

Interdependence

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November 19, 2022

RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammad looti (2022). *Interdependence*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=39430>

Interdependence is a dynamic of being mutually and physically responsible to, and sharing a common set of principles with others. This concept differs distinctly from "dependence," which implies that each member of a relationship cannot function or survive apart from one another. In an interdependent relationship, all participants are emotionally, economically, ecologically and/or morally self-reliant while at the same time responsible to each other. An interdependent relationship can be defined as an entity that depends on two or more cooperative autonomous participants (e.g. - co-op). Some people advocate freedom or independence as a sort of ultimate good; others do the same with devotion to one's family, community, or society. Interdependence recognizes the truth in each position and weaves them together.

History

Authors and leaders have written and spoken about interdependence throughout history, including Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Stephen Covey. Karl Marx first used the term interdependence in the Communist Manifesto (1848) in describing the universal interdependence of nations in comparison to the old local and national seclusion of independence and self-sufficiency. Will Durant drafted a civil rights "Declaration of Interdependence" on April 8, 1944. Stephen Covey describes a spectrum of maturity from dependence to independence to interdependence. He states that interdependence is a choice that only independent people can make (dependent people do not have the free choice to enter into an interdependent relationship), and the participants are generally able to produce more together than either person would be able to produce separately.

Role of interdependence in Feminist philosophy

In the Ethics of care approach to morality, Nel Noddings emphasises the interdependence of people. She saw it as a hidden fact which is often unseen or not discussed in a male dominated, justice and judgment based approach to ethics. Carol Gilligan was an early proponent of the view that interdependence rather than rules underlay the basis of morality

Business and commerce

There is a view that computer technology has allowed greater communication, interaction and interdependence. It is thought that this has massively helped the introduction and start up of new ideas and enterprises. This is supported by the work of Steven Covey and the don Tapscott and Anthony Williams book Macrowikinomics. These works point to interdependence as one of the principles of the age of networked intelligence, and of progress in knowledge and innovation. Along with collaboration, openness sharing and integrity, Tapscott and Williams state that interdependence is transforming businesses and the world we live in.. Covey maintains that we function best as

innovators when we recognise, and work towards, the role of interdependence.

Quotes

"The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual. The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community."

-William James, Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment, Atlantic Monthly, October, 1880

Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without interrelation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism. His social interdependence enables him to test his faith and to prove himself on the touchstone of reality.

Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, March 21, 1929, p. 93

The basic thought that guides these specific means of national recovery is not narrowly nationalistic. It is the insistence, as a first consideration, upon the interdependence of the various elements in all parts of the United States - a recognition of the old and permanently important manifestation of the American spirit of the pioneer.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, 1932

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.

John Muir, My First Summer in the Sierra, Houghton Mifflin, 1911, Chapter 7

...for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

Martin Luther King Jr., I have a dream, 1963

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

Independent thinking alone is not suited to interdependent reality. Independent people who do not have the maturity to think and act interdependently may be good individual producers, but they won't be good leaders or team players. They're not coming from the paradigm of interdependence necessary to succeed in marriage, family, or organizational reality.

Stephen Covey, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, 1989

Hence, international co-operation and solidarity and the relentless search for consensus become an absolute imperative. They are the only possible alternative for all nations, whose interdependence is being made increasingly manifest by the rapid development of production technology, of transport and communications, as well as by the overhanging threat of deterioration of the environment and exhaustion of natural resources. And what is one to say of the frightful accumulation of means of destruction in a world facing the no less frightful problems of hunger, disease and ignorance?

Federico Mayor, Address to the "Symposium 80" on International Cultural Relations: Bridges Across Frontiers, Bonn, 27 May 1980