WIKIPEDIA

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring is a concept introduced during the 1970s by Mark Snyder, that shows how much people monitor their self-presentations, expressive behavior, and nonverbal affective displays.[1] Human beings generally differ in substantial ways in their abilities and desires to engage in expressive controls (see dramaturgy).[2] It is defined as a personality trait that refers to an ability to regulate behavior to accommodate social situations. People concerned with their expressive self-presentation (see impression management) tend to closely monitor their audience in order to ensure appropriate or desired public appearances.[3] Self-monitors try to understand how individuals and groups will perceive their actions. Some personality types commonly act spontaneously (low self-monitors) and others are more apt to purposely control and consciously adjust their behavior (high self-monitors).[4]

Contents

Historical context

Major case studies

There are many cases in which self-monitoring is used a variable of interest. Many recent studies look into the relationship with on-task behavior, work-place utilization, and leadership positions.

A pilot study regarding on-task behavior was done with two high school students with symptoms of learning disabilities. [5] These students were trained using a self-monitoring application and given prompts and the results showed positive, stable improvements in their on-task behavior after each individual's self-monitoring was increased.

When looking at theoretical and empirical evidence in self-monitoring in the work-place, research indicates that high self-monitors are proficient in meeting the social expectations and increasing their leadership outlook. [6] Results from the study done by Day and Schleicher emphasize that the higher the individual scores on the scale, the more successful the individual tends to be as determined from the criteria of getting along, getting ahead, and making sense.

The relationship between self-monitoring and career mobility in particular was studied with a research pool of Masters of Business Administration graduates. [7] High self-monitors are reported to be more likely to change employers, change work locations, and achieve promotions in comparison to low self-monitors.

Controversy and confusion

Self-monitoring, despite all the research and theory behind it, has been shrouded with controversy and confusion with respect to its actual existence.[8] The initial confusion was caused because there were factor analyses conducted, revealing that the structure of most items of the Self-Monitoring Scale was multifactorial. There are three factors that appeared necessary to account for the correlations between the items for the measure, interpreted as Acting (e.g. "I would probably make a good actor"), Extraversion (e.g. "In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention"), and Other-Directedness (e.g. "I guess I put on a show to entertain or impress other people") (Snyder, M. & Gangestad, S. (2000)). Though these factor analyses are used as instruments to measure the level of self monitoring, they have prompted the question of the existence of self-monitoring. Mark Snyder and Steven W. Gangestad, (2000) argued through a series of quantitative experiments that it is indeed a real unitary phenomenon by showing that external criterion measures representing a wide array of phenomena relating to expressive control all point to self-monitoring as a real causal phenomena.

Additionally, they argue that the external criterion variables generally mark most directly tapped by the Self-Monitoring Scale rather than being tapped by the measures of Extraversion, Social Surgency, or Other-Directedness, meaning that Self-Monitoring can better describe the factors that contribute to a persons personality than the combination of these. Measures of these three factors relate to the self-monitoring criterion only with respect to the fact that they have similar variance with the self-monitoring dimension, with Other-Directedness being the most highly related to Self-Monitoring. Hence, through answering these two questions, doubts regarding the existence of the Self-Monitoring phenomena were clearly dispelled.

Scale

Snyder's self monitoring scale was developed in 1974. It measures whether or not an individual has the will and ability to change how they are perceived by utilizing impression management in various social interactions. The score is based off of twenty five questions that the individual answers according to their thought process and is used to determine how an individual may manipulate nonverbal signals and adjusts theirs actions according to a situation. The score is calculated based on how the individuals responds to True and False questions.

Low self monitors

Low self-monitors tend to exhibit expressive controls congruent with their own internal states; i.e. beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions regardless of social circumstance. Low self-monitors are often less observant of social context and consider expressing a self-presentation dissimilar from their internal states as a falsehood and undesirable.[9] People who are unwilling to self-monitor and adjust their behavior accordingly are often aggressive, uncompromising, and insistent with others. This may make them more prone to condemnation, rejection, and the possible consequent feelings of anger, anxiety, guilt, low self-concept, isolation, and depression. Even the occasional indiscretion can make social situations awkward, and could result in the loss of a friend, co-worker, client, or even job. Those who are willing to adjust their behavior will often find that others are more receptive, pleasant, and benevolent towards them.

High self monitors

Individuals who closely monitor themselves are categorized as high self-monitors. They often behave in a manner that is highly responsive to social cues and their situational context. High self-monitors can be thought of as social pragmatists who project images in an attempt to impress others and receive positive feedback. In comparison to low self-monitors, high self monitors participate in more expressive control and have concern for situational appropriateness. As these individuals are willing to adjust their behavior, others may perceive them to be more receptive, pleasant, and benevolent towards them.

Low vs high self monitors

A low score on the self-monitoring scale can range anywhere from 0-8 and a high score ranges from 15-22 [2]. Some traits of high self-monitors include readily and easily modifying their behavior in response to the demands of the situation, whereas low self-monitors care little about modifying their behavior in response to the situation and tend to maintain the same opinions and attitudes regardless of the situation.[10] High self-monitors find it much easier to modify their behavior based on the situation than low self-monitors do. High self-monitors would be more likely to change their beliefs and opinions depending on who they are talking to, while low self-monitors would tend to be consistent throughout all situations. This has been studied mainly in correspondence with relationships. Compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors will have more dating and sexual partners, are more interested in having sex with people they are not in love with, and are more likely to have had sex with someone only once, as well as be more likely to deceive potential romantic partners.[10] High self-monitors are more likely to choose a romantic partner who is attractive but unsociable, while low self-monitors are more likely to choose a partner who is unattractive but sociable.[11] High self-monitors are also more likely to take on leadership positions than low self-monitors.[12]

Differences in individuals' propensity for self-monitoring have a heritable component,[4] but the likelihood that a person becomes a high (or low) self-monitor also varies between social contexts and groups.[3] For example, on average, sexual minorities (such as gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals) are more likely to be high self-monitors than their otherwise similar heterosexual counterparts, but this difference exists primarily in geographic areas where the stigma against minority sexual orientations is strong. In the United States, for example, differences in self-monitoring based on sexual orientation have been documented in rural areas and small towns but do not seem to exist in the context of large cities, which tend to be more tolerant of minority sexual orientations.[3]

Individualistic differences

Self-monitoring is useful for students from preschool to adulthood and can be taught to individuals at a variety of levels of cognitive functioning. Self-monitoring interventions foster independent functioning, which allows individuals with disabilities to rely less on prompts from others [13]. Self-monitoring interventions are among the most flexible, useful, and effective strategies for students with academic and behavioral difficulties [14]. They have demonstrated efficacy for targeting a range of academic abilities [15], self-help skills [16], behavioral problems [17], and social behaviors [18]. Students with behavioral and academic difficulties typically have limited awareness and understanding of their own behavior and its effects on others. Self-monitoring interventions equip students to recognize and keep track of their own behavior [19]. Using these strategies, students can learn to identify and increase positive, pro-social behaviors, the behaviors necessary for success in general education settings. Self-monitoring strategies are individualized plans used to increase independent functioning in academic, behavioral, self-help, and social areas. Rather than focusing on reducing a student's undesired behavior, self-monitoring strategies develop skills that lead to an increase in appropriate behavior. When self-monitoring skills increase, corresponding reductions in undesired behaviors often occur, even without direct intervention [20]. This collateral behavior change allows teachers and parents to address multiple behaviors with one efficient intervention. The five steps involved in planning a self-monitoring intervention:

1. Identify the target behavior.
2. Select/design a self-monitoring system.
3. Choose reinforcers and how the student will earn them.
4. Teach the student to use the system.
5. Fade the role of the adult in the intervention.

Social approach

It's been argued that individualism should influence self-monitoring [21]. Cultures high on individualism focus on the self, not others. In individualistic cultures, knowing the context is not necessary to predict others' behavior, thus people from individualistic cultures are more likely to be low self-monitors. Cultures low on individualism (i.e., collectivist cultures), in contrast, value conformity to ingroups and group memberships. In collectivistic cultures, knowing the context and social status of the other person is essential to predicting his or her behavior. Thus, people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to be high self-monitors.[22]

Job performance

It has been shown that there is a significant relation between an individual's performance at his job and his or her ability to change their self-presentation in order to most adapt to the situation. Self-monitoring was most important during early tenure.[23] This history of finding individual difference variables that relate to job performance has been unsuccessful.[24] Some of the reasons why it is difficult to use individual difference variables to predict job performance is because there is failure to consider contextual effects such as informational influence and pressures for conformity. Other difficulties are a result from attempting to use personality measures without having a good understanding of the nature of the job and the individual's development in the job. This results in the individual differences being assessed without fully understanding why they should affect job performance directly or how they may affect an individual's performance when you take into consideration increased job knowledge that an individual may gain through experience.[25]

One case that shows how success could be related to individual predispositions is in organizations where individuals hold boundary-spanning positions. Boundary spanners purpose is to filter and transfer information across organizational boundaries.[26] The individuals that are responsible for this transfer of information may be in a roles both inside and

outside the organization. Therefore, they should be able to respond to social and informational stimuli, inside and outside the organization. The nature of this job makes it likely that an individual's performance in this role is likely to be influenced the degree to which that person can perceive, understand and adapt to different social situations as appropriate. I essence, an individual who is a high self-monitor would be better at responding to different social cues and hence be more equipped to transfer information effectively across organizational borders and consequently a higher performer.[23]

Over time, however, the competitive advantage that high self monitors have over low self monitors reduced as job knowledge increases through experience and poor performers leave boundary spanning roles.[2]

Social impacts

Riggio et al., (1982) suggests that the self-monitoring as monitored by the self-monitoring scale is a multidimensional construct and is composed of many elements central to social interaction. It was determined that the elements of self-monitoring appear to be "charisma", "performance", and "social sensitivity". Therefore it is determinable that those with high levels of self-monitoring had greater skill at navigating and bridging social situations while in contrast, those with lower levels of self-monitoring may struggle in the same situations.[27]

The differences between how high self monitors and low self monitors treat relationships and social situations stem from the differences in what they seek to gain out of their social life and their understanding of self. High self-monitors view their self as a product of social interactions and their own adaptability in various social settings. In contrast, low self-monitors view their self as a product of personal dispositions and their effects on social situations. High self-monitors look for friends with similar activity preferences, while low self-monitors look for friends with similar attitudes. High self-monitors also generally end up becoming close to other high self-monitors, and vice versa with low self-monitors.[28]

Relationships

High self-monitors look for a social context that allows flexibility and adaptability to play a multitude of roles without role conflict. High self-monitors are more likely to believe in the idea that there are multiple people one can love, and focus on attributes such as physical attractiveness,[29] sex appeal,[30] social status, and financial resources.[31] In turn, the attachments high self-monitors form with their significant others are more avoidant, and they can feel uncomfortable with significant others that have higher levels of intimacy than themselves. Low self-monitors on the other hand look for a social context that gives them the freedom and security to express their emotions and dispositions freely without any interpersonal conflicts. They are more likely to believe in the idea of "one true love", and look for attributes such as personality desirability,[32] similarity of values and beliefs, and other dispositions like honesty, responsibility, and kindness.[33] This leads to more secure relationships being formed, and level of intimacy is not a problem.[34][35]

Similar processes

Self presentation

There is a strong connection between self-monitoring and self-presentation, as it's proven that people who are high self-monitoring have greater cognitive access to self-presentation related concepts than people who are low self-monitoring.[36] Through a 100-person experiment, it was found out that high-self monitors more quickly linked positive

personality traits to themselves following exposure to impression-related words, proving high self-monitors possess a heightened capacity to cognitively process self-presentation information. High self-monitors rely on social information to guide their self-presentations since they vary their presentations based on different social cues. They are also, compared to low self-monitors, more likely to recall personal information about an upcoming interaction partner, are better able to judge emotional displays, are more skilled at decoding nonverbal behaviors, show better performance on interpersonal perception tasks, are more focused on their interaction partners, and they seek out and consider more information about an audience when trying to convey a particular identity.

Essentially, Tyler, Kearns and McIntyres argue that high self-monitoring people are more likely to seek out social cues and information through interactions, following which they will employ this information in their behaviour, hence portraying a self presentation or image that they want to. Additionally, they are more sensitive to social cues and social information. People low in self-monitoring, however, would behave as themselves in most cases and hence not have an option in the self-presentation that they project, as well as being less sensitive to social information present around them.

Social psychology theory

There are several theories within social psychology that are closely related to the self-monitoring construct. Icek Ajzen argues that subjective norms are an important antecedent to determining behavioral intention in the theory of reasoned action/theory of planned behavior.[37] High self-monitors tend to weigh subjective norms more heavily than low self-monitors. Studies that evaluate private attitudes and public actions include Ajzen, Timko and White, 1982; and DeBono and Omoto, 1993. Informational cascades theory is related to observation learning theory which was developed by Bikhchandani, S.; Hirshleifer, D. and Welch, I. (1992) and describes how people will follow, sometimes blindly, the actions of others. The self-monitoring construct would identify that high self-monitors may be more susceptible to informational cascades and herd mentality. This can be a problem if a culture of groupthink is part of the organizations decision making process. High self-monitors are more motivated to attain high social status than low self-monitors.[38] Research drawing on the elaboration likelihood model suggests that high self-monitors, more than low self-monitors, react favorably to peripheral processing of advertising images consistent with high social status.[39][40][41]

Notes

1. Day and Schleicher, 2009

2. Snyder, 1974

3. Knight, Carly R.; Tilcsik, András; Anteby, Michel (2016-01-29). "The Geography of Stigma Management" (https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023115625172). *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*. **2**. doi:10.1177/2378023115625172 (https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2378023115625172).

4. Snyder, Mark (1987). *Public Appearances, Private Realities: The Psychology of Self-Monitoring*. New York: W. H. Freeman. ISBN 978-0716717973.

5. Mason, Wills. (2014). Implementation of a self-monitoring application to improve on-task behavior: A high school pilot study.

6. Day, Schleicher. (2006). Self-Monitoring at Work: A Motive-Based Perspective.

7. Day, Kilduff. (1994). Do Chameleons Get Ahead? The Effects of Self-Monitoring on Managerial Careers.

8. Snyder, M. & Gangestad, S. (2000)

9. Snyder & Gangestad, 2002

10. Sanderson, C. A. (2010). Social psychology. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley ;.

11. Snyder, Berscheid & Glick, 1985

12. Eby, Cader & Noble, 2003

13. (Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, and Carter, 1999)

14. (Mitchum, Young, West, & Benyo, 2001)

15. (Rock, 2005)

16. (Pierce and Schreibman, 1994)

17. (Todd, Horner, and Sugai, 1999)

18. (Strain & Kohler, 1994)

19. (Hoff and DuPaul, 1998; Rhode, Morgan, and Young, 1983)

20. (Dunlap, Clarke, Jackson, Wright, 1995; Koegel, Koegel, Harrower, and Carter, 1999)

21. Gudykunst et al., (1987)

22. Gudykunst, W. B., Gao, G., Nishida, T., Bond, M. H., Leung, K., Wang, G., et al. (1989). A Cross-cultural Comparison Of Self-monitoring. Communication Research Reports, 6(1), 7-12.

23. Caldwell (1981)

24. Bem & Allen (1974)

25. Salancik and Pfeffer (1978)

26. Aldrich and Herker, 1977, Tushman, 1977

27. Riggio and Friedman 1982. The Interrelationships of Self-Monitoring Factors, Personality Traits, and Nonverbal Social Skills

28. Leone & Hawkins (2006). Self-Monitoring and Close Relationships

29. e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Glick, 1985, Jones, 1993; Snyder, Berscheid, & Glick, 1985)

30. (Jones, 1993)

31. Jones, 1993

32. (e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Glick, 1985; Snyder et al., 1985)

33. Jones, 1993

34. (Gaines et al., 2000)

35. Leone & Hawkins (2006). Self-Monitoring and Close Relationships

36. Tyler, Kearns, McIntyre, 2016

37. Ajzen, 1985

38. Rose, P.; Kim, J. (2011). "Self-Monitoring, Opinion Leadership and Opinion Seeking: a Sociomotivational Approach". *Current Psychology*. **30**: 203–214. doi:10.1007/s12144-011-9114-1 (https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs12144-011-9114-1).

39. Snyder and DeBono, 1985

40. DeBono and Packer, 1991

41. Shavitt, Lowrey, and Han, 1992

References

- Ajzen, Icek. (1985). From intention to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl and J. Beckman (Eds.) *Action-control: From Cognition to Behavior*. Heidelberg, GE: Springer, 11–39.
- Ajzen, I.; Timko, C. and White, J.B. (1982). Self-monitoring and the attitude-behavior relation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42, 426–35.
- Bikhchandani, S.; Hirshleifer, D. and Welch, I. (1992), A Theory of Fads, Fashion, Custom, and Cultural Change as Informational Cascades. *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 100, No. 5, 992–1026.

- Briggs, S.R.; Cheek, J.M. and Buss, A.H. (1980). An analysis of the Self-Monitoring Scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38, 679–86.
- DeBono, K.G. and Omoto, A.M. (1993). Individual differences in predicting behavioral intentions from attitude and subjective norm. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 133, 825–31.
- DeBono, K.G. and Packer, M. (1991). The effects of advertising appeal on perceptions of product quality. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17, 194–200.
- Day, D. and Schleicher, D. (2009). Self-Monitoring, The Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology, 19, 886-888.
- Eby, L. T., Cader, J., and Noble, C. L. (2003). Why do high self-monitors emerge as leaders in small groups? A comparative analysis of the behaviors of high versus low self-monitors. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 33(7), 1457-1479. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2003.tb01958.x
- Hosch, H.M. and Marchioni, P.M. (1986). The Self-Monitoring Scale: A factorial comparison among Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 8, 225–42.
- Lennox, R. and Wolfe, R. (1984). Revision of the Self-Monitoring Scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 1349–64.
- Riggio, R.E. and Friedman, H.S. (1982). The interrelationships of self-monitoring factors, personality traits, and nonverbal skills. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 7, 33–45.
- Rose, P. and Kim, J. (2011). Self-Monitoring, opinion leadership and opinion seeking: A sociomotivational approach. *Current Psychology*, 30, 203-214.
- Shavitt, S.; Lowrey, T.M. and Han, S.P. (1992). Attitude functions in advertising: The interactive role of products and self-monitoring. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1, 337–64.
- Snyder, M. (1974). Self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, 526–37.
- Snyder, M., Berschedi, E., and Glick, P. (1985). Focusing on the exterior and the interior: Two Investigations of the initiation of personal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 1427-1439
- Snyder, M. and DeBono, K.G. (1985) Appeals to image and claims about quality: Understanding the psychology of advertising. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 586–97.
- Snyder, M. and Gangestad, S. (2000). Self-monitoring: Appraisal and reappraisal. *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 126, No. 4, 530–55.
- Yler, Kearns, McIntyre, (2016). Effects of Self-Monitoring on Processing of Self-Presentation Information. Social Psychology, 47(3)
- Wicker, A.W. (1969). Attitudes versus actions: The relationship of verbal and overt behavioral responses to attitude objects. *Journal of Social Issues*, 25, 41–7.

External links

- Mark Snyder's Faculty Web Page at The University of Minnesota (http://www.psych.umn.edu/people/faculty/snyder.htm)
- Self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1974) (http://personality-testing.info/tests/SM.php), online implementation.