

Example of reflective paper: research in mainstream media and sense of self essay...

[Design](#)



Research in Mainstream Media

In the article “ Giving the finger: This hurts me more than you,” Kluger (2009) reports a study that aimed to clarify how gestures can affect thoughts and feelings about others. Although the article is very informal and aims to entertain the audience in addition to providing them with interesting information, it is professional and all key points found in the original research paper by Chandler and Schwarz (2009) are included in the text, such as explaining the difference between learned and inborn gestures or the development and meaning of the “ thumbs up” and “ middle finger” gestures.

The study by Chandler and Schwarz (2009) investigated how non-verbal gestures affect the perception of other people. It is already documented that motor movement, such as facial expressions, posture, and arm movement, can determine the individual’s thoughts and feelings, but recently developed models suggested that it is possible for motor movements to determine perceptual patterns. The paper was divided into two separate studies. In Study 1, the researchers investigated how extending the middle finger affected their social perceptions while reading an ambiguous story about a man named Donald, who can be characterized as both assertive and aggressive. In Study 2, the impact of thumb extension on social perception was investigated while reading the story. To prevent bias, the participants were told that they were participating in a language comprehension study and the participants moved their index or middle fingers.

A total of 58 undergraduates participated in Study 1, and 74 undergraduates participated in Study 2. Both studies followed a 2 × 2 factorial design. Study

I found that participants that moved their middle fingers were more hostile towards Donald than participants who moved their index fingers. Study 2 showed that there is no significant difference between those moving the thumb and those moving the index finger, but gender-specific analysis showed that women who moved their thumb were more likely to be kind in describing Donald. In conclusion, Chandler and Schwarz (2009) believe that their work showed that using certain hostile gestures could. However, they do not discuss the limitations (e. g. probability of lurking variables) of their work and the statistical reporting is inadequate, which does not support their generalization of their conclusion to the entire population.

Overall, Kluger (2009) reported the study quite accurately and extensively. The numbers of participants were clearly stated, the audience is introduced to the topic appropriately, the methods used are described accurately, and the results are reported without bias. However, the mainstream media article does not assess the paper critically and fails to report two things that could affect the accuracy of that study. First, because all people who have learned the aforementioned gestures are the target population, it is possible to suggest that the sample size was too small, so the study was underpowered and it is not possible to reliably generalize the findings. Second, it is possible that various lurking variables affected the outcomes, and the self-reported study design could definitely impact the reliability of the results. Even though Kluger conveyed the important key points presented in the study, those findings should have never been reported in the first place because of inadequate statistical reporting and potential flaws in the study design.

Sense of Self

The movie “ The Diving Bell and the Butterfly,” directed by Schnabel (2007), describes the life of Jean-Dominique Bauby after he experiences a stroke at the age of 43 that results in locked-in syndrome. That condition leaves him completely paralyzed, so he cannot move and speak. Eventually, Bauby learns how to communicate with others thanks to his speech therapist Henriette. Another person reads the letters of the alphabet, and Bauby blinks once to let them know which letters to spell out. With this system, Bauby overcomes his limitations and writes the book on which this movie is based on. Apart from a supportive environment, it is possible to notice that his internal state of mind was what helped him recover mentally, accept the situation, and make the best of it.

Bauby’s condition tells us that human consciousness is not as limited as we tend to believe, and that human beings have more control over how they perceive and evaluate reality. Of course, his own state of consciousness upon waking up in the hospital is crippled. Occasionally, a scene of a diver in the diving bell appears because Bauby explains his condition as a man trapped in the diving bell, which symbolizes his paralyzed body. However, the butterfly is his consciousness, which is unrestricted in its imagination and memory, and he decides to utilize his consciousness to keep him motivated after overcoming the initial desire to die.

There are many facets of the self, and most psychological theories agree that the sense of self is created by the interaction between biological factors and social factors. Therefore, it is only natural for Bauby to have a shattered sense of self in the early stages before accepting his condition. Without

seeing himself in any social role in his condition, his self-esteem and self-identity were severed. However, his case proves that the self is not necessarily affected by external obstacles, and despite the odds, he manages to maintain his self-esteem and self-identity that help him live through the rest of his life productively and complete a book. On his example, it is possible to suggest that our sense of self is defined by social interactions only when we allow them to affect our self-image. Otherwise, we build our own self through the choices we make and actions we take.

References

- Chandler, J., & Schwarz, N. (2009). How extending your middle finger affects your perception of others: Learned movements influence concept accessibility. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(1), 123-128.
- Kluger, J. (2009, February 25). Giving the finger: This hurts me more than you. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1881743,00.html>
- Schnabel, J. (Director). (2007). *The diving bell and the butterfly* [Motion picture]. France & United States: Lionsgate.