

SELF-DISCREPANCY MEASUREMENT

There are two ways to measure self-discrepancy.

(1) Using the Regulatory Focus Strength Measure:

To calculate actual-ideal discrepancy, subtract the actual-self extent rating from the ideal-self extent rating for each “ideal” attribute the participant listed. Then sum all the difference scores for each listed “ideal” attribute.

Use the same procedure to calculate actual-ought discrepancy. Subtract the actual-self extent rating from each ought-self extent rating for each “ought” attribute. Then sum all the difference scores for each listed “ought” attribute.

Reference

Higgins, E. T., Shah, J., & Friedman, R. (1997). Emotional responses to goal attainment: Strength of regulatory focus as moderator. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72, 515-525.

(2) Using the Selves Questionnaire:

Participants are asked to list up to 10 traits or attributes associated with actual, ideal, and ought self-concepts.

Instructions:

In the following questionnaire, you will be asked to list the attributes of the type of person you think you *actually*, *ideally*, and *ought* to be:

Actual self: Your beliefs concerning the attributes you think you *actually* possess.

Ideal self: Your beliefs concerning the attributes you would like *ideally* to possess; your ultimate goals for yourself.

Ought self: Your beliefs concerning the attributes you believe you *should* or *ought* to possess; your normative rules or prescriptions for yourself.

Each page of the questionnaire focuses on a different domain (i.e., actual, ideal, and ought self-concepts are written about on three different pages).

Calculating Self-Discrepancy:

- (a) Compare the attributes listed for the actual self-concept with those listed for the ideal self-concept. Determine which attributes *match* (appear on the lists for both actual self-concept and ideal self-concept), and which attributes *mismatch* (i.e., an attribute on one self-concept list is the opposite or an antonym of an attribute on

- another self-concept list). Synonyms and antonyms are operationally defined in terms of Roget's Thesaurus. Repeat the process for the actual self-concept list and the ought self-concept list.
- (b) Calculate the self-discrepancy score by subtracting the total number of actual-ideal matches from the total number of actual-ideal mismatches. The same calculation is used for the actual-ought self-discrepancy score.

Reference

Higgins, E. T., Klein, R., & Strauman, T. (1985). Self-concept discrepancy theory: A psychological model for distinguishing among different aspects of depression and anxiety. *Social Cognition, 3*, 51-76.