



Understanding The Concept Of Self

Dr. Ramkrishna Buradkar,

Department of education

Asst. Prof.-Bhartiya Shikshan Mahavidyalaya,

Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract-

Self concept refers to the experience of one's own being. It includes what people come to know about themselves through experience, reflection and feedback from others. It is an organized cognitive structure comprised of a set of attitudes, beliefs, values, variety of habits, abilities, out looks, ideas and feelings of a person. Consistency of behaviour and continuity of identity are two of the chief properties of the self-concept.

Self- understanding is the key to the successful resolution of any emotional problem. Self-understanding has aspects as; self esteem and ideal self. This study focuses that why understanding self is necessary to everyone. It is gives strategies of understanding self and improving our self. It tell us about the importance of teacher's role in improving self esteem of students and helps them in understanding themselves.

Keywords- Self concept, understanding self

Introduction -

The self is not something that one finds; it is something that one creates. One should understand himself truly for realistic, satisfactory and truly optimistic life. Our self should be developed in a right direction from early years of age so as to develop our personality. In this respect understanding self is crucial in education.

Baumeister defines Self Concept as, "Self Concept is individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is".

Purkey suggests that self concept is -

- Learned
- Organized
- Dynamic

Carl Rogers believes that the self-concept has three different components;

The view you have of yourself (self image)

How much value you place on yourself (self esteem or self-worth)

What you wish you were really like (ideal self)

Characteristics of Self- Concept:

1. Displays uniquely with each person.
2. Vary from very positive to very negative.
3. Carries emotional, intellectual, and functional dimensions.
4. Changes with the context.
5. Changes over time.
6. Influence the individual's life.

Self understanding-

- Self understanding is awareness of and ability to understand one's own actions.
- Self understanding is the key to the successful resolution of any emotional problem.

Benefits of Self understanding-

- Knowing exactly what is bothering you of feeling bad without knowing why. This in turn will allow you to take the first step towards happiness.
- Not feeling lost because you will know exactly where you fit in life. Whether it's a career or a relationship.
- A solid understanding of others, the more you understand yourself the more you will understand others. Understanding self can be focused mainly as ;

Dimensions of self concept –

Different dimensions may constitute different kinds of self-concept; for example, the dimensions that create “academic self-efficacy” will not have as much overlap with “social self-efficacy.”

- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Self-image (physical)
- Ideal self
- Identities or roles (social)
- Personal traits and qualities (Elliot, 1984; Gekas, 1982)

On the broadest level, self-concept is the overall idea we have about who we are and includes cognitive and affective judgments about ourselves. Self-concept is multi-dimensional, incorporating our views of ourselves in terms of several different aspects (e.g., social, religious, and spiritual, physical, emotional), it is learned, not inherent. It is influenced by biological and environmental factors, but social interaction plays a big role as well. Self-concept develops through childhood and early adulthood when it is more easily changed or updated, It can be changed in later years, but it is more of an uphill battle since people have established ideas about who they are. Self-concept does not always align with reality. When it does, our self-concept is “congruent.” When it doesn't, our self-concept is “incongruent.”

The Development Stages of Self-Concept-

Self-concept develops and changes throughout the lifespan, but it is most in flux during the early years. Early childhood is a ripe time for young humans to perceive themselves in the world.

1. The Formation of Self-Concept during Early Childhood

- **Stage 1: 0 to 2 years-old**

- a. Babies need consistent, loving relationships to develop a positive sense of self.
- b. Babies form preferences that align with their innate sense of self.
- c. Toddlers feel secure with gentle but firm limits
- d. At age two, language skill develops and toddlers have a sense of “me.”

- **Stage 2: 3 to 4 years-old**

- a. Three and four-year-olds begin to see themselves as separate and unique individuals.
- b. Their self-images tend to be descriptive rather than prescriptive or judgmental.
- c. Preschoolers are increasingly independent and curious about what they can do.

- **Stage 3: 5 to 6 years-old**

- a. They are transitioning from the “me” stage to the “us” stage, where they are more aware of the needs and interests of the larger group.
- b. Kindergarteners can use their words to communicate their wants, needs, and feelings.
- c. Five and six-year-olds can use even more advanced language to help define themselves within the context of the group (Miller, Church, & Poole).

- **Self-Concept in Middle Childhood (about 7 to 11 years-old)**

During middle childhood children are beginning to develop a sense of their social selves and figuring out how they fit in with everyone else. They reference social groups and make social comparisons more often, and begin to think about how others see them.

- More balanced, less all-or-none descriptions
- Development of the ideal and real self
- Descriptions of the self by competencies instead of specific behaviours
- Development of a personal sense of self (Berk, 2004)

Culture begins to play a big role at this stage, but we'll talk more about that later.

The Development of Self-Concept in Adolescence(about age 12-18)

Adolescence is where the development of one's self-concept really explodes. This is the stage in which individuals play with their sense of self, including a time when they experiment with their identity, compare themselves with others, and develop the basis of a self-concept that may stay with them the rest of their life.

During this period, adolescents are prone to greater self-consciousness and susceptibility to the influence of their peers and chemical changes happening in the brain (Sebastian, Burnett, & Blakemore, 2008).

In adolescence, there are two important factors that influence self-concept and self-worth:

1. Success in areas in which the adolescent desires success.
2. Approval from significant people in the adolescent's life.
3. When students have a healthy sense of self-worth and self-esteem, they contribute to a greater self-concept.

Examples of Self-Concept-

Self-concepts are rarely all positive or all negative; someone may have both positive and some negative self-concepts in different domains (e.g., a husband who thinks of himself as a good father but sees his physical self as out-of-shape and unhealthy or a student who think so themselves as a great athlete who struggles academically).

Some examples of positive self-concepts include:

- A person sees herself as an intelligent person;
- A man perceives himself as an important member of his community;
- A woman sees herself as an excellent spouse and friend;
- A person thinks of himself as a nurturing and caring person;
- A person views herself as a hard-working and competent employee.

On the other side, these people could have negative self-concepts like:

- A person sees herself as stupid and slow;
- A man perceives himself as expendable and a burden on his community;
- A woman sees herself as a terrible spouse and friend;
- A person thinks of himself as a cold and unapproachable person;
- A person views herself as a lazy and incompetent employee.

We all have many of these mini or domain-specific self-concepts that encompass our self-concept. Some may be more positive or negative than others, and each is an important piece of what makes us who we are.

Conclusion-

Understanding yourself takes time and you will learn far more through experiencing life than by interviewing yourself and taking tests. Understanding the concept of self is more important to everyone. If you don't understand yourself you cannot success in your life. As a teacher one should help the students to understand themselves at every level of education through various strategies, accept student's emotions, their feeling, their background, their various concepts and their behaviour. It is important for teachers to explicitly teach children how to set realistic expectations of themselves and their skills.

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