

Social self and its manifestations sociology essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The self-concept involves how we think about and evaluate ourselves. In psychology self means the collection of cognitively held beliefs that a person possesses about themselves. However it is also seen that the “ self” is an important tool with the help of which human beings make their mark in the society and manage themselves to satisfy and fulfil their needs. Traditionally the concept of “ self” was seen as a tool which only represented the stable, genetically determined character or which later came to be called as “ personality”. Though recently it was found that “ self” keeps on evolving throughout the lifetime of person. With more developments in science and research it has been found that “ self” is seen as dynamic and changeable, hierarchical, situationally and cognitively influenced and culturally constructed.

In marketing field it is seen that every customer has a unique image of himself/herself. These self-images or perceptions of self have close relationship with personality, customers tend to buy those products and services whose images or personalities they can relate in a meaningful manner. The purpose of self is to gain social acceptance and play social roles, the society creates and defines roles, and the individual seeks and adopts them. For example farmer, soldier, businessman etc. are all various roles in a society pursued by individuals. Aristotle the Greek philosopher said “ man is by nature a social animal, an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual”. This is where the social self comes into picture. In social self a significant portion of “ self” and its “ behaviour” are socially directed and influenced. The social self and

socialization comprise of an intrinsic bond which is inseparable when it comes to identity formation. Socialization is imminent and inevitable consequence of human existence in society, the reason why an individual receives inclusion into society is to produce social and cultural continuity. Thus it is seen socialization plays a vital role in the prevalence of a culture and without adequate forms of socialization, culture may cease to exist. An individual's life depends on other individuals, human infants are born unable to care for themselves. Their survival depends on another individual's efforts. Thus the relation with individuals is the key not only to survive but also to fulfil needs, desires, attain success and reach highest potential.

Sociology and marketing are closely interrelated. Marketing involves creating the value for people, making it accessible, retaining old customers and attracting new ones. It is hard to create and spread it without understanding human relations and behaviour of consumers. Once marketers understand how consumers think, what makes them tick, why do they choose specific products and services compared to other ones then they will be able to pitch their product/service in more efficient and visible manner. This in turn will be beneficial for the company as well, as with increase in sales profit will rise and eventually more and more consumers will begin to buy products/services. So sociology and marketing do not involve focus groups or media, they involve real life observations and digging into human nature and nature of interactions. Social media and the digital technology are just enhancers of social behaviour. Human beings just keep interacting and express themselves and their opinions, in the current scenario which is powered by technology that makes it wider and allows them to reach more

people. The motivations remain the same as before social media – belonging and conviviality, to mention two most relevant drivers.

Development of concept of self has two aspects:-

The existential self – this is the most basic part of self-concept, sense of being separate and distinct from others and the awareness of the constancy of self. According to psychoanalysts the existential self begins as young as two to three old and rises in part due to relation the child has with the world. For example when the child smiles and someone smiles back.

The categorical self – the self can be put in categories such as age, gender, size or skill. In early childhood the categories children apply to themselves are very concrete. Later, self-description also begins to include reference to internal psychological traits, comparative evaluations and to how others see them.

Social Self and Self Image:-

The social self is simply any idea, or system of ideas, drawn from the social life that the mind cherishes as its own. The social self involves how the society perceives the individual, and the ideal social self involves how the individual would like the society to perceive him/her. In a society individuals are unique and different from one another however their “ self” is thoroughly socially constructed. The social self can include ethnicity, gender, age, and place of residence or any other categorization that helps characterize a person’s identity. There are two types of socialization: primary and secondary. Primary socialization involves the beginning stages of accepting social ideologies like for example a child’s embrace into cultural practices

and norms. Secondary type of socialization manifests on primary and becomes the true test of identification and the social self. The social self exists within the parameters of subjective reality, but selfhood is a part of larger objective reality that is intrinsically connected with socialization. Without socialization the social self and identity would not exist. Social self is on-going process combining the “ I” and the “ me”. In this on-going process social self is influenced by four factors:-

The “ I” – the unpredictable and unorganised self.

“ Me” – the image of the social self seen through other people’s reactions.

The generalized other – organized set of information about the general expectations and attitudes of a social group.

Significant others – a person or persons who have great influence on one’s behaviour and self-esteem.

The social self maintains complete cohesion based on its societal influences, the generalized other and primary socialization respectively. A number of theories explain how people become socialized and develop a sense of self. The looking-glass self refers to the interactive process by which we develop an image based on how the individual imagines he/she appears to others. Other people act as a mirror, reflecting back the image we project through their reactions to our behaviour. Seeing oneself as how others perceive is only the beginning. Eventually one sees how others see us, but also takes on or pretends to take the roles of others. This act of role-taking forms the basis

of the socialization process by allowing us to anticipate what others expect of us.

The figure on next page (fig-1) shows the hierarchy of social self and the various components that govern social self.

Fig-1

Throughout history individuals have been thought to have a single self-image and to be interested as consumers, in products and services that satisfy that single self. When consumer behaviour is taken into consideration, the idea of individual embodying a number of different selves suggests that marketers should target their products and services to consumers within the context of a particular self. Every individual has a certain image of himself or herself with certain traits, skills, habits, possessions, relationships, and ways of behaving. Individuals develop their self-images through interactions with people, initially their parents and then other individuals or groups with whom they relate over the years.

It is the image people create of themselves that is the psycho-cultural basis of their strengths and weaknesses, triumphs and failures. For a nation's self-image tends to be self-fulfilling. If individual thinks that he/she will be defeated, then he/she has already lost the cause. If one thinks he or she is inferior, then one will tend to lower standards and will be satisfied. Negative self-images, whether individual or collective, can cause untold social and cultural damage. Human beings have nothing to lose by creating and working for the most exalted and inspiring images of themselves, because, as scholar Dr. Perlas " any social self-image is a self-fulfilling prophecy

<https://assignbuster.com/social-self-and-its-manifestations-sociology-essay/>

anyway". Some people may ask how one person can be a potent force for social transformation, but as the prominent leader in Indian nationalism Mahatma Gandhi once remarked " if you like the world to change, you can before by being the change you want to see in the world".

Today, seemingly immutable ideas about people and organizations are being directly challenged and transformed on an unprecedented scale. Indeed, as human beings are moving towards a post-modern global society they are breaking out of their parochial perspectives and are recognizing that organizations in all societies exist in a wide array of types and species and functions within a dynamic spectrum of beliefs and lifestyles. A significant leading light towards this expansive direction is the illumination provided us by the profound insights of scholar Dr. Nicanor Perlas. His radical message is that " organizations are products of human interaction and imagination rather than some blind expression of an underlying natural order". This contemporary insight is still shattering many beliefs-one of which is the longstanding conviction that bureaucracy, oligarchy, and other forms of hierarchical domination are inevitable. In direct contradiction to materialist and behaviourist doctrine, where everything is supposed to be governed from below upward through micro determinist stimuli and physiochemical forces, the new ideational view upheld by scholar Dr. Perlas gives subjective mental phenomena a causal role in brain processing and thereby a new legitimacy in science as an autonomous explanatory construct. Future reality, in his view, is " permeable, emergent, and opens to the mind's causal influence". That is, reality is conditioned, reconstructed, and often profoundly created through individual's anticipatory images, values, plans,

intentions, beliefs, and the like. To a far greater extent than is normally acknowledged, he asserts that human beings create their own realities through symbolic and mental processes and, because of this consciousness evolution of the future is a human option. It is the image of which in fact determines what might be called the current behaviour of any organism or organization. The image acts as a field. The behaviour consists in gravitating toward the most highly valued part of the field. By deliberately changing the internal image of reality, people can change the world. This is what led Einstein to admit that “imagination is more important than knowledge”.

All individuals hold self-images, images of their race, profession, nation, and cultural belief systems; the underlying images held by a civilization or culture has an enormous influence on its fate. Human beings also have images of their own potential as well as the potential of others. According to mind-body studies, merely an anticipatory image, for example, of a hostile encounter can raise one’s blood pressure as much as the encounter itself. Similarly, numerous new studies now show that consciously constructed images can lead directly to such things as blood glucose increases, increased gastric acid secretion, blister formation, and changes in skin temperature and pupillary size. The positive image of the future is the single most important dynamic and explanatory variable for understanding cultural evolution: “Any student of the rise and fall of cultures cannot fail to be impressed by the role played in this historical succession of the future”. The rise and fall of images of the future precedes or accompanies the rise and fall of cultures. As long as a society’s image is positive and flourishing, the

flower of culture is in full bloom. Once the image begins to decay and loses its vitality, the culture does not long survive.

Digital trends set to trigger changes in the social self:-

1. The inner circle: Individuals seek to mirror their social personas in the digital world. But so far, digital has forced individuals to bring together not only their social selves, but also their professional and familial ones, and present a single persona to everyone they keep in contact with online. The average Facebook user has 130 friends, from best friends to new acquaintances. Examples: Google circles, Facebook Groups, Twitter Lists
2. Personalized news: It is seen that human beings currently create more information in a year than they ever have historically. Understandably, overwhelmed by the plethora of information online, people need ways to navigate relevant information and choose what to read. Already, RSS feeds and social networks facilitate the process through integration with news sites that allow users to generate passive status updates by posting content to the wall. Now applications that sort content based on digital friendship are emerging. The result is social reading is the new standard in online content consumption. Examples: Percolate, News. me, Flipboard, Zite
3. Rent: Today one can get more entertainment for less. The average Netflix user spends over 11 hours per month watching movies. Digital has changed the sense of ownership and the behaviour of renting is extending into categories beyond media and car rental where human beings realize that their use for certain products is limited and therefore does not warrant a

purchase like for instance infant clothes or art for home or office interiors.

Examples: Plumgear. com, Artsicle. com

4. Seamless transactions: People are always demanding that their processes become more efficient, quicker and safer, especially when it comes to their bank account. People can now carry at least one screen with them at all times. 40% of US consumers own a Smartphone, which has become so much more than a phone. Transactions are quickly becoming fully integrated with screens in multiple ways, from paying with their phones to executing financial transactions. Examples: Bitcoins, Google Wallet, Monitise, Square Card, Facebook Credits

5. Home, body, web: Technology is fast reaching a tipping point where it is both sufficiently small and affordable to allow people to monitor their bodies and adapt to their environment automatically. People's interest in leading healthier lifestyles, and automating the process through technology and sharing results and experience, is increasing dramatically. Examples: Nest. com, Jawbone Up

6. Ubiquitous accessibility: Market researchers and data analysts have found that data storage capabilities double every two years, so the demand for data and data accessibility is huge. With the increase in cloud computing usage, physical storage space is becoming obsolete. People access data from multiple devices, whether at home or on the go. Not long ago people stored their digital files locally, but the development of the cloud allows them to store larger amounts online. This is a storage solution that will become more prevalent as companies allow cloud access and service offerings drop

in price. Examples: Bitcasa, DropBox, Google Docs, Instapaper, iCloud, SkyDrive

7. The reliable subscription: Human beings are creatures of habit and they want availability of the products they love in their busy lifestyle. In the past decades people have become an increasingly time-starved society, limiting their availability to maintain routines. Subscription services are utilizing this opportunity to greatest extent possible. Examples: ManPacks, PlaneRed, Lollihop, Memberly

8. Short-term nostalgic obsessions: Nostalgia has always been embedded in culture and society. People like to analyse their recent life through check-ins and status updates and to enhance their tactile experiences by bringing digital things to life. As people become more immersed in digital objects, their desire to revisit the not-so-recent past will increase. Examples: Little printer, Instaprint

9. Location-based discovery: Seeing the same place through someone else's perspective enriches it with new meaning. Interactive websites and mobile social apps are helping people to make creative archives on locations. Examples: Trover, Foursquare Radar, Google Maps, Tour Wrist

10. Control over data: Data has become an intricate part of human life. People are now able to quantify all their digital actions and more services catering to specialized activities have emerged. People are becoming aware of the value of the data they share online, and may start making decisions differently. Examples: Ford Sync, LastFM, Goodreads, reading. am, Voy. url

Manifestations of self in online social networks:-

Over the past 5 years, online social networking sites (OSNs) like Facebook and MySpace have become a central, virtually unavoidable medium for social interactions. OSNs started by catering to specialized communities and niche groups but have since expanded their reach substantially, permeating virtually every stratum and demographic group in the developed world. As such, they now provide fertile, ecologically valid, and empirically tractable domains in which to examine on-going, real-world phenomena and processes in social and personality psychology.

To map out the basic connections between self and OSN behaviour, two descriptive exploratory studies are observed and studied to examine how traits are expressed on Facebook, currently the most widely used OSN in the world. The personality correlates of self-reported Facebook usage and ways in which personality traits are expressed in terms of observable information found on Facebook profiles are also studied as well as the extent to which observers are sensitive to the ways in which personality is manifested on profiles. Two competing hypotheses have been proposed to describe the relationship between offline and online behaviour. The rich-get-richer hypothesis argues that “ individuals with pre-existing social structures and socially adaptive personalities will reap larger social benefits from Internet use and will use the Internet more for social communication” than will “ individuals who are less socially adept”. In contrast, the social-compensation hypothesis argues that individuals who struggle to make social connections in face-to-face interactions will use the Internet as a place to enhance their inter- personal lives by forging social relationships online.

<https://assignbuster.com/social-self-and-its-manifestations-sociology-essay/>

Some early research on aggressive behaviour online suggested that online personality could diverge from offline personality, but others have argued that those studies were based on forms of media in which users had no expectation for future interactions.

Supporting the idea that online social processes mirror those conducted offline, recent research suggests that people largely use online tools to maintain their existing relationships, people who are liked in offline context are also liked online, and mirroring offline findings, those who use OSNs more frequently also possess greater social capital.

Despite this research pointing to similar socialization processes in offline and online contexts, research focusing specifically on personality processes in online contexts is scarce. The deliberate processes by which personality traits become expressed in physical, aural, social, and virtual environments could play the same role in OSNs.

Result and conclusion of the research:-

In two studies, this research revealed a number of connections between personality and Facebook-related behaviour. Extraversion predicted not only self-reported frequency of Facebook usage, but also engagement in the site, with extraverts (vs. introverts) leaving observable traces of higher levels of OSN activity. Consistent with socialization in offline contexts, extraverts seek out virtual social contact and are more engaged during online social experience than are introverts. In the case of social networking sites, this engagement leaves behind a behavioural residue in the form of friend lists, picture postings, and so on. Similarly, rather than providing an opportunity

<https://assignbuster.com/social-self-and-its-manifestations-sociology-essay/>

for conscientious people to loosen their collar, OSNs may instead provide another haven in which low conscientious procrastinators can avoid getting down to work. Openness is also expressed as it is in the offline-world with evidence of exploring new activities, experiencing new people, and changing the photo- graphic scenery. Thus, rather than being an escape from reality, OSN sites exist as a microcosm of people's larger social worlds.

The findings converged with other research to suggest that individuals are able to use observable profile information-be it the number of friends, photos, or another feature-to form accurate impressions of at least some basic personality traits. However, the research also showed that observers seemed to neglect some of the valid cues. These findings showing that some traits are manifested more clearly than others are consistent with the growing body of research showing that different traits are manifested in different contexts.

Conclusion:-

The society plays a crucial role in developing the “ self” of an individual. Self has evolutionary as well as adaptable functions , the self can serve various psychological functions, having a self is not only knowing who you are, what you can do etc, but also how to get along in a group, observe and understand how to contribute in a group and make oneself visible and important figure. Everyone uses social comparison to understand how are they doing and how high or low do they stand in various situations. The social comparison is done to make oneself feel better by downward comparison and for improving oneself the individual has to look through

upward comparison. The self-concept is formed from three major sources of information that humans obtain from others: words, feelings, and behaviours. What one thinks about oneself is often based on other's comments, how one feels about oneself often comes from other's emotional reactions towards individual and how an individual behaves is often in response to other's reactions towards that individual. Another source of information that helps build or reduce self-concept is the set of internal standards used to judge one's performance. If these standards of ideal performance are too high, a person may feel that he or she does not measure up. Consequently, the person develops feelings that devalue a sense of worth, resulting in a low self-concept or self-image in that area. Children often learn these internal standards from watching how their parents, teachers, and peers judge their performance at school and at home.

When social self is discussed, another important aspect is also considered which plays vital role in development of "self", this aspect is socialization. Socialization is a sociological approach that attempts to explain how people learn cultural morals and the responses and emotions that differentiate human beings from animals that are driven merely by the drive to survive and reproduce.

Socialization starts from the assumption that humans are more than animals that do whatever it takes to survive. Instead humans recognize that they are part of a group, and they observe other humans for guiding cues on how they should respond. When a baby is born it observes its mother to learn how emotions work and what the proper response to different events should be. Gradually as the child learns that it is a separate being from its mother

and other humans it learns to think about its own reactions and responses and how they differ from those of other people. In this stage the child may deliberately test things out by trying a different response than the one approved by other people. Eventually, the child settles into a pattern of being able to regulate their own responses and empathize with what others want and how they respond. In this way socialization is a careful dance in which the developing human learns to balance their own independent desires and responses with those of the people around them.