

Development of the social self

Psychology



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The ability to develop and maintain a consistent and functional sense of the self in the increasingly superficial and anonymous interpersonal context of modern mass societies is widely believed to be one of the cornerstones of personal and social success (Forgas and Williams, 2003). According to Freud's theory, the self is developed as the result of the conflict between id, ego, and superego (Bakhurst and Sypnowich, 1995). Chapter 2 discusses the development of the self as the result of comparing the self-concept of who the person thinks he is and the possible selves as images of what the person dreams of or dreads becoming in the future. Within the social identity approach, the self is taken to comprise both personal and social identity. The developmental study of the social self is important because the social identities of adults mobilize specific forms of group-related perception and actions. The understanding of the relation between social self-conceptions and social action becomes vitally important because social identity creates and defines the individual's place in society. According to Tyler and Kramer (1998), there are several types of behavior: (a) individualism with high outcomes for oneself; (b) altruism and collectivism with high outcomes for others but low outcomes for oneself; (c) cooperation with high outcomes for both; (d) competition with high outcomes for oneself, but low outcomes for others; and (e) aggression with low outcomes for both. Every single person has someone to support, inspire, and motivate for further personal and professional development. Such actions as supporting a person's dreams, strengthening a positive self-image, and inspiring for further improvements have a profound and long-lasting impact. By helping people connect to their sense of optimism and individual vision of the ideal self, people can highly motivate and energize others for better learning, development, and change

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(Bennett and Sani, 2004). The main idea of the self discussed in Chapter 2 is that usually, people tend to overestimate what others think about them, thus, their behavior is limited and controlled by fear, lack of confidence, and social stereotypes. When people speak in public, for instance, they usually feel nervous and think it is obvious to others. Though, if to explain about spotlight effect and the illusion of transparency (informed condition), people become more confident while speaking in public and felt better about their speech and appearance than those in the control and reassurance conditions. The development of the self starts at an early age when children learn to understand themselves through the perception of the surrounding world and in relation to certain social groups. In the process of developing a theory of mind, children and adolescents gradually learn that people have thoughts, feelings, motives, and behavior different from their own. The interpersonal skills are developed and nurtured through the relation to the family, friends, school mates, university mates, colleagues, and other people (Bennett and Sani, 2004). Chapter 2 further discusses the sense of individualism and collectivism compared between industrialized Western cultures that have independent self and those in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America that have an interdependent self. Such a different perception of the self in these cultures creates different attitudes and behavior among people. The self-schema organizes and guides the elements of individual self-concept and specific beliefs when people tend to process efficiently and remember information relevant to their self-concept, known as the self-reference effect. In such a way, the self-concept has become a major social-psychological focus because it helps organize thinking and guide social behavior (Tyler and Kramer, 1998). The self-concepts are <https://assignbuster.com/development-of-the-social-self/>

determined by several factors, including the roles people play, the social identities, social comparisons with others, successes and failures, judgments by others, and the surrounding culture. Usually, there is a tendency among people to think better of themselves if others think well about them. In reality, such perception is based not on what others actually see, but what people imagine others see. The chapter continues discussing the issue of predicting human feelings and behavior, which are usually overestimated by people who tend to exaggerate the desired behavior with the actual one. To understand the individual self better, it might be useful to apply self-analysis because the mental processes that control human social behavior are distinct from the mental processes through which people explain their behavior (Forgas and Williams, 2003). In such a way, each individual tends to self-present, which presumes to present the desired image both to an external audience (other people) and to an internal audience (themselves).