

Love and Muslim Identity: Self-Actualization Analysis in *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated*

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Abstract

This study examines the novel written by Ayisha Malik, entitled Sofia Khan is Not Obligated which aims to explore the life journey of the main character, named Sofia in achieving the concept of self-actualization. The analysis focuses on Sofia's journey in fulfilling her love needs and the defending of her Muslim identity as a modern Muslim woman in London. The researcher uses Abraham Maslow's concept of self-actualization to explore Sofia's journey of love and Muslim identity. The research methodology used is a descriptive qualitative method through in-depth data analysis. The results of this study show that Sofia can be said to have achieved self-actualization, in her love journey she is able to consider according to her wishes, and her identity as a Muslim is also able to be maintained. In conclusion, through this concept we can take a picture that women are also able to make their own decisions and achieve the concept of self-actualization.

Keywords: *Self-actualization; Love; Identity*

A. Introduction

This analysis highlights Sofia's life journey to achieve the concept of self-actualization. Especially in Sofia's love journey and the defense of her Muslim identity as a modern Muslim woman. *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* by Ayisha Malik is a romantic comedy novel that tells the life of Sofia Khan, the main character who will be the focus of this analysis. Sofia is a thirty years old woman who is still happily working as a writer for a publishing company in London. She lives with her Pakistani immigrant family. As a mature woman, Sofia navigates the complexities of love, family expectations, and her Muslim identity. Her family expects Sofia to marry soon, which pushes Sofia to seek a successful love that matches her desires. In fact, Sofia never thought of looking for love or marriage, she still persevered with her own potential and did her business as a writer. Sofia is a very intelligent and professional writer (Claire, 2019). Her professionalism showed when

Sofia was asked by her company to write about Muslim dating in London, and she accepted. After that, her days are filled with researching love life in London as Sofia's love story unfolds. The next focus of analysis that is interesting to highlight is Sofia's Muslim identity. Sofia is able to balance her love journey with her Muslim identity, which she always maintains, even though she is the only one among her family members who wears a headscarf.

The most common concept of self-actualization is the one introduced by Abraham Maslow. As Maslow stated in the hierarchy of needs, self-actualization is the peak of psychological development when people are able to express something according to their will. Self-actualization refers to individuals who seek to increase their awareness of their skills and abilities, and also act to achieve desired goals and objectives (Kapur, 2019). According to Maslow in the theory of 'hierarchy of needs', the psychological aspect of self-actualization focuses on the needs of a person's life, including physiological needs, safety needs, love belonging needs, esteem needs, until finally reaching self-actualization. Sofia has met her first level of needs, which are physiological needs, she meets the needs of her body such as eating, drinking, sleeping, clothing, and others. The next level is safety needs, Sofia also fulfills her safety needs by having parents and many friends. Esteem needs are also reflected in Sofia's potential to become a writer. However, there is one level of need that Sofia misses in achieving the concept of self-actualization, that is love and belonging needs.

According to Maslow, love and belonging needs are related to human needs that require a sense of belonging and acceptance in social groups, one of which is in romantic relationships and marriage (Aini, 2022). The journey of finding love with the right man for Sofia does not always run smoothly, she also has to consider the wishes of parents who already want Sofia to get married soon. However, in her love journey, Sofia dares to reject a man who she thinks is uncomfortable for her. This is a barrier for Sofia to get married faster. In other words, Sofia is able to maintain comfort for herself, she is able to make her choices in finding love, even though there are expectations of parents for her to get married soon.

The second focus in the analysis of Sofia's love journey is the defense of Sofia's Muslim identity. In the midst of modern life in London and this widespread love journey is a challenge for Sofia. As a Muslim, Sofia must also consider and defend her faith in order to be maintained. According to Maslow, self-actualization can be achieved when humans are at their peak experience, which means that humans can be said to have achieved the perfection of their lives. More deeply, the perfection of life as the peak of self-actualization is when humans are able to have the height of value for the ultimate goal of their life, not just worldly affairs, so that spiritual perfection and religious values will be fulfilled (Annajih et al., 2023). Overall, Sofia's love journey is accompanied by her Islamic values, which she always tries to maintain. Sofia tries to find success in love by not compromising her faith as a Muslim. Through Sofia's story, an analysis can be drawn related to the concept of self-actualization, which focuses on fulfilling Sofia's love needs and not shaking her Muslim identity.

This study is an analysis of the concept of self-actualization in the novel *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* by Ayisha Malik. The focus is on analyzing the journey of the main character Sofia, in achieving love and belonging needs as well as the defense of her Muslim identity. In analyzing this novel, the author applies the concept of self-actualization introduced by Abraham Maslow.

Self-actualization was popularized by Maslow in the concept of 'hierarchy of needs' introduced in 1943. Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of physiological needs, safety

needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and also the last one is achieving self-actualization. Maslow (1943) stated that all humans are at least motivated to achieve certain needs to be able to achieve the concept of self-actualization. According to Maslow, self-actualization is the concept with the highest level of the hierarchy of needs in humans. In other words, self-actualization is the peak of psychological needs when people are able to express something to their will.

This analysis focuses on the process of achieving love and belonging needs in Sofia's life journey. Love and belonging needs are one of the levels of human needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs to achieve self-actualization. According to Maslow in (Williams, 2009) stated love and belonging needs are related to giving and receiving acceptance and affection. In addition, Maslow stated love and belonging needs are also related to human needs, one of which is romantic relationship and marriage (Aini, 2022). However, Sofia, who is already thirty years old, is the expectation of her family and people around her to get married soon, even though Sofia actually still enjoys and enjoys her writing work (Claire, 2018).

The second focus of discussion is Sofia's defense of her Muslim identity as a modern Muslim woman in London. As Maslow's concept of self-actualization can be linked in a Sufistic perspective, they state that a deeper psychological peak can be achieved when humans are at the highest value point in life, which is not only able to achieve world affairs, but also achieve religious values that must be fulfilled for eternal life after death (Annajih et al., 2023). This is the highest peak that should be in the concept of human self-actualization, especially for a Muslim. This is illustrated in Sofia, where she must balance her love story with her Muslim identity so that it does not fade with the times. As a Muslim, Sofia is supposed to maintain her Muslim identity to reach the peak of human psychology. One of the characteristics of peak experience is that there is a tendency to perfect one's personal identity or distinctiveness (Maslow, 1964)

B. Method

Creswell (2016:3) explains that research methods are research procedures that encompass steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The research method used in this research is a qualitative method. Qualitative method is a research method that focuses on in-depth observation. The reason for using this qualitative research method is that the researcher wants to obtain a deeper analytical knowledge of the concept of Self-actualization present in the characters of the novel *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated*. The researcher also uses a descriptive method. According to Sugiyono (2005: 21), the descriptive method is a method used to describe the results of research but is not used to make broader and more concrete conclusions. The collected data is not in the form of numbers, but it includes manuscript, notes, personal documents, memos, and other documents. Essentially, the qualitative approach in this research is to match the actual data with the applicable theory using descriptive methods. In the scope of qualitative data, it refers to data presented in verbal form rather than numerical form (Noeng Muhadjir: 1996). The

researcher obtains data based on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources refer to information obtained firsthand by the researcher. The researcher explores the novel *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated* as the primary data that can be observed for obtaining a deeper analysis. Secondary data, on the other hand, refers to information collected from existing sources, such as media analysis, literature review, websites, and the internet.

C. Findings and Discussion

The exploration of the achievement of self-actualization can be found in Sofia as the main character in the novel *Sofia Khan is Not Obligated*. Self-actualization, as proposed by Abraham Maslow in his hierarchy of needs, refers to understanding one's potential and personal abilities. In self-actualization, a person is able to create and do something according to his wishes. According to Maslow, self-actualization is the highest level of psychological development, which can be achieved after the fulfillment of basic needs, such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, and esteem needs. Sofia has fulfilled the first basic need, namely physiological needs, which refer to the basic needs of the human body that must be met to maintain survival and well-being. Sofia's physiological needs are met in the form of having shelter, food, water, air, clothing, and other primary needs. Sofia also fulfills her second level needs, which are safety needs, she has loving parents who always support whatever Sofia does, she also has a sister named Maria who is always a place to tell stories, and she has many close friends such as Hannah, Suj, Fozia, Daisy, and many more who are briefly mentioned in the novel. The next level of needs is esteem needs, which Sofia has also managed to fulfill, she has managed to become a great writer at a publishing company in London. This can be seen when Brammers, the boss of the company, praises Sofia in the following quote from the novel:

“Brammers opened up her hands towards me. ‘You’re energetic, Sofe. Always telling funny stories; everyone in the editorial meeting thinks you’d be great. And this blog shows you can write.’” (Malik, 2015, p. 26-27)

In the quote, it can be seen that Sofia is indeed recognized and accepted regarding her potential in becoming a writer. A writer has indeed become Sofia's passion and potential. Therefore, Sofia has achieved the concept of esteem needs in the concept of self-actualization.

In the concept of self-actualization by Maslow, there is one level that has not been fulfilled by Sofia, that is love and belonging needs. Sofia has indeed received enough love from her parents. However, as a woman who is already thirty years old, her parents want to see Sofia find her love soon and get married. In her love journey, Sofia also tries to maintain her Muslim faith in the midst of modern life in London, so that her faith does not waver in her love journey. Therefore, this analysis will explore Sofia's love journey and the defense of her Muslim identity.

1.1 Love and Belonging Needs

Throughout the story, there are three male characters who have been close to Sofia. First, Imran, a man who is considered a little rigid, his family is Islamic, and always does everything for Sofia. Second, Naim, a man who is funny, interesting, and rather flirtatious when approaching Sofia. Third, Conall, who is Sofia's next-door neighbor as well as her close friend who always supports Sofia. Initially, Sofia considers all of them as close friends. Until finally without realizing it, that Sofia has loved one of these men.

Initially, Sofia has an interest in Naim who she thinks is funny, they usually send messages to each other via cellphone. One day, Naim did not send a message to Sofia as usual, so she waited for news from Naim. However, suddenly Naim gave a message to Sofia with uncomfortable words, can be seen in the following quote:

From Naim: What
are you wearing?
WTF??

From Naim: Oh, shit, sorry, Sofe. Are you awake? Shall I call you?
Erm, helloooooo? Who the hell was he messaging? No, don't call me. Don't even think of calling me. ARGH! (Malik, 2015, p. 226)

The message from Naim made Sofia feel uncomfortable. Such questions are considered an invasion of privacy and impolite to ask directly. Sofia's response shows that she is an assertive woman when she doesn't like something. She shows a self-actualization attitude, where she can act according to what she wants, and in an instant her feelings towards Naim change. Sofia doesn't even want to exchange messages or get in touch with Naim anymore.

In the midst of Sofia's emotional journey, a nuanced exploration unfolds as she navigates relationships with Naim and Imran. The shedding light on her feelings towards these individuals and the complexities she faces in reconciling personal desires with societal expectations:

“Naim and I speak all the time, but words are just words. Imran spoke all kinds – constructed sentences that built something that resembled hope. I can't remember if I even really wanted to be with him, or if it was because that's what was expected.” (Malik, 2015, p. 137-138)

The quotation suggests Sofia's contemplation and uncertainty about her feelings towards Naim and Imran. The frequent communication with Naim is described as mere words without a clear implication of deeper emotional connection. On the other hand, Imran's words are portrayed as constructing sentences that build something resembling hope. Sofia expresses a sense of ambiguity regarding her relationship with Imran, questioning whether her desire to be with him is genuine or if it's influenced by societal

expectations. This introspection implies a conflict between her personal desires and external pressures, possibly reflecting a struggle with her love and belonging needs. The mention of ‘constructed sentences that built something that resembled hope’ indicates that Imran’s words might be creating an illusion of hope or fulfilling societal expectations rather than being a genuine expression of love. This ambiguity points towards a potential conflict between Sofia’s quest for self-actualization and the societal expectations imposed on her in the context of relationships. This quotation captures Sofia’s internal conflict between her own desires and societal expectations, highlighting the complexity of her emotional journey and suggesting a connection to both her self-actualization and love needs.

On the other hand, there is Imran, a man who has been close to Sofia for a long time and even knows her family. Imran is a man who intends to marry Sofia. However, there is one thing that Sofia always considers, when later they get married, Imran wants Sofia to live with his family, and Sofia doesn't want that.

“one auntie might’ve said, ‘I’m sorry that your potential husband wanted you to live with his family and a hole-in-the-wall.’

‘This is one of the many reasons I’ve turned my back on marriage,’ I said.”

(Malik, 2015, p. 6-8)

In this quote, it can be said that Sofia always considers anything that is not right for her. Her decision not to make a quick decision about marriage also reflects her strong self-understanding and ability to make life choices that suit her personal desires and goals. For Sofia, living in a house with her in-laws and sister-in-law is like a hole-in-the-wall, that means limited privacy, lack of independence, a different lifestyle and concerns about family expectations. Sofia’s family is very supportive of her marriage to anyone, including Imran. The marriage had to be what they wanted, based on mutual convenience. Sofia’s aunt is only worried about her fate in the future. From the quote, it is implied that Sofia is asked to rethink what she will do in the future.

In the nuanced exploration of Sofia’s emotional landscape, the following paragraph delves into her perceptions of love and marriage. Sofia’s reflections unveil a profound yearning for emotional connection and meaningful communication within the context of matrimony which dissects her belief that sharing thoughts is a fundamental aspect of marriage. Can be seen in the following quote:

“I always thought that’s why people got married – to tell them things. Well, most things, at least.”(Malik, 2015, p. 34)

In this quote, Sofia expresses a belief that one of the reasons people get married is to share their thoughts and experiences. The emphasis on the act of sharing suggests a fundamental human need for emotional connection, understanding, and communication within the context of a marital relationship. Sofia’s statement implies a deep desire for

emotional connection, which is a core aspect of love. Marriage, in her perception, becomes a platform for sharing intimate thoughts and feelings, fostering a sense of closeness and understanding. The idea that marriage is a vehicle for sharing ‘most things’ reflects the importance of open and meaningful communication in fulfilling love needs. Sofia seems to seek a relationship where there is a free exchange of thoughts and experiences, contributing to a strong emotional bond. Sofia’s belief hints at an expectation of intimacy within a marital relationship. This intimacy involves not only physical closeness but also the sharing of one’s inner world, reinforcing the idea that love, for her, is intertwined with emotional transparency. Overall, this quote suggests that Sofia’s concept of love involves a deep, emotional connection and a need for open communication, emphasizing the importance of these elements in her understanding of a fulfilling romantic relationship.

Until one day, Sofia’s father fell ill and had to be hospitalized intensively. During her father’s illness, Sofia felt indecisive and reconsidered her intention to get married, she was afraid of losing her father, while her parents already wanted to see Sofia get married soon. Finally, Sofia decided to accept Imran. Sofia was planning a wedding with Imran, but Imran still turned out to have a request that Sofia took into consideration. Friends around her began to support what Imran had said, but Sofia was not sure that it was the truth. Like the quote below:

‘But girls move in with the in-laws all the time,’ he said. ‘It’s normal.’ Normal? Whose normal? I suppose another reason to not marry someone is differing ideas on concept of normality. (Malik, 2015, p. 12-13)

In this excerpt, a friend of Sofia’s confirms about the woman who lives in her in-laws’ house. However, Sofia doesn’t agree with that. According to her, there will be many things that happen if a wife lives in the same house as her in-laws. Seeing from Sofia’s background, which is not very obedient to some religious teachings, moreover, the matter of ‘living with in-laws’ is not a suggestion that has been determined by religion, Sofia will certainly reject this. However, over time, Sofia and Imran’s closeness continued. After her father was discharged from the hospital, they started planning the wedding process. This can be seen in the following quote:

‘I think June is perfect time for wedding,’ said Imran’s dad, looking over at his wife and nodding. I felt like my throat was closing up. June? June?? That’s next month! First of all, I have to get thin, second of all, that’s next month. Mum and Dad sat there, nodding in agreement. I tried to catch Imran’s eye but he was too absorbed in setting dates to consult (hello?) the woman he’s meant to be marrying. Maria intervened. (Malik, 2015, p. 253)

The quote reflects the atmosphere of setting the wedding date. Sofia feels the time is too soon, and hints at her disapproval. However, Imran ignores her. This reflects the beginning of the tension in Sofia and Imran’s relationship, where Sofia feels pressured

and in a position she is not used to. After the completion of the meeting of the two families, Imran sent a message that was not pleasing to Sofia. This can be seen in the following quote:

“From Imran: I hope you cook like your mum.
When people have their love goggles on, they don’t believe a bad word you say. Sometimes it’d be nice for Imran to say I’m being an annoying cow, which would be completely acceptable as I can be an annoying cow a lot of the time.”
(Malik, 2015, p. 253)

Imran’s statement made Sofia feel offended. Even though they are not officially married, Sofia feels demanded by Imran’s attitude which states that Sofia should be able to cook like her mother. In fact, Sofia would be happier if Imran told the truth about Sofia, for example saying that Sofia was an annoying woman, the statement would be more accepted by Sofia than ‘I hope you cook like your mum’. The strain on Sofia and Imran’s relationship doesn’t stop there, it can be seen in the following quote:

“Imran’s mum insists on buying me a wedding dress.
Provido being that it’s her choice. Sigh.” (Malik, 2015, p. 255)

Sofia complained that she felt uncomfortable with Imran’s mother’s insistence on her wedding dress. Moreover, this was Sofia’s wedding, but was required to comply with Imran’s mother’s wishes. Sofia is used to freedom and doing whatever she wants. When she is brought together with Imran and all the traditions of her family, Sofia feels that it restricts her from expressing herself freely. Until finally, the peak of their tension arrived. When Sofia meets Imran, her future husband discusses that when she gets married, Sofia must change her name to Sofia Haque as Imran’s surname:

‘Imran,’ I said, putting down the menu, desperate for him to understand. ‘If it’s not the wedding date, it’s the outfit. If it’s not the outfit, it’s the choker, and if it’s not the choker, it’s my name. You’re telling me to change my name. ‘I don’t think we should do this,’ I said. (Malik, 2015, p. 283)

In the quote, Sofia shows her disapproval. Sofia reveals everything that she has been holding back during the wedding planning process. Sofia feels that every little thing has rules and demands from Imran’s family. Finally, Sofia decided to cancel their wedding. Imran looks disappointed. This is a decision that will have a big impact. However, Sofia dares to make her own decisions without consideration of her parents. The concept of self-actualization is increasingly reflected in Sofia. Sofia reflects self-understanding, because certainly only Sofia is the one who knows better what she feels and what is best for her. At least, Sofia dares to act for her own good.

Another male character, Conall, is Sofia’s neighbor. Conall is Sofia’s close friend,

but they have different religions, Conall is a non-Muslim man. However, they are very close, even more so than Sofia and Imran. Sofia always tells Conall about her life, and vice versa. Sofia also used to tell the tension of her relationship with Imran. Conall always supports whatever Sofia does, that's what makes her comfortable. They don't realize that their feelings are actually more than friends.

This can be seen when Conall has to go several months to Afghanistan for work. During Conall's departure, Sofia just felt the loss of someone who meant by her side, Conall also felt the same way. Every day, Sofia always waited for Conall's return. Until that time came, Conall had returned to London. He came back with a bearded appearance, which surprised Sofia. However, not long after, Conall had to return to another country, Pakistan. Conall goes with his group for work to make a documentary film about the slums there. This time, Conall intends to go with Sofia. As a writer, Sofia could relate to Conall's work and was intrigued. Eventually, they travel to Pakistan with the rest of Conall's colleagues. During the trip Conall showed something surprising. Can be seen in the following quote:

'Like the length of your dress being in correlation with the length of a Muslim's beard . . .' he said. Muslim's beard?

'Some things don't make sense until you have the time to think about them. And then you just have to adjust a few things. You don't mind having to adjust the length of your dresses?'

'Conall . . .' I began. What was he saying? Did he actually mean what I think he meant?

'You better not. Seeing as I've feckin' adjusted my religion.' Oh my actual, actual God. (Malik, 2015, p. 333)

Conall has decided to become a Muslim. This is completely without Sofia's knowledge. This is in stark contrast to Imran who always demands Sofia even for small things. However, Conall managed to melt Sofia's heart, because even in making big decisions related to his religion, Conall did not argue with Sofia first. Conall has accepted Sofia well, and is felt to have fulfilled Sofia's need for love. Sofia finds herself in a complex emotional landscape where Conall, without her knowledge, embraces a new religion to be with her, showcasing that the fulfillment of love doesn't always necessitate marriage. This contrasts sharply with another man, Imran, who consistently demands her attention but falls short in meeting her deeper romantic expectations, highlighting the intricate dynamics of human relationships and the impact when love and belonging needs aren't met as anticipated:

"I wondered if I should say hello, but Fozia said I should wait for him. (Why should women always wait for 'him'?) But I did wait. Then I waited some more. It was when I was speaking to someone who asked when the buffet would be served (because I looked like the waitressing staff?) that he approached us,

answered her, looked at me, and then walked away. Looked right at me. Then I walked away. Unbelievable! As if I wasn't the girl he once wanted to marry. What is wrong with the world? There's the man who apparently wanted to marry me, who ignores me, and there's the other man who doesn't want to marry me, but calls me all the time. (Malik, 2015, p. 173)

In this quote, Sofia is experiencing a complex situation involving unmet love and belonging needs. The desire for acknowledgment and connection is evident in her frustration over being ignored by someone she thought once wanted to marry her. On the other hand, the attention from another man who doesn't express a desire to marry her may fulfill a sense of belonging, even if it doesn't meet her deeper romantic expectations. Sofia's feelings highlight the intricacies of human relationships and the emotional impact when those needs aren't fulfilled as expected. Sofia, who previously felt unfulfilled in her need for love and belonging, is frustrated by being ignored by someone who once wanted to marry her. Despite receiving attention from another man who isn't seeking marriage, Sofia's desire for acknowledgment persists. The complexity of human relationships is evident as Sofia faces emotional impacts when these needs go unfulfilled. In the end, Conall's significant decision without consulting Sofia, in contrast to Imran's demanding nature, suggests that the need for love can be fulfilled beyond traditional marital norms, providing a resolution to Sofia's emotional journey.

1.2 Sofia's Muslim Identity

Living a modern life in London was a challenge for Sofia. In the beginning, she was not a religious person. She didn't even wear a hijab and used to smoke. However, Sofia always wanted to improve herself and maintain her Muslim identity. Can be seen in the following quote:

“Yes, Mum. One day I'll sweat to death in my hijab.’
‘Your hair's your one beauty – all covered up,’ said Mum, looking at my head.” (Malik, 2015, p.11-12)

In her daily life, Sofia is determined to change her life by wearing a hijab that reflects her Muslim identity. Even when her own mother asked Sofia not to wear the hijab, it was not a problem for her. Hijab has become her determination. As a writer with a women's dating project, Sofia is familiar with Muslim dating research in London. Even in the crowd, Sofia maintains her faith. At Mussie's wedding, Sofia was happy that there was no alcohol:

“Sigh. All I can say is, thanks to God there's no alcohol at Mussie weddings (unless Chachu was carrying a hipflask) – just a DJ, some chicken korma, a few belly-dancing accessories and the aunties are on the dance floor as if their life depends upon it”. (Malik, 2015, 139)

Sofia expresses a sense of gratitude towards God for nothing of alcohol at Mussie weddings, highlighting a connection between the Muslim identity and cultural practices. The mention of specific elements like chicken korma, belly-dancing accessories, and the active participation of aunties on the dance floor suggests a celebration of cultural traditions within the context of Islamic values. The phrase ‘thanks to God’ reflects a recognition of religious principles influencing the atmosphere at the wedding, contributing to the self-actualization of Sofia’s Muslim identity. In her love journey, Sofia also wants to marry someone who understands religious values. Can be seen in the following quote:

“if ever I were to get married I’d rather like to grow in faith with the person who I’ve committed to *for ever*.” (Malik, 2015, p. 32)

Sofia’s statement shows that she wants to maintain her Muslim identity for as long as possible. This reflects Sofia’s religious values and desire to have the same beliefs in a marriage relationship to maintain faith together. Sofia’s religious firmness can also be seen when she experiences indecision. When she wanted to accept Imran’s request for marriage, Sofia had actually asked for guidance with istikhara prayer. That can be seen in the following quote:

“I looked at the istikhara prayer, resting on the bed, picked it up and did what I had to do”. (Malik, 2015, p. 231)

Sofia’s actions reflect a deep conviction that God has a significant role in guiding life decisions. Not only that, Sofia occasionally used to read the Qur’an.

“I woke up early to read some Qur’an so I was walking around the house in my burqa and black hijab, as one does when they’re praying.” (Malik, 2015, p. 292)

Overall, Sofia always expresses religious devotion through daily routines, such as reading the Qur’an in clothes that reflect religious values. This reflects that the concept of self-actualization is the highest level of human psychology. Implicitly, it can be said that Sofia wants happiness not only in world affairs, but for her life after death. More deeply, in the profound exploration of Sofia’s journey, the following quotes encapsulate the intricate dance between her quest for self-actualization and the nuances of her love needs. As Sofia unveils her thoughts on marriage and the significance of her hijab, can delve into the complexity of her identity and the relationships she seeks, where the interplay of personal fulfillment and love becomes a central theme. These excerpts shed light on Sofia’s introspection, showcasing the delicate balance she navigates in the pursuit of a genuine and accepting connection.

“hardly makes sense to marry someone with whom I can’t share what’s essentially the main part of my life.’ I pointed at my scarf. He took a deep breath and nodded. ‘And the last thing I want is to deal with another person in the world that has a problem with my hijab. I mean, I love this thing, but not everyone feels the same way, I’m afraid.’ (Malik, 2015, p.176)

The quoted passage from Sofia suggests a complex interplay between her self-actualization and her love needs, particularly in the context of her identity and personal choices. Sofia’s statement, ‘hardly makes sense to marry someone with whom I can’t share what’s essentially the main part of my life,’ reflects a desire for self-actualization. She recognizes the importance of sharing her life, including significant aspects like her hijab, with a partner. This indicates a need for a relationship that allows her to fully express and embrace her identity. Sofia’s attachment to her hijab and her statement, ‘I love this thing, but not everyone feels the same way,’ demonstrates her commitment to her personal choices and values. This is a crucial aspect of self-actualization – the pursuit of personal growth and fulfillment. The dialogue portrays Sofia’s consideration of the potential challenges in a relationship where her hijab might be a point of contention. This highlights the need for mutual respect and understanding in love relationships, aligning with her desire for a partner who can embrace her fully. In summary, the quoted passage intertwines Sofia’s journey of self-actualization with her love needs, emphasizing the importance of finding a partner who respects and understands her identity, particularly in relation to her hijab.

D. Conclusion

The results of this study show that Sofia can be said to have achieved the concept of self-actualization. Sofia goes through a love journey that is full of challenges, so that finally her love and belonging needs are fulfilled. This relates to Maslow’s concept which proposes the idea that interpersonal relationships, social support, and a sense of connectedness with others can also fulfill human love needs. Marriage may be one form of fulfillment, but other forms of affection, friendship, acceptance, and emotional involvement also play an important role in fulfilling the love needs aspect of the human hierarchy of needs. Sofia also commonly incorporates her religious values into the journey of her love story. This is in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, that self-actualization includes self-understanding. Sofia’s defense of her Muslim identity, which involves awareness and acceptance of religious values and beliefs, can provide a strong foundation for her to understand herself and integrate those values into her daily life. In conclusion, the concept of self-actualization can break stereotypes against women. In fact, women can also achieve freedom, living life according to their values, aspirations, and her potential.

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