

The (Relative) Self

The self interprets and organises self-relevant actions and experiences; it has motivational consequences and adjusts in response to challenges from the social environment.

Kanagawa et al (2001) found that when participants described their selves, they considered their connection to the group differently. I.e. people from collectivist cultures were more likely to mention group memberships etc.

Multiple Selves

We know that the situation can significantly effect how we react. Self knowledge is therefore organised in terms of self-aspects, different roles, activities and relationships.

Cultural Differences

Self-construal is relative. Though the basic ingredients are the same, the weighting and some of the content is different.

Priming Mindsets (Gardner et al. 1999)
Participants were primed to collectivist values to reflect self-construals of collectivist individuals.

Cohen et al. have shown that "culture of honor" mediates people's responses to insult.

Future Selves

Higgins (1987) differentiates between **actual, ideal and ought self**. Any **goal** is based on a discrepancy between a person's actual and desired self.

Sources of Self-Concept

He argues that self knowledge is not based on the question "who am I?" but rather "what is my relation to the world", suggesting that self-knowledge is pursued for adaptive benefits.

Self-Perception Theory (Bem, 1972) Our own behaviour acts as a basis for inference.

Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) Comparisons with others are ubiquitous. People use others to evaluate their own traits, abilities and personal characteristics. We compare ourselves more if others are close and more if the domain is central or important to our self-concept.

Past Selves

Our understanding of our previous selves is bias. We regularly make **downward comparisons of our self**, for example **Ross et al. (2001)** with student ratings of how sociable they were.

Our perceptions are inaccurate. For example, remember **Neisser's** study on the challenger shuttle disaster.

Cognitive Dissonance we remember feeling differently to how we actually did.

Ross et al (1979) Joint Contributions are remembered better when outcome was positive, but people deflate their contributions when outcome was negative.

Mussweiler et al. (2004) Self Evaluation Primed participants with either athletic vs. non-athletic people (Clinton vs. Lauda) and super-athletic and super-nonathletic (Jordan vs. Pope) and then asked them to perform a self evaluation; how many push ups can you perform and can you run 100 meters? Moderate primes elicited congruent estimates of athletic ability (Clinton=Lower) whereas extreme primes elicited incongruent estimates (Jordan=Lower), suggesting that self-other evaluations are relative and context dependent.

Looking Glass Self Other people's reactions.

Tice asked participants to complete counter attitudinal essay in front of graduate student or not. Those in front of student were more likely to change their attitude, suggesting that our self-perceptions are affected by our situation.