

The Self and Social Relationships

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Self-Perception as Interpersonal Perception

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A self-perception is a perception of someone who is also the perceiver. In this sense, self-perceptions are a very special type of person perception and several insights can be had by viewing them as such. In this chapter, we consider how self-perceptions are related to perceptions made of individuals by other people, how they are related to the perception of others, and how they are related to perceptions that individuals have of how they believe they are perceived by others.

To assist in the understanding of the interplay between different types of perceptions, the social relations model (SRM; Kenny & La Voie, 1984) is used in this chapter as a methodological framework. The SRM permits a detailed examination of interpersonal perceptions that can be theoretically rich. Because the SRM may be unfamiliar to researchers, and likely even more so to self-researchers, we briefly describe the model.

Consider the perception that Doug has of Tara's level of competence. Imagine that Doug and Tara are members of a workgroup within an organization. The SRM implies a decomposition of Doug's perception of Tara into the following five different components:

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|----------------------|--|
| Group mean: | How competent do members of the work group think other members of the group are? |
| Actor effect: | How competent does Doug see others in the workgroup? |
| Partner effect: | How competent is Tara seen by other members in the work group? |
| Relationship effect: | How competent does Doug particularly see Tara? |
| Error: | How much noise is there in Doug's perception of Tara's level of competence? |

In order to partition a dyadic judgment into these five components, we need to have at least four members in each group, and all group members must perceive the competence of all other group members; such a design is commonly called a

round robin. To be able to separate error variance from relationship variance, there must be multiple replications; that is, competence must be measured at multiple times or by multiple measures. Note also that variance due to group is typically not estimated in trait rating studies because it is often negligible (i.e., less than 5 percent of the total variance).

The remainder of the chapter addresses four questions that examine self-perception from an interpersonal perspective. First, we ask whether self-perception varies as a function of interaction partner. If Doug views himself as competent when he interacts with Tara, does he also view himself as competent when he interacts with Sara? Second, we consider possible discrepancies between the perception of self and the perception of others, or self-enhancement. Kwan, John, Kenny, Bond, and Robins (2004) developed an index of self-enhancement that combines two aspects of the perceptions of others: how the person sees others and how others see the person. We review a recent study that uses Kwan et al.'s index of self-enhancement. Third, we consider the perceptions that individuals have of how others view them, termed metaperceptions.

We review the finding that how people think others generally view them correlates strongly with how they view themselves. Fourth, we consider the methodological issue of idiographic analysis. Such analyses enable researchers to examine moderators of the relationships between perceptions of the self and perceptions of others.

THE RELATIONAL SELF

Following James (1890), the self is often viewed as fundamentally interpersonal, composed of a repertoire of relational selves. The self therefore is thought to vary across social roles that individuals play in their daily interactions (e.g., Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993), by group membership (Brewer, 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), and interaction partner (Kenny & Malloy, 1988; Kenny, Mohr, & Levesque, 2001). We discuss all three ways in which self-perceptions are relational.

Researchers examining how the self varies as a function of role are often interested in the degree to which self-perceptions are consistent across roles, but they may also be interested in the degree to which consistency in self-perceptions predicts individual or interpersonal outcomes. An individual may have several social roles, such as friend, co-worker, and parent, and her or his self-perceptions may differ as a function of that role. Donahue et al. (1993) assessed self-concept differentiation; that is, the degree to which an individual's self-perceptions are consistent across five social roles: student, friend, romantic partner, son or daughter, and worker. Participants were asked to rate themselves on 60 traits for each of the five roles. The authors found individual variability in the degree to which people see themselves consistently across social roles. Self-concept differentiation also predicted mental health outcomes: Individuals who saw themselves very differently across roles were more depressed and neurotic and had lower self-esteem than individuals who saw themselves as similar across roles.

In addition to defining oneself in terms of social role, self-perceptions can change as a function of group membership or social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). One focus in this theory is the interplay between ingroup identification and individuality. For example, research on optimal distinctiveness theory (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) has examined how the balance between collective identity (i.e., identity derived from group membership), and personal identity function to form self-perceptions. Research on the theory has found that individuals strive to find some middle ground between group identity and individuality (Brewer, 1991).

Besides social role and group, an individual's relational partner provides a context in which self-judgments are made (Kenny & Malloy, 1988; Kenny et al., 2001). For example, research on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) has demonstrated that self-perceptions change as a function of the comparison other; specifically, the comparison other aids in determining the degree to which an individual sees him or herself positively (Gibbons, Benbow, & Gerrard, 1994). Additionally, Andersen and Chen (2002) examined how self-perceptions are related to perceptions of significant others in particular. The authors propose a model where self-perceptions are linked to representations of significant others, and these linkages form specific relational selves for each significant other. Individuals have many relational selves. Thus self-perceptions are not independent from other-perceptions.

We now review several studies that test the degree of consistency in self-perceptions across different interaction partners. In most of the studies, persons who were previously unacquainted interacted for a brief time with several different interaction partners, and after each interaction, made self-judgments. For each partner, the person rated how he or she behaved in the interaction on one or more trait measures. For instance, Frank interacts with Sam and Harry, and we ask Frank how agreeable he was in each of the interactions. All of the studies used the social relations model to partition judgments into the three sources of variance previously described: actor, partner, and relationship. We present an overview of the procedure for each of these studies, followed by a discussion of overall trends in the SRM variance partitioning.

In Oliver (1988), 56 persons were broken into 14 sets of two males and two females. Each of the two males interacted one-on-one with each of the two females in a simulated date. The interactions lasted approximately 15 minutes. After each interaction, both partners made ratings of how positive (e.g., mature and friendly) and how active (e.g., outgoing and confident) they were during the interaction. The analyses were done separately for the two measures and for men and women and then averaged. We present in Table 6.1 the average of the four analyses. The results for this study, as well as the others, are discussed after the methodological details of the remaining studies are presented.

In Christensen, Stein, and Means-Christensen (2003), 124 previously unacquainted persons were placed in four-person groups. In a round-robin design, each person took turns engaging in three separate getting-acquainted conversations in dyads. The conversations were each 5 minutes. After each interaction, persons rated their own personality on 15 traits. Among the traits used

TABLE 6.1 Social Relations Variance Partitioning of Dyadic Self-Ratings

Study	Actor	Partner	Relationship	Error
Oliver (1988)	.540	.054	.416	***
Christensen et al. (2003)	.555	.001	.439	***
Yingling (1980)	.472	.000	.528	***
Albright & Malloy (2006)	.442	.029	.528	***
Robins et al. (2004)	.407	.067	.526	***
Strack (2004)	.217	.027	.110	.646

*** Relationship variance cannot be separated from error variance.

were sociable, dependable, and related. The results are averaged across the 15 traits.

In Yingling (1980), 24 women were placed into six groups of four persons. Each woman interacted one-on-one with each other in a round-robin design. After each interaction, the woman completed a measure of her social competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984) with the interaction partner. The results are presented for that single measure.

Albright and Malloy (2006) studied 17 four-person groups, 9 of which were previously acquainted and 8 previously unacquainted. Individuals in the groups engaged in 5-minute one-on-one interactions with other group members. The participants rated themselves on nine measures of personality. The results did not vary much due to acquaintance, and so we have pooled them and averaged over the nine measures.

In Robins, Mendelsohn, Connell, and Kwan (2004), 70 four-person, mixed gender groups were instructed to get acquainted. Thirty of the groups were face-to-face interactions, 20 were by phone, and 20 were computer mediated. The interactions lasted between 5 and 10 minutes. After each interaction, both partners made ratings of talkative, warm, and nervous for both themselves and their partners. The self-rating results are averaged over the three measures and the three conditions.

Finally, Strack (2004) investigated self-perceptions in weekly student work groups. There were 98 groups with between four and eight members, resulting in a total of 604 people. Groups interacted in sessions of 100 minutes and ratings were obtained after the second or third meeting. Participants rated themselves on the three SYMLOG dimensions (Bales & Cohen, 1979) of positive-negative, forward-backward, and upward-downward. We averaged results across the three variables.

One benefit of examining self-perceptions using the SRM is that self-judgments are dyadic variables, and the variance can be partitioned into SRM components. The SRM components of actor, partner, and relationship have the following interpretations:

- Actor: How a person sees her or himself across all interactions,
- Partner: How a person “makes” others view themselves when they interact with him or her, and
- Relationship: How a person differently perceivers her or himself depending on interaction partner.

To illustrate the variance partitioning for self-judgments, consider self-ratings of friendliness. A large amount of actor variance would reflect the tendency for some individuals to believe that they are friendly across all of their interactions and for others to believe that they are not friendly across all of their interactions (i.e., there is variability in the extent to which people report being friendly across all interaction partners). A large amount of partner variance reflects that some individuals elicit self-ratings of friendliness from others and others do not elicit friendliness. Specifically, people in general who interact with one individual tend to see themselves as friendly, and people in general who interact with another individual see themselves as unfriendly. Finally, a large amount of relationship variance reflects that individuals see themselves as friendly with particular interaction partners, and as unfriendly with other particular interaction partners.

The view that self-perceptions do not differ as a function of interaction partner or social context implies a substantial amount of actor variance and relatively little partner and relationship variance. That is, people see themselves the same way across the context of interaction partner. The presence of substantial partner and relationship variance would suggest that self-ratings vary by interaction partner.

Table 6.1 presents the results from the six studies reviewed here. We see from these studies that the bulk of the variance, about 44 percent, is at the level of the actor: People see themselves in essentially the same way across different interaction partners. Partner variance is very weak, averaging only 3 percent. Thus we do not find that some people elicit the same self-perceptions across partners. Only Strack (2004) separated error variance from relationship variance. Therefore, we can only examine relationship variance for this study. She found non-trivial levels of relationship variance, 11 percent: Self-perceptions did change with interaction partner. Note that most of the relationship variance came from the positive–negative dimension, for which relationship explains 22 percent of the total variance, whereas the other two dimensions averaged only 6 percent of variance.

The overall results for the variance partitioning might seem surprising given prior work on the self as relational. There are several possible explanations as to why our results do not demonstrate variability in self-perceptions by interaction partner. First, the studies we have reviewed have focused on traits judgments, which people generally believe to be a stable. If emotions (e.g., feelings of happiness and sadness) were measured, we would likely find relationship variance and perhaps even partner variance. The finding in the Strack (2004) study of relational variance for the positive–negative dimension supports this view. Second, participants in these studies engaged in similar tasks with their interaction partners before making self-judgments. If a variety of interaction tasks were studied, there might have been less consistency. Third, the roles of the partner were essentially the same. If very different types of interaction partners (e.g., romantic partner, casual acquaintance, parent, and boss) were studied, we might have found differing self-perceptions. Andersen and Chen's (2002) research on relational selves has demonstrated that self-perceptions and perceptions of close others are tightly intertwined. It is unlikely that the same holds true for acquaintances and especially

for strangers. Consistency of self-perceptions should be studied using close others as well as strangers and acquaintances. Fourth, it should also be noted that because members of non-Western cultures may have a more collective sense of self (Markus & Kitayma, 1991), they might show greater amounts of relationship and perhaps even partner variance as well. In sum, consistency in self-perceptions may be moderated by several variables.

SELF-ENHANCEMENT BIAS

Thus far, we have used the social relations model as a framework for understanding how self-perceptions change as a function of interaction partner, and what might moderate consistency of self-perceptions from partner to partner. In this section, we elaborate on the SRM to examine a ubiquitous bias found in self-perception: self-enhancement. A classic question in both personality and social psychology is the extent to which people self-enhance, and what the antecedents and consequences of self-enhancement are. One major source of interest in this question is due to the important article by Taylor and Brown (1988) on positive illusions. They made the highly controversial argument that people benefited psychologically by seeing themselves as better than others. Another source of interest is in the area of cross-cultural comparisons. Researchers have debated whether people from Western cultures tend to self-enhance and whether those from Eastern cultures self-efface (e.g., see Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003).

There has also been debate about the measurement of self-enhancement. Kwan et al. (2004) note that self-enhancement has been conceptualized in two very different ways. The first uses the comparison between an individual's self-perceptions and the perceptions of others in order to determine the extent to which an individual self-enhances, and is based on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). The second is Gordon Allport's (1937) notion of self-insight, which compares an individual's self-perception to perceptions of that individual by others.

Thus there are two different senses of self-enhancement: People can see themselves as better than they see others, or they can see themselves as better than others see them. Kwan et al. (2004) argue that self-enhancement is properly examined by combining both theoretical approaches. To successfully assess both questions in one analysis, a componential analysis needs to be undertaken.

Kwan et al. (2004) proposed that three components are needed for a complete account of self-enhancement: (1) self-perception, (2) perception of others, and (3) perception made by others. The authors extended the SRM to conceptualize self-perception as an interpersonal perception in which the perceiver and the target are the very same person. The relationship effect or an individual's idiosyncratic self-view reflects individual differences in self-enhancement. Kwan et al. (2004) examined self-enhancement across 32 personality traits, and found that the self-insight index, the social comparison index, and the SRM index are not empirically equivalent. They also found that self-esteem correlates positively with the SRM index of self-enhancement, indicating illusory self-esteem.

Recent research has extended the study of self-enhancement beyond individual difference variables to group-relevant variables. Anderson, Srivastava, Beer, Spataro, and Chatman (2007) used the Kwan et al. (2004) self-enhancement index to examine self-enhancement of group status. They were interested in the extent to which individuals are accurate about their status in groups, and how self-enhancement and accuracy of group status affect social acceptance. Groups ranging in size from four to six members engaged in four work sessions. Self-perceptions and other-perceptions of group status were collected using a round-robin design where everyone rated everyone else and themselves. Anderson et al. (2007) found that people showed a self-enhancement bias in perceiving their acceptance, but they showed a self-effacement bias in perceiving their status. Additionally, they found that self-enhancement of status resulted in lower levels of acceptance by others over time.

There is a complication in the computation of the self-enhancement index. Kwan et al. (2004) suggested adjusting how a person sees him or herself by how the person sees others in general (the actor effect) as well as how the person is seen by others in general (the partner effect). This strategy presumes that actor and partner effects affect self-perceptions as strongly as they affect the perceptions of others; an assumption that may not be true (Krueger, 2006, personal communication). Following, Kenny (1994), Kenny and West (2007) have developed a more general strategy for the measurement of self-enhancement.

SELF AND METAPERCEPTION

The focus of this section is the relation between self-perceptions and what people think others think of them. These perceptions of perceptions have been called *reflected appraisals* (Felson, 1981) or *metaperceptions* (Laing, Phillipson, & Lee, 1966), the term we shall use. Theorists have related metaperceptions to self-perceptions in two different ways. First, Leary and Downs, (1995) sociometer theory proposes that self-esteem is a reflection of individuals' metaperceptions of social inclusion and exclusion. Second, symbolic interactionists have proposed that metaperception plays a key role in the formation of the self-concept (Kinch, 1963). Recent work has suggested that self-perceptions may affect metaperceptions more than vice versa (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). In this section of the chapter, we examine this relationship between self-perceptions and metaperceptions.

Recall that within the social relations model or SRM, a judgment made by a perceiver can be partitioned into three sources of variance: actor, partner, and relationship. The same partitioning can be undertaken for a metaperception, but the components have different meanings. Consider the metaperception that Tara has of Doug's perception of Tara's level of competence (i.e., how competent does Tara think that Doug sees her). Assume again that Tara and Doug are both members of a group, and all group members make perceptions and metaperceptions of other group members' level of competence. Within the SRM, Tara's metaperception has five different components:

Group mean:	How competent do members of the group think that other members of the group see them?
Actor effect:	How competent does Tara think that other group members see her?
Partner effect:	How competent do other group members think that Doug sees them?
Relationship effect:	How competent does Tara think that that Doug particularly sees her, above and beyond other group members?
Error:	How much noise is in Tara's metaperception of Doug's perception of her level of competence?

We can take metaperceptions in a group and partition the total variance into these five components. Particularly relevant in this chapter is the correlation of the actor effect in metaperception with a self-judgment. For example, if Tara sees herself as competent, does Tara also think others see her as competent?

The correlation between self and metaperception is relevant to the question of meta-accuracy: To what extent do people know what others think of them? With the SRM, there are two types of meta-accuracy: *generalized meta-accuracy*, and *dyadic meta-accuracy*. We can examine generalized meta-accuracy, or how accurate Tara's metaperceptions are in general, by correlating the partner effect in perceptions of Tara's level of competence (i.e., how competent do others in general perceive Tara to be) with the actor effect in Tara's metaperception. The degree to which Tara's metaperception of Doug's perception of her in particular is accurate is termed dyadic meta-accuracy.

If metaperceptions are accurate, what is driving their accuracy? Self-judgments appear to play a key role in the process of forming metaperceptions, and in predicting their accuracy. Kenny and DePaulo (1993; see also Chapter 8 in Kenny, 1994) review eight SRM studies that examine the correlation between metaperceptions and self-ratings. The authors were interested in the degree to which individuals use their own self-perceptions in making judgments of what they think others think of them, and how accurate these perceptions are, both at the level of the dyad, and in general. Across the studies that examine metaperceptions of traits, a large portion of the variance in metaperceptions was at the level of the actor (on average, 55% of the variance). This finding indicates that individuals tend to believe that others view them in consistent ways, and is consistent across all levels of acquaintance. For example, Tara thinks everyone sees her as competent (or not competent). In addition, individuals' metaperceptions for specific others are not distinguishable; relationship variance in metaperceptions is miniscule. Thus Tara does not distinguish between how competent she thinks Doug thinks she is from how competent she thinks other group members see her to be.

We know that individuals are not good at distinguishing what specific others think of them, and they generally believe that people perceive them consistently. In terms of how accurate perceivers' metaperceptions are, results are consistent. Kenny and DePaulo's (1993) review indicates that people are fairly accurate in general, but are not particularly apt at distinguishing between what specific others

think of them; dyadic meta-accuracy was weak across the reviewed studies. What then, is driving meta-accuracy?

Kenny and DePaulo (1993) claimed that metaperceptions are largely driven by self-perceptions. Consistently across the affect and trait studies, the average correlation between self-perceptions and the actor effect in metaperceptions is .87. At the generalized level, there is a strong correlation between how individuals view themselves, and how they believe others view them. Evidence from across several studies indicates that self-perceptions and metaperceptions are generally very highly correlated.

Researchers have debated the direction of causation for self-perception to metaperception. Symbolic interactionists have argued that the causation goes from metaperception (of significant others) to self-perceptions: We perceive what significant others think of us, and then we form impressions of ourselves based on these perceptions. However, Kenny and DePaulo (1993) argue that individuals probably do not use feedback from others in forming their self-perceptions, but rather, use their self-perceptions to form metaperceptions. If individuals did use feedback from others in forming self-perceptions, targets would be more accurate at knowing what specific others thought of them, indicated by larger dyadic meta-accuracy than the authors found.

Alternatively, people may base their self-perceptions on their interpersonal behavior, and then assume that others will similarly interpret their behavior, and therefore judge them consistently with how they judge themselves. Thus metaperception is based on self-perception, and self-perception is based on behavior. Gilovich, Savitsky, and Medvec (1998) have theorized that people believe, quite mistakenly, that who they are is readily transparent to others. Despite conflicting theories on the origin of metaperceptions, there is strong empirical evidence that self-perceptions are strongly related to metaperceptions, even more so than other perceptions. The strong relationship between self-perception and metaperception has been replicated studying a variety of variables, and across non-Western cultures (e.g., Shechtman & Kenny, 1994).

Moderators of the Self-Perception–Metaperception Relationship

Given the strong correlations found by Kenny and DePaulo (1993), several researchers have attempted to examine factors that might lower that correlation. Some researchers have focused on the process of metaperception, others on acquaintance, and still others on group membership. In this section, we review research that examines these possible moderators.

Albright, Forest, and Reiserter (2001) examined whether the correlation between self-perception and metaperception is the result of people using their self-perceptions to form metaperceptions, or the result of people using their actual behavior to form metaperceptions. By instructing participants to engage in a self-presenting role (i.e., either optimists or pessimists), they created a situation where self-perception would not be correlated with interpersonal behavior. The authors theorized that successful self-presentation would lead to accurate metaperception. Results indicated that actors predicted with a high degree of accuracy how they

were judged; all correlations between the actor effect in metaperception with the partner effect in other-perception were in the .90s. Metaperceptions were not based on self-perceptions of optimism; the correlations between self-perceptions and metaperceptions were not statistically reliable and were all very weak. Interestingly, self-perceptions also correlated weakly with behavioral measures; thus individuals were not inferring their self-perceptions from their behaviors. When participants were not instructed to act out roles, the correlation between self-perceptions and metaperceptions was high, consistent with the findings of Kenny and DePaulo (1993) that focused on dispositional judgments. These results indicate that when individuals are instructed to do so, they can focus on the perceptual salience of their behaviors rather than on their self-concepts, which enables them to use the same cues that perceivers use.

Albright and Malloy (1999) hypothesized that perhaps metaperceptions are not based on perceptions made by others because individuals make the actor-observer bias in attribution. Originally articulated by Jones and Nisbett (1972), the bias may be particularly relevant to the development of metaperceptions because the environment is more salient to the actor, and the actor is more salient to the observer. Differences in perceptual salience between actors and observers may lead to inaccurate metaperceptions. Albright and Malloy investigated how the opportunity to observe oneself from a visual perspective affects the relationship between self-perception and metaperceptions, and meta-accuracy. In three studies, individuals in groups interacted with each other while being videotaped, and then made self-judgments, other-judgments, and metaperceptions of anxiety. Meta-accuracy was the greatest among groups where individuals were allowed to view the videotaped interactions (with a visual and auditory focus on themselves) before making metaperceptions. Results from Albright and Malloy (1999) suggest that self-observation increases meta-accuracy because of differences in stimulus information. The authors argue that perceivers and targets have shared meaning systems for visual and verbal data, and when targets are given the same information as perceivers, the process of determining what behavioral information is available to others is no longer inferential. Thus perceivers and targets have the same information on which to base judgments. This finding is consistent with Albright et al. (2001), who manipulated how salient individuals' self-concept was by instructing them to self-present. When individuals are forced to take the perspective of the perceiver, they appear to be using the same behavioral cues as other perceivers, rather than their self-perceptions on which to base metaperceptions.

Christensen et al. (2003) were interested in how an individual difference variable, social anxiety, explains the correlation between self-perception and metaperception. The authors were particularly interested in the negative biases that social anxiety has on both self-perceptions and metaperceptions of trait ratings. The authors found that social anxiety explained some, but not all, of the relationship between self-perceptions and metaperceptions. Socially anxious individuals saw themselves negatively and in turn perceived that others saw them negatively as well. This study illustrates how an individual difference variable, social anxiety, shapes self-perceptions, and ultimately, metaperceptions.

Thus far, all of the studies reviewed used unacquainted or newly acquainted

perceivers and targets. Levesque (1997) investigated the hypothesis that acquaintance might moderate the correlation between self-perceptions and metaperceptions for personality traits and affective judgments (i.e., liking). He found that consistent with studies reviewed by Kenny and DePaulo, variance in metaperceptions is largely at the level of the actor and the relationship, and correlations between the actor effect in metaperceptions and self-perceptions were quite large and near 1, indicating that at the generalized level, individuals perceived themselves as they thought others perceived them. At the dyadic level, the correlations were weaker, but still substantial, although Levesque's (1997) findings were consistent with Kenny and DePaulo's (1993) review that meta-accuracy is much greater at the generalized level than at the dyadic level, Levesque is cautious to interpret his findings as an indication that individuals do not use feedback in making self-perceptions. It may not be particularly beneficial to know, for example, that a particular person views the self as extroverted. Rather, it is more useful for individuals to know what others think of them in general. He argued that this is especially the case among acquainted individuals, who are better able to gauge the consistency of a target's behavior than strangers, and behavioral consistency is correlated with self-perceptions (Levesque & Kenny, 1993). Although the process by which other-perceptions are incorporated in the self-view may change as a function of acquaintance, individuals' self-judgments are strongly related to their metaperceptions among both acquainted and unacquainted individuals.

Malloy, Albright, Kenny, Agatstein, and Winquist (1997) examined metaperceptions for non-overlapping social groups. Target individuals made metaperceptions for three friends, three family members, and three co-workers. The authors found that individuals believe that they are seen similarly, but not exactly the same, across the three social groups; the average correlation between the social groups is .735. Generalized meta-accuracy was the largest for family members, and the smallest for co-workers, but the differences were small.

In a study examining gender as a moderator of the self-perception–metaperception relationship, Marcus and Miller (2003) examined self-perceptions, metaperceptions, and other-perceptions of physical attractiveness among strangers. Groups of strangers in a round-robin design made self-judgments, judgments of other group members, and metaperceptions of physical attractiveness. Results indicated that metaperceptions of attractiveness highly correlated with self-perceptions of attractiveness, and these results differed slightly for men and women. Women who rated themselves as attractive believed that both men and women perceived them as attractive. Thus the correlation between self-perceptions and metaperceptions for women was positive both for metaperceptions of what men and for metaperceptions of what women thought of them. However, men who rated themselves as attractive only believed that women perceived them as attractive, not other men. Thus there was not a self-perception–metaperception correlation for metaperceptions of what men thought of them. Consistent with Kenny and DePaulo (1993), there was a considerable degree of generalized meta-accuracy for both men and women.

Finally, Frey and Tropp (2006) speculated that the strong correlation between self-perceptions and metaperceptions exists for metaperceptions of ingroup

members but not for outgroup members. Directly relevant to this hypothesis, Santuzzi (2007) studied group interactions. Within those interactions, persons stated whether they smoked cigarettes or not and then later made perceptions of personality. In this study, ingroup perceptions are perceptions of smokers made by smokers as well as perceptions of non-smokers made by non-smokers; outgroup perceptions are those of smokers made by non-smokers and vice versa. Interestingly, Santuzzi (2007) found stronger self-metaperception correlations for ingroup than for outgroup members. Work by Vorauer and Kumhyr (2001) on meta-stereotypes also suggests that self-perceptions may not be related to metaperceptions of outgroup members.

Self-Perceptions and Metaperceptions across Cultures

Researchers may question the generalizability of the strong correlation between metaperceptions and self-judgments. Particularly, metaperceptions made by individuals in cultures that use more direct communication styles may be more accurate and correlate more highly with other perceptions if individuals are more candid communicators within these cultures. Shechtman and Kenny (1994) examined generalized and dyadic meta-accuracy using a sample of Israelis. They measured meta-accuracy in a population with a more straightforward communication style and proposed that directness would lead individuals to be more accurate metaperceivers than Americans. Israeli participants who were previously unacquainted interacted with each other in a context that encouraged feedback. Shechtman and Kenny (1994) found ample evidence for generalized meta-accuracy, and little evidence for dyadic meta-accuracy. Consistent with Kenny and DePaulo (1993), self-perceptions correlated highly with metaperceptions. Results did not support the hypothesis that within a culture with more direct communication style, individuals would be more meta-accurate perceivers.

Along these same lines, we examined data gathered by Jung (2006), who examined self-, other-, and metaperceptions of personality traits in South Korea. Perhaps it is the case that because the collective self is used more in Asian cultures than in Western cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and that in some Asian cultures people are less likely to enhance the individual self than in Western cultures (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1997), individuals in collectivist cultures will be more accurate metaperceivers, and the individual level self will less likely to be used in forming metaperceptions.

Jung (2006) examined metaperception on several traits in groups of persons who were acquainted for 1 and 3 years. He found that consistent with findings in Western cultures, self-perceptions correlate very strongly with the actor effect in metaperceptions, the average correlation being .70. This finding was consistent across length of acquaintance; individuals who were acquainted for 1 year used self-perceptions in making metaperceptions to the same extent as those who were acquainted for 3 years. In sum, research has consistently demonstrated cross-culturally that individuals largely incorporate their self-judgments into their metaperceptions.

Summary of Metaperception Research

We reviewed a growing body of research that examines the relationship between self-perception and metaperception. Strong evidence indicates that individuals use their self-perceptions in forming perceptions of what they believe others think of them, and this process is consistent across Eastern and Western cultures. In addition, individuals believe they are seen consistently by others; however, individuals are less able to predict how particular others view them, even when these others are acquaintances and not strangers.

Research focusing on the process of forming metaperceptions has demonstrated that when individuals focus on their behaviors rather than on their self-concepts, the strong relationship between self-perception and metaperception declines (Albright et al., 2001). In a similar vein, when individuals are given the same information about their own behavior as other perceivers are given, the correlation between self-perceptions and metaperceptions is reduced. In general, inducing individuals to draw on their behaviors rather than their self-concepts in forming metaperceptions leads them to become more accurate metaperceivers.

It appears that acquaintance does not moderate the strong self-metaperception correlation, however, group membership does. Santuzzi (2007) found that individuals are more likely to use self-judgments of ingroup members than of outgroup members. Also, Marcus and Miller (2003) found evidence for stronger self-metaperception correlations for opposite-sex judgments than same-sex judgments for males.

IDIOPHIC ANALYSES

In the final section of this chapter, we consider a methodological issue in interpersonal perception studies. A long-standing question in person perception in particular, and social perception in general, is the extent to which social judgments are accurate or biased. Self-judgments have often been used in this debate. In terms of bias in the perception of others, one major area of study has been the study of assumed similarity or false consensus: To what extent do perceivers use self-perceptions to determine how it is that they see others? Self-judgments are also often used as the standard for accuracy (Funder, 1995). That is, to determine if judgments about a target are correct or not, the researcher asks the target for self-judgments, presumes that the target is correct, and examines the relationship between self-judgments and judgments of the target by other perceivers. In this case, the researcher is interested in *self-other agreement*.

Let us carefully consider the question of self-other agreement. This agreement is usually measured by correlating across *persons*; that is, how a person sees him or herself on a given trait with how others see him or her on that trait. Alternatively, we can compute this correlation within person and across *variables*; for example, we can have a person rate him or herself and another on a set of variables (e.g., sociable, intelligent, and honest). We then compute a correlation for that person between the person's self-ratings and the rating of the other

person. For this correlation, the variable is the unit of analysis and there is a different correlation for each person. Such a within-person analysis has many names—*q* analysis, ipsative analysis—but we prefer the term *idiographic analysis*. Such correlations have been computed in prior studies of self–other agreement (Pelham, 1993) as well as assumed similarity (Krueger, 2000).

There are two major advantages in using the idiographic approach. First, it allows the researcher to study moderators of person perception phenomena. If, for instance, there was an interest in showing that depressed people were less likely to assume that others were similar to themselves, one could correlate a measure of depression with an idiographic measure of assumed similarity. Second, an idiographic analysis provides a single value, instead of several different values for each variable. Because of this aggregation, idiographic analyses may provide a more powerful overall test of a phenomenon.

There are, however, several key drawbacks to the use of such methods. First, the process is computationally complex; one must compute elaborate statistics for each person. Second, one must decide which idiographic measure to use and each might yield very different results. For instance, self and other can be correlated with each other, or the sum of absolute differences can be measured. The researcher needs to carefully consider which type of idiographic measures to employ (Cronbach & Gleser, 1953). Third, there might be self–other agreement, but the source of that agreement may be mean differences between the variables rated. In such a case, a person's self-rating would correlate not only with the others' rating of him or her but also with others' ratings of a third person. This problem, called *stereotype accuracy* (Cronbach, 1955), can be eliminated by proper statistical analyses. Computational complexity, choosing the appropriate index, and stereotype accuracy are difficulties in idiographic analyses, but they can be overcome.

We next illustrate an idiographic analysis using the Study 2 data from Kenny, Horner, Kashy, and Chu (1992). In that study, there are 10 ratings of personality, two for each of the Big Five. There were 27 groups of four women who rated the three other participants at zero acquaintance as well as making self-ratings. Zero acquaintance means that the women have not interacted; they are making personality ratings based on appearance and nonverbal behaviors. We decided to use a correlational index. Note that for this study, we are computing the idiographic index for dyad, not person. For instance, we can compute Jane's assumed similarity to Sue, Helen, and Jennifer.

To remove stereotype accuracy as a potential problem, we followed the advice of Kenny and Acitelli (1994) by subtracting from each score its mean on that particular variable across all persons. We computed the variable means separately for perceptions of the self and for perceptions of the other. Had we not done these mean subtractions, we would have found spurious large levels of both assumed similarity and self–other agreement.

We computed a self–other agreement correlation by correlating a person's self-ratings with how the person was seen by a particular other. We computed the assumed similarity correlation by correlating the self-ratings with how the self saw a particular other. Thus for each person, there are three sets of assumed similarity

correlations, and three sets of self–other agreement correlations, one for each interaction partner. The average assumed similarity correlation was .195 and the average self–other agreement correlation was .030.

Because we have assumed similarity and self–other agreement for each dyad, we can perform an SRM analysis on these measures. With this analysis we could ask four interesting questions:

1. Do some people assume that their partners are similar to them and other people do not (actor variance in assumed similarity)? Does Jane think that she is similar to Sue, Helen, and Jennifer?
2. Are some people seen as very similar to others, and other people are seen as not very similar to others (partner variance in assumed similarity)? Do Sue, Helen, and Jennifer think they are similar to Jane?
3. Do some people’s self-ratings tend to agree with their partners’ ratings of them, and other people’s self-ratings tend to show low agreement (actor variance in self–other agreement)? Do Sue, Helen, and Jennifer see Jane the way she sees herself?
4. Do some perceivers tend to agree with people’s self-ratings and others tend not to agree (partner variance in self–other agreement)? Does Jane see Sue, Helen, and Jennifer the way they see themselves?

The third question has been called *expressivity* (Snodgrass, Hecht, & Ploutz-Snyder, 1988) or the *good-target hypothesis* (Funder, 1995) and the fourth question has been called *perceptivity* (Snodgrass, Hecht, & Ploutz-Snyder, 1988) or the *good-judge hypothesis* (Colvin & Bundick, 2001).

We do find evidence that some people assume similarity more than others; the answer to question 1 is yes. We also find that some people have more self–other agreement than do others; the answer to question 3 is yes. This result may seem surprising in that the mean level of self–other agreement is essentially zero. If there are differences in self–other agreement, then for some selves, others can predict their self-ratings and for other selves, the correlation between self and other is negative. Our explanation of the result is as follows. Some people are more prototypical and for these people there are positive self–other correlations. However, others are counter-prototypical and so for these people the average self–other correlation is negative.

Some (e.g., Pelham, 1993) have argued that idiographic analyses yield superior information to more traditional nomothetic analyses, in which each variable is analyzed using person as the unit of analyses. Kenny and Winquist (2001) have shown that when appropriate analyses are done (e.g., effects resulting from stereotype accuracy are removed), the results from the two sets of analyses tend to be very similar. To show this, we also conducted a nomothetic analysis on the Kenny et al. data and averaged those analyses across the 10 variables, and found the following: The average assumed similarity correlation across the 10 variables is .158, whereas the average self–other agreement correlation is only .050. Note the results are essentially the same as the findings in our idiographic analysis.

As we have stated earlier, the major advantage of the idiographic analyses is

the possibility of discovering who shows more or less of the given effect. We can then examine which persons show more self–other agreement or more assumed similarity; that is, we can conduct a person moderator analysis. For example, we also found that people who assume more similarity see others more favorably.

We have in this section concentrated on idiographic analyses of assumed similarity and self–other agreement. However, other self-perception indices can be subjected to an idiographic analysis. In particular, meta-accuracy, the ability of a person to know how others view him or her, could be analyzed by idiographic methods.

SUMMARY

The relationship between self-perceptions and perceptions of others is bidirectional: To understand ourselves, we need to understand others and to understand others, we need to understand ourselves. This complex interplay of self-perceptions with other-perceptions and metaperceptions is discussed in this chapter. To understand how a person sees her or himself, we need to also understand how the person sees others, how others see the person, and how the person thinks others see him or her.

We have used the social relations model as a model for the study of these processes. Although this can be very complicated, it potentially offers us new insights into the relationship between self-perception and the perceptions of others. We hope this chapter has illustrated that utility and that researchers take advantage of the approach.

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