

Psychological Basis of Self concept

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Abstract- Every individual has a concept of self and at the same time every individual aspires to make an identity of them in the society. The concept of self varies from person to person. Some people are very energetic, enthusiastic as excel in every field of their life. In other words, they have a very positive approach towards life. Whereas there are some people who always sulk, criticise and tries to find escape goat. They may have a very negative approach towards life may be due to constant failures or some other reason. In this paper the author has tried to highlight the psychological basis of self concept. There are many psychologists who have given their theories but in this paper the author has highlighted the theory of Erikson. Erikson's theory basically falls under educational psychology. Erikson in his theory talks about eight stages of psychological development starting from birth till late adulthood. Each stage has its unique characteristics and needs. At each stage, Erikson suggests that the individual faces a developmental crisis. Each crisis can be resolved by embracing an extreme position or by the healthier and more productive stance of finding a balance between the extreme positions. The way in which the individual resolves each crisis influences resolution of future crisis and has a lasting effect on that person's self-image and view of the society.

Key Words- Self Concept, Identity, Children, Student, Psychological

I. INTRODUCTION

What is identity? Is identity different from self-concept? Many of the psychologists use these terms interchangeably or in other way both these terms are synonymous. In psychology, self concept generally refers to our perceptions of ourselves-how we see our abilities, attitudes, attributes, beliefs and expectations (Harter, 2006; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). We could consider self concept to be our mental picture of who we are. It is our attempt to explain ourselves to ourselves, to build a scheme (in Piaget's terms) that organises our impressions, attitudes and beliefs about ourselves. But this model or scheme is not permanent, unified or unchanging. Our self-perception can vary from situation to situation and from one phase of our lives to another. In general identity is a broader term in comparison to self-concept. Identity includes people's general sense of themselves along with all their beliefs, emotions, values, commitments and attitudes. Identity integrates all the different aspects and roles of the self (Wigfield et al., 2006). There are many psychologists who gave their theories regarding identity and self concept. But Erick Erikson is the stalwart among them. His psychosocial theory emphasises the emergence of the self, the search for identity, the individual relationships with others, and the role of culture throughout life.

II. ERICKSON'S STAGES of PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Erikson offered a basic framework for understanding the needs of young people in relation to the society in which they grow, learn and later make their contributions. He regarded development as a passage through an interdependent series of stage, each with its particular goals, concerns, accomplishments and dangers. Erickson further suggested that the individual faces a development crisis at each stages of development. Each crisis can be resolved by embracing an extreme position or by the healthier and more productive stance of finding a balance between the extreme responses. The way in which the individual resolves each crisis influences resolution of future crisis and has a lasting effect on that person's self-image and view of society. In the table below all the eight stages of Erickson's theory is depicted which he called as the "eight ages of man"

Table I.
 Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychological Development

<i>Stages</i>	<i>Approximate Age</i>	<i>Important Event</i>	<i>Description</i>
1.Basic trust versus basic mistrust	Birth to 12-18 months	Feeding	The infant must form a first loving, trusting relationship with the caregivers or develop a sense of mistrust.
2.Autonomy versus shame/doubt	18 months to 3 years	Toilet Training	The child's energies are dedicated toward the development of physical skills, including walking, grasping, controlling the sphincter. The child learns control but may develop shame and doubt if not handled well.
3.Initiative versus guilt	3 to 6 years	Independence	The child continues to become more assertive and to take more initiative but may not be too forceful, which can lead to guilt feelings.

4. Industry versus inferiority	6 to 12 years	School	The child must deal with the demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence.
5. Identity versus role confusion	Adolescence	Peer relationships	The teenager must achieve identity in occupation, gender roles, politics and religion.
6. Intimacy versus isolation	Young adulthood	Love relationships	The young adult must develop intimate relationships or suffer feelings of isolations.
7. Generativity versus stagnation	Middle adulthood	Parenting/ Mentoring	Each adult must find some way to satisfy and support the next generation.
8. Ego integrity versus despair	Late adulthood	Reflection on and acceptance of one's life	The culmination is a sense of acceptance of oneself and a sense of fulfilment.

Source: Anita Woolfolk, *Educational Psychology, 13th Edition, 2017.*

A. The Preschool years: Trust Autonomy and Initiative

Erickson identifies trust versus mistrust as the basic conflict of infancy. According to him the infant will develop a sense of trust if its needs for food and care are met with the comforting regularity and responsiveness from caregivers. In this first year infants are in Piaget's sensorimotor stage (as cited in Woolfolk, A., *Educational Psychology, 2017*) and are just beginning to learn that they are separate from the world around them. This realisation is part of what makes trust so important. Infants must trust the aspects of their world that are beyond their control. Having a secure attachment helps young children develop trust and also learn when mistrust is appropriate—either extreme of complete trust or mistrust is dysfunctional.

Erickson's second stage, autonomy versus shame and doubt, marks the beginning of self-control and self-confidence as young children begin to assume the responsibilities of self care such as feeding, toileting and dressing. If parents do not reinforce their children's efforts to master basic motor and cognitive skills, children may begin to feel shame. They may learn to doubt their abilities to manage the world. Erickson believes that the children who experience too much doubt at this stage will lack confidence in their own abilities throughout life

For Erickson, the next stage of initiative versus guilt adds to autonomy the quality of undertaking, planning and attacking a task for the sake of being active. The challenge of this stage is to maintain a balance between zest for activity and an understanding that not every impulse can be acted on. Again adults must tread a fine line, this time in providing supervision without interference. If children are not allowed to do things of their own, a sense of guilt may develop; they may come to believe that what they want to do is always 'wrong'

B. The Elementary and Middle School Years: Industry versus Inferiority

Between the ages of 5 and 7, when most children start school, cognitive development is proceeding rapidly. Children can process more information faster and their memory span is increasing. They are moving from pre-operational to concrete-operational thinking. As these internal changes progress the children are spending hours every week day in the new physical and social world of school. They must now re-establish Erikson's stages of psychological development in the familiar school setting. They must learn to trust new adults, act autonomously in their more complex situation and initiate actions in ways that fit the new rules of school.

The next psychological challenge for school year is what Erikson calls industry versus inferiority. Students are beginning to see the relationship between perseverance and the pleasure of a job completed. In modern societies, children's ability to move between the worlds of home, neighbourhood, and school and to cope with academics, group activities and friends will lead to a growing sense of competence. Difficulty with these challenges can result in feelings of inferiority. Children must master new skills and work towards new goals, at the same time they are being compared to others and risking failures. Because schools tend to reflect middle-class values and norms, making the transition to school and meeting the challenges of industry versus inferiority may be especially difficult for children who differ economically or culturally.

After elementary school, in the transition to middle school, students confront an increased focus on grades and performances as well as more competition on all fronts—academic, social and athletic. Just when they are eager to make decisions and assume more independence, students encounter more rules, required courses and assignments. They change from a close connection with one teacher all year to more impersonal relations with numerous teachers in many different subjects across the year.

C. Adolescence: The Search for Identity

As students move into adolescence, they are developing capabilities for abstract thinking and understanding the perspectives of others. Even greater physical changes are taking place as the students attain puberty. So, with developing minds and bodies, young adolescent must confront the central issue of constructing an identity that will provide a firm basis for adulthood. The individual has been developing a sense of self since infancy. But adolescence marks the first time that a conscious effort is made to answer the now-pressing question: "Who am I?" The conflict defining this stage is identity versus role confusion.

Identity refers to the organization of the individual's drives, abilities, beliefs and history into a consistent image of self. It involves deliberate choices and decisions, particularly about work, values, ideology and commitments to people and ideas.

D. Beyond the School Years

The crises of Erikson's stages of adulthood all involve the quality of human relations. Intimacy versus isolation refers to a willingness to relate to another person on a deep level, to have a relationship based on more than mutual need. Someone who has not achieved a sufficiently strong sense of identity tends to fear being overwhelmed or swallowed up by another person and involves concern and guidance for both the next generation and future generations. Productivity and creativity are essential features. Achieving integrity versus despair means consolidating your senses of self and fully accepting its unique and now unalterable history.

III HOW SELF CONCEPT DEVELOPS?

The self-concept evolves through constant self-evaluation in different situations. Children and adolescents are continually asking themselves, in effect, "How am I doing?" They gauge the verbal and non-verbal reactions of significant people—parents and other family members in the early years, and friends, schoolmates, and teachers later—to make these judgements (Harter, 1998, 2006). Younger children tend to have positive and optimistic self-concepts. They don't compare themselves to peers: they just compare their current skill level to what they could do earlier in their lives and see improvements. In some ways this confidence protects them from disappointment and maintains persistence—a good thing for developing children (Harter, 2006). Older students are less optimistic, more realistic, and even cynical. In either case, for younger and older students, self evaluation contributes to a person's self-concept in any given domain and also to an overall sense of self-worth. Self concept is multi-dimensional. A student's overall self concept is made up of more specific concepts, including academic and non-academic self-concepts. Many psychologists consider self-concept to be the foundation of both social and emotional development. Research has linked self-concept to a wide range of accomplishments—from performance in competitive sports to job satisfaction to achievement in schools (Byrne, 2002; Goetz, Cronjaeger, Frenzel, Ludtke, & Hill, 2010; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008; Moller & Pohlmann, 2010). In Indian culture self concept develops not only through personal accomplishments but through a strong sense of interdependence in relation to the significant people in children's life such as their family, friends, community and culture at large which we call as "samskars".

IV CONCLUSION

In the contemporary society Erikson's theory is important because he believed that a sense of competence motivates behaviour. Each stage in his theory is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life. In each stage, he believed people experience a conflict that serves as a turning point in development. In his views these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. If people successfully deal with the conflict, they emerge from the stage with psychological strengths that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. If the stage is handled well, the person will feel a sense of mastery, which is sometimes referred to as ego strength or ego quality. If the stage is managed poorly, the person will emerge with the sense of inadequacy in that aspect of development. If they fail to deal effectively with these conflicts, they may not develop the essential skills needed for a strong sense of self.

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