New directions in research on well-being: psychological process in everyday contexts

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Self-Concept: Who Am I?

• A person’s answers to the question, “Who am I?”

• Take time to answer this question...

• Are your answers more relational (collectivist) or about self (individualist)?
At the Center of Our Worlds: Our Sense of Self

• Schema
  • Mental templates by which we organize our world

• Self-schema
  • Beliefs about self that organize and guide the processing of self-relevant information

Possible Selves

• Images of what we dream of or dread becoming in the future
  • Spend more time in the present! Well-being
Development of the Social Self

• What Determines Our Self-Concept?
  • Roles we play
  • Social identities we form
  • Comparisons we make with others
  • How other people judge us
  • Surrounding culture
Development of the Social Self

The Roles We Play
  • New roles begin as playacting then become reality
    • As we play them we begin to believe them (*self perception theory*)

Social Comparisons
  • We compare ourselves with others and consider how we differ... Via Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)
    • We tend to compare upward
      • *Who is your referent group?*
Development of the Social Self

• Success and Failure
  • Our daily experiences cause us to have empowerment or low self-esteem
    • Remember Self-esteem <-> Competence?

• Other People’s Judgments
  • Looking-glass self (Cooley, 1902 – sociologist)
    • How we think others perceive us is a mirror for perceiving ourselves

SELF EFFICACY
Self and Culture

- Individualism
  - Concept of giving priority to one’s own goals over group goals and defining one’s identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group identifications
  - Independent self
Self and Culture

• Collectivism
  • Giving priority to the goals of one’s group and defining one’s identity accordingly
  • Interdependent self
  • Asian, African, and Central and South American cultures
  • Can you think of groupings other than just national cultures?
Self and Culture

• Culture and Cognition

• Collectivism results in different ways of thinking
  • Asians tend to think more in relationships than Americans
  • Americans see choices as expressions of themselves.
    • Which focus more on the focal object/background?
    • Japanese / Americans?
    • What does this tell us?
Self and Culture

• Culture and Self-Esteem

  • In collectivist cultures
    • Self-concept is context-specific rather than stable
    • Conflict takes place between groups
    • Persist more when failing

  • In individualistic cultures
    • Self-esteem is more personal and less relational
    • Persist more when winning
    • Conflict takes place between individuals
      • Crime
      • Divorce

• In your opinion, which culture is ‘better’?
Self-Knowledge

- Explaining Our Behavior
  - Do we know what affects our mood?

- Predicting Our Behavior

  - Planning fallacy
    - Tendency to underestimate how long it will take to complete a task
    - What are the implications for goal setting?
      - In job or in school?
Self-Knowledge

• Predicting Our Feelings

• Studies of “affective forecasting” reveal people have the greatest difficulty predicting the intensity and the duration of their future emotions
  • We underestimate the effects of situational cues

• Impact bias
  • We overestimate the enduring impact of emotion-causing events
    • How much time would you like on a island holiday?
    • How long would it take to get over a job loss?

• Immune neglect
  • Tendency to neglect the speed and strength of the “psychological immune system” which enables emotional recovery and resilience after bad things happen
Self-Knowledge

• The Wisdom and Illusions of Self-Analysis
  • Mental processes that control our behavior are distinct from those we use to explain our behavior
  • Automatic implicit attitudes regarding someone or something often differ from our consciously controlled, explicit attitudes
    • What’s the difference in the two?
    • How are we strangers to ourselves?
    • Implicit ones change more slowly
  • Self-reports are untrustworthy – no guarantee of their validity
Self-Esteem (motivation power?)

• Our overall self-evaluation or sense of self-worth
  • *What are your “domains” of SE?*
    Attractive/smart/athletic/rich/loved?....

• Feedback is best when it is true and specific
  • Leads to high “self-efficacy”
  • General praise...”you can do anything you want”
    • Can lead to unrealistic optimism
    • *What were you told in school?*
    • *Competence feedback -> High Self-efficacy*
  • *Which do better?*
    • Those failing were told “feel great about yourself-hold your head high” or “taking control will help”
Self-Esteem Motivation

- Self-esteem maintenance
  - What level is best to have? Hi/med/lo?
- Self-esteem threats occur among friends whose successes can be more threatening than that of strangers (social comparison theory)
  - Referent others
THE SELF AND THE ENVIRONMENT
WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY?

It’s an interdisciplinary field that studies the *relationship between individuals and their background*.

Environment influences behavior at different levels.

In every moment of our lives, we are in one place or another, interacting with and within that place.
ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Is an interdisciplinary field focused on the interplay between humans and their surroundings:

- natural environments,
- social settings,
- built environments,
- learning environments,
- and informational environments.

This discipline is both value oriented and problem oriented, prioritizing research aimed at solving complex environmental problems in the pursuit of individual well-being within a larger society.
Environmental Psychology

Stressor:
- a stimulus that affects an organism in a psychologically or physically injurious way
Temperature

• A stressor that affects many behaviors

• Very hot or very cold temperatures can cause behavioral effects
  • Extreme Heat
  • Extreme Cold
Noise

• Noise is a stressor that can overstimulate people

• Noise often leads to poor work performance and social functioning
Environmental Toxins

• Nearly any airborne substance (man-made or natural) can trigger respiratory problems resulting in diminished work performance and health consequences

• Airborne toxins can impair motor tasks involving reaction time and affect long-term health
Crowding

Number of people around can affect behavior

Crowding: the perception that personal space is too limited rather than the size of a space or the number of people around
Personal Space

• Encroachment causes displeasure and possible withdrawal

• Cultural Differences

• Spatial Zones: Intimate, Personal, Social, and Public
The dominance of vision

• Already in early times the vision was the leading sense. Plato regarded vision as humanity’s greatest gift.
• Until today, sight prevailed on top of the hierarchy of the senses and our technological culture has separated the senses even further.
• “Vision and hearing are now the privileged sociable senses, whereas the other three are considered archaic sensory remnants with a merely private function, and they are usually suppressed by the code of culture” (Pallasmaa, 1994).
ENVIROMENTAL
PSYCHOLOGY

ARCHITECTURAL
PSYCHOLOGY

• Post-occupancy evaluation (POE)

(Gifford, 2002)

• USER-CENTERED DESIGN
OR SOCIAL DESIGN

• Case studies
Observed-based environmental assessment

Perceived Environmental Quality Indices (PEQI)

Vs

EQI (Environmental Quality Indices)
The evidence-based design process
New elaboration of the Post-occupancy evaluation process model

(Preiser & Yocis, 2002)
Architecture – space

“Architecture is essentially an extension of nature into the man-made realm, providing the ground for perception and the horizon to experience and understand the world. It is not an isolated and self-sufficient artifact. It directs our attention and existential experience to wider horizons”

(Pallasmaa, 1994)