| Module Detail | |
|---|---|
| **Subject Name** | Education |
| **Course Name** | Understanding the Learner |
| **Course Code** | EDU502 |
| **Module Name/Title** | *Self-concept: meaning, components, characteristics and dimensions of self-concept; self-esteem: meaning, types and ways to build self-esteem in students.* |
| **Module Code** | UTL010 |
| **Pre-requisites** | ……………………… |
| **Learning Outcome** | After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to: <ul><li>Identify the level of self-concept amoung learners and enhance it through various dimensions of self-concept.</li><li>To provide opportunities to build self-esteem amoung learners.</li><li>Analyze the ways to build self-esteem in students.</li></ul> |
| **Keywords** | Self-concept, self-esteem |

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# Contents

# 1. Introduction

Self-concept is the overreaching prospective we have on "why we are?" Each of us has our Unique self-concept different from the self-concept of others and their concept of us. The present module contains meaning of self-concept, its various components, characteristics and dimensions. This module also includes meaning of self-esteem and types of self-esteem. The last section of the module includes ways to build self-esteem in students.

# 2. Meaning of self-concept

The concept of self has origin in the earliest history of personality theory. In the 17th century, the philosopher Rene Descartes discussed "Cognito" (awareness of one's own being) as the core of human existence. Sigmund freud used the term "Ego" to refer to the organized aspect of personality. Other theorists such as William James used the term 'self' to describe essentially the same processes. Generally, it has become conventional to refer to the nation of self as perceived object, something of which the individual is aware as his or her conscious experiences, as self-concept. Self-concept is an idea constructed from the beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses to others. One's self concept is largely a collection of beliefs about oneself. It is also called self-construction, self-identity, and self-Perception or self-structure. Generally, it embodies the answer to "Who am I?" In simple terms, the self-concept is used to refer to how someone thinks about; evaluates or perceives himself or herself. To be aware of oneself is to have a concept of self. Self-concept is the image that we have of ourselves. Carl Rogers proposed a distinction between the self-as-actually-perceived (self-concept) and the self-as-ideally-desired (ideal self). The notion of self-concept emphasizes the psychological significance of one's subjective experiences, so that it is more congruent with scientific philosophies of Existentialism and Phenomenology than with the Logical Positivism and Scientific Empiricism. Self-concept is generally thought of as our individual perceptions of our behaviour, abilities and Unique characteristics. It is essentially a mental picture of "who one is as a person?"

Driever (1976) defined self-concept as "the composite of beliefs and feelings that one holds about oneself at a given time, formed from perceptions particularly of others' reactions and directing our behavior."

Rosenberg (1979) stated that, "self-concept is the totality lf an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object."

According to Purkey (1988), "self-concept is often considered as the cognitive thinking aspect of self (related to one's self-image) and generally refers to the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his/her personal existence."

Self-concept is made of one's Self-Schemas and interacts with self-esteem, self-knowledge and social self to form the self as a whole. It includes present, past and future selves (or possible selves), represent individuals' ideas of 'what they might become?' 'What they would like to become or what they are afraid of becoming?' Possible selves may function as incentives for certain behaviour. The perceptions people have about their past and future selves relate to the Perception of their current selves.

According to Carl Rogers, everyone strives to reach an ideal self. Self-concept has three components namely self-image, self-worth or self-esteem and ideal self.

Baumeister (1999) defined self-concept, "as the individual's beliefs about himself or herself including the person's attributes and who and what the self is?"

Baron (2008) stated that self-concept includes all the information and beliefs individuals have about their own characteristics and themselves.

According to Wikipedia, "self-concept or self-identity is the mental and conceptual awareness and persistent regard the sentient beings hold with regard to their own being." John Turner in this theory "The Self-Categorization Theory" states that self-concept consists of two levels: a personal identity and a social one. Self-concept can alternate rapidly between the personal and social identity.

According to Lewis, development of self-concept has two levels:
**(i) The Existential Self:**
This is the most basic part of the self-scheme or self-concept; the sense of being separate and distinct from others and the awareness of the constancy of the self. The awareness of existential self begins as young as two to three months old and arise in part due to the relation the child has with the world.
**(ii) The Categorical Self**
Having realized that he or she exists as a separate experiencing being, the child next becomes aware that he or she is also an object in the world which can be experienced and has properties.

## 2.1. Components of self-concept

From the meaning and definitions of self-concept following components of self-concept can be identified.

### (a) Personal Identity

According Erikson, personal identity is the important component of self-concept which deals with 'who we are?' consisting of our sense of self, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion. Identity is the internal sense of individuality, wholeness and consistency of a person over time and in different situations.

Dreier further divides the component of personal identity of self-concept into:

### (i) The Moral-Ethical Self

It is that aspect of personal identity which functions as observer, standard setter, comparer and most of all, evaluator of who the individual says he or she is. This component of personal self makes judgments that influence an individual's self-evaluation.

### (ii) Self-consistency

It is that component of personal identity that strives to maintain a stable self-image. Even if self-image is negative, because of this need for stability and consistency, the individual resists letting go of the image from which he/she has achieved.

### (iii) Self-Ideal/Self-Expectancy

It relates to an individual's perception of what he or she wants to be, to do or to become. The concept of ideal self-arises out of the perception one has of the expectations of others. Disturbances in self-concept can occur when individuals are unable to achieve their ideals and expectancies.

### (b) Physical Self or Body Image

An individual's image is a personal appraisal of his physical being and includes physical attributes, functioning, sexuality, wellness-illness state and appearance. Physical self is an integrated collection of visual, auditory, tactile and proprioceptive information that combines with affective and cognitive processes to form the image of one's physical self (Robertson 1991). An individual's body image may not necessarily coincide with his or her actual appearance. A disturbance in one's body image may occur with changes in structure and functioning.

**(c) Academic self**

Academic self relates to how well one demonstrates an ability to learn academic content. There are two levels: a general academic self-concept of 'how good one is overall?' and a set of specific content related self- concepts that describe 'how good one is in mathematics, languages, sciences etc.?'

**(d) Social self**

Social -self describes how one relates to other people. Social-self is also described as "looking glass self". Self has meaning only with the social context and it is not wrong to say that social situations define our self-concept and self-esteem.

The concept of 'looking glass self' states that part of how we see ourselves comes from our perception of how others see us. If we are repeatedly labeled and evaluated by others, then self-labeling may occur, which happens when we adopt others' labels explicitly into our self-concept.

**(e) Trans- Personal Self**

Transpersonal self relates to the supernatural or unknown. Transpersonal has been defined as experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos.

**(f) Self-Esteem**

Self- esteem refers to the degree of regard or respect that individuals have for themselves and is a measure of worth they place on their abilities and judgments. Warren (1991) states that self-esteem breaks down into two components (i) the ability to say that "I am important", I matter" and (ii) the ability to say "I am competent", "I have something to offer to others and the world".

Self-esteem is very closely related to other components of self- concept i-e body image, personal identity etc.

## 2.2.  Characteristic of self- concept

Self- concept has following characteristics:

(i) **Organized** In order to arrive at general picture of self, the individuals collect and organise a great deal of information on which they base their percepts.

(ii) **Multifaceted** Self- concept includes areas such as social acceptance, physical attractiveness, academic abilities etc.

(iii)**Multidimensional** Self-concept has different dimensions. Elliot (1984) has mentioned self-esteem, self-worth, self-image, ideal self, identities or roles, social- personal traits and abilities as different dimensions of self- concept.

(iv)**Develops Systematically** The multifaceted characteristics of self- concept are in hierarchy which is developmental in nature. There are various stages of development of self namely self-awareness (infancy), self- recognition (18 months), self-definition (3 years) and self- concept (6-7 years).

(v) **Stable** Though success or failure or superiority in an individual may bring change in his or her self-concept yet it does not change the primary self-concept of the person.

(vi)**Social :**Self- concept is social in nature. As already mentioned social self is called 'looking glass self'. Social situations define our self- concept and self-esteem.

(vii) **Temperamental** Individual's self- concept includes the views about the prevailing emotional states or predominance of a particular kind of emotional reaction.

(viii)**Academic** It includes individuals' views of themselves in relation to school, teachers, curricular and co-curricular activities.

(ix)**Moral** It is the individual's estimation of his or her moral worth which regulates the behavior of an individual in different situations.

(x) **Intellectual** Intellectual component of self-concept deals with individuals' awareness of their intelligence and capacities of problem solving and judgment.

(xi)**Unique** Every individual has unique self-concept because his or her perception about self is unique.

(xii)**Powerful influence** Self-concept has powerful influence on the life of the individual. It regulates every activity of individual's fife.

## 2.3. Dimensions of self-concept

Elliot (1984) has mentioned following dimensions of self- concept.

**(a) Self- Esteem**

 Self- esteem refers to the degree of regard or respect that individuals have for themselves and it is a measure of worth they place on their abilities and judgments.

**(b) Self- Image**

self- image is one's idea of his or her abilities, appearance and personality. Self-image is the mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resistant to change, that depicts

not only details that are potentially available to objective investigation by others, but also items that have been learned by that person about himself or herself either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others.

**(c) Self-Worth** Self-worth is the sense of one's own value or worth as a person. It is a respect for or a favorable opinion of oneself. Self- worth should be less about measuring yourself based on external actions and more about valuing your inherent worth as a person.

**(d) Ideal-Self** Ideal-self is an idealized version of yourself created out of what you have learned from your life experiences, the demands of society and what you admire in your role models.

**(e) Identities** It is the essential aspect of who we are, consisting of sense of self, gender, race, ethnicity and religion. Identity is the internal sense of individuality, wholeness and consistency of a person overtime and in different situations.

**(f) Role Performance** It is the way in which individuals perceive their ability to carry out significant roles. Normal changes in maturation result in changes in the role performance. Fulfillment of role expectations lead to an enhanced sense of self.

## 3. Meaning of self-esteem

Self-esteem is widely used concept both in popular language and psychology. It refers to individual's sense of his or her value or worth or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates or likes himself or herself. Self-esteem refers to the degree of regard or respect that individuals have for themselves and it is a measure of worth they place on their abilities and judgment.

The psychoanalysts' concept of 'superego' concerns evaluative and judgment aspect of the self, providing the theoretical nucleus for the concept self-esteem, referring to those aspects of self-perception that concern the degree to which one likes or dislikes the content of what one perceives.

Warren (1991) states that self-esteem breaks down into two components: (i) the ability to say that "I am important", "I matter", and (ii) the ability to say "I am competent", "I have something to offer to others and the world". Self-esteem is very closely related to other components of self i-e body image and personal identity etc.

Abraham Maslow described two forms of "esteem." The need for respect from others in the form of recognition, success and admiration and the need for self-respect in the form of self-love, self-confidence, skill or aptitude.

According to Blascovich and Tomaka (1991), "self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of self-concept, a broader representation of self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative and affective ones. Construct

of self-esteem is mostly used to refer to global sense of self-worth. Narrower concepts such as self-confidence or body esteem are used to imply a sense of self-esteem in more specific domains.

A leading authority on self-esteem Branden Nathaniel (1995) mentioned six pillars of self-esteem namely (a) the practice of living consciously, (b) the practice of self-acceptance, (c) the practice of self-responsibility, (d) the practice of self-assertiveness, (e) the practice of living purposefully and (f) the practice of personal integrity.

Self-esteem contemplates what needs to be? "I Can" and pride contemplates what has been accomplished? "I Did". Self-esteem is often considered as the affective or emotional aspect of self and generally alludes to how one feels about and values himself or herself. This is sometimes used as a synonym for self-worth.

William James (1890) developed the following formula for the development of self-esteem:

**Self-Esteem = Success/Pretensions**

The formula explains that self-esteem will be created by the individual as he or she reflects on one's behavior related to one's own and others' expectations. An important point is that two people can have exactly the same success, but develop different levels of self-esteem because they or important people in their environment have different levels of expectations.

## 3.1.  Difference between self-concept and self-esteem.

1.  Self-concept is informative in nature and does not lead to evaluation as is in the case of self-esteem.
2.  Self-concept is knowledge about self, whereas there are positive or negative feelings in the self-esteem.
3.  Self-concept is more cognitive aspect about self while self-esteem is more of an evaluation of self and is emotional in nature.
4.  Self-concept answers the question "Who am I?" whereas self-esteem answers the question "Am I good enough?"
5.  Self-concept is formed by the self-perception and perceptions of us by others whereas self-esteem comes only form what one thinks of himself or herself and not what others people think of him or her.
6.  Self-concept is broader and self-esteem in one component of self-concept.

## 3.2. Types of self-esteem

Self-esteem is a very important factor if you want to maintain your well-being. Self-esteem can be vital when forming healthy, positive relationships with those around us.

According to Gloria Gaynor, "self-esteem comes from what you think of you not what other people think of you. There are three types of self-esteem. This does not mean that we can label ourselves with one single type of self –esteem but rather we know that sometimes we feel more exuberant and other times more depressive. It all depends on what is happening in our fives. However, one can know which type of self-esteem predominates in one self. Major types of self-esteem are:

**(a)    Inflated Self-Esteem**

People with this esteem think that they are better than others and have no doubt about underestimating everyone else. This is very negative self-esteem, as it holds them back from establishing affectionate and healthy relations. Their competitiveness is always present and they always want to come out on top. For these people, happiness is found in achieving success, but the reality is that they don't attain happiness with this attitude. People with inflated self-esteem are characterized by their inability to listen to others and to critique themselves. They are not capable of correcting their own errors and as such they are continuously blaming others.

**(b)    High Self-Esteem**

People with high self-esteem accept and value themselves. It is a positive self-esteem, as it manages to make the persons satisfied with their lives. The confidence in oneself and the courage to face any problem that may arise make everything much easier.

According to Branden Nathaniel," Persons of high self-esteem are not driven to make them superior to others; they do not seek to prove their value by measuring themselves against a comparative standard. Their joy is being who they are; not in being better than someone else. However, this does not make them arrogant, nor do they feel better than anyone else." There are some people who are not able to maintain this high self-esteem constantly and can indeed be seen off balance.

**(c)    Low Self-Esteem**

People with low self-esteem are opposite to those having high self-esteem. They do not value themselves and do not trust their possibilities. Insecurity that they may be feeling is carried over into almost every situation. Fear of failure torments them and holds people with low self-esteem back.

According Pope Francis," Needing to talk badly about others indicates low self-esteem. That means they feel so low that instead of picking themselves up, they have to cut others down."

People with low self-esteem have movements of euphoria when every things is going right for themselves; but when things start to go bod, their self-esteem drops very quickly. They are sensitive people, who are easily influenced and who tend to show their opinion, but without defending it.

## 3.3. Ways to build self-esteem in students

According to Wikipedia, "self-esteem reflects an individual's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his/her own worth." Teachers plays one of the biggest roles in how good or bad children can feel about themselves - again avoid criticism. Influence from a teacher can make and break a child's sense of self-esteem.

The most important feature of high self-esteem and resilience is the belief that one has control over many areas of one's life and can accurately define these areas. This belief is tied to the feeling of ownership. For developing this sense of ownership and self-control, teacher should provide opportunities to the students from very early age to learn and apply problem solving and decision making skills.

Every child is unique. Students whose needs are not met may begin to feel that they are not welcome or that they are disappointing the teacher by not living to their expectations. Therefore, the teacher should establish realistic expectations, goals and accommodations that respond to the unique strengths and needs of each child and help them succeed. Accept the students as they are.

When students find that they are making positive difference to the school environment, they are motivated to do well and are more willing to take appropriate risk in learning. Teacher should provide opportunities to students to contribute to their world and to the well-being of others.

Teachers should provide opportunities to students to tell the things they liked most about themselves and then prompt them to state things they can do well and the things they feel good about.

Always remember that self-esteem is about how much students feel valued, appreciated, accepted, loved and have a good sense of self-worth and self-image. Expectations from students must be realistic. Differentiated instruction is the key and ensures that expectations match students' strengths ability levels.

Students should be actively involved in the process of their own learning. Always highlight the positives and avoid criticism.

Every student possesses an "island of competence" or areas of strength that must be identifies, reinforced and displayed by the teachers. A strength based model of teaching recognizes the importance of using child's strengths as an important component of any intervention programme. If all children learn differently, then it makes inherent sense that teacher should teach them in ways they learn best.

For checking the use of ineffective coping behaviors, the teacher should teach learners in ways they can learn best. The teacher should change his/her teaching approach and teaching style, if students with learning problems are to adopt a more positive and hopeful approach. Teacher must be comfortable in making accommodations whenever and wherever needed.

Every student desires to learn and be successful is school. If they are not, then teacher must strive to understand the nature of their learning problems and arrange remedial instructions accordingly.

Self-defeating behaviors of students such as quitting, or not trying or acting like class clowns or class bully, should be recognized as ineffective coping strategies, a mark of feeling of vulnerability, low self-esteem and hopelessness. Rather imposing punitive consequences, the teacher should try to minimize the despair among students.

The teacher should use Attribution Theory for bolstering self-esteem and hope. This approach directs the teacher to find ways for learner with learning problems to feel an increasing sense of ownership, control and responsibility for their successes and to view mistakes as experiences for learning rather than feel defeated. One of the most effective means of dealing with fear of making mistakes and failing is to discuss fears with other students even before making any mistake. Openly acknowledging the fear of failure renders it less potent and less destructive.

The teacher should help students with learning problems to understand their unique strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate accommodations in the school programmes.

## 4. Summary

Self-concept is an important aspect personality and is lively a collection of beliefs about-oneself and generally embodies the answer to "who am I?" self-concept has two aspects i.e. the existential self and the categorical self. Personal identity, physical self

or body image, academic self, social self, transpersonal self and self-esteem are the important components of self-concept. Self-concept is well organized, unique, stable, multifaceted, multidimensional, social, moral, intellectual, and temperamental, develops system magically and has powerful influence on the individual. Self-image, self-worth, ideal self, identities Arad role performance are the major dimensions of self-concept.

Self-esteem is an important component of self-concept, which regress to the degree of regard or respect that midindnals have for themselves and is a measure of worth they place on their abilities and judgments. Midindnals have these types of self-concept i.e. inflated, high and low. Practice of living consciously, self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-assertiveness, living purposefully and personal identity are they pillars of self-esteem. For developing self-esteem among students, teacher should encourage them to believe that they have control over many areas of their lives, develop sense of ownership, self-control, make them feel that that they are making positive difference to school environment, identify their strengths and reinforce them. Students should be actively involved in their learning process. Have realistic expectations from students and try to minimize despair among students and make use of attribution theory.

**Quadrant – III        Learn more/Web Resources/Supplementary Materials**

Reference- (books articles, research papers, journals, case studies etc.)

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**Glossary**

**Bolstering** - Supporting or strengthening

**Coping Behavior** –An action taken to soothe oneself during or after a stressful or threatening situation.

**Depressive** – Causing feeling of loss of hope and dejection.

**Ego –** In psychoanalysis, it is that part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing and a sense of personal identity.

**Exuberant –** Full of energy, excitement

**Euphoria –** An extreme, unrealistic feeling of physical and emotional well-being, feeling "high".

**Perception –** The ability to see, hear or become aware of something through senses.

**Proprioceptive information –** It is the information through which we perceive the position and movement of body, including our sense of equilibrium and balance.

**Resilience –** The ability to be happy, successful again after something difficult or bad has happened.

**Self-Schema –** Scheme is a cognitive structure we have to describe various categories of knowledge about the world. We also hold scheme about ourselves called self-schemas.

**Self-Defeating Behavior –** Behavior that takes a person away from what he or she wants or that distracts a person from his or her goal.

**Sentient –** Being able to perceive or feel things.

**Superego –** A part of person's mind that acts as a self-critical conscience, reflecting social standards learned from parents and teachers.

**Unique –** Being the only one of its kind, unlike anything else.

**Quadrant IV          Self-Assessment**

**Description:** In self-assessment Question No. 1 to 10 consist of multiple choice questions in which learners are required to select the correct one out of the four alternatives and Question No. 11 to 15 has five statements in which learner has to identify about true/false statements

**(1)** "Who am I?" refers to which of the following concepts?
(a) Self-Esteem                    (b) Self-Efficacy
(c) Self-Concept                   (d) All the above

**(2)** Self-concept is:
(a) Cognitive and descriptive aspect of self.
(b) Evaluative aspect of self.
(c) Opinionated aspect of self.
(d) None of these.

**(3)** According to Lewis, which of the following is an aspect of self-concept?
(a) The Existential Self           (b) The Categorical Self
(c) Both 'a' and 'b'               (d) None of these

**(4)** Which of the following is a component of self-concept?
(a) Personal Identity        (b) Body Image
(c) Social Self              (d) All the above

**(5)** Who has proposed a distinction between self-as-actually perceived and self-as-ideally desired?
(a) William James                  (b) Carl Rogers
(c) Abraham Maslow            (d) Sigmund Freud

**(6)** It is reported that people who have high self-esteem themselves can   generally increase your self-esteem because:
(a) They give honest feedback      (b) They respect others
(c) They respect themselves        (d) All the above

**(7)** Which of the following is a major consequence of high self-esteem?
(a) Good mental health             (b) Increased absenteeism
(c) Increased involvement          (d) Decreased complaints
 in team work

**(8)** The expression "The looking glass self" refers to which of the following?
(a) Much of our self-knowledge is based on self-reflections.
(b) We infer self-knowledge from the observations of our own behavior
(c) Part of how we see ourselves comes from our perception of how others see us.
(d) None of these

**(9)** Which of the following is a type of self-esteem?
(a) Inflated Self-Esteem           (b) Self-Image
(c) Existential Self               (d) All the above

**(10)** Which of the following is much harmful type of self-esteem?
(a) Inflated Self-Esteem           (b) High Self- Esteem
(c) Both 'a' and 'b'               (d) None of these

**(11)** Self-concept is unidimensional. ( )

**(12)** Our self-concept can be partially created form just our thoughts about "who we think we are?" ( )

**(13)** Idealized self is, "who we would like to be or think we should be?" ( )

**(14)** Two people can have exactly the same success, but develop different levels of self-esteem. ( )

**(15)** Self-concept is made up of Self-Schemas and interacts with self-esteem and self-knowledge to form the self as a whole. ( )

## SCORING KEY

| Question No. | Answer |
|---|---|
| 1 | c |
| 2 | a |
| 3 | c |
| 4 | d |
| 5 | b |
| 6 | d |
| 7 | a |
| 8 | c |
| 9 | a |
| 10 | a |
| 11 | False |
| 12 | True |
| 13 | True |
| 14 | True |
| 15 | True |