

Relationships between Explicit Self-Esteem, Implicit Self-Esteem and Movement

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This study is a correlation study, connecting two worlds of knowledge: the study of self-esteem, which has been studied amply in the field of cognitive and social psychology, and the study of movement, based primarily on theoretical work in Dance Movement Therapy.

This study examined the relationships between movement variables, explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem and the degree of defensiveness of self-esteem.

Video recordings of movement activity were coded according to 27 selected movement dimensions, based on the work of Laban. Explicit self-esteem was measured by a self-report questionnaire. Implicit self-esteem was measured by the IAT (Implicit Association Test) tool. The degree of defensiveness of self-esteem was calculated as the difference between implicit self-esteem and explicit self-esteem. Participants included 42 female students and young women who volunteered to participate in movement activities held as part of the study.

The purpose of the study was to examine: (1) If there are correlations between movement dimensions and levels of self-esteem (explicit and implicit)? (2) If it is possible to distinguish, based on movement characteristics, between defensive self-esteem and secure self-esteem?

The results indicated the existence of correlations between movement dimensions and both levels of self-esteem. Correlations were found between four dimensions of movement (movement inward, movement outward, grounding and use of strong weight) and implicit self-esteem, and one dimension (use of the sagittal plan) of movement and explicit self-esteem. A marginally significant tendency towards correlation was found between movement dimension and the defensiveness of self-esteem.

Additional findings indicated the existence of an intervening variable of movement experience: more connections among movement dimensions, levels of self-esteem and defensiveness of self-esteem were identified among women who do not have extensive movement experience.

The study also found significant differences between two groups of movement experience in personal characteristics: women with extensive experience in movement had higher explicit self-esteem, higher defensiveness of self-esteem and a more varied use of movement compared to women with limited experience/ no experience in movement.

Results of the study suggest that the observation of movement combined with verbal estimation may provide significant information about implicit self-esteem and the degree of the defensiveness of self-esteem. This provides support for key assumptions in DMT field, regarding the relationship between movement and personality, and offers an opening for future investigation in larger and more varied samples, combined with measurement of personality and personal dimensions and while taking previous movement experience into account. This, in accordance with current results, suggests that movement experience partly obscures movement expression of self-esteem types and defensiveness.

Keywords: Movement, movement evaluation, explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, defensiveness of self-esteem, DMT .

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