



STUDY OF DIFFERENCE IN LEVEL OF SELF-PERCEPTION OF NGO WORKERS WITH INCREASE IN AGE

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ABSTRACT

Objective – To study the effect of experience with increase in age of NGO workers on their self-perception. The main objective of researcher was to evaluate the difference in level of self-perception of male and female workers who are associated for a long period with the organization.

Sample – The data consists of RSS workers. A total of 450 RSS workers participated in the study, out of which 385 were the male employees and 55 were the female employees. The data was collected from NGO's operating from Vidharbha Region.

Method – The data was collected using the A Comprehensive Battery of Scales of Entrepreneurship. This scale is developed by Dr. V.P. Sharma and published by National Psychological Corporation, Agra. The first part of scale comprises of Self-Perception Trait by the participants.

Results – The result of the study demonstrated that male employees of age more than 35 years have significantly high level of self-perception than the male employees who are younger than 35 years of age ($t(383) = 2.887, p = 0.0041$). However, the level of self-perception of female employees was similar in level irrespective of their age and experience ($t(53) = 0.035, p = 0.9725$)

Conclusion – The present study concludes that male workers of NGO develop higher self-perception as their age increases along with the experience of working for development of others. However, the level of self-perception is not affected in female workers irrespective of their age group

Key Words: *Self-Perception, NGO, RSS Workers, Age*

DOI Number: 10.14704/nq.2022.20.8.NQ44490

NeuroQuantology 2022; 20(8): 4608-4615

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INTRODUCTION

Self –Perception

The self of a person refers to person's experience as a single, unitary and autonomous being that is different from others. This part of individual is not attached to another person. The experience of the self can be divided into following broad areas –

- Consciousness of one's physicality.
 - One's inner character and emotional life.
- People experience their 'self' in two senses. The first can be categorized as being an active

agent who influences the world and also get influenced by the world. This experience of self is recognized as 'I'. The second categorization involves reflection and evaluation of self. In this type of self, people turn their attention to their physical and psychological attributes to contemplate the constellation of skills, traits, attitudes, opinions, and feelings that they possess. This second type of self represents 'Me'. The focus of this self is on how people observe themselves from the outside looking in. It is much like people monitor and contemplate



the competence and character of other people.

In daily life, people make an inference of other people's attitude by observing their action and behaviour. The behaviour which a person manifests in a particular situation is attributed to their personal trait and attitudes. For example, if an individual watches a child disposing the waste material in garbage bin instead of throwing it on floor, the child is perceived as being a responsible and environmentally friendly citizen. Similarly, if an old age person is seen scolding a helper or maid, he may be perceived as an angry person.

Interestingly, sometimes people observe their own behaviour like an outsider and try to make inference about their own attitude. This behaviour of individual helps in developing self-perception. Self-perception can be understood as person's view of his or her self or of any of the mental and physical attributes that constitute the self. Such a view may involve genuine self-knowledge or varying degrees of distortion (APA Dictionary, 2020). Self-perception theory, suggests that all individuals analyze their own behaviour much as an outside observer might and, as a result of these observations, make judgments about why they are motivated to do what they do. According to self-perception theory (Bem, 1967), when a person is unsure about their own behaviour and attitude, one way to infer them is by looking at their own behaviour.

Bem in his theory also mentioned that people's behaviour is influenced by their self-perception. For example, if a person perceives himself as good road biker, he/she may buy certain products and equipment to go on for a long cycling ride. Bem, however, reversed this relation by suggesting that it is also possible that people understand their attitudes and interests because they have made inferences based on their behaviour. Thus, the person may infer that he/she is interested in biking because of frequent cycling trips and lavish spending on road bike.

A similar explanation is given for emotions that people experience, by self-perception theory. According to the theory, people infer about their emotions by observing their

bodies and behaviours. Thus, people experience various emotions and feelings by observing and analysing their actions such as facial expression, postures, level of arousal and behaviour. Hence, it can be concluded that feelings are consequences of behaviour and not the other way around. People are angry because they scowl and are happy because they smile – this is the self-perception effect.

Every individual has experienced the self-perception effect. It happens many a times that even having a very rough day when one goes home to their family, to kids all the stress is replaced by smile and contentment. The smile which passes through the face decreases the original behaviour of feeling irritable and angry. Thus, it can be concluded that behaviour changes attitude.

Different behaviour elicits different emotional experience. When a person sighs while talking, talks in a very low voice, sits ideal for the whole day, he/she probably would feel depressed and bit down. The emotional experience people have is highly influenced by the behaviour they exhibit.

The self-perception effect might also influence the later behaviour exhibited by the individual. Suppose, an individual who is introvert by nature and does not enjoy party might think of start going to parties and talk to new people. That person actually makes an attempt and start enjoying the party. This behaviour influences the attitude about social behaviour and leads the person to perceive greater outgoingness in them. The next time they are at party, they exhibit outgoing social behaviour nearly without any much effort.

Various other researchers have been carried out to understand this carryover effect. Particular research was conducted by Brunelle, (2001) to look out the impact on adolescent volunteer's level of empathy, social responsibility and concerns for other by attending community service in their area. The findings of the study suggest that community service positively influences sympathy and compassion for others, sense of concern for society at large, and willingness to take action to help others in the community. This concludes that behaviour of engaging in



volunteer helping experience can create a shift towards more caring and helping attitude and thereby changing the perception of self for the individual.

Importance and Implication of Self-Perception Theory - The self-perception theory suggests that when the internal awareness of individual is for their attitude and emotions is ambiguous, they can view themselves in much the same way as the outsider observer. According to the theory, it is viable to rely on external cues about the behaviour to infer on the inner states. If a person eats too much than usual for dinner, he gets the cue that he is hungrier today than usual days. Also, if a person keeps on biting their nails for the entire day may assume that they are nervous on something as they are biting their nails continuously. In both the cases mentioned above, the attitude or emotion is inferred from the behaviour demonstrated by the individual. Thus, the self-perception theory allows people to gather various external environmental cues and apply them to understand what attitude or emotions they are experiencing internally.

The self-perception theory also has an important application when attitude and behaviour of the person is incongruent. The therapist who works with substance abuse or alcohol addicted people reports the benefit of using the concept of the theory. Individual who begin to consciously observe the amount they are drinking might infer from their behaviour that they are tense or anxious and then do something about it other than drinking. Similarly, a changed behaviour might inform individuals about their internal state and attitude. In nutshell, the application of self-perception theory is vast in the changing the attitude and behaviour of the individual.

Signs of people with positive self-perception

Self-perception is important because how we think about ourselves affects how we feel about ourselves and how we interact with others and the world around us. A positive self-perception can boost our physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

- People with positive self-perception give themselves credit. They understand that

the accomplishments they have achieved in their life are due to their sincere hard work and persistence. They don't attribute their accomplishment to luck and being there just in time.

- People with good self-perception are present and are in the moment. They don't spend their time in regretting what have not been right. They neither focus too much on future. They are focused on the immediate moment and what they can do right now to help themselves move forward.
- Positive self-perception saves people from exaggeration. They perceive things as they are. They are level headed and generally see things without amplifying.
- It is natural for people to dwell on things they are disappointed about. However, people with positive self-perception don't have time to dwell on negative outcomes. Instead, they look for the takeaways and for what they can learn from the experience and figure out how to improve upon things for the next time.
- People with high self-perception are emotional but they don't get swayed away with emotions. They are not ruled by their emotions, moods or feelings. Their relationship with others is not on mercy of their moods.
- Grudges and harbouring negative feelings is not the way of dealing with negative experience for positive self-perceived people. They possess the skill of letting go of negativity and making room for more positivity in their lives.
- These people don't believe in comparing themselves with others. They are happy with what they are and the path they are leading in life. They don't devalue themselves by comparing their life with others.
- They are kind to themselves. They understand that some things are not under control and if such tasks are not accomplished, they don't push themselves harder or blame them for failure. They accept it gracefully and move on.

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- They appreciate the truth that perfection is illusion. They know that all are striving to better themselves in various ways, but if one targets for some unrealistic goal, they are bringing a lot of disappointment for themselves.
- People with positive self-perception practice gratitude. They understand that nothing can be achieved single-handedly. It is the combine efforts of every person which leads to the destiny.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Leadership styles have an influence manager's job satisfaction, efficiency, and willingness to work in team. The leadership style is also influenced by age, gender, profession, type of managerial post, years of management experience and type of organization. A cross-sectional study was conducted using self-administered multi-questionnaire. It was based on leadership styles, behavior and attitudes of manager. It was concluded that managers' self-perception of their leadership style was transactional. It was focused on the maintenance of the status quo. Some trend was identified in scores towards the transformational style, mainly among nurse managers. However, both the styles correlate with satisfaction from the work being performed and willingness to strive to work better. [Jodar I Sola et. al., 2016].
- A self-perception model was developed to understand and discuss its managerial and research implications for management of human resource. The model was based on various studies undertaken to enhance the understanding of the self and for measuring the accuracy of self-perception. Accuracy is defined as the degree of agreement between self and other evaluations/ratings. 'Others rating' under this study was provided by sub-ordinates, peers, superiors and others who work closely with the manager. The key areas of evaluation and rating were training needs assessment, performance appraisal and leadership behaviour of the manager. The model posits enhanced individual and organizational outcomes when self-perception is accurate and diminished or mixed outcomes when self-perception is inflated or deflated, respectively. [Francis Yammarino and Leanne Atwater, 2006].
- The self-perception of managers regarding their leadership influence their behaviour and attitude towards the subordinates. A detailed analyses and interpretation were carried for self-perception in the context of leadership, conflict handling and participation of day to day working of managers. A qualitative study was initiated using in depth interviews to collect the data. It was concluded that manager's performance was characterized as de-professionalized. They manifested self-favouring trends, forced obedience and results were considered ahead of their employees' wellbeing. It was concluded that lack of managerial skill may result in creating bullying situation for sub-ordinates. [Martín, Acosta-Fernández & Torres, Teresa & Los, María & Aguilera-Velasco, Á & Blanca, Pozos-Radillo & Parra Osorio, Liliana., 2015.]
- Senior managers are found to manifest an increasing interest in encouraging knowledge-sharing behaviour in their organizations. An empirical study was conducted to examine the senior manager's perception. The study utilized Aizen's theory of planned behaviour to develop a research model for assessing the factors that influence encouragement in senior official. The analytical results confirmed that the main determinants of enterprise knowledge sharing behaviour was intentions of the senior managers. It was also concluded from the study that senior manager's attitude, perceived behavioural control positively influenced the intentions to encourage the knowledge sharing attitude. [Lin, Hsiu-Fen & Lee, Gwo-Guang, 2004]
- Gender differences influence the self-perception. It was also observed that self-perception biases are related to negative recall as well. A masculine task was



conducted among females and males for evaluating gender differences in self-perception in three measures of accuracy – self -evaluation, calibration and response bias. The results of the study concluded that females underestimated those performances, they were less calibrated and demonstrated more conservative response than males. It was further found that females were more likely than males to recall their mistakes even with performance and accuracy of self-evaluations controlled. [Sylvia Beyer, 1998].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim of the study - The aim of this study was to assess the difference in self-perception of NGO workers as their experience in the field increases with their age. The researcher was interested in assessment of self-perception of both the genders.

Objective

- To study the difference between male NGO workers with age more than 35 years and workers with age less than 35 years in their level of self-perception.
- To assess the difference in the level of self-perception of female NGO workers with age more than 35 years with female workers of age less than 35 years.

Result

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of level of Self Perception of male and female employees.

Variables	Mean	S.D.
Male above 35 years	252.97	26.67
Male below 35 years	243.72	35.82
Female above 35 years	247.63	33.76
Female below 35 years	247.25	32.24

The above data shows the mean of level of self-perception in male NGO workers of age 35 years or more which is 252.97 and

Hypothesis

H₁: There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of male workers with age more than 35 years and male workers of age less than 35 years.

H₂: There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of female workers with age more than 35 years and female workers of age less than 35 years.

Research Design

The study is a simple 2*2 factorial design to study the difference in level of perception between the employees working in NGO.

Tool used

A Comprehensive Battery of Scales of Entrepreneurship

This scale is developed by Dr. V.P. Sharma and published by National Psychological Corporation, Agra. The scale has two parts – 1) Self-Perception of Entrepreneurship Traits and 2) Organizational Ability and Managerial skill which is subdivided into four parts. The test re-test reliability of the scale for self-perception is 0.791. The validity of scale was assessed by correlating the scale items with already established scale and it was found to that $r=0.78$, correlated. The norms of the scale for interpretation are divided into 7 categories from extremely high to extremely low. The items of the self-perception trait is measured using 7 points Likert scale.

Statistical Techniques

- Descriptive Statistics – Mean, SD
- T Test for calculation of mean difference



35.82. Similarly, the mean for women workers of age above and below the age of 35 years is 247.63 and 247.25 respectively, the standard deviation for both the groups are 33.76 and 32.24 respectively.

First hypothesis states that,
'There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of male workers with age more than 35 years and male workers of age less than 35 years.'

The first hypothesis demands the calculation of difference of mean value between the male workers of age more than 35 years and male worker of age less than 35 years, for their level of perception. The hypothesis states that there is significant difference between the group means of the participants. Hence, the researcher has arranged the data accordingly and computed t test for independent samples.

Description	Stress	
	Mean	Std Dev
Male workers age above 35 years	252.97	26.67
Male workers age below 35 years	243.72	35.82

Result:

A total of 385 male workers participated in the study, among which 144 workers were below the age of 35 years and 241 workers were above the age of 35 years. The mean value of senior workers is 252.97 and the standard deviation is 26.67, i.e., the score is between the range of 226.30 to 279.64 (252.97 +/- 26.67)

The mean value for the second group of participants is 243.73 and standard deviation is 35.82 i.e., the score is between the range of 207.90 to 279.54 (243.73 +/- 35.82)

t value for the given data is computed for significance at $p < 0.05$ level. The t value statistically is $t(383) = 2.887$, $p = 0.0041$ which is positive and significant. This states that there is significant difference in level of perception of senior male workers and workers who have not completed a long duration in the NGO. Hence the

hypothesis **'There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of male workers with age more than 35 years and male workers of age less than 35 years.'** has been accepted.

Second hypothesis states that,
'There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of female workers with age more than 35 years and female workers of age less than 35 years.'

The second hypothesis demands the calculation of difference of mean value between the female workers of age more than 35 years and female worker of age less than 35 years, for their level of perception. The hypothesis states that there is significant difference between the group means of the participants. Hence, the researcher has arranged the data accordingly and computed t test for independent samples.

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Description	Stress	
	Mean	Std Dev
Female workers age above 35 years	247.63	33.76
Female workers age below 35 years	247.25	32.24

Result:

A total of 55 female workers participated in the study, among which 12 workers were below the age of 35 years and 43 workers were above the age of 35 years. The mean value of senior workers is 247.63 and the

standard deviation is 33.79, i.e., the score is between the range of 213.87 to 281.42 (247.63 +/- 33.76)

The mean value for the second group of participants is 247.25 and standard deviation



is 32.24 i.e., the score is between the range of 215.01 to 279.49 (247.25 +/- 32.24)

t value for the given data is computed for significance at $p < 0.05$ level. The t value statistically is $t(53) = 0.035$, $p = 0.9725$ which is not significant. This states that there is no significant difference in level of perception of senior female workers and workers who have not completed a long duration in the NGO. Hence the hypothesis 'There is a significant difference in the mean of level of perception of female workers with age more than 35 years and female workers of age less than 35 years.' has been rejected.

Discussion

Self-perception is a trait which keeps on evolving with the increase of experience in life. Self-perception allows people to gather important cues from their external environment and apply them to understand what attitudes or emotions they are experiencing internally. It helps the person to understand who they are, what kind of behaviour they indulge in, what are their intentions etc.

The aim of this research was to ascertain the level of self-perception in the employees of NGO. NGOs are simply organizations operating to better the world around them. People working in an NGO have an aim to improve the life of people who are not supported by society, are not capable and struggle in their day-to-day life. The working is more for upliftment and betterment of society as large. Thus, people working in NGO have a positive judgment towards their self as they are doing something for greater good, which over and above their own self.

The findings of first hypothesis of research concludes that individual of age group more than 35 years rate themselves high on the level of self-perception. The finding is also backed by the theory of Eric Erickson life stage of an individual, it specifies that the period of adulthood is governed by generativity or stagnation. In this period, individual starts providing their care, love and support to others who are in need. It is an age where the person is more empathetic and develops concerns for others. Therefore, individual working in NGO, who extends their assistance

to people in need which in turn helps to improve their judgement towards self.

The findings of second hypothesis states that the level of perception of women are similar irrespective of their age. This finding can be seen in the light of the fact that women by nature and their pre-disposition are more care giving and empathetic from their childhood. They are the biggest caregiver and support of their families. Hence, they develop a higher self-perception for themselves from the initial stages of their life. Hence, working for NGO does not increase their level of self-perception extensively irrespective of their age group.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that male workers of NGO develop higher self-perception as their age increases along with the experience of working for development of others. However, the level of self-perception is not affected in female workers irrespective of their age group.

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