

Self-Concept and the Theory of Self

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ABSTRACT:

A person's view and assessment of themselves are referred to as their self-concept, which is a key psychological term. It includes all of their opinions, attitudes, values, and self-perceptions in relation to a variety of topics, including their skills, personalities, and social identities. An overview of self-concept and the theory of self is given in this abstract, along with information on how they are formed and how they affect psychological health. It explores well-known self-concept ideas such as the self-discrepancy theory and the self-esteem theory. It also looks at how self-concept affects motivation, behaviour, and wellbeing. Understanding self-concept and the theory of self may help people better understand how they perceive and create their identities, as well as the consequences this has for their personal development, social interactions, and psychological health.

KEYWORDS:

Behaviour, Psychological, Self-Concept, Self-esteem, Social.

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is a key idea in psychology that deals with how people see and assess themselves. It includes people's views, values, and self-perceptions regarding their skills, personality characteristics, social positions, and affiliations with other social groupings, among other components of their identity. Grasp how people create their identities, deal with social relationships, and preserve their psychological wellbeing requires a thorough grasp of self-concept. The theory of self aims to shed light on the cognitive and emotional processes involved in self-perception and self-evaluation in order to explain the origins and growth of self-concept. It examines how people build their sense of self, the variables that affect this development, and how this affects psychological functioning. The self-discrepancy hypothesis, put out by Higgins (1987), is a significant theory in the study of self-concept. In accordance with this theory, people contrast their actual selves (i.e., how they see themselves right now), ideal selves (i.e., how they perceive themselves in the perfect situation), and ought selves (i.e., how they perceive themselves in the ideal situation given social expectations). These self-perceptions might differ, which can cause emotional suffering and inspire people to work towards self-consistency[1], [2].

Self-esteem theory is a key topic in the study of self-concept. An individual's overall assessment of their own value and worth is referred to as self-esteem. According to the self-esteem hypothesis, people work hard to keep and boost their self-esteem, looking for affirmation and avoiding circumstances that put their self-worth in jeopardy. It implies that self-esteem affects a variety of psychological processes, including motivation, self-control, and interpersonal interactions. Self-concept development is a complicated process that is impacted by a number of elements, including as social interactions, cultural standards, and personal experiences. An individual's self-concept is significantly shaped by the comments and assessments they get from important persons, including parents, classmates, and instructors. By establishing norms and standards for people to measure themselves against, social and cultural influences also aid in the formation of self-concept[3], [4].

For personal development, interpersonal interactions, and psychological health, it is crucial to understand self-concept and the idea of self. It may support healthy self-esteem, aid in the development of a more accurate and positive self-concept, and aid people in navigating social situations successfully. It also sheds light on the psychological mechanisms that underlie motivation, behaviour, and adjustment. In the discussion that follows, we will go further into the elements of self-concept, consider

key ideas, look at how self-concept is formed, and assess how self-concept affects motivation, behaviour, and wellbeing. We may learn more about how people see themselves, create their identities, and negotiate the intricacies of social relationships by researching self-concept and the theory of self[5], [6]. Self-concept is very important in determining how people think, feel, and act. People use it as a cognitive filter to understand and assess their experiences, which shapes how they see themselves and the world around them. It impacts how people see their own skills, knowledge, and limits, which has an impact on how confident, motivated, and open to taking on challenges they are.

Self-concept is developed early in childhood and continues to change throughout the course of a person's life. Early self-concept is formed in infancy as a result of socialisation experiences and interactions with carers. As people become older, they take into account criticism from classmates, instructors, and society, which further shapes how they see themselves and what they believe. Self-concept is a dynamic process that is shaped by continuous interactions and experiences rather than being a static construct. People constantly adjust and improve their self-concept in response to fresh knowledge and criticism. Positive experiences and successes may build positive self-perceptions and boost self-esteem, but bad experiences or failures can undermine one's self-concept and cause self-doubt. Self-concept affects more than just an individual's inner ideas and beliefs. It affects their actions, decisions, and interactions with other people. People often behave in ways that are consistent with their self-concept and seek approval and validation from others to support their beliefs of themselves. To control perceptions and keep their self-concept and how they are seen by others consistent, they may also use self-presentation techniques[7], [8].

In addition, one's self-concept affects one's psychological and mental health. Positive self-concept and high self-esteem are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, adaptability, and psychological well-being. On the other hand, those with poor self-esteem and a poor sense of their own worth are more prone to interpersonal problems, melancholy, and anxiety. In a variety of disciplines, including psychology, education, counselling, and organisational behaviour, it is essential to comprehend self-concept and the theory of self. It guides treatments targeted at supporting the growth of a positive self-concept, improving self-esteem, and developing self-acceptance. It also helps to develop welcoming surroundings that support people's identities and promote a feeling of belonging. Self-concept is a complex construct that affects people's perceptions, thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and interpersonal interactions. It changes during the course of a person's life and is affected by social interactions, life events, and cultural elements. Researchers and practitioners may learn more about the complexity of human identity via the study of self-concept, which also helps to promote positive self-perceptions and psychological well-being[9], [10].

II. DISCUSSION

The self has long had a prominent position in management and psychology theories of human behaviour as a psychological construct. In fact, one of the social sciences' most extensively researched ideas is the self. Given that it has long been believed that the self is the fundamental centre of human motivation and action, as well as judgement and decision-making, the significant attention paid to the self as a study issue is scarcely unexpected. This section briefly summarises some of the key constructs related to the self before describing some of the popular definitions and views of it. The importance of the self and theories about the self for organisational theory and management practise is then further explained in the next section. The last part discusses some of the most recent and significant advancements in the understanding of the self and its function within organisations.

Fundamentals

What exactly do we mean when we refer to the self as a psychological concept? Since the beginning of psychology, defining what we mean by the self or, more specifically, a person's self-concept has proved to be a difficult problem that has consumed psychologists of every age. As a result, there are now an overwhelming number of definitions, theoretical models, and empirical findings on the self, its origins, and the effects of its activities. Leading self-theorist and social psychologist Mark Leary has proposed the idea of selfhood to denote the total thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that result from people's

awareness of themselves as possessing a self that functions as both a subject and an agent. The agentic actor we experience when we actively engage the environment and interact with others is represented by the self-as-object.

The more phenomenological aspects of selfhood, such as the experiencing, knowing, and reflecting aspects of selfhood that individuals link with their self-awareness, are included in the self-as-subject, in contrast. Early research on self-schemata made a significant addition to our understanding of the self as a psychological phenomenon. Self-schemata are the fundamental mental models of the self that serve to regulate and organise how individuals interpret information about themselves. The way the self is conceptualised or perceived varies significantly across individuals as well as among cultures, according to research by Hazel Markus and others. The notion of independent self-construal's vs interdependent self-construal's has been one of the most significant contrasts. Individuals' independent self-construal are characterised in terms of

Due to their inherent focus on individual thinking and choice, people from Western cultures are most often identified with distinguishing characteristics and qualities. self-constructs that are interdependent, on the other hand, tend to place more of an emphasis on more collectivistic ways of thinking and doing and have been conceptualised in terms of people's relational relationships to one another. However, even within a certain culture or period of time, researchers have noted that there are significant individual variances with regard to both the content of our self-schemata and self-construals. Moreover, it has been shown that social contextual elements have a significant impact on how individuals see themselves.

Multidimensional Nature of the Self: The Self as Kaleidoscope

Over the last few decades, a substantial amount of theory and research has shown how the self is inherently multifaceted. The research of Marilynn Brewer and other social identity theorists has shown that the psychological self consists of three different types of self-concepts: an individual-level self-concept, an interpersonal or relational self-concept, and a collective self-concept. All of the individual-level characteristics we connect with ourselves as separate persons are referred to as personal and distinctive characteristics. Our dyadic interactions with others are reflected in our relational self-concept. Finally, the collective self-concept includes and reflects the memberships of our broader social groups. Numerous laboratory studies have shown, based on these theoretical differences, that even minute changes in language may "cue" the activation of these various perceptions of self, having a considerable impact on psychological and behavioural outcomes. Experiments on choice behaviour in social dilemma situations, such as when individual interests or well-being conflict with those of the group, have demonstrated, for instance, that cuing or highlighting the individual self-results in comparatively "selfish" decisions, whereas activating the collective self-results in more cooperative, group-oriented behaviour.

Social psychologist Kay Deaux has gone so far as to describe the psychological self as inherently kaleidoscopic in light of this data as well as the findings of several other investigations. She contends that this metaphor effectively conveys how the self is seen as changing, diverse, and complex as well as its many expressions in various circumstances and depending on various motivational orientations or demands. She contends that this leads to a high degree of adaptability in how the self is seen and understood. Similar to this, motivational theories about the self-emphasise how psychological needs and objectives influence how people express themselves and behave. Self-efficacy is one of the most significant motivating concepts. Self-efficacy is the term used to describe people's confidence in their ability to accomplish the intended goals and objectives. Conflicting thoughts or pictures about the overarching objectives that underlie our self-related cognitions and behaviours further highlight the complex and variable consequences of such motivational processes on self-assessment.

For instance, self-esteem-based motivational concepts hold that people will behave and think in ways that will help them safeguard or maintain their feeling of value. In contrast, self-enhancement theories suggest that people are driven to skew their judgement in favour of exaggeratedly favourable self-appraisals. Finally, self-verification theories make the bold claim that people are driven to validate their

self-images, even when doing so might harm their self-esteem or self-improvement. Another compelling illustration of how motivational processes may influence self-evaluation and the content of self-perceptions comes from research on self-affirmation. People may evoke other good or untarnished elements of themselves in an almost compensating, restorative manner when one component of their sense of self is challenged, as research by Claude Steele and others has shown.

Importance

The majority of psychological theory and research on the self has focused on the functions that our conceptions of and understandings of the self-play in human behaviour, which are essentially functional. Organisational views on the self also exhibit this functional viewpoint.

Adaptive Nature of the Self

Self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-reflection are among the most significant functional abilities of the self. The term "self-awareness" describes our ability to create a conscious awareness of the self as both a subject and object with specific modes of interaction with the outside environment. Our ability to control our ability to think and behave in a way that furthers goals and other key reasons while also being able to suppress ideas and actions that are unhelpful. Finally, self-reflection shows people's ability to be aware of their acts and their effects, to adjust their self-concepts in light of accumulated experiences, and to better control their thoughts, emotions, and future behaviours. Together, these three functional abilities support a person's capacity to successfully traverse their environment. Given that one of the manager's most important responsibilities is to shape the attitudes and behaviours of people under his or her control, understanding and successfully using these three skills is very helpful for managers. Managers may more effectively use the human capital under their control by using people's capacity for self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-reflection.

Self-Relevant Processes and Their Organizational Implications

In organisational theory and management practise, a number of self-relevant functional psychological processes have shown to be especially significant. The first of them relates to techniques for self-evaluation. The aspects that affect people's perceptions of themselves, such as their talents and work experiences, are reflected in self-evaluation processes. These evaluation procedures take into account people's assessments of their skills, expectations for their output, feeling of entitlement, and whether they are receiving fair treatment in interactions with others within an organisation. Self-esteem is a significant psychological dimension along which individuals perceive their unique skills, and it has been widely researched by psychologists. Despite the fact that some psychologists see self-esteem as a personality trait, others have pointed out the critical part that environmental influences may play in the formation and maintenance of high or low self-esteem. Another important psychological process that aids individuals in situating themselves within the social structure of an organisation and defining who they are in relation to others within that organisation is self-categorization.

People may classify themselves in a variety of ways, but research indicates that people do so most often and easily in terms of the conspicuous and well-known social groups to which they belong and with which they identify. The two main social categories that have received the most attention are gender and race. Additionally, these social category memberships are crucial to how individuals use social stereotyping to judge others. Age-related self-categorizations and stereotyping have received less attention, but they are becoming more frequently acknowledged as significant social categorization processes as the workforces throughout the globe become older. Additionally, social comparison may be utilised to assist people in evaluating their comparative talents and performance across a range of crucial organisational characteristics. But people's reasons for comparing may have an impact on the specific sort of social comparison they make. For instance, people may employ downward social comparisons to strengthen their perceptions of ability or improve their emotions of self-worth (i.e., compare their performance against those who are less competent or doing less well). On the other hand, people may use upward social comparisons to learn how to perform better (i.e., compare their performance with those who are more experienced or knowledgeable). People may compare their

personal performance or skill level from when they were originally employed by an organisation to their present performance or skill level to measure their growth or regression on a certain dimension.

Bias and Distortions in Self-Awareness and SelfAppraisal: How and Why the Self Gets in Trouble

Given the adaptive importance of accurate self-knowledge and the self-schemata, best exemplified by the Greek proverb to "know thyself," one may assume that people's self-conceptions evolve towards more veridical or accurate self-conceptions. Research, however, has demonstrated that it is difficult to get such exact self-knowledge, despite how desirable and adaptive it may appear. Shelley Taylor and others have successfully shown that individuals experience a range of self-enhancing illusions and other self-related distortions in this area. David Dunning, a psychologist, has expanded on this viewpoint by recording and organising our awareness of the significant and durable obstacles to self-insight that such constructive illusions produce.

Despite the fact that most psychology research on the self-emphasises the useful and adaptable aspects of people's self-concepts, some studies have emphasised the strains of selfhood and other related issues. obstacles to achieving it. For instance, social psychologist Roy Baumeister's study demonstrates the many ingenious strategies people use to the "burdens" of selfhood. Such research has helped us better understand the causes and dynamics of paradoxical types of self-denigration, such as masochism and other behaviours that appear to defy logic. Research on self-defeating behaviour and self-handicapping also shows the intricate and perversely clever ways in which people may destroy themselves while pursuing objectives that seem to be significant. One instance of such self-defeat or undermining is choking under pressure.

An individual's publicly presented self is, at best, an ephemeral, fickle, and self-consciously "strategic entity," ever responsive to changing goals, audiences, and/or concerns about conforming to cultural norms and social conventions, according to research on self-presentation or impression management. In other words, people are compelled to present their "best face" and adjust that best face to the current situation. However, a more optimistic interpretation of this material emphasises how flexible and adaptable people's adept self-presentations are. Psychologists are more and more aware of the social nature of people, which drives our need to blend in and get along. As a result, people give psychological weight to their position and reputation in the social groupings they are a part of. This so-called social self is essentially relational and, hence, sensitive to other people's presence, as social identity theorists have shown.

The Cutting Edge and the Future of Self Theory and Research

The study of the self in organisations and psychology is developing quickly nowadays. Several more study streams have lately had an influence on our knowledge of the self, even if research is still ongoing in all of the aforementioned domains. One significant field of contemporary study is an effort to view our knowledge of the self from the standpoint of evolutionary theory. For instance, evolutionary psychologists have suggested that thinking of the developed psychological self as modular is more helpful than conceptualising it as a single, cohesive psychological entity. These psychologists point out that the human brain itself developed in a modular way, with newer regions of the brain physically "added onto" or "superimposed upon" older ones. These theorists contend that when viewed from this angle, it is not at all surprising that self-conflicts, conflicting motives, internal dissonance, and other manifestations of our multiple selves result in competition for attention, the pursuit of conflicting objectives, and other apparent inconsistencies in attitude, affect, and behaviour. Another fascinating area of study that is quickly increasing our understanding of the self is the use of neuroscientific ideas and techniques. For instance, brain imaging research is shedding new light on how the self is organised in the human brain and how and where self-relevant data is stored and processed. Finally, given the globalisation of business and the increasingly international nature of big, complex organisations, cross-cultural theory and research on the self is becoming more and more significant to management experts.

Study on the self is still one of the most active fields of psychological study in modern management theory, as this short essay is meant to make clear. The capacity of managers to successfully inspire and

influence the organisational behaviour of others will be directly impacted by how well they understand the psychological complexity of the self, which is one of the most helpful implications of this study for managers. Second, the complexity of their own self-representations and degree of self-awareness will determine their capacity to control their own behaviour, particularly in leadership circumstances. Therefore, managers' self-awareness serves as a very genuine basis on which their ability to lead effectively ultimately hinges.

III. CONCLUSION

Self-concept and the theory of self are key psychological concepts that provide insight into how people see, judge, and comprehend themselves. In contrast to the theory of self, which aims to explain how self-concept develops and how it affects psychological functioning, self-concept covers the ideas, attitudes, and self-perceptions that people have about different parts of their identities. Understanding one's own self-concept and idea of self has profound effects on many different areas. It aids in our understanding of how people create their identities, connect with others, and preserve their psychological wellbeing. Researchers and practitioners may learn more about the cognitive and emotional processes involved in self-perception and self-evaluation by researching self-concept. Frameworks for comprehending the intricacies of self-concept are provided by well-known theories like the self-discrepancy theory and the self-esteem theory. They draw attention to how people's conceptions of themselves and their own worth are influenced by society standards, social comparisons, and personal experiences.

Motivation, behaviour, and interpersonal interactions are all significantly influenced by self-concept. It affects people's self-assurance, self-control, and judgement. Additionally, it affects how people interact with one another since self-concept influences how people act and behave in social situations. Given how crucial self-concept is, interventions may be made to advance good self-perceptions and improve psychological health. People may build a positive sense of self and deal with life's obstacles more skilfully if self-acceptance, self-esteem, and self-confidence are fostered. Finally, self-concept and the theory of self provide important insights into how people interpret and create their identities. Understanding how self-concept develops and has an influence allows us to better assist people in their personal development, improve their wellbeing, and foster constructive interpersonal connections. Over the course of a person's life, their self-concept continues to influence their ideas, emotions, and actions.

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