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Self-control and Self-consciousness:
Regulation or Acceleration of Self-discrepancy Distress?

Abstract: *The present study explores the connection between the actual/ideal (A/I) and actual/ought (A/O) self--discrepancies and negative emotional states such as stress, anxiety and depression. Moreover, it seeks to understand the effects of potentially intervening variables, self-control //and self-consciousness, on the affect-discrepancy relationship. 638 participants (60% female, aged 18-55) participated in the study. They filled out questionnaires measuring actual/ ideal self-discrepancy, actual/ought self-discrepancy, self-control, private/public self-consciousness and psychological distress (depression, anxiety and stress; DAS). The results revealed that both, A/O and A/I self-discrepancies, are positively associated with DAS but do not have a predictive value for them. However, depression, anxiety and stress are significantly predicted by low self-control and high personal self-consciousness. Also, the study confirms that self--control and self-consciousness moderate affect-discrepancy relationship: self-control is a significant moderator of the relationships between (1) A/I and A/O self-discrepancy and depression and (2) A/I and A/O self-discrepancy and stress. Also, public self-consciousness moderates the relationship between A/O self-discrepancy and stress. In this respect those who have high self-control and high self-consciousness are less likely to experience negative emotional reactions related to the discrepant self-constructs.*

Key words: *Self-discrepancy, self-control, self-consciousness, stress, anxiety, depression*

INTRODUCTION

While our social existence depends largely on the self-awareness, gaining the self-knowledge is the fundamental human motive. Self-knowledge is defined as a self-digest that summarizes body of information about oneself as an object in the world (Higgins,1996). The reflexive thoughts, basis of our self-knowledge, are the human's unique ability, that regulates and structures how we interact with the outside social world. The self-knowledge generates our self-schemas which represent individuals' perceptions on who they actually are in different social setting and in different social roles. These beliefs might be incongruent and in order to decrease self-discrepancy individuals have regulate or modify their perceptions, feelings, and actions to change self-views according to the particular feedbacks or with the standards of desired behavior (Baumeister, 1999). There are several theoretical assumptions about the reasons and intentions of self-concept elaboration process. The identity control theory states that people affirm their identities by modifying the situation to maintain self-knowledge congruent with the identity standards (Burke & Harrod, 2016). Self-verification theory argues that in order to make the world seem coherent and predictable people want others to see them in the same way as they see themselves, and they process the feedback about themselves to promote the survival of the self-views (Swann, 1983). And self-discrepancy theory (SDT) suggests that people strive to reduce discrepancy between others' evaluation of them and their own self-evaluation (Higgins, 1987). The self-discrepancy theory (SDT) predicts that incongruences between actual/ ideal and actual/ought selves lead to the psychological distress. People then try to rectify their faults by bringing the self closer or in line with the ideal or ought standards and consequently, specific emotional and behavioral responses arise. Numerous empirical studies support the assumption that self-discrepancies are related to the emotional distress (Boldero & Francis, 1999; Scott & O'Hara, 1993; Strauman & Higgins, 1988; Stevens et al., 2014) however, some of them have failed to confirm these specific associations (Bruch et al., 2000; Phillips & Silvia, 2005).

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Obviously, elaboration of self-concept brings to different behavioral and emotional changes that needs more nuanced research.

The present study seeks to address this issue by exploring how self-control and self-consciousness influence the self-discrepancy/affect relationship. Self-consciousness and self-discrepancies are closely related categories. Self-consciousness allows us to monitor our inner emotional and cognitive states and conceive the public aspects of the self to maintain desired self-image in public settings (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Those two directions of self-attention are referred as private and public self-consciousness. However, people could be conscious not only on private and public selves, but they could be conscious on being observed by others that triggers the anxiety. These tendencies depict three dimensions of self-consciousness: private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness and social anxiety. The affective state arises when the impression management is failing and person becomes aware about it. Thus, we hypothesize that self-consciousness could be moderator of affect/discrepancy relationship.

Another potentially intervening variable – self-control - is viewed as leading factor for effective self-reguation (Milyavskaya & Inzlicht, 2017), that undeniably indicates that self-control has an agency to influence self-discrepancies and amplitude of digestion/agitation related emotions.

The study result contributes to the existing theoretical literature on affect/discrepancy relationship by exploring not only which specific negative emotions are related to self-discrepancy, but also by identifying those self-related personality variables that have a potential to strengthen or weaken the relationship between psychological distress and self-discrepancy.

Below we discuss theoretical and empirical evidences from the past research on discrepancy/affect relationship and intervening variables that influence this relationship. Next we present our original empirical study and discuss the results in the framework of strength self-control theory (Baumeister and Heatherton, 1996; Muraven and Baumeister, 2000) as a component of self-regulation process theory (Gillebaart, 2018) , self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Silvia & Duval, 2001) and self-discrepancy theory (SDT).

Self-discrepancy, affective state and intervening factors

Numerous studies have documented that self-discrepancies are associated with specific emotional states, however, the results of empirical studies are not straight-forward.

Self-Discrepancy Theory (SDT) implies that actual/ought (A/O) self-discrepancies linked to agitated affective state such as anxiety, but actual/ideal (A/I) self-discrepancies linked to dejection related symptoms and depression. Several studies support distinctiveness of emotional distress as a result of A/I and A/O discrepancies (Bizman et al., 2001; Barnett et al., 2017; Higgins, 1987; Scott & O'Hara, 1993; Strauman & Higgins, 1988), but

numerous studies show that both A/I and A/O discrepancies are related to both dejection (depression) and agitation (anxiety) related emotions (Tangney et al., 1998). Also, A/I discrepancy is most consistent predictor of depression, but A/O discrepancy doesn't reveal the strong association with anxiety as it was theorized (Barnett et al., 2017; Bruch et al., 2000). In contrast Joanne M. Dickson reported that A/I self-discrepancy was related with both depressive and anxious symptoms, whereas A/O self-discrepancy was associated only with anxiety (Dickson et al., 2019). However, Thomson (2016) found out that depression was not associated with any self-evaluation standards, but higher neuroticism is associated with greater discrepancy between actual and ideal self-perception. Depression and anxiety are not only emotional states that has been studied in the context of self-perception. Barnett found that ideal-own self-discrepancy is a predictor for sadness, joviality, self-assurance and surprise, but actual ought self-discrepancy is associated with guilt and attentiveness (Barnett et al., 2017).

While study results are equivocal, some research focused on contextual and intervening variables that might affect the link between A/I and A/O self-discrepancies and the specific emotional outcomes. Several studies documented that personality predispositions, cognitive interpretation styles and self-awareness are capable to change the direction and strength of affect/discrepancy relationship.

For example, it has been found that rumination mediated the relationships between A/I self-discrepancy and anxious and depressive symptom (Dickson et al., 2019) Also, ability to self-monitoring has a moderating influence on discrepancy/affect relationships: both ideal/other and ought/other discrepancies were particularly problematic for high self-monitors; by contrast, the two discrepancies from the own standpoint were of greater significance to low self-monitor (Gonnerman et al., 2000).

Attribution styles (internal vs. external causal attribution) also appeared to be a significant influencer of the relationship between self-discrepancy and emotions: A/O and A/I discrepancies were positively associated with agitation and dejection related emotions respectively, but only in internally based causal attribution condition (Petrocelli & Smith, 2005). Actual/ought /ideal selves appeared to be strongly related with another self-concept - undesirable self. The study documented that distance from undesired self plays an important role in discrepancy/affect relation: ideal- self discrepancies predicted emotional state related to the dejection and ought-self discrepancies predicted agitation related states, but only when people perceived themselves far from their undesired self (Heppen & Ogilvie, 2003). Also, when person perceive him/herself close to their undesired self, anxiety was the result of escaping from the feared self rather than resembling the ought self (Carver et al., 1999). Given results evidence that reasoning style as well as self-reflective concepts are crucial to be considered in the context of self-discrepancy and its emotional outcomes.

Some studies shifted their focus to more broad questions related to the role of general self-awareness or self-consciousness. The initial findings suggest that self--awareness boost the relationship between self-discrepancies and negative emotions: on a low level of self--awareness self-discrepancies had weak, nonsignificant relations to emotion, but on a high level of self-awareness, self-discrepancies strongly predicted emotional experience (Phillips & Silvia, 2005). Moreover, self-awareness can increase the accessibility and significance of the discrepancy (Phillips & Silvia, 2005). Previous research found that self-awareness activates self-relevant information (Eichstaedt & Silvia, 2003; Hull et al., 1988), makes discrepancies more salient (Carver & Scheier, 1978; Gibbons, 1990; Ickes et al., 1973), increases the motivation to be congruent with standards and thereby amplifies emotional consequences of self–standard discrepancies (Hormuth, 1982; Silvia & Duval, 2001; Silvia & Gendolla, 2001). Some studies have explored more high order mental state – consciousness in the contexts of affect/discrepancy relationship. The private self-consciousness appeared as a moderator variable between self-discrepancies and emotion (Fromson, 2006), also real/own-ought/other discrepancy showed unique association with chronic social self-consciousness (Calogero & Watson, 2009). However other study indicated that, self- reflectiveness, but not internal-state awareness, was associated with greater self--discrepancy (Ben-Artzi & Hamburger, 2016).

In sum we can argue that self-knowledge acquisition demands revision of self-schemas which is related to psychological distress. However, some individual level, self-related variables potentially could influence the link between self-discrepant self-knowledge and psychological distress.

In the present article, we aim to extend the empirical evidence for discrepancy/affect relationships in two ways. First, we explore the emotional consequences of discrepancies between actual/ought self (A/O) and actual/ideal self (A/I). Second, we explore the effects of intervening variables, namely self-control and self-consciousness, on the affect/discrepancy relationship.

We hypothesize that: (1) A/I discrepancy is linked to depression; A/O discrepancy leads to anxiety and both discrepancies are linked to stress. (2) Self-control moderates the affect/discrepancy relationship: On the high level of self-control the link between A/I and A/O discrepancy and distress diminishes. (3) Self-consciousness moderates the affect/discrepancy relationship: On the high level of self-control the link between A/I and A/O discrepancy and distress accelerates.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

Participants consisted of students from a large public university in Georgia (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University). Their ages varied between 18 and 55 (N = 638; 39 % males). Participation was voluntary and participants received partial course credit in exchange of their participation.

Measures

The Selves Questionnaire

The Selves Questionnaire (Higgins et al., 1985) was used to measure A/I and A/O self-discrepancies. The participants were asked to write down ten attributes they believed they had(actual self), attributes they would ideally like to possess (ideal self), and attributes they think others (friends, family members) would like them to possess (ought self). The Selves Questionnaire were scored according to Higgins et al.'s (1985) scoring procedures: first, the actual self-concept attributes were compared with ideal self-concept attributes. Then matched and mismatched attributes were identified and counted and lastly, the self-discrepancy score were calculated by subtracting the total number of actual/ideal matches from the total number of actual-ideal mismatches. The same procedure has been developed to calculate the actual-ought self--discrepancy score.

The Self-control Scale

The Self Control Scale (Tangney et al., 2004) included 36 items (a = .75) and was used to assess the self-control trait (Gillebaart, 2018). All items (e.g.,"I am good at resisting temptation";"I'm not easily discouraged";"I am able to work effectively toward long-term goals") were scored on a 5-point scale from 1 (not agree at all) to 5 (fully agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-control.

The Self-Consciousness Scale

The Self-Consciousness Scale (revised version, rSCS: Scheier & Carver, 1985) was used to assess level of self-consciousness. The questionnaire is designed to measure three dimensions of self-consciousness: Private self--consciousness (e.g."I think about myself a lot";"I'm constantly thinking about my reasons for doing things", etc.), Public self-consciousness (e.g."I'm self-conscious about the way I look";"I care a lot about how I present myself to others", ect.), and Social anxiety (e.g."I'm concerned about what other people think of me";"Large groups make me nervous", ect.). 22 items of the questionnaire were graded on a 4-point Likert-type scale, anchored by 0 ("not at all like me") and 3 ("a lot like me").The internal consistency reliability estimate was a = .68 for private self-consciousness, .60 alpha for public self-consciousness and .76 alpha for social anxiety.

The Stress, Anxiety, Depression Scale (DASS)

Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS: Lovibond et al., 1995) consisted of 42 items and was used to asses level of depression (14 items; a = .92) , anxiety (14 items; a = .87) and stress (14 items; a = .90) in given cohort. Items were rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale, anchored by 0 ("did not apply to me at all") and 3 ("Applied to me very much, or most of the time "). The sample items for depression scale include"I couldn't seem to get any

enjoyment out of the things I did", for anxiety scale "I felt scared without any good reason" and for stress scale "I was in a state of nervous tension".

RESULTS

All statistical data analyses were performed using SPSS version 21.0 (IBM Corp, 2012). The preliminary analyses (linearity, little multicollinearity, no auto-correlation, and homoscedasticity) show no violation of assumptions.

The results from an independent samples T-test indicated that male and female participants have a different level on all three subscales of self-consciousness: females scored higher on personal self-consciousness subscale ($M = 19.26$, $SD = 4.27$, $N = 362$) then males ($M = 18.47$, $SD = 4.61$, $N = 250$), $t(574) = -1.93$, $p < .005$. The same trend was revealed for public self-consciousness: female participants has higher scores ($M = 13.92$, $SD = 3.58$, $N = 375$), than male participants ($M = 13.28$, $SD = 3.76$, $N = 249$),) $t(622) = -2.10$, $p < .005$. And lastly, females showed higher levels of social anxiety ($M = 9.03$, $SD = 4.25$, $N = 372$), compared to males ($M = 7.49$, $SD = 4.30$, $N = 251$), $t(621) = - 4.42$, $p < .00$.

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between all study variables are shown in Table 1. Inspection of this table shows that A/I and A/O Self-discrepancy scores were intercorrelated ($r =.64$, $p < .01$). Also, both type of self-discrepancy were positively correlated with stress, depression and anxiety and negatively correlated with self-control scores. Self-control showed negative association with dejection related emotions as well. Increase in public self-consciousness was correlated with increases in stress ($r =.14$, $p < .01$) and personal self-consciousness was consistently associated with greater depression ($r =.14$, $p < .01$), stress ($r =.27$, $p < .01$) and anxiety ($r =0.10$, $p < .05$).

The hierarchical multiple regressions were performed separately for depression, stress and anxiety (See. Table 2.) to see whether self-discrepancies, self-consciousness and self-control emerged as a unique predictor for different emotional states. For each emotional states, depression, anxiety and stress, firstly, self-discrepancy scores (A/I and A/O) were entered in equation, on the next step public and personal self-consciousness, and lastly on the final step the self-control scores.

The results of step one for depression indicated that the variance accounted for (R^2) with first two predictors (A/I and A/O self-discrepancies) equaled .02, which was significantly different from zero ($F_{(2, 426)}= 4.33$, $p<.01$). On the next step, public and personal self-consciousness scores were entered into the regression equation. The change in variance accounted for (R^2) was equal to .05 and personal self-consciousness emerged as a significant positive predictor for depression ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$). On the last step self-control scores have been entered into the regression equation ($F_{(1, 423)}= 24.34$, $p<.00$), which recorded higher Beta value ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .00$) and thus appeared as strong negative predictor for depression.

Next we performed the hierarchical multiple regressions for the anxiety including the same predictor variables. Only last step was statistically significant ($F_{(1, 427)}= 14.95$, $p<.00$) and again self-control has been emerged as negative predictor ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .00$).

When the stress scores were regressed on the same predictor variables the significant regression equation was found for the step two ($F_{(2, 435)}= 15.84$, $p<.00$) and step three ($F_{(1, 424)}= 5.86$, $p<.01$). Personal self-consciousness show positive predictive values ($\beta = .24$, $p < .00$) and self-control emerged as negative predictor for stress ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .00$).

Table 1. *Means, standard deviations and person correlations matrix for continuous variables (n=638)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Self-discrepancy A/O									
2. Self-discrepancy A/I	.64**								
3. Private self-consciousness	.08	.05							
4. Public self-consciousness	-.08	-.05	.44**						
5. Social anxiety	.13**	.20**	.14**	.25**					
6. Self-control	-.15**	-.12*	.08	-.04	-.21**				
7. Depression	.17**	.14**	.14**	.04	.29**	-.26**			
8. Anxiety	.10*	.13**	.10*	.07	.23**	-.20**	.73**		
9. Stress	.14**	.13**	.27**	.14**	.20**	-.16**	.74**	.76**	
M	1.03	1.13	15.19	18.91	13.66	8.43	12.39	10.29	17.46
SD	2.83	2.69	14.25	4.42	3.66	4.33	10.14	8.36	10.46

Note: M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation respectively. A/I=actual/ideal; A/O=actual/ought
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. Results of multiple hierarchical regression predicting depression, anxiety and stress

Independent variables	Depression			Anxiety			Stress		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Step 1									
Self-discrepancy A/I	.38	.23	.10	-.01	.19	.00	.18	.23	.05
Self-discrepancy A/O	.19	.24	.05	.37	.20	.11	.24	.25	.06
R2		0.02			0.012			0.01	
ΔF		4.33**			2.71			2.19	
Step 2									
Private self-consciousness	.33	.13	.14**	.16	.10	.08	.57	.12	.24***
Public self-consciousness	-.04	.15	-.01	.08	.12	.04	.14	.15	.05
R2		0.38			0.024			0.08	
ΔR2		0.18			0.01			0.07	
ΔF		4.06**			2.46			15.84***	
Step 3									
Self-control	-.17	.03	-.23***	-.11	.03	-.19***	-.09	.04	-.11***
R2		0.91			0.057			0.09	
ΔR2		0.05			0.03			0.01	
ΔF		24.35***			14.96***			5.87**	

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$

Contrary to our expectation, self-discrepancies did not predict negative emotional states, but private self-consciousness and self-control emerged as significant predictors for depression and stress, while anxiety was predicted by self-control only.

Our main hypothesis was that self-control and self-consciousness moderate the relationship between self-discrepancies and negative emotions. To test this hypothesis, series of moderation analysis have been conducted on target variables. We tested the significance of the indirect effects using bootstrapping procedures (Hayes, 2013). As we see from the figure 1. Self-control was a significant moderator of the relationship between A/O self-discrepancy and depression (F (3,464)=7.76, p= <.001,

R2 = .05). Interaction effect was highly significant (b =-.03, 95%CI (-.0401 , -.0137), *p* =. 001). On a low self-control level relationship between self-discrepancy and depression is positive (b= 0.61; s.e.= 0.269, p=.00), while on a medium level of self-control it is still positive but the strength of relationship decreases (b= 1.60; s.e. =0.36, p=.03).On a high level of self-control this relationship is no more significant.

We also found that self-control was a significant moderator of the relationship between A/I self-discrepancy and depression (F (3,464)=4.72, p=<.001, R2 = .03) (fig. 2). Interaction effect was highly significant (b =- .03, 95%CI (-0.0535, -0.0132), *p =. 001*). On a low self-control level relationship between self-discrepancy and
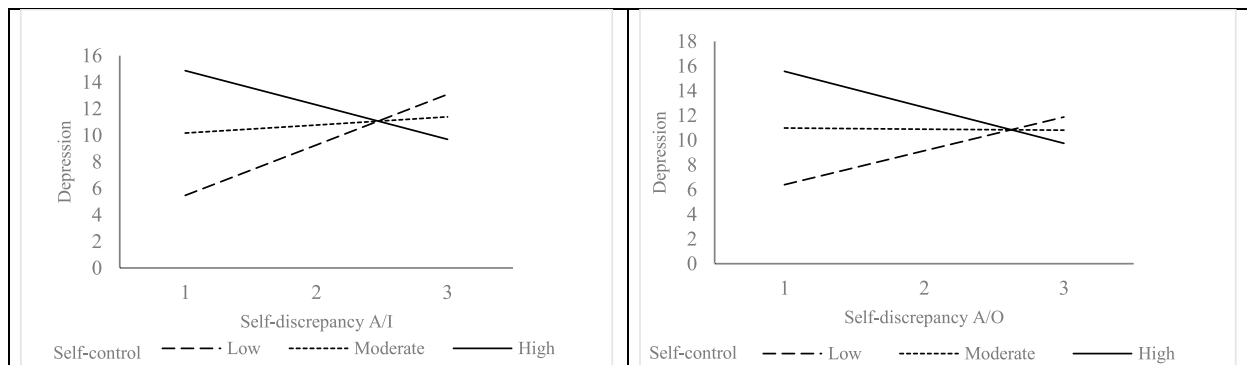

Figure 1. Moderating effect of self-control on (1) A/I self-discrepancy and depression and (2) A/O self-discrepancy and depression

depression is positive *(b= 1.7945; s.e.= 0.5121, p=.00)*, on a medium and high levels of self-control relationship is no more significant (See figure 2)

Additionally, we found that public self-consciousness was a significant moderator of the relationship between self-discrepancy A/O and stress (Fig. 3) (F (3,490) =9.5751, *p*=<.001, R2 = .05,). Interaction effect was highly significant (*b* = - .09, 95%CI (-.1868, -.0074), *p* =. 03). On a low self-control level relationship between self-discrepancy and depression is positive (*b*= *0.; s.e.= 0.3635, p=.00)*, on a medium level of self-control it is still positive but the strength of relationship decreases (*b= 0,9465; s.e.=0.27, p=.0*).On a high level of self-control relationship is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to find out the emotional consequences of discrepancies between actual/ ought self (A/O) and actual/ideal self (A/I). We propose that A/I discrepancy is linked to depression, A/O discrepancy leads to anxiety and both discrepancies are linked to stress. The study results confirm predicted associations, however they did not yield support to the previously established view that each of discrepancies are distinctive, associated with either dejection or agitation related emotions (Higgins, 1987). The results show that both A/I and A/O self-discrepancies were positively associated with all of three emotional states: depression, anxiety and stress. Even though the positive link between A/I discrepancy with both agitation and dejection related emotions has been evidenced previously (Dickson et al., 2019), the data reveal undifferentiated associations of self-related discrepancies with negative emotional states. This may suggest that specific conflicting representations, no matter whether it is related with ideal or ought self, are associated with emotional vulnerabilities such as stress, anxiety or depression.

We did not find any predictive values of self-discrepancies for negative emotional states, which suggest that self-discrepancies could be associated with negative emotional states but not necessarily predicting depressive and anxious symptoms. Interestingly self-consciousness and self-control emerged as a predictor for negative emotions as well as for stress. Namely, after entering into regression equation, private self-consciousness positively predicted depression and stress. Private self-consciousness is related to increasing self-presentation issues which might be linked to depression and stress levels. Internal state awareness is constantly linked with negative consequences such as sadness and dampen positive affect (Silvia, 2002), because when individuals focus on the self, they eventually become extremely concerned with internally generated negative expectations, fears and worries (Ashford et al., 2005). Our study demonstrates that not public self-consciousness but only private self-conscious-
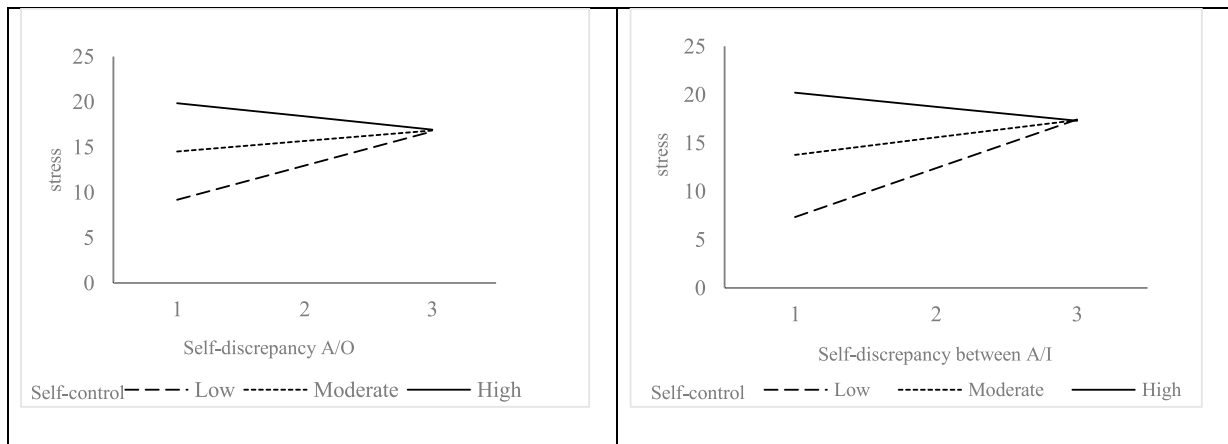

**Figure 2. Moderating effect of self-control on (1) A/I self-discrepancy and stress
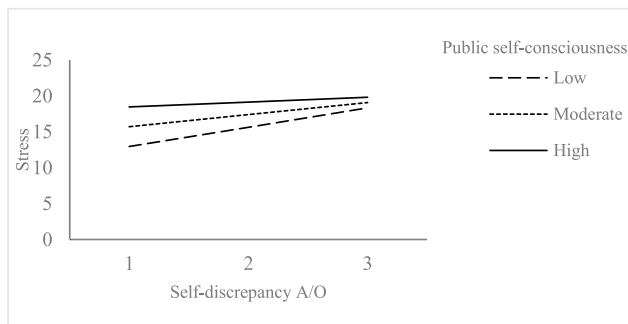and (2) A/O self-discrepancy and stress**

**Figure 3. Moderating effect of public self-conscious-
ness on A/O self-discrepancy and stress**

ness is able to trigger stress and depressive symptoms. One possible explanation of this can be that people who focus more on those aspects of the self that are shown to others and on external standards (Scheier & Carver, 1980) (e.g., public self-consciousness), can more effectively manage their self-presentations, and consequently alleviate expectation for negative evaluation.

Similar to this pattern, self-control also accrued as significant but negative predictor for general distress (depression, stress, anxiety). This finding is partially consistent with previous studies demonstrating that self-control positively correlated with well-being and negatively correlated with general distress (Bowlin & Baer,

2012). Moreover it predicts significant variance in psychological health. While self-control is a personal self-regulation that promotes goal attainment, conflict resolution and priority selection, evidently, as a consequence of those functions, general distress is decreasing.

Present study also explored the effect of potentially intervening variables, self-control and self-consciousness, on the affect/discrepancy relationship. Self-control was a significant moderator of the relationships between (1) A/I and A/O self-discrepancy and depression and (2) A/I and A/O self-discrepancy and stress. On a low self-control level relationship between self-discrepancy and depression was positive, but on a medium level of self-control strength of relationship decreased. There result suggest that self-control not only negatively predicts general psychological distress and depression, but when specific conflicting representations are arising, such as self-related self -discrepancies, it hinders negative outcomes such as depression and stress.

Recently adaptive role of self-control was questioned, while referring it to several negative consequences (Mathes et al., 2017). While number of studies evidence that high self-control predicts better adjustment, less pathology, high grades, good interpersonal relationships (Tangney et al., 2004), affective wellbeing, life satisfaction (Hofmann et al., 2014), general sense of meaning in life (Stavrova et al., 2020) and goal attainment (Stavrova et al., 2019), it also linked with to restricted emotional extremes (Layton & Muraven, 2014) prolonged sense of regret (Kivetz & Keinan, 2006) and to alienation (Koole et al., 2014).

The study findings support the idea that self-control is an adaptive trait by evidencing that higher level of self-control results in diminishing negative emotions caused by self-discrepancies. It supports the idea, that that self-control has a potential to buffer conflicting cognitive representation and decrease the negative emotions. Self-control which basically regulates emotions and cognitions and therefore is an important vehicle for negotiating inner conflicts, has agency to revise conflicting schemas and modify them in order to become congruent. Another explanation of the moderating role of self-control might be the fact, that individuals with trait self-control successfully monitor their action to reach desired goals that prevents them to get conflicting self-representations and therefore psychological distress. Importantly, self-control only mediates relationship between self-discrepancies and depression and stress, and therefore does not affect the level of anxiety, which is more instant, alarming reaction on worrying trigger and is hardly to manage and monitor.

Our expectation, that heightened self-consciousness should lead to increased level of perceived discrepancies thus accelerating negative emotions, was not confirmed. Instead we observed an opposite result. Namely, moderation analysis revealed that increased public self-consciousness decreases stress caused by A/O discrepancies. This finding complements and strengthens previous study results reporting that, against the initial expectation, the state of heightened self-focus on self-discrepancy increases affective consequences, while public self-consciousness does not have a comparable moderating effect on discrepancy/emotions relationship (Fromson, 2006). The results we observed in this study confirm even more salient result: high level of public self-consciousness weakens relationship between psychological stress caused by A/O discrepancy. This might suggest that increased awareness of how one is seen by others has a dual effect: from one side it might increases the frequency of experienced self-discrepancies, but on the other side it allows individuals being more alerted toward feedback from others and thus effectively manage their public selves. Consequently, we can assume that public self-consciousness helps and does not hinder the stress reduction.

In sum, the study revealed two considerable findings. First, we evidence that self-discrepancies even when they have positive association with digestive or agitative emotional outcomes are not necessarily predictors of those emotions. And secondly, high level of both moderation variabls self-control and self-consciousness not agitate but mitigate detrimental effect caused by conflicting cognitive self-constructs.

This study is not without limitations. To assess self-discrepancy we used The Selves Questionnaire (Higgins et al., 1985), being aware that there is Integrated Self-Discrepancy Index (ISDI), a new method for measuring self-discrepancies that integrates idiographic and nomothetic methods and therefore is better able to measure ideal and ought selves as distinct constructs (Hardin & Lakin, 2009). In this study we move behind the 'first generation' questions examining the affect/discrepancy relationship and analyzed next generation questions nuancing the nature of this relationship (Hardin & Lakin, 2009). Future research on SDT should go further end try to identify potential coping mechanisms and strategies people use to handle the stress caused by self-discrepancy.

COMPLIANCE
WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments.

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