

Self-Esteem

• Readings Overview:

- Nature, origins, and functions of self-esteem
 - Nature: Definition and characteristic differences between people high and low in self-esteem
 - Origins: What experiences give rise to self-esteem
 - Functions: When is self-esteem important and what difference does it make?
 - The "dark side" of self-esteem
- Unresolved controversies in the field

Definitions

• The positivity of a person's evaluation of self.

• Three meanings:

- Global (trait) self-esteem
 - Feelings of overall self-worth
 - Stable over time (personality characteristic)
 - Global self-esteem versus domain specific self-esteem?
- Self-evaluations
 - Affective versus cognitive bases of self-esteem?
 - Affective: Developed early in life from attachment bonds, feelings
 - Cognitive: Bottom up, evaluations, ideas
- Feelings of self-worth (state self-esteem)
 - At any given moment
 - State versus trait self-esteem?
 - Which is more important?

3/30/10

- Function of self-esteem:

- Terror management theory (Solomon)

- Along w/ capacity to know + understand, we also recognized we're mortal. (developed)

- Existential fear of death

- Self-Esteem used to cope w/ it (buffer)

- Contribution to society

- Piece of self left behind

- Sociometer hypothesis (Leary)

- Signal to us that things are (not) going well in relation to other people

Sociometer hypothesis

- Evolutionary Model

- Self-esteem system: "sociometer"

- Be a member of a group rather than alone as an early human

- Social monitor whether we're being included or excluded by others

- Motivated to behave in ways that minimize the probability of rejection/exclusion

- Subjective "feelings" provide feedback regarding one's relational value to others

- "State" self-esteem

- Varies from situation to situation

- Want to maintain high self esteem

- Indicator of quality of relationships

- Low self esteem: History of rejection/exclusion

4/1/10

- Development of self-esteem
 - Feeling that develops
- Attachment bonds and self-esteem: "roots"
 - Child left away from caregiver
 - Ambivalent, insecure, secure

(Emotional) Affective Differences Associated w/ Self-Esteem

- HSE have more favorable views of themselves which they protect by processing information in biased ways that helps to maintain their emotional stability.
 - HSE makes people feel good; it is subjectively pleasant
 - HSE show more self-serving biases in response to feedback and events than LSE
 - HSE exaggerate control over events more so than LSE
 - LSE have less pleasant and positive moods than HSE for daily events
 - LSE have greater emotional variability than HSE
 - HSE are more oriented toward self-enhancement, and LSE are more oriented toward self-protection
 - HSE is negatively correlated w/ depression and social anxiety
 - LSE not necessary for depression
 - Think negatively about everything (and not just self)

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Nature and Origins of Self Esteem

◦ Cognitive Models

- Purposely construct self-esteem

- "Add-em-up" model

· Take all self appraisals and add them up

- "Weight-em-by-importance" model

· Give more weight to domains of importance

- Self-Ideal model

· Discrepancies between actual and ideal self

- Self-evaluations and Self-esteem

· Linked

- Certainty of self-knowledge and self-esteem

· High self esteem have greater certainty in knowledge about self (relative to people w/ low self esteem)

· More defined

· LSE fluctuate in certainty (conditional)

★ Self concept confusion

· Abilities they possess and level of mastery

Cognitive Differences Associated w/ Self Esteem

◦ HSE is associated w/ more thorough, accurate, and extensive self knowledge

- HSE give more extreme ratings, LSE more non-committal

- HSE can furnish longer lists than LSE of liked and disliked activities, group memberships, and self reported information

- HSE report higher certainty about their self knowledge than LSE

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- HSE self-ratings fluctuate less over time than LSE's
- HSE self-knowledge more internally consistent

- Sociological Models

- Sociological variables are assumed to affect SE
 - occupation, prestige, income, education, social status, race, religion, gender

- Social identity theory

- Groups we belong to impact feelings about self
 - internalize groups, how favorably those groups are perceived by other people (in our mind)

- Gender Differences in self-esteem (Joseph's)

- Assumption women have lower self esteem because men have more dominant roles
 - Not allowed to develop high self-esteem

Gender and Self-Esteem (Josephs)

- H_0 : Self-esteem is related to culturally mandated gender appropriate norms

- Men: Independent

- Women: Interdependent

- Study 1: Social Comparison Study

- False uniqueness effect

- Males: HSE > LSE, Females: HSE = LSE

- Study 2: Self-Reference Effect

- Process things that are self referent more quickly/efficiently

- Males demonstrate effect more than women

- But only for men who have high self esteem

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- Study 3
 - Described independent + interdependent tasks
 - Told them they performed well/badly
 - Then asked if they did task again, would they do better/worse
 - Males who did badly on independent task predicted they would do better (only for HSE)
 - Females same for interdependent task

Different Patterns of Social Behavior Associated w/ Self Esteem

- LSE is associated w/ greater persuasibility and susceptibility to influence than HSE
 - Want to fit in, feel sense of belonging
 - Not as much certainty about self
- HSE is associated w/ wanting to stand out in a positive way, LSE is associated with wanting to avoid standing out in a bad way

Self Esteem and Responses to Evaluative Feedback

- Positive feedback: Little effect on self-esteem
- Negative feedback
 - Emotional Responses to failure
 - LSE: Takes feedback personally, affected on whole
 - Cognitive Responses to failure
 - HSE: Can differentiate failure to specific aspects of self
 - LSE: Globally inadequate
 - Behavioral Responses to failure
 - Risk-taking, self-handicapping, task performance and persistence, and social comparison

- Risk-taking

- LSE: Don't want to fail

- Self-humdrapping

- HSE: want to make self look even better
 - LSF: Guard against failure

- Task-Performance and Resistance

- HSE: choose harder tasks

Self-Esteem and Responses to Evaluative Feedback

- Theoretical Explanations

- Cognitive model of emotional distress

- Low outcome expectancy

- Doubt abilities

- Affective Models of emotional distress

- LSE feel badly about themselves, but intensity of feelings greater than HSE

- Fluctuation of feelings

- Theoretical models of self-protection

- Cognitive

- Affective

- Is high self-esteem always good?

- Bushman + Baumeister, 1998

- Consequences of self esteem

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Is high self esteem always good?

- HSE seems conducive to interpersonal violence
 - More self esteem to lose
 - Narcissism/Egotism
 - More conditional self-esteem, try to defend it
 - Directed towards person who threatened them
- Those w/ HSE change their behavior drastically when confronted w/ ego threats
- Inflated SE is linked to poor social skills and psychological maladjustment in longitudinal data and some lab studies
 - SE not consistent w/ other's views of them

Consequences of Self Esteem

- Compared to LSE, HSE:
 - is highly related to happiness
 - improves persistence in the face of failure
 - speak up more, contribute more to group projects
 - perceive of themselves as better liked and more popular
 - Are disliked more after ego-threat (narcissist)
 - more willing to terminate close relationships
 - Think they can develop more close relationships
 - is associated w/ stronger ingroup bias and outgroup derogation
 - amplifies both aggressive and nonaggressive tendencies (narcissist)
 - does not reliably cause improvement in academic performance or task performance

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- Compared to NSE, LSE:
 - is associated w/ victimization; weak link to delinquency
 - linked to depression
 - is a risk factor in eating disorders, especially bulimia

Consequences of Self-Esteem

- Conclusions:
 - Except for a link to happiness, more effects are weak and inconsistent
 - Effects of SE become weaker as criteria become more objective
 - Most effects of SE are indirect
 - Interventions to boost SE will not likely produce positive outcomes
 - As a construct, SE is more suited to individualistic than collectivist cultures (Dienear)

Cross-cultural Correlates of Life Satisfaction of Self-Esteem

- Participants: 31 nations, N = 13,118
- Measured
 - Self-esteem
 - Life satisfaction
 - Satisfaction w/ specific domains
 - Family, friends, finances
- Results Related to
 - Individualism - Collectivism
 - Income / person
 - Cultural heterogeneity

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- Hypothesized
 - SE should be a greater predictor of life satisfaction in individualistic cultures
 - Family/friend satisfaction should be a greater predictor of life satisfaction in collectivistic cultures
 - Financial Satisfaction should be a greater predictor of life satisfaction in poorer cultures.
 - Trying to meet basic human needs
 - Heterogeneity should be a greater predictor of life satisfaction in individualistic cultures
- Findings indicated:
 - Satisfaction w/ Self, family, friends and finances correlated moderately and significantly w/ life satisfaction
 - Self esteem was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction across respondents and nations but was lower in collectivistic cultures
 - Financial satisfaction was a greater predictor in collectivistic cultures
 - Friend satisfaction was a greater predictor in individualistic cultures

Unresolved Controversies

- Self-enhancement and self-consistency debate
 - Shrauger's affect-cognitive distinction
 - Affect → Self-enhancement
 - Cognitive → Self-consistency
 - Swann's self-verification theory
- Global VS domain-specific self esteem
- High genuine SE versus egotism/narcissism
- Measures of SE (explicit VS implicit)

Friday May 7
9 AM
Final

4/8/10

Depression

1. Prevalent

- Relatively common, short episode

2. Virulent

- Episode lasts for up to 2 years
- Likely to recur

3. Heterogeneous

- Display a variety of different symptoms
- Many different factors contribute to the onset

Chapter Overview

• Role of self-relevant processes in:

- onset of depression
- experience of depression
- Factors that influence the duration and severity of a depressive episode

• Theoretical Models

Diathesis-Stress Model

• Factors influencing onset

- Negative life event
 - Death, divorce, loss of job
- Diathesis variables: vulnerability factors
 - Why people respond in different ways

• Dysphoria

- Mild, short-term depression

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- Self-Relevant Features

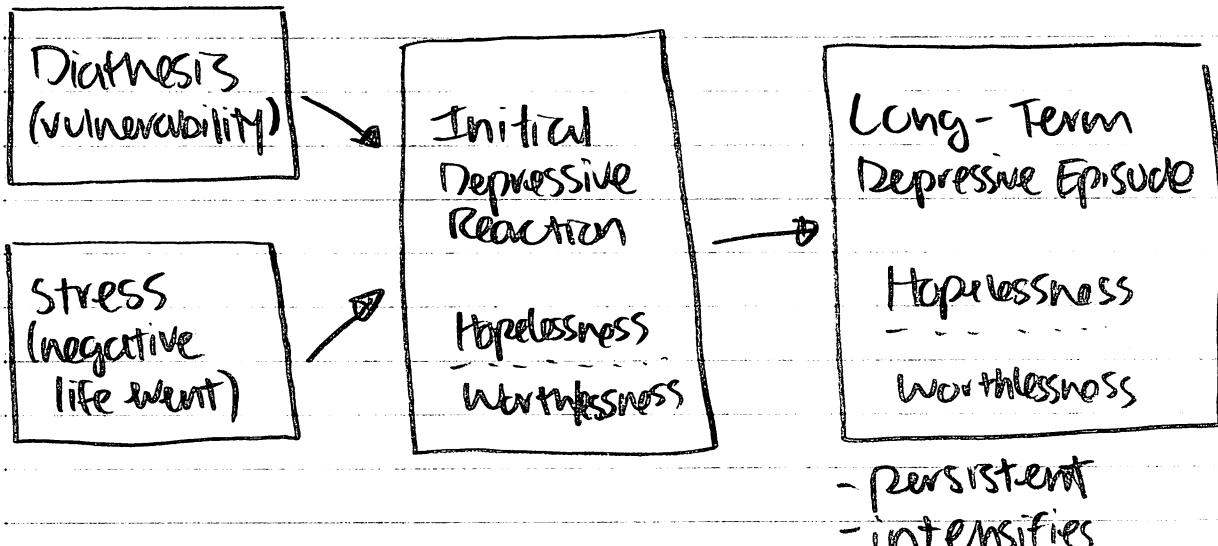
- Hopelessness

- Belief that no outcomes can be influenced

- Worthlessness

- Feeling of uselessness, inadequate

Diathesis - Stress Model of Depression



Self-Esteem Models

- Feelings for the Self as risk factors for depression

- Low Self-esteem

- Mixed evidence, no solid relationship between LSE + depression

- Response to failure

- Negative life event

- Self-worth contingency models

- Conditional feelings of self-worth

- Depend on evaluations of other people

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- Labile (unstable) self-esteem
- Fluctuates, contingent

Brown's Model of Self-esteem and Depression

Negative
Social
Event

Self-Worth Contingency Models of Depression

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Cognitive Models

- Depression results from ways we process self relevant information
- Beck's (1979) Cognitive Model
 - Dysfunctional beliefs: vulnerability factor
 - Negative Self-Schemas: maintain depression
 - Negative cognitive triad:
 1. Negative view of the self
 2. Negative view of world
 3. Negative view of future
 - Ever present, always influencing perceptions

Beck's Cognitive Model of Depression

Diathesis
Dysfunctional Beliefs

Somatic Disturbances
- can't eat, sleep

Stress
Significant Life Event

Motivational Disturbances

Affective Disturbances

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Beck's Cognitive Model

- Research Support

- Do depressed people exhibit the negative cognitive triad?
- Do depressed people process information in a negatively biased and distorted fashion?
 - Different activation hypothesis (Teasdale) Some people think more about neg. thoughts than others, suffer more severe depression.
 - Process negative information faster
 - More negative self-relevant thoughts
- Are dysfunctional beliefs a vulnerability factor in the development of depression?
 - Happen to occur along w/ depression
 - Don't necessarily cause it

Cognitive Models

- Depression results from ways we process self-relevant information
- Attribution Models
 - Attributions we make about negative life events influence the onset, magnitude, and duration of depression
- Reformulated Learned Helplessness Model
 - Dog being shocked w/ no escape
 - Desired outcomes beyond control
 - Stable, internal, and global attribution
- Hopelessness Model
 - Negative attributions
 - Internal, global, and stable
- Model:

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- Negative attributional style
 - should be same responses (internal, stable, global) for both positive and negative events

Attributional Models (Research Support)

- Do currently depressed people exhibit a negative attributional style?
 - Yes!
- Does a negative attributional style, combined with a stressful life event, predict the development of depression?
 - Yes!
 - Genetically inhibited, emotional abuse

Attributional Processes

- Influence the severity and duration of depressive episodes
- Self-awareness
 - Positive relationships between depression and private self-consciousness
- Ruminative coping style
 - Individual differences in tendencies to ruminate about symptoms and the consequences of symptoms
 - Ruminate about depression itself
 - lead to longer and more severe depression
 - Expressed by women more than men

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- unwanted thinking
 - difficulty suppressing negative thoughts
- Summary Model: Emphasizing Self-Relevant Processes
 - Look on slides

Weary + Williams

- Depression might have self presentational aspects
 - can self handicap in ways to protect themselves from poor performances in the future (no second chance at failure)
- Manipulate other people with their depression
 - to get attention, what they want, etc...
- Experiment
 - 4 groups of people
 1. Repressed expectations of future task
 2. Not depressed, expectation of future task
 3. Repressed, no expectation
 4. Not depressed, no expectations

First group strategically failed so they wouldn't have to complete a second task

- resulted in greater negative affect

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- Positive Allusion

- Tendency to engage in overly positive self evaluations
- Pervasive, enduring, and systematic

Three Classes of Allusions

1. Positivity Bias

- Rate ourselves more positively in comparison to others
 - less negatively

2. Judgments of Control

- Seeing ourselves as having more control over outcomes than we actually have

3. Unrealistic Optimism

- More optimistic about our futures than other peoples future

Normative Model

- Accurate self-knowledge is characteristic of mental health

- Accuracy and bias in self-evaluations
- Accuracy and bias in judgments of control
- Accuracy and bias in judgment of the future

- Brown says most of the time most of us exhibit those allusions

- Important of mental health

- Discrepancy in these allusions for depressed people

- They don't display these biases as much (to a lesser extent)

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Do People Believe what they Report?

◦ Sample limitations

- Usually college students

- Some reason behind thinking you are better than average

- But do rate selves better on irrelevant characteristic

- Positive illusions characterst across all age groups

◦ Alternative explanations:

- Self-Presentation

- Positivity used to get other people to view us in positive ways

- Display positivity in private, so self-presentation not valid

- Self-deception

- Believe what we present to others

- Protect ourselves from negative information about the self

- Used for enhancement

1. Self-deception enhancement

2. Self-deception denial

* Positive self denial relevant in regards to illusions

- Repressive Realism

- Depressed people more accurate in self-knowledge

- Don't engage in illusions as much

◦ Cultural Limitations

- Independent self construal displays more bias than interdependent

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Unrealistic Optimism (Heine + Lehman)

- Assessed cultural differences in unrealistic optimism
 - Canada
 - Japan
- Expected to see less optimism w/ Japanese compared to Canadian students
- Expected to find differences in the constructs underlying unrealistic optimism between the two cultures
 - Psychological Control
 - Availability of Stereotypes
 - How easily they could image people for whom that outcome would be true
 - Independent: constantly comparing ourselves to other people

Study 1

- Unrealistic optimism
 - Canadians > Japanese
 - for both positive and negative events
- Feelings of control and availability of stereotypes
 - Canadians > Japanese
 - Pos + Neg
- Correlations between optimism, controllability, and stereotype availability
 - Canadians > Japanese

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Study 2

- Severity of events
 - Canadians: Independent > Interdependent
 - Japanese: Interdependent > Independent
 - Severity of interdependent: Japanese > Canadians
- Controllability of Events
 - Canadians > Japanese
 - Japanese: Interdependent > Independent
- Imagining Stereotypes
 - Canadians: Independent > Interdependent events
 - Canadians > Japanese for both types of events

In Conclusion...

- Canadians: More unrealistic optimism than Japanese for both independent and interdependent events
- Japanese: More self-evaluating views across estimates
- People w/ interdependent

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Another Study

- Compared to Canadians, Japanese:
 - Show less unrealistic optimism
 - Show fewer illusions of control
 - Show less positivity bias
- Not the case that illusions do not occur in collectivistic societies, they are just more modest.

Mental Health Criteria

- Subjective state of happiness or well-being
- Capacity to form/maintain satisfying relationships
- Ability to engage in productive/meaningful work
- Capacity to grow/mature by successfully coping w/ life's challenges

* People who meet these criteria have positive illusions

Happiness

- Happy people
 - Think and feel positively about themselves
 - Have feelings of personal control
 - Are optimistic about their futures

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Relationships

- Satisfying interpersonal relationships
 - Idealistic perceptions of partner
 - Own relationship is superior to other
 - Own relationship is more likely to endure
- Stranger marriages
 - Self-verification, even if negative
 - Resive to be understood as they understand themselves
 - Central to development of intimacy

Work

- Positive views of ability and high expectations of success
 - work harder
 - Persist longer
 - Perform better
- Strong belief in personal control
 - Exert more effort
 - Perform better

Stress & Coping

- Strong sense of perceived control
 - Feel better about themselves/situation
 - Cope more effectively
 - Perform better

... reduced anxiety and increased tolerance enhance ability to cope

- Perceived control as important as actual control

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- Strong Sense of optimism
 - cope more effectively
 - Recover faster following surgery

... constructive, problem-oriented focus

Overly Positive Self-Evaluations (Colvin, Block, and Funder)

- Self evaluations vs. External criteria
 - Independent descriptions of observers and friends
- For both genders
 - Negative impressions of self-enhancers
 - Suggests negative psychological adjustment
- Accurate appraisals of self are essential to positive mental health

Cost of Positive Illusions

- Overly positive self-views
 - Narcissism
 - Grandiose, exhibitionist, entitlement, & exploitative
 - Judged negatively by others
 - Interpersonal violence
 - Repressive coping style
 - Fail to acknowledge/attend to physiological stress

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Costs of Positive Illusions

- Exaggerated perceptions of control

- Maladaptive persistence

- Mixed evidence of this

- Self-Regulatory Failure

- High self esteem set goals too high

- when ego involvement involved

- Excessive optimism

- Ignore safety considerations

- Fail to take precautionary behaviors

- Mixed evidence

* Only excessive illusions hurt us