

Behaviour self perception



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Behaviour can be described as ‘conscious or unconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary’. Subsequently it is of great interest to the study of psychology. It allows psychologist to predict mood, understand and treat abnormality. Self perception is said to tie into the type of behaviour we demonstrate. According to *self-perception theory* (Daryl Bem’s, 1967), people come to a conclusion concerning internal characteristics from their or other people’s behaviour. They combine thoughts and feelings and other people’s reactions to gauge opinions about themselves. It can be simply described as a change of attitude. Self-perception theory is a case of attribution primarily concerned in the ways in which people “explain (or attribute) the behavior of others, or themselves (self-attribution), with something else.” The factors that this paper will focus on are the influence of others on both the behavior we demonstrate and the influence on the perception of ourselves.

The demonstration of frowns, snubs and other more negative types of reaction reminds people in social situations that they have crossed certain boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Thus the demonstration of, smiles, praise, and other positive responses are drawn out by acceptable behaviour (Shaffer, 1982). This is the type of information a high self-monitoring person or persons that constantly review their behaviour are reported to seek (Snyder & Cantor, 1980). According to self-monitoring theory, behavioural tendencies made in social environment are established from “firstly situational and interpersonal definitions of behavioural appropriateness, and secondly the actor’s awareness of his or her personal

values, attitudes, and psychological state individuals differ (White and Gerstein, 1987).” This demographic constantly reviews and adapts their behaviour to fit these sanctions, high self-monitoring persons should, therein, be able to benefit from the appropriateness of their behaviour and the potential for ‘ social profit’.

An important distinction to make when analysing the relationship between self perception and behaviour is between self esteem and self acceptance. These are two keys areas that decide how an individual views themselves. Mancinnes D. L, (2006) studied the parallel between self esteem, acceptance and the impact on psychological health. The results showed that people in poor psychological health i. e. high levels of depression, anxiety were more likely to have a low self acceptance and self esteem than those from the general population. The concept of self esteem and self acceptance would held to be similar but not ‘ synonymous’ with the other. Higher levels of self esteem were seen to be closely associated with lower levels of depression. Self acceptance seemed to more associate with a general feeling of psychological well being, in particular helpful when undertaking clinical help for psychiatric problems. This seems to reinforce existing findings of Sorgaard *et al.* (2002).

Research carried out by (Neihart & Roeper, 2006) on Dimensions of ‘ Underachievement, Difficult contexts, and Perception of Self’ highlights the difficulties that achievement has on gifted students when they associate said achievement, attitudes or behavior with certain ethnic, gender or cultural differences. The study suggest that smarter children from lower class backgrounds are perceived as weak, children in the same school class will

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invariably project their flaws onto the smarter child. This will enable the smarter child to feel what the weaker child feels like. It is from this the smarter child often reviews via self-monitoring the behavior they demonstrate in front of weaker children often playing down academic effort and achievement. This would appear to reinforce an ultra-strict method of self-monitoring theory as suggested above. The impact of school on certain children, including disabled pupils, and the way they viewed their global self-worth was studied by (Bear, Korterling & Brazier, 2006). It was inferred that non-completers would score lower than pupils that graduated. This, however, was not the case. No significant difference was found. This suggests that the key to school completion, is not student academic skill level, but the application of such skills i. e. motivation to finish homework, attend class, avoid discipline. Further research should be carried out to see how school completers/non-completers apply the skills they have learnt, whether they attend further education and what motivation and strategies are most beneficial to them.

Are there specific attributions an individual holds to be effective in a social environment? In the development understanding of pro-social behaviour the impact of 'egoism' and 'hedonism' in acts of kindness i. e. helping, has been addressed in certain theoretical treatments of pro-social behaviour (White & Gerstein, 1987). The primary issue being what motivates people to help. One area to focus on is whether the cost/reward ratio influences people to help. "Evidence indicates that under most conditions the consequences for helping, whether tangible or intangible, do indeed influence the likelihood that assistance will be given" (Lerner & Meindl, 1981). 185 students

participated in the first section of the study carried out by White & Gerstein, 1987. They completed an hour-long survey. In the survey was Snyder's (1974) Self-Monitoring Scale. Part two of the study was conducted four weeks later. Students either heard one of two lectures, these were tailored towards strong or weak social sanctions. It was concluded from the results of the survey and lecture that high self-monitoring individuals helped more when faced with extrinsic pressure and not as indicated by existing research that egoism played a significant role in motivating high self-monitoring individuals to help. Further a level of significance could be placed on egoistically relevant information presented by an external actor up to a month before they were asked to participate in helping. This proves that this motive had considerable strength. Low self-monitoring persons, as previously reported, appeared to have far less interest in social rewards attached to the behaviour they demonstrated. From this it was inferred that their decision to help was not based on expected social sanctions. The potential weaknesses of this research are the accounts of people helping at significant cost to themselves with little reward. What do the role of other human emotions such as empathy, self-esteem, and responsibility have in influencing helping? Is cost and reward more 'cognitively salient' to high against low self-monitoring individuals or are low self-monitoring individuals choosing to ignore these ramifications.

The role of egoism is also a key factor in understanding children's perception of social status. Sandstrom & Herlan, (2007) allowed 94 participants to take a social status score test. The difference was measured between actual and perceived scores, thus establishing an ego scale of the sample size. Also

measure was the participant's reaction to both positive and negative feedback. It was found in support of existing studies that egotism was associated with aggressive reputation in the classroom. However the development of the existing research is both timely and necessary, it showed the paradoxical view that aggressive behaviour in the classroom is not always associated egotism but associated with an over pessimistic view of self, particular in response to negative feedback from a peer. Self esteem was associated with behaviour of a retaliatory nature in response to a negative feedback condition. This suggests that perhaps the experimenters didn't take into account for the mental well being of the participants in pre selection. Further that their results could have been compromised by participants who were generally in a state of depression or had other psychological problems. This could have been rectified by asking potential participants to take a pre-test evaluation to test suitability.

The idea of self monitoring is influenced from an early age whether consciously or subconsciously. Cassidy & Conroy, (2001) addressed the issue of external influences at maternal stage of the child/parent relationship and the impact that has on the child's self esteem. It was hypothesized that maternal and autonomy support would increase a child's school and sport perceived competence. In turn their perceived competence would contribute to their self esteem. It was found that the child's perceived competence in both domains positively contributed to their self esteem. At this early stage in a child's development their self esteem would be a contributing factor as to how they would monitor their own behavior. It could also have an impact on whether they are a high or low self monitoring individual. A key method

employed by several experimenters involves the use of sport/exercise to further understanding of self esteem and emotional well being. This is due to the social outlet that sport provides as well as reducing the risk of problems such as cardiovascular disease and obesity. Research carried out by (Donaldson & Ronon, 2006) examined the relationship between sports participation and emotional well being. The results showed in particular to children who were perceived to be good at sport had far less emotional and behavioral problems, further that increased levels of sports participation had a positive impact on emotional well being and self perception. A key development in this study was that the estimation of a child's physical ability may have some influence between physical activity and self-esteem. However based on this finding the study failed to acknowledge the importance of measuring, before the experiment was carried out, the participant's self-perceptions of competence, ability, and fitness.

The role of sporting events, behaviour and self perception was developed further by Voyer & Kinch in the study of 'The Home Disadvantage'. An assertion made by Baumeister and Steinhilber 1984, suggested that home crowd support may act as a disadvantage on the home team's performance in a knockout championship or tournament especially if the team members were trying to become champions for the first time. They stated that the prospect of a 'desired identity change' (i. e., seeing themselves as champions) would increase self-attention (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Further that a supportive audience should increase self-presentation worries because it should help define or favour the redefinition. In contrast an explanation of

the effect of arousal on performance was measured on the same circumstances.

The existing research had developed the idea that teams perform more positively away from their home venue in critical games, this involved ‘reference to redefinition of the self’. This explanation reinforced the assertion that the home disadvantage should not be prevalent when redefinition of the self is not involved, just like the cases in which a team can repeat in consecutive years as the winner of a tournament. The new research has developed this idea further; it has narrowed the home game problem to specifically the final round of a championship, using a sample of NHL Hockey teams as its main sample. It was found that is the only time when the participant’s self-redefinition is more likely to occur. Paradoxically arousal would be more advantageous in the championship round than in the non championship round for first-time winners primarily because they are closer to their goal. One major disadvantage with the sample used in this experiment is the teams in the NHL are given more home games in the playoffs and championships. This is a reward for success in the regular season. It is important to consider the implication of this on the present findings of this study.

Previous research has shown that failure to thrive at infancy has a significant impact on how children view one self, more specifically body image, emotional development and appetite. (Drewett, Corbett & Wright, 2006) suggest that children who failed to thrive at infancy are significantly shorter and has less of an appetite in comparison to their best friend. In the development of the relationship between the child and their parents, some

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researchers have stated that children are 'passive recipients' (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969; Bowlby, 1969). Other research has discovered that some children were more biologically prone than their counterparts in developing secure attachments this can lead to clinical conditions such as depression. Bostik & Everall, (2007) developed this idea and looked at adolescents views of suicide and attachment relationships. The onus was put on the important of attachment relationships and the influence these had on the adolescent's view of their self perception, the world and the stem of suicidal feelings with in them. Cristina & De Minizi, (2006) addressed the parallel between Loneliness and Depression in Middle and Late Childhood and Relationship to attachment and Parental Styles. It was found that parent's acceptance would create an emotional stability in the child's subconscious therein positively affecting the view of self. Further that lack of interest by the father would negatively affect this view. Differences' were found in the influences and perceptions of both mothers and fathers. This was said to follow 'cultural patterns of gender attribution.' The role of caregivers, who respond favourably to children's demands, is said to increase the children's understanding of social relations and subsequently a desire to learn and adjust with the normality of their social world (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974; Kochanska, 1993). With this in mind caregivers nurture the development of social competence. This is essential for the development of self-control and cognitive development. Other similar models, which are provided by people who are significant to the children through their type of relationship, may influence pro-social behaviour. The significance of this study is minimal, already relying heavily on existing knowledge on the parent/child relationship this study only seeks to reinforce the general idea

of what is considered an effective or ineffective parent, further the impact that has on the child.

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2. When writing the introduction, start off with a research question (e. g., cognitive abilities of infants), progressively narrow it (category formation in

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infants), and finally state the specific lines of research you will be discussing (eight recent articles on infant discrimination of basic-level categories for concrete objects). You want to establish a brisk but even pace when moving from a broad topic to a specific topic, avoiding sudden jumps that will lose your reader.

3. Describe each article (or each line of research, depending on what makes sense), then compare them. Comparisons are essential; descriptions alone are not illuminating. What do you compare? The possibilities include: research assumptions, research theories tested, hypotheses stated, research designs used, variables selected (independent and dependent), equipment used, instructions given, results obtained, interpretation of results, researcher speculations about future studies. Your job is to determine which factors are relevant. All studies have strengths and weaknesses. Finding them will help you make meaningful comparisons.