

Is the ideomotor
effect a
comprehensive
explanation for
extraordinary human
resea...

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



ABSTRACT

The involuntarily and subconscious behavior of some individuals can be described as extraordinary capabilities. When individuals cannot consciously account for their actions, the phenomena is called ideomotor effect. The effect is not clearly understood though scientific research strongly relates it with the subconscious mind. The difficulty in conducting experiments to come up with a clear psychological and scientific explanation for the ideomotor effect, has lead to it being related to psycho-kinesis and extra sensory perception. The two (ESP AND PK) have an explainable origin from the subconscious mind although further research continues in the field. How scientists explain one sending tears without his conscious mind registering and recognizing that he s crying? Other areas that related to this include foretelling the future happenings (clairvoyance), awareness of events that are not geographically around you, and in PK determining the next number in a random number generator. The influence, the energy and the source of such phenomena can only be attributed to the subconscious mind as further studies wait to bring a clearer explanation. The lack of repeatability and validity of experiments in ideomotor, ESP and PK makes such studies unacceptable.

The ideomotor effect is a psychological occurrence where an individual makes movements unconsciously. It is characterized by involuntary and subconscious actions. In the brain, there are two sections that are involved in motor behavior. The first section deals with the production of the motor activity, while the second records that behavior in the conscious mind.

Ideomotor effect happens when the activity is not registered in the conscious

mind in the second part (Häberle, 2006).

William B. Carpenter was the first person to observe the effect when he was experimenting about dowsing. According to him, ideomotor effect was third in subconscious behavior together with excitomotor (breathing and shallowing), and sensorimotor. The ideomotor is also called the Clever Hans effect named after a horse who was claimed could understand and solve primary mathematical problems and gave the answer by tapping its foot. Later on it was discovered that the horse had no mathematical capabilities but was using visual images from its owner of when to start and stop tapping (Gindes, 1952).

There are other phenomena attributed to the ideomotor effect such as Ouija boards, dowsing and automatic writing. But can ideomotor effect be tied to extra sensory perception (ESP) or psychokinesis (PK). Extra sensory perception occurs in total disregard of the known sensory mechanisms. It includes phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, thought transference amongst people, and precognition of future knowledge. Both seem to seem to portray an unconscious element of perception, where both cannot be explained through defined paths. An example of ideomotor is shedding of tears due to powerful emotions. This draws a line between the two since a cause and effect seems somehow near in ideomotor than in ESP. In ideomotor effect, the body decides to react reflexively with the conscious influence of the person (Rossi, 1988).

The ideomotor effect is strongly linked to hypnosis where a visual cue of “no” or “yes” is used instead of a verbal cue. The ideomotor effects produced actions of small magnitude which are subtle but can be enlarged for

experimentation as in the case of a hand-held pendulum. The ideomotor effect is also called the “Chevreul Pendulum Illusion” after a French chemist Michel-Eugene Chevreul, who scientifically scrutinized the hand held pendulum.

He termed the pendulum mysterious and concluded that the pattern with which the pendulum swung, were determined by unconscious and involuntary muscle movements. The ideomotor effect is more enhanced when a person is concentrating more or under intense physical strain.

Comparing this with PK, which is the direct influence of matter by thought and brain energy. It includes telekinesis; movement of matter, aero-kinesis; movement of air, aqua-kinesis; movement of water, pyro-kinesis; movement of air (Easton, 1977).

When an individual interferes with a random number generator, and another sheds tears but does not realize it, while another one tells of events happening far away from where he/she is, we can infer though not conclusively that the three have a common denominator. This is the fact that what they do, happens to them unconsciously and in a way themselves cannot explain.

Experiments on random number generator (RNG), which were spearheaded by Helmut Schmidt and were early known as precognition tests, have been used as PK tests. This is because it is almost impossible to differentiate quantitatively between PK and precognition. In the PK tests, the researcher instructs the subject to wish or have it in mind that a given target be picked by the RNG. Such a scenario reduces chances of precognition (Gindes, 1952).

The hand held pendulum experiment used to demonstrate the ideomotor effect by letting it linger over a sheet of paper is also used in ESP experiments and ouija boards. The paper was printed with words " YES, NO and MAYBE" minor movements on the hand in response to the asked questions could cause movement of the pendulum toward any key word printed on the card (Barnett, 1980).

In a normal state, if a person was to visualize how to tie up his shoelaces clearly, the mind would work out the procedure as accurately as possible. In the ideomotor case, your hand muscles through unconscious memory of how a shoe is tied would try to perform the task physically. This would be unconscious where one later realizes that one was just imagining. Unless the shoe is untied, the individual comes into realization that he was about to do something without his conscious will. This is in the likely event where we actually intended to tie our shoes and they are untied at the time of such an imaginative episode. This relates with hypnosis where individuals sink into a therapeutic sleep and reveal their unconscious and subconscious thoughts and ideas, through guided questions and stimulation (Easton, 1979).

In comparison to ESP and PK, there is a strong correlation between the three psychological concepts although, they each manifest in a different scenario but the underlying mechanism seems to be the same. The lack of a combined research between the three, and unpredictability of occurrence of events all inhibit understanding, and hence clear comparison between them (Rossi, 1988).

Ideomotor occurs within an individual and can be inferred through studying body language and states of consciousness. Other aspects of ideomotor

include activities such as doodling where the body is performing some random subconscious actions. While in ESP it is guessing of cards under controlled conditions in PK, there is no way where the experiments were deemed viable at all. This was because they could not be repeated or validated any way (Häberle, 2006).

There has been revived research and interest in the three concepts ESP, PK and ideomotor effect. Some people and scientists use them as an explanation of unknown occurrences (Easton, 1979).

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