

Identity

Understanding identity

- Our self is what we are born with, our gender, physical characteristics;
- Our identity is created by the development of the “self” (our self-concept), through communication over a long period of time;
- We have not only one identity but multiple identities, which are influenced by societies and are dynamic.
- The way identities develop depends on one’s cultural background.

Understanding identity

- **Cultural identity** – refers to one's belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group. It is formed in a process that results from membership in a particular culture and involves learning about and accepting traditions, heritage, language, religion, ancestry, thinking patterns and social structures of a culture. People internalize the beliefs, values, norms, and social practices of their culture and identify with that cultures as part of their self-concept.

Understanding identity

- **Social identity** – develops as a consequence of memberships in particular groups within one's culture. Characteristics and concerns common to most members of such social groups shape the way individuals view their characteristics. The types of groups with which people identify can vary widely and might include perceived similarities due to age, gender, work, religion, ideology, social class, place, common interests.
- **Personal identity** – based on people's unique characteristics, which may differ from those of others in their cultural and social groups.
- **Cultural, social** and **personal** identities are interdependent. Characteristics of people's social identities will inevitably be linked to the preferences shaped by their cultural identities. Similarly, how people enact their unique interests will also be heavily influenced by their cultural identities

Characteristics of cultural identity

- Cultural identities provide an essential framework, organizing and interpreting our experiences of others.
- This is because cultural identities are ***central, dynamic*** and ***multifaceted components*** of one's self-concept.
- **Identities are created through communication;**
- **Identities are created in spurts;**
- **Identities are influenced by society;**
- **Identities are developed in different ways in different cultures.**

Social and cultural identities

- Gender identity ;
- Racial identity;
- Ethic identity;
- Physical ability identity;
- Religious identity;
- Class identity;
- National identity;
- Regional identity.

Formation of cultural identity -3 stages

- **Unexamined cultural identity** – one's cultural characteristics are taken for granted, consequently there is little interest in exploring cultural issues.
- **Cultural identity search**- a process of exploration and questioning about one's culture in order to learn about it and to understand implications of membership in that culture.
- **Cultural identity achievement** – characterized by a clear. Confident acceptance of oneself and an internalization of one's cultural identity. People in this way have developed ways of dealing with stereotypes and discrimination.

Multicultural identity

- Multicultural people are those who live “on the borders” of two or more cultures;
- They often struggle to reconcile two or very different sets of values, norms, worldviews and lifestyles;
- Some have multicultural identities as a result of being born to parents from different racial, ethnic, religious or national cultures, or they were adopted into families that are racially different from their own family of origin.
- Multiracial people;
- Global nomads or third culture kids (TCKs).

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