Self-Esteem

The concept of self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself.

Definitions

*Self-esteem* is a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self.

*Self-esteem is an attitude of approval or disapproval that an individual makes regarding himself and the extent to which the individual believes he is capable and worthy (Coopersmith, 1967).*

Self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of the self-concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones. The construct is most often used to refer to a global sense of self-worth, but narrower concepts such as self-confidence or body-esteem are used to imply a sense of self-esteem in more specific domains. Self-esteem functions as a trait, that is, it is stable across time within individuals.

Self-esteem is an extremely popular construct within psychology, and has been related to virtually every other psychological concept or domain, including personality (e.g., shyness), behavioral (e.g., task performance), cognitive (e.g., attributional bias), and clinical concepts (e.g., anxiety and depression).

There is the well-established relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being (e.g., depression, social anxiety, loneliness, alienation).

Self-esteem has a related construct, self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's sense of competence or ability in general or in particular domains.
Measures

Among the most popular and well-utilized measures of self-esteem are:

- **the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** (RSES) (Rosen, 1965)
- **the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory** (CSEI) (Coopersmith, 1967).

**The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** is a 10-item self-report instrument, using a four-point response scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

**The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory** is a 58-item self-report instrument, offering the choice between two answers to each item: “like me” or “unlike me”.

It was designed to measure in any individual those evaluative attitudes towards the self that one holds in five subscales:

- general subscale (twenty-six items),
- social subscale (eight items),
- academic subscale (eight items),
- family subscale (eight items),
- lie subscale (eight items).

A high score on the lie subscale suggests that the subject responded defensively to the inventory or understood the intention of the inventory by attempting to respond positively to all items.

The major basis for the construction of the instrument was the belief that self-esteem is significantly associated with effective functioning and personal satisfaction.