

“IT IS SELF-CONCEPT, SELF-ESTEEM OR SELF CONFIDENCE”

Gooh Mo Lee and Abdul Latif Bin Ahmad
Faculty of Education Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Abstract

There are variety of ways to think about the self. Two of the most widely used terms are self-concept and self-esteem. How do we evaluate these two? How do we define these fancy words and where we do begin to determine the effect of them?

Self Concept

Self-concept, as it is generally used in the professional literature, is a group of feelings and cognitive processes which are inferred from observed or manifest behaviour. It is the person's total appraisal of his appearance, background and origins, abilities and resources, attitudes and feelings which culminate as a directing force in behaviour (Labenne, W.D., Bert, I., Greene, 1969). The self-concept conditions the way individual interpret the comments of others towards his or her behaviour and influences also the way he or she behave in the future in a similar situation. It is what the individual thinks of as his actual self (Azizi et al, (2007b)). The self concept is that which individual primarily guides, controls and regulates his or her performance and action.

Self-concept generally refers to 'the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person hold to be true about his or her personal existence' (Purkey, 1988). Self-concept is learned. No one is born with self-concept. The world appears as a confused mass of impressions to the new born infant. The infant is even unaware of his physical dimensions. The self-concept gradually emerges in the early months of life and is shaped and reshaped through repeated perceived experiences, particularly with significant others. It does not appear to be instinctive. It is a social product developed through experience, it possesses relatively boundless potential for development and actualization. Because of previous experiences and present perceptions, individuals may perceive themselves in ways different from the ways others see them.

Self-concept is organized. It has a generally stable quality that is characterized by orderliness and harmony (Azizi et.al, 2005a). Each person maintains countless perceptions regarding ones's personal existence, and each perception is orchestrated with all others. Because of it's stability and organized, self-concept gives consistency to the personality. Self-concept requires consistency, stability and tends to resist change. If the self-concept changed readily, the individual would lack a consistent and dependable personality (Purkey, 1988).

Self-concept is dynamic. It is a continuously active system that dependably points to the 'true north' of a person's perceived existence (Purkey, 1988). This guidance system not only shapes the ways a person views oneself, others and the world but it also serves to direct action and enables each person to take consistent 'stance' in life.

Self-concept development is a continuous process. In the healthy personality there is constant assimilation of new ideas and expulsion of old ideas through out life. Individuals strive to behave in ways that are in keeping with self concept, no matter how helpful or hurtful to oneself or others.

Self Esteem

Self esteem has generally been in terms of reflexive attitudes or sets of attitudes (Wells, L. Edward, 1976). Self esteem refers to a more or less phenomenal process in which the person perceives characteristics of himself and reacts to those characteristics emotionally or behaviorally. It refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves. Self esteem is a quiet confidence in one's own regardless of any shortcomings or deficiencies (Benson, L. 1974). It is the ability to love oneself, not by falsifying a version of the self, but by acceptance of what one really is. Self esteem is the discrepancy between real (how the person actually perceives and estimates himself) and ideal (how the person would like to be) self conceptions and frequently been labeled by such terms as self satisfaction, self acceptance and personal adjustment (Wells, L. Edward, 1976).

Self esteem is an experience. It is a particular way of experiencing the self. It is a good deal more than a mere feeling. Self esteem involves emotional, evaluative and cognitive components. It entails certain dispositions. To move toward life rather than away from it, to move toward consciousness rather than away from it, to treat facts with respect rather than denial, to operate self responsibly rather than the opposite.

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and reflecting on what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done (Azizi et.al,2007a). We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations and the expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. Self-concept is developed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction.

Self-concept refer to the general idea we have ourselves and self-esteem refer to particular measures about components of self concept. Franken (1994) suggests that self-concept is related to self-esteem in that; "people who have good self-esteem have clearly differentiated self-concept. When people know themselves they can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do".

Self-esteem however, is only one of the many dimensions of the self concept. Franken (1994) also states that, “self-concept perhaps is the basis for all motivated behaviour. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves, and it is possible selves that create motivation for behaviour”. Self esteem is the way you perceive yourself (Crisp, M., 1991). It translates into self worth. If an individuals place a high value on themselves, they will respects their skills, abilities and will have confidence in what they can accomplish. Having a high degree of self esteem usually gives one a comfortable, secure feeling inside that manifests itself in a positive, confident attitude. Self-esteem is confidence in our ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, and respond effectively to change. It also the experience that success, achievement, fulfillment and happiness.

Self-concept usually takes precedence over physical body. Individuals will often sacrifice physical comfort and safety for emotional satisfaction (Purkey, 1988). Self-concept continuously guards itself against loss of self esteem. The loss of self esteem produces feelings of anxiety. If self concept must constantly defend itself from assault, growth opportunities are limited.

Self Confidence

Self confidence is the level of where we are aware of ourselves, in concern of our abilities, gift and knowledge. This is where we have the awareness of our capabilities. We grow to feel safe and comfortable with what we used to in our surroundings. Self confidence is usually based on how well or not so well we`ve done in previous situations. It is how we feel about ourselves. Our self worth is based upon our previous performance. We tend to base our own personal values on how successfully we perform in different situations and we often require perfect performance of ourselves. If we don`t live up to our perfect standards, we end up lowering our values of ourselves.

Self-confidence is an attitude which allows individuals to have positive yet realistic views of themselves and their situations. Self-confident people trust their own abilities, have a general sense of control in their lives, and believe that, within reason, they will be able to do what they wish, plan, and expect.

Having self-confidence does not mean that individuals will be able to do everything. Self-confident people have expectations that are realistic. Even when some of their expectations are not met, they continue to be positive and to accept themselves.

People who are not self-confident depend excessively on the approval of others in order to feel good about themselves (Azizi et.al, 2005a). They tend to avoid taking risks because they fear failure. They generally do not expect to be successful. They often put themselves down and tend to discount or ignore compliments paid to them. By contrast, self-confident people are willing to risk the disapproval of others because they generally trust their own abilities. They tend to accept themselves; they don't feel they have to conform in order to be accepted.

Self-confidence is not necessarily a general characteristic which pervades all aspects of a person's life. Typically, individuals will have some areas of their lives where they feel quite confident, e.g., academics, athletics, while at the same time they do not feel at all confident in other areas, e.g., personal appearance, social relationships.

Self Confidence and Self-esteem

Are self-esteem and self confidence the same thing? What are the relationship between self-esteem and self confidence?

a) *They are not the same:*

Self-esteem actually is the attitude the individual have towards himself. It is haow much do you like yourself and respect yourself? Self-esteem is what do you think , your worth as a person? Self confidence on the other hand is belief in yourself and wahat can you do.

b) *They are related:*

These two concept are closely related even though they are not the same thing. We need both to be successful in any way. We need both to be healthy functioning human being. Self-esteem is not possible if you lack of self confidence. If we have self confidence, we cannot suffer from low self-esteem. We must work on our self confidence and we wil build our self-esteem and vise versa.

A lack of self confidence causes missed opportunities, hesitation and lack of action. Lack of self confidence may lie in our poor level of self-esteem, lack of experience or fear of the unknown. Confidence is gained in action and in knowing we are well prepared and have the skills and ability to do whatever we have to do. Poor self-esteem will destroy our self confidence. We have to improve our self confidence and self-esteem at the same time.

Our self confidence is the part of ours that knows we have the ability to do things. Our self-esteem is the part of our believes we can do it. It is the feeling of our self worth and self respect. We can build self confidence to achieve anything and we can build self-esteem to believe it. Though self confidence and self-esteem are different, they can go hand in hand. We may be confident in our ability to do something, but unless we believe in ourselves (self-esteem) it will not happen.

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