

The Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Wednesday, March 9, 2005

I. Self-Complexity: How many selves do we have? (Linville, 1987)

A. Low versus High Self-Complexity

Low Self-Complexity

With Men	With Friends	With Family	Studies
Outgoing Playful Reflective Mature Emotional Assertive Competitive Relaxed Humorous	Humorous Relaxed Assertive Outgoing Mature Emotional Reflective Soft-Hearted	Emotional Playful Reflective Mature Assertive Humorous Outgoing	Quiet Organized Studious Mature Reserved Industrious

High Self-Complexity

At Home	At School	Social Life	Work Life
Lazy Emotional Relaxed Humorous Playful Affectionate Unorganized Soft-Hearted Not Studious	Reflective Reserved Unorganized Lazy Insecure Conformist	Outgoing Humorous Quiet Relaxed Playful Insecure Impulsive	Industrious Rebellious Playful Outgoing Assertive Relaxed

B. Self-Complexity, Stress, and Coping

II. The Evaluative Component of the Self: Self-Esteem

A. We have a sense of what we're like, and we *evaluate* what we're like.

B. A Debate: How Best to Measure Self-Esteem

Friendly	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfriendly
Lazy	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Industrious
Fair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Unfair
Smart	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Stupid
Weak	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Strong

1. Average Trait Evaluations? Weighted average, as in forming impressions or evaluations of others?

2. Or a more holistic approach? (Rosenberg, 1965)

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

At times I think I'm no good at all. (reverse scored)

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

I am able to do things as well as most others.

I certainly feel useless at times. (reverse scored)

I take a positive attitude toward myself.

C. Self-esteem = Success/Pretensions (James, 1890)

D. Self-esteem f [real-ideal self-discrepancies] (Higgins, 1987)

III. Is high self-esteem all it's cracked up to be?

A. Ambiguous with regard to practical social benefits (correlation does not equal causation).

B. Positive Cognitive and Affective Correlates of High Self Esteem

1. High self-esteem associated with more definite self-knowledge (Greenwald, Belezza, & Banaji, 1988)
2. High self-esteem associated with more confidence and certainty of self-knowledge (Baumgartner, 1990)
3. High self-esteem associated with more consistent self-knowledge (Campbell, 1990)
4. High self-esteem associated with self-serving attributional biases (Blaine & Crocker, 1993)
5. High self-esteem associated with more positive mood over time.
6. High self-esteem associated with less variability in mood: deep keel, emotional anchor

C. Interpersonal Correlates of High Self-Esteem

“The news most frequently reported, however, is that the association between self-esteem and its expected (positive) consequences are mixed, insignificant, or absent.” (Mecca et al., 1989, pl. 15)

1. High (and inflexible) self-esteem is associated with aggression and violence (ego threat) (Kernis and others, 1989, 1993; Tagne and others, 1992).
2. High (inflated) self-esteem is associated with a lack of social skills (Colvin and others, 1995).
3. After ego-threat, people with high self-esteem are perceived as less likeable (Vohs, 2000)

Summary

1. The self-concept can be more or less complex. High *self-complexity* is associated with positive psychological and health outcomes in response to stress.
2. The *evaluative* component of the self is *self-esteem*.
3. Although high self-esteem is associated with cognitive and affective benefits, the practical benefits are less clear, and there are actually some interpersonal costs to unrealistically high self-esteem, especially after ego threat.