seems to be universally valid is that the pressures felt by individuals across the world are increasing on continuous bases.

The individuals of the modern day society are more competitive than ever; they come to be ruled by values different from those of their ancestors and they are faced with more pressures in all familial, societal and workplace climates. Given these intense strains, people of the modern day society are in constant need of new sources of energy, motivation and internal balance. A part of this role is now coming to be played by the offerings of self-help.

The current project is as such focused on analyzing the consumption of self-help through the lenses of the young female professionals in Turkey. The following paragraphs explain numerous elements linked to the topic, such as the rationale behind it, the purpose of the project, the need for it, the background or the approach used in addressing it.

1.1. Rationale of problem

The consumption of self-help literature by the young Turkish professionals is rather limitedly addressed within the specialized literature – Unat, Kandiyoti and Kiray (1981) for instance detail the life and condition of the Turkish woman, but make no reference to their consumption of self-help literature.

This as such generates the need for such a research endeavor. But this issue represents specifically only the particular segment of the population onto which the research project would be constructed, with the real reason behind this project being represented by the increasing popularity of self-help and its adjacent industry.

Self-help has created a new phenomenon in which each and every single individual strives to become a better self in order to attain better things in life. The inhabitants of the modern day society have as such commenced a struggle with their own and they desire to create improved versions of themselves.

Self-help is a multi billion dollar industry, creating and selling anything from videos, books, audio cassettes and CDs to T-shirts and other memorabilia scripted with messages aimed to improve the individual – or the perception of the individual. The industry is often blamed for being faulty and for supporting the belief that everybody can achieve greatness. Such a system of thought is dangerous in a context in which only a small percentage of the global population would achieve some degree of greatness.

Furthermore, while self-help has, in some instances, generated positive results within the lives of individuals, the results were generally short lived. Self-help cannot improve the life of people, it can only act as an enhancer of the perception people have

over themselves and over their life. They can also act as motivators stimulating people to take the necessary measures and improve their lives. But eventually however, their results wear off and the initial problems resurface, to once again pose threats for the individual.

All in all then, self-help is a new phenomenon impacting people across the globe. And despite the negative dimensions it integrates, fact remains that millions of individuals throughout the Earth rely on the teachings of the industry in order to cope with the pressures of the modern day society. In other words then, as the moral values change and as religion plays a more and more decreased role within our lives, self-help is here to provide a new sense of values – the values of the self, of self improvement and of self benefits (Rhodes, 2006). And the popularity of this phenomenon gives rise to an academic interest and the subsequent studies which follow – such as the present endeavor.

1.2. Purpose of study

The current endeavor is characterized by two specific purposes, which are in fact perceived as its two primary significances. In this order of ideas, the first purpose and significance of the thesis is represented by the theoretical dimension. At this stance, the undertaking centralizes important data in the available literature and presents them in a manner which is easy to read and understand.

But aside from gathering information in the specialized literature, the current thesis also conducts its own research and develops its own findings. This dimension adds to the theoretical importance by creating new results which help the readers better understand the nature and applicability of self-help literature within the modern day context of the young Turkish professional females.

At the level of the theoretical purpose then, the dissertation seeks to support the development and growth of the academic research community by creating new findings. In other words, the effort hopes to help readers better understand self-help literature in the context of the young professional Turkish women.

Aside from the theoretical purpose, the endeavor also seeks to attain a practical purpose. This refers to the provision of adequate information to the non-research related individuals within the Turkish labor force. This, for instance integrates women candidates, women employees of various ages, employers, human resource managers, providers of self-help and so on. The findings in the dissertation would help all of these parties better understand the importance and applicability of self-help in today's community. Human resource managers would for instance better understand the need for employee empowerment whereas the young professional women would be better able to understand their actual worth and improve their working conditions. In other words, the practical purpose of the thesis is that of providing valuable information to the players in the Turkish labor force in order to create more mutually beneficial relationships.

1.3. The need for the study

The need for the current dissertation is explained by the scarcity of available data on the subject of the consumption of self-help by the young professional women in Turkey. At a general level, the phenomenon of self-help is relatively novel and few sources have critically approached it. In spite of this however, sufficient data is available to analyzing the general applicability and manifestation of self-help.

At the level of self-help, as it is applied in Turkey, and specifically among young professional women, this topic is understudied. The scarcity of resources detailing this

particular topic is as such the main reason supporting the need for the current research endeavor.

1.4. Background to the study

The idea of the current study is based on personal curiosities pegged to self-help. Throughout the recent years, the phenomenon has gained an astonishing popularity at a global level, and this has characterized even the more traditional Turkey. The idea for the thesis was as such born and the emphasis would be placed on the young professional women in the country.

At a more specific level, the dissertation would draw on various findings in the literature, in new experiments and interviews, but also from already created projects. Specifically, the background of the author in creating this current thesis is represented by three previous studies:

- *Self-help literature as a commodity: consumption through construction of need for power*
- *Commodification of spirituality in bestselling Turkish novel: The forty rules of love as a self-help book*
- *Using formal concept analysis for classification of life style segments.*

To one degree or another, the findings in all of these studies would be integrated within the current dissertation. The more important background feature is however represented by the fact that the studies have opened a door into the field of self-help research, with particular emphasis on its manifestation on Turkish young woman human resources.

1.5. Description of approach

The approach to the analysis of the consumption of self-help by the young professional women in Turkey is a multifaceted one, focusing on assessing the main topic through distinctive lenses. The first step in this effort then would be constituted by a discussion on the rise of self-help in light of the changes occurring at the level of professional identity.

As this stage is completed, the second part of the approach is represented by the commodification of the Eastern culture and its relationship with self-help through the specific lenses of spirituality, but also through those of the need for power. The third step would be represented by a review of the literature on self-help. This section would integrate various opinions of specialized researchers on the phenomenon of self-help and its importance and role within the society.

The next component in the approach of the analysis of the consumption of self-help by young Turkish women is represented by the actual research process. This research process is structured as follows:

- Establishment of the research methodology to be used
- A thematic analysis based on the common themes represented in ten best-selling self-help books; nine of which give professional advice and one is a fictional best seller, and the themes are elaborated through a critical analysis of the local fictional best-seller
- Semi structured narrative interviews with a sample of 15 Turkish women employed in various knowledge intensive sectors
- The analysis of the findings and the discussion of the observations.

The section on concluding remarks centralizes and restates the most important findings in the dissertation, but it also integrates a subsection on the limitations encountered in the construction of the thesis, as well as the very limitations of the study. The limitations are explained and it is argued that, in spite of the mentioned limitations, the study findings remain relevant and applicable within the analyzed sample.

1.6. Design of investigation

The investigation process is hereby understood as the mechanism by which specific data on the consumption of self-help by the young Turkish female professionals is collected. At this level, two processes are essential. The first revolves around the aforementioned thematic analysis, through which ten books in the field of self-help would be reviewed. Emphasis would be placed on the main themes in the books, their main points, but also their primary recommendations for readers to follow.

As this stage is completed, an intermediary process is developed and it revolves around the collective analysis of the books in order to identify the most important points they make, as well as the common recommendations or the emerging themes. The data as such collected would also be used to create one of the interview questions, which would then be responded by the young Turkish women in the selected sample.

The second process of the investigation is then represented by the interview of the fifteen Turkish professionals and the adjacent data collection. This process would be continued with the centralization of the collected answers and the subsequent analysis. Ultimately, findings would be generated and discussed.

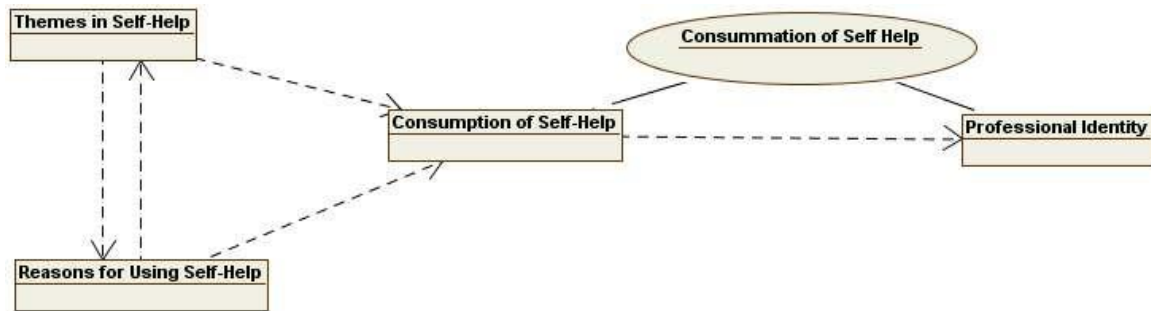


Figure 1. Research Model



Figure 2. Research Design

1.7. Sample selection

The sample onto which the research was conducted was represented by fifteen Turkish women, young professional occupying various positions in industries such as marketing and advertising, finance, IT and so on. More detailed information on the construction of the sample would be offered throughout the section dedicated to the research methodology. At this level nonetheless, it is important to explain why this specific sample was selected.

The Turkish population reveals a fairly high level of human development, with a relatively high life expectancy at birth, access to education and infrastructural development. In a more specific presentation, the following elements are noteworthy:

- The Turkish population is structured onto three age categories: 26.6 per cent of them are of ages up to 14, 67.1 per cent are of ages between 15 and 64 and the remaining 6.3 per cent are of ages higher than 65. The population growth rate is of 1.235 per cent – the 95th largest population growth rate in the world.
- The median age of the population is of 28.5 years, with 28.1 years the Turkish males and 28.8 years the Turkish females.
- A large portion of the population – namely 70 per cent – lives in urban sites and this figure is expected to increase as it is supported by an annual urbanization rate of 1.7 per cent.
- The infant mortality rate is of 23.94 deaths per 1,000 live births – the 84th largest in the world. The total fertility rate is of 2.15 children born per woman.
- The life expectancy at birth is of 72.5 years for the total population, with 70.61 years for the Turkish males and 74.9 years for the Turkish females.
- The income per capita in Turkey is of \$12,300, higher than the global average of \$11,200. The population works primarily in the services sector (45.8 per cent), but also in agriculture (29.5 per cent) and industry (24.7 per cent).
- The unemployment rate is of 12.4 per cent, significantly over the global average of 8.8 per cent. At this level, it is noted that the unemployment rate refers to the percentage of the people who want to work, have the capacity and are actively

seeking employment, but does not integrate the people who do not work, but neither wish to work, nor seek employment.

- In Turkey, 17.11 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line.
- The literacy rate – understood as the percentage of the population over the age of 15 that can read and write – is of 87.4 per cent, with 95.3 per cent for the Turkish males and 79.6 per cent for the Turkish women. Males usually spend 12 years in school, whereas women do not spend more than 11 years (CIA World Factbook, 2011).

All in all then, despite the fairly high level of human development, Turkey continues to reveal discrepancies in its treatment of males and females. In other words, gender based discrimination exists as the gender gap in the country has yet to be closed. These findings are consistent with those of the United Nations Development Programme, which computed the gender inequality index for the countries across the globe.

The gender inequality index (GII) is a tool used to assess the comparative conditions of men and women within the same territory. Specifically, emphasis is placed on the comparative achievements of genders at three specific levels – reproductive health, empowerment and the labor force market. The reproductive health variable is measured with emphasis on the mortality of mothers and the fertility rate in adolescents. The levels of empowerment are also assessed through two specific lenses – the number of seats held by women in Parliament and the levels of educational attainment. Finally, the labor force dimension is assessed through the rates of female participation to the labor force.

The gender inequality index is computed in order to identify the levels of national development through the lenses of gender inequality. It as such represents a starting point

in the construction of future policies and legislations. The GII is computed between the values of 0 and 1, with 0 indicating low levels of gender inequality (close to gender equality) and 1 indicating high levels of gender inequality.

At an international scale, the lowest level of the gender inequality index is registered in the Netherlands, with 0.174. Turkey's GII has a computed value of 0.621 and ranks 77th on the top of global GII. The table below reveals the figures for each of the elements taken into consideration in the computation of the GII. Data included refers to Turkey and also the Netherlands, as a benchmark for future efforts.

Table 1: Gender inequality index in Turkey and Netherlands

Country	Human development level	Gender inequality index		Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent fertility rate	Female seats in Parliament (% in 2008)	Population with at least secondary education (% in 2010)		Labor force participation (% in 2008)	
		Rank	Value				F	M	F	M
Netherlands	Very high	1	0.174	6	3.8	39.1	86.3	89.2	73.4	85.4
Turkey	High	77	0.621	44	38.8	9.1	27.1	46.8	26.9	74.6

It is easily observed that the status of Turkish women is significantly inferior to that of Dutch women and that gender inequality remains a stringent issue within the country. And this situation is incurred in spite of the fact that the Turkish legislation recognizes men and women as equals and – at least theoretically – presents them with equal opportunities for education and employment.

“Although the government guarantees women equal work and pay opportunities, the traditional value system elevates gender segregation in the workplace and other public spaces as a social ideal. Even urban, educated, professional women may encounter the persistence of traditional, religiously colored values about gender roles among their putatively modern, secular husbands” (The Library of Congress, Country Studies, 2011).

This situation is generally accepted by the more mature and even older Turkish females, who were raised in the culture and tradition of a patriarchal family, in which the man of the house was the indisputable head of the house, the provider for the family, the educated individual and the decision maker.

Just like any other culture and society however, Turkey is changing and it is severely impacted by the forces of globalization. In this sense, the country has not only become open to trade with the states in the Western Hemisphere, but it is also being impacted by the cultural and social values in the region. And one of these values is the pursuit of gender equality, highly popular and well embraced by the young Turkish women.

Unlike their mothers and grandmothers, the young professional Turkish women of today try to become more and more emancipated. They have become separated from the

way of life of their predecessors. They dress differently, think differently and they have different expectations in life. And these differences are not only obvious between generations, but even between same age females that have chosen different paths. Some families in Turkey still militate for a return to the traditional values in which women were rather secluded and worked only within the household. This means that differences would be encountered between young Turkish women who work outside the home and those who chose a traditional path. While the first category would wear modern apparel, like the young women in Paris or Rome, the latter category would wear the burka (Eccarius-Kelly, 2010).

Overall, the modern day Turkish women focus more on education and they want to get jobs that ensure financial stability and even independence. They continue to be different from the women in the Western Hemisphere, but they fight the same battle for gender equality and women's rights. They were all brought to the labor force as a means of generating more household incomes or supporting industries in times of wars when the men were otherwise engaged, and their general presence in the labor force is aligned with general improvements in human development levels, as well as national gains at the economic level (Turkish American Women Scholarship Fund, 2011).

All in all then, the young Turkish professionals represent the country's ambassadors in the international change process and the global struggle for human rights. They stand between tradition and modernity but they play their role with little guidance. This means then that, in their pursuit of gender equality and women's rights for education and professional success, young Turkish professionals have to look for support in

alternative sources, as their families and communities might still be prone to condemn such a behavior on the part of women.

In this context then, when the young professional Turkish women strive to become independent, attain education and succeed in the workplace, they look to self-help to support their professional and personal endeavors. This mixture of cultural, personal and global features which drives Turkish women to consume self-help products is the primary reason as to why this specific sample was selected.

Based on this selection of the sample, it is expected that the individual reasons that drive women to use self-help products and services are also complex. And complexity is subsequently expected to be revealed in terms of the means in which the young Turkish professionals actually consume the self-help products and services.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHANGING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND SELF-HELP

2.1. Introduction

The current chapter strives to explain the emergence of the self-help phenomenon through the lenses of the changing identity of the employee. Initially focused on working the land as the primary source of income, the modern day employee is focused on becoming better trained and increasing their value within the business climate. The present section then strives to present the process which has sat at the basis of this metamorphosis at the end of which, the modern day employee comes to consume self-help.

In order to address this issue, attention is initially given to the historic identity of the person – that of land identity. It is then argued that factories changed this identity to gradually create an organizational identity. Finally, the contemporaneous society is supporting the dismemberment of the organizational identity and seems to be replacing it with the professional identity. In this context, the self-help phenomenon is flourishing.

2.2. The land identity

The modern day professional individuals seek to continually improve themselves in order to prove their worth to themselves, but also to their peers and subalterns. They are in a constant search for professional identity as a source of personal wellbeing. The employees of today then focus on self bettering as a means of improving their own private lives. More than in the past, they are motivated not only by financial gains and the

need for subsistence, but they are motivated by personal desires to succeed and to attain more than they actually need.

This situation has even led some researchers to believe that the players in the contemporaneous business community are run by greed. Yet, this greed is the result of managerial actions and decisions, through which the employees are stimulated to become more active within the labor force, to better support the economic agents in attaining their objectives and to as such reap the rewards of their efforts. Grimshaw (2010) for instance argues that one should not be blaming the employees for this greed, but recognize that it was induced by the reward system. In Maslow's motivational theory, greed could be assimilated with employees' desires to be not only provided for, but also to be recognized and valued.

But this was not always the nature of the employees. Historically, people would work the land as a means of ensuring their sustenance and those who did not directly work the land – as they were nobles, warriors and other such occupation – still relied on land and other people to work the land and provide for them as well. In those historic times, the identity of the individual would be created based on the wealth they possessed, the roles they played within the community, the network of people in which they activated – such as the proximity to the leaders and the ability to benefit from these relations.

Land was the ultimate asset and landlords were the wealthiest people. From the financial standpoint, they enjoyed the highest living standards and this meant that they would eat the best foods, send their children to the best schools and employ the most servants. But aside from this, there were other dimensions of owning land. Landlords

were as such well received in the courts and they had the means to stimulate political decisions in their favor. Also, they were respected and they enjoyed a high social status within the communities in which they lived.

Gradually however, the cultivation of land was no longer the primary objective of the community. Slavery was abolished across the world and even the poorest of the individuals were able to move freely and search for better ways to live their lives. Eventually, factories were opened and they employed virtually any individual, regardless of his land possession. Land was no longer the primary statement of wealth and it came to be replaced by other types of assets, such as stocks, buildings, automobiles, flight devices and so on. The modern day cultivation of land is restricted and agriculture no longer represents the main source of subsistence. The table below reveals a numeric presentation of this statement:

Table 2: GDP contributions and labor force participation by sectors

	GDP contribution			Labor force		
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Agriculture	Industry	Services
World	5.7 %	30.7 %	63.6 %	36.6 %	21.5 %	41.9 %
Turkey	8.8 %	25.7 %	65.5 %	29.5 %	24.7 %	45.8 %
U.S.	1.2 %	22.2 %	76.7 %	0.7 %	20.3 %	79 %

At a global level, it is observed that people are less involved in agricultural occupations but focus more on services. This trend is also common in Turkey and in the United States. Turkey still strives to engage in agriculture and relies on it as a source of

export income, keeping its contribution to the gross domestic product superior to that of the global average (8.8 per cent in Turkey as opposed to only 5.7 per cent the global mean value). The United States of America on the other hand, barely even cultivates anymore.

In terms of the population and the labor force, less people are being employed in agricultural positions. And even when they do activate in the agricultural field, the efficiency of their efforts in comparison to that of the people employed in other fields is decreased. In the case of Turkey for instance, nearly one third of the national labor force is employed in agriculture, but it only generates a GDP contribution of 8.8 per cent. Overall then, the international trend is that of focusing on industry and services rather than land cultivation.

Today, land is no longer the primary source of income and the land identity does not directly represent the wealth possessed by the individual. Land is now perceived as a means of entertainment. The wealthy individuals of today buy lands to create their own individual spaces in which they can live more private lives and within the designs and conditions they desire and create for themselves. Helmut Geist (2006, p.664) explains:

“The role of land in relation to economy and society [...] has been transformed. Today, land-based industries account for only tiny proportions of national gross domestic products (GDPs) and employment. The historic role of land in producing food and wood has weakened: memories of physical scarcities are fast receding. The role of land in providing a pleasant environment and the setting of pleasant lifestyles has grown as the productive role has weakened. Increasingly, farms are being purchased as residential rather than productive units.”

It is then safe to argue that the land identity has gradually shifted from defining the scopes of individuals to only providing a sense of wealth and personal wellbeing. But somewhere in the process, individuals gained a new identity – the organizational identity. The following section focuses on it and seeks to offer comprehension of organizational identity in order to then explain how it is now being replaced by the professional identity.

2.3. The Factory Identity

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution has manifested across the world. It revolved around a process by which technologies were created and introduced in order to support mass production. The most important developments of the Industrial Revolution refer to the water mills, the processing of iron and the creation of the steam engine.

In Turkey, these developments would only generate significant impacts during the twentieth century. The state was traditionally enclosed, with little relations with the other countries and with a strong emphasis on national traditions and ways of life. But change came to take effect within the country during the 1920s decade, with the creation of modern day Turkey (Vahide and Abu-Rabi, 2005). The first impacts were felt at the level of politics, where new parties were created and more emphasis was placed on personal liberty. And despite the great progress made by Turkey, its labor force and its social population, the commencement of self-help is hereby assessed through the lenses of the Western community. It is nevertheless accepted that the Eastern cultures and spirituality contribute significantly to the industry (Purdie, 2010; Rhodes, 2006; York, 2001), but this realization is further addressed in a more detailed approach throughout the following chapter.

Returning to the Industrial Revolution, the immediate manifestation of the development was that of the opening of numerous factories. These factories were in dire need of workforce and as such promised increased living standards for the workers. This created a context in which the agrarian rural population left their traditional occupations and moved to the cities in search of better lives. Some of the new workers moved to the cities altogether, but others sought temporary employment only to gather financial resources to then invest in their farms.

Regardless of their motivation however, all individuals working in the factories of the Industrial Revolution encountered harsh conditions. They were asked to work long hours and the sole rest they got was on the only free day – Sunday. Sometimes, they were forced to work during Sundays as well. The working conditions were tough, with immense strains on both physical as well as emotional wellbeing.

The employees were constantly supervised and even punished when they did not complete their tasks. They were paid salaries below their needs for a decent subsistence and they also had to endure unsanitary and unsafe conditions in both the workplace as well as in their city homes.

The infrastructure of the days was poor and underdeveloped, presenting the new citizens with limited abilities for decent housing. Several individuals – and often more than one family – would live in a single small and crowded space, without access to necessary facilities. Illnesses as such became a common problem of the Industrial Revolution workers.

And while the men were tougher and better able to cope with these pressures, the shortages were felt more stringently by the children and the women. The females would

traditionally work in the household and care for the children and the household chores, while the children would attend to smaller household tasks. But the factory owners were confronted with a dramatic shortage of labor force and the families faced financial shortages. In such a context then, women and children were employed in the factories of the Industrial Revolution.

Women and children were asked to complete the same difficult tasks as the men, but were paid less. Children would often be paid one third of what the men would be paid, and it was often the case that children were not paid at all. This situation was supported by the stringent need families had for money, by the greed of factory owners, but also by the absence of policies and institutions to regulate labor.

A new dramatic measure was taken in respect to children working in these factories – orphans were brought in. The parentless children were “adopted” by factories through contracts that basically gave rights to factories to exploit the children. There was no age limit on work and children were expected to start working as early as they got to be four years old. When they got tired of the work and fainted or got dizzy, their heads would be soaked in cold water. If they tried to escape, they would be followed, brought back and punished. A popular punishment was that of strapping weights to the necks and forcing the children to walk with them in order to set an example for their peers. When they fell ill, the factory would no longer take an interest in them. Many children died as a result of hard labor (Isecke, 2009).

Working conditions for women were also difficult. And unlike today, when they have the option of going to work, or in other times, when they were expected to only work within the household, the women of the Industrial Revolution were expected to

work in factories. They would often be employed in the mills, but numerous women also worked in mines, alongside with the men. They would put in long hours and worked in the same difficult conditions.

But the women also felt two more additional pressures – household chores and bearing children. In this order of ideas, despite the perception of gender equality as both males and females would be employed in mills, factories and mines, the household chores continued to represent the responsibility of women. When they came home from a long day of work, women would have to clean, cook, do the laundry and all of the other household chores required, often without benefiting from any help from the men or the children.

The second pressure felt by the women was that of child bearing. In this order of ideas, during the Industrial Revolution, the labor force shortage was stringent. Factory owners militated for an increase in the population in order to provide more labor force. While this argument might seem improper today, it has to be pointed out that the younger workers in the factories, mines and mills would only be four years old, meaning that a newborn could quickly become a source of labor.

In this context then, the size of the population exploded during the Industrial Revolution and it was often the case that families had up to ten children. This rate of child bearing nevertheless created negative strains upon the health of the women. Also, as the need for labor force was intense, women were requested to “work right up to and straight after the day of the child’s birth”

(<http://www.schoolshistory.org.uk/IndustrialRevolution/womenandchildren.htm>, 2011)

2.4. The organizational identity

The heavily exploited workers gradually became united and commenced to militate for their rights. Within the Western hemisphere, the worker unions were received with violent reactions on the part of the factory workers. The employees went on strike and the employers initiated armed conflicts against them.

The commencement in the formation of the modern day labor force was gruesome and difficult, being marked by bloodshed and the loss of human life, all in the pursuit of profits. The modern day economic agents still chase their historic goal of profit registration, but they do so through a more complex approach. Specifically, the emphasis of contemporaneous economic agents is that of attaining their financial objectives through the satisfaction of the needs and wants forwarded by the customers, the employees, the stock owners as well as other categories of stakeholders.

But the predecessors of these economic agents built their profits on the exploitation of the people. Nevertheless, little by little, the government intervened and created laws which prevented economic agents from exploiting their staff members. Today, there are various legislations that safeguard the wellbeing of employees. Emphasis is for instance placed on the ability to rest between working sessions, the right to paid annual leave, minimum remuneration valid at national level or equal employment opportunities.

The authorities in Turkey have also aligned themselves with the international trend of employee protection and have developed various laws that regulate employment contracts. Full time employment is only possible after the age of 15 and 13 year old children may work part time jobs in conditions which do not physically strain them.

Child labor is common in farms and the Turkish government is actively seeking solutions to resolve the problem. Workers are allowed to join or form unions, with the exception of some categories.

“With the exception of the police and the armed forces, Turkish workers have the right to unionize or join existing labor unions. The right to strike exists for most workers except those employed in the public utilities, education, and the petroleum, sanitation, and national defense industries, as well as those who are responsible for life and property protection. The law requires collective bargaining to have taken place before a strike. In order for a union to become a bargaining agent, the law requires that it must represent "50 percent plus one" of the employees at a particular work place and 10 percent of all workers in the particular branch of industry nationwide” (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2010).

The Turkish legislation has improved throughout the recent decades and has granted more rights to the employees. The workers in the public sector nevertheless remain rather restricted in their abilities to militate for better rights and this feature has attracted the criticism of the international community. The response of the Turkish government was that of easing the restrictions, but these have yet to be fully eliminated.

Within the global climate, as employment legislations were developed, factories and firms tried to create working environments in which the employees felt comfortable and safe. Also, since they – the employers – were no longer able to punish the employees as they did during the Industrial Revolution, a new approach was necessary. This approach revolved around the motivation of the staff members to work and support the company in attaining its objectives. The development and implementation of this

approach was supported at a theoretical stance as well, with numerous economists focusing on motivational theories.

According to Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856 – 1917), employees were motivated by the salary they received. This theory continues to represent the foundation of employee motivation, but it is also completed with other theories as well. Elton Mayo (1880-1949) for instance argued that the employees were not only motivated by financial outcomes, but also by the ability to meet their social needs while at work.

A more complex theory of human motivation was developed by Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), who argued that people were motivated by six categories of needs, organized as in the pyramid below:

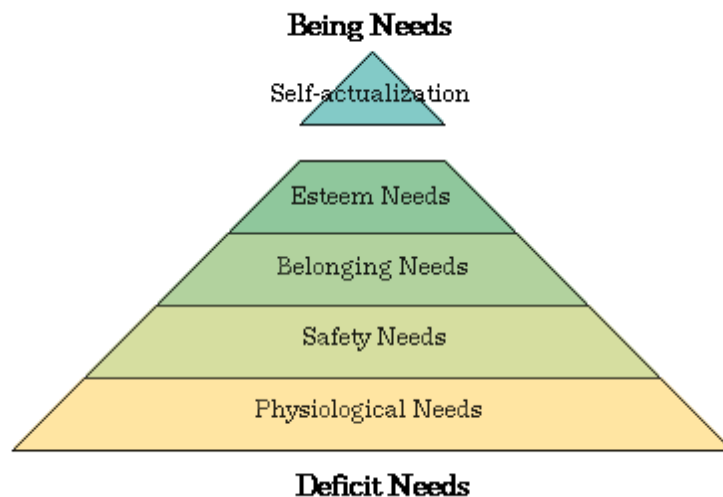


Figure 3. Hierarchy of Needs

At the basis of the motivational pyramid sit the physiological needs, such as shelter, food and water as the primary motivators of human activity. The second layer is represented by safety needs, such as the safety of one's health or the safety over the possessed property. More recently, the safety of the job – namely understood as the

ability to possess one job and count on it for the long run – has also been included in this second category of motivators.

The second layer is represented by the need to love and be loved, combined with the need to belong to a family or a group. The fourth layer of needs is constructed on the need to be appreciated and recognized for one's efforts. This need applies specifically in the context of the workplace as the employees feel the stringent necessity to have their worth and merits recognized by their subalterns as well as by their peers.

Finally, at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs sit the wants for self-actualization. Similar to the need for esteem, self-actualization is important within the business climate and indicates that the employees are motivated by the ability to improve themselves. Training programs and other efforts to supporting the professional development of the individual have as such become highly popular forces of employee motivation.

To complete Maslow's application of the needs theory within the workplace, Frederick Herzberg (1923- 2000) argued that the employees' levels of motivation were generated by two categories of factors – motivators and hygiene factors. The motivators were the elements directly linked to the job, such as the projects completed by the employees, their features of interest, the attached responsibilities or the opportunities for promotions. The hygiene factors on the other hand are not directly linked to the job, but they are complementary forces which define whether or not the employee would work. They do not however have the ability to motivate the staff members to work harder. These forces include the working environment, the working conditions and even the paycheck.

Herzberg's theory reveals a dual importance. On the one hand, it represents a statement to economic agents on how to approach and motivate their staff members. It militates for support of personal development as a source of employee content, and as such increased employee performances. Specific recommendations derived from Herzberg's theory include job enlargement, job enrichment and employee empowerment.

The second significance pegged to the theory of motivators and hygiene factors is that it conflicts with Taylor's primary findings of people being solely motivated by the pay check (Armstrong, 2002). In light of these findings, the modern day economic agents have created a context in which they strive to deliver the most welcoming, safe and rewarding working environments which attract the best qualified staff members. This search for the best staff members is now more than ever necessary as the employees of the services era no longer operate machines to create products, but they create and use technologies and knowledge to create solutions, customer satisfaction and organizational profits. The modern day employees are as such the intellectual capitals and the force behind corporate success and economic agents compete to gain access to the most talented staffs.

This pursuit of the best staff members, materialized in numerous efforts to create employee satisfaction and motivation, coupled with other organizational endeavors to craft satisfaction for other categories of stakeholders was promoted through the forces of globalization and increasing competition. And it has given birth to a new business era, in which companies strived to differentiate themselves from their competitors. They focused on improving their images, on attracting more customers and on better appealing to the public. In this light, they created their organizational identities.

The previous pages have focused on the setting of the context in which the organizational identity has been created. Additionally, they have revealed the central elements of the organizational identity. In other words, the current section has discussed and presented various dimension of the organizational identity through time, from when the identity was focused on profits through exploitation, through today, when it is characterized by attaining profits through the simultaneous satisfaction of the needs and wants of numerous stakeholder categories. But in order to give more meaning to this section, it is necessary that it be wrapped up with the more technical definition of organizational identity.

In this order of ideas, the table below centralizes several definitions of organizational identity as they are presented within the specialized literature:

Table 3. Definitions of Organizational Identity

Definitions of Organizational Identity	Reference
Organizational members' definition of themselves as a social group in relation to external environment, emphasis on the difference from competitors	Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson (2010) Rughase (2006)
Defined in relation to a common understanding of various constituents of membership by the organizational members	Puusa & Tolvaanen (2006)
A concept characterizing certain aspects of organizations used by researchers/ a concept used by organizations characterizing aspects of themselves (self-reflexivity in the second use)	Hatch & Schultz (2004)
Features linking present organization with the past	Rughase (2006)

Fragmented, changing and continually emergent features of organizations, related to leadership and organizational change	Moore& Sonsino (2003)
How the organization is perceived and aims to be perceived by the audiences	Hoffman and Ford (2009)

Overall then, organizational identity has been formed after decades of business developments and by millions of economic agents seeking to succeed within the more dynamic and competitive business climate. While it has a rather complex and multifaceted meaning, the current endeavor relies on the understanding of organizational identity as the desired image the company wishes to project upon the various stakeholder categories. This image is generically one of financial stability but also of focus on stakeholder needs and wants in order to generate trust and sustainable sales. Ultimately, while the approach has changed, the goal remains that of profit registration.

There are numerous dimensions of organizational identity. Puusa and Tolvaanen (2006) for instance assess it in light of trust and they find that both notions are definable at several levels; that they are relative, ambiguous and have a qualitative nature. Also, both organizational identity and trust are created and maintained through social interactions.

The organizational identity plays an important part in the fruitful collaboration between the parties activating in an organizational setting. It helps establish commitment between the parties and it generates trust. Still, in order for commitment and trust to be generated at the organizational level, these have to exist within the individual. At the individual level then, there is the self-identity, representing the theory the individual has of themselves. But there is also the need for identification, or the ability of the individual to become integrated and accepted as part of the community; he needs to belong to an

organization. And he will belong to the organization which promotes the values in which he believes, where he can commit to those values and where he can interact in trust with the rest of the organizational parties (Puusa and Tolvaanen, 2006). In other words, there is a direct relationship not only between the organizational identity and the trust within the company, but there is a direct link between the personal identity and the organizational identity. Puusa and Tolvaanen virtually suggest that the organizational identity is, among other things, influenced by the personal identity of its employees.

Rughase (2006) approaches the concept of organizational identity through a more generic lens and argues that the concept is a relatively new one, but popular within research areas. The underlying core of the organizational identity would lie in the identity research in social studies and sciences, meaning as such that the study of the organizational identity is complex and integrates elements from social studies, psychological studies, social identity theory and organizational research. In such a context, organizational identity is defined from three different perspectives, as follows:

- a) Organizational identity is “what is taken by organization members to be central to the organization
 - b) What makes the organization distinctive from other organizations (at least in the eyes of the beholding members); and
 - c) What is perceived by members to be an enduring or continuing feature linking the present organization with the past (and presumably the future)”
- (Rughase, 2006).

Jacqueline Moore and Steven Sonsino (2003) tend to disagree however. They come to argue that the organizational identity is far from being enduring, but that it is

fragmented, changing and continually emergent. According to them, organizational identity is in strong relationship with leadership, and leadership is a continually changing and developing practice, which modifies to respond to emerging pressures from the micro and macro environments. Additionally, it is even argued that the very instability of the organizational identity is a key facilitator of organizational change – the primary driver of organizational success (Moore and Sonsino, 2003).

Overall, the concept of organizational identity is a complex one, with the opinions of researchers continuing to differ and to raise different points of debate. Nevertheless, the importance of organizational identity within the modern day business climate is undeniable. Organizational identity creates a distinctive image of the firm and establishes the relationship between the entity and its numerous stakeholder categories. But the organizational identity goes beyond that and influences the very nature and behavior of its staff members, by creating their professional identity. The organizational identity is more and more commonly revealed at the internal level of the individuals. People relate more and more with their professions, with their professional success, and with the companies in which they work. In the context of a highly competitive environment, people feel the constant pressure to develop in both the professional setting, as well as the personal setting. In this order of ideas, the organizational identity creates the professional identity, in which self-help plays a major part.

2.5. The professional identity and self-help

The modern day staff member is no longer paid minimum wage to operate the machines, to work in mines or to blindly implement the decisions made by the managers.

The contemporaneous staff members are educated and well aware of their rights. They possess an increased ability to switch jobs and seek the best employment opportunities. And this situation is the result of the organizational realization of the importance of staff members.

Specifically, the managerial teams have recognized that the employees are not just controllable forces which operate machines, but that they are intellectual beings who can come with innovative solutions to problems. The employees are the ones who develop the products or deliver the services. They are the ones who test the items and create the prototypes. They are as such directly responsible for product quality, safety and other product characteristics, which eventually come to impact customer satisfaction. Today then, the employees are the most important organizational asset (LaDou, 2004).

While this is true in all instances, it is even more so applicable within the services sector. Here, the employees are the ones which directly interact with the customers. They are as such the direct generators of customer satisfaction, which ultimately leads to revenue suitability and the increased ability of the economic agent to attain their financial goals. But in order for the employees to function in an efficient and effective manner, they need to themselves be satisfied on the job.

Job satisfaction is attained through a wide array of human resource strategies, which virtually integrate the creation and offering of incentives in all categories of motivators revealed by the motivational theories. Some relevant examples of common HRM (human resource management) strategies aimed at increasing employee satisfaction include the following:

- The offering of training sessions in order to support the professional development of the staff member
- The offering of flexible working schedules in order to allow the employees to balance their professional responsibilities with their personal commitments
- The offering of performance based premiums and bonuses
- The offering of promotional opportunities, the increase in professional responsibility and the support offered in the creation of a career
- The empowering of the employees and their active involvement in change strategies and in the decision making processes
- The offering of sessions for body building, the integration of cultural diversity or the offering of medical coverage or healthcare insurance.

The modern day employees are as such now treated with more respect and consideration than ever before. The popularity of this trend is based on the nature of its origin. Specifically, the change in the perception of the staff members has occurred within the services sector, where the employees were directly responsible for customer satisfaction and as such organizational success.

As it has already been mentioned throughout the previous sections, the global community is more and more focused on services, rather than agriculture and industry. The international average indicates that more than half (63.6 per cent) of the total economic output of the world is generated by the services sector. In Turkey, services contribute to the gross domestic product with 65.5 per cent and employ 45.8 per cent of the national labor force.

In such a context then, the values implemented within the services sector have soon expanded to the rest of the fields. Nowadays then, the employees in all working sectors demand respect, rewards and support in the pursuit of their careers. They are now meant to believe that, with the right attitude and with the right skills and preparation, they can create the *boundaryless* career. They are encouraged to take on more responsibilities, to participate in more training sessions and to aim higher and higher.

Unlike their predecessors in the mines, mills and factories of the Industrial Revolution, the employees of today do not fear their employers and have legislations to protect them. They focus only on improving themselves. And in this context of the empowered and unlimited employee, economic agents expect them to take advantages of their newfound sense of freedom and empowerment and continually invest in their development.

Nowadays then, for an individual to be employable, it is no longer sufficient for them to be skilled and capable at their precise job related tasks. They have to be good communicators and they must also possess good people skills which create and foster a pleasant, yet competitive working environment. The employees and prospective employees are as such required to possess social and cultural capital which could present the company with diverse insights and innovative solutions to various issues the economic agent might face internally or externally.

Within this framework, less emphasis came to be placed on the organizational identity as more attention was placed on the professional identity. The specialized literature places a rather decreased emphasis on the professional identity of modern day individuals, and this can be explained by the fact that the phenomenon is only a recently

observed one and it has yet to be fully recognized and studied. Throughout the current dissertation however, the professional identity plays an essential part in the understanding of the modern day labor force, part of which are also the young professional women in Turkey.

In this order of ideas, a working definition of professional identity created by the researcher based on the so far collected information is this:

The professional identity is the multitude of elements which define an individual within the working structures. More than technical abilities, these elements include the desires to learn, the knowledge possessed the people skills, the cultural and social capital, and any other not-technical skill which could help enhance the professional role and the advancement of the individual on the organizational ladder.

This definition is rather generic, but it is within this meaning that professional identity is used throughout the current dissertation. It is also implied that this professional identity makes the individual employable and desirable by various economic agents. But the creation of professional identity – even more so than the defining of the concept – is extremely complex and tedious.

Table 4. Definitions of Professional Identity

Definitions of Professional Identity	References
Professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences	Ibarra (1999) Schein (1978)
Work identity subject to relational and social influences within and beyond occupation or organization	Arthur (2008) Hall et al.(2002)
Occupational identities linked to race, age,	Piore&Safford(2006)

gender and ethnicity rather than traditional workplace structures	
Non static, adjusted and adapted by individuals during career transition as opposed to organizational identity	Ibarra(1999) Nicholson (1984)
The result of socialization process and rhetorics where the information is provided regarding meanings associated with a profession	Fine(1996) Hall(1987)

Professional identity has been defined as a mix of technical and non technical skills which make an individual a valuable organizational asset. The formation of a professional identity through the lenses of technical skills requires years of education and training, coupled with expertise. But while this might appear as challenging, the real dare with professional identity is the creation of the mentality of a professional.

The employees in the modern day business climate have to be used to rejection. Have to be able to understand ambiguous messages and respond to them in a professional manner. They have to know when to speak and when to keep their silence. They have to be good negotiators, but do this without being too persistent and driving their partners away. They have to recognize their own worth and convince the employers why they are valuable. They need to prove their capabilities to the peers and superiors and they have to gain the respect of all, including their own subalterns. They have to become detached but without showing signs that they do not care.

Overall then, the modern day employees have to integrate all of their internal resources and create an integrated product to be “bought” by an employer. This internal combination of skills, abilities, moral values and personal commitments is the most challenging part in the construction of the professional identity and the essential part in

succeeding – not just at the job, but in life itself, where the need arises to utilize knowledge in various ambiguous and complex settings (Alvesson, 1993).

In the pursuit of this professional identity, individuals find themselves using less traditional channels of education and training. They for instance turn to yoga in order to find inner balance or they read books and articles in order to motivate themselves or to prepare for interviews and other experiences related to professional accomplishment. All these efforts of moral support and personal development in the formation of the professional identity are integrated under the larger umbrella of self-help (Megginson and Whitaker, 2003).

The premises of self-help are those of empowering individuals to take an active control of their lives and to improve their life. The main arguments are those that the individual can and must best help themselves. Help from the outside – mainly from other persons – is often short lived and not sustainable. This specifically means that individuals have to learn how to help themselves and how to stop relaying on others. By applying these teaching, the people would evolve and the communities in which they live and function would also develop.

Probably more than the males, the females across the globe take pride in their newfound professional identity and continually seek to improve it. The response of women to professional development could be explained by two specific features. On the one hand, women have for ages been discriminated against and the modern day society now presents them with increased opportunities for employment. While at a global level, employment among women remains inferior to that of men; while they are underrepresented in the parliament and often undereducated in comparison to their male

counterparts, women recognize the developments which have been made in the struggle for gender equality and seize them.

In this setting then, women embrace their new roles and places within the labor force and strive to maximize the experience by improving themselves; by following an ascendant professional path and by continually opening new doors to development through personal improvement. But aside from this, women would turn to self-help as they are more spiritual than the men. They are more likely to make compromises and seek alternative methods of approaching and resolving a situation.

These combined features of the females which explain their approach to self-help constitute the reasons as to why this specific gender was selected in the analysis of the consumption of self-help. More detailed information on this would however be provided throughout the Literature review section. In terms of the motivation at the basis of the selection of young professional Turkish women, this is revealed by the fact that the subjects represent a new cultural phenomenon, which has been explained throughout section 1.8.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEED FOR POWER AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF EASTERN CULTURE

3.1. Introduction

The employees of the contemporaneous era activate within a climate in which the employers compete to hire and retain the best staffs. This newfound importance of the organizational members has two specific implications:

- On the one hand, the companies invest more in their staff members. They offer incentives to retain them and they invest in their professional formation in order to capitalize on their skills. The outcome of this is that the employees are now – more than ever – able to leave their current employer and seek employment with other agencies which offer better working conditions, higher rewards and generally superior incentive packages.
- On the other hand however, the mutations in the labor force imply that the individuals themselves compete for positions with the best paying and rewarding economic agents. In other words, employees now compete with each other and engage in a fierce battle for the best positions.

Obtaining however the finest jobs is often a complex process which no longer relies on the possession of the technical skills required to complete the tasks assigned to a respective position. In order for an individual to be employable, they have to possess highly developed people skills, to be creative and innovative, to be able to become

integrated within the organizational climate – overall, they have to possess a mixture of skills and traits which make them valuable additions to organizations.

The players in the modern day labor force then are leading an ongoing battle with other players in the market, but also with themselves. They encounter pressures on daily bases and these pressures increase when assessed through the lenses of the employees. In other words, the present society creates new strains for all individuals, regardless of the field in which they operate or the life they lead. Children are for instance presented with more choices for education and nutrition, which impact their lives. The youth must also make deeper decisions as they are presented with more educational opportunities; but they are also challenged by the pressures of their peers or by the temptations which await them at every corner. The elderly are increasingly ill as a result of the natural process of aging, but also as a result of the general population getting sicker due to a sedentary life style.

The players in the labor force are generically the ones that have to deal with these pressures as they are the parents of the young and the children of the elderly. And on top of all these personal responsibilities, they must also focus on the development of their careers. And the career development is not only a personal desire understood in Maslow's need for self-actualization and esteem, but it is also a practical and financial need of supporting a life style. This realization implies that assistance in coping with these pressures would generically be sought by particular categories of individuals which consume self-help. In other words, the pursuit of professional success is more common within specific categories and the usage of self-help is more widespread within other categories. This issue would be addressed throughout the following section.

3.2. Lifestyle based consumption

This section commences at the premise that the lifestyle of an individual directly impacts their consumption behaviors. It is already accepted that there are specific features within the life of an individual which will impact the purchase and consumption behaviors. In terms of gender for instance, females will be more likely to make smaller household purchases or attend to the consumption needs of the children, whereas the larger household decisions would also be influenced by the males in the family. In other words, when the family is looking to purchase a product which would be used for a prolonged period of time, such as an automobile, the final decisions would be made with the involvement of both genders.

Another feature which determines consumption levels and purchase behaviors is represented by the financial status of the family or the individual. In this line of thought, the wealthier buyers will focus on higher quality products and services, which last longer and which simultaneously serve more needs. At a nutritional level, these individuals will focus on foods which safeguard their health and which increase their life expectancy. The less economically endowed individuals however will focus on products which serve an immediate purpose, but which might not be sustainable within the long term. At the nutritional level, the relevant example is offered by the fact that the less wealthy individuals consume the highest levels of fast food products, as these are often more cost effective than the healthier version of the foods.

Aside from gender and income, the consumption patterns of individuals are also influenced by personal beliefs. For instance, one individual with a strong conviction and realization of the threat posed by global warming will use products and services which support the protection of the environment. They would for instance take the bus, walk, or ride the bicycle and would avoid using the personal automobile for the transportation of a single person for a relatively small distance. They would also consume eco and bio products and would selectively collect the litter in order to support recycling. Overall, they would live their life in order to implement the values they perceive as important; they would create a new lifestyle revolving around their unique demands, values and expectations. To extrapolate, this means that the lifestyle created by each and every single individual is in fact a determinant of their consumption patterns and behaviors.

Michael Pinches (1999) argues that lifestyles and consumption patterns are interrelated and they inform on what the individual does, what the individual hopes to achieve, but also they reveal directly who the individual is. In other words, consumption intersects with the lifestyle and, along with other factors, sediments the identity of the individual.

“Consumption and other behaviors are melded – they become habitual and even normatively sanctional among one’s peer – into a lifestyle. A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfill utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity. On the one hand, consumption choices and other elements of lifestyle achieve a definite coherence

between groups and even classes and this becomes basic aspects of social differentiation” (Pinches, 1999, p.76).

Seen through these lenses then, consumption helps create personal identity and allows the individual to affiliate themselves with the group of choice, while at the same time distancing themselves from other groups. And this realization has attracted the attention of researches throughout the years. In a vigorous analysis of emerging 19th century American nouveau riche, Veblen (1965) pointed to how conspicuous consumption served to individuals belonging to this social category to artificially construct themselves as privileged elite. He distinguished the emerging elite from the industrial elite who retained their identities within the production process and named it as the ‘leisure class’. In a similar manner, through a critical analysis of Marxian class theory of identities, Weber pointed how collective lifestyles originated and perpetuated by status groups (Weber 1946, p. 187, 191, 300). He depicted that ruling classes were constituted as a fragmented social category where different status groups were struggling to distinguish themselves from the others through different lifestyle and consumption patterns.

As time passed and the societies evolved, the link between lifestyle and consumption intensified. With the democratization of the consumption in late modernity lower classes have also started to constitute their identities through distinguishing their lifestyles from the others in order to express their identities. As the so-called postmodern cultural conditions started to break down the link between hierarchical social categories and consumption patterns, the study of lifestyle as a tool of actively constructing self

identities has become prominent (see, e.g., Baudrillard 1988; Featherstone 1991, Maffesoli 1996). Bourdieu (1977) contended that while social class positions played an important role in the determination of the lifestyle patterns of individuals, individuals had the opportunity to strategically deploy imposed consumption patterns to actively create their own lifestyles. He contributed to the Marxian theory by introducing the idea that consumption was also a field of class struggle besides production.

Lifestyle analysis has become popular among the marketing scholars because of its versatility as a basis for determining market segments according to diverse consumption practices and social and psychological variables. Since their early introduction by Lazer in 1963, segmentation categories have evolved from simple classification of lifestyle characteristics according to demographic and socio-economic variables to more versatile, inductive techniques developed to depict a rich view of the market and a more life-like portrait of the consumer (Wells 1974, Wagner and Weddle 1995). These studies involved classifying consumers into identifiable market segments according to the factor analysis of specific traits elicited from selected activity, interest, and opinion questions (known as AIO inventories) which recovers the latent structure of specific lifestyle patterns within the data. However, inductive techniques used for extracting these patterns have received extensive criticism on the grounds that they lacked theoretical sophistication. Later work on lifestyle analysis sought to find a basis in established value and personality theories resting on the premises that lifestyle attributes are expressions of latent personality and cultural traits (Lastovicka 1982; Mitchell 1983). Under the name of psychographic, such work grounded AIO operationalization into the personality theory (Zablocki and Kanter 1976). Psychographic research considered a

wide variety of consumption and non-consumption related activities, interests and opinions as symptoms of certain coherent personality traits rather than random empirical behaviors.

In a similar manner, values perspective lifestyle research depends on the premises that consumption patterns are a reflection of individual differences in certain universal value dimensions across groups (Kamakura and Novak 1992; Novak and MacEvoy 1990). However, instead of using an inductive approach deriving psychological traits from an inventory of scales, values based research deduces the lifestyle segments according to the classification of individuals in terms of their rankings or weightings on certain a priori value dimensions. These studies are based on the premises of the social psychologist Rokeach (1973) who contend that the outcomes of the values of the individuals will be manifested in their lifestyles orientations and guide their actions, attitudes, and judgments. List of Values (LOV) is a major application of this theory to consumer lifestyle research and conceptualizes individuals as adapting to various life roles, based in part upon value fulfillment (Kahle 1983). Another popular application is VALS which classifies the individuals according to their scores on a list of predefined value and demographic dimensions into eight clusters of consumers (Novak and MacEvoy 1990).

Like the psychographics approaches, values based approaches depend on the assumption that actions and object orientations of consumers manifest a list of latent variables representing some universal antecedents that is not affected by the socio-historical context. While the psychographic approaches focus on personality factors, values based approaches take cultural dimensions as the determinant of individual

actions. They conceive culture as a homologous and internally coherent structure that is relatively stable across groups and situations. Consumers are presumed to acquire their values through the socialization process. Once internalized and established, values assign a recognizable order and regularity to behaviors which enact like personality traits and guide individuals through their actions and object orientations in their future life stages. This perspective defines culture as the "software of the mind" that guides us in our daily interactions. Individuals who inhabit the same social environment are presumed to share the same cultural characteristics that are manifested in the consumption and lifestyle orientations of the social group they belong to (Hofstede, 1991).

On the other hand, recent work on culture rejects the latent-variable view of culture as a coherent, integrated entity and conceives it as a fragmented and instable process. According to these views, cognitive processes orienting people towards particular activities, interests and opinions are not out of context, universal values but are interpretive acts embedded in local contexts. Individuals still acquire culture through socialization process. However, this acquisition does not provide them with a coherently structured value system which acts as an algorithm but endows them with a "toolkit" (Swidler 1986) "repertoire" (Tilly 1992), or a 'script' (Bourdieu 1990) which performs as a map or a template guiding them through their actions and choice of objects. Individuals employ these templates to make sense of the phenomena surrounding them. Within this perspective, consumption objects are symbols that communicate meanings through discursive practices (Levy 1959; McCracken 1986; Mick 1986).

All in all, regardless of the approach taken, fact remains that a strong connection exists between the levels of consumption and consumption behaviors and the lifestyle of

the individual. This relationship, in essence, sits at the basis of the formation of a person's identity and individuality, but does not represent the sole element of this construction. Based on these findings, a question is being posed relative to the consumption of self-help within specific groups. This question would be approached throughout the section dedicated to the literature review, where various sources would be reviewed in order to provide more information on the features of the industry.

3.3. The need for power

Aside from the consumption and the actual lifestyle of the individual, this section claims that the propagation of the self-help is also based on the ongoing search for power. Modernity forces the individual to be powerful and to succeed in their endeavors, to respond to all pressures and to raise above all challenges.

Alongside with motivation and incentives, theory states that people need power in order to adequately function. They need to be in charge and get a sense that they have the ability to control actions, reactions, situations and so on. But today, as the challenges dramatically intensify, the power held by an individual over his life continually decreases. And while this outcome is frustrating within the climate of the personal life, it is alarming within the professional background.

This era of late modernity creates incremental strains for the organizational staff members and most of these are pegged to uncertainty and risk. These problems are now exacerbated as a result of the internationalized economic crisis, which has forced economic agents to reduce their expenditures, necessity which has often resulted in the loss of jobs. In Turkey for instance, in the manufacturing sector alone, it was estimated that 286,000 jobs were lost one year after the crisis commenced. Unemployment rate

grew during the same period from a pre-crisis average of 10.2 per cent to 15.8 per cent. One third of the country's unemployed were youth of ages between 15 and 25 (United States Department of Labor, 2011).

But even before the crisis, jobs were uncertain and there was always the risk of being downsized. A relevant example is offered by the case of outsourcing – proliferated through the incremental forces of globalization. In this setting, economic agents would continually seek more cost efficient alternatives to completing their operational processes and this desire has often materialized in firms in one country being closed and plants being opened in cheaper regions. Jobs were as such cut and the stability of millions of families across the globe was cut in the name of profits.

While it could be argued that globalization and outsourcing have redistributed wealth from the richer nations to the less economically developed nations, this argument is unsubstantiated. In other words, when they move from one region to another, economic agents register cost savings. They pay the employees in the foreign country less than they would have paid the employees in the origin country, and keep the difference in profits. The employees in the foreign country where the plant is opened are seldom paid wages above the minimum imposed by the respective state. The outcome is that of a state of poverty propagation as the states are only able to survive on these contracts, with progress becoming even further away. Through these lenses then, it is argued that globalization negatively impacts national identity and increases the gap between the world's rich and its poor.

And women play an important and demoralizing role in this process; especially the poorer women in third world countries, where they are targeted to work in

sweatshops, for minimum wages. They put in long hours, but the paycheck is insufficient to improve their life standards. They nevertheless accept the degrading situation as they do not have more viable alternatives. This situation propagates the capitalist model.

“Women workers of particular caste/ class, race and economic status are necessary to the operation of the capitalist global economy. Women are not only the preferred candidates for particular jobs, but particular kinds of women – poor, Third World and Two-Third World, working-class, and immigrant/ migrant women – are preferred in these global, *flexible*, temporary job markets” (Kennedy and Beins, 2005, p.89).

Women are as such more sensitive to exploitation, to poverty and they make more intense efforts to establish themselves, to find their roles within the society and the communities, and to gain and preserve more power. Women were generally powerful within the households, where they made most of the decisions. They were also powerful in the education of the children and other household and family related chores. Today however, they seek to find power outside the home; they look for power which establishes them within the workplace community (Darlington and Mulvaney, 2003).

In the context of job risks and uncertainties, millions of people turn to self-help as a means of gaining more control. This control is not however one exerted over the world, over situations and other people. It is more of a control exerted over oneself. It helps the individual reader better understand themselves and provides the motivation to accept the world and to gain control over their feelings and perceptions. Basically, self-help does not militate for the control of others, but for a better understanding, acceptance and

control of the self. Self-help books and other self-help items are generally constructed around this theme – control over the self.

But these themes and other features of self-help would be addressed throughout the following chapters. At this level, it is assumed that the need for power and control has supported the increasing popularity of self-help. This specifically points out to the necessity to assess the need for power.

In an imaginary and extended hierarchy of needs, the need for power would be at the top of the pyramid, above the need for self-actualization. The concept of the need for power was first coined by David McClelland in 1961, but it has since then caught the attention of numerous researchers.

Biswajeet Pattanayak (2005) defines the need for power as “the desire to be influential to control people and change situations” (Pattanayak, 2005, p.180). Lussier (2008) argues that people who reveal a high level of need for power will seek to advance within the organizational climate. The majority of leaders as such reveal high levels of the need for power n-Pow. These individuals habitually compete, but tend to engage in competitions they have a strong sense they could win; they do not like to lose. People with a high need for power desire to control others – or at least to influence them –, to control situations, and they are generally confrontational; they are seldom characterized by a need of affiliation and belonging to a specific group as the desire to control or influence these groups is higher. In other words, “they are more concerned about getting their own way (influencing others) than about what others think of them” (Lussier and Achua, 2009, p.42).

Rollinson (2008) assesses the need for power at a deeper organizational level and argues that the managers of the modern day era reveal a higher need for achievement. Through their lenses, control is more important than achievement as achievements in themselves can only be completed with the aid of control and power. The ability to detain the control then satisfies a more private and psychological need of these managers. Rollinson then agrees with Lussier and states that the actual need for affiliation sensed by these individuals is generally lower.

Overall then, the need for power is a new force which drives people in the personal as well as the professional climates. And in order to deal with this pressure and to manage this need in a world in which individuals tend to lose control and face more risks and uncertainties, some people turn to self-help. It is again emphasized that self-help nevertheless militates for the control of the self and the improvement of life through personal development, rather than the influencing of others.

3.4. Spirituality within the workplace

In a background of competition between employees and employers, coupled with incremental pressures on all sides of business activity, and in the framework of changing religious perceptions, the modern day workforce has turned to spirituality. In other words, the present day workplace has not only metamorphosed to treat the employees better, but has also changed from a formal environment into one which embraces spirituality.

The concept of spirituality in the workplace has been coined after the analysis of numerous players within the business community and it represents a deeper understanding of business decisions, their rationale and their consequences. Mashi

Rahmani (2011) argues that spirituality in the workplace links the rationale of decisions with the nature of the consequences. In this order of ideas, he argues that when a business decision is based on pure and positive motives, then the outcome would also be a positive one. If, on the other hand, the motivation is selfish, ill and not pure, then its consequences would be negative.

This comprehension of spirituality within the workplace is commonly applied in the management of the human resources. Employers as such rely on the belief that high levels of employee morale would materialize in high performance levels. In other words, the application of spirituality within the workplace is a strong factor at the basis of the sustained investments made in the motivation and satisfaction of the employees. In this light of events then, it can be argued that spirituality within the workplace is the result of a combination between ethics and strategic business, but at a deeper level than both practices would be applied on their own.

Spirituality in the workplace is constructed on karmic principles that positive actions attract positive reactions, whereas negative actions would lead to the reaping of negative consequences. But aside from this universal balance, spirituality within the workplace also accepts the belief that the world is governed – or at least influenced – by an entity larger than what we know – by a Higher Power. And in order to create positive business results, economic agents have to connect to the higher power.

“As business people seeking success, we should consider new methods and techniques which connect with a Higher Power. Organizations which practice positive psychology and invest in employee motivational programs have been shown to reap rewards in the form of improved employee performance and self-

reported employee satisfaction. These results generally translate into increased sales and ROI (Return on Investment)” (Rahmani, 2011).

Rutte (1996) takes a different approach to spirituality within the workplace by assessing it through the lenses of the organizational staff members. For them, spirituality in the workplace represents a need and desire for work and employment to signify more than the means to an end. Specifically, the employees of the modern day complex workforce perceive their jobs not just as a source of income to help them sustain life, but as a source of personal achievement and emotional gains as well.

This need for spirituality is not only observed at the personal level, but even at the group level. One particular explanation for the incidence of spirituality within the workplace is represented by the aging of the population, a trend observed at the global level. In this sense, people across the world focus on having fewer children, and instead better providing for them. While this trend is more common in the developed nations, it is also coming to be present in the emergent and less developed countries.

In this context then, the labor force is aging and it is not fully replaced as the population approaching retirement is numerically higher than the population likely to enter employment. As the people age, they come to be more interested in spiritual matters, such as their legacies or the values by which they lead their lives. And while these interests support the emergence and growth of spirituality among more mature employees, they also lead younger employees to consider spiritual matters (Rutte, 1996).

Regardless of the lenses through which workplace spirituality is perceived, fact remains that it represented an increasingly popular phenomenon which would be worthwhile studying in years from now as it is expected to change and generate

significant impacts within the organizational climates. The rationale behind this expectation for continued emphasis on workplace spirituality is constructed on the benefits of spirituality within the workplace. These refer to the following:

- Spirituality supports creativity
- Spirituality fosters communication
- Spirituality promotes the respect for the others
- Spirituality helps create a greater vision for the employees as well as for the overall firm
- Spirituality helps create an environment in which partnerships and trust flourish
- Spirituality provides the individuals with energy and helps them embrace flexibility (It Is Time, 2011).

The pursuit of spirituality is often difficult, especially in today's era, when the traditional religious values characterize the society less than they did in the past. In this context then, when the Church no longer represented the refuge of the individuals, they turned to alternative providers of spiritual values. And a most predominant representative of this category of values promoters is represented by the gurus, life coaches and any other advocates of self-help.

The underlying principle in the actions and advice of gurus is that of motivation. In other words, they strive to motivate people to enjoy the day, to do things even if these things do not seem like they would materialize in success, to take the steps for their happiness. Life coaches promote the belief in the self and enforce a sense of enthusiasm and empowerment.

Life coaches and gurus are – or at least seem to be – happy people, empowered people, people in control of their lives; individuals able to control their lives and emotions, people who can attract good things their way. These features of the gurus and life coaches make them highly popular with other individuals and they also represented the reasons as to why organizational managers have brought them in to speak to the employees.

Today's motivators are the gurus and the life coaches and, within the organizational climate, they focus on the motivation of the employees in order to increase their morale levels. Motivators can be organized into three categories, based on the size of the target they seek to influence. In this order of ideas, the individual motivator is the guru striving to influence a single person. The team motivator is the guru striving to influence several individuals and the organizational motivator is the guru striving to influence an entire company, rather than just particular individuals (Greeno, 2006).

The primary scope of these efforts was that of increasing employee satisfaction on the job, but the morale increased to also impact the life of individuals outside the actual job. Gradually then, gurus gained more importance in social life and in contexts outside professional ones. Life coaching can now occur in a formal and organized context, but even in a cafe during a friendly conversation as it is based on conversations and dialogues.

Life coaches help people understand and confront their fears. They also help them gain a deeper meaning of dilemmas and realize matters they had not realized up until that point. An important role of the life coach is that it helps the individual see things they do not want to see.

At the end of a conversation with a guru or a life coach, the individual feels refreshed and empowered to make the decisions which have to be made. Gurus offer inspiration and stimulate trust in the self. But the true test of a guru's success is when an individual becomes able to empower and inspire themselves, rather than require the assistance of a life coach. In other words, the best self-help principles argue that books, coaches and gurus cannot help an individual by providing them with the answers, but only by helping them to identify the answers themselves.

“True life coaching isn't about some guru telling you how you should live. Yes, you may attempt to bask in the comfort of an expert who can fix your life, your fashion sense, your body flaws and your emotional angst. But these fixes are too often like an elegant sticking plaster. Changes don't last, unless a real change has come from deep within you. True life coaching enables you to call on your very own guru, any time, any place, with or without the support of another human being” (Purdie, 2010, p.9).

Life coaching, gurus and the general self-help industry then is focused on the individual identity – on helping people understand themselves, accept themselves and support themselves in their own endeavors. The self-help industry is even more so successful as it does not implement precise models on how to improve life, but it promotes individual empowerment and the self improvement of the life.

In other words, in a context of decreasing religious values and increasing socio-economic pressures, the self-help industry creates a new focus – the focus on the self. And this focus on the self reveals the new trend within the contemporaneous society of taking matters into one's hand and not relying on others – even on Divinity – to solve

one's problems. In this scenario, however profane it would sound, the self-help industry promotes a new deity – the self.

Religious trends along history have militated for a clear separation of the people from the Divinity. But people remain alike all gods promoted by global religious views. In the Christian bible it is stated that God created Adam “in His own image; in the image of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2002, p.81). In Buddhism for instance, Buddha is not a god, but was a simple man who left his life and pursued mental tranquility and inner peace. The Buddhist dogma even argues that everyone can be a Buddha if they follow the doctrine (Easwaran, 2007).

In this sense then, the self-help industry militates for the internal discovery of the divinity, for the realization that the Divinity is closest to the people when the people implement the principles of kindness, of a well organized mind and of universal balance. The self-help industry argues that the saviors of mankind are the very individuals, who need to step up and improve their life, rather than continue to await a divine intervention. They need to create this divine intervention by themselves.

3.5. The commodification of Eastern values, cultures and spirituality

In the dynamic world of today, workplaces come to also be characterized by an increased emphasis on spirituality. The previous section has given meaning to workplace spirituality from the perspectives of the employers and those of the employees. But these perspectives are insufficient in the discussion of spirituality within the organizational climate. Kent Rhodes (2006) for instance argues that spirituality within the workplace is also differentiated based on culture.

In the West for instance, the understating of workplace spirituality would be more formal and more emphasis would be placed on the creation of a technical definition to explain the meaning of spirituality as it applies to the organizational climate. Such an approach to spirituality within the Western Hemisphere would be explained by the clear separation of the state from religion. In other words, the Western people would themselves fight to separate their professional tasks from their religious convictions and values. This tendency of separation creates a context in which the Westerners are generally confused about the meaning and application of spirituality.

The peoples in the Eastern Hemisphere however live their lives in a mixture of religion and tradition and this blend – the generator of spirituality – has not been separated from the state, nor has it ever been neglected. This subsequently means that these peoples have a more complex and deeper understanding of spirituality. They apply it in their everyday life and they know exactly what it means, despite the fact that they do not integrate it in a technical and restrictive definition.

“Indicators suggest that cultures other than that of the U.S. may not be engaged in the same exploration of and confusion about the topic of spirituality in the workplace. Such concern in the U.S. regarding separating personal spirituality from work could be in part due to America’s political insistence on the separation of church and state and therefore the disintegration of personal spirituality from work. This separation stands in stark contrast to cultures in which individuals’ daily lives are infused with religious tradition” (Rhodes, 2006).

This distinctive comprehension of spirituality has made the Westerners perceive the Easterners as spiritually complex beings; as people who lived in peacefulness,

togetherness and happiness superior to that encountered in the more stressful and constraining Western cultures. This simple distinction in the understanding and applicability of spirituality has transformed the East in a standard of spirituality which sits at the basis of a healthier and happier life.

Gradually then, people from the West traveled to the East in search of their own spirituality. They strived to know themselves better, to understand themselves better and to accept themselves. In all these, they came to accept the world as it was and free themselves from the rigors of the modern day society. But for the people who could not travel to the East to directly meet gurus and find their own spirituality, alternative sources were created.

The creation of means and mechanisms through which the people from the West could experience the culture from the East is generically organized under the process of the commodification of the Eastern values, cultures and spirituality. Generically, it is perceived that the ways of the East were transformed into books, teachings, lessons and discourses on how to experience spirituality. But the result is not always positive or embraced by the Easterners.

The importance of self-help literature as a cultural product for the Western consumer is discernible in terms of a prevailing colonial tradition, postmodern consumer culture and its manifestations in the increasing need for self-reflexivity among consumers. To start with, consumption of self-help literature is a salient issue in the context of Western consumption due to its heavy appropriation and exploitation of exotic religions, cultures and spiritualities. York (2001) argues that New Age, which is the basic concept underlying self-help, is simply the commodification of traditional spiritualities

without consent of the sources; a kind of spiritual exploitation and an extension of capitalist imperialist logic of the West and this logic is manifest in its cultural products as well. Self-help books are, in this regard, among the foremost cultural products flourishing in the West targeting the demand for cultural and spiritual exoticism among the Western consumer. The interest in Eastern cultures and local religions might be traced back to the orientalist attitude of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century European colonialism (Said, 1979) fundamentally in service of setting the hierarchical superiority of the West over the East. The orientalist discourse of self-help, apart from setting forth a distinction between the East and the West, also serves the purpose of enlivening the “disenchanted” (Weber and Parsons, 2003) lives of the modern Western consumers, bounded by rational, dualistic thinking in all spheres of life, including religion.

This colonial outlook extended to postmodern day, which witnesses the blossom of self-help, in its appropriation and misinterpretation of Eastern localities, and its misrepresentation of Eastern cultures by fusing them into such an “atomic” category. However, the clumsy eclecticism of self-help literature further complements the needs of the postmodern consumer in search of novel spiritual forms of a customizable, jigsaw-like character. Possamai (2002, 2003) calls the appropriation of alternative spiritualities, as “perennism”. Perennism can be considered as part of the cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson, 1991) since late capitalism is characterized with an inclination towards “parody and pastiche”. In this regard, the spiritual discourse underlying self-help literature is in alliance with the postmodern zeitgeist where “depth in culture is replaced by surface or even by multiple surfaces” (Rosenau, 1992). The reason for appropriation of exotic religions and indigenous cultures in the case of self-help literature is thereby

parallel to the late capitalist culture's tendency to create depthless, playful cultural products rather than those that encourage self-transcendence.

But the efforts of the Westerns in understanding and embracing the Eastern values have gravely failed. Taken out of their context, the values, cultures and spirituality of the Eastern Hemisphere seem out of place and cheap replicas of thousands of years of deeper meanings and lives spent in the honoring of the Eastern ways. All in all, the self-help industry stands for the transformation of the long lasting Eastern values into products which can be purchased at kiosks across the globe or in empty words which strive to convince employees to work harder.

As self-help literature can be considered as a genre, which appropriates local religions, exotic cultures and spiritualities, it is “kitsch” in that respect rather than offering real transcendence. Adorno and Bernstein (2002) define “kitsch” as a “parody of catharsis” and a “parody of aesthetic experience”. For him, the objective of art is challenging the power structure through subjectivity. The readers of self-help literature wish to move away from boredom, but at the same time they do not want to put any individual effort into self-transcendence and therefore consume this literature which gives them both an escape from daily strains and offers “predigested” (Adorno and Bernstein, 2002) self-transcendence guidelines. Hence, there is no real aesthetic or cathartic experience in this passive consumption of self-help, it becomes only a parody of these experiences; a copy of psychology, religion and philosophy which invoke these experiences; and consequently a kitsch commodity.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW ON SELF-HELP

4.1. Introduction

Throughout the current chapter, emphasis is placed on the analysis of self-help and its role and importance within the modern day society. The approach taken is a general one and does not focus precisely on the dimension of young Turkish professional females in their understanding and use of self-help. This is generally the case as the sources discussing this specific topic are scarce, pointing out to the very need for the current research endeavor. The information presented would as such integrate data on self-help from a generic standpoint.

The sources integrated at this stage of the research endeavor are numerous and complex, to include internet articles, books and articles in the specialized journals and magazines. Each of these categories of literary resources is characterized by specific limitations and advantages. Internet articles for instance are short and to the point. Additionally, they reveal the benefit of integrating data on current issues in a quick and efficient manner, which is also easy to read by both professionals, as well as non professionals. The current endeavor seeks to use common language and as such be easily accessible to novices as well as experienced readers and researchers. This decision would enhance the initial purpose of the dissertation of supporting both the academia, but also the practitioners and the other parties interested in the consumption of self-help by the

young professional women in Turkey. Returning nonetheless to the internet articles as a source of information, it has to be mentioned that they also reveal the disadvantage of not being peer reviewed and integrating potential bias. In order to reduce this limitation, emphasis is placed on verifying the presented information with the scope of revealing the truth behind it and its consistency through various sources.

The second category of literary sources consulted in the construction of this thesis is represented by articles in specialized magazines and journals. These sources have the advantage of detailing specific dimensions of the researched topic, and also being peer reviewed and as such not biased. These sources then support the creation of an objective section of literature review, which integrates reliable and relevant information. The disadvantage of the articles in the specialized journals and magazines is that they might be highly specific and not relevant for another specific topic or the dimension of the topic which is of interest to the researcher. Then, these articles are often written in a highly formal and complex language, which might restrict the access of the novice researcher to the information presented.

Finally, the books used throughout the literature review section reveal the advantage of being generally written in a common language, meaning as such that they are accessible to a wide array of audiences, from the more specialized researchers to the more novice examiners. The books are also large and integrate extensive information. Unlike the articles on the internet, but also unlike most articles in the specialized media, the books take a more integrated approach to the topics studied as they first set the context and introduce the reader to the entire complexity of the situation. Additionally,

since they discuss various elements related to the topic, it is highly possible that they also integrate information relevant for the researcher.

Working with books might however be more complex and tedious, but the more common disadvantage is pegged to their time-relevant viability. In this order of ideas, the construction of a book is a long and intricate process, which often takes years. This virtually means that, by the time a book would be available within the market, it would already contain information which is no longer applicable. In other words, books seldom contain information – especially numeric information – which is germane years after the completion of the book.

In order to minimize the disadvantages of the three primary sources of information, but also to maximize their advantages, the current endeavor balances data from all books, journals, magazines and the internet. This combination of sources increases the quality of the literature review by supporting the provision of unbiased data as well as the integration of valid and necessary pieces of information.

4.2. Review of the available literature

The section on the examination of the available literature on self-help is organized into various subsections, each united by elements of commonality and centrality. The first such subsection then is represented by an effort to comprehend the true meaning of self-help. This section is followed by an inquiry into the various forms of self-help – the more common of these being books and groups –, continued with the patterns of consumption of self-help items and completed with a review of the benefits and limitations of self-help.

4.2.1. The concept of self-help

The phenomenon of self-help has gained incremental momentum throughout the world and the specialized literature has responded to this with an intensification of the studies conducted and written on self-help. This specifically means that the definitions incurred in the literature are numerous and vast. The scope of this subsection is that of presenting numerous definitions of self-help as they arise in the literature.

The definition of self-help depends on the context in which it is analyzed. In this order of ideas, through the specific lenses of Jewish law, self-help is understood as “a direct action of an individual on a matter usually decided in court” (R. Yoseph of Colon, quoted by Shimshon Ettinger and Hanina Ben-Menahem, 1988, p.16). From this standpoint then, self-help is understood as occurring whenever an individual decides to act by themselves in a matter which would otherwise be decided by the judicial system. Such a definition was provided over two decades ago, before the emergence of the self-help phenomenon, as this is manifested today.

In the context of this research, self-help is understood in a different manner, one which better applies in milieu of late modernity. Such a definition is provided by Lavoie, Borkman and Girdon (1994) and quoted by Joseph K. F. Kwok, Raymond K. H. Chan, W. T. Chan (2002). According to them,

Self-help represents the “mobilization and recruitment of peers in an informal and non-hierarchical setting and sharing of their common experience” (Kwok, Chan and Chan, 2002, p.10).

In this definition, it is made obvious that self-help in fact relies on the expertise and knowledge of others, which is shared in an informal context. Self-help is not as such understood as a process of internal personal development and improvement, nor as the manifestation of a guru's teachings upon the individuals, but it represents an informal construction in the mists of which people help each other.

“Self-help is a process of sharing a common experience, challenge or concern. It is participatory in nature, and involves getting help, giving help, and learning to help yourself, as well as sharing knowledge and experience”

(<http://www.mhепinc.org/self-help/what-is-self-help>, 2011)

This second definition of self-help is more informal, but reveals a wider comprehension of the self-help phenomenon. Similar to previous definition, in which emphasis is placed on getting help, this new definition emphasizes on three specific elements – giving help, getting help and self development. In the context of the current dissertation then, self-help is perceived more in terms of this second definition as self-help understood through this process is based on helping the self as well as the others.

In this context of the self-help phenomenon as understood and applied in late modernity, two distinct definitions raise a particular interest – the self-help group and the self-help books.

“A self-help group is a supportive, educational, usually change-oriented mutual aid group that addresses a single life problem or condition shared by all members. Its purpose may be personal or societal change or both, achieved through the use of ideologies for dealing with a situation” (Kurtz, 1997, quoted by Kwok, Chan and Chan, 2002, p.10).

The self-help books are constructed on the same principle of information sharing with the purpose of aiding the individual. W. Brad Johnson defines self-help books as follows:

“We define as *self-help* any book, other than the Bible itself, which has been written to help you improve, change or somehow understand your personal qualities, relationships, mental health or faith. Authors of self-help books typically attempt to provide encouragement, information, or advice to readers who wish to *help themselves*” (Johnson, 2000, p.183)

4.2.2. Forms of self-help

The self-help industry is a complex construction formed from numerous elements, all aiming to aid the individual improve their condition. Individuals often deal with different problems, from lack of self trust and confidence, to more life threatening issues, such as drug addictions. As a result of the increased diversity of problems and conditions, self-help has elaborated a myriad of means through which it addresses the individuals.

The multitude of component elements to the self-help industry is also due to a more marketing process of thoughts. To better explain, while the problems individuals face are indeed complex and different and require diverse approaches, the individuals themselves are different creatures, with distinctive needs, features and capabilities. While for an individual it would be easier to buy a book and read it in their times of peace and tranquility, for another person, the more proactive approach in which they regularly joined group meetings would be more suitable. Through these lenses then, in order for the products in the self-help industry to target and satisfy the needs of as many customers as possible, the diversification of the industry has been created.

Some forms of self-help refer to internal processes of thought, based on reflections on what the individual has heard in a conversation, has seen on the television, and has read in a magazine and so on. And ultimately, self-help is about the internal ability to improve oneself. But in order to attain this ability, the self-help industry has created numerous products, the more common of them referring to the following:

- Self-help books
- Self-help support groups
- Self-help cassettes and other voiced materials
- Self-help seminars
- Self-help therapies
- Self-help exercise.

Since the self-help books and the self-help groups are the more common forms of self-help, it is necessary to review them in a more detailed manner.

a) Self-help books

The self-help books are probably the most common form of modern day self-help as they are the most easily accessible ones. For a few dollars, anyone can access information on how to overcome their fears, how to be successful in business, how to identify illnesses, how to live longer and so on. The definition of the self-help books is often a complex endeavor for the simple fact that, however their scope is obvious, the definition of the multifaceted self-help books is rather challenging. Sandra K. Dolby has however come to assess numerous self-help books in terms of their themes, aims and constructions and has as such created a relevant definition of the books. In her *Self-help books: why Americans keep reading them*, Dolby states:

“Self-help books are books of popular nonfiction written with the aim of enlightening readers about some of the negative effects of our culture and worldwide and suggesting new attitudes and practices that might lead them to more satisfying and more effective lives” (Dolby, 2005 , p.38).

The self-help books are generally easy to identify and pick up from a pile of different books and this is due to four characteristics they reveal. Specifically:

- (1) Self-help books are written in an informal style and a rhetoric manner, rather than being formal and narrative
- (2) Self-help books are focused on the improvement of the self
- (3) Self-help books reveal a unique structure and composition based on the identification of a problem and the proposition of a solution to the respective problem
- (4) Self-help books reveal an educational dimension in which they focus on educating the reader on how to improve their lives (Dolby, 2005).

Self-help books are also interesting as a phenomenon, which has gained more and more momentum within late modernity. W. Brad Johnson argues that this popularity of the self-help books is due to a mix of six specific reasons, as follows:

- They are highly cost effective
- They are readily available
- They reveal an apparent relevance to issues encountered on daily basis
- They are written in a hopeful and optimistic tone which increases the morale of the reader

- They allow the readers to explore their personal issues in an intimate manner, without having to deal with the shame associated with visits to professionals
- Readers of self-help books might often be prevented from accessing other sources of help (Johnson, 2000, p.184).

At the final level of the actual impacts of the self-help books, the specialized literature has yet to convene on a universally accepted result. In most cases, the results are ambiguous and open for interpretations. But however it is unverifiable, the frequent readers of self-help book declare that the lecture of the books has generated positive impacts onto their lives (Johnson, 2000, p.185).

b) Self-help support groups

The self-help support groups are mostly common throughout the Western Hemisphere and within the more developed countries. Within the United States for instance, such groups are increasingly popular and they are recommended even by authority figures, such as judges, as well as by psychiatrists and psychologists.

The self-help groups are generally formed from several individuals, all fighting the same problem and struggling together to overcome it. Examples of problems commonly addressed in support groups include the loss of a dear one, violence and anger issues, weight management and so on. But the official recognition of these groups has increased significantly as they came to aid people with drug addictions overcome their quandaries.

Self-help support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous for instance enjoy popularity as they offer a new sense of hope in the social and personal rehabilitation of the individuals. Detailed assessments of the impact of these groups on the actual

rehabilitation of the individuals indicate varying results, without a real ability to testify for an unambiguous benefit (Weiss, et al., 2000).

The self-help groups are led by individuals with either a theoretical background, or an extended expertise with the problem at the core of the group. Each group might create its leader based on internal premises, but professionals seldom intervene – unless they themselves are group members. Generally, the participation of the group meetings is free of charge and not mandatory – unless otherwise decided by a judicial power. Each meeting is structured based on a particular topic of the problem and the local groups are relatively autonomous from the headquarters in other cities (Johnson, 2000).

4.2.3. Consumption of self-help

The most popular self-help book of relationships is John Gray's *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, which was purchased by equal proportions men and women. The other books which followed however were mostly purchased by women. In 2008 for instance, 80 per cent of all self-help relationship books were bought by women. Among the most popular titles, one could pin point to *The seven principles of making a marriage work*; *When things fall apart*; *Women who love too much*; *Smart women, foolish choices*; *Men who hate women and the women who love them*. The list of such books is virtually endless.

The popularity of these types of titles has led Forbes editor Kiri Blakeley (2009) to wonder whether all those women purchasing the respective books were in a poor relationship, in a relationship which made them unhappy and with men which did not

respect them. The answer was a definite NO, giving then birth to a new question – why do women devour self-help books?

First of all, the issue of self-esteem is more discussed in relation to women in the literature. Specifically, large amounts of women do not have sufficient trust in themselves and as such suffer from low self-esteem. The self-esteem is generically understood as a sense of value, trust and self-worth an individual perceives of themselves. This could for instance refer to the appearance of the individual, the relationships developed, the beliefs and emotions and so on. The self-esteem is generically viewed as a personality trait, which means that it is maintained for a prologue period of time and it is rather stable (Cherry, 2010).

The problem that women are reported to have more self-esteem issues makes them turn to self-help in order to address them. They continually feel that they have a problem, they overanalyze things and they feel that they are being over analyzed and criticized by those around. Also, whenever a problem occurs, the lower self-esteem of women makes them believe that it is their fault. The sense of shame is as such manifested and the responsibility of dealing with the problem arises (Blakeley, 2009).

The low-self esteem of women is pegged to a myriad of elements, such as their historic inferiority to men and the sustained discriminations to which they have been subjected, but also more modern causes. For instance, the abusive experiences of a woman – such as emotional, sexual, mental or verbal abuses – determine the woman to think less of herself and as such lower her self-esteem. Negative messages received from the environment would also lower the self-esteem; for example, a young girl who has

witnessed a bitter divorce as a child might not be able to hold a job or a relationship as her sense of unworthiness is intense.

Aside from abuse and harmful messages, the self-esteem of women is also negatively impacted by insufficient comfort and unattainable expectations. When women have to live longer periods of time in conditions of insufficient emotional and physical comfort, their self-esteem levels would decrease dramatically. Also, when they set goals which are unrealistic and impossible to attain, the morale and sense of worth of the women will decrease (Juhasz, 2010).

Low self-esteem is an important problem for the women in late modernity and it can be recognized by the following signs:

- Feelings of not belonging and worthlessness
- The propagation of abusive relationships – in all social, professional and romantic fields
- Depression, anxiety and pessimism
- Dependence on other people to provide positive feelings
- Poor image of the self and the negative perception of the personal skills, without the recognition of the actual abilities
- The constant need for approval and the sustained search for approval
- Negative talks regarding the self (the calling of one *loser*, *dumb* or other such appellatives)
- Eating disorders
- Low performances on the job or even inability to hold jobs

- Sexual promiscuity and/ or addictions to drugs, alcohol, sex, food, work or even religion
- Busyness and the living of life in a super-achieving style, which prevents the women from facing their “demons” (Hudson, p.14)
- Inability to set realistic objectives, coupled with the inability to carry out the objectives set
- Low trust in others and a high threshold for risk
- Antisocial or even violent behavior, with a preference for solitude (Yasko-Mangum, 2007)
- The causing of harm to oneself, self-mutilation or even thoughts and attempts of suicide
- Constant fear of being judged, expression which stifles every move of the people with low self-esteem (Hudson, p.13-14).

Among the Turkish women, the levels of self-esteem are generically low. The Turkish women still carry on their fights for gender equality, which, as has been mentioned before, is only existent at a legal stance, but the real life points to a different situation. The Turkish women endure domestic violence and prejudice, and however the legislation offers protection and support, the legislative breaches and the failures in implementation allow for women to be abused (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

A report of the Committee against Torture found that despite legal equality with the males, the females in Turkey are limited from the social, economic and cultural standpoint. The secular traditions in the country prevent women from benefiting from education and employment and they as such prevent their development. In spite of the

improvements in the condition of women and the increasing employment rates among females, their overall conditions are still improper. Out of the total of technical and professional workers, only 36 per cent are women; out of the legislators, senior officials and managers, women only occupy 9 per cent of the positions. Turkish women earn an estimated 46 per cent of the income generated by the men and 90 per cent of all real estate properties in the country are owned by males (p.347).

Violence against women in Turkey remains a stringent problem and it is present in both homes as well as outside them. The findings of the World Organization against Torture in its report *Violence against women in Turkey* are alarming. They state that 90 per cent of the Turkish women experience physical and/ or emotional violence on the hands of their husbands or boyfriends. Some of them even stated that they were beat on their wedding night.

The majority of the victims do not report the abuses to the police, and those who did report them, have been met with insensitivity. Rather than treating domestic violence as a crime, the authorities try to get the parties to compromise and reunite. And in the severe cases when the aggressor is punished, the top punishment – however seldom existent – is never more than a week in jail. In such circumstances, Turkish women endure in silence.

Shelters have been created to serve as a place of refuge for victims of domestic violence, and these shelters are highly populated. The incidence of such shelters is however decreased and there are various regions in the country where no such shelter can be found. The number of the shelters has even further been reduced recently as funding for them is scarce.

Aside from domestic violence, Turkish women endure other forms of abuse as well. They are often the victims of marital rape, situation which is not considered a crime and not regulated in any way. Marital rape is propagated by the fact that a large proportion of Turkish brides are bought – that is a price is paid by the groom in order for the couple to marry. A recent study to the Committee against Torture on 599 Turkish women found that prices were paid for 61 per cent of the women. The practice of paying for the bride is disregarded by the women as it creates a sense that females are commodities for males to trade and that once the men pay the price, the women become their properties.

The study for the Committee against Violence also found that 60 per cent of marriages in East Turkey are arranged by the families, sometimes without the consent of the future spouses. 1 in 10 women in Turkey live in polygamous marriages, in which they have the same husband as other women. Turkey has banned polygamous marriages in 1926, meaning then, that from a legal standpoint, women in polygamous marriages have fewer rights than women in monogamous marriages.

But behind the tragedy of these actions, they are not the most serious infringement of women's rights. These occur when women are killed in the name of honor and are more common in East and South Turkey, but have been reported throughout the entire country. The murders are brought about by the women "allegedly [stepping] outside her socially prescribed role, especially, but not only, with regard to her sexuality and to her interaction with men outside her family" (World Organization against Torture, p.351). The killing in the name of honor is completed by a young male in the family of the

victim, generally a minor and the punishment is often inexistent or extremely mild and the authorities condone the behavior.

Domestic violence, marital rape, polygamous marriages, bride-price, arranged and forced marriages, honor killings, all constitute infringements of human rights. They not only stifle the rights and positions of women within the society, but they also cripple their opinions of themselves. A more detailed study (Sahin et al., 2010) used regression analysis to correlate domestic violence, abuse, childhood trauma and the type of marriage the women were in with the levels of self-esteem. The results indicated that the Turkish women revealed low levels of self-esteem and that these were directly linked to domestic violence and the abuse to which they were subjected as children.

Returning to the general consumption of self-help, this is propagated among women not only due to low self-esteem, but also due to different processes of thought. For instance, when the women encounter a problem, they start to feel shame and responsibility for the respective situation. They will as such seek ways to solve the problem, but also ways to cope with the shame and the new responsibility. As a special element, they will often resort to self-help.

Men on the other hand, are less likely to recognize the existence of an internal problem, and even when they do so, they reveal a strong belief that they can handle the problem by themselves. Men are more confident than women and they do not create internal processes of shame and responsibility that would have to be dealt with later on. Such a situation is associated with the historic role of males and females. Specifically, men would serve functions of providing for the family and they would do so through jobs and interactions with the external environment. They were in charge of safety issues and

sufficiency of life. Women on the other hand were completing more sensitive functions within the household, such as raising the children and they would only interact directly with family members or other women. This social differentiation of the genders constitutes a valid argument as to why women – more than men – are more prone to consuming self-help (Blakeley, 2009).

Dawn M. Wilson and Thomas F. Cash conducted a study on 264 students in their consumption of self-help books. Aside from validating the theory according to which women are larger consumers of self-help literature, they also found the following:

- People with an increased tendency to read and who generally appreciate reading were more likely to read the self-help books than people who did not generally read
- People who read self-help books were generally more prone to study psychology and were more interested in psychology related issues and topics
- Readers of self-help books revealed higher levels of self control
- Consumers of self-help books reported higher levels of satisfaction in life (Wilson and Cash, 2000).

The current subsection has focused on the assessment of the consumption patterns of self-help and has undoubtedly revealed that women are the largest consumer palette. An inquiry into the consumption patterns of self-help among Turkish individuals was however unsustainable due to lack of sources. The research section would however strive to reduce this general limitation by providing new insights into the consumption patterns revealed by young professional women in regard to self-help.

4.2.4. Benefits and criticism of self-help

The opinions of the impact of the self-help industry vary across sources, with some of the items in the specialized literature revealing advantages, whereas other sources indicating disadvantages. In their analysis of the impact of self-help group participation among individuals in Hong Kong, Bong-Ho Mok (2004) found a distinctive increase in the levels of individual empowerment in the aftermath of the implementation of the self-help techniques.

Specifically, Mok found that the individuals participating in self-help group meetings revealed an increased ability to cope with stress and to deal with personal problems. Additionally, the support received within the self-help groups was linked to improvements in the relationships developed. Expressly, the individuals participating in self-help group meetings became empowered to better manage the relationships with other individuals, with organizations as well as with the overall community. At a personal level, Mok found that the people participating in the meetings of the self-help groups were able to decrease the pressures of the family burdens, to perceive loneliness at a decreased level and to minimize their feelings of guilt.

And while the individual impacts were perceived as relevant, Mok also argued that the benefits revealed at individual level would spread out at the level of the community, to as such generate added social benefits. In this order of ideas, Mok believed that improved assessments, beliefs and confidence in the self brought about higher levels of involvement in problems of the macro-environment. This additional involvement then materialized in a higher representation of the people's needs and wants and even generated positive impacts at political levels.

A different potential benefit of self-help is assessed in the context of the United States, where drug and alcohol addictions challenge the modern day population. Here, self-help support groups are believed to sustain individuals in overcoming their addictions and regaining control of their lives. They are as such recommended by medical institutions.

Despite great number of studies conducted, the actual impacts of these groups are difficult to estimate. On the one hand, there appear arguments according to which these groups would support positive outcomes in overcoming cases of substance abuse (McKay, 1994; Montgomery, 1995). On the other hand however, the results are inconclusive and have indicated that the affiliation to a self-help group does not necessarily lead to successful outcomes. In other words, the self help groups did not generate positive impacts, but they neither created negative ones (Connors and Dermen, 1996).

Self-help books are however beneficial in the improvement of the relationship between parents and children. A research (Smith et al., 2003) claims that the benefits of self-help books between parents and children are manifested at two levels. First, the self-help books would be read by the family counselors, who would then be better able to understand the problems encountered by the parents and children and to as such devise more appropriate solutions.

At a secondary level, the benefit is revealed when the family counselors recommend the parents what specific self-help books to read by themselves. This lecture would allow the adults to better understand the problems faced by their children, to help them solve them, but would also shed some light into how the behavior of parents

impacts the children. In other words, the self-help books would support parents in reshaping their behavior so that they can improve their life and that of their children. Ultimately then, the self-help books – when the advice in them is adequately implemented – would save parents time and money and would improve the family relationships (Smith et al., 2003).

One specific reason sitting at the basis of the increasing popularity of self-help is represented by the sustained sickening of the population. In this era of consumerism and pollution, the global population is sicker than it has even been. The self-help phenomenon helps people face illness and cope with it, as best as they can. In 1989 for instance, the impact of the self-help groups were assessed on 232 patients from 65 disease categories. Negative developments were observed in only a few cases, whereas the majority of the patients noticed improvements regarding: (a) their acceptance and understanding of the diseases (the stress related to the medical condition), (b) their relationships with those around, mainly the family members and (c) behavior of the patient and their response to the medical services (Trojan, 1989).

The benefits of self-help have been extensively assessed within the literature and a more concise review of them is necessary at this stage. In other words, the lines below centralize some of the most relevant benefits of self-help, as they have been forwarded by various sources:

- At the level of self-help groups, members have extensive insight into the problem and they can support each other in addressing and resolving the pressing issues (Cunningham, Koski-Jannes, Wild and Cordingley, 2003)

- Self-help features are more easily accessible to the people – all of them – but even more so for those who reject the more formal and traditional approach to solving problems. Additionally, the barriers raised by self-help are less restrictive as the levels of judgment are minimal and because the access to them is often cost efficient (Zastrow, 2011).
- Self-help groups are beneficial as they support individuals in overcoming their problems. They do this through four specific elements – they offer hope through the power of positive examples; they create and offer social support as a sense of the larger community; they empower the individuals and they provide knowledge and education to the group participants (White, 2011).
- As opposed to people who live in communities where self-help is insignificant, the individuals functioning in communities where self-help is predominant live better lives. This is revealed at the following levels:
 - They reveal an increased ability to hold jobs
 - They are more active and engaging in educational actions
 - They are more independent, but their family ties are stronger, meaning as such that they get along with the families better, but do not require assistance
 - They are more responsible, proactive and they get ill at degrees inferior to those of the people living outside the self-help communities. A study of the Mental Health Empowerment Project has for instance found that people in self-help communities are hospitalized 50 per cent less than people outside self-help communities. Aside from the personal health

benefit, this situation also generates tremendous savings for the healthcare budgets.

- Finally, the self-help community is, in itself, a network, where people can meet and create connections. These connections can then help them in future personal endeavors, but also professional ones, to as such support the socio-economic development of the individuals (Trautman, 2011).

But in spite of these advantages, the self-help industry is subjected to intense criticism from numerous groups and individuals across the globe. A first category of criticism is raised by psychologists and psychiatrists. These were initially the writers of the self-help books – and many of them continue to write the books – and they draw their teachings and lessons from the very cases with which they had dealt throughout their careers. In other words, the specialized psychologists have put their knowledge on paper and have allowed for individuals who could not otherwise access therapy to benefit from the input of professionals.

Nonetheless, in the context of an increasing popularity of self-help, the books gradually came to be written by individuals who did not possess the knowledge and expertise to be offering advice to individuals. This specifically meant that the readers came to be presented with information that was not always useful, relevant or reliable. This situation led to the occurrence of instances in which people would read the self-help books and implement teachings which did not apply to them. Also, it was common that readers would misdiagnose themselves based on information collected from self-help books. This outcome was mostly obvious with younger and less experienced readers (Dolby, 2005).

Other negative outcomes of the self-help phenomenon are briefly revealed below:

- Self-help materials might not generate any impact on the people seeking to attain personal objectives, or even the opposite of their objectives could materialize, in cases when they use the self-help materials before having first consulted a professional (Birmingham and Treasure, 2010, p.191)
- As it has been mentioned before, the inadequate use of self-help materials or the use of insufficiently documented self-help materials could lead to situations in which the help-seeker misdiagnoses themselves and embarks in an impossible mission to resolve a problem that does not exist. Additionally, negative experiences might decrease the trust in self-help and deny future possibilities for successful outcomes (*Handbook of self-help therapies*, p.189).

The negative impacts of self-help – generally the failure of succeeding in the endeavors for which the individual had set out – would traditionally be pegged to three specific elements: the individual does not possess the knowledge necessary to resolving the problems; the individual lacks the proper perspective in understanding the situation or the individual lacks the proper motivation to implement the personal improvement agenda (Dombeck and Wells-Moran, 2006). In each scenario then, it appears that the success of self-help is pegged to the accessing of professional support prior to the commencement of a plan. This recommendation however is seldom implemented and this trend is mostly obvious at the level of self-help books, which are easily accessible for anyone.

The combination of inadequate research in the construction of the books and reader naivety determines some professionals to never recommend these books as sources

of information. In fact, they even argue that reading the books could cause dangers for the individual and that they should be warned of this before buying the book. A message devised for this purpose is revealed below:

“WARNING, reading this book may be dangerous to your health. This book may contain false, misleading and ridiculous information which may prove useless or may even make your difficulties worse” (Johnson, 2000, p.185).

It is needless to say that such a message would never be printed on a book, especially when the product sells and when profits and buyers do not tardy, but also as long as there is no official power to regulate this field. But it is imperative for the readers to recognize the threats of self-help books and to assess them. Generically, there are four main issues pegged to self-help books:

- Only a small percentage of the self-help books are based on scientific evidence. This means that the majority of them is speculative and based on the personal, non-substantiated beliefs of the author.
- In the absence of scientific data, the authors of self-help books would be tempted to oversimplify complex situations, an approach which is erroneous as a complex situation should be presented with complex solutions
- All self-help books start at the premise that there is something wrong with the individual; that the book hides truths and techniques the individual must possess in order to overcome their sense of inadequacy they must be felling. These books as such generalize the sense that all individuals are – in one way or the other – dysfunctional.

- The last issue with self-help books is that they often exaggerate and present themselves as life changing solutions, as answers to all problems encountered by individuals, and as simple necessities in life. One book for instance was promoted as one which “will shake you up, knock you down, stand you up straight and challenge the very heart of your soul. It is a hard-hitting, eye-opening book. It is a must read” (Johnson, 2000, p.187).

Overall, the self-help books, the self-help groups and other elements in self-help might be useful for helping an individual manage a specific situation. Nevertheless, they are “never perfect” (Johnson, 2000, p.187), so the advice of the writers in the specialized literature is that of the exercising of caution in the usage of self-help products and services.

4.3. Chapter summary and importance

The review of the available literature was important in order to set the basis of the future research to be conducted. In other words, the analysis and presentation of the previous information allows the researcher to comprehend the context of the general consumption of self-help and then this increases the ability to adapt and understand it within the context of the young professional women in Turkey.

At a more specific level, the review of the literature has revealed that the self-help phenomenon is extremely complex, presenting both upsides as well as downsides. The most important points to remember from the literature refer to the following:

Table 5. Chapter Highlights

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CHAPTER
The concept of self-help differs in understanding and has evolved through time. It is nevertheless assimilated with the informal exchange of information and the offering of support in order to overcome a problem or improve the self.
The more common forms of self-help are books and groups. They are both easily accessible and reveal reduced barriers in comparison to other support and aid materials.
The self-help literature often oversimplifies complex issues, provides advice based on opinion, does not rely on scientific data and exaggerates the need for it. Some of the messages self-help books could send would even be catalogued as ridiculous.
Self-help reveals both advantages as well as disadvantages, but in order for the advantages to materialize – however perceptual – the self-help schemes have to be supported with professional assistance.
The primary consumers of self-help books are women. The reasons for this include their self-confidence issues, but also the societal pressures.

These points of interest constitute the starting point in the assessment of the consumption patterns of self-help books by the young Turkish professionals. In other words, the previous pages of the analysis of the available literature have set the basis and the context by pointing out important features of self-help and by revealing issues to which importance must be granted throughout the future analysis.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

The fact that extensive use of statistics in the processing of information is not only characterized by impersonality and lack of bias, but also by the inability to take into consideration non quantitative information, the method of inquiry in this dissertation is a qualitative one. In the case of consumption and consummation of self-help by young Turkish women for instance, an experimental study could be inadequate as it would be unable to integrate the elements which drive women to use self-help. Experimental research methods are for instance unable to integrate features from culture, society, perceptions, ethics, as well as any other type of qualitative information which reveals a non-statistically measurable impact on the phenomenon. Based on the specifics of the current endeavor then, in which non-quantifiable variables are at the center of the analysis, the experimental research methodology seems unsuitable.

For the current endeavor, the research methodology involves a dual strategy. In the first part of the research process, thematic analysis is the method of inquiry. The main themes were extracted from ten best selling books in the sample by means of word count and frequency analysis and gathered into 10 main categories. The themes were later used in constructing one of the questions of the semi-structured interview, which is part of the interviewing process in the research.

The semi-structured interviews have a narrative style open-ended question in the end which would allow interviewees to express their own experiences. The narrative approach to conducting an interview reveals a wide array of benefits, one of them being the ability of the narrative approach to support development. In other words, the narrative interview is constructed with the aid of extensive research – of the literature in this case, but also with the aid of thematic analysis– which means that it is theoretically relevant. But aside from this, the narrative style of interrogation and question development allows the researcher to pose various other questions which lead to the gathering of valuable information, developing as such the research features and the relevance and applicability of the findings.

“The narrative interview can take a variety of forms from a biological-interpretative approach, a life chapters approach to one which uses either a single generative question or a series of flexible generative questions” (Maginn, Thompson and Tonts, 2008, p.144-145).

The narrative interview as such falls into the pre-established category of research tools and techniques which can be personalized to enhance the research experience. Based on this possibility, the narrative interview to be used in the collection of information on the consumption of self-help by the young Turkish professionals would be formed from eight questions, detailing issues on the frequency of consumption, motivation for consumption or outcomes of self-help consumption. The questions would offer the sample members the ability to choose from a pre-defined list of possible answers, but would encourage them to give their own unique answers, as well as explain their answers, where necessary.

5.2. The sample

The research sample is formed from fifteen women in Turkey, all professionals aged between 25 and 35. They have been asked to give their name, yet only the first name would be disclosed for privacy purposes. This disclosure does not however interfere with the study findings. All respondents are defined as knowledge workers, meaning that they work and function in sectors where intellectual capital, more than manual labor, is essential. The narrative interview was implemented at an in-depth level, throughout the duration of one hour. Each interview was conducted in an informal setting, in a cafe near the office of the respondents and the subjects of these interviews were:

- Mine, 26 years old, employee in the family business (neo traditional1, abbreviated as NT1)
- Asli, 30 years old, employee in the family business (NT2)
- Tugce, 34 years old, employee in the family business (NT3)
- Ece, 35 years old, financial specialist (NT4)
- Burcu, 27 years old, information technology worker(NT5)
- Eray, 28 years old, newspaper columnist (Neo-liberal 1, abbreviated as NL1)
- Ozge, 33 years old, academic(NL2)
- Naz, 25 years old, styling assistant for a fashion magazine(NL3)
- Damla, 30 years old, fashion designer (NL4)
- Cigdem, 29 years old, academic(In- between 1 , abbreviated as IB1)
- Banu, 34 years old, self-employed yoga instructor (former media specialist, IB2)
- Ebru, 28 years old, information technology worker (IB3)

- Nihan, 31 years old, financial specialist (IB4)
- Deniz, 31 years old, advertiser (IB5)
- Aybuke, 33 years old, fashion designer. (the bridge/outlier, abbreviated as O)

From an educational standpoint, the interviewed women all possess at least an undergraduate degree, with some of them also possessing graduate degrees. The issuers of the degrees are all reputable universities in Turkey, attesting as such to the educational capabilities of the sample members. In terms of social and family backgrounds, they are all single and come from middle class and the upper middle class. Despite the similarities they reveal, the young professional women in the sample reveal some important differences based on their lifestyles. From a previous study conducted (Suerdem& Urhan, 2010) four separate clusters were identified among the sample.

- The neo-traditional respondents (NT)
- The neo-liberal respondents (NL)
- The in-betweens (IB) , and
- The bridge/ outlier (O).

Before noting detailed definitions of each cluster and its members, it is important to refer to the previous study, Using Formal Concept Analysis for classification of life style segments (Suerdem& Urhan, 2010) which yielded the researcher with the clusters.

For the previous study, the same interviewees were employed. According to the framework of the research 15 women aged between 25-35 and who work in finance,

media and advertisement sectors were interviewed. Each respondent was interviewed for approximately an hour, in a casual manner in cafes around their offices. Interviews were held in order to discern the lifestyle differences among a group of similar demographics. The young professional women who were interviewed have at least an undergraduate degree from a reputable university in Turkey, some having graduate degrees. They come from middle to upper- middle class family backgrounds and all of them are single. Although the classical lifestyle analyses aim to extract lifestyle segmentation through psychological and socio- demographic variables, the interviews and analysis in the study focus on cultural attributes by holding the socio-demographic variables constant. The women in the sample were questioned about their activities, interests and opinions. They were asked questions about their entertainment preferences, clothing styles, newspapers they read, hobbies, pets, and favorite places for spare time activities. Then they were clustered, using Formal Concept Analysis (FCA).

FCA is an appropriate technique for lifestyle analysis since it has the capacity to visually organize the structural relation between answers and their relation to the actors. FCA is based on the definition of a concept as a unit of thought constituted as two parts, the extension and the intension. The extension of a concept includes all objects belonging to it and the intension involves all attributes applicable for all those objects. This definition has important characteristics for understanding the principles of categorization since objects and attributes play a prominent role together for determining the taxonomical structure of objects according to their attributes. FCA has important properties as a classification method since it lends itself to joint visualization objects and attributes through a structural hierarchical structure. These properties render FCA a

versatile tool for the formalization of lifestyle communities. FCA has the potential to represent how lifestyle segments are organized as semiotic communities as shown in the figure below.

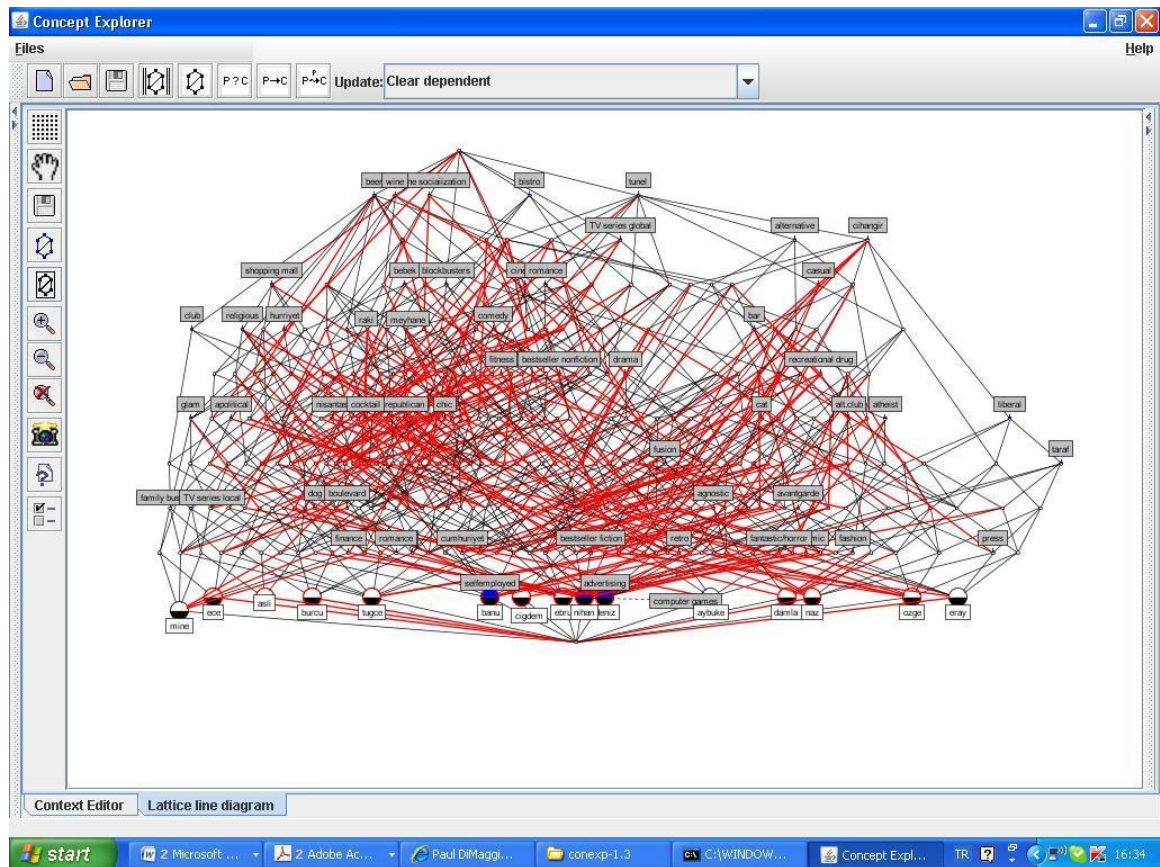


Figure 4. Lifestyle clusters/semiotic communities among the 15 interviewees

Formal Concept Analysis revealed three main clusters through an AIO Depending on the distribution of the interviewees and their lifestyle attributes, the left-hand cluster is named as neo-traditionals, the right-hand one as neo-liberals and the middle one as in-betweens. Grounding them back into the first round of unstructured interviews as to why these women make specific lifestyle choices, these clusters can be interpreted as follows.

a) The neo-trationals

One third of the interviewees are clustered as neo-trationals. Their general characteristics are an emotional attachment to traditional family, cultural and religious values albeit a lack of hardcore devotion to any one of them. They feel connected and have faith in these values but are not active fans and defenders of them. They are more conservative in their opinions, but most of their activities and interests are less conservative than their opinions on politics and religion. They are either republican or apolitical and define themselves as non-practicing religious people. They try to keep up with the latest trends in fashion and never go for casual, avant-garde or retro styles but they prefer the ‘glam’ look with accessories and spend considerable time on beauty and fitness. While they sport a glam look in their spare time, they prefer a polished or ‘chic’ look at work. Three of the members of this cluster work in businesses established by their family while one of them works in finance and another works in information technology sector. The ones working in the family business, NT1, NT2 and NT3 define themselves as apolitical while those working in other sectors are holding republican views.

This cluster’s tastes in movies and books generally include blockbusters and bestsellers. They watch trendy local and global TV series regularly, and although most find local shows cheesy, they still continue to watch them. The newspaper choice of this cluster is Hurriyet, the most popular and mainstream paper in Turkey or there is no regular newspaper readership. The women in this group prefer going to trendy nightclubs and bistros to bars and alternative nightclubs. However, one member of the group, NT4 who works in the finance sector finds reading some columns of boulevard papers as

amusing and also differs in her night club and favorite beverage choice despite the similarities in other likes and dislikes.

Most of the women in this cluster have either not experienced with recreational drugs or have little experience and has quit except NT3 who is approximately once a month involved in social drug use. Two women in this cluster, NT1 and NT3, keep dogs as pets, and the others do not have any pets and object to the idea such as NT5 who works in the IT sector and tells that she hardly has any like and time for either cats or dogs. The women in this cluster most of the time prefer going to upper scale districts such as Nisantasi, for shopping and bistros, and Bebek for bistros only. Among Tunel and Cihangir, the districts that have been gentrified and are similar to New York's SOHO, they prefer going to Tunel, because in that district there are both local chain cafes and popular night clubs nearby more than Cihangir district with more alternative clubs and less publicized and more local cafes. This is also the cluster of the women who enjoy going to shopping malls for cinema and shopping the most and spend considerable time in these malls. Furthermore, all members of this cluster, but NT4, use online means of socialization such as websites for networking and chatting.

In short, this is the cluster containing the most similar women in their interests, activities and opinions with no dramatic variation among the group.

b) Neo-liberals

This is the cluster with two sub-clusters: the hardcore neo-liberals and the softcore neo-liberals. This cluster is generally characterized by less conservatism in activities, interests and opinions. This hardcore sub-cluster includes a neo-liberal newspaper columnist(NL1), and an academic(NL2) whereas the softcore sub-cluster consists of

NL3 who works as a styling assistant in a fashion magazine and NL4 who is a fashion designer. The women in the hardcore sub-cluster and NL4 in the softcore cluster define themselves as atheists whereas NL3 can be described as an agnostic. The whole cluster has liberal political views and the hardcore sub-cluster members are also animal rights and feminist activists. All the members of the whole cluster except NL4 regularly read newspapers, and their newspaper choice is Taraf, a non-popular newspaper with neoliberal discourse. Despite NL4's definition of herself as a liberal, she does not subscribe to Taraf and has no regular paper readership.

Another characteristic of the whole cluster is the experimentation of the members with recreational drugs but the drug choice differs among the sub clusters. The softcore neoliberals are more into social drugs like cocaine, whereas the women in the hardcore sub-cluster use cheaper, tranquilizing drugs. The nightlife preferences of the cluster tend towards bars and alternative clubs, and the members have regular alcohol consumption of all types. They have a casual style, apart from NL4 who prefers wearing avant-garde designs of her own.

While the hardcore sub-cluster and NL4 in the softcore sub-cluster prefer reading non- bestsellers and going to alternative movies rather than blockbusters, NL3 tells she also reads bestseller nonfictions such as personal development books. The women in this cluster are followers of trendy global TV series with the exception of NL1 in the hardcore sub-cluster. Both women in the softcore category, NL4 and NL3, have cats and the women in the hardcore cluster, NL2 and NL1, although not keeping cats as pets, feed several stray cats in their neighborhood. NL2 and NL1, the hardcore sub-cluster, are more conservative in the districts they socialize. They prefer socializing in places around their

neighborhood, and these places are usually bars and bistros in Cihangir and Tunel for the hardcore sub-cluster whereas alternative clubs are in the same district is added for the softcore sub-cluster.

The women in this cluster do not follow fitness programs such as regular gym membership and dietary regulation, except for the softcore sub-cluster, which are more interested than the hardcore sub-cluster in subtle dietary control, possibly due to the effect of their involvement with the fashion world as part of their professions.

c) In between

This is the cluster with the most amount of variation among the members definition of themselves. However, it is possible to classify the five women in this category into two sub-clusters: the in- between that define themselves nearer to the neo-traditionals and the in-betweeners who are positioned nearer to the neo-liberals. The first sub-cluster includes IB1, an academic, and IB2, a media specialist turned into a self-employed yoga teacher. The second subcluster consists of IB3, working in IT sector, IB4 from the finance sector, and IB5 who works in the advertising sector.

The women in the first category resemble each other in their political and religious views as well as many of their interests and activities. They define themselves as republicans and both read Cumhuriyet, a republican oriented newspaper. They define themselves as non-hardcore religious people. They are not into alcohol, drugs and nightlife other than occasional nights out usually at bistros. However, while IB1 has never been into these activities, IB2 has given up on them as part of her yoga teaching profession. They both read bestsellers, fiction and nonfiction and follow global TV shows, are regular cinemagoers interested in romance, comedy and drama. They are also

similar in their pet preferences, they both own cats. While IB2 prefers socializing in Nisantasi, Bebek, Tunel and Cihangir, IB2 usually goes to Tunel for socializing, and, unlike IB2 and like IB5 in the whole in-between cluster is not interested in online socializing. Both IB1 and IB2 have a casual, comfortable style, like IB3 in the other sub-cluster in her spare time.

Those in the second category resemble each other in their preferences and opinions in many respects. IB3 is more similar to IB1 and IB2 in her political views as she is a republican, but she defines herself as an atheist. Other women in this sub-cluster of in-betweens nearer to the neo-liberals define themselves as agnostics, but while IB4 holds liberal political views, IB5 is not interested in politics at all. Therefore, when comparing between the members of this sub-cluster, there is not a match between the political view and religious view; and furthermore among the whole cluster no match between any two members' political and religious views except the first sub-cluster members, IB2 and IB1. The same argument holds for the newspapers. For example, IB5 is not a regular newspaper reader, while as a republican IB3 is a reader of not *Cumhuriyet*, but the mainstream newspaper *Hurriyet*. IB4 reads the liberal paper, *Taraf*, and resembles in this regard of consistency to the neo-liberal cluster. However, she is not an activist.

While the nightlife, alcohol and district preferences of the in-betweens are quite similar in which they do not choose over one preference to another, what distinguish them are their reflections on why they are open to every option. IB4 works in a highly competitive environment as an IT consultant and her work and peer environment puts much pressure on her to keep herself up to date with trends. Therefore, most of her

choices result from these subtle enforcements from her environment to improve herself and also cope with the stress it creates. On the other hand, IB5 is more carefree, works in a creative environment with fellow peers, and is not subject to the same amount of work stress IB4 faces. She says that she wants to live her life to its full extent, experience everything and does not care about classifications. From the interviews we made with all the women in the group, IB5 was the most unclear about identifying herself as to why she makes such lifestyle choices or what her choices were. While IB4 makes the same types of choices to support her social identity, IB5 does them for the sake of experimentation. One main difference between them is that while IB5 looks more similar, with her avant-garde and retro style to the softcore neo-liberals, and recreational drug use to all the neo-liberals, IB4's social environment restricts such choices and IB4 is also not interested in these lifestyle factors as it does not contribute to her financial and social standing.

As we have seen, the in-between sub-cluster is unique, as the members are not consistent in their activities, interests and opinions. Some are more similar to neo-liberals and some to neo-traditionals. Furthermore, in this cluster, even those who were mapped nearest to each other differ dramatically in their descriptions of themselves and have very distinct motives behind their preferences.

b) The bridge/ outlier

In the mapping, it can be noticed that there was one woman, Aybuke(O), who does not share a cluster with any woman in our sample and stands right in the middle of the softcore neo-liberals and the in-betweens nearer to them, namely between IB4, IB3 and IB5 on the one hand, and NL3 and NL4 on the other hand. Her apolitical views and non-readership of a specific newspaper bring her closer to Deniz in the in-between

cluster, and her atheism to both IB3 in the middle of the in-between cluster and the hardcore neo-liberals which she is not neighboring in the map. Her personal style and profession are what keep her nearest to the softcore neo-liberals as she works as a fashion designer and works with NL4, but as she likes retro clothing other than only avant-garde designs of her own and other stylists, she resembles more to IB5 in this respect. However, she says she hates casual or chic clothing and never wears such clothing items.

O differs from the others from how she describes her activities, interests and opinions through the word ‘never’. For example, IB5, from the previous cluster, was indifferent among categories and used phrases such as “both...and...”, “all” while not emphasizing “never” or what she did not do at all. O, on the other hand, uses the phrase “never” the most, she describes herself and her lifestyle choices through what she “never” does. She does not go to cinema, bistros or meyhanes “at all”, “never” reads a paper or “never” drink certain drinks. She emphasizes the districts she does not go like Nisantasi and Bebek, unlike NL3 and NL4, the softcore liberals who tell where they go to and with whom O shares her district preference of Tunel and Cihangir. In this regard, she resembles the hardcore neoliberals, who strongly reject going to certain places such as popular clubs. She shares her interest in fantasy and horror fiction with IB3 in the in-between cluster, and uses online socializing tools like most of the others in the two clusters. Her non-interest in pets resembles IB5 from the in-between cluster.

CHAPTER 6

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

6.1. Introduction

The self-help literature is probably the most popular component of self-help and the explanations for this are various, including the easy access to these books, regardless of time zones, but also the easy accessibility from a financial standpoint. At this stage of the dissertation, emphasis is placed on a thematic analysis of ten self-help books. The scope of this chapter is that of ensuring a deeper understanding of the self-help literature in order to be better able to comprehend and integrate the consumption of self-help by the young professional women in Turkey. Additionally, the analysis of the books sits at the basis of the construction of one question in the research questionnaire to be administered to the selected sample. With this objective in mind, the following books have been assessed based on popularity and being of a nature related to professional development:

- *Secrets of Self-Confidence* by Linda Ingleson (2010)
- *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiation* by Lee Miller (2010)
- *Influence without Authority* by Allan Cohen (2005)
- *Dealing with Difficult People* by Roy Lilley (2010)
- *Achieving Personal Success* by Warren Redman (1995)
- *Women at Work: Strategies for Survival and Success* by Anne Dickson (2000)
- *Knowing Your Value: Women, Money and Getting what You're Worth* by Mika Brzezinski (2011)

- *Women Who Worry too Much: How to Stop Worry and Anxiety from Ruining Relationships, Work and Fun* by Holly Hazlett-Stevens (2005)
- *Healing Your Emotional Self, A Powerful Program to Help You Raise Your Self-Esteem, Quiet Your Inner Critic and Overcome Your Shame* by Beverly Engel (2007)
- *The Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Shafak (2010)

Detailed elaborations of these books, apart from Elif Şafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* could be found at Appendix A. At this point of the dissertation, the main themes extracted from these books through thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is not a separate method on its own, but it rather gives insight to the researcher for further investigation. Through employing word count and finding out frequencies of recurrent words (refer to Appendix B) in the ten self help books in the sample, it became possible to categorize them into categories or themes. "A theme is a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon"(Boyatzis, 1998). Therefore, the themes in the current inquiry were generated inductively from data and try to describe and organize its contents.

6.2. Popular themes in self-help books

The self-help books aim to improve the individual by helping them set new values and following them in order to better live their lives and attain their purposes. The messages of the self-help literature are often common and recurrent throughout the books, as has even been revealed throughout the discourse analysis of the ten selected

books. Some books for instance, such as Lee Miller's *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiation* or Anne Dickson's *Women at Work: Strategies for Survival and Success* deal with the professional identity and motivate women to become better professionals. Others however, such as *Secrets of Self-Confidence* by Linda Ingleson or Beverly Engel's *Healing Your Emotional Self...* focus more on the personal growth of the woman; on her accepting and cherishing herself; on her moving beyond the socially imposed limits. But in making their final statements, each of the books uses a combination of more themes. They will for instance appeal to the need to shatter barriers, the need to accept and love the self, or the motivation through the presentation of legends of success. The most common themes in the ten analyzed self-help books include as such the following:

Table 6. Ten Themes in the Sample Books

THE COMMON THEMES IN THE SAMPLE BOOKS ACQUIRED THROUGH THEMATIC ANALYSIS
Rejection of external authority
The love for the self
The belief that all beings are equal
The power of thought
The need for power
Reflection on the self
Personal legend
Authenticity and the preservation of self identity
Emphasis on the present
Reconstruction of individual agency through transformation
Expert systems

6.3. The Elaboration of Ten Central Themes by a Critical Analysis of Forty Rules of Love

This section analyzes a bestseller written by the Turkish novelist Elif Şafak, namely, “The Forty Rules of Love” (2010) as an example of fictional self-help literature although it is not marketed as such. The reason why this book is chosen for further analysis of themes from the previous analysis is due to the fact that it was read by all of the interviewees in the research, it is a local bestseller and it may be subjected to literary analysis as it is fiction. The motivation to analyze this novel is twofold. The first reason is that the book consists of two parallel stories of love, one of which takes place in our times in America, and the other taking place in the 13th century Anatolia. These two stories are critical because while the old story narrates the companionship and love between Rumi and Shams of Tebriz who are the leading figures of the local “tasavvuf” philosophy, the modern day story intends to make the audience reflect upon themselves through the old story by establishing empathy for the modern protagonist among the readers. In this regard, the novel can be analyzed as a self-help book that borrows heavily from an indigenous philosophy that originates from 13th century Anatolia, as well as appealing to the search of the audience for self-reflexivity through a form of cultural consumption. “Tasavvuf” is a form of spirituality not-bounded by laws as opposed to institutional Islam and has similarities to other exotic spiritualities and incorporates adequate mysticism to appeal to the disenchanted spiritual worlds of Western readers and their Eastern counterparts previously discussed.

The novel is analyzed through literary criticism extracting ten main concepts that appear in most of the non-fiction self-help literature. These themes were specially chosen for two reasons: 1) as they are the most recognizably recurrent themes after close readings of the book under analysis and a vast number of other self help literature 2) the themes rely upon a combination of previous work on self-help literature such as those of Askehave (2004), Hanegraaf (1998), Redden (2002), McGee (2005), Giddens(1991) and how the concepts these authors used are related to this specific work will be detailed under the appropriate theme. The aim is to show that *The Forty Rules of Love*, as a novel, can be classified as a type of self-help book due to the ten self-help themes dispersed throughout the whole book, rather than a novel based on a genuine understanding of an indigenous spirituality and philosophy. Furthermore, the relation of these themes to postmodern professional consumers will be discussed.

The Forty Rules of Love (2010) was first written in English by Elif Şafak, who has long been an expatriate in the US herself. It was first released in the US, and in the following months translated into Turkish and released in the Turkish market as *Ask* (Love). In Turkey, it has been the bestselling book in the shortest period of time during the entire Turkish literary history. For the English version, while it is nearly impossible to translate the native tasavvuf terms as well as appropriate the philosophy while writing, it appears to have been a necessary step in creating a bestseller catering to the orientalist (Said 1979) gaze of the American reader in need of novel alternative spiritualities. Said (1979) asserts that orientalism is a way of interpretation whose raw material is the “orient, its civilizations, peoples and localities” (p.203). Such a standpoint is well-reflected in the front cover of the book: the English version’s front cover has a picture of

a building resembling Taj Mahal although the Rumi and Shams's story in the novel takes place in Anatolia which was and is quite different culturally (This is reminiscent of the package artwork of Camel cigarettes which exhibits a camel with pyramids and palm trees in a desert, an inconsistent combination). This picture choice was intended for Western audiences who have a unified view of the Eastern parts of the world, and Taj Mahal and Indian culture is probably the most universally well known stereotyping of the "Eastern culture". This is also probably the reason the cover artwork was altered in the Turkish translation along with the changing title; the publishing company probably estimated it would not yield the same effect in Turkey, so a leaf in the shape of a heart located in the middle of a flashy pink background was chosen. Due to the female connotations of the color pink and considering the hesitation of potential male readers to buy the book, the publishing house also released the book in grey a few months later in Turkey (This is reminiscent of the introduction of Coke Zero with a can design of bolder colors as opposed to Coke Light which has had feminine connotations despite both being sugar free versions of the original Coke).

The rhetoric in both versions employs Orientalist attractions, such as references to *One Thousand and One Nights* (p.83), and themes from other Eastern folktales. For instance, the leader in a dervish lodge gives the protagonist in the old story, Shams, three items to help him in his journey: a mirror to show his inner beauty, a silk handkerchief as a reminder of pureness of his heart, and a balm to cure his wounds, "both inside and outside"(p.87). Later in the novel, just like in tales, each of these items is given to a person in need: a man with lepra, a prostitute, and an alcoholic. This is reminiscent of the "donor" role Propp (2003) identifies in his analysis of Russian folktales. Propp asserts

that the “donor” character in folktales always gives the protagonist/ hero of the folktale some magical objects after testing his potential for cleverly use them. His conclusion about the other characters and the functions of a sequence of a fairytale is much applicable to Middle Eastern folktales, from which this novel borrows.

The book’s target audience is postmodern professionals including professional women who have comfortable but dissatisfying lifestyles just like the female protagonist, Ella Rubinstein, and professional men who are fed up with the stress and strain of work life and prefer a more independent lifestyle like the male protagonist, Aziz Zahara. In the back cover of the book, Ella is described as follows:

“Something is missing in Ella Rubinstein’s life. She has much to be grateful for: a long, stable marriage, albeit one that has lost its spark; three teenage children who, romantic difficulties apart, have no major troubles, and a comfortable life in a pleasant home. But Ella needs a new challenge. Taking a job as a reader to a literary agent, her first assignment is to read a novel by a mysterious Scottish author, Aziz Z.Zahara. Plunged back into thirteenth-century Anatolia, Ella reads about the fabled poet Rumi, whose worldview was transformed by the whirling dervish Shams of Tabriz and his forty rules of life and love. Fascinated, Ella tracks down Aziz Z.Zahara (even the name of the male protagonist conjures up images of the Sahara) and begins to correspond with him- and in doing so her world is turned upside down...”

The passage above, as well as giving a flavor of the book’s main characters, incorporates some of the ten concepts inherent in self-help literature that is discussed in the scope of this paper. From this point onwards, the central themes will be discussed, supported by passages from the novel and their relations to the postmodern professionals, the target audience.

1. Rejection of external authority

The rejection of external authority has been discussed to be the foremost characteristic of self-help discourse (Askehave 2004, Redden 2002) since self-help literature emphasizes the rejection of commitment to any kind of doctrine or institution, including institutionalized and centralized hierarchical religion, and detachment from the authority of representatives of such institutions. In *The Forty Rules of Love*, the refusal of such institutions is stimulated or triggered by characters that are portrayed as exhibiting countercultural tendencies. Hanegraaf (1988) attributes the property of being countercultural to New Age principles that are the central tenets of self-help literature. Redden (2002) argues that the Beat generation and writers such as Aldous Huxley had been inspiration for the rise of the New Age in the 60s and such countercultural inspirations are observable in the character depictions in this self-help novel. For example, the female protagonist of the book, Ella, before meeting the mysterious writer she corresponds with, imagines him as follows:

“And somehow the image that popped up in her mind was of a tall, dark-looking, mysterious man with leather pants, a motorcycle jacket, and black hair that fell to his shoulders, riding a shiny red Harley-Davidson with multicolored tassels hanging from the handlebars. She smiled at the image. A handsome, sexy, Sufi motorcyclist riding fast on an empty highway! Wouldn’t it be nice to get picked up while hitchhiking by a guy like that?”(p.36).

In the book, there are comparisons between Ella's husband and Aziz, with whom she corresponds and later has an affair with, which is a marker of the tension between "Western" rationality and materialism and "Eastern" wisdom and spirituality. Later in the book, Ella learns about Aziz's life story in which he started as a busy and ambitious businessman and turned into a Sufi traveler, leaving the entire material prospects behind (pp.212-234, this is also a common cliché which can be observed in international fictional self-help bestsellers like the Alchemist and The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari). Aziz no longer has a regular job, unlike David, Ella's husband, who is "a successful dentist who worked hard and made up a lot of money"(p.1). Aziz travels around the world and takes photographs of people "of all colors and stripes"(p.43). Aziz is the prototype of postmodern cosmopolitan professionals since most of them want to end up in carefree non-materialistic lifestyles after acquiring wealth and career and those who achieve this are no longer rare. Reaching the non-materialistic ends is also considered as a type of achievement for many cosmopolitan professionals in Turkey as well.

In the parallel story taking place in the 13th century Anatolia, characters who act against the social norms are presented. The rebellious protagonist in this story is Shams, a dervish who plays by his own rules of rulelessness and the author tries to position Shams in this story as a projection of the character of Aziz in the modern day story. The novice, a young character who comes to the dervish lodge to become a dervish, is astonished by Shams's manners and later takes him as a role model. He describes him as follows:

"Who was he? What was he doing here? He wasn't like the dervishes in the lodge. His eyes looked fierce and unruly, even when he bowed his head in modesty. There was something so unusual and unpredictable about him that it was almost frightening"(p.57).

The master of the dervish lodge makes a similar observation about Shams:

“In the beginning I expected him to pack up and leave at any moment, so visible was his aversion to a strictly ordered life. I could see that it bored him stiff to have to sleep and wake up at the same hours, eat regular meals, and conform to the same routine as everyone else. He was used to flying as a lonely bird, wild and free”(p.65).

In one part of the book, Rumi talks about dervishes, who are not like other religious authorities in physical appearance and look more off-stream.

“Over the years I had seen wandering dervishes of all sorts pass through Konya in their quest for God. With striking tattoos, multiple earrings and nose rings, most of these people enjoyed having “unruly” written all over them...”

The rejection of religious authorities is present throughout the book, mostly in the confrontations of Shams with those representing authority such as the master of a dervish lodge, a judge, a politician and a spiritual teacher. He stresses the non-importance of being devoted to a specific faith or practice:

“You can study God through everything and everyone in the universe, because God is not confined in a mosque, synagogue, or church”(p.58).

Shams even rejects his own authority as external to another person. He warns the young novice who idolizes and wishes to follow him about the dangers of following external guides and tries to enlighten him:

“There are more fake gurus and false teachers in this world than the number of stars in the visible universe. Don’t confuse power-driven, self-centered people with true mentors. A genuine spiritual master will not direct your attention to himself or herself and will not expect absolute obedience or admiration from you, but instead will help you to appreciate and admire your inner self”(p.88).

Some off stream characters in the story also complain about people who call themselves religious and judge others on this basis. “Suleiman the drunk”, an alcoholic in the 13th century story, is one of them:

“...this is exactly why I abhor religion. All sorts of them! Religious people are so confident of having God by their side that they think they are superior to everyone else”(p.127).

There is criticism of this viewpoint of superiority through grotesque characters such as Baybars, who is the nephew of an important official. Baybars is one of the most extreme characters representing religious despotism and vulgarity. At one point, he tells he does not approve the likes of Mevlana since he thinks they preach passivity and submission in the face of the Mongolian threat into Anatolia and consequently to Islam. He looks down on words like “patience”, “balance” and “tolerance” and equates them with “waiting to be slaughtered by our enemies or be stricken by some other calamity”(p.188).

There are also female authority breakers in the novel such as Jeannette, Ella’s daughter, who insists on getting married to a non-Jew freshman in her college because

she has fallen in love and Kimya, the only female student of Rumi, who falls in love with Shams and eventually marries him despite the barriers to such an affair.

Finally, Shams tells Mevlana (Rumi) that even one's full trust on his own knowledge is dangerous and the knowledge in such a situation becomes a threatening oppressive authority:

"Believe in your values and your rules but never lord them over others...Stay away from all sorts of idolatry for they will blur your vision. Let God and only God be your guide. Learn the Truth, my friend, but be careful not to make a fetish out of your truths"(p.246).

2. The cliché of "all of us are equal" and universal holism

One of the concepts of most self-help literature, and this novel is *universal holism*, and it is one of the most recurring themes in the book. Throughout the book, the idea that the universe is a whole, rather than made up of distinct parts and living things including people is emphasized. The friendship and peace among people and civilizations are highlighted in the lives, thoughts, and actions of the protagonists, and those, which object to this premise, are depicted as villains. The problems created by such unholistic thought are revealed throughout the book. For example, the woman protagonist of the modern story, Ella, is Jewish and comes from a traditional Jewish family in which even marriage outside the religion is approached with intolerance.

In the beginning of the book, Ella is very unfamiliar to Sufism and mysticism and hesitates to write a critical report about a novel on the subject by an unknown author, Aziz Zahara. However, the editor of the publication house motivates her by saying: “Isn’t connecting people to distant lands and cultures one of the strengths of good literature?”(p.13).

After starting to work on the novel of Aziz, Ella wants to learn more about him and looks at the pictures of people he put up on his website. “Most were portraits of people of all colors and stripes”(p.43).

Furthermore, the historical context in which the old story takes place is emphasized to establish a resemblance to the present day- in terms of religious wars and chaos. The author accentuates that diversity and latitude are virtues on the path to universal holism, through monologues and dialogues of the characters. For example, Shams, on his journey to the city where most of his story will take place, thinks:

“It makes no difference to me whether that place belongs to Muslims, Christians, or Jews. I believe that the saints are beyond such trivial nominal distinctions. A saint belongs to all humanity”(p.100).

After his settlement in the city, he sees a great diversity, from gypsy musicians to Arabic travelers, Jew traders, Indian snake traders, European poets, Buddhist monks, Chinese acrobats and Urumian philosophers and becomes happy with what he comes across.

Off stream sexual orientations are also welcome by Shams. He goes to the red light district of the city and talks to a hünsa (hermaphrodite) brothel manager about the goodness and God within each person (p.146).

Shams also gives messages to a prostitute in the brothel who will later escape from the brothel to start a new life:

“Because there is no such thing as ‘them’, just as there is no ‘I’. All you need to do is keep in mind how everything and everyone in this universe is interconnected. We are not hundreds and thousands of different beings. We are all One”(p.135).

In one part of the book, Rumi’s son says:

“My father had always been a loving man. He embraced people of all faiths. He was kind not only towards Muslims but also Christians, Jews, and even pagans. After Shams came into his life, his circle of love became so vast it included even the most fallen of society- prostitutes, drunks and beggars, the scum of the scum”(p.338).

In the modern day story, one of the instances where respect to diversity is highlighted is the moment Aziz tells Ella that when he was young he fell in love with a woman who was “...a multiculturalist, a human-rights advocate, a counterculture activist...”

The name of the book originates from and the plot operates on a set of rules pointed out by Shams after each episode he encounters. The 26th rule of Shams is one of the finest instances where the universe should be perceived as a whole:

“The universe is one being. Everything and everyone is interconnected through an invisible web of stories...one man’s pain will hurt us all. One man’s joy will make everyone smile”(p.207-8).

Examples of universal holism are present not only in the content of the novel, but also in the form. After the last sentence of the Turkish translation of the Forty Rules of Love, there is a line showing symbols of seven religions in the world next to each other. This is another message conveyed by the author on peace and holism in the world.

3. The power of thinking

The premise that positive thinking will yield favorable outcomes is a central theme in many self-help books, and references to this theme are made throughout the novel.

In the beginning of the novel, the book Ella will report on (Aziz’s book) starts with the opposite of the sentences that has just come out of her mouth (p.15). It is emphasized as a sign of the potential of people to make their thinking become reality. In the beginning of Shams’ journey, he decides to go to Baghdad to find his soul mate because he wishes cordially to find his soul mate and his inner voice informs him about his soul mate’s place (p.40). This is again similar to the nonfiction self-help literature's discourse on the power of thinking. This is supported in the modern day story when Ella, at a time of despair due to hardship in communication with her family, “calls” her soul mate, Aziz, by writing the first e-mail to him (p.45).

One of the rules of Shams, namely the 8th rule goes as follows to highlight the importance of hope and positive thinking, as well as the existence of a universal power operating through one's thinking:

“Whatever happens in your life, no matter how troubling things might seem, do not enter the neighborhood of despair. Even when all doors remain closed, God will open up a new path only for you”(p.73).

The 27th rule of Shams also claims that outcomes are consequences of an individual's thinking and actions, and also highlights the importance of individual responsibility that will be elaborated in the later sections:

“This world is like a snowy mountain that echoes your voice. Whatever you speak, good or evil, will somehow come back to you”(p.211).

4. Need for power

Self-help literature is mostly consumed because the consumers want to fulfill their need for power (McClelland 1967) as they are persuaded by the self-help industry that they are not sufficiently happy, successful, rich, healthy or enlightened; they need to “belabor” (McGee 2005) themselves to reach the desired level. In other terms, readers wish to compensate for the properties they are made into thinking they do not possess by being taught how to possess them. In this regard, self-help literature acts as identity crutches (Belk 1988), engaging in “commodified production of self-actualization”(Rindfleisch 2005), acting as the “new agents” which Redden (2002) regards

as exploiting the ‘commodified philosophy of self’ through ‘trading on the symbolic value of personal enhancement’. In the face of intense competition in every sphere of life, the compensators are rewarded, so an individual must be better at compensating his “abstinences” than his rivals in an economy and culture of risk and plurality (Giddens 1991).

The Forty Rules of Love, as a self-help book is no exception to this analysis. All characters in the novel are told to have been through pain and suffering in the past or they have a lacking element in their lives which they later become acquainted with. In one of Rumi’s monologues, the questioning of a lacking element is clear:

“I am a happy, satisfied man both in my private life and in the community. Why, then, do I feel this void inside me, growing deeper and wider with each passing day? It gnaws at my soul like a disease and accompanies me wherever I go...” (p.99)

The typical western female protagonist created by the author, Ella, despite having a big house with an apparently nice family, has also been exposed to hardship in the family she grew up, in his relationship with her husband in the past and is in search of something that is missing in her life. This character reflects the lives of the estimated readers of the book. That's the primal reason why the book became a success in Turkey. In the beginning of the book, before starting an affair with Aziz, she engages in other activities to forget about the lack and pain in her life:

“The kitchen was the one place in her life where she could avoid the outside world altogether and stop the flow of time within herself” (p.62).

Aziz, the Shams of the modern day story has also gone through traumatic events in his life, such as the death of his lover, engagement with drugs and off-stream life, and his interest in tasavvuf originates from these experiences which showed him there was still a lack of meaning in his life.

The characters in the book are transformed after they become aware of a *lacking element* in their lives or after they have gone through so much *pain, loss and suffering*. After the realization of the lack and going through the suffering phase comes the enlightenment. However, on this path, *patience and submission* prove to be critical factors. In one of the correspondences with Aziz, Ella writes:

“ As for submission, I’ve never experienced the kind of peaceful surrender you wrote me about...But I have to give you this: Amazingly, things between Jeannette (her daughter) and me turned out the way I wanted only after I stopped wanting and interfering”

One of Shams’ rules goes as follows to support the same argument: “Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead let life live through you”(p.161).

In another rule, this patience and submission is explained in detail: “Submission does not mean being weak or passive. It leads to neither fatalism nor capitulation. Just the opposite. True power resides in submission. Those who submit to the divine essence of life will live in unperturbed tranquillity and peace even when the whole wide world goes through turbulence after turbulence”(p.292).

After questioning oneself, healing and transformation always comes after and with pain (Hazleden 2003) in self-help literature. While the past is characterized by losses, the future is characterized by *risk* and *opportunity* (Giddens 1991), and risk-taking is encouraged through the actions of the characters since they are rewarded with enlightenment and transformation. Therefore, risk-taking is praised in many parts of the novel:

“Ella found it puzzling that an unpredictable and impenetrable world could drive people like her back into their houses but had almost the opposite effect on someone like Aziz, inspiring him to embark on adventures far off the beaten track”(p.64).

Upon his journey to Konya, Shams speaks to himself:

“Though I anticipated the hardships ahead, that didn’t worry me much. Whatever fate awaited me in Konya, I welcomed it. As a Sufi, I had been trained to accept the thorn with the rose, the difficulties with the beauties of life”(p.86)

The prostitute introduced in the old story, after her life-long suffering and conversation with Shams decides to leave the brothel no matter what undesirable consequences this action might cause (p.230). Rumi is another example of risk-praisal when he goes to a wine house to buy wine although he might easily lose his reputation as a religious leader, because of the forbid on alcohol by Islam (p.236).

5. Self-reflexivity

While each character in the novel is transforming, he/she reflects upon him/herself. For instance, through Ella’s thoughts on herself, the author stimulates the readers to reflect upon themselves on the same account. *Self-reflexivity* (Giddens 1991) and observation is needed to be carried out continuously to improve and transform

oneself and we witness many instances of Ella's self-reflexivity to heal herself. This is also related to another concept; the rise of *personal legend* (Redden 2002), self sufficiency (Hazleden 2003), creative potential and self responsibility (Askehave 2001) and therefore individual agency (Bandura 2001) is praised against institutions and structure as already mentioned. The character of Ella, for example, regards herself and her life as a project in which she has the control and exercises free will through her own choices. She starts by questioning her position:

“Ella then wondered what Shams would see if he read her palm. Would he explain to her why her mind turned from time to time into a coven of dark thoughts? Or how come she felt so lonely even though she had a large, loving family? What about the colors in her aura? Were they bright and bold? Had anything in her life been bright and bold lately? Or ever?”(p.36-7)

Ella has made a checklist of the things she should do before turning forty and after her birthday, she looks at how many of these she has accomplished. Although the to-do list consists of items about time management, diet, beauty and family, the last item she has recently added, “open your heart to love” is yet to be accomplished (p.113-14). This is one of the instances in the novel, which promotes self-reflexivity and regarding oneself as a project to be completed.

The alcoholic character, Suleiman the drunk, in the old story asks the bartender why drinking is a sin if it is not considered so in heaven. When bartender says whether he has to question everything, Suleiman comments:

“Of course I do. That's why we were given a brain, don't you think?”(p.127).

In a part of his life story, which he tells Ella, Aziz writes that he was already where he wanted to be, and all he needed was to “stay and look within”(p.234).

Another character in the old story, Husam the student, challenges his dogmatic teacher on where the devil resides. This is also an example of the rejection of external authority that is already elaborated and personal responsibility that will be discussed in further detail in the rest of this section:

“We are higher than the highest, but also lower than the lowest. If we could grasp the full meaning of this, we would stop looking for Sheitan outside and instead focus on ourselves. What we need is sincere self-examination”(p.257).

6. Personal Legend

The rise of *personal legend* (Redden 2002), self sufficiency (Hazleden 2003), creative potential and self responsibility (Askehave 2001) is an important property of self-help literature and therefore individual agency (Bandura 2001) is praised against institutions and structure. In the self-help discourse, outcomes are brought into reality by the actions of the individual. In this regard, in the novel, Ella regards herself and her life as a project in which she has the control and exercises free will through her own choices. In the beginning of the novel, she contemplates that love does not come to those who wait for it, but rather to those who are determined to find it. This is the start of her journey to transformation.

In the old story, a novice from a dervish lodge who takes Shams, who stayed in the lodge, as a role model offers to accompany him on his way to Konya. When Shams asks if he has the strength to accompany him, he says:

“I certainly do. And my strength comes from within”, emphasizing the power that lies within each individual against challenges, which is a critical tenet of self-help discourse. However, personal legend can only be revealed through tenacity, along with responsibility. The leader of the dervish lodge Shams’ trip starts from, writes to the leader of the lodge he will go to that although there were other candidates who wanted to go, “Shams was the only one who persevered even after hearing about the danger of the task”(p.80).

After taking responsibility, being determined and displaying tenacity for the aim of transforming oneself, belief in the individual’s own self and confidence in self-potential becomes crucial to create one’s personal legend. In the novel, appropriated from Tasavvuf philosophy that the self is a reflection of God or there is a portion of God in each human being, there are many instances where personal power is glorified. In one part of his trip, Shams comes across a beggar with lepra and gives him a mirror which “will remind you (him) that you (he) bear God within you (him)”(p.123).

The 22nd rule of Shams supports the importance of individuals in creating outcomes and the difference brought about by their perceptions:

“When a true lover of God goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his chamber of prayer, but when a wine bibber goes into the same chamber, it becomes his tavern. In everything we do, it is our hearts that make the difference, not our outer appearances”(p.141).

When Rumi sees Shams the first time, he infers that he was alone and has always been alone in his life (p.155) from his self-relying answers and independent manners.

Later, after their companionship begins, Shams tries to persuade Rumi that there is a poet inside of him although he is not aware and one day he will be one of the greatest poets the world has ever seen (p.208).

Finally, the 29th rule of Shams points out that destiny is also determined by an individual's choices:

“Destiny doesn't mean that your life has been strictly predetermined...your destiny is the level where you will play your tune. You might not change your instrument but how well to play is entirely in your hands”(p.221).

7. Authenticity

The concept of *authenticity* (Giddens 1991) is touched upon in many parts of the book. The existence of an ontologically separate self (Hazleden 2003) or a higher self (Askehave 2004) is presented in the words of characters such as Shams and the higher self can be reached through;

- 1) Fighting against the ego or the lower self that may take the form of interest in prestige, wealth, etc.
- 2) Through self-loss in the prayers to God and immanent transcendence in the form of becoming one with God. The mystical discourse of each thing on earth being a reflection of God is repeated in Rumi or Shams's many phrases.

In self-help ego and personality are regarded as illusions which steer the individual away from himself, therefore they are advised to be eroded as much as possible. Shams asks Rumi “how far Rumi was willing to go to efface his personality in

order to be absorbed in God”(p.166). Since the authentic self is a reflection of God, personality and ego should be demolished to find God through God within oneself.

Material possessions and social standing are parts that are advised to be given up to be replaced with authentic self. In Rumi’s words to Suleiman the drunk in the old story:

“Sometimes it is necessary to destroy all attachments in order to win over your ego. If we are too attached to our family, our position in society, even our local school or mosque, to the extent that they stand in the way of Union with God, we need to tear those attachments down”(p.240).

Shams consecrates Mevlana’s actions against finding his authentic self. The lines below are also reminiscent of Ella’s feelings towards Aziz, who has been a wealthy and successful man only to give them up to find his genuine self:

“...but it was rare, as rare as rubies, for a man who had already made his way up, a man who had plenty of gold, fame and authority, to renounce his position all of a sudden one day and endanger his reputation for an inner journey, one that nobody could tell where or how it would end”(p.246).

As mentioned above, authentic self is considered as a reflection of transcendent powers within the individual in tasavvuf philosophy and the individual is sacred due to being a unit power within the cosmic power. Therefore, transcendence is immanent in tasavvuf mysticism. To reach the authentic self, an individual should pass through self-loss as well. Therefore, in the novel there are many instances to which the concepts of immanent transcendence and self-loss are appropriately allocated. For example in the beginning of Aziz’s book, the protagonist contends “there is a thin line between losing

yourself in God and losing your mind”(p.29). Another of Shams’ rules asserts that the individual must hold on to “nothingness” rather than a false identity:

“..you aim for the supreme stage of nothingness. Live this life as light and empty as the number zero...it is not what we aspire to achieve but the consciousness of nothingness that keeps us going”(p.266).

The excerpts below are two of the many examples in the book that the transcendent is immanent:

“Doesn’t God say, I am closer to you than your jugular vein? I asked. God is not someplace far up in the sky. He is inside each and every one of us. That is why He never abandons us. How can He abandon Himself?”(p.30).

“The devil is not an extraordinary force that attacks you from without. It is an ordinary voice within. If you get to know yourself fully, facing with honesty and hardness both your dark and bright sides, you will arrive at a supreme form of consciousness. When a person knows himself or herself, he or she knows God”(p.112).

8. The Existence of Expert System

Although the importance of individual agency is pronounced in the novel, *expert systems* (Giddens 1991) in the form of friends, companions throughout the “travel” is portrayed as necessary and guidelines and instructions such as the fictional “forty rules of love” by Shams is embedded in the whole story which likens the book to any self-help non-fiction book. Although the guidance is told to be ideally bidirectional, the guide for Ella to transform herself is mostly Aziz in the modern day story, Shams is Rumi’s

“coach” to find his inner being. However, spiritual guidance is held essential. Rumi reflects this view as follows:

“...until someone comes along and makes you realize what you have been missing all this time. Like a mirror that reflects what is absent rather than present, he shows you the void in your soul. That person can be a lover, a friend, or a spiritual master. Sometimes it can be a child to look after”(p.192).

Towards the end of the story, Shams reveals how they spiritually guided each other with Rumi :

“With the initiation of poetry, music, and dance, a huge part of Rumi’s transformation is complete. Once a rigid scholar who disliked poetry and a preacher who enjoyed the sound of his own voice as he lectured others, Rumi is now turning into a poet himself, becoming the voice of pure emptiness, though he might not have realized this fully yet. As for me, I, too, have changed and am changing. I am moving from being into nothingness”(p.278).

Rules and guidelines proposed by the expert systems can be found in the book, including the forty rules to reach love, the importance of number forty explained by Aziz in terms of its relation to Islamic mysticism(p.115).

9. The emphasis on present

The importance of living in the *present* rather than obsessing on one’s future or past is exhibited throughout the novel. The power of the moment is contrasted against the western mode of planning and constant control of time in most self-help literature as Giddens (1991) asserts in his analysis of a self-help book.

In the beginning of the modern day story, Ella is tired of not being able to concentrate on the present because her mind is always occupied with planning the next day, week or year, putting up reminder notes about them, and upon seeing the Forty rules of love, she jokingly says she should write her own rules called “The Forty rules of the Deeply Settled, Earthy Housewife”(p.43). Furthermore, before her “transformation”, she regards the kitchen as “the one place in her life where she could avoid the outside world altogether and stop the flow of time within herself”(p.62).

When Shams leaves the dervish lodge for Konya, he thought that he “had no past or future, sealed forever in this moment”(p.87).

In an e-mail, Ella reminds Aziz about something he told her about the meaninglessness of control of time and life:

“...you said the idea that we could control the course of our lives through rational choices was as absurd as a fish trying to control the ocean in which it swam”(p.144)

Aziz’s e- mail(p.145-46) in response to the above, in addition to regarding time control an attempt in vain, actually gives a message by the novelist, Safak, on why she has written the novel. Through the character of Aziz, she touches on the modern Western world, her thoughts on religion versus faith, rational individuals, systems, and the rising need in modern society for spirituality and transcendence and adds that late modern societies are similar to medieval times in which “there is an explosion of interest in spirituality”(p.146). However, she estimates the possible criticisms such as this article

and conveys through Aziz's words that "spirituality is not yet another dressing for the same old dish. It is not something we can add to our life without making major changes there"(p.146).

In the following sections of the book Ella discovers what time actually means. Other characters such as Kimya, a female student of Rumi, who gets married to Shams, instead of accepting the present Shams as he is, plans to transform him in the future to be more involved with her, but later understands these attempts and trying to control the future is more harmful to her.

10. Reconstruction of individual agency through transformation

Another important concept, which can be extracted from the various parts of the book, is the *reconstruction of individual agency* (Redden 2002) *through transformation* (Askehave 2004). Each character in the novel is transformed and this transformation is explained by the "travel" metaphor. Furthermore, metaphors and parables are embedded throughout the book which are factors reinforcing the rhetoric of any self-help book (Askehave 2004). After passing through stages already mentioned, the characters in the book are enlightened and completely transformed by gaining knowledge and control on themselves. This transformation is likened to a travel as can be inferred from the following passages:

“It was my tenth rule: East, west, south, or north makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you’ll travel the whole world and beyond”(p.86).

“ ‘Your journey is already changing you’, said the master when I went to his room to say good-bye. ‘And it hasn’t started yet.’”(p.87)

In one of her correspondences with Ella, Aziz writes the following that life is a journey in search of authenticity:

“Each time I say good-bye to a place I like, I feel like I am leaving a part of me behind. I guess whether we choose to travel as much as Marco Polo did or stay in the same spot from cradle to grave, life is a sequence of births and deaths”(p.92).

In Rumi’s words, the life is defined to have seven stages to complete transformation of oneself (p.165-66). Ella also keeps track of her transformation (also a sign of self-reflexivity) during her own “journey”, and Rumi’s transformation after indulging in conversations with Shams, is observed by his wife. Shams also tells about the necessity of transformation after a journey with a companion:

“Every true love and friendship is a story of unexpected transformation. If we are the same person before and after we loved, that means we haven’t loved enough”(p.277).

Finally, Rule 38 of Shams, highlighting the importance of transformation, is remembered by Ella in a moment of decision to leave her house :

“Even if a single day in your life is the same day as the day before, it surely is a pity. At every moment and with each new breath, one should be renewed and renewed again”(p.336).

ElifŞafak’s book “The Forty Rules of Love” is a fine recent example of a bestseller fiction, which is not marketed as a self-help book but actually adopts all principal concepts of self-help non-fiction in both its style and content. Dolby(2005) discusses, self-help books are similar to each other in that they, like fairy tales, recast traditional material into instructional extended essays.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Introduction

The popularity of the self-help phenomenon is directly linked to the personal desires and ambitions of each and every individual and it is fostered more and more by the increasingly dynamic and challenging modern society. But while the society does put pressure to improve and develop the self, these desires are in fact generated at an internal level. In other words, the need for power obvious at an external level is only the second factor in the propagation of the self-help phenomenon, but the primary factor is represented by the will for power.

The need for power was explained throughout the previous chapters of this dissertation and it has been linked to forces in the external environment. For instance, within the workplace, the fact that competition and opportunities are increasing for the employees, means that they have to improve themselves in order to overcome the challenges and seize the opportunities. And this feature of late modernity stimulates the consumption of self-help by supporting individuals in their search for personal development.

But while the role of the need for power cannot be denied, it is hereby argued that this stimulates consumption of self-help, whereas the actual consummation of self-help is stimulated by the will for power. The concept of consummation is generically assimilated within the context of a marriage, when the new spouses engage in intimate relationships and consummate the marriage. As an extrapolation to self-help, the consummation of these materials would refer not only to the purchase and usage of the materials – the generic consumption of self-help – but to the actual implementation of the teachings.

This consummation of self-help – unlike the consumption which is generated by the need for power – is generated by the will to power. The concept of the will for power belongs to German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and it is based on the features of human motivation. Specifically, it argues that people reveal a particular need to prove themselves and to occupy the best positions in life that they can. And in order to prove their worth and attain these valuable positions – representing the will to power – they turn to a wide array of tools, including the consumption and consummation of self-help.

Following this line of thoughts, the current chapter focuses on the presentation of the consummation of self-help by the young professional women in Turkey. In order to attain this objective, the interview is conducted and answers are retrieved from all fifteen women. This chapter is focused on revealing their answers, with the findings being interpreted throughout the subsequent chapter.

7.2. The interview questions

In a traditional format, the questions for the interview would have been presented throughout the chapter dedicated to the research methodology. Nevertheless, the

interview is here integrated at this stage as its construction was based on extensive research, including both the literature review, the condition of women in Turkey, but also on the discourse analysis of the ten books approached throughout the previous chapter.

The analysis of all these sources was necessary in order to best observe and understand the features of self-help commodities in order to lay the foundations for the future inquiry and consummation expectations. For instance, in the construction of the questions regarding the professional identity, more emphasis was placed on the thematic analysis of books such as *A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiation*, *Knowing Your Value: Women, Money and Getting what You're Worth* or *Women at Work: Strategies for Survival and Success*. Still, in the construction of the questions to reveal the personal and emotional involvement of women in their relationship with self-help consumption, more useful data was collected from books such as *Healing Your Emotional Self*, *A Powerful Program to Help You Raise Your Self-Esteem*, *Quiet Your Inner Critic and Overcome Your Shame* or *Women Who Worry too Much: How to Stop Worry and Anxiety from Ruining Relationships, Work and Fun*.

In this order of ideas, based on the research so far conducted, the interview devised as well as the interview material could be found at Appendix C.

Each of the respondents was asked to give her age, occupation and level of educational attainment in order to further help with the processing of the data collected. Also, to increase the accessibility to information and to ensure that the data provided is useful and relevant, the interview questions were structured in order to allow the respondents to freely answer, but also in a means to offer direction when the respondents would know what to answer.

7.3. Data collection

Throughout this section, emphasis is placed on the presentation of the specific answers offered by each of the fifteen women in the constructed sample. The primary means of data presentation will be that of a faithful depiction of the actual words used by the respondents in order to authentically and reliably reveal their consummation of self-help, their usage of it and their perceptions of the self-help phenomenon. The collection of the data is structured into fifteen sections, each corresponding to the answers given by each of the fifteen young professional women in the sample.

The previous sections have represented the highlight of the dissertation by collecting data specific to the young professional women in Turkey. At this stage then, emphasis would be placed on the analysis of the collected information in order to create specific findings which explain the consumption of self-help by young professional women in Turkey. The current part is structured in accordance to the interview conducted, namely to the topics raised by the interview questions. The following subsections then address the individual topics in the questions and discuss the findings of relevance in each case.

7.4. Self-help consumption levels

The fifteen respondents in the constructed sample have revealed different levels of consumption of self-help materials. The usage of self-help books and other forms of self-help is pegged to a wide array of features, such as the lifestyle of the individual, the profession or the personal beliefs and convictions. Specifically, this means that the actual consumption of self-help can be integrated in various categories, as follows:

- High levels of self-help consumption

- Medium levels of self-help consumption
- Low levels of self-help consumption.

High levels of self-help consumption were generically declared by the women in the neo-liberal cluster. The increased levels of consumption of self-help by these clusters – represented by NL1, NL2, NL3 and NL4 – are explained by the fact that these women are more open to experiencing new things and are not so fond of traditionalism and are also less conservative.

Highest levels of self-help consumption were as such observed among people with more liberal views, who look to alternative solutions to improving their lives. A consistency is then revealed between the two clusters of neo-liberals and the in-betweens closer to neo-liberals. Among the cluster of in-betweens closer to the neo-liberals, high levels of self help consumption were observed, as both IB3 and IB4 declared that they were consuming self-help materials at extended levels. The exception is however represented by IB5 who argues that her focus on the consumption of self-help is minimal. She is more interested in having fun and new experiences, than obsessing about self-improvement.

At the levels of the in-betweens closer to the neo-traditionals, consistency is not observable, as IB2– the self-employed yoga instructor – also noted high levels of self-help consumption, which is inconsistent with the results of the neo-traditional group. Within this group, self-help consumption levels are low, with these women being more skeptical and more focused on the traditional ways of dealing with problems.

Within the cluster of neo-traditionals, the levels of self-help consumption ranged from low to medium, NT1 and NT5 declaring they use self-help on some occasions, but

they do so in addition to other coping and development techniques. NT2, NT3 and NT4 all revealed low levels of self-help consumption.

Finally, O, who reveals features of both traditionalism and liberalism – more similar to liberals, however – declares to use self-help materials to a low extent. Despite her relatively liberal choices in life and the possibility of working within a less restrictive and stressful environment, O seems to be a private person, who internalizes her emotions and is not interested in new experiences. Such a belief is substantiated by her recurrent use of the word “never” to describe her life in terms of the actions she never makes, as opposed to other respondents who described themselves in terms of the actions they do take.

Overall then, the consumption levels of self-help are diverse and a clear pattern is not observed among the clusters. Generalization could however be made at the level of the liberal and traditional clusters, but exceptions to these generalizations occur, meaning that the final consumption of self-help is generated by a myriad of forces particular to both individual as well as the environment in which they live, work and function.

Table 7. Levels of Self-Help Consumption

	High levels of self-help consumption	Medium levels of self- help consumption	Low levels of self-help consumption
Neo-trationals		NT1 NT5	NT2 NT3 NT4
Neo-liberals	NL1 NL2 NL3 NL4		
In-betweens	IB3 IB4		IB5

Outlier			O
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7.5. Origins and motivation for self-help consumption

The fifteen respondents interviewed have forwarded different reasons as to why they commenced to turn to self-help materials. NT5 and IB4 for instance – both workers within the IT sector – have argued that their personal rationale drove them to self-help materials, but that the personal decisions for self-help consumption came as a result of the pressures and challenges of working within the IT sector. Information Technology is now the fastest developing segment of the international economy. IT sets the pace and rhythm for development and forces other sectors – and the individuals within them – to quickly develop as well. The IT industry is as such the most challenging and dynamic and requires for its agents to also be highly developed, skilled and capable in order to not just keep up with the rapid change, but also to create and implement it. By activating in such a stressful and vibrant sector, NT5 and IB4 recognized the need for continuous development. But NT5 resorts to self-help materials to a low extent, whereas IB4 does so to an increased extent. Specifically, NT5 is more focused on technical development, whereas IB4 is more focused on integrating her technological development with the personal development.

The personal rationale and desires for improvement have also constituted grounds for the approach to self-help material for other six respondents in our sample. In this order of ideas, NT1, NT4, NL1, NL3, NL4 and IB3 all turned to self-help as results of internal processes of thought. In terms of the specific elements which helped each and

every one of them decide in favor of self-help, these differ. For NT4 and IB3 for instance- similar to the case for NT5 and IB4– the field in which they operated constituted grounds for desires of self-development. In this order of ideas, the financial sector is highly demanding and requires highly skilled and capable people in order to function. This means that the competition and the pressures of working within the financial sector are immense. Subsequently, the employees in the field have to simultaneously cope with two strains of demands – technical demands of the field and personal traits and abilities to cope with the stress and pressures. Both of these goals are better attained with the aid of self-help materials.

Women working in more creative fields however also turn to self-help materials and they also noted that it was the pursuit of personal and professional development that constituted the independent rationale in the search for self-help materials. But each of them had specific reasons. NL1 for instance argued that she turned to self-help in a means of improving her communication capabilities. She is a columnist and needed to learn how to communicate her ideas in a means more appealing to the readers. Additionally, she is rather conservative about her own socializing and resorted to self-help books as a means of improving her own skills for socializing.

NL3 and NL4, both working within the fashion industry, have indicated personal desires and convictions in their decisions to turn to self-help. Being in the fashion industry, both of them are interested in their appearances and in the ways in which they are perceived by those around them. Both commenced by consuming materials related to the industry; they then gradually moved on to consuming self-help as a means of improving their professional status and their personal lives. IB5 and O also function in

more creative fields, but their consumption of self-help is restricted at a low level. The two argue that when they do consume self-help materials, they do so out of curiosity or for the fun of it.

Also low level consumers of self-help materials, neo-traditionals NT2 and NT3 noted that nothing has so far managed to convince them to turn to self-help materials. The final group, formed of NL2, IB1 and IB2 turned to self-help as a result of personal sorrows, and at the advice of a professional psychiatrist or psychologist. NL2 and IB2 were abused – one as a child and the other as a young adult – and have undergone therapy for their emotional scars. During the sessions, they were advised to read some materials and participate to group meetings in order to help them deal with their problems.

Overall, the reasons which drive young professional women in Turkey to consume self-help are various.

In order of incidence, the highlights can be organized as follows:

Table 8. Reasons For Self Help Consumption

	PERSONAL CONVICTIONS(profession al development/ self- improvement)	SPECIALIZE D ADVICE (cases of abuse and trauma)	SAKE OF EXPERIENC E AND CURIOSITY	NO PURPOS E
Neo- traditiona ls	NT5 (professional development) NT4 (stress management)			
Neo- liberals	NL1 (Communication skills) NL3 (image pressures) NL4 (image pressures)	NL2 (perception of abuse)		
In betweens	IB4(both professional&personal development) IB3 (stress management)	IB1 IB2 (perception of abuse)	IB5	
Outlier			O	

7.6. Common types of self-help consumption

As expected, the more common types of self-help material is represented by the self-help books and this is explained by the fact that they are readily accessible, made for the understanding of all and financially accessible. But these women do not seem to just read any books. They for instance reveal an interest in best-selling self books, but in their selection of the material, they seek the credentials of the authors. They as such are more interested in a book written by an academic professional, rather than a bestseller written based on the experience of one person alone.

In terms of the popularity of self-help materials, this is revealed below, based on the incidence of each type of self-help material:

Table 9. Types of Self-Help Consumption

	BOOKS	MAGAZINE ARTICLES	SPIRITUALITY	GROUPS	YOGA AND OTHER FORMS OF EXERCISE
Neo-trationals	9 out of 15	NT5	NT2 (religion, sacred) NT3(religion, sacred)		NT5(yoga for well-being and balance)
Neo-liberals		NL1 NL3 NL4		NL2	
In between		IB3 IB4	IB5(ultimate form of self help)	IB1 IB2	IB2(yoga as way of life) IB4(yoga for well being and balance)
Outlier			O(ultimate form of self help)		

1. Books, with an incidence of 9 women respondents indicating that the more common form of self-help they use are books.
2. Articles in magazines and journals of the specialized media. These are common in six cases, namely for the professionals who seek guidance in their career development: IT worker NT5, columnist NL1, styling assistant NL3, fashion designer NL4, IT worker IB4 and financial specialist IB3.
3. Spirituality, which is common in four instances but often understood in different terms. While IB5 and O perceive spirituality as the ultimate form of self-help, NT2 and NT3 believe that spirituality has nothing to do with self-help. Spirituality and religion are held sacred, whereas self-help is commercial.
4. Groups, with an incidence of 3 instances. Groups are attended by NL2, IB1 and IB2, all of which strive to deal with intense personal problems, they would not be able to address with the simple reading of books. The popularity of groups is linked to the human dimension of them, namely with the fact that they integrate people with similar experiences, inputs and abilities to best understand complex instances.
5. Yoga and other forms of physical exercise, in 3 instances. These are generally the preferred choices of the IT workers and that of the yoga instructor. For IB2, the yoga instructor, yoga is a way of life, but for NT5 and IB4, yoga and other forms of physical exercise represent balance and an effort for personal wellbeing, especially necessary as they have sedentary jobs.

7.7. Important themes of self-help

At the level of themes, the individual selections of the fifteen respondents differed based on occupation, personal affiliations and values, but also past experiences.

Generally, the majority of the readers were interested in self development and assistance with professional development. But the women who for instance suffered from abuse and trauma – Ozge, Cigdem and Banu – were less interested in using self-help for career development, but were more interested in overcoming their internal emotions. The chart below reveals the incidence of the themes, as selected by the respondents in the constructed sample:

Table 10. Theme Popularity

Ranking of Popularity of Themes
Reconstruction of individual agency through transformation(10 votes):indicates most women in the sample realize that improvement and self-development can only come through internal change.
Reflection on the self (9 votes) Personal legend (9 votes) The importance of expert systems (9 votes) This might indicate that the readers understand the role of the self in the development process, but they also look for precise solutions to their problems.
Love for the self (6) The belief that all beings are equal (6) The power of thought (6) The need for power (6)
Rejection of external authority(5) Authenticity and preservation of the self-identity(5)
Emphasis on the present(3): might indicate that the interviewees are more past or future oriented

The rejection of external authority – otherwise a quite common element within self-help – is rather unpopular among our fifteen respondents. This tendency might be

based on the fact that they still perceive themselves through traditional lenses of inequality, ergo the increased popularity of the theme of equality – equality of which it could be said that the women are trying to convince themselves.

Another observation which has to be made is that the multitude of themes in which the women are interested might depend on the levels of consumption. While this observation cannot be extrapolated to the entire sample as exceptions do exist, it has to be noted for instance that NL1, the columnist with a high levels of self-help consumption, is simultaneously interested in seven themes (the love for the self, the rejection of external authority, the power of thought, reflection on the self, the personal legend, authenticity and the preservation of the self identity, and the reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation), whereas NT2, with a low consumption of self-help, is only interested in one theme (expert systems).

7.8. Issues addressed

Based on the incidence of the responses retrieved from the women in the palette, the most popular issue addressed is represented by personal development, followed by professional advancement, with the least popular one being represented by the overcoming of abuse. These findings are indicative of the fact that the women in the sample are self and career centric and that only a small percentage of them has suffered from abuses and reveals a need to address the trauma. The chart below reveals the popularity of the issues addressed by the fifteen young professionals in Turkey in their consumption of self-help materials:

Table 11. Issues Addressed

Ranking of Issues Addressed
General self development (10 votes)
Professional development (9)
Perceived inferiority of women and the need to empower the female(7)
Stress and pressure of daily problems (6)
Communication (5): mostly selected by those interested in professional development, with direct emphasis by the women working in more creative industries, with the exception of NT4, women selecting this issue to be addressed are in creative fields (NL1, NL3, NL4 and IB5; a columnist, a styling assistant, a fashion designer, and an advertiser, respectively)
The need to deal with and overcome abuse(4): might be due to the fact that the incidence of abuse is low within the sample.

The small difference between the two most popular issues and the rather increased difference between them and the third most popular issue clearly testifies for the most important issues of modern day young professionals in Turkey – emphasis on self and professional development. While they still face other problems, such as abuse and low confidence, these are being gradually overcome by the women in the sample as they come to place more emphasis on themselves. This situation might not however characterize the women in different age groups, of different occupations, of lower education and living in more traditional backgrounds. As mentioned, all women in the sample are unmarried, meaning that they are able to experience life and freedom in their own terms. Married women – especially those married into highly patriarchal families – could continue to face more severe issues.

Similar to the previous issues addressed, the women in the constructed sample focus on different issues when consuming self-help materials. An important observation which is made is that the relationship between the level of self-help consumption and the number of the issues in which a woman is interested are in an indirect relationship. In other words, unlike in the case of the themes approached and the level of consumption, a high level of self-help consumption is indicative of fewer issues addressed, whereas a lower level of self-help consumption would be indicative of numerous issues of interest.

The case of NT4 and NL2 are the most relevant ones. NT4, a financial worker with a low level of self help consumption, declared that when she did consume such products, she looked at materials detailing various issues, specifically: the daily stress and pressures, the perceived inferiority of women coupled with the need to become an empowered woman, general self development and professional development. NL2 on the other hand – academic with a high level of self-help consumption – is interested in only two issues – the inferiority of women and the need to become an empowered woman, and the overcoming of abuse.

Such a link between the levels of self-help consumption and the issues approached could be based on the fact that the women who consume high levels of self-help materials are focused on target issues. They have spent many years identifying their specific problems and they now use self-help materials to try to address and resolve their issues. On the other hand, the women consuming lower levels of self-help materials know little about how self-help could help them. They have spent little amounts of time addressing their internal and external issues and they do not focus on specific problems to solve. This then means that when they consume self-help materials – even if this happens

rarely – they do not focus on a specific issue, but review several issues, from communication, to personal reflection to professional development.

7.9. Results of self-help consumption

As with all previous themes approached, the women gave different recollections of the lessons they learnt and the general outcomes of their self-help consumption. Some of the lessons and outcomes were strongly positive, some were neutral and others were strongly negative.

The strongly positive outcomes and lessons are the most popular ones, with an incidence in 7 situations – NT1, NL1, NL2, NL3, NL4, IB1 and IB2. All of them noted improvements in their lives, especially linked to more self esteem and self worth. In the cases of NL2, IB1 and IB2, the consumption of self-help is allowing them to try and live normal lives and overcome the traumas they had experienced at one point or the other. For NL1, NL3, NL4 and NT1, the effects are linked to their perceptions of jobs and personal lives.

The neutral situations were represented by five distinctive situations – NT4, NT5, IB4, IB3 and IB5. In all these instances, the underlying idea was that the consumption of self-help did not generate major positive outcomes, but it neither generated important negative results. In other words, these five women declared that they felt neither improvement, nor did they feel that the consumption of self-help hurt them.

Finally, the strongly negative outcomes and lessons were the least common ones, with only three instances – O, NT3 and NT2. In the case of O, she learned to trust nothing else than her hard work, whereas NT2 and NT3 learned that no book or guru will ever be able to tell you how to live your life in a better manner. You have to find how to

live your life. The table below reveals the incidence of positive, neutral and negative outcomes and lessons.

Table 12. Results of Self-Help Consumption

	POSITIVE OUTCOMES	NEUTRAL OUTCOMES	NEGATIVE OUTCOMES
Neo-trationals	NT1(perception of job and personal life)	NT4 NT5	NT2 NT3 (did not benefit from no books or gurus)
Neo-liberals	All neo-liberals(more self esteem, job and life perception, NL2-overcome trauma)	IB3 IB4 IB5	
In-betweens	IB1(overcome trauma) IB2(overcome trauma)		
Outlier			O (trust nothing other than hard work)

It is observed that the more common outcomes are the strongly positive ones, but that these outcomes and lessons are not material and palpable results, but mere changes in perceptions – the way the woman views herself, the image she projects upon others, the expectations she raises, the means in which she deals with problems and so on.

Ultimately then, the results of the consumption of self-help are in strong connection with the personal beliefs of the consumers. Women who are more optimistic and more readily available to believe the ideas suggested by self-help are more likely to reveal results they view as positive and their perceptions of their lives are likely to improve. On the other hand, women who are more skeptical would be unlikely to reveal positive results as they

would not believe in the lessons promoted by self-help, nor would they change their perception to recognize optimistic outcomes of their consumption of self-help.

7.11. Stories and experiences with self-help

Throughout the final part of the interview, the fifteen women were asked to describe the most relevant experience they have had and which was influenced by the self-help phenomenon and by their consumption of self-help. As with the rest of the questions, the responses to this inquiry differed based on the personal and unique experiences of each woman, but also based on her own understanding and applicability of the self-help phenomenon.

The more common experiences described by women were linked to personal and professional achievements, generated by the fact that they became more daring, confident and revealed an increased sense of self worth. In this context then – without necessarily being more technically capable – the women improved the image they were revealing for others and as such managed to increase the trust others revealed in them. In other words, the changes incurred were obvious at the levels of perceptions – the perception of the self which subsequently impacts the perceptions others have over the individual.

The relevant examples in this sense are offered by the cases of NT4, NT5, IB4 and IB3. In the case of IB3, she always knew that she was a valuable addition to the organization in which she was operating. But she was making half the salary that was registered by a man occupying a similar position. Before engaging in self-help consumption, she would have never considered asking for a raise because she did not feel she would ever be granted one. But with the aid of the self-help books and the articles she

read, she became aware of her true value. So she used this new found sense of worth and made her case with the manager by explaining why she deserved a raise. And she received it as the manager saw her confidence and recognized her worth. All this was possible when IB3 recognized her value and presented it to others, but also when she developed the courage to stand up for herself. She gained the strength to ask for a raise. She became more proactive and no longer relied on the wrong belief that if she worked hard enough, she would be recognized, cherished and rewarded.

Similar instances were observed for the cases of NT5, NT4 and IB4. All of these women were undervaluing themselves and the self-help materials helped them gain more trust in themselves and as such make them be perceived with more trust by their peers and subalterns. While, like IB3, NT4 also got a raise, NT5 and IB4 requested – and received – promotions. In all four cases nevertheless, it has to be argued that neither raises nor promotions were significant.

Aside from raises and promotions, professional achievements with the aid of self-help also materialized in the implementation of ideas by NL1, NL3 and NL4. In each case, the women had to struggle in order to have their inputs heard, considered, and finally implemented. But in each case, as they stood by their concepts and fought for them, the women managed to have them implemented. NL1 was able to write her story to ease the minds of her readers; NL3 was able to complete a photo shooting that seemed lost and NL4 was able to leave her unique print on the marketing campaign which represented her line of women's clothing.

Professional achievements are essential and important results of self-help implementation, but two of our respondents indicated that their ability to help others was

more important than anything else. NL2 was able to recognize an abused student and help her exit the situation in which she was suffering from violence and mistreatment. And IB2, the yoga instructor, spends every day helping others overcome their fears and their own demons in order to regain control of their lives. NT2, NT3 and IB5 declared that they did not implement the teachings of self-help in any situation and they did not have a story relevant to tell. O however argued that her implementation of the self-help lessons caused her an embarrassing moment as she was refused a raise, and now states that she would never again apply self-help techniques.

In a nutshell, the experiences encountered as a result of self-help culture embracing represent:

Table 13. Experiences with the Usage of Self Help Teachings

	Neo-traditionals	Neo-liberals	In-betweens	Outlier
Idea recognition		NL1(write her own story) NL3 (completed a lost photo shoot) NL4(her unique print on the marketing campaign)		
Raises	NT4		IB3	
Promotions	NT5		IB4	
Ability to help others		NL2(helped an abused student)	IB2(helps others overcome their fears)	
Internal stability				
Courage to get a new job				
Negative outcome of not	NT2 NT3		IB5	O(refused a raise due to self

getting the promotion				help technique implementation)
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Overall then, young professional women are prone to consume self-help, but a distinctive conclusion about their consumption patterns cannot be drawn due to the numerous variables which differentiate them. The sample selected by this research process has been based on the inputs of fifteen different women, and despite the initial creation of clusters based on similarities and differences, the findings were not consistent with the initial expectations. For instance, it would have been expected for the women in the same cluster to reveal similar approaches to the self-help phenomenon. Such an observation would have led to the creation of solid findings according to which the consumers of self-help would have been identified and described. Nevertheless, such an outcome is not achievable as the consumption of self-help does not appear to be tailored to demographics, religious or political views. Within the neo-traditional cluster for instance, it would have been expected that the women are high consumers of self-help as they are high achievers and would as such consume self-help as a means of self-development. This assumption was however proven wrong as the majority of the respondents – NT2, NT3 and NT4 – indicated low levels of self-help consumption. In the cases of NT5 and NT1, who indicated medium levels of self-help consumption, the rationale for this consumption was not demographic or political, but based on personal desires to evolve – in the case of NT1 – and the peer pressure in the case of NT5. The same peer pressure has determined IB4 to turn to self-help.

Overall then, the consumption of self-help cannot be tailored and integrated into a pattern based on political views, religious convictions, drug consumption, socialization

preferences and other demographic criteria. Ultimately, the consumption of self-help appears to represent a matter of personal choice, generated by a unique combination of several forces, such as the lifestyle of the individual, the personal beliefs and values (i.e. women with a stronger belief in the Divinity turn less to self-help, but place their hopes with the Deity), the past and the experiences lived, or the nature of the job performed and the nature of the industry in which they activate – IB4 and NT5 for instance, both workers within the information technology sector, argued that the rapid pace of development within the field force them to develop alongside, or risk getting left behind.

The role of the industry in which the individual operates in the creation of self-help consumption patterns could be assessed outside the IT industry, in which the two representatives – IB4 and NT5 – have attested its validity. Specifically, the women working in fashion design and advertising would be expected to reveal similar patterns of self-help consumption, which would be influenced by the fact that they work in creative industries, less stressful than the IT industry. But such an assumption is only validated by NL1, NL3, NL4 and IB2, who all reveal high levels of self-help consumption. The other women working in creative industries – IB5 and O – both indicate low levels of self-help consumption. This then means that the industry in which one works cannot constitute a clear and independent force indicative of the self-help consumption pattern.

A final note which has to be made is that all fifteen women in the sample constructed and used throughout this research endeavor have graduated at least from university, with some of them possessing even masters' or doctoral degrees. This specifically means that they are all highly educated and intellectually capable. And in a context in which self-help is often described as ridiculous or unhelpful, these rational

women preserve their logic and do not fall trap to the promises of self-help. They remain rational and use self-help to a limited degree and to help with specific tasks, rather than expecting self-help to change their life. And among these women, those who do use self-help materials appear to do so as a result of specific forces.

Overall, the fifteen women in the constructed and analyzed sample are part of a homogenous group. Their lifestyles, educational patterns and professional identities are similar; they are all knowledge workers and they have all graduated from top universities in Turkey. Yet, their patterns of self-help consumption differ, and these differences are offered generically by personal motivations, which differ from one woman to the other.

As section 8.3 has shown, the primary motivator stimulating women to consume self-help literature is represented by their very personal convictions, rather than by their professional identity. Still, when self-help is consumed with a distinctive and personal motivation, the pursuit of the professional identity does play a crucial role. As section 8.6 has shown, the professional development represents the second most popular issue addressed by the women in the sample. In some instances even, as section 8.8 has shown, the consumption of self-help has even materialized in positive impacts on the professional identity and development, as the women were able to use their new found trust and self esteem to get raises and promotions. This virtually reflects that the professional identity is a major determinant in the consumption of self-help, yet it is not the only one, with the personal traits of the consumers also playing a major part.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Limitations of the study

Similar to any other research endeavor, the current dissertation is characterized by several limitations. The first of them is represented by the fact that the approach – however comprehensive – is insufficient to reveal and understand the topic at an exhaustive manner. Such a limitation is common to all research endeavors and is accepted due to the inability of any research effort to exhaust all topics and subtopics related to the approached subject.

In order to address this limitation however, emphasis is now placed on the identification of several subtopics of the current dissertation. These subtopics have, in some way or another, been mentioned throughout the dissertation but the ability to address them has been limited. They are now mentioned as they could represent starting points in future research endeavor by this author or by another. In other words, these limitations and subtopics could in fact further support the development of the field of academic research. In this order of ideas, attention is given to the following subtopics:

- a) The women in Turkey are marked by different lifestyles. The young professionals studied in this research process for instance strive to create equality and benefit from equal rights and opportunities. It was as such argued that their own lifestyle indicates their preference for self-help consumption. What are the other different lifestyles of different women categories – such as older women in Turkey or other

demographic groups of women across the globe – and how do these lifestyles impact self-help consumption?

- b) The current study has not identified a clear and distinctive pattern of self-help consumption, and this is due to the increased complexity of the forces which sit at the basis of self-help consumption. One assumed element in the lack of consumption patterns is represented by the high levels of educational attainment of the fifteen women in the sample. This intellectual capability could indicate skepticism and decreased consumption of self-help. It would as such be interesting to assess the consumption and perceptions of self-help materials among less educated groups of individuals. It could for instance be assumed that the individuals with less education are more prone to believing that the self-help phenomenon could improve their lives.

Another limitation is given by the restricted size of the sample, namely of ten research subjects. The outcome is that of a restricted ability to extrapolate the findings in order to explain the usage of self-help by the entire community of women, or even by the totality of women in Turkey. This limitation is however counteracted by the construction of the sample based on a criterion of diversity. In other words, while the common element was that of an age limit of 25 to 35, the occupations and educational attainment levels of the subjects differed. This feature increased the relevance of the findings by striving to reduce bias and by integrating input from various subjects.

8.2. Summary of findings

The contemporaneous society is extremely dynamic and challenging, presenting individuals with countless pressures. But at a socio-cultural level, fewer individuals seek comfort in religion and traditional values. They seek to improve their life through themselves and through their own self development. And in this era, the phenomenon of self-help has gained increased momentum. The current endeavor has focused on the analysis of self-help through the lenses of its consumption by young female professionals in Turkey. The selection of this specific research sample was due to the realization that these young Turkish professionals represent the new age in Turkey's rather traditional values and families, in which the man would be the provider and the one working outside the home. But a majority of the modern day Turkish women fight for equal rights, for access to education and for professional success. And in a society broken between the new and the old, they seek guidance in their own culture – the self-help.

The phenomenon of self-help is not an innovation of the modern day community, but this society does create the favorable context for the propagation of self help. To better explain this, the second chapter has focused on the evolution of the labor force through the sense of the land, factory, organizational and the more recent professional identities.

Organizational identity emerged as a natural process of evolution, when the labor force developed and when the economic agents became forced to recognize their rights. Gradually however, in the background of various social and economic changes – the most

important of them being globalization – the economic agents took one step ahead and came to recognize not only the rights of the employees, but also their worth.

This process initially occurred within the more and more popular and powerful services sector, where the staff members represented the direct link between the company and the customers, and as such the primary generators of satisfaction and revenues. Gradually however, the personnel strategies developed and implemented by service providing companies came to be adopted by non-service agencies. This adoption of values based on employee worth, satisfaction and reward sits at the basis of the professional identity, which seems now to be replacing the organizational identity. The shift – similar to the previous shifts of factory identity replacing land identity and factory identity being replaced by the organizational identity – is a natural process of evolution and development.

In the creation of professional identity, individuals require two sets of skills – technical and personal. While the technical skills are developed through traditional educational and professional formation channels, the personal traits are more difficult to create. This is where self-help makes a difference by motivating, supporting and guiding individuals on how to make the changes which empower them and improve their personal and professional lives.

More than men, women are more likely to consume the products of self-help and this is commonly explained by their newfound sense of professional freedom and formation, but also through their gender characteristics of being more prone to seek alternative solutions to the encountered issues. This represents the reason as to why women were selected as the population for study. The specific sample of young

professional women in Turkey was selected as these women represent a new cultural phenomenon worthwhile assessing.

Aside from women, other forces are believed to contribute in the selective consumption of self-help. Chapter three has argued that the identity of the individual is the result of numerous forces, including the lifestyle and the consumption patterns and behaviors. In other words, the consumption of self-help literature and other forms would be particular to a specific group of individuals. This assumption was tested with the aid of the literature review, and it has been found that women are the more predominant consumers of self-help products and services.

Another element considered as a contributor to the decision to consume self-help is represented by the incremental pressures encountered by the individual within the personal life as well as the professional climate. At the level of the professional climate, the individual faces more risks and uncertainties, in an already dynamic context in which they compete for jobs and opportunities. It is believed that in order to cope with these pressures, some human beings turn to self-help as a means of gaining more control and as such addressing their need for power. And biology has proven that women are motivated by the need for power and this factor could contribute to their increased tendency to consume self-help products. But what has to be recognized is that self-help militates for the control of the self and personal improvements through deeper processes of through and understating. It does not support control and improvements in the sense perceived by the individuals following the traditional need for power.

But self-help is more than just control – it is about spirituality. Spirituality is a complex phenomenon, with different meanings and applications for various categories of

individuals. The peoples in the Eastern Hemisphere perceive spirituality as an integrant component of their lives and live by its principles in a natural manner. The peoples in the Western hemisphere however feel the need for a more technical definition of spirituality, alongside with a *manual* on its implementation.

Within the workplace, spirituality is generically understood differently in terms of the perspective from which it is assessed. For the employer, spirituality means higher employee morale and higher performances, whereas for the employee it means the ability to address work not just as a mechanical task, but more so as a real ability to improve one's life and make a difference.

In order to further stimulate the motivation and morale of the employees, organizational managers had brought in life coaches and gurus, who gradually become more and more popular outside the organizational climate. The life coaches and gurus are integrant parties of the self-help industry and they support individuals in overcoming their fears, in taking control of their life and in making the best decisions.

The true success of a guru is when the individual is able to find wisdom and answers by himself and within himself. This outcome of a self-help effort indicates the central point of self-help – believing in oneself, helping oneself and finding the deity within oneself. The Eastern culture is not however faithfully represented by self-help, which is perceived often as an effort to transform the Eastern traditions, ways and values into products and services which can be sold for the profits of tertiary parties. And even when the financial dimension is nullified in the equation, the teachings of the self-help industry remain out of context and a kitsch representation of the spiritual complexities of the East. But in spite of this belief, the self-help industry is a focal point of personal

development in today's society and it has even impacted the consumption behaviors of young Turkish women. In other words, despite the negative perception of self-help industry within the East, this phenomenon is important and worthwhile studying.

A primary step in the approach to the topic was represented by the review of the available literature. Due to the scarcity of resources detailing the consumption of self-help by the young professionals in Turkey, the stand taken throughout this section was a general one with emphasis on the role of the self-help in today's society. In order to increase the relevance of the research process, the literature review was composed with balanced attention to three primary sources of information – the internet, books and the specialized media (journals and magazines). Each of these sources is characterized by both advantages as well as limitations, but their combined use has led to the minimization of the shortages and the maximization of the benefits.

The review of the available literature has generically identified the definition of self-help as an organized and informal effort to help the others around, to receive help and also to support the development of the self. Despite the existence of various forms of self-help, the more common of them are the books and the groups. The long term impacts of neither of these self-help tools have been identified, with some stating negative impacts whereas others indicating no impacts, to even negative impacts.

People often engaging in self-help actions declare healthier and better satisfied with their lives and the self-help books are sometimes even recommended by professional psychiatrists as an added means of information. In some instances however, the self-help books could lead to misdiagnosis of the self, and they could also contain unreliable information. In terms of the groups, they are perceived as supporting recovery through

the sharing of knowledge among people facing the same problems. The actual results are yet to be clarified however.

In terms of the people mostly embracing self-help guidelines, these generally refer to women, with an estimated 80 per cent of self-help book readers being women. The tendency of women to engage in self-help activities is pegged to low self-esteem, but also to social trends and traditions. At the level of self-esteem, the women in Turkey register low levels of trust and self-worth and this is supported by the abuses they continue to suffer. In such a context then, it is understandable why they turn to self-help.

The research methodology selected was that of the onion ring, in which each process would be commenced only after the previous one is completed. Before detailing the research onion however, emphasis was placed on the presentation of the three main categories of research methodologies – experiment based research methods, opinion based research methods and observation based methods. The presentation of the specifics of each category of methodology was integrated in order to support the further argumentation for the onion ring.

As for the actual research method that was selected, this integrated the following:

- The phenomenological research philosophy according to which the studied phenomenon was too complex for it to be integrated in a statistical model using rigid variables
- The inductive research approach, which is based on the gradual gathering of information and the ultimate formulation of findings
- The research strategy of a semi-structured narrative interview, through which all fifteen women in the sample would be asked to respond to several questions

- The duo-method research choice, according to which two methods were employed in the collection and processing of the data; first a thematic analysis of texts and then conducting interviews
- The cross sectional time horizon, through which the phenomenon of self-help consumption by young Turkish professionals is assessed at more levels at a single point in time
- Qualitative techniques and procedures which reveal the advantage of allowing the researcher to best observe and comprehend the behavior of the selected sample.

At the level of the research sample, this was constructed from fifteen women of ages between 25 and 35; all employed in professional industries and knowledge positions. The lifestyles and preferences of the women in the group revealed both similarities as well as differences, leading to the subsequent construction of four specific clusters. The neo-traditional cluster is formed from family business employees NT1, NT2 and NT3, as well as from financial specialist NT4 and IT employee NT5. These women are more conservative, have either republican convictions or are apolitical; they dress fashionably and they read bestsellers and watch blockbusters. The neo-liberals, out of which columnist NL1 and academic NL2 are hardcore neo-liberals and styling assistant NL3 and fashion designer NL4 are softcore neo-liberals, are less conservative, have liberal political views, animal activist and regular newspaper readers (except for NL4). They are more prone to experience with drugs and they often turn to non blockbuster movies and non bestselling books. The in-betweens are organized into two categories, formed from academic IB1 and self-employed yoga instructor IB2, who have beliefs closer to neo-traditionals and IT worker IB4, financial specialist IB3 and advertiser IB5,

who have beliefs closer to neo liberalism. Finally, there was also fashion designed O, who was integrated in the bridge/ outlier cluster as she was found in between neo-liberals and the in betweens near the neo-liberals.

In order to better identify the features of the self-help phenomenon, a more detailed look was taken at the more popular component of self-help – the books. The sixth chapter has as such focused on the detailed discussion of the ten central themes in ten self-help books, elaborated through a discussion of a popular Turkish book, written by Elif Şafak. The ten books assessed were constructed on themes recurrent in the self-help literature. For instance, they all militate for reflection over the self and the improvement of the self through the combination of individuality traits but also the use of expert systems. The scope of all books and self-help processes is that of enlightenment and self-help eases the transformation of the individual into the better version of the self.

The data necessary was collected with the aid of fifteen individual interviews, with each of the fifteen women in the constructed sample. Eight specific questions were asked and they ranged from the consumption of self-help, to the impacts of this consumption. While a clear and distinctive pattern of self-help consumption among the women in the sample cannot be created, some forces appear as forces in the individual decision to consume, how to consume and why to consume, self-help. These refer to the following:

1. The industry in which the individual works and the nature of the job they perform.

The women in the more stressful industries looked to self-help as a means of professional development, whereas the women in the more creative industries looked at self-help as a means of personal liberation and development.

2. The past of the individual consuming self-help indicates the nature of issues and themes addressed in the self-help materials. For instance, women who have suffered from abuses earlier in their lives, tend to consume self-help materials dealing with issues of overcoming abuse and supporting gender equality and women's rights and issues. Women who have not been abused and are career oriented will tend to approach themes and issues dealing with self development and professional advancement.
3. There appears to be a connection between the level of self-help consumed and the number of themes approached and issues of interest. In the first case, a large volume of consumption indicates numerous themes, but limited numbers of issues of interest, explained by high levels of specialization and focus on few specific issues. In the second scenario, a low level of self-help consumption indicates a lower incidence of themes, but an increased number of issues approached and this is explained by the fact that the consumers do not focus on particular problems to solve, but browse through more issues, more so out of curiosity, rather than an actual need to solve a problem.
4. The personal experiences the individual has had with self-help. Aybuke for instance, who had a negative experience after implementing the teachings from an empowering article, reveals a decreased willingness and openness to self-help materials.
5. At the ultimate level of the actual results and the lessons learnt from the consumption of self-help materials, the majority of the women indicated positive results; one third of the respondents indicated neutral outcomes and three women

indicated strongly negative results. Ultimately, the results are observed at the level of individual perceptions of the selves and the world around through their own lenses. Women who are more optimistic and ready to believe the teachings of self-help present positive outcomes as they are willing to embrace a happier lifestyle, even if no palpable results are observable. On the other hand, more pessimistic and skeptical women are unlikely to perceive positive impacts from self-help teachings and this is because they tend to be more realistic and judge results in terms of their materialization.

In due course then, the consumption of self-help is based on personal preferences, past experiences and personal beliefs. And it appears that the results of this consumption are perceptual, indicating various outcomes, based on the means in which each individual approaches self-help, consumes self-help and embraces its teachings.

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Appendix A Summary and Discussion of Self- Help Book Sample

Secrets of Self Confidence

The Secrets of Self Confidence was created by Linda Ingleson, an International Confidence and Motivation Coach and expert in Neuro Linguistic Programming. A Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming, Ingleson is a successful organizational consultant and motivational speaker. Her extensive experience with consulting individuals and organizations and her knowledge in the field have determined her to write “Secrets of Self Confidence”.

The author’s purpose in writing this book is to develop an easy to understand program that helps people build self confidence. The reason for selecting this topic is represented by the impact of self confidence on various aspects of individuals’ lives, and the increased interest in this subject caused by people’s lack of self confidence that is reflected in their actions. Given the fact that self confidence represents the basis of personal success, the writer considers it is important to solve confidence issues in order to be able to work also on other aspects that influence individuals’ lives.

The work is written from the point of view of the specialist in personal development. The experience that Linda Ingleson has in building self confidence is reflected in this book. In other words, this book is the result of the author’s work on behavioral change strategies, neuro linguistic programming, and motivational speaking. This book is supposed to work like a coach people have access to whenever they want (Ingleson, 2010).

Regarding the audience of the book, “The Secrets of Self Confidence” addresses all individuals with reduced self esteem and confidence. However, the main segment targeted by this book is represented by professionals that require high levels of confidence in their career development, and need to balance their professional and personal lives. Basically, the book is useful to teenagers, adults, and seniors. Each of these categories has different types of problems that must be approached with confidence.

The writing style of this book is a combination of formal and informal writing. In other words, the author uses the formal style when trying to explain the mechanism of certain behaviors and attitudes. The informal style is used when providing examples intended to make readers associate themselves with the issues described in the text. This writing style is a proper one in addressing the targeted audience. The writer’s style is easy to follow, helping readers focus on the issues discussed in the text, instead of focusing on understanding the language.

The book is organized in 8 modules: Commitment and Responsibility, Habits and Behaviors, Beliefs and Values, Confidence, Taking Action, Goals, Communication, and Motivation. The readers are invited to work these modules sequentially. The introductory part of the book explains what methods are required in reaching the objectives that readers establish. These methods refer to theory, self-analysis, exercises, reflection, goal setting, taking action, and evaluation. The writer also provides advice on the time required for reaching the confidence objectives that the book addresses.

Also in the introductory section, the writer clarifies the learning objectives in the case of each module. This is intended to help readers identify the important aspects they must focus on. The Commitment and Responsibility module is intended to help readers

understand the blaming behaviors that influenced the actions. The cause and effect issue is also addressed by this module. The author explains the importance of individuals' comfort zone and provides strategies intended to use this aspect in improving their behavior. Another important aspect addressed by this module refers to the analysis of people's reactions and how to properly manage them.

The Habits and Behaviors module is intended to help readers identify the behaviors that do not have the impact they want on their lives. This also requires that readers identify their strengths and weaknesses. The author helps readers to develop and implement strategies in order to improve different aspects of their lives. These strategies are focused on building confidence. The Beliefs and Values module focuses on clarifying the difference between beliefs and self-limiting beliefs. The writer's interest in this issue relies on the fact that these limiting beliefs significantly influence people's decisions. The exercises in this module invite readers to identify and analyze the values they consider important in different areas of their lives. The writer explains this strategy by determining readers understand the impact these values have on their behavior.

The Confidence module is organized so that it helps readers identify the factors that stop them from reaching different objectives they establish for different aspects of their lives. The module also intends to determine these readers focus on aspects that help them improve different situations they consider unsatisfactory. The exercises in this module are developed in order to identify the factors that reduce readers' confidence and why the readers allow for such situations to take place. In addition to this, the writer provides certain useful techniques for increasing self confidence.

The Taking Action module refers to exploring different emotions that have been identified by readers as important for their development. This module is also helpful in understanding the behaviors that influence readers' options for handling different situations in their lives. The module also provides strategies intended to help readers establish objectives.

The Goals module focuses on learning the importance of establishing goals and objectives. In this module, readers are invited to understand and explore the principles that support individuals in establishing these objectives. The most important method used by the writer in this case is represented by the SMART method. This strategy is intended to help individuals with reduced levels of confidence to define the goals and objectives they consider important.

The Communication module refers to understanding the communication of different types of individuals with different styles of communication. Readers are also trained on how to develop relationships with different people they are talking to. The writer also focuses on communication problems and on providing strategies that are able to counteract their effects. The module also presents different techniques that can be used in effective communication. Another important aspect addressed by the writer in this module is represented by increasing the confidence of individuals that must provide business presentations.

The Motivation module presents the importance of motivation. In addition to this, the writer focuses on exploring the issues that motivate readers. The writer makes the difference between different types of motivations, and explains that some of these

motivations are not productive. Readers learn how to identify their motivations and how to use them in reaching their objectives.

The book is written in the form of a manual with numerous exercises. The organization of each module is quite simple. The writer begins each module by stating the learning outcomes that are expected from readers. In addition to this, the introductory part of each module recommends the required time for completing the learning and exercises provided in these modules, and the materials needed in each case. The modules continue by presenting the notions that the book targets. The definitions and impact of each of these factors are presented. In order to ensure that the readers understand these issues, the writer provides exercises intended to clarify these subjects and to help readers apply these issues to their situation. These modules also provide certain stories intended to exemplify the aspects discussed in the theoretical area of the book.

The numerous exercises that the book provides reflect the writer's experience in the personal development practice. The exercises are simple to understand and to perform. The results of these exercises are quite complex, allowing readers to identify interesting facts about themselves that help them improve their situation. The sequence of these modules supports a gradual personal development of the individual.

From the point of view of specialists in the field, the book does not provide new information on building self confidence. The book relies on common principles of neuro linguistic programming. In other words, the book is not extremely helpful for individuals trained in NLP. However, the book is helpful in the case of individuals that are not that informed on NLP principles, and that require coaching in this field. The writing style is coherent and makes correct use of technical terms. Therefore, the writing style is proper

for the targeted audience. Given the fact that the issue of self confidence is differently approached by individuals, some of the readers might find their ideas on the subject modified, while others might find their ideas reinforced as a result of reading this book. This is because this situation depends on each reader.

Knowing Your Value: Women, Money and Getting what You're Worth

Mika Brzezinski is an American journalist who wrote her latest book based on her own experience. Unlike other works integrated in this discourse analysis, *Knowing your value...* is a rather reflexive work, in which the author describes her own problems and her own situations. The underlying theme is that of the diminished sense of worth in women – a sense which is not only propagated by men, but also by the women who indulge this perception.

Mika Brzezinski is one of the hosts of a popular morning show in the United States, namely *Morning Joe*. In 2010, she published her first book, *All things at once*, which is integrated in the category of self-help books. *All things at once* is a motivational book inspiring women of all ages to overcome the challenges they face in both personal as well as professional life.

In 2011, Mika Brzezinski published her second book – *Knowing your value: women, money and getting what you're worth*. She bases the book on her own experiences and on the fact that – despite her major contribution to the journalist field, she felt that she was being insufficiently appreciated and valued by her peers and supervisors. She believes that this situation is common for most women, who reveal a decreased sense of self-worth and this is due to the negative perceptions of women. Mika Brzezinski herself points out that in certain occasions in her life, she has failed to take a

strong position for herself, but has preferred to play the victim. Such a decision does nevertheless come with great expenses for women, as their process and abilities for development are made more difficult.

In order to make her point clearer, Brzezinski discusses the concept of gender equality. While recognizing the efforts which have been made in the pursuit of gender equality, she also notes that the actual equality has yet to be achieved. At a financial level alone, women continue to be paid less than the men for doing the same job. But the gender inequality is more prominent at a subconscious level, and within the social constructions, meaning as such that women continue to be thought of as less than men in all life contexts.

The experiences and insights she reveals in her book are generally self-realizations and derived from the very experiences and life of the author. But to add extra credibility, Mika Brzezinski also integrates the opinions and experiences of other representative females within the United States, such as Tina Brown, Carol Smith or Lesley Jane Seymour. These women revealed the commonality of not fighting for their rights, but just focusing on working hard and believing that they would be noticed and rewarded.

“I felt like if I was deserving, then my boss should recognize that I was deserving” (Valerie Jarrett, quoted by Mika Brzezinski, 2011).

“More than one quarter of women in our survey (an MSNBC survey online) described themselves as scared when asking for a raise. Many said they would rather have a root canal” (Brzezinski, 2011).

“We women think that we will work very hard... and then money will come”
(Carol Smith, quoted by Mika Brzezinski, 2011).

Men on the other hand, are more assertive and they do not hesitate to ask for a raise or to be more aggressive in proving their worth and increasing their professional value. Mika Brzezinski as such proposes that women improve their approach to enhancing their value, but that they do not lose their individuality and female sensitivity in the process. Her model for this is described as “not too soft, not too hard; hard as nails, warm as toast” (Brzezinski, 2011).

Other issues tackled by Mika Brzezinski include the following:

- The sense of entitlement
- The approach of the things for which the woman is not paid, with the recommendation for the thing not to be completed if the woman is not paid for it
- The promotion of the self
- The action and reaction to being ignored
- Asking and not asking for things, being consistent and persistent
- Speaking up for one's beliefs
- The value of strategic alliances and the role of ‘sisterhood’
- Marriage and motherhood for the working professional women.

Overall, *Knowing your value: women, money and getting what you're worth* is an interesting piece of reading, made so by the notoriety of the author – Mika Brzezinski. But as highly reliable self-help books go, it has to be recognized that this journalist's second book is not reliable as it is not based on theoretical models, scientific data and academically attested documents, insights and evidence.

A Woman's Guide to Successful Negotiating

Lee Miller is an expert in business negotiations, a professor of Management, and author of several bestselling books on the art of negotiation. Though this current work, the scope is that of helping women learn negotiation skills required in business.

The book refers to women that consider they should improve their negotiation skills. The importance of this subject has been observed by the authors in their teaching practice, but also in everyday life. The effects of successful negotiation and the problems caused by the lack of such skills have been reported by numerous students, or business professionals the authors work with. Therefore, this book was written in the attempt to increase awareness on the subject and to provide significant knowledge to people that want to improve their negotiation skills.

The intended audience is represented by women that consider their negotiation skills as being insufficient to reaching the intended agreements in different situations they are confronted with. This book is not directed towards professionals only, but also to students and other categories of women that have needs regarding their negotiation skills. The writers consider that negotiation skills can help women improve most situations they are confronted with, like purchasing cars, houses, work relationships, and others.

The objectives of this book are presented on the front cover. Some of these objectives include: Get What You Deserve, Project Confidence, Never Be Taken Advantage of Again, and others. Other objectives of the book are revealed by its contents. These objectives refer to understanding the factors that influence success, identifying the mistakes most women make, and on how to succeed in business and in other areas of their lives.

The book is written from the point of view of professionals in the field of business negotiating. The authors are trying to explain technical aspects regarding the process of negotiation. They mostly focus on the need of learning how to negotiate efficiently, on teaching readers some of the most useful teaching skills, and on how to apply these skills in various situations. The writing style is rather formal, but easy to understand by all categories of readers with minimum knowledge in the field.

The introductory part of the book is intended to describe the objectives of this work and to explain what readers should expect to learn from reading it. In addition to this, the introduction provides numerous examples of successful women in different business activities, and their approach and experiences with negotiation. From the introduction of the book, readers learn the book is written on negotiation for women in the context of a business world dominated by men. The introduction also provides some examples of everyday negotiating, between friends, at the restaurant, and other similar situations (Miller, 2011). The purpose of these simple examples is to help readers understand what the process of negotiation is and how it can be successfully used.

The first chapter is titled The Three Keys to Success. The aspects described in this chapter rely on the confidence of readers. This is because confidence has been reported as the most important factor that influences successful negotiation. The chapter presents the point of view of numerous professionals that explain why confidence is important in the negotiation process. In addition to this, the writers provide useful tips on how to build confidence.

The chapter also focuses on the practical aspects of negotiating. Therefore, readers are invited to perform certain exercises on building confidence and on negotiating

small aspects they are interested in. The writers also provide useful advice on what people should do in order to increase the success of their negotiations. This refers to collecting information about the opponents in the negotiating process. This allows the negotiator establish the correct negotiation strategy. The negotiator should also establish the objectives of each situation that requires negotiation. In addition to this, the negotiator must determine the opponents' interests, determine the range of possible agreement, and decide on the approach of the negotiation strategy.

The second chapter of the book is titled The 10 Most Common Mistakes Women Make and How to Avoid Them. This chapter focuses on identifying and analyzing the most important errors that affect the results of women's negotiation style. The authors present errors regarding women's mentality, approach, and negotiation strategy. This chapter relies on the knowledge and experience of authors. Based on the findings in this chapter, the writers also provide a series of important recommendations intended to help women not make these mistakes in different negotiating situations. In addition to this, the chapter presents the opinion of different women professionals on these mistakes and the strategies they used in counteracting their effects.

The third chapter is titled Convince: Change the Way Others See Things. In this chapter the writers refer to the ability of persuasion as an important factor of successful negotiation. In this chapter, women are advised to improve their convincing and persuasion skills. In other words, women should try to change their opponents' opinion and determine them to see things the way they want to. In order to reach this objective, the writers consider it is useful to invest in certain training programs.

The book continues with an important chapter that refers to the integration of collaboration in the negotiation process. In the authors' opinion, collaboration is an important tool in the problem-solving approach. An important advantage of collaboration is that it satisfies the interests of all involved parties. Therefore, women are oriented towards less aggressive negotiation strategies in comparison with men. Given the fact that men and women have different negotiation styles, the authors recommend that women focus on collaborative strategies.

Another important chapter refers to the process of creation and its involvement in negotiations. Basically, the writers invite women to change the game if they do not like its rules. In other words, women should change the way they negotiate if the negotiation style is considered improper. This strategy has numerous effects, as it is not limited to the negotiation process. By changing the rules of the negotiation processes they are involved in, women are in control and are able to determine the objectives of these negotiations.

The writers continue the main idea described above in the following chapter of the book. The chapter titled Mars and Venus: Negotiating with Men versus Negotiating with Women is intended to identify and analyzes the differences between men and women reflected in their negotiation style. In this chapter the readers find out that men's negotiation style is more aggressive and seems to be based on the principles of warriors. The writers associate men's negotiation style with the Art of War. This association is frequent in the literature in the field and is intended to help understand men's style and approach regarding negotiations.

The book does not limit to negotiation in the field of business. The writers address women's negotiation with their significant others. However, this does not mean that the

authors encourage women to manipulate their husbands or boyfriends. The intention of the writers is to teach these women strategies intended to help them convince their partners to increase their involvement level within the house and the relationship. The authors compare this type of negotiation with that used in business.

The book continues with a chapter that focuses on women's negotiation with their families. The necessity of addressing this issue relies on the numerous communication problems reported by many women within their families. They complain about their relationships with their husbands, about the communication problems with teenagers, with their inability to handle children, and others. In this chapter, readers learn several strategies they can use at home, in improving their relationships with family members.

This is in strong relationship with women's negotiation during divorces. This subject is addressed in a different chapter and teaches women to negotiate in order to get what they deserve in such situations. It is important to take into consideration the fact that the writers do not encourage women to fight or to revenge on their husbands, but to apply proper negotiation strategies that help everyone win.

There are also other chapters in the book that refer to the differences between men and women. The chapter that focuses on equal pay for both genders reveals these differences and the strategies that can be used in reducing them. Therefore, the writers consider that women can succeed in business same as men can, and they should be equally paid for their job. But in the writers' opinion, this can only be achieved by negotiating.

In this book, women are also taught how to buy a car or how to buy or sell real estates. Women are taught traditional negotiating tactics that allow them to achieve great

results in such situations. In addition to this, the writers teach women how to change their negotiating strategies when buying or selling cars and houses. The book also discusses strategies used in virtual negotiating.

The writing style in this case is coherent, original, and easy to understand by readers. The writers provide information on various topics regarding negotiation and its influence in different aspects of women's lives. The book explains technical aspects regarding the process of negotiation. In addition to this, the authors present the points of view and experiences of numerous women in different business fields. An important approach in this book is represented by negotiation and its use based on the differences between men and women. Another important aspect that must be taken into consideration refers to the fact that the writers encourage women to use negotiation strategies that help all the parties involved in this process win something.

Influence without Authority

Alan Cohen is one of the most popular personal development trainers, and authors of numerous bestselling books on the subject. David Bradford is a Management consultant, with organizational and individual consulting experience. In this new book, they focus on influencing superiors, customers, and subordinates, leading people, and building successful relationships

Influence without authority is intended to help individuals improve their persuasion skills and influence different people they must work with towards reaching their objectives. The authors provide complex information derived from technical knowledge and experience. The intended audience is represented by individuals that need

to improve their influence skills at the workplace, but it can be useful to any individuals that consider they require such skills in other areas.

The writing style is formal, but easy to understand. The book is organized in three main parts. The first part is introductory into the subject. The second part provides information on influence models. The third part of the book describes practical applications of influence.

The introduction is intended to present the learning objectives of this book. This helps readers determine whether they should read this book, and compare these objectives with the objectives they establish and their needs regarding persuasion skills. The introduction also explains the needs for establishing an influence model. In addition to this, the writers analyze the barriers to influence and provide strategies intended to counteract these barriers.

The second part of the book is titled *The influence Model*. This section is intended to provide information, to discuss theories, and to develop strategic models that can be used by individuals in different situations that require their power of influence. The writers advise readers to use such a model in situation where the other person is known to be resistant, there is little information on the opponents, or the relationship with the opponents does not favor the person in case.

Based on these assumptions, the writers have developed an influence model that can be used in several situations. This influence model relies on certain activities. The model is based on the approach that the individual's opponents must be considered potential allies. This requires the analysis of opponents' interests in the attempt of finding common interests that could support an alliance, rather than to consider these opponents

as adversaries and develop strategies in accordance with this position. In order to be successful at influencing others, the authors recommend that people clarify their goals and priorities. Given the fact that objectives are very important in the persuasion process, readers are encouraged to identify their objectives in order to create an approach to the situation that follows these objectives.

Another important aspect addressed by the influence model is represented by the analysis of opponents' world. This mostly refers to organizational forces that have the ability to determine objectives and needs. In other words, it is necessary to assess the drivers that determine the opponents' actions. This sometimes requires inside information from companies. Another part of the influence model proposed by the writers refers to identifying relevant values. This refers to both sides of the negotiation. This determines the assessment of resources relative to opponents' needs and interests.

An important part of the influence model is represented by dealing with relationships. This activity requires that the individual assesses the nature of the relationship with his opponent, and how that person wants to be related to. Based on this information, the individual can establish the alternative solutions that can be considered satisfactory for all parties involved. The most important part of this model is represented by determining the trading approach in accordance with each situation (Cohen & Bradford, 2005).

In this part of the book, the writers also discuss the most frequently observed barriers that influence the persuasion process. Such a barrier is represented by not being able to clarify goals and objectives. If the individual is not sure about what objectives he must reach with the influencing strategy, it is likely that the process will not be

successful. Another barrier is represented by not properly analyzing the opponents' world. This does not allow making a correct opinion on the needs and priorities of opponents. Most of these barriers are derived from the activities of the influence model and refer to certain actions that are not properly followed by people. In order to sustain the importance of these activities and their barriers, the writers provide stories of different successful people that have managed similar situations and have learned important facts about how to influence others.

In addition to this, the writers provide help in applying the principles associated with the activities within the influence model. This is a very important part of the book, because it summarizes information from various fields of study. The readers are also provided numerous strategies they can use in different situations.

The third part of the book is titled Practical Applications of Influence. This part of the book is more clearly organized in comparison with the other parts. Each chapter in this part of the book refers to a different situation and relationship that the individual must manage, and provides approaches and strategies that can be used in influencing the opponents in case. The first chapter in this part of the book refers to how to influence people's bosses. In this chapter, the writers describe different types of bosses, their behaviors, and the psychology behind these behaviors. Based on this information, the readers are provided strategies on how to approach each type of boss and how to determine them to provide what the individual in case wants. This helps readers identify the type of superior they are dealing with at work, and to develop a strategy that is in accordance with their situation.

Another chapter refers to influencing difficult subordinates. This seems to be a more important subject, because the chapter is more complex and provides different approaches. The writers discuss the most important influence concepts and their application in different situations. The success in influencing such subordinates relies on feedback. This seems to be the approach the writers prefer in this case. In addition to this, the writers describe a series of problems the readers might be confronted with, and provide strategies that can be used in counteracting their effects.

There is also a chapter that refers to leading and influencing teams. The factors that the authors consider to be the most important in such situations are represented by the challenge of determining the loyalty of team members, understanding the values of team members, increasing the attractiveness of the project, the leader's management style, and others. The writers provide strategies intended to help readers use these factors in their favor and develop successful projects.

Some of the readers are interested in influencing large groups. Their needs are satisfied by the book in a chapter that refers to influencing organizational groups, departments, and divisions. In this chapter, the writers discuss how influence can be gained within the company. In such cases, the authors recommend the application of the influence model. However, they also recommend readers to be persistent because gaining influence in large groups is a difficult process. In addition to this, the writers discuss the limitations that have been observed in people's influence on large groups.

The writers address other subjects, like influencing colleagues, indirect influence, understanding organizational politics, and others. The book also provides numerous

examples that can be studied online, and additional resources that interested readers can use in order to improve their knowledge on how to influence others.

Influencing without Authority is one of the most complex books that refer to the process of persuasion and influence. The complexity of this book relies on the fact that it addresses numerous situations that individuals must manage in all areas of their lives. The extended knowledge in this book is the result of writers' experience and study in several fields, summarizing the most useful information, and presenting it in a form that is easy to understand by most readers. Therefore, readers learn general influence models that can be used in most situations if applied properly. In addition to this, the readers learn how to influence different types of people they must work with. An important issue that must be taken into consideration regarding this book is that the authors do not simply provide strategies that people can learn and apply, but develop models that help people create their own strategies by teaching them how to analyze each situation and how to use this information in successfully influencing others.

Dealing with Difficult People

Roy Lilley is a successful British businessman. He is currently an established independent health policy analyst, writer, broadcaster, and commentator. Roy Lilley is the author of numerous books, like *Managing the Message: A Tool Kit for Communicators*, *Trust Management and Strategy*, *Making Sense of Risk Management*, and others. In *Dealing with difficult people*, Lilley's emphasis falls on providing strategies for dealing with difficult people in different situations.

The book is the result of the author's experience with difficult people, and the observation of numerous similar situations reported by most people. The writer provides

a different approach to dealing with such people. The writing style is informal, and the book is filled with emoticons and other graphics that are intended to help readers identify certain aspects. The intended audience is represented by adults in all business fields that are forced to deal with difficult people in different areas of their lives. Some of the objectives of the book are stated on its front cover. These objectives include: handling aggression, managing conflict, motivating poor performers, and others.

The book is organized in several chapters. The introductory chapter provides important information on human relations. From this chapter, readers learn some of the principles that human relation rely on, some of the most important characteristics of difficult people, how to identify them, what they mean, what their impact is, and how they should be handled. The writer also provides certain rules that readers should apply in such situations. These rules are easy to identify. The book continues with a chapter that identifies and discusses the most important types of difficult people. In the writer's opinion, these types of difficult people are represented by: egoists, aggressive people, lazy people, bullies, moaners, groaners, and critics, perfectionists, manipulators, and stubborn people.

The book continues with an analysis of conflicts. The writer describes what conflict is and the most frequent types of conflict. The writer also provides certain strategies that individuals can use in managing conflicts. However, it is recommended to use addition resources for readers that require complex information on this subject. The writer continues with a chapter that refers to difficult bosses. This chapter discusses different types of difficult bosses, and leads to the conclusion that angry bosses are the most difficult type to deal with. The writer provides information on the psychology of

such bosses and what they want from their subordinates. The writer considers that such bosses like to see their subordinates increase their efforts in reaching the established objectives (Lilley, 2010). In order to deal with this behavior, readers are advised to not give their bosses the satisfaction of seeing this.

Regarding the workplace, it seems that coworkers can also be very difficult to deal with. The writer's experience and analysis of different workplace situations have determined him to consider that it is competition that drives difficult behavior of colleagues. The rivalry and opposite opinions of workers in the same office determine some of these people to get personal with others. In such situations, their behavior is not based on logic and reasoning, making it difficult to deal with using logic strategies and approaches. But the writer provides strategies intended to release the strains on the relationships at the workplace and to sustain a calm and relaxed environment, rather than deal with each difficult colleague and situation individually.

The workplace is also analyzed from the boss's point of view. In other words, the book addresses situations where bosses must deal with difficult subordinates. This is usually the case of stubborn team members that influence the company's activity. In such cases, superiors must develop and implement strategies intended to improve relationships with subordinates and to determine them to improve their performance.

The book continues with several chapters. Each of these chapters addresses the types of difficult people mentioned above. In each case, the writer approaches the situation from several points of view. The writer addresses situations where these types of difficult people are bosses, subordinates, or customers. In these cases, the writer provides a detailed analysis of these types of difficult people. The readers learn their

characteristics, motivations, and needs. Based on this analysis, the writer determines the behavior of such people. It is easy for readers to associate these behaviors with people they must deal with in different areas of their lives. These behaviors are presented in a simple manner, allowing readers to understand and to study them.

In addition to this, the writer presents the drivers that influence these behaviors. The intention is to help readers understand how the mind of these people works and why they behave the way they usually do. This also helps determine strategies intended to modify these behaviors or how to deal with them. The writer also addresses different situations he has observed as being frequent and affecting numerous people. These situations are intended to help readers associate their situation with the issues discussed in the book.

The writer also takes into consideration factors like morale and attitude, and how these situations affect readers. This is intended to determine readers to analyze their situation, and to determine what strategy they used in addressing difficult people. In other words, they must assess their attitude regarding such people. This helps them determine what their position and level of understanding of such situations is. Based on these factors, readers can establish what strategies are likely to be the most successful in their case.

The book is not limited to analyzing difficult people. The writer also discusses several difficult situations most people are confronted with at their workplace. Such situations are represented by gossip, or by people that like finding faults in others in order to pick on them. The writer analyzes these situations and provides several strategies that readers can use in counteracting the effects of these problems, and in building a

workplace environment that encourages and supports friendly relationships within the company.

The relationship with customers is an important aspect that interests many people. Employees that work with the public find themselves in the position of dealing with angry customers that are not satisfied with certain products and services and direct their anger towards front office employees. Although most companies have developed procedures to be followed in such cases in order to improve the relationship with customers, the application of these procedures is not always successful. As a consequence, employees become stressed, their morale and motivation are low, and they experience lack of satisfaction at work. This determines other problems in most aspects of their lives. Therefore, these employees often report the need of additional help. They understand they must learn how to deal with difficult people.

This book is written in order to satisfy this need. The writer addresses customer relationships in one of the largest chapters in the book. In this chapter the writer targets the policy that the customer is always right. Based on his experience, the writer describes the main types of difficult customers and analyzes their behavior. For example, this is the case of customers that make requests that cannot be satisfied as rapidly as they want to. Other difficult customers are well-known for screaming to employees, or for being very rude, making it difficult to reason with. In other cases, it might be other members of the staff's fault for irritating customers and determining certain conflicts to take place.

The writer provides solutions in these cases also. Lilley provides some explanations regarding their behavior. Based on identifying the factors that influence this behavior, the writer provides examples of strategies that can be used with difficult

customers in different business activities. However, the writer takes into consideration the fact that these situations are not all the same, and some of them might require the creativity of readers.

The writing style of the book is coherent and original. The book is easy to understand by most categories of interested readers. In comparison with most books on this subject that focus on technical issues, Lilley's book makes a fun and enjoyable reading. Although the writing style is informal, the readers will find that the aspects discussed in the book rely on strong knowledge in various fields of study. The author offers information on psychological aspects regarding difficult people, social information, and business knowledge reflected in the chapters that focus on relationships at the workplace, and customer relationship management.

The book provides general information on how to deal with difficult people and it should be considered the basis for further research on the subject. Readers that are interested in expanded their knowledge in this field are invited to address additional books and articles, based on the issues discussed in each chapter. The book does not provide important information for professionals in the field.

Dealing with Difficult People and the principles, rules, and strategies it provides cannot only be applied to workplace relationships, but can be expanded to most types of relationships. This is because these strategies are based on psycho-social analysis of behaviors of most frequently observed types of difficult people. The strategies provided in this book are easy to understand, and readers are expected to successfully apply them in most situations.

6.7. Achieving Personal Success

Warren Redman is a successful psychotherapist that developed an original program called Emotional Fitness Coaching. He is the author of numerous bestselling books on similar subjects. His experience with individuals and groups has determined him to develop a series of programs intended to help people develop themselves. In *Achieving personal success*, he focuses on helping people understand themselves and others in order to reach emotional balance.

Warren Redman is a psychologist and certified human resources professional specialized in emotional fitness. He is the author of numerous books on improving individuals' emotional situation. *Achieving personal Success* is one of his best-selling works. The writer's experience with counseling numerous individuals and groups has determined the need to write about emotional balance and how to achieve it.

The intended audience is represented by adults with different emotional problems that are aware of the fact they need professional help in reaching an emotional equilibrium. The writer address people that want to understand themselves and others. The book is written from the point of view of the professional that can provide such help. The writing style is rather informal, but not as friendly to the readers in comparison with similar books. The objectives of the book are represented by helping individuals achieve their personal success. In other words, the writer intends to help readers more satisfied and less frustrated. From the writer's experience, this can refer to all areas of people's lives.

This personal development book does not limit to people with problems in this area, but it can also be used as a resource for counselors, teachers, social workers, and others. Readers are expected to improve their listening skills; they will learn what other

people are satisfied and frustrated by, and how to achieve personal success at work, in their families, and with their relationships.

The book is organized in several chapters that address various subjects of importance to the process of reaching a satisfactory emotional status. The content does not provide much information for interpretation. The chapters are simply titled and do not allow readers to identify much of the issues they address.

The introductory section of the book is intended to present the author's opinion and approach to personal development. Redman presents his basic philosophy regarding what it means to develop as a human being, to be heard, understood, and responded to, and to understand others in the same manner. Redman views most people not reaching their personal development potential. In order to come to their help, in addition to counseling, the writer has also developed an action plan presented in this book.

Redman is aware of the fact that some of the readers might disagree or might not understand his vision and main opinions that the action plan relies on. Therefore, the writer introduces readers into the meaning of these notions. For example, Redman discusses the meaning of listening and its importance (Redman, 1995). The same applies to being heard, being understood, being accepted, and being responded to. In the introductory section the writer also describes the chapters of the book and explains the most important issues they address.

The introduction is followed by a chapter titled "Exploring". The title of the chapter does not explain much to readers. In this chapter, readers are explained the processes that Redman used in order to develop the action plan provided in this book. The writer refers to numerous psychoanalysis techniques, provides a series of theories in

the field, and presents the work of important psychoanalysts that have significantly improved the literature in the field. Some of the readers might not feel interested in this information, while others might find it difficult to understand. However, it is important that readers take this information into consideration, because this allows them to understand the basis of the book and of the actions they must perform.

The following chapter is titled “Lifescale and Workscales”. This chapter refers to analyzing the personal and work areas of people’s lives. In order to reach this objective, Redman has developed a set of questions for each of these scales. These questions are intended to help readers analyze their situation and change their perspective, if necessary. Redman developed these questions based on his experience with patients and clients. When asked those questions, these people were forced to perform an in-depth analysis of their situation. Another consequence of these questions refers to people becoming influenced by them on how they see things. In addition to this, the questions were intended to determine how much satisfaction and frustration people feel regarding different aspects of their lives.

Redman also provides examples of people he worked with and what impact these questions had on their situation. This builds credibility, and readers find it easier to associate themselves with these characters. It also helps them understand that many people have similar problems, and that their situation is somewhat normal. This is because some individuals prefer to deny their problems. Redman also discusses the progress made by people with his strategy.

The book continues with a chapter titled “A Structure for Listening”. The reason behind addressing this subject is represented by the reduced listening skills the writer has

observed in most people. In Redman's opinion, the problem is not the listening potential of individuals, but their availability regarding this activity. In other words, Redman considers that people are the reason for poor listening, which leads to communication problems.

In order to explain his opinion, Redman provides examples of situations where people show reduced listening skills that affect their relationship with others. In addition to this, the writer also exemplifies with successful situations, where different individuals have managed to improve their listening skills and to improve their relationships at work or in their private life.

This chapter is followed by the chapter titled "Meanings". This is an important chapter and is intended to help readers understand most of the aspects in their lives. The writer states that some of the readers might not agree with his opinion, because their view is biased by their personal experiences. In such cases, the writer recommends that readers analyze the action plan provided by the book and apply it to their situation. The answers to the questions developed by Redman are also expected to help readers understand the issues addressed in this chapter.

The book continues with a chapter titled "Connections". It is expected that readers will be mostly interested in the problems approached by this chapter. This is because Redman discusses relationships, the problems they are affected by, and the strategies that individuals can apply in order to develop successful relationships. People always complain about not getting along with people at work, or with some friends, or about having to deal with difficult people. This chapter provides some psychological explanations about the factors that cause these problems. In addition to this, readers are

taught how to use the concepts of listening, being heard, understood, accepted, and responded to in improving their relationships with other people.

The chapter titled “Applications” is intended to provide certain rules about how the action plan provided by Redman should be applied. This chapter has a practical approach, in comparison with previous chapters that focus on theoretical aspects of the problems addressed by the book. The writer understands that readers require these rules in addition to the explanations provided in each chapter. Redman also presents some of his successful cases in his work with individuals and groups in applying the action plan.

The chapter titled “Learning to Apply Inner Balancing” is intended to increase readers trust in the program developed by Redman. In order to reach his objective, the writer describes how the process can be applied in several aspects of people’s lives. This is because some of the readers are interested in improving their personal lives, others are interested in improving their professional life, and others simply want to improve some small issues they are not satisfied with. However, the writer advises that readers should focus on each of these issues in order to sustain their personal development process.

The writer continues to discuss the application of his program in the chapter titled “Achieving Personal Success”. This chapter is intended to help readers to sediment the most important issues addressed in each chapter of the book. In other words, this chapter summarizes the information presented in the book. Redman considers that readers should continue to expand their knowledge in this field by addressing additional resources.

The book is an interesting reading from several points of view. Redman combines theoretical knowledge in the field with his significant experience on working with people.

The book is not only useful to individuals interested in personal development, but also to professionals that want to improve their knowledge and their business.

Women at Work: Strategies for Survival and Success

Anne Dickson is a psychologist and educator, specialized in assertiveness training, interactive communication, and personal development. She is the author of several bestselling books about women's rights. Dickson has an important experience in training individuals on personal development and in working with different companies, revealing as such the high levels of relevance of her books. In *Women at work...*, she focuses on developing personal development strategies for women professionals.

The reason for writing this book is represented by the author's observation of the problems that women professionals are confronted with at the workplace, or at home, because of their work. The gender inequality issues that are not resolved in many organizations are another reason that the writer considers of affecting women's status in the professional world.

The book is written from the point of view of the psychologist and educator with significant experience in training women and men in a variety of contexts. The objectives of the book refer to providing strategies intended to help women get other people at work to take them seriously, gaining the respect of others, learning the difference between authoritative and authoritarian, imposing their points of view, improving their negotiation skills, and others. The intended audience is represented by women professionals, but the book can be usefully applied in the case of women that also want to improve other aspects of their lives.

The introductory section of the book describes how Dickson got the idea of writing this book. This section is also used by Dickson to present her educational background, skills and experience. In addition to this, the introduction explains what readers can expect to find in this book. Therefore, readers identify the important aspects that the book addresses.

The introduction of the book is followed by a chapter titled “Assertive – Substance or Stereotype?” In this chapter, the writer explains what assertiveness is and why it is important. This is because this concept is frequently used in business, but also in other fields. Although people are encouraged to become more assertive, some of them do not see the importance of this characteristic (Dickson, 2000). Therefore, the author finds it useful to address this subject and to explain what assertiveness is and what its importance is.

Communication problems are frequent within most relationships. This also refers to relationships at work. This issue is addressed in the chapter titled “Speaking Up”. In order to help readers better understand these issues, the writer identifies and discusses some of the most frequent communication problems reported by professionals in different fields. This is also intended to determine readers to associate themselves with the book.

An interesting approach of this book is represented by role-plays that the writer provides regarding each situation discussed in this book. For example, this chapter provides several practice exercises that present different approaches to the same situation. Each exercise discusses the errors made in the situation in case and what their impact is. Readers are also provided the best solution to these situations. In addition to this, Dickson explains the psychological aspects that the behaviors discussed in these exercises rely on.

The following chapter is titled “Taking Yourself Seriously”. The writer wanted to refer to this subject because one of the most frequent complaints Dickson hears is represented by the fact that women consider themselves not taken seriously enough. This affects their self confidence, their relationships at work, and their performance. The author provides strategies that women can use in order to determine other to take them seriously. In addition to this, the writer develops several practice exercises that readers can use. These exercises refer to readers’ relationship with their bosses, coworkers, and subordinates. The objective of these exercises is to increase the authority of women at the workplace, but not by increasing their toughness.

Another important aspect that women require professional opinions about is represented by relationships at work. The writer addresses this aspect in one of the book’s chapters, and provides a series of recommendations. Given the fact that it is difficult to avoid emotions at the workplace, the writer feels somewhat obligated to advice women that consider themselves not being able to properly handling such situations. This refers to friends at work, relationships, and work situations affected by them. Each chapter refers to different situations that are considered important at the workplace.

Numerous women that Dickson has worked with have complained about the fact they often refused in the selection and recruitment process because they are women, although in certain cases they are better trained than men candidates. Dickson advises these women how to handle such rejections in a different chapter. This situation is not as frequent as it used to be, but some women continue to feel discriminated.

Another problem reported by woman Dickson has trained refers to the limits that must be set at the workplace. Some of them have difficulties setting these limits, or must

deal with coworkers that do not recognize these limits. This affects women's work environment and their performance. Dickson provides several strategies intended to help women in setting these limits. In addition to this, the writer provides some examples about how to handle difficult coworkers that refuse to meet these limits.

Women in management positions experience difficulties also. Their main problem is the authority they must develop at work. But Dickson advises these women to not be authoritative with their subordinates. In other words, Dickson teaches these women be angry, not aggressive. Their employees must be aware of their position and must respect them, but they also should be treated so that they feel appreciated by their superiors.

Given the fact that some women must deal with increased opposition from men at work, they face a lot of criticism. It has been observed that women tend to take criticism more personally in comparison with men. Therefore, Dickson teaches women how to change their perspective on criticism, how to manage it, and how to properly use it. In another chapter, Dickson provides strategies on how to efficiently criticize others.

The book is not limited to addressing some of the issues that women consider important at work. Instead Dickson focuses on the entire context of the situation and on the factors that cause these problems. In the writer's opinion, such situations are determined by the differences between genders, discrimination at work, and gender inequality. In different chapter, the writer addresses the more visible aspects regarding genders at work, but also the less visible ones.

Some of the visible aspects are represented by pay differences and by discrimination. Although pay differences between men and women for similar jobs have been reduced, these differences represent causes of frustration for many women. Dickson

provides the explanations of several specialists regarding these differences. Some of these explanations are accepted by women, while others are considered unacceptable.

The issue of discrimination is another important aspect addressed by Dickson. The importance of this issue relies on the fact that some women are not aware of the fact they are being discriminated at work, because they associate such behavior with others. Therefore, Dickson helps women identify discrimination at work and explains the behavior that determines it.

In addition to this, Dickson discusses the culture at work that the writer has observed in most companies she has worked. Based on her experience, Dickson has developed different work culture models. This is intended to help women to identify the type of organizational culture their company has developed. Based on the characteristics of these cultures, women can analyze and understand the environment they work in and understand the behaviors of their coworkers. This helps them improve their relationships at work, and improve their efficiency and productivity.

The book addresses women professionals in most fields, but it also provides useful information for most women that can be used in different areas of their lives. The book can also be successfully used by psychologists and human resources professionals that work with such issues. The writing style is coherent and easy to follow and to understand by readers. The book provides strong explanations for some of the most important aspects that women have reported in the case of their professional situation. The importance of this book relies on the fact that the situations discussed in it reflect the writer's experience. In addition to this, the writer does not limit to providing theoretical

explanations to these situations, but Dickson also provides useful exercises that readers can practice in order to improve their problems.

Women who worry too much: how to stop worry and anxiety from ruining relationships, work and fun

Women are traditionally known for worrying excessively – or at least more than their male counterparts. Women have conventionally dealt with issues within the household and they were subjected to criticism, judgment and rule of men. In such a context, the emancipating women of today continue to encounter difficulties in making a decision, in creating objectives and in attaining them. And the reason for this is often constituted by the fact that women worry and fail to stick to a plan for fear they have not made the right decision. Women as such doubt themselves excessively and this behavior ruins their relationships in both personal and professional contexts. Holly Hazlett-Stevens comes to solve this problem in her *Women who worry too much: how to stop worry and anxiety from ruining relationships, work and fun*.

The book commences by first explaining the reasons as to why women are more anxious and worry more than men, to then move on to explaining the nature of worry and anxiety. It then continues by providing some specific strategies in the management of worry and anxiety.

Holly Hazlett-Stevens states that the actual reasons for which women worry more than men have yet to be fully analyzed, identified and agreed upon. She does nevertheless emphasize that the phenomenon is real and that women are twice more likely than men to develop an anxiety disorder. The more common element which generates anxiety and which is recurrent for most women experiencing anxiety refers to the personal

predisposition to experience negative feelings – otherwise known as negative affectivity. On its own, negative affectivity does not create anxiety and anxiety attacks, but when the individual already experiencing negative affectivity encounters situations in life in which they perceive danger or other negative emotions and outcomes, anxiety and worry intensify and come to define the life of the individual.

Despite the fact that it is accepted that women are more anxious than men, it is yet uncertain as to what precisely generates the differences. Holly Hazlett-Stevens argues that there are three categories of reasons: differences in the raising manner of boys and girls, the natural tendency of women to experience some emotions at a higher intensity when compared to men's feelings and the biological differences in the means in which genders respond to stress and pressure.

As young children, boys are perceived as being more resilient and capable than girls, and they are such encouraged to overcome the challenges they face and raise above them. When young girls however experience challenges, their problems are indulged by the parents. Then, there is also the biological predisposition of women to experience anxiety and fear to a degree higher than that of men.

In the aftermath of explaining the features and reasons of anxiety and fear, Holly Hazlett-Stevens moves on to the provision of some specific recommendations as to how women could go about in dealing with their emotions of fear and nervousness. These refer to the following:

- The identification of the elements which cause the anxiety in the first place
- The processing of the worrying phenomenon and the identification of its triggers and manifestation

- The need to break old habits which create anxiety, stress and discomfort
- The contextualization of the fears, referring specifically to the creation of perspective for the anxious thoughts. This strategy allows the individual to often recognize that the need for worry is limited, sometimes even inexistent
- Facing the fears, recognizing them and stopping to avoid them as this approach would only deepen them. At this stage, it is crucial to go outside one's comfort zone.
- Learning to relax and applying the relaxation techniques in more circumstances in which it is necessary to relax both the mind and body, either simultaneously or not.

Doctor Holly Hazlett-Stevens is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nevada in Reno, working in the Department of Psychology in the program of Clinical Psychology (Website of the University of Nevada). She is specialized in anxiety and stress related disorders, her background increasing the relevance of the book on the representatives of the female gender who worry too much. Also, the background of the author enhances the reliability of the data and the relevance of the book within the culture of self-help items.

Healing Your Emotional Self, A Powerful Program to Help You Raise Your Self-Esteem, Quiet Your Inner Critic and Overcome Your Shame

The selection of this book was long from being incidental and Beverly Engel's work has been chosen as it relates personally and directly to the women in Turkey. Engel deals with issues pertaining to women who have suffered abuses either as children or as adults, and who as such suffer from low self-esteem. These situations – sadly enough – constantly materialize in Turkey, where an estimated 90 per cent of the women suffer some form of abuse from their husbands or boyfriends. In such a context then, the self-esteem of the Turkish women is often decreased and they are expected to read books on how to improve their self-esteem in order to improve their perceptions and their lives.

Beverly Engle is the author of eighteen self-help books and the success of her works is constructed on two specific elements, both linked to her professional expertise. On the one hand, Engle is a professional in family therapy and a psychotherapist, meaning as such that the advice she offers in her self-help books is constructed on years of study and academically validated insights. On the other hand, throughout her career, Engle has specialized in issues related to women primarily, such as the sexual abuses to which they have been subjected and their impacts upon the development of the females, the relationships they develop along their lives, their sexuality and a wide array of other women related issues.

In *Healing Your Emotional Self...*, Engel deals with a common theme of abuse in childhood and the impacts it generates upon the future adult. Specifically, the book addresses the adults which have been abused or neglected as children and strives to help them overcome the abuse to which they had been subjected in the past. The scope, as the

very title mentions, is that of improving the self-image of the readers, their trust in themselves, and generally, their self-esteem levels.

The central technique in Engel's book is based on the mirror technique, or the mirror therapy, which basically argues that the people perceive themselves through the eyes of others. In other words, the people use other individuals as mirrors to identify who they really are. In early childhood, the mirrors of the children are the parents and the means in which the parents describe and see the child are also the means in which the child sees themselves. And this mirror defines the future adult. For instance, if a parent smothers the child, they will grow to be highly dependent on the parent and will tend to believe that they cannot succeed in life without the support of their parents. If on the other hand, the parents are perfectionist and highly demanding, the child would come to think that they are not good enough.

Based on the analysis of the types of parents and the impact of parenting on the self-esteem of children, Beverly Engel has devised six parenting types and the mirrors they create for children. They are presented below:

- Parenting style of neglecting the children, rejecting them or even abandoning them creates the mirrors of "I am unlovable" and "I am worthless." In other words, neglected, rejected or abandoned children will come to believe that they are unworthy and not lovable.
- Parents who overprotect their children and smother them will create the mirror of "I am nothing without my parent." These children will require the constant assistance of the parents and will be unable to achieve independence and personal, individual success.

- Parents who exercise over-control or even tyranny upon the children will create the “I am powerless” mirror. The children of such parents would reveal a constant feeling of being helpless and incapable of achieving their own objectives.
- A parenting style based on constant criticism and perfectionism creates the mirrors of “I am bad”, “I am unacceptable” or “I am not good enough.” These children will constantly feel worthless and nothing they will ever do will feel good enough as they were raised in the spirit of over-criticism.
- Finally, the parents who were narcissistic and self-absorbed revealed only a different form of neglect, in which the parent came first and the child second. The mirror created in this stance was that of “I do not matter”, which will come to impact the adult by making him believe that their opinions do not matter; that their feelings do not matter; that they do not matter.

The parenting style creates immediate impacts on the self-esteem and gives birth to the inner critic, or the voice judging what the individual has said, done and so on. The inner critic has a different strength based on the parenting style. A more aggressive and condemning style, in which the child was criticized excessively, will make the adult face the inner critic on continuous bases. A more relaxed and encouraging style will however mean that the adult’s inner critic is only appearing rarely. A strong inner critic, combined with shame and perfectionism leads to low levels of self-esteem.

Engel’s book is interactive in the means that it creates and presents several questions by which the reader can identify whether they had been abused as children and understand the nature of their abuse. The more common forms of neglect refer to the following:

- The parents did not respond to the needs of the infant or toddlers; they left them in their cribs and did not change their diapers
- The parents did not feed the children or fed them inappropriately based on their nutritional and nourishment needs (does not apply to impoverished parents)
- The parents forced the children to feed themselves before they were able to do so
- The parents did not provide the children with adequate clothing, such as thick clothes in winter
- The parents did not bathe the child regularly and/ or did not wash their clothes
- The parents did not provide physical care in the form of medical and dental assistance
- The parents did not provide emotional support, such as hugs or encouragement when the child was upset
- The parents often left the child for weeks in the care of others
- The parents left the children alone with an irresponsible caretaker
- The parents – on more than one occasion – forgot to pick the child up from school and other locations
- The parents forced the children to live in unsafe, unsanitary and otherwise uninhabitable facilities
- The parents did not get out of bed to care for the needs of the children
- The parents forbade the children from leaving their room or the house for long periods of time
- The parents neglected the children as they were using drugs and alcohol (Engel, pp.34-35).

Aside from neglect, Engle also provides lists of other forms of abuse in order to allow the reader to identify with the specific form of abuse to which they were subjected, to understand it and to as such overcome it. As this endeavor is completed, the author presents the recommendations on how the readers can help-themselves overcome the abuse and enhance their sense of self worth. As mentioned before, emphasis is placed on the mirror therapy. It was used to help the individuals understand how the perceptions of others impact the perceptions of the selves, but also to improve the sense of worthiness and reduce the shame.

Another therapy is Robert Firestone's voice therapy. According to this, individuals are encouraged to voice the criticisms of their inner critic. The verbalization of the negative thoughts helps the individuals assess them, realize them and counter-argue them with logic. This technique has been proven to gradually diminish the sense of self-criticism and has reduced the power of the inner critic.

All the forms of abuse presented in *Healing Your Emotional Self...* come to create individuals with low self-esteem levels, who are prone to depression and even suicidal thoughts. And the numbers of people who, as children, have been subjected to one form of abuse or another, is generally higher than believed – argues Engel. Such a statement casts a shadow of doubt upon the book, which aside from this, appears valid and scientifically constructed. But the belief that many people were abused as children and do not know about it reveals a commercial construction stimulating people – without any apparent problems – to purchase the book, and identify a problem to which they would relate. In the absence of specialized help and guidance, the book could lead readers to believe that they have a severe problem, when this is not the case. Additionally, the

readers would embark in the implementation of a long process of recovery from a problem which might not even exist. At their personal levels then, more troubles could be created as time and other resources would be consumed, as the parents would be accused and as frictions within families would be incurred. In such a context then, it is advisable to read and apply the teachings of *Healing Your Emotional Self*...only after having been advised to do so by a professional.

Healing Your Emotional Self, A Powerful Program to Help You Raise Your Self-Esteem, Quiet Your Inner Critic and Overcome Your Shame is generically a book worth reading by people who have suffered some form of abuse as children and would now require assistance in overcoming the trauma still impacting their lives. But aside from the victims, the book is also a useful piece of reading for the aggressors by helping them understand the consequences of their actions. Overall, *Healing Your Emotional Self*...is a constructive approach to self-help as it treats a real and important problem faced by women across the globe – and especially in Turkey – and it relies on scientific data and academically proven techniques.

Appendix B

Thematic Analysis Frequencies

	FREQUENCY	% SHOWN	% PROCESSED	% TOTAL	NB CASES	% CASES
BELIEF	109	5.5%	1.1%	0.4%	20	95.2%
SPIRITUAL	109	5.5%	1.1%	0.4%	14	66.7%
POWER	107	5.4%	1.1%	0.4%	18	85.7%
ORGANIZATION	101	5.1%	1.1%	0.4%	9	42.9%
ACHIEVEMENT	98	4.9%	1.0%	0.4%	18	85.7%
ATTRACT*	91	4.6%	0.9%	0.4%	7	33.3%
ACTION	81	4.1%	0.8%	0.3%	16	76.2%
RULE	79	4.0%	0.8%	0.3%	10	47.6%
EMOTION	75	3.8%	0.8%	0.3%	13	61.9%
PROBLEM	73	3.7%	0.8%	0.3%	15	71.4%
CONSCIOUSNESS	67	3.4%	0.7%	0.3%	14	66.7%
ABILITY	62	3.1%	0.6%	0.2%	14	66.7%
AUTHENTICITY	54	2.7%	0.6%	0.2%	7	33.3%
LEADER	51	2.6%	0.5%	0.2%	3	14.3%
CHOOSE	46	2.3%	0.5%	0.2%	16	76.2%
RELATIONSHIPS	45	2.3%	0.5%	0.2%	13	61.9%
NATUR*	37	1.9%	0.4%	0.1%	11	52.4%
EXPERIENCE	35	1.8%	0.4%	0.1%	14	66.7%
STRATEGY	34	1.7%	0.4%	0.1%	9	42.9%
VISUALIZATION	34	1.7%	0.4%	0.1%	8	38.1%
KNOWLEDGE	33	1.7%	0.3%	0.1%	13	61.9%
CONNECTEDNESS	33	1.7%	0.3%	0.1%	8	38.1%
MEDITATION	30	1.5%	0.3%	0.1%	6	28.6%
POSITIVE	28	1.4%	0.3%	0.1%	7	33.3%
PRESENT	26	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%	11	52.4%
PROSPERITY	26	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%	7	33.3%
FEAR	26	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%	6	28.6%
DECISION	25	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%	7	33.3%
UNIVERS*	24	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%	6	28.6%
LOVE	22	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	10	47.6%
HEAL	22	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	4	19.0%
OPPORTUNITY	19	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%	10	47.6%
COURAGE	19	1.0%	0.2%	0.1%	7	33.3%
PURPOSE	17	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	8	38.1%
TOOL	17	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	4	19.0%
RESPONSIBILITY	16	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	6	28.6%
COMPLEXITY_OF_LIFE	15	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	6	28.6%
MACHINE	14	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	3	14.3%
FUTURE	13	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	6	28.6%
SUBCONSCIOUS_MIND	13	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	5	23.8%
HARD_WORK	13	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	4	19.0%
VISION	11	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	6	28.6%
SCIENCE	11	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	6	28.6%
EGO	11	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	4	19.0%
NEGATIVE	10	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	7	33.3%

TRANSFORM	10	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
EFFECTIVE	9	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	4	19.0%
IDENTITY	8	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
PATTERN	8	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
STRESS	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	6	28.6%
HAPPINESS	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
FREEDOM	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
COMMITMENT	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	4	19.0%
ESSENCE	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	4	19.0%
CONCENTRATION	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	3	14.3%
HEALTH	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	3	14.3%
CREATIVITY	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	3	14.3%
HAPPY	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	3	14.3%
GUILT	7	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	2	9.5%
MAGIC	6	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	5	23.8%
STATE_OF_MIND	3	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3	14.3%
MAKE_SENSE	3	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3	14.3%

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

- a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.
- b) Medium. I sometimes use self-help techniques to deal with personal and professional issues, but they only represent a complementary technique to other coping mechanisms I generally employ.
- c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Give your own answer: _____

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

- a) Advice from a friend or a family member
- b) Advice from a specialist, such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist
- c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer: _____

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

- a) Self-help books

- b) Yoga and other forms of physical exercise
- c) Self-help groups
- d) Self-help cassettes, videos, DVD and other such materials
- e) Spirituality

Give your own answer: _____

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help materials. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you? Please explain what makes this theme of greater importance to you.

- a) The love for the self
- b) The rejection of external authority
- c) The belief that all beings are equal
- d) The power of thought
- e) The need for power
- f) Reflection on the self
- g) The personal legend
- h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity
- i) Expert systems
- j) Emphasis on the present
- k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Give your own answer: _____

Question 5: Self-help presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

- a) The daily stress and pressures
- b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman
- c) The overcoming of abuse
- d) General self development
- e) Communication
- f) Professional advancement

Give your own answer: _____

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

Give your own answer: _____

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

Give your own answer: _____

a) Mine, 26 years old, worker in the family business

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

b) Medium. I sometimes use self-help techniques to deal with personal and professional issues, but they only represent a complementary technique to other coping mechanisms I generally employ.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“You could say that I just have an innate desire to be better; to communicate better, to be liked by people. Yes, I have a desire to be liked by people and this is why I turn to self-help.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help materials. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

a) The love for the self

c) The belief that all beings are equal

e) The need for power

f) Reflection on the self

g) The personal legend

Question 5: Self-help presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“Well, I suppose that I learned to accept myself; to identify who I am and to be OK with it. I learned that my worst enemy is not an outsider, but that I am my worst enemy. So I try to always make peace with myself and the rest will follow. I no longer try as hard to be liked by others.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

d) General self development

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“As a matter of fact, I did notice improvements. I feel better about myself and this impacts my entire life. I am more confident, less judgmental myself and feel less pressure. I used to create the pressure. I am happier now!”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I am a rather needy person. This is probably my most powerful limitation as I constantly seek to be approved and liked. And when I see signs of people not liking me or disagreeing with me, I tend to feel insecure. But recently, when such a situation occurred, and I was publicly contradicted, I responded in a polite manner and kept my cool. And I told myself it’s Ok for not everyone to like me.

Without my improved opinion of myself, I would have probably obsessed about the incident and it would have tormented me for at least a week, if not more.”

b) Asli, 30 years old, worker in the family business

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

Give your own answer:

“Nothing so far.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

e) Spirituality

Give your own answer:

“I seldom resort to self-help, but when I do, I appeal to spirituality. Prayer is the most useful means of getting in touch with your self and finding strength to overcome your problems.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

i) Expert systems

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“Hmm... what I learned. I cant’ say I learned all that much. Actually, I only reinforced my beliefs that I need to trust myself. There are no expert systems and

perfect solutions to your problems in books and in other self-help materials. You just have to find the solutions within yourself and apply them to the specific context of your problem.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

d) General self development

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“No, as a matter of fact, I did not witness any impact on my life whatsoever.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from the self-help culture.

“I did not apply teachings from self-help to any situation.”

c) Tugce, 34 years old, worker in the family business

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

Give your own answer:

“Nothing so far.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

e) Spirituality

Give your own answer:

“I generally do not use self-help materials, but when in times of need, I turn to religion and spirituality for comfort and guidance. I do not however perceive these as self-help, but as tradition and the natural way.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

d) The power of thought

e) The need for power

f) Reflection on the self

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“Just to believe in myself more; to try hard, to work hard and to give it my best shot. But this I already knew, so I suppose I did not actually learn anything new from self-help.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

d) General self development

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“No, I did not witness any major change in my life. I am still the same person, with the same values and the same commitment to my responsibilities and daily obligations.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I don’t recall ever trying to implement teachings from self-help”

d) Ece, 35 years old, financial specialist

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“I work in the financial sector, put in long hours and have to work twice as hard as a man in order to be recognized as valuable. This means that within the limited time and financial resources, I have to be intellectually capable and emotionally available. I have little time to invest in myself, but I do need to remain strong and capable in order to continue to perform at my job. To attain this, I sometimes resort to self-help.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Give your own answer:

“I usually read self-help books which deal with both technical issues that help me develop professionally, but both with more intimate issues which help me develop as a person and as a woman. I specifically choose books because they are easy to come by, cheap solutions and I can read them while I commute to and from work.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

c) The belief that all beings are equal

e) The need for power

f) Reflection on the self

g) The personal legend

i) Expert systems

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“I don’t really know if I learned any lessons. I suppose I learned that I also need to relax and find my inner balance in order to succeed at my profession.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

d) General self development

e) Communication

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“No, I can’t actually say that I witnessed important changes in my life – for the good or the bad. The self-help materials didn’t cause any bad or good. No, I can’t say they changed my life in any way.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“As many young women, I live on rented spaces. I no longer live with my family and I do yet afford to buy my own house. So the money is tight. Well, it was. Now it’s a bit better, because last year, after improving my self confidence, I firmly asked my boss for a raise, and I received one of 10 per cent. The fact that I had just successfully completed a difficult project also helped. But this was an isolated situation and did not get the courage to ask for other rewards again.”

e) Burcu, 27 years old, information technology worker

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

b) Medium. I sometimes use self-help techniques to deal with personal and professional issues, but they only represent a complementary technique to other coping mechanisms I generally employ.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“I selected the variant of personal rationale, as the decision to turn to self-help was my own, rather than influenced by a peer or a professional. Nonetheless, I came to the conclusion after the observation of the trends within the IT industry. Here, everybody fights to get ahead or even to remain on course. And if I wanted to succeed in this rapidly changing industry, I had to keep up with its rapid pace of development.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

b) Yoga and other forms of physical exercise

Give your own answer:

“I use yoga, fitness and jogging as means of relieving stress and pressure. But aside from these, I read articles on self-help and technical information in the specialized journals and magazines in order to keep up. I know that self-help books are the more common forms of self-help, but within the IT industry, they do not apply as by the time a book gets printed, the information in it is already outdated.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

c) The belief that all beings are equal

i) Expert systems

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“I basically learned that you cannot advance in the workplace only through technical knowledge, but that you also need people skills as well. You do not get people skills from self-help, but they don’t hurt either.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

d) General self development

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“I wouldn’t say that that my life changed in any way after reading self-help articles or taking yoga classes. I might have become more self centric, but I still have a long way to go to attain my objectives.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“About two years ago, I was transferred from my project to a new project, which required maintenance, rather than actual software development. I did not like the position as I believed it would slow my progress down and would prevent me

from remaining up to date on the IT developments. Six months into this project, I threatened by boss that I was going to quit, so he promoted me to a development position. I felt so relieved. I think it was confidence which convinced him. I don't know what I would have done had he not given in to my plea.”

f) Eray, 28 years old, newspaper columnist

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“Being a newspaper columnist, your number one priority is that of people reading and appreciating your pieces. At the university you are taught on how to write correctly and how to present facts accurately and objectively. But this does not always appeal to the reader and the writer has to find her own style and her own means of understanding and communicating with her audience. It was this desire that led me to self-help materials. Additionally, I am rather shy and resistant to change and communication within my own social circle and I believed that the self-help practices could also improve this aspect of my life.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Give your own answer:

“I often read self-help books which improve communication capabilities, but I also read articles in the specialized media. I do this as I need to understand my profession from a critical standpoint and to understand the readers and writers at a deeper level.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

- a) The love for the self*
- b) The rejection of external authority*
- d) The power of thought*
- f) Reflection on the self*
- g) The personal legend*
- h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity*
- k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation*

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“Wow! Where do I begin? I learned to trust myself more and to speak up for myself. I learned that I am valuable and that I need to invest in myself first.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

- d) General self development*
- e) Communication*
- f) Professional advancement*

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“Result... I found myself. As I am, not as anyone else would want me to be. And I found the courage to stand up for my self. So yes, my life has significantly improved. ”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I remember when the aviary flew first emerged and the hysteria it created;the pandemic. But I did some research on my own and found that it was not a dramatic situation, but a normal one in which the flu viruses naturally evolve every some decades. I insisted on writing a piece to ease the minds of the readers and my persistence paid off.”

g) Ozge, 33 years old, academic

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

b) Advice from a specialist, such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist

Give your own answer:

“I grew up in a traditional, patriarchal family as the youngest girl in a family of six, with one older sister and four older brothers. I was continually reminded of

how inferior I was and how unworthy. And as if this emotional abuse was not enough, when I was thirteen, I was sexually abused by one of my older brothers. With the support of women's aid organizations, I managed to escape from that environment, educate myself and create a better life for myself. Today, I continue to go to counseling sessions in order to repair the damage to my emotional state. My psychiatrist has recommended some materials on how to understand, accept and overcome the abuse."

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

c) Self-help groups

Give your own answer:

"I read the books my therapist suggests, and I also read other books I found to be of relevance in helping me overcome my personal issues – abuse. And they help, they do. But the real progress is made during group meetings, where you get to share your experience, to understand it at a different level, to understand the experiences of others and to start to recover."

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

a) The love for the self

c) The belief that all beings are equal

f) Reflection on the self

g) The personal legend

h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity

i) Expert systems

j) Emphasis on the present

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“I am not done learning yet. But I am learning how to let go of the past; how not to blame myself for what happened; how to try and live my life as normally as possible.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

c) The overcoming of abuse

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“Yes, I did see important results. I am less introverted and I try to lead a normal life. I do not know if that is possible, but self-help gave me the strength to at least try. I owe myself that.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help..

“I was teaching one of my classes at the university and I realized that one of my students had gradually changed from a happy and extrovert person into one

depressed, pessimistic, silent and introvert. I recognized the signs of abuse and I was able to help her admit to the problem. I then guided her to counselors that could better help. My own abuse and the ability to recognize it through self-help processes led me to end it for another person. And that is huge!”

h) Naz, 25 years old, styling assistant for a fashion magazine

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“In my job, I have to be continually around people and impress them. When you work with numerous individuals, the impression you make on them is essential to the future of the business collaborations and the success of the professional endeavors. The self-help practices promised to improve my self image and as such the image I projected for other people.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Give your own answer:

“Books would definitely be my first choice as they contain vast information and practical advice, being also accessible. Whenever I go on turn or am in a break or

on the road, I read the books to improve myself. But aside from books, I also read articles in the specialized media on how to improve as a stylist.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

- a) The love for the self*
- b) The rejection of external authority*
- d) The power of thought*
- g) The personal legend*
- h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity*
- i) Expert systems*
- k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation*

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“Self-help aided me to find myself and to define myself not by social standards and expectations, but by who I am inside. It gave me courage to stand up for myself. It motivates me to go forward and aim higher – both personally and professionally.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

- e) Communication*
- f) Professional advancement*

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“Well, I do feel more empowered. I trust myself more. I take more changes and I live more experiences. I live life to a fuller extent. So yes, I would say that self-help had a positive impact on my life.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I was assisting with a photo shoot for a prestigious magazine in Turkey, when the primary model in the shoot appeared to work with considerable bruising on her face. Despite the make-up artists’ efforts, the swelling could not be hidden. So I proposed we shot a series of pictures with women engaging in violent actions. *Back to basics* we called it and it features women in small leotard suits, near caves and with messy hairs and make-ups - primitive. It was welcomed with increased success and I was able to support the idea in front of my bosses as I had more confidence in myself. Sadly enough however, I did not reap any benefits from my idea, but I am hoping it will pay off in the future.”

i) Damla, 30 years old, fashion designer

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Give your own answer:

“The fashion industry is crazy. You always run from a presentation to the other, you interact with bad-tempered models; face difficult purveyors and demanding customers. The stress and pressure got to me so badly that I needed to do something about it or risk losing my sanity and patience. This is where self-help materials intervened.”

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Give your own answer:

“I love self-help books, so yes, that would be my main answer. They are so easy to buy and read, and also some information in them is applicable and with good results. But I also often sneak a peak at articles in the media to see what new information is made available to the public.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

a) The love for the self

b) The rejection of external authority

d) The power of thought

e) The need for power

g) The personal legend

h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“I learned that I need to be more determined and more involved!”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

d) General self development

e) Communication

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“I gained more control over my life. I took more control and I do not wait for others to solve my problems or to dictate my life. It is up to me now!”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I remember a campaign for one of my early shows. It was created by two marketing specialists from abroad. They knew their marketing alright, but had no

clue as to how to apply it for women's fashion, and in Turkey too. So, despite their initial reticence, I became involved and set the direction for the campaign.

Since then, I always intervene in the campaigns which promote my designs.”

j) Cigdem, 29 years old, academic

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

b) Medium. I sometimes use self-help techniques to deal with personal and professional issues, but they only represent a complementary technique to other coping mechanisms I generally employ.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

b) Advice from a specialist, such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist

Give your own answer:

“I grew up as the single daughter in a family of five children. I was never abused, but I did feel inferior to my brothers. To some extent, this is the trauma of my life. I now have to deal with it”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

c) Self-help groups

Give your own answer:

“Books are the more common elements I use, but I also use therapy and groups, as complementary in my recovery process.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

- b) The rejection of external authority
- c) The belief that all beings are equal
- e) The need for power
- j) Emphasis on the present

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“Forgive others and myself. Accept others and myself. Move on; though they are more easily said than done.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

- b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman*
- c) The overcoming of abuse*

Give your own answer:

“I also selected the abuse, but I have to state that I am interested in the overcoming of emotional abuse, as I perceived my childhood; however, I was never physically abused.”

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“Well, I do feel more confident. I trust myself more and I begin to put the inferiority complex behind me. It does not always work, but sometimes it does.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I was working as the assistant to a male professor at a different university, alongside with other assistants, all men. Where my male colleagues were asked to help with the research and would participate in classes, I would be asked to bring the coffee and to run errands for the professor. I finally built up the courage to confront him, but that did not lead anywhere. So I applied for a new job at a different university and I got it. Now I myself am on the way to becoming a university professor.”

k) Banu, 34 years old, self-employed yoga instructor (former media specialist)

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

b) Advice from a specialist, such as a psychologist or a psychiatrist

Give your own answer:

“During my years as a university student, I fell in love with a boy. A bad boy. I would have followed him to the end of the world. But I did not want to quit school for him and be a stay at home wife. He tried to beat me into accepting this, but I continued to refuse. After several broken ribs and countless bruises, I sought

specialized assistance and ended the relationship. He was not punished in any way, but I was lucky that he lost interest in me. I know stories of women who weren't as lucky as I was."

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

- a) *Self-help books*
- b) *Yoga and other forms of physical exercise*
- c) *Self-help groups*

Give your own answer:

"I found my comfort in yoga and in teaching others how to use yoga to find their inner balance. But I also read self-help books and go to meetings."

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

- a) *The love for the self*
- b) *The rejection of external authority*
- c) *The belief that all beings are equal*
- g) *The personal legend*
- i) *Expert systems*
- k) *The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation*

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“I learned that you cannot change the past. But that the present and the future lay in your power; that there is no sense in regretting. That there are more people out there suffering from mistreatment and that they need help.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

c) The overcoming of abuse

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“I totally changed my life, so yes, major impacts. I turned my sorrow into inspiration to help others.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“Wow, there are so many. I don’t know if one is more important than the other. It is simply more than rewarding to see how yoga helps an individual balance their responsibilities, but also deal with the traumas of the past. Overcoming difficulties and helping others face and conquer their demons – this is my most successful experience.”

l) Ebru, 28 years old, information technology worker

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“Working in an industry like mine – IT that is – you see people come and go. Change is imperative and omnipresent. And in order to succeed, you have to continually change and improve yourself.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

b) Yoga and other forms of physical exercise

Give your own answer:

“Physical exercise is essential to preserving my mental stability, especially since I spend more than ten hours a day sitting at my office. But aside from exercising, I also read the articles in technical and self-help magazines.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

d) The power of thought

e) The need for power

f) Reflection on the self

g) The personal legend

i) Expert systems

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“Well, I did learn to push myself – which I always did – but to push myself in a more constructive manner; and without jeopardizing my mental and physical health.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

d) General self development

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“The yoga I take and the articles I read have yet to transform into professional gains. I did advance professionally throughout the past year or so, but this was the result of hard work and ambition, rather than self-help consumption.

Nevertheless, I cannot say that the yoga or the articles hurt.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“The company in which I work is highly bureaucratic, and it takes forever to get a decision or an idea implemented. I was feeling so frustrated with a technical process that I took matters into my own hands and organized a new administrative

process to improve the original one. And the effort paid off as it was recognized and I was promoted for my achievement. But it was not easy, as many people told me to give it up as I did not stand a real chance of succeeding. But my new formed help-yourself structure supported me in my endeavor, and ultimately, secured my success.”

m) Nihan, 31 years old, financial specialist

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

a) Extremely high. I often cope with problems and get strength and energy through self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

a) Advice from a friend or a family member

c) Personal rationale, such as personal problems or personal desires for improvement

Give your own answer:

“I look to self-help materials to improve my professional status, to learn how to better communicate with those around me, to learn how to negotiate, how to make myself heard and how to be happier in my daily life. And I need this support as the job I perform is highly demanding and as I require as much energy and morale as possible. The self-help materials are a good support in this sense.

I resorted to them in a combination of advice from my sister – who is a nurse and the self-help materials aided her in dealing with the stress of the trauma she

witnesses all day – but also as a personal realization that my job is too stressful to not require additional management.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

a) Self-help books

Give your own answer:

“I read the books of self-development and how to become a better professional, but I also read the articles in various magazines which detail topics which interest me.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

b) The rejection of external authority

d) The power of thought

e) The need for power

f) Reflection on the self

g) The personal legend

i) Expert systems

k) The reconstruction of the individual agency through transformation

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“I learned to believe in myself. To realize that with hard work, dedication, integrity and by preserving my values, I can do anything.”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

d) General self development

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“I believe self-help books and articles give you the power to believe in yourself. I already had that power, just didn’t know it. All of us have the power and self-help might help up reach it. Other than that however, I do not strongly support self-help as a source of a better life. It is all within us.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“At the beginning of the year, the employees at the human resources department mistakenly handed me a salary check that was not mine – it was that of male co-worker, which had been with the firm for approximately the same period as I had been and was doing a similar position. But his salary was twice as high as mine. I knew that because I was a woman I was not appreciated at my full professional level, but half!? I had already been reading self-help books and was feeling more confident than usually, so I made an appointment with my manager and supported

my value within the firm. He gave me a 10 per cent increase in my salary. I felt so proud and I would have never done it without my support from self-help!”

n) Deniz, 31 years old, advertiser

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

Give your own answer:

“None of the above variants led me to consume self-help. I seldom do so. But when I do, I do it for the fun of the experience. We owe it to ourselves to try anything at least once, right?”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

e) Spirituality

Give your own answer:

“As I said, I only sometimes consume self-help and when I do this it is out of fun or the desire to live the new experience. On daily basis, I use spirituality in order to find my inner balance. But I do not perceive my spirituality as a self-help procedure.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

c) The belief that all beings are equal

f) Reflection on the self

i) Expert systems

j) Emphasis on the present

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help-materials.

“That new things await me at every corner;that I need to be spontaneous and live life to the fullest;that I have to remain true to myself. But then again, I already knew these things”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

d) General self development

e) Communication

f) Professional advancement

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“No, self-help did reinforce some of the values in which I already believed. But I could not say that it generated any important impacts on my life.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I don’t think that I ever tried to apply the teachings of self-help onto a situation to observe its outcome.”

o) Aybuke, 33 years old, fashion designer.

Question 1: How would you describe your levels of consumption of self-help products and services in your professional and personal life?

c) Low, I seldom use self-help techniques.

Question 2: What drove you to commence your usage of self-help commodities?

Give your own answer:

“I next to never use self-help, but when I do, it is out of curiosity. I do not trust the phenomenon nor believe that it can create palpable impacts, but it is interesting to try to at least experience it. I least I can say that I tried it and it never worked. And I have my own experience to attest for it.”

Question 3: To what types of self-help commodities do you generally resort?

e) Spirituality

Give your own answer:

“Yes, it is spirituality I use to help me cope with my internal problems and issues. But this spirituality is a cultural and essential part of life and it has nothing to do with the kitsch one calls self-help. This self-help-culture is nothing but an attempt to fool the ill minded into believing in personal miracles. Spirituality on the other hand is divine and the sole solution to worldly problems.”

Question 4: There are numerous recurrent themes in self-help. Which of these themes (pointed out below) best speak to you?

f) Reflection on the self

h) Authenticity and the preservation of the self identity

j) Emphasis on the present

Question 5: The self-help phenomenon presents the individual with a wide array of lessons. Please indicate which most important lessons you learnt from the self-help materials.

“Lessons? Well, I didn’t actually learn any lessons. Only to not trust empty words and the opinions of others. I am never again relying on that!”

Question 6: When you read self-help books or engage in other types of self-help activities, what issues do you try to address?

a) The daily stress and pressures

b) The perceived inferiority of women/ the need to become an empowered woman

c) The overcoming of abuse

Question 7: What was the result of your consumption of self-help materials? Did you witness significant improvements in yourself, your personal and your professional life?

“Well, there was the outcome of my not receiving the raise I asked for. Other than that there were no other outcomes, as I did not again use self-help techniques. I am my own help.”

Question 8: Please tell us about one important experience which has resulted in either strongly positive or strongly negative results as an outcome of applying the teaching learnt from self-help.

“I was once on a train coming back home from a fashion presentation and I stumbled upon a magazine article on how women should be empowering

themselves. How we are more valuable than we give ourselves credit for and how we should demand to be respected and rewarded better. Motivated by this depiction of the modern day women, and went into my boss' office and asked for a raise, hoping that the success of the latest presentation would back me up. The boss looked at me in a surprised manner and told me that there were no funds allocated for raises. And that was that. I have never felt so humiliated and I would not have come to feel this way had it not been for the article. I am never again reading and applying those teachings. The only thing I rely upon is hard work."