

Self-concept

- Working Self-concept
 - situations may activate different aspects of self-concept
 - * social context
 - agentic traits in work contexts
 - communal traits in family contexts
 - * Social identity – group membership
 - social comparisons
 - only male in the group
 - uw students vs uft students
 - * personality with situation
 - who you are / where you are
 - different people with different situations will lead to different self-concept
 - bad in peers but great in grandparents
- Culture and Social thinking
 - independent self: (north america)
 - * separate from others
 - * autonomous
 - * focus is on individuality and uniqueness
 - interdependent self: (chinese)
 - * connected to others
 - * behaviour, thoughts, and traits are situationally embedded
 - * harmonious relationships are essential
- self-knowledge come from
 - Introspection(内省): looking inward and examining own thoughts, feelings and motives

- Reflected appraisals: looking at other people's reaction to determine if we are doing something as expected

Limitations of Introspection

- unaware of the reasons for our feelings and behaviours
 - center-stage effect
 - implicit egotism
- get wrong when predicting how we will feel and behave in various situations
 - good/bad situation will not affect you in a long term. you will get used to it eventually
 - impact bias: overestimating impact of emotion-causing event
 - negative events: immune neglect
 - * psychological immune system includes strategies for rationalizing, discounting, forgiving and limiting emotional trauma
 - Focal aspect of event
 - * Daily hassles
- Dual Attitude system
 - Explicit (consciously controlled)
 - * what we use to explain our behaviour
 - implicit (automatic)
 - * what actually guides our behaviour
- Predicting Behaviour
 - Why are we often wrong in predicting our behaviour
 - * we underestimate:
 - the power of the situation
 - our motivation to see ourselves and our life positively

- We are better at predicting other people's behaviour
- Center-stage effect
 - preferential bias towards items located in the middle
 - selected items were very similar to each other
 - the position of each item shifted across participants
- Implicit Egotism
 - influences major life decisions
 - * where people live: more people named Louises in St.Louis
 - * what people do for a living: more people named Dena over-represented among dentists
 - * whom they marry
 - people are disproportionately likely to marry other people whose first/last names resemble(像) their own

Limitations of Reflected appraisal

- people may not be honest with us
- people may not notice us as much as we think they do
 - spotlight effect: tendency to overestimate extent to which our actions and appearance are noted by others
- The spotlight effect
 - awareness of this oversensitivity can improve how people cope when they actually are in the spotlight
 - even when blunders are noticed, people do not judge us as harshly as we think

Self-esteem

- Above average effect: people see themselves as better than average on most positive dimensions

- Generally assume: people biased in evaluating selves but more objective about others
 - so selves superior by comparison
 - but story is more complicated
- when domain is more difficult, we have tend to view ourselves less superior than the other
- Favorable Self-Views:
 - Over-emphasize own skills in estimating percentiles
 - * easy tasks: good → boost in self esteem
 - * hard tasks: lousy → protect self esteem by making domain less important
 - this phenomena is in part a self-serving bias, in part self-focused thinking
 - * self-focused thinking: do not consider the average person skills are, instead only focusing on thinking themselves
- How much value people place on themselves
 - high SE: feel good about self
 - * higher life satisfaction
 - * lower depression and anxiety
 - * higher self-efficacy
 - * more confidence in being liked by others
 - low SE: feel less good/uncertain about self
 - low SE does not mean that people do not have self-esteem. **Instead they have self-esteem score lower than average**
- comes from:
 - bottom-up view of self-esteem
 - * smart, attractive and talented lead people have high self-esteem
 - top-down view of self-esteem
 - * high self-esteem leads they believe they are smart, attractive and talented

- better outcomes for HSE?
 - evidence of objective differences is lacking
 - HSE and LSE equally liked by peers, intelligent in working, competent
 - SE has some causal effect on subjective experience over time
 - * depression (medium-sized effect)
 - * relationship and job satisfaction (small to medium effect)
 - * health (very small effect)
 - * occupational status (no effect)
- Dark side of High self-esteem
 - inflated unstable or tentative beliefs in the self's superiority may be most prone to encountering threats and hence to causing violence
 - * narcissistic personality (自恋性格)
 - Key is interaction of HSE and threat
 - * narcissism + HSM is greater aggression than narcissism + LSM
- Raising Self-esteem
 - praising LSM children can backfire (事与愿违的)
 - * person vs process praise → more shame after failure
 - * inflated(过分的, 膨胀的) praise → less challenge-seeking
 - positive self-statement make LSEs more anxious
 - Narcissism "epidemic" (传染)
 - * university students are taking care less about the relationship between others and more focusing on themselves
 - praise for the progress instead of the person
 - teach people maintain relationship to give/receive process praise

Lecture – preserve self-esteem

- self-serving cognitions

- take credit for success and distance from failure
- the more we are using self-serving bias, the more we feel happy ourselves
- we are using stereotype when making the decision → when we experience failure, we are more tending to use our stereotype to preserve our self-esteem
 - * people tends to rate female manager lower than male managers when female managers provide lower rate
 - stereotype: female managers are less good as male manager in decision making
- comparing oneself favorably to others
 - * e.g. I do more xxxx in this relationship
- unrealistic optimism
 - * I am more likely to get a job and own a house than my peers
- false consensus(舆论) and false uniqueness
 - * false consensus: underestimate your false behaviour is / overestimate a false common behavior
 - e.g. I lie, but does not everyone lie?
 - * false uniqueness: underestimate a proper common behaviour is
 - e.g. not all people drink responsibly
- self-handicapping(刻意强调客观原因: 比如课程太多, “生病“, 而不是承认自己的 time management skills 有待提高)
 - often make excuses for **past performance, sometimes make excuses for future performance**
 - behaviours that sabotage performance and provide an excuse for failure
 - * lack of effort/ not practicing
 - * illness
 - * procrastination
 - * drinking or taking drugs
 - protect SE with failure and enhances SE with success

- increases risk of failure (because keep playing video games and using the same excuse)
- Downward social comparisons
 - making comparisons with worse others
 - biased evaluation of your own performance
 - people distort ambiguous feedback in the enhancing direction
 - prefer people whose strengths are different from ours
 - * choosing friends
 - * hiring decisions
 - * romantic partners
- temporal comparisons
 - making comparisons between current self and past self or future self
 - subjective experience of time
 - * subjective distance from courses
 - when think about best grade: really close to now
 - when think about the worst grade: it is really far from now
 - favorable past selves and outcomes feel recent
 - unfavorable past selves and outcomes feel distant
 - manipulate subjective distance of timeline
 - * high school is fairly recent: they judge their current social success relatively low
 - * high school is long time ago: they judge their current social success relatively high
- make you feel good:
 - prevents learning from mistakes
 - increases risk of failure

- alienates others
- decreases motivation to improve further

Reading

- spotlight effect: seeing ourselves at centre stage, thus intuitively overestimating the extent to which others' attention is aimed at us.
- illusion of transparency: feel especially transparent when we feel self-conscious and worry about being evaluated negatively by others
- Social surroundings affect our self-awareness: When we are the ONLY members of our race, gender, or nationality in a group, we notice how we differ and how others are reacting to our difference.
- Self-interest colours our social judgment: When problems arise in a close relationship, we usually attribute(归于) more responsibility to our partners than to ourselves.
 - When things go well at home or work or play, we see ourselves as more responsible
- Self-concern motivates our social behaviour: In hopes of making a positive impression, we agonize(挣扎, 极度痛苦) about our appearance
- Social relationships help define the self: In our varied relationships, we have varying selves

Self-concept: Who am I

- self-schemas: The elements of your self-concept, the specific beliefs by which you define yourself
 - Schemas are mental templates by which we organize our worlds.
 - affects how we perceive, remember, and evaluate other people and ourselves.
 - make up our self-concepts help us organize and retrieve our experiences.
- Social comparison: We compare ourselves with those around us and become conscious of how we differ. We then use others as a benchmark by which we can evaluate our performance and our beliefs.

- privately compare with peers; get happy with other's failure
- social comparison is based on incomplete information.
 - * facebook users used Facebook more often were more anxious, more lonely, and less satisfied with their own lives (
- can also diminish our satisfaction in other ways
 - * When climbing the ladder of success, we tend to look up, not down; we compare ourselves with others who are doing even better
 - * When facing competition, we often protect our shaky self-concept by perceiving the competitor as advantaged.
- looking-glass self: what matters for our self-concept is not how others actually see us but the way we imagine they see us

Self-knowledge

- Predicting behaviour:
 - others are making better prediction on our personal grades/relationship than ourselves
 - planning fallacy: underestimating how long it will take to complete a task
 - improve self-predicting:
 - * The best way is to be more realistic about how long tasks took in the past.
 - * Estimate how long each step in the project will take.
- Predicting feelings:
 - people have the greatest difficulty predicting the intensity and the duration of their future emotions
 - * Hungry shoppers do more impulse buying
 - * When natural disasters, such as hurricanes, occur, people predict that their sadness will be greater if more people are killed
 - * People overestimate how much their well-being would be affected by both bad events and good events

- impact bias: overestimating the enduring(持久的) impact of emotion-causing events.
- self-analyze
 - Perception and memory studies show that we are more aware of the results of our thinking than of the process
 - When the causes of our behaviour are conspicuous and the correct explanation fits our intuition, our self-perceptions will be accurate.
 - Analyzing why we feel the way we do can actually make our judgments less accurate.
 - dual attitudes
 - * automatic, implicit attitudes
 - trusting their guts
 - change more slowly
 - * consciously controlled, explicit attitudes
 - limits of our self-knowledge has two practical implications
 - * psychological inquiry: (Self-reports are often untrustworthy)
 - * our everyday lives: Personal testimonies are powerfully persuasive

self-esteem

- beauty/smart/intelligent leads high self-esteem: bottom-up
- high self-esteem leads taking more care about their appearance: top-down
- Feedback is best when it is true and specific
- people often react more positively to upward comparisons, rather than downward comparisons, to romantic partners
- In relationship:
 - High self-esteem people usually react to a self-esteem threat by compensating for it

- Low self-esteem people, however, are more likely to blame themselves or to give up
- Why maintain self-esteem?
 - alerts us to threatened social rejection, motivating us to act with greater sensitivity to others' expectations
 - social rejection lowers our self-esteem and makes us more eager for approval
- self-esteem tracks how we view ourselves on traits we believe are valued by others
- Self-esteem thus depends on whether we believe we have traits that make us attractive to others, and not necessarily on the traits that we say we value most.
- “terror management theory:
 - humans must find ways to manage their overwhelming fear of death.
 - self-esteem can never be wholly unconditional
 - because of we do not want to believe our life is vain, we must pursue self-esteem
- pursue self-esteem
 - actively pursuing self-esteem can backfire
 - those who pursue self-esteem, perhaps by seeking to become beautiful, rich, or popular, may lose sight of what really makes them feel good about themselves.
 - compassion(同情) – will likely be a better way to achieve higher self-esteem
 - * set compassionate goals, say be supportive → get recognized by roommates and get higher self-esteem
 - The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self

Trade of HSE and LSE

- low in self-esteem are more vulnerable to anxiety, loneliness, and eating disorders
 - trying to boost low self-esteem by repeating positive phrases backfires: actually makes low-self-esteem people feel worse

- They make less money, abuse drugs, and are more likely to be depressed
- Self-esteem was seemingly a symptom of an underlying disease—in this case, a tough childhood
- High self-esteem has other benefits: It fosters initiative, resilience, and pleasant feelings
 - Self-esteem does not cause better academic achievement or superior work performance
 - Folks with high self-esteem, he reports, are more likely to be obnoxious, to interrupt, and to talk at people rather than with them
- Narcissists usually have high self-esteem, but they are missing the piece about caring for others
 - Narcissists weren't aggressive toward someone who praised them
 - Narcissism is also linked to a lack of empathy—the ability to take other people's perspective and be concerned about their problems
 - Narcissists realize that they see themselves more positively than others see them and admit that they are arrogant and exaggerate their abilities
 - they make good first impressions but are often actively disliked in the long run

Self-Efficacy: how competent we feel on a task

- Children and adults with strong feelings of self-efficacy are more persistent, less anxious, and less depressed. They also live healthier lives and are more academically successful.
- self-efficacy leads us to set challenging goals and to persist
- stay calm and seek solutions rather than ruminate on their inadequacy.
- Self-efficacy, then, like self-esteem, grows with hard-won achievements.
- If you believe you can do something, that's self-efficacy. If you like yourself overall, that's self-esteem.
- If you want to encourage someone, focus on her self-efficacy, not her self-esteem.

Self-serving bias

- Winners can easily attribute their successes to their skill, while losers can attribute their losses to chance
- self-serving attributions: attributing positive outcomes to oneself and negative outcomes to something else
- Self-serving bias also appears when people compare themselves with others
- subjective behaviour dimensions (such as “disciplined”) trigger greater self-serving bias than objective behaviour dimensions
- defensive pessimism: a dash of realism;
 - save us from the perils of unrealistic optimism.
 - Students who are overconfident tend to underprepare, whereas their equally able but less confident peers study harder and get higher grades

False consensus and uniqueness

- false consensus: find support for our positions by overestimating the extent to which others agree
 - When we behave badly or fail in a task, we reassure ourselves by thinking that such lapses also are common.
 - occur because we generalize from a limited sample, which prominently includes ourselves
- false uniqueness effect more often occurs
- see our failings as relatively normal and our virtues as relatively exceptional

Temporal Comparison

- with our own past selves are typically flattering to our current selves
- Questing for self-knowledge, we’ re motivated to assess our competence. Questing for self-confirmation, we’ re motivated to verify our self-conceptions. Questing for self-affirmation, we’ re especially motivated to enhance our self-image

Self-handicapping

- Handicaps protect both self-esteem and public image by allowing us to attribute failures to something temporary or external rather than to lack of talent or ability
- known that there is a big event and still plan to relax themselves without fully preparing
→ if failure, then making excuse for last night parties/etc.

self-presentation

- Self-presentation refers to our wanting to present a desired image both to an external audience (other people) and to an internal audience (ourselves)
- students who were told to “put your best face forward” actually made a more negative impression on people they had just met than those who were not under self-presentational demands
- The upside is that self-presentation can unexpectedly improve mood.
- people high in narcissistic traits thrive on Facebook, tallying up more friends and choosing more attractive pictures of themselves to display
- score high on a scale of self-monitoring:
 - act like social chameleons
 - adjust their behaviour in response to external situations
 - less committed to their relationships
 - more likely to be dissatisfied in their marriages
 - rack up more connections online
- low in self-monitoring care less about what others think. They are more internally guided and thus more likely to talk and act as they feel and believe
- Self-presented modesty is greatest in cultures that value self-restraint

learned helplessness

- Depressed or oppressed people, for example, become passive because they believe their efforts have no effect.

- people benefit by training their self-control “muscles.”
- learn how to exert willpower in one area of your life, resisting temptation in other areas becomes easier
- the cost of excess choice:
 - individualistic modern cultures indeed have “an excess of freedom,” causing decreased life satisfaction and increased rates of clinical depression.
 - Too many choices can lead to paralysis(麻痹), or what Schwartz calls “the tyranny of freedom.”
 - * the more choices, the less satisfaction
 - people like and will pay for the freedom to reverse their choices.

summary

- As the person performs or behaves better, self-esteem is encouraged to rise, and the net effect will be to reinforce both good behavior and improvement. Those outcomes are conducive to both the happiness of the individual and the betterment of society