MANAGERIAL SELF-ESTEEM:

AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCT

AND ITS POSITION IN A PROPOSED

NOMOLOGICAL NET

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This paper defines the construct of managerial self-esteem, describes an instrument for its measurement and presents an exploratory analysis of construct validity by examining its relationship with selected intrinsic, coping and organizational variables. Included is a set of hypotheses which guided the validation of the measure. Homogeneity of scale items, test-retest and internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminate validity are discussed.

he study of the relationship between overall or general feelings of self-esteem (i.e. global self-esteem) and various organizational constructs has long been of interest to a number of researchers of organizational behavior. Most recently it was found that global self-esteem interacts with feedback from specific tasks and accounts for significant amounts of variance in job performance, general job satisfaction, absenteeism and job search intentions. (Renn and Prien, 1995) Also, Tang and Baldwin (1991) found subjects with high self-esteem maintain a higher sense of certainty and confidence on tasks despite receiving negative feedback. Wiener, Muczyk and Martin (1992) found evidence that self-esteem acts as a moderating factor in the relationship between work satisfaction and the individual's sense of well-being. Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham (1989) developed a construct delineating an individual's perception of organizational self-esteem, which they found has a significant relationship to a number of organization based measures.

Also, self-esteem moderated the impact between a sense of job insecurity and overall psychological well-being (Orpen, 1994), while Jex, Cvetanovski and Allen (1994) found self esteem moderate the relationship between unemployment and psychological strain, with women

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showing a stronger impact than men. Self-esteem also was related to perceived performance, but not to actual performance in a study by Martin and Murberger (1994), after Morse (1976), in an earlier study, had reported low self-esteem was negatively related to actual performance. In another earlier study, Quinn and Shepard (1974) reported that low self-esteem was negatively related to a sense of competence, as well as a propensity to leave among blue collar workers.

In studies concerning other factors related to the psychology of persons in organizations, Wylie (1961) found that persons with low self-esteem exhibit the dispositional characteristics of anxiety, depression and neurotic behaviors. Schalon (1968) and Shrauger and Rosenberg (1970) reported that low self-esteem individuals exhibit poorer social skills and Wells and Marwell (1976) reported that persons with low self-esteem lack initiative and assertiveness.

A RATIONALE FOR A ROLE-BASED CONSTRUCT OF MANAGERIAL SELF-ESTEEM

In view of this growing body of evidence concerning the impact of global self-esteem on other aspects of organization behavior, it appears likely that a related construct might also explain a significant amount of variance in the performance of persons in the role of manager. The purpose of this study is to apply the findings of this earlier work concerning the role of global self-esteem in organizational behavior to the complex role of the manager by describing a multifaceted managerial self-esteem construct, developing a proposed measure for this construct, and examining the measure in relation to selected role related organizational variables in an attempt to assess its construct validity. The development of such a construct could have significant implications concerning both the selection and development of managers, as well as in enhancing the understanding of the impact of other organizational variables on managerial performance.

Much of the past research concerning the impact of self-esteem utilized measures of global self-esteem. Simpson and Boyle (1975), among others, argue that an important attribute of self-esteem is that it is a multi-faceted construct with varying levels of specificity depending on the circumstance under which the individual is acting (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Song & Hattie, 1985; Tharenou, 1979). This research argues that studies should utilize measures of global self-esteem in examining the overall feelings of self-efficacy of an individual, utilize role-based self-esteem measures in examining a person's evaluation of his or her appropriateness for specific roles, and finally utilize task-specific self-esteem measures in examining a person's evaluation of his or her competence concerning a specific task.

Bruckner (1989) argues that task-specific self-esteem and self-efficacy are synonymous as they both reflect an essentially bi-polar confidence level of the individual. (i.e. (a) Can I, or can I not perform the task? And (b) How confident am I that I can perform the task?) Global self-esteem is an overall construct that reflects the individual's self-evaluation or sense of worthiness across the wide variety of overall life situations. Thus, role-based constructs such as managerial

self-esteem should be based on an individual's evaluation of his or her sense of both their self-worth and self-efficacy across the specific set of tasks or situations required to perform in the role of a manager. It is important to note the subjective nature of both global self-esteem and the role based construct of managerial self-esteem. These constructs are not simply the sum of an individual's task specific perceptions, but include the overall sense of worthiness an individual has concerning his or her ability to carry out the requirements of the role. Despite the strength of the individual's task-based sense of efficacy, it may be mitigated significantly by any of a number of broader based psychological factors which underlie both an individual's sense of global self-esteem and managerial self-esteem.

THE MANAGERIAL SELF-ESTEEM CONSTRUCT

Coopersmith, (1967: 4,5) defines global self-esteem as "the evaluation an individual makes with regard to the self, it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes the self to be capable, significant, successful and worthy." Self-esteem is also often defined as the degree to which individuals believe they are able to satisfy their needs. (Korman, 1976; Wells & Marwell, 1976) Additionally, Wood & Bandura (1989: 408) state that "self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to meet most situational demands."

Thus, managerial self-esteem is defined as the evaluation individuals make concerning their worthiness to fulfill the requirements for success across the various components of the managerial role. People with high managerial self-esteem feel they have the knowledge and ability to be effective in the various situations which may arise in their role as a manager and have the skills to perform various managerial tasks. Conversely, persons with low managerial self-esteem feel uncertain about their ability to perform the various requirements of the managerial role.

PROPERTIES OF MANAGERIAL SELF-ESTEEM

Carmine and Zeller (1979: 23) state that "construct validity is concerned with the extent to which a particular measure relates to other measures consistent with the theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the concepts (or constructs) that are being measures." Thus, for the purpose of the this study, managerial self-esteem is examined in three distinct areas: intrinsic properties, role-based antecedents and consequences of managerial self-esteem.

Intrinsic Properties of Managerial Self-esteem

The intrinsic properties of managerial self-esteem examined in this study are shaped by the self consistency motivation theory enunciated by Korman (1976), which proposes that a basic tenet of self-esteem is that individuals first develop perceptual determinations about their

environment and then follow these determinations with subsequent attitudes and behaviors which are consistent with these determinations. Thus, this study of managerial self-esteem includes an examination of the relationship between managerial self-esteem and the individual's intrinsic propensities of global self-esteem, sense of autonomy and internal work motivation. It is hypothesized below that high managerial self-esteem will concurrently reflect a positive relationship with these selected intrinsic characteristics.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and global self-esteem.

<u>Hypothesis 2</u>: There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and internal work motivation.

Several studies found positive relationships between (a) autonomy and global self-esteem (Kohn & Schuler, 1973) and (b) autonomy and work role esteem (French & Kaplan, 1972; Gardell, 1971; Margolis, Kroes & Quinn, 1972). Thus:

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and autonomy.

Coping Styles and Managerial Self-esteem

An individual's sense of self-esteem also effects the methods with which he or she copes with dissonance in his or her environment. Bandura (1977: 34) notes that "... expectations of personal mastery affect both initiation and persistence of coping behavior. The strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even cope with given situations." Thus various styles of coping behaviors should be related to an individual's sense of managerial self-esteem. People with low global self-esteem tend to avoid situations requiring behaviors which they believe exceed their coping skills. Thus, people with low managerial self-esteem would tend to utilize negative coping behaviors. (i.e., They will avoid stressful situations, rather than attending to them directly.) The following hypotheses were arrived at from this conceptual framework:

<u>Hypothesis 4:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and positive thinking coping.

<u>Hypothesis 5:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and interpersonal coping.

<u>Hypothesis 6:</u> There will be a negative relationship between managerial self-esteem and avoidance/resignation coping.

<u>Hypothesis 7:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and direct action coping.

The Role Based Antecedents of Managerial Self-esteem

A valid role based construct such as managerial self-esteem should reflect significant relationships with other role based constructs. Previous research examining work role esteem found it associated with role ambiguity (Beehr, 1971; Margolis et al., 1974). Thus it is

hypothesized that managerial self-esteem will show a negative relationship with role conflict and role ambiguity and a positive relationship with task significance and task identity.

<u>Hypothesis 8</u>: There will be a negative relationship between managerial self-esteem and role conflict.

<u>Hypothesis 9:</u> There will be a negative relationship between managerial self-esteem and role ambiguity.

<u>Hypothesis 10:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and task significance.

<u>Hypothesis 11:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and task identity.

Identity as a manager is a measure of the degree to which an individual identifies with the managerial role (Joseph, Aldag & Keenan, 1989). It assesses the extent to which the individual perceives he or she is a member of management, is perceived by others as a manager, possesses various symbols of managerial affiliation, has been granted authority commensurate with the management role, and is treated and accepted by others as a manager.

Persons with a strong sense of role or managerial identity should have a commensurately strong sense of managerial self-esteem. As such:

<u>Hypothesis 12:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and identity as a manager.

Outcomes of Managerial Self-esteem

As discussed earlier, individuals tend to behave in a manner consistent with their self-image and which maintains their sense of cognitive consistency. (Korman, 1976). Consequently low managerial self-esteem should be consistent with low job satisfaction and a lack of commitment to the organization which places them in this dissonant framework. Thus:

<u>Hypothesis 13:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and organizational commitment.

<u>Hypothesis 14:</u> There will be a positive relationship between managerial self-esteem and job satisfaction.

Also, when persons have high managerial self-esteem, their cognitive dissonance in that role will be reduced and their level of somatic tension will decrease. As such:

<u>Hypothesis 15:</u> There will be a negative relationship between managerial self-esteem and somatic tension.

The work of Quinn and Shepard (1974) and Gardell (1973) found that individuals with low global self-esteem have a high propensity to leave their positions. The corollary to this attribute

would indicate that person's with high role-based self-esteem would tend to have longer tenure in their positions. (i.e., To have more years of experience as a manager.)

Hypothesis 16: Managerial self-esteem will be related to years of tenure as a manager.

In response to the concerns of Simpson and Boyle (1975) and Tharenou (1979) regarding the validity of current self-esteem measures, their discriminate accuracy, and the utilization of appropriate levels of construct measurement, two hypotheses are offered below to establish the ability of the managerial self-esteem measure to discriminate with a global self-esteem measure relative to the individual's identity as a manager and task identity. Of the many constructs examined in this study, identity as a manager most closely fits the role identification characteristics measured by the managerial self-esteem instrument. If the arguments concerning the enhanced validity of role and task specific measures voiced by Simpson aand Boyle (1975) and Tharenou (1979) are accurate, managerial self-esteem should show a stronger relationship with identity as a manager than global self-esteem. As such:

<u>Hypothesis 17:</u> There will be a stronger relationship between managerial self-esteem and identity as a manager than between global self-esteem and identity as a manager.

Continuing this same argument, it should also be expected that individuals with high managerial self-esteem should have a stronger identification with the tasks they face in their roles as managers than persons with high global self-esteem. Thus:

<u>Hypothesis 18:</u> There will be a stronger relationship between managerial self-esteem and task identity than between global self-esteem and task identity.

METHODS

Subjects

Sample 1

The initial subjects were 114 first-level supervisors and mid-level managers at two mid-size manufacturing plants in the Midwest. There were two administrations of the measure. The first took place before the subjects participated in twelve days of management development training. The second was administered after the completion of the training. The data were collected by self-report paper and pencil questionnaires administered by mail. The first administration included 118 subjects, from whom 114 responses were returned, for a response rate of 94%. The second administration included 90 subjects from whom 60 responses were returned, for a response rate of 67%.

Sample 2

The second sample includes 200 managers or supervisors who responded to a mailing from the author. The survey was mailed to 1,000 managers and supervisors who had

attended management development programs at a Midwestern university. The initial mailing was followed by a letter of reminder, which resulted in the response rate of twenty per cent

MEASURES

Development of the Managerial Self-esteem Measure

The managerial self-esteem scale consists of ten items derived from (a) an examination of management literature and (b) a discussion of the construct with people within industrial and academic organizations who were likely to be knowledgeable about the role of managers. The examination of management literature consisted of three parts. The first involved examination of textbooks currently utilized in basic management courses, and identification of common factors found in these textbooks. The second aspect included reviewing the curriculum components of organizations providing professional development seminars in management and again identifying common factors. The third was to review other management books which describe the various roles of managers in an attempt to validate the already identified factors. Specific items were then designed to assess the subjects' perceptions of their sense of worthiness in the areas of management communication, organization abilities, problem solving, and competency in their roles as managers.

Other Measures

Global self-esteem was measured by use of the 10-item Rosenberg (1965) scale. This is a measure of general self-esteem, including items such as "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and "At times I think I am no good at all" (reversed).

Role Perceptions. Role ambiguity was measured with use of the 14-item scale developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). It consists of two subscales assessing role ambiguity (unclear role expectations) and role conflict (conflicting role expectations). Identity as a manager was assesses with a 25-item scale (Joseph, Aldag & Keenan, 1989) which examines the extent to which the individual perceives that he or she is a member of management, is perceived by others as a manager, possesses various symbols of management, has been granted authority and responsibility commensurate with the management role, and is treated by others as a manager.

Coping behaviors. Coping behaviors were measured through the use of a scale developed by Latack (1981, 1986). This scale, containing 30 items, taps the degree to which the individual engages in each of four sets of coping behaviors: positive thinking; interpersonal; avoidance/resignation; and direct action (comprised of task-focused, problem-solving efforts).

Consequences. Satisfaction with work was assessed by use of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Organizational commitment was gauged by a nine-item scale developed by Cook and Wall (1980). Somatic tension was measured by use of a six-item scale asking individuals to indicate how much of the time they feel nervous, jittery, physically fit (reversed), calm (reversed), fidgety, and energetic (reversed). Latack and Aldag (1976) reported coefficient alphas of .75 and .77 for this scale.

Analyses

Means, standard deviations, coefficient alphas and zero order correlations for all variables are presented in Tables 1 and 2. In keeping with the exploratory nature of the study, zero-order correlations among variables were first computed. Since directional hypotheses are presented, one-tailed significance tests were employed.

Coefficient alphas and test-retest correlations were calculated in order to estimate the reliability of the managerial self-esteem scale.

RESULTS

Internal consistency

In the first administration to sample one, coefficient alpha for the managerial self-esteem measure was .805 and on the second administration, coefficient alpha was .803. For the second sample, coefficient alpha was .823. These results indicate strong internal consistency.

The test-retest reliability coefficient was .67. While this figure indicates stability of the measure, it was likely affected negatively by the impact of the training.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was performed on the a combination of both administrations of the scale. Principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation and application of a scree test suggested that a one factor solution was most appropriate. The one factor solution, the loadings of which are shown in the Table 3, was thus employed. All items except number 5 had a loading of greater than .5. Item 5 was subsequently dropped from all further analyses.

nable 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficient Alpha and Zero-order Correlations

Note: n=112, Cronbach Alpha in Parentheses along diagonal for multiple item measures, p<05;*p<01;***p<001 (One Tailed)

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Crombach Alpha and Zero-order Correlations
Sample 2

SD	em 39.74 3.07 (.80)	41.95 4.61	ity 17.63 4.85437***287*	29.60 6.38 .214*296**	ince 11.88 2.34 .306** .212*343**199	9.20 3.01 .204 .258*343**368** .168	30.63 9.51 .120 .482***242*397** .412*** .327**	1t 34.86 4.48 .286* .289*431***343** .448***	
Variable	(1) Managerial Self-Esteen	(2) Global Self-Esteem	(3) Role Ambiguity	(4) Role Conflict	(5) Task Significance	(6) Task Identification	(7) Satisfaction With The Jo	(8) Organization Commitmen	(9) Identify As A Manager

Note: n=65 Cronbach Alpha in parentheses along diagional for multiple item measures. *p<05,**<01.***p<001 (One -Tailed)

Table 3

Factor Analysis for the Managerial Self-esteem Items

	Factor Loadings						
	Sample 1	Sample 2					
1. I communicate effectively with other							
persons in management.	.481	.570					
2. I communicate effectively with the							
persons reporting to me.	.624	.623					
3. I effectively organize the work in my							
department.	.714	.565					
4. I assign tasks to others that are							
clear and understandable.	.559	.577					
5. I consult with others before making							
decisions which affect them.	.228	.298					
6. I am effective in motivating the employees	S						
reporting to me.	.638	.718					
7. I am effective at reviewing the work of others							
and providing them with meaningful							
feedback.	.742	.610					
8. I am effective at solving problems							
on the job.	.432	.528					
9. I provide effective leadership for my							
department.	.825	.751					
10. Overall, I feel confident in my effectiveness							
as a supervisor/manager.	.780	.851					
Eigenvalue	3.88	4.03					

Convergent Validity

An indication of the convergent validity of a measure appears where there is a strong relationship between the measure and other measures of similar constructs. Managerial self-esteem was examined in it's relation to several corollary constructs as well as several role-based constructs and the coping measures.

Managerial self-esteem correlated significantly with the Rosenberg measure of global self-esteem, (hypothesis 1), (r=.47, p<.001 - sample 1);(r=.26, p<.05 - sample 2); (hypothesis 2), internal work motivation (r=.38, p<.001 - sample 1); (hypothesis 3)

autonomy (r=.21, p<.05 - sample 1); (hypothesis 4) positive thinking coping (r=.52, p<.001 - sample 1); (hypothesis 5) interpersonal coping (r=.50, p<.001 - sample 1)); (hypothesis 6), avoidance/resignation coping (r=.50 p<.001 - sample 1) and (hypothesis 7) direct action coping (r=.57 p<.001 sample 1).

Also, the relationship between managerial self-esteem measure and several role-based constructs was examined. Managerial self-esteem correlated significantly with (hypothesis 8) role conflict (r=-.14, p<.01 sample 1) (r=-.21, p<.01 sample 2); role ambiguity (hypothesis 9) (r=-.49, p<.001 sample 1) (r=-.44, p<.001 sample 2); task identity (hypothesis 11) (r=.27, p<.01 - sample 1); and identity as a manager (hypothesis 12) (r=-.43, p<.001 - sample 1). Hypothesis 10, the correlation between managerial self-esteem and task significance was , (r=.13, ns - sample 1) , (r=.31, p=.01 - sample 2).

Discriminate Validity

Discriminate Validity was assessed by examining the results of hypotheses 17 and 18, as well as by examining how well the items in the managerial self-esteem measure differed from global self-esteem items through a factor analytic examination. Hypotheses 17 and 18 were intended to discriminate managerial self-esteem from global self-esteem by comparing the correlations between these measures and the measures for identity as a manager and task identity. Hypotheses 17 and 18 were confirmed, as the correlation between managerial self-esteem and identity as a manager was r=.55 p<.001, while the correlation between global self-esteem and identity as a manager was r=.20 ns. (Table 4) Also, the correlation between managerial self-esteem and task identity was r=.27 p<.05, while that between global self-esteem and task identity was r=.11 ns.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach Alpha and Zero-order

Correlations

lean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
39.6	3.84	(.82)			
12.4	5.01	.56***	(.83)		
6.7	7.91	. 31***	.43***	(.71)	
35.8	5.01	.35***	.33***	.36***	(.82)
	39.6 12.4 6.7	39.6 3.84 42.4 5.01 6.7 7.91	39.6 3.84 (.82) 42.4 5.01 .56*** 6.7 7.91 .31***	39.6 3.84 (.82) 42.4 5.01 .56*** (.83) 6.7 7.91 .31*** .43***	39.6 3.84 (.82) 42.4 5.01 .56*** (.83) 6.7 7.91 .31*** .43*** (.71)

Note: n=203

Cronbach alphas are in parentheses along diagonal for multiple item measures.

A critical requirement of the managerial self-esteem measure is that it discriminate from global self-esteem. To assess this, all of the items from global self-esteem and managerial self esteemed were factor analyzed together. This analysis indicated that all of the Rosenberg global self-esteem with the exception of one loaded greater than .41 on one factor, while the managerial self-esteem items, with one exception, all loaded greater than .48 on a second factor.

DISCUSSION

Persons with high managerial self-esteem see themselves as worthy of fulfilling the requirements of their role as a manager and expressing an attitude of approval or disapproval concerning how well they are able to satisfy the needs arising from performance in the management role. It is therefore indicated that managers with high managerial self-esteem perceive themselves as capable of successfully performing the tasks required for this role in the organization. The results of this research indicate the importance and usefulness of the managerial self-esteem construct, its measure and their relevance for a wide variety of organizational factors. Both the corollaries and consequences indicated in the proposed nomological network were appropriately related to the measure of managerial self-esteem.

Several directions for future research are evident. First, research appears indicated concerning measurement of the amount of variance attributed to intrinsic properties of the individuals, vs. external organizational and socialization experiences. This could have significant implications for management development interventions, as well as for organization behavior interventions related to defining the role of the management staff. Second, while the study was not intended to test theories of

p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

managerial self-esteem, but to validate the measure, all of the hypotheses were supported. This indicates that future research might focus on longitudinal studies of the impact of both corollaries and consequences examined in this study and other constructs which may also likely be a part of the nomological network surrounding managerial self-esteem. Third, it appears important to look at the measure in terms of non self-report constructs, to examine whether either common method bias might be affecting the results reported in this study. Fourth, and perhaps most important, further work needs to be done in examining the validity of both the construct and the measure. This might include an examination of relationships to other role based measures, was well as how it is differentiated from measure of self efficacy.

In summary, the research indicates the pervasive influence of a construct of managerial self-esteem. Such findings appear to indicate a need for additional research to further explore the construct and measure.

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