

Aspects Of Social Identity, Self Concept, Self Esteem, Self Functioning And Gender Aspects (Part 7)

Azizi Hj Yahaya

4.0 Definations of Self Esteem

Global self-esteem may be a composite of several individual areas of self evaluation. Each of these subareas can be assessed separately and there is a scale for measuring three aspects of self-esteem such as performance self-esteem, appearance self-esteem and social self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

Self-esteem can be considered as the person's global or average evaluation of their whole self concept.

If self concept refers to "one's identity as distinct from others," then self esteem refers to "the value one places on that identity" (Berns, 1989). In a sense, self esteem reflects how we feel about our self concept.

According to Rosenberg, 1979, self esteem refers to a global judgment about the worth or value of the self.

According to Cartwright, 1950, "The group to which a person belongs serves as a primary determinant of his self-esteem. To a considerable extent, personal feelings of worth depend on the social evaluation of the group with which a person is identified. Self-hatred and feelings of worthlessness tend to arise from membership in underprivileged or outcast groups".

According to William James self-esteem is seen as an affective phenomenon: That is, he suggests that it is lived as a feeling or an emotion. This means self-esteem is something that we find ourselves as having or lacking, whether we want to or not. Self-esteem = Successes/Pretensions. Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator (James, 1983).

There is a very large body of literature on self-esteem and it comes from almost every major theoretical perspective. For example, psychodynamically oriented authors uncover insights about self-esteem as a developmental process (Adler, 1927, White, 1959).

Cognitive-behaviorists frame self-esteem in terms of problem-solving skills and various coping strategies (McHale & Craighead, 1988). Social psychologists focus on attitude formation, especially self-protective ones such as “self-handicapping” (Snyder, 1989). Humanistic psychologists emphasize the experiential dimensions of self-esteem, particularly in terms of self-acceptance (Branden, 1969).

Coopersmith, (1967) defined self-esteem in the following way:

“By self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individuals holds towards themselves. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviour”.

According to Carl Rogers (1961), the nucleus of personality is self esteem. That is how we evaluate and feel about ourselves. People who don't like themselves are prone to anxiety, depressions and self-destructive behaviour patterns. People who like and accept themselves are more satisfying and productive lives and better relationships. The ability to accept and like ourselves depends partly on how we interpret the feedback we get from other people early in life, especially our caregivers. It also derives from how we interpret our ongoing record of successes and failures especially the important domains of our life such as relationships academic achievements (Harter, 1987).

Self-esteem is the evaluation a person makes of his or her self-concept along a good-bad dimension. People differ from each other in terms of whether they see themselves as worthwhile, valuable and good.

In short self-esteem is a general evaluation of self-concept along a good-bad or like-dislike dimension and is a sum of your positive and negative reactions to all the aspects of your self concept.

CONTINUE...