

Aspects Of Social Identity, Self Concept, Self Esteem, Self Functioning And Gender Aspects (Part 4)

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3.0 Definations

3.1 Definitions of Self Concept

Formation of self concept begins in **childhood and it continues throughout an individual's life**. Like Eric Erikson says in his 'Eight stages of development', an individual goes through eight stages in his life. Erikson kept a stage model of development, implying that people go through the stages in a certain order and that there is a specific issue that characterize each stage. Second, Erikson believed that each stage represented a conflict or perhaps a development crisis which needed to be resolved. Third, Erikson maintained the notion of fixation, meaning that if the crisis was not successfully and adaptively resolved, then personality development could become arrested and the person would continue to be preoccupied by that crisis in development.

The eight stages are :

- a. Trust versus Mistrust
- b. Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt
- c. Initiative versus Guilt
- d. Industry versus Inferiority
- e. Identity versus Role Confusion
- f. Intimacy versus Isolation
- g. Generativity versus Stagnation
- f. Integrity versus despair

Self-concept is how you see yourself. It includes your own listing of personal traits that you feel is important, and your evaluation of how you rate according to these traits. It has much to do with whether you like yourself and how much. An individual can have a positive or negative self concept about himself/herself based on one's valuation of him/herself. It is an important element in an individual's life. A positive self concept makes an individual to hold a positive opinion of one's self, feeling worthwhile and worthy of love, liking, accepting and respecting one's self.

Bandura (1986), defines self concept as a “composite view of oneself that is formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others”.

Gecas and burke define self-concept as the combination of an individual's thoughts and feelings about him or herself. He also says that self concept refers to the product of reflexivity and is composed of attitudes, beliefs, norms, values and experiences.

The Gale Encyclopedia of psychology defines self-concept the way in which one perceives oneself. According to their definition, self-concept can be divided into categories, such as personal self-concept (facts or one's own opinions about oneself), social self-concept (one's perceptions about how one is regarded by others) and self-ideals (what or how one would like to be).

“Self concept...the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of ‘I’ or ‘me’ and the perceptions of the relationships of the ‘I’ or ‘me’ to others and to various aspects life, together with the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness though not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, but at any given moment it is a specific entity.” (Rogers,1959). According to **Rogers**, one's self-concept influences how one regards both oneself and one's environment. The self-concept of a mentally healthy person is consistent with his thoughts, experiences and behavior. A strong self-concept is flexible and allows a person to confront new experiences and ideas without threatened.

Social psychologists have pointed out that self-concept also plays an important role in social perception-the process by which we form impressions of others. Attribution-how we explain the causes of our own and other people's behavior is particularly influenced by our own self-concept.

Social learning theory is also concerned with the ways in which we view ourselves, especially in terms of our perceived impact on our environment. Jullian B.Rotter claimed that the expected outcome of an action and the value we place on the outcome determine much of our behavior. For example, people with positive self-concept leads them to believe they will succeed at a task are likely to behave in ways that ultimately lead to success.

According to **wikipedia**, self-concept is the mental and conceptual awareness and persistent regard that sentient beings hold with regard to an individual's own being.

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