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The Benefits and Possible Costs of Positive Core Self-Evaluations: A Review and Agenda for Future Research

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In any analysis of the source of positive psychological states and behavior in work and applied psychology, one must consider the strong possibility that some individuals are born with predispositions toward positive feelings and behaviors. In a 1997 conceptual article, Judge and colleagues (1997) introduced the concept of core self-evaluations. According to Judge et al. (1997), core self-evaluations is a broad concept representing the fundamental evaluations that people make about themselves and their functioning in their environment. Individuals with positive core self-evaluations appraise themselves in a consistently positive manner across situations; such individuals see themselves as capable, worthy, and in control of their lives. Individuals with negative core self-evaluations, in contrast, tend to view themselves as less worthy than others, dwell on their failures and deficiencies, and see themselves as victims of their environment. According to Judge et al. (1997, 1998), The concept of core self-evaluations is indicated by four widely-studied traits: self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy. Judge et al. (2002) have presented evidence that the first three of these traits are the most widely studied in psychology. As these authors note, however, very little research has examined the commonalities and overlap among these traits. Although neuroticism has been considered a broad trait even by those researchers who do not endorse the five-factor model (Eysenck, 1990), study upon study continues to treat self-esteem and locus of control as individual, isolated traits. As we will show, consideration of these traits in isolation leads to underprediction and semantic confusion (Dewey, 1974).

In this chapter, we will review the evidence on core self-evaluations. We first review evidence for the construct validity of the concept. We also briefly discuss the measurement of core self-evaluations. Then, as an exemplar of a positive trait, we consider the benefits and possible costs of

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positive core self-evaluations. Finally, we lay out an agenda for future research based on the foregoing review.

Construct Validity of Core Self-Evaluations

Following Schwab (1980), in reviewing the construct validity of core self-evaluations, we consider four questions: (1) *Convergent validity* – do the four core traits (self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalized self-efficacy) share sufficient covariance to indicate a common concept?; (2) *Lack of discriminant validity of core traits* – do the core traits display similar patterns of relationships with other variables, which would suggest that the core traits lack discriminant validity relative to each another?; (3) *Discriminant validity relative to other traits* – Is the core concept distinct from other traits, such as the Big Five (excluding emotional stability, of course, which is also part of the Big Five)?; (4) *Incremental validity* – does the broad core factor predict criteria better than the isolated core traits or beyond other traits (such as the Big Five traits)? Let us consider each of these questions in turn.

Convergent validity

Research has consistently shown that the four core traits are substantially interrelated. For example, in the Judge et al. (2002) meta-analysis, the average correlation among the traits was .64, which is as high as the correlations among alternative measures of the Big Five traits (see Ones, 1993). Moreover, factor analyses – using both exploratory and confirmatory methods – have consistently shown that the four core traits load on a common factor (Erez and Judge, 2000; Judge et al., 1998, 2000). Although evidence suggests that locus of control tends to correlate less strongly with the other three traits than these three traits correlate with each other, overall, it appears that measures of the four core traits converge to indicate a higher-order core self-evaluations concept.

Lack of discriminant validity of core traits

Some might argue that the four core traits are in fact distinct because they correlate differently with relevant outcomes. This, of course, is an empirical question. In correlating the individual core traits with three important applied criteria (subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and job performance), the results tend to show that the individual core traits show a very similar pattern of correlations with other variables (Judge et al., 2002). For example, with respect to job satisfaction and job performance, Judge and Bono's (2001) meta-analysis revealed that, with the exception of the correlation between generalized self-efficacy and job satisfaction (which was boosted by a single strong correlation in a one large sample study), the credibility intervals all overlap. Thus, it appears that the core traits do not display much discriminant validity in terms of their correlations with the three outcomes.

Discriminant validity relative to other traits

Some researchers have argued that core self-evaluations is not a new concept. Schmitt (2004: 352) questions the degree to which core self-evaluations is separate from the Big Five, noting that core self-evaluations 'is a broader concept indicated by a composite of three Big Five traits,' Judge et al.'s (2002) study revealed that self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, and locus of control displayed an average correlation of .44 with extraversion and .46 with conscientiousness. These correlations are far from trivial; however, the correlations of these traits with the Big Five traits tend to be similar to the correlations of neuroticism with the other Big Five traits (see Judge et al., 2004). Moreover, these core traits correlate much more strongly with neuroticism than with either conscientiousness or extraversion.

Incremental validity

Perhaps the 'acid test' of the distinctiveness and usefulness of core self-evaluations is to determine whether the broad core trait predicts broad criteria better than the individual traits, and predicts criteria controlling for the five-factor model traits. Erez and Judge (2000) have addressed this issue explicitly in terms of the relationship of core self-evaluations to motivation and job performance. They found that the overall core concept always predicted motivation and performance, whereas the individual traits did so inconsistently. Judge et al. (2002) also demonstrated that the core factor better predicted criteria (job satisfaction, life satisfaction) than did the individual core traits. Moreover, both of these studies showed that core self-evaluations predicted criteria controlling for all or some of the Big Five traits. Thus, it appears that the overall concept is a more consistent predictor of outcomes than are the individual traits, and provides incremental validity over the five-factor model.

Measurement of Core Self-Evaluations

Despite support for the concept of core self-evaluations, one limiting issue is the measurement of the trait. In the past, Judge and colleagues measured core self-evaluations with a combination of measures of the specific core traits. The resulting measure was long, containing 37 items. Because most trait measures are substantially shorter than this, and to avoid some of the limitations of indirect measures (see Judge et al., 2004), Judge et al. (2003) developed and validated a direct measure of core self-evaluations, the Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES). The CSES is provided in Table 1. Judge et al. (2003) demonstrated the validity of this measure across four independent samples. In each sample, the CSES was reliable ($\alpha \geq .80$). Confirmatory factor-analyses of the 12 items suggested that they indicate a single dimensional construct. Furthermore, the CSES showed convergent validity, as evidenced by its correlations with the four core traits, was

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Table 12.1 Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES)

Instructions: Below are several statements about you with which you may agree or disagree. Using the response scale below, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	___				
2.	___				
3.	___				
4.	___				
5.	___				
6.	___				
7.	___				
8.	___				
9.	___				
10.	___				
11.	___				
12.	___				

Note: r = reverse-scored.

Source: Judge et al. (2003)

significantly correlated with job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and supervisory ratings of job performance, and displayed incremental validity in predicting these criteria controlling for the core self-evaluations factor as well as the traits from the five-factor model.

The possible benefits of positive core self-evaluations

Having introduced the CSE concept, described construct validity evidence, and presented information in its measurement, we now turn to the possible implications of positive core self-evaluations. First, we review positive effects of positive core self-evaluations.

Happy feelings: Core self-evaluations and subjective well-being

Research on core self-evaluations has consistently revealed positive relationships with job satisfaction (Best et al., 2005; Heller et al., 2002; Judge et al., 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005; Judge and Bono, 2001; Piccolo et al., 2005; Rode, 2004) and life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2002; Judge et al., 1998, 2002; Piccolo et al., 2005; Rode, 2004). In a meta-analysis of the four components of CSE and job satisfaction, Judge and Bono (2001) demonstrated that each of the traits was significantly correlated with job satisfaction. The average corrected correlation was .32. Furthermore, the correlation increased to .41 when the traits were aggregated. Likewise, Judge et al. (1998) found significant relationships between each of the traits and both job and life satisfaction, rated by focal participants and their significant

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others, in three samples (physicians in the United States, graduates of an East Coast business school, and employed Israeli students). Structural equation estimates revealed that a single core self-evaluations factor had moderately strong, significant effects on these outcomes.

More recent findings have supported the positive effects of CSE across cultures. In separate samples of Dutch and Spanish students and employees, Judge et al. (2004) found that the psychometric properties of the CSE scale were similar to those of US samples. The CSE-job satisfaction relationship was investigated in the Dutch sample, resulting in a strong, positive correlation ($r = .56, p < .01$). In an exploration of the validity of the CSE construct in Japan, a culture even more divergent from that of the US, Judge et al. (2005) found that the four component traits loaded on one higher order factor. This factor, in turn, was significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .49, p < .05$), life satisfaction ($r = .52, p < .05$), and happiness ($r = .67, p < .05$).

In addition to establishing that a meaningful relationship exists, researchers have sought to illuminate processes underlying the link between CSE and satisfaction. Several mechanisms have been suggested. Judge et al. (1998) argued that, consistent with self-verification theory, individuals with high CSE should attend to and process information about their work environment in a manner that leads to positive conclusions while individuals with low CSE should do the opposite, influencing job satisfaction. In addition, based on Locke's (1976) part-whole hypothesis, Judge et al. (1998) reasoned that an increase in job satisfaction would lead to a commensurate increase in life satisfaction. As expected, Judge, et al., found that the relationship between core self-evaluations and job satisfaction was partially mediated by perceptions of job characteristics. While core self-evaluations had a direct effect on life satisfaction, it also bore indirect effects via perceptions of work characteristics and job satisfaction.

Best et al. (2005) recently presented further evidence for the influence of CSE on job satisfaction via appraisals of the work environment. In a study of Veterans Administration employees in a wide range of positions, the authors found that core self-evaluations was negatively related to perceptions of organizational obstacles to goal fulfillment (perceived organizational constraint; $\beta = -.32, p < .05$). Perceived organizational constraint mediated between CSE and burnout, which negatively predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = -.44, p < .05$). CSE, furthermore, had a direct negative effect on burnout ($\beta = -.31, p < .05$). These results suggest that employees high in CSE are less likely to view their job tasks and organizational environment as stressful, shielding them from burnout and its deleterious effects on job satisfaction.

Studies that focus only on perceptual measures of job characteristics make it impossible to distinguish whether high-CSE individuals simply hold a rosier picture of objective attributes or whether they actually select into jobs with better attributes. To address this drawback in earlier

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research, Judge et al. (2000) examined the mediating role of objective job complexity, ascertained by coding job titles, as well as subjective job characteristics. They found that both subjective and objective indicators of job complexity were partial mediators of the relationship between CSE measured in childhood and early adulthood and later job satisfaction for individuals between the ages of 41–50. These results suggest that core self-evaluations influence not only how favorably people view their jobs, but also the actual level of complexity of the jobs they obtain.

In addition to selecting more challenging jobs, people with high CSE may find their work more satisfying because they choose personally meaningful goals. Self-concordance theory posits that goals pursued for fun or on the basis of personally relevant values increase subjective well-being and goal attainment (Sheldon and Elliot, 1998). Judge et al. (2005) proposed that individuals with positive self-concept should be less vulnerable to external pressures and, therefore, more likely to set self-concordant goals. In longitudinal studies of college students and employees of several different firms, participants disclosed goals they had set for the following two months and answered questions that captured the level of self-concordance of each goal. In both studies, self-concordant goals partially mediated between core self-evaluations and life satisfaction and between core self-evaluations and goal attainment. It appears that core self-evaluations do lead to the pursuit of self-concordant goals, which increases life satisfaction and goal attainment. However, the influence of goal attainment on life satisfaction was mixed. The authors concluded that core self-evaluations ‘may serve more like a trigger than an anchor. People with positive core self-evaluations strive for “the right reasons,” and therefore “get the right results”’ (p. 266).

While initial studies of the CSE construct assumed that job satisfaction mediated its relationship with life satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998), Heller et al. (2002) argued that the job-life satisfaction link might be spurious due to dispositional influences on both. In a longitudinal study of university employees, they found that, controlling for CSE, the correlations between various combinations of self and significant other ratings of job and life satisfaction decreased by 33–51 percent. In most cases, the partial correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction remained significant. Thus, while the job-life satisfaction link is partially spurious, there may also be situational influences on subjective well-being. This finding was significant for its contribution to the specification of future models of the link between core self-evaluations and satisfaction. CSE may affect life satisfaction partially through job satisfaction, but it may also affect both job and life satisfaction through mutual or independent pathways, in concert with situational influences.

But does it matter to the bottom line?

The evidence that CSE influences satisfaction seems convincing, but what about performance effects? Judge and Bono (2001) found that the average

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corrected correlation of the four core self-evaluations traits with job performance was .23 and that the validity of the aggregated traits was .30. Judge et al. (1998) argued that CSE should affect performance via its influence on motivation. High-CSE individuals should be more likely to persist in the face of setbacks, believe in their capabilities, feel that they can control outcomes, and experience less fear and anxiety in novel or challenging situations. This hypothesized mediating role of motivation was supported by Erez and Judge (2001) in a laboratory study with a sample of undergraduate students and a field study of salespeople at a *Fortune 500* company. In both cases, motivation partially mediated the relationship between CSE and performance. In the lab study, CSE positively influenced motivation, which was measured as persistence on the task and as subjective task motivation. In the field study, CSE directly affected sales productivity and supervisor-rated performance while also exerting an indirect influence via goal-setting motivation.

Bono and Colbert (2005) offered additional insight into the CSE-motivation-performance relationship via a longitudinal field study examining the effects of CSE on responses to multi-source feedback. As predicted, they found that high-CSE individuals were more satisfied with multi-source feedback and were more committed to goals set as a result of the feedback process. Furthermore, people with high CSE were more committed to goals when there were discrepancies between their self-ratings and the ratings of others. Low-CSE individuals' commitment was higher when self- and other-ratings were mutually consistent, and moderate-CSE individuals were most committed when their ratings from others were high, regardless of self-ratings. The results of this study suggest that high-CSE individuals are more likely than others to benefit from feedback that differs from their own self-perceptions.

The influence of CSE on persistence and commitment was explored in an entirely different context by Wanberg et al. (2005), who found that unemployed high-CSE individuals demonstrated greater job search intensity over the course of several months. The authors warned, however, that the effect of CSE was 'quite small' (HLM coefficient = .51, $p < .01$) relative to some of the study's control variables such as occupation (HLM coefficient = -4.71 to -11.40, $p < .01$) and gender (HLM coefficient = -6.47, $p < .01$). Still, their finding is indicative that positive self-concept may give individuals on the job market an edge due to their stronger motivation, particularly when taken with Judge et al.'s (2004) finding that CSE was moderately correlated with career ambition ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). Future research might explore whether job search persistence and career ambition can explain why high-CSE individuals obtain more complex jobs.

CSE may also be an important asset for the many individuals whose work carries them into unfamiliar environments. Johnson et al. (2003) reported that, controlling for extraversion, CSE had a positive effect on social ties of expatriate employees with host country nationals and with other expatriates

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($\beta = .30$ in both cases, $p < .05$). Social ties, in turn, mediated between CSE and adjustment to work. Together, the Wanberg et al (2005) and Johnson et al. (2003) findings suggest that positive core self-evaluations may be particularly beneficial under circumstances of insecurity and change. This may be especially critical in an era of increasingly unstable employment contracts and distributed work arrangements.

In sum, the evidence gathered to date directly disputes the idea that positive self-concept is unimportant or, even, dangerous. Certainly, it is no panacea for all that ails. Yet, there is ample evidence that individuals with high CSE view their circumstances more optimistically, set more difficult and self-concordant goals, persist longer in pursuit of those goals, deal constructively with feedback and disappointments, and adapt well to new environments. These behaviors may, in turn, lead to their obtaining more complex jobs, finding greater fulfillment in those jobs, and performing more effectively.

The possible costs of positive core self-evaluations

It appears that positive core self-evaluations have a number of important benefits to individuals and to organizations. However, every concept has potential limitations, and core self-evaluations is no exception. Now, we turn to the possible negative side-effects of core self-evaluations.

The costly pursuit of a positive self-concept

In Western society, it is generally considered 'good' (desirable) to think positively of yourself and 'bad' (undesirable) to think poorly of oneself. One might expect, then, for people to pursue or strive toward a positive self-concept. Indeed, Crocker and Park (2004) argue that when people seek to raise their levels of self-esteem, there are short-run benefits but long-term costs. The key to this argument is how people seek to raise their self-esteem. These authors argue that people pursue self-esteem by attempting to 'validate their abilities or qualities in the domains in which self-worth is invested' (Crocker and Park, 2004: 393). Thus, for example, an employee might pursue self-esteem by seeking to validate their self-worth through effective job performance. So what is wrong with this? These authors argue that to make self-esteem contingent in this way is costly in terms of autonomy (people work because they feel they have to rather than want to), loss of relationships (people become focused on themselves at the expense of others), and increased risk of depression (when people fail, it undermines their global sense of self-worth). These arguments are controversial, and the evidence marshaled in support of them is often indirect and sketchy. However, they do raise an interesting perspective – whether society's pressures to be positive have, in a sense, created a monster that is manifested in the pursuit of self-esteem.

Can one be too positive?

Is it possible to be too positive? Is there a risk of creating a 'Stepford Organization?' The benefits, and costs, of positiveness continue to be debated in the literature (Baumeister et al., 2003; Colvin et al., 1995; Taylor et al., 2003; Taylor and Sherman, 2004). In one camp are researchers who claim that positive thinking and even positive illusions are beneficial. They argue that positive people, even those with a false positive self-concept, are better adjusted (happier) and more motivated (Taylor et al., 2003). In the other camp are those who argue that those who have an unrealistically positive self-concept are viewed as exploitive by their peers, and actually have lower levels of well-being (Colvin et al., 1995). Although whether the *illusion* of self-esteem is helpful is debatable, others have argued that either self-esteem itself has few benefits (Baumeister et al., 2003), or the pursuit of self-esteem is harmful (Crocker and Park, 2004).

On this former point, we think the evidence is clear that self-esteem is positively but moderately related to various criteria that people would view as important. People with high self-esteem tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and their lives, and tend to perform better at their jobs. It is true that the correlations are not strong, so that one cannot say that self-esteem is some magic ingredient for life success. But, at the same time, we believe it a misreading of the literature to conclude that self-esteem has no or few benefits.

Another means of looking at an overly positive self-concept is to consider narcissism. Narcissists are individuals who have a high opinion of themselves, are self-centered, given to grandiose fantasies, and interpersonally manipulative. One could scarcely think of a more biting insult than to label someone a narcissist; yet the advantages and disadvantages of narcissism continue to be debated. There is little dispute that narcissists tend to derogate others when their self-concept is threatened, to emphasize winning over relationships, to be repelled by intimacy, and to be highly susceptible to the self-serving bias (tendency to make internal attributions for success and external attributions for failure). Yet, at the same time, it is far from clear that narcissists are unhappy. Indeed, a team of researchers recently conducted several studies showing that narcissists tend to be happier, largely because they have higher levels of self-esteem (Sedikides et al., 2004). Thus, whether narcissism is good or bad may depend on one's perspective: what is good for the narcissist may be bad for the people who are objects of the narcissist's attention.

Settlement of the debates surrounding the benefits and drawbacks of narcissism may, after all, bear little relevance to CSE. At first glance, narcissism may seem to be simply an extreme form of positive self-concept. However, further probing suggests that narcissism and CSE are quite distinct, given both differences in their conceptualization and in their patterns of relationships with various criteria. For instance, narcissists react defensively against negative feedback (see Sedikides and Gregg, 2001), a

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characteristic that is clearly inconsistent with findings that people with high CSE react more proactively to negative feedback that is discrepant with their own self-perceptions (Bono and Colbert, 2005). Moreover, correlations vary widely between narcissism and self-esteem, which is typically the highest loading of the four component traits on the second-order CSE factor in confirmatory factor analyses (Judge et al., 1998; Erez and Judge, 2001). Brown and Zeigler-Hill (2005) provided evidence that these variations are grounded in the fact that self-esteem measures differ in the extent to which they emphasize attitudes of superiority and dominance as opposed to the attitude that one is simply 'as good as' or 'not inferior to' others. Indeed, Campbell and colleagues (2001) reported findings that narcissism seemed to encompass only agentic, ego-centered conceptions of the self (i.e. intellect, extraversion) while self-esteem seemed to comprise a balance of agentic and communal self-perceptions (i.e. conscientiousness, empathy). Finally, there is virtually no conceptual overlap between the dimensions of the most widely-used narcissism measure (the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, or NPI; Raskin and Hall, 1981) and the dimensions of CSE.

Recently, Hiller and Hambrick (2005) suggested that executives can reach such a high level of CSE that it taints their decision making. They proposed that 'hyper-CSE' would be a useful measure of executive hubris, an assertion that recalls the debate over the relationship between high self-esteem and narcissism. Hiller and Hambrick (2005) argued that CSE is not likely related to 'unhealthy reactive narcissism' but should be positively related to 'healthy narcissism', which they understand to be based on secure self-esteem. Some theorists view narcissism as occurring along a continuum with overlap between 'adaptive narcissism' and healthy self-esteem. However, Hiller and Hambrick (2005) argued that CSE becomes inflated because of the power inherent in an executive's position. However, CSE is more likely a stable characteristic. Even for executives with positive CSE, the negative outcomes predicted seem more characteristic of the narcissism construct.

Is positive self-concept associated with violence and antisocial behavior?

In an influential article, Baumeister and colleagues (1996) argued that aggression results from threats to self-esteem and, therefore, that many high self-esteem individuals may be predisposed to violent or antisocial behavior. In supporting this view, Baumeister et al. (1996) argue that psychopaths often have inflated self-views. Whether this is true or not, as we shall note shortly, a positive self-view is not necessarily isomorphic with an inflated self-view. As with many psychopathologies, the mental structures necessary to commit violent acts are probably complex, even conflicted, and may depend on the nature of the crime (the causes of rape are unlikely to be identical to the causes of terrorist acts). Overall, as

Baumeister et al. (2003: 22) noted: 'Many researchers have sought to link self-esteem to violence, aggression, and antisocial tendencies. The results are mixed at best.' Thus, if we can generalize from the self-esteem literature, we doubt there is any simple connection between positive core self-evaluations and violent, antisocial, or deviant behavior.

Benefits of negative thinking

Remember the retort 'I'm not cynical, I'm just realistic?' There actually is some evidence that depressed people are more realistic in estimating contingencies of actions such that they are more accurate (better able) to judge the consequences of their actions (Alloy and Abramson, 1979). Thus, when making accurate decisions is important, being positive may actually be bad. On the other hand, depressed people also exhibit memory decay to a greater degree than nondepressed individuals, especially when people are put under 'cognitive load' (mental strain). Thus, it is not that depression represents a vast cognitive advantage to individuals. Rather, it simply may be that depressed people, or negative people more generally, are in fact sadder but wiser in making certain judgments.

Future research

Pursuit of positive self-concept at work

Because work is a major source of identity to most individuals (consider the number of surnames in English and other languages that define a family in terms of an occupation; Hulin, 2002), it is reasonable to expect that most of us derive at least some sense of self-worth from our work. Crocker has raised questions about the functionality of such contingencies in self-worth. So, the questions become: Do people base their core self-evaluations on occupational success? Is it 'healthy' to do so? Does it matter what specifically it is based on (e.g. is it 'healthier' to base one's self-concept on interpersonal closeness, or popularity within a social network, or earnings, etc.)?

Stability of core self-evaluations

Research by Kernis (2005) has suggested that variability in self-esteem is important. Consistent with this idea that self-concept may vary within persons, Schinkel et al. (2004) conceptualized CSE as a state-based construct. Judge et al.'s (2003) Core Self-Evaluations Questionnaire was used as the measurement instrument in a laboratory study with Dutch undergraduates who took bogus job tests. Participants who received detailed performance feedback experienced a significant decrease in CSE (from 3.64 at Time 1 to 3.58 at Time 2) while CSE of those in the condition without feedback actually increased. Furthermore, procedural fairness interacted with feedback such that CSE increased for those in the no-feedback

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condition who perceived high procedural fairness while it remained basically unchanged for those who perceived low procedural fairness. These findings, in concert with Kernis' work, indicate that there is some merit to the idea that the stability of an individual's CSE, as well as the general level, influences the appraisal processes believed to link CSE to outcomes.

Effects on creativity

With the exception of Judge and Bono (2001) and Erez and Judge (2001), there has been little study of the effects of core self-evaluations on domains of job performance other than task performance. There is good reason to believe, however, that core self-evaluations may play a key role in creative action in organizations. According to Amabile's influential 'componential model' (1996), intrinsic motivation is a key antecedent to creativity. While creativity researchers have devoted considerable attention to factors that may influence intrinsic motivation, little attention has been paid to the role of personality. Rather, they have tended to focus on contextual characteristics. However, given the finding by Judge et al. (2005) that CSE positively predicts the pursuit of self-concordant goals, it's very likely that people with positive CSE are more intrinsically motivated.

Self-control

Another potentially fruitful area of inquiry is the relationship of CSE to self-control. Recently, Tangney et al. (2004) proposed that self-control predicts a broad range of positive outcomes (i.e. secure attachment style, empathy, constructive conflict resolution, low levels of psychopathology) and seems not to possess any serious drawbacks. In their study, controlling for socially desirable responding, self-control was positively correlated with emotional stability ($r = .42, p < .001$) and negatively correlated with depression ($r = -.34, p < .001$), anxiety ($r = -.33, p < .001$) and hostility ($r = -.27, p < .01$). It would seem, however, that self-control is not a conceptual replacement for self-concept but, rather, a consequence of self-concept. After all, locus of control is a major component of CSE, and it seems likely that people who believe they can exercise control will make more of an effort to do so.

Interpersonal relationships

The findings by Johnson et al. (2003) point to the potential for a significant role for core self-evaluations in interpersonal relationships at work. Though the influence of personality on social ties at work is a fairly under-examined area, there is evidence that it may be an important avenue for further research. For instance, Klein et al. (2004) found that neuroticism was negatively associated with centrality in friendship ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$) and advice networks ($\beta = -.40, p < .01$) and positively associated with centrality in

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adversarial networks ($\beta = .31, p < .05$) of teams five months after their formation. When all of the study's other control variables were introduced, none of the other Big Five traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience) predicted advice network centrality. Other than neuroticism, only openness predicted friendship network centrality ($\beta = -.43, p < .01$), while openness ($\beta = .27, p < .05$), agreeableness ($\beta = -.30, p < .05$) and extraversion ($\beta = .33, p < .001$) were significantly associated with adversarial network centrality. The Big Five are often considered the most useful personality traits for predicting work outcomes. However, in both Johnson et al. (2003) and Klein et al. (2004), CSE and one of its major components, neuroticism (e.g. emotional stability), predicted variance beyond extraversion.

Most of the research on self-concept in relationships has focused on romantic attachments. This literature may provide a starting point for building a model of the role of CSE in relationships at work. For instance, Murray and Rose (2005) argue that high self-esteem promotes relationship health, in part, because it leads to more accurate perceptions of relationship partners' positive regard and affections. Furthermore, they cite evidence that high self-esteem individuals may hold an approach orientation to relationships while low self-esteem individuals are avoidant, focused on protecting themselves from getting hurt rather than promoting intimacy and trust. Applied to a work context, high CSE individuals may be more likely to establish trust with co-workers and, because they are less concerned with the potential for harm, may engage in fewer political behaviors. Moreover, since CSE is a multi-faceted construct, it may predict relationship behaviors and outcomes better than any of its components alone, as has been found in research on CSE and other criteria such as job satisfaction and performance.

Conclusion

Within the realm of positive psychology, core self-evaluations is an important emergent concept. It is an integrative trait that may bring together disconnected streams of research. It is related to a host of outcomes that are important to individuals and organizations. However, we have also reviewed areas where positive core self-evaluations might have limitations. Future research would benefit from further study of the benefits of, limits to, and possible costs of, positive core self-evaluations.

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