

PERCEPTIONS OF COUNSELLOR GENUINENESS, EMPATHY, AND REGARD:
IMPACT OF COUNSELLOR NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR
AND SUBJECT SELF-ESTEEM

by

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ABSTRACT

A review of the research literature illustrates the influential roles of both nonverbal behavior and self-esteem in the process of interpersonal perception. Studies investigating the salient factors in creating facilitative conditions in counselling have found counsellor nonverbal behavior to influence client perceptions of the counsellor. Additionally, research studies on self-esteem have found one's self-esteem level to have a considerable impact on his or her perceptions of another in an interpersonal interaction. The current study investigate the influential role of counsellor nonverbal behavior (eye contact, trunk lean, body orientation, facial expressiveness, head nodding) on client perceptions of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. Counsellor nonverbal behavior was examined both alone and in interaction with subject self-esteem.

Subjects viewed two eight-minute videotaped counselling interviews in which the verbal script remained constant while the counsellor nonverbal behavior differed in level of responsiveness (responsive vs. unresponsive). Subjects evaluated counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard on the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (1962). The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1964) was

administered to determine the subjects' self-esteem level.

It was predicted that the videotaped counsellor emitting responsive and unresponsive nonverbal behavior would receive high and low ratings of genuineness, empathy, and regard, respectively. Additionally, it was expected that, in both of the nonverbal behavior conditions, the counsellor would receive significantly high or lower ratings in the predicted directions from the low self-esteem subjects.

A multivariate analysis of variance revealed that responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior was associated with higher ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. Self-esteem level, however, failed to interact with counsellor nonverbal behavior to differentially affect counsellor evaluation. The results were discussed and the limitations of the current study, implications of the findings, and suggestions for future research were presented.

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CHAPTER I
Introduction

Counselling-related research has lent itself predominantly to investigating the factors most salient to a successful therapeutic outcome. Researchers in this area have increasingly focused on counsellor variables most facilitative to therapeutic success (e.g. Tyson & Wall, 1983). Counsellor nonverbal behavior is found to have an influential effect on the client's perceptions of the counsellor as genuine, empathetic, and high in regard (Fretz, Corn, & Tuemmler, 1978). Rogers (1957) argues that the presence of three facilitative conditions (counsellor genuineness, empathy, regard) are necessary for therapeutic change to occur within the client. He further asserts that a functional relationship exists between the facilitative conditions and therapeutic success. In other words, a higher degree of genuineness, empathy, and regard on the counsellor's part is associated with a greater likelihood of therapeutic change within the client. By contributing to the facilitative conditions of therapy in this way, counsellor nonverbal behavior can be considered an important factor in successful therapy (Young, 1980).

The influential role of counsellor nonverbal behavior has been studied in relation to the client's perceptions of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. In order to assess the salience of the role of nonverbal behavior,

researchers have employed responsive and unresponsive conditions of counsellor nonverbal behavior and counsellor verbal statements. Other researchers have considered the type of verbal statement or orientation employed by the counsellor as well as the nonverbal behavior of the counsellor. Various verbal orientations are found to differentially affect the influential role of nonverbal behavior in the perception of facilitative conditions. Researchers have speculated that the differential effects may be due to an effect triggered by confrontive messages (e.g. Reade & Smouse, 1980).

It is the individual's perceptions rather than the facilitative conditions of the therapeutic sessions that appear to be critical to therapeutic success (Young, 1980). Any factor that affects one's perceptions, such as self-esteem, may thus serve as an important topic of study. A small body of research focuses on the influential role of self-esteem on one's perceptions in an interpersonal interaction (Angle & Goodyear, 1984; Colman & Olver, 1978; Klein, 1977; Stroebe, Eagly, & Stroebe, 1977). Although mixed results are found, the researchers in this area conclude that self-esteem level exerts an influence on how one perceives another. Since the research review demonstrated both counsellor nonverbal behavior and one's self-esteem to affect one's perceptions, it seems useful to examine the interaction between the counsellor nonverbal

behavior and subject self-esteem relative to perceptions of the counsellor. The current study attempts to undertake such an investigation.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The following review of the literature examines the influence of both counsellor nonverbal behavior and self-esteem on perception. Of the research examining counsellor nonverbal behavior, studies investigating its influential role in relation to verbal behavior will be presented first, followed by those considering the counsellor's verbal orientation. The impact of confrontation on perception is briefly discussed in reference to a self-esteem effect. Lastly, the review will focus on the research examining the influential effect of self-esteem on one's perception of another. The literature indicates that, although counsellor nonverbal behavior has an influential role in the counselling process, client self-esteem may interact with the nonverbal behavior to influence perceptions of the counsellor and, thus, to influence therapeutic effectiveness.

The significance of nonverbal behavior in creating facilitative conditions is demonstrated in two studies conducted by Fretz et al., (1979). In the first study, the videotaped counselling interviews were observed and rated by subjects who were requested to assume the role of the client. Two conditions of counsellor nonverbal behavior (responsive and unresponsive) were employed by varying the durations over which the nonverbal behaviors occurred.

Higher ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard were recorded from viewing the videotape employing responsive nonverbal behavior. In order to gain a more thorough understanding of nonverbal behavior, the second study examined its influential role in relation to the verbal behavior of the counsellor. Low and moderate levels of verbal empathy were included with the nonverbal conditions employed in the first study. The results showed that, the responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior was associated with high ratings of the facilitative conditions for both levels of verbal empathy.

Tepper and Haase (1978) found support for the salience of counsellor nonverbal behavior in creating facilitative perceptions of the counsellor. Professional counsellors and clients who were presently engaged in counselling viewed videotaped interviews which presented different combinations of varying levels of verbal (high and low empathy and regard) and nonverbal (responsive and unresponsive) counsellor behavior. For both groups of subjects the nonverbal behavior was predominant over the verbal behavior in affecting the perception of the facilitative conditions.

An investigation of the interplay between the verbal and nonverbal components undertaken by Typson and Wall (1983) further supported the dominant role that nonverbal behavior plays in the communication process in counselling.

Combinations of either responsive or unresponsive verbal and nonverbal behavior comprised the four behavioral conditions in videotaped counselling interviews. Observers rated the consistently responsive behavior (verbal and nonverbal) as the most facilitative in terms of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. Of the two inconsistent conditions, the unresponsive verbal-responsive nonverbal condition was associated with higher counsellor ratings.

Inconsistent and consistent verbal and nonverbal responses were also employed in a study by Graves and Robinson (1979). A quasi-experimental design involved having the clients in the counselling interviews also serve as the raters. Graves and Robinson (1979) reported that the nonverbal channel of the counsellor's communication greatly influences the client's perceptions of the counsellor as genuine.

The research cited thus far consistently indicates that responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior yields higher ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard than does unresponsive counsellor nonverbal behavior.

The effect of the verbal-nonverbal interaction in facilitating the influence of nonverbal behavior appears to be more complex when the verbal orientation of the counsellor's responses are considered. The verbal orientation refers to the verbal mode or primary verbal intervention comprising the counsellor responses. Claiborn

(1979) utilized two verbal orientations: interpretive and restatement in that the majority of the counsellor's responses in the two conditions were interpretations and restatements, respectively. Observers rated a counsellor emitting responsive and unresponsive nonverbal behavior as they occurred in both types of verbal orientations. Although the responsive nonverbal behavior condition was associated with higher ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard, overall, the combination of this condition with the interpretive verbal orientation resulted in the highest rating of these facilitative conditions.

Seay and Altekruze (1979) offered support for the interactive relationship between counsellor nonverbal behavior and verbal orientation. In one tape, the counsellor employed several verbal orientations of an affective nature (reflection of feeling, restatement of content, clarification). In the other tape, the counsellor employed several verbal orientations of a behavioral nature (probes, interpretations, confrontations, suggestions). A quasi-experimental design was employed by having the counsellor's nonverbal behavior occur naturally and the subjects act as clients in videotaped counselling interviews. Judges categorized the counsellor's nonverbal behavior as either responsive or unresponsive and the subject-clients rated the counsellor on genuineness, empathy, and regard. Nonverbal behavior was found to have

a differential effect in the communication of the facilitative conditions depending upon type of verbal orientation. The explanation given was that nonverbal behavior underscores the content of the verbal message. The nonverbal behavior may thus reinforce the emotional appeal of the message in the affective verbal orientation, resulting in more positive counsellor ratings. Additionally, the perception of the behavioral verbal orientation as possibly intimidating may be accentuated by the nonverbal behavior. Both Claiborn (1979) and Seay et al. (1979) have stressed the importance of the communication process as a system where the influential role of nonverbal behavior is affected by the type of verbal orientation. Their results indicate that a relationship exists between responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior and certain types of verbal orientations, and positive counsellor ratings.

Further confirmation of this functional relationship was found in the experimental manipulation of inconsistent verbal-nonverbal messages, (Reade & Smouse, 1980). The verbal and nonverbal components of the messages were each positive or negative indicating either approval or disapproval of the client, and were presented in the context of one of three types of verbal orientations (restative, reflective, confrontive). Subjects assumed the client's role in the videotaped interviews and then later

rated the counsellor. The effect of the nonverbal component was dependent upon the type of verbal orientation employed. In the confrontive verbal orientation, no difference was revealed between the consistently positive verbal-nonverbal and the negative verbal-positive nonverbal conditions. Of the two inconsistent conditions, the negative verbal-positive nonverbal message yielded higher counsellor regard and effectiveness ratings only in the context of this verbal orientation type. These findings suggest that nonverbal behavior in a confrontive verbal orientation has a greater impact on perception. One explanation given by the authors for the predominance of the nonverbal component is that the nonverbal channel of a message carries information that is salient to one's self-image or self-esteem. They further suggest that because a confrontive message is direct, somewhat intimidating and risks exposing one's vulnerability, the client might be highly sensitive to the nonverbal channel in that type of message.

The definition of confrontation in conjunction with the results of a study conducted by Moxnes (1974) underscores the salient role of self-esteem in confrontation. Confrontation, as defined Egan (1976), is an interpersonal skill that involves a challenge to examine more closely one's behavior and its effects in order to gain a different perspective on the situation. Anderson

(1968) defined confrontation more specifically as an expressed recognition and invitation for the client to examine intrapersonal discrepancies (one's conflicting thoughts, emotions, behaviors) and interpersonal discrepancies (conflicting thoughts, emotions, behaviors between the counsellor and client). Additionally, confrontation may facilitate an awareness of previously unrecognized thoughts and feelings, and precipitate an emotional response in the client. A relationship between the awareness level and affective involvement of the client was demonstrated by Moxnes (1974). In studying the emotional ramifications of verbal behavior, he found the most anxiety-provoking level of verbal communication to involve the expression of self-material bordering between the private and unknown aspects of self. Moxnes (1974) explains these findings by describing the nature of this level of verbal communication. Material bordering on the private and unknown aspects of self is both unstructured in its organization and threatening to one's self-image. The communication of this material, even to oneself, is thus anxiety-provoking. Given the definition of confrontation, Moxnes' (1974) results can be interpreted to suggest that self-esteem plays an important role in the effect of confrontation. To the extent that private self-material on the edge of awareness is involved in inter- and intrapersonal discrepancies, and given that this level of

verbal communication is potentially threatening to one's self-image, confrontive responses would be expected to affect the client's self-esteem. The effect of confrontation on the perception of counsellor nonverbal behavior may thus lie in the threatening potential of the message to the client's self-esteem.

Although the construct of self-esteem has played a popular role in both theory and practice, it has not been well utilized in the area of counselling-related research. Furthermore, the study of subjective factors such as self-esteem in the counselling process has focused primarily on the counsellor rather than the client. Young (1980), however, asserts that personality and other subjective factors play an influential role in the perception of counsellor nonverbal behavior. How the counsellor is perceived is not solely determined by some objective meaning of the behavior itself, but is greatly influenced by the perceiver's personality make-up.

One of the limited number of studies that investigated the influential role of self-esteem in the perception of the counsellor was conducted by Angle and Goodyear (1984). In their study, three factors were considered: subject self-esteem level; sex of counsellor; and, type of counsellor introduction. After listening to two audiotaped counsellors, the subjects rated them on attractiveness. The results revealed self-esteem to have an influential

effect on perception only as it interacted with the other variables. Furthermore, low as compared to high self-esteem had the strongest effect in that it was associated with both the highest and lowest evaluations of the counsellor.

The influential role and differential effect of self-esteem on perception are supported in several other studies. Colman and Olver (1978) had subjects of high and low self-esteem levels receive either neutral or flattering evaluations based upon their performance in a previous interview. The high self-esteem subjects were found to possess a greater affinity for the evaluator who offered flattery while the low self-esteem subjects expressed more favor to the neutral evaluator. Although Klein (1977) likewise found a differential effect of self-esteem level, the low as compared to the high self-esteem subjects in his study held more negative feelings for both the evaluator and the evaluation process regardless of the positive or negativeness of the evaluation. Additionally, the low self-esteem subjects overall felt the evaluator held less of a liking for them.

As well as influencing one's perceptions of another, self-esteem level can bias one's perceptions of another's feelings toward him or her, (Stroebe et al., 1977). In an investigation of the influence of self-esteem on attribution, Stroebe et al. (1977) found that high self-

esteem subjects more often inferred positive evaluations as sincere and negative ones as contrived. The reverse was found for the attributions made by the low self-esteem subjects. Although the above-mentioned studies are not consistent in the direction of their findings, their results unequivocally illustrate the influential power of self-esteem on perception.

Summary

The literature review demonstrates the influential role of both counsellor nonverbal behavior and perceiver self-esteem on the perception of the counsellor or evaluator. It was found that responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior significantly increases the client's perceptions of the counsellor as genuine, empathetic, and high in regard. The influential effect of the counsellor's nonverbal behavior is even greater when the responsive nonverbal behavior occurs in the context of confrontive counsellor responses. By the given definition of confrontation as involving a potential threat to one's self-image (Egan, 1976), self-esteem appears to be a crucial element in the effect of confrontive responses. Research on self-esteem demonstrates that self-esteem level plays a salient role in influencing one's perceptions of another. One study in particular (Angle & Goodyear, 1984) found low self-esteem, in interaction with other factors, to influence one's perceptions the most.

In lieu of the cited research, the current study investigated the influential role of counsellor nonverbal behavior and subject self-esteem in the subjects' perceptions of the counsellor. Subjects rated the genuineness, empathy, and regard of a videotaped counsellor whose nonverbal behavior was either responsive (responsive NVB condition) or unresponsive (unresponsive NVB condition) on genuineness, empathy, and regard. Both NVB conditions will be presented in the context of a confrontive verbal orientation. This is in accordance with Reade and Smouse (1980) who found that nonverbal behavior employed in the context of a confrontive verbal orientation had the greatest influence on perceived facilitative conditions. The self-esteem level of the subjects was later assessed.

Predictions

Based on the literature review, the following predictions were made:

1. The counsellor in the responsive NVB condition will receive higher ratings of genuineness, empathy, and regard from the subjects than will the counsellor in the unresponsive NVB condition, across all self-esteem groups.
2. An interaction effect between the NVB condition and subject self-esteem will occur. As compared to the other self-esteem groups, the low self-esteem group will rate the

counsellor in the responsive and unresponsive NVB conditions highest and lowest in genuineness, empathy, and regard, respectively.

CHAPTER III

Method

Subjects

In response to class announcements, 87 University of Victoria students initially volunteered to participate in the study. Five students withdrew from the study and two were excluded due to incomplete responses on a questionnaire, leaving a total of 80 subjects (47 females and 33 males). The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 48 with a mean age of 23. The subjects were undergraduate and graduate level students in the following areas of study: Education; Psychology; Arts and Science; Educational Psychology; and, Human and Social Development.

As an incentive for completing participation in the study, a \$25.00 draw took place at the conclusion of the study.

Independent Variables

The two independent variables were counsellor nonverbal behavior and subject self-esteem.

Two counsellor nonverbal behavior (NVB) conditions were employed in the study: responsive and unresponsive. Based on research that demonstrates the powerful influence of counsellor nonverbal behavior on client perceptions of the counsellor, responsive and unresponsive NVB conditions were defined as follows, respectively: 80 versus 20

percent eye contact (Tyson & Wall, 1983); forward versus backward trunk lean (Tyson & Wall, 1983; Graves & Robinson, 1976); direct versus indirect body orientation (Tyson & Wall, 1983; Graves & Robinson, 1976); 55 versus 21 percent facial expressiveness (Claiborn, 1979; Tepper & Haase, 1978); and, 16 versus 5 percent head nodding (Claiborn, 1979).

A glossary of the definitions for each of these nonverbal behaviors is presented in Appendix A.

Three levels of self-esteem (low, middle and high) were employed in the study. The self-esteem scores for the subjects were determined by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1964). The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) is a Likert-type scale with a five-point response range (completely true to completely false) for 100 self-descriptive statements (Angle & Goodyear, 1984). The range of possible scores is 90 to 450 with a mean and standard deviation of 345.57 and 30.70, respectively. Fitts (1964) assures content validity of the TSCS through the thoroughness of the classification procedure in attaining meaningful and useful categories. Since the Total Positive Score (TPS) measures overall self-esteem only this score was utilized in the current study. A high test-retest reliability coefficient of .92 is reported for the TPS.

Dependent Variables

The Genuineness, Empathy, and Regard Subscales of the

Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1962) served as dependent measures. Because client perceived counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard are considered to be separately validated variables (Seay & Altekruise, 1979), the three corresponding subscales of the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (BLRI) were treated as separate measures rather than as a composite relationship score. To preserve the validity and reliability of the instrument, however, the BLRI (1962) was administered in its complete form.

Each of the subscales represents a distinct construct yielding a quantitative score for one of the facilitative conditions. Sixteen items scored on a six-point scale (from -3 to +3) comprise each of the subscales which together yield the composite relationship score. An extensive literature review on the BLRI (1962) indicates high internal reliability (means of the coefficients for Congruence .88, Empathy .84, Regard .91) (Gurman, 1977 in Barrett-Lennard, Note 1). A high test-retest reliability was also noted (total score coefficients varying from .80 to .85 across the subscale) (Barrett-Lennard, Note 1). Based on the rigorous validation procedure employed in developing the BLRI (1962), Barrett-Lennard (Note 1) also makes a strong claim for the content validity of the instrument and its subscales.

Stimulus Materials

Two simulated counselling interviews were videotaped to resemble actual counselling interviews. Differing only in the level of NVB emitted by the counsellor, the two videotaped interviews employed the same pre-written verbal script of the client concern, adjustment to university life (see Appendix B). It can be inferred from the dialogue that this was the first counselling session. The nature of the presenting concern is believed to be one which university students in general could relate to with the least difficulty (Graves & Robinson, 1976). The verbal script included 12 and 11 counsellor and client responses, respectively. According to Egan (1976) and Anderson's (1968) definitions of confrontation, the majority of the counsellor's responses (7) were defined as confrontive in nature. The remaining counsellor responses were comprised of restatements of content, reflections of feeling, and open-ended questions. The emphasis on confrontive statements constitutes a confrontive verbal orientation for the counsellor's verbal role in the videotaped interviews.

The pre-written verbal script was memorized by the counsellor and client, and the counselling interactions in the two NVB conditions were rehearsed for eight hours prior to taping. The two counselling interviews were taped over the client's left shoulder with part of her head and shoulder serving as a partial outside frame. It was

assumed that a minimum visual perception of the client would aid in the appearance of an actual counselling interview. The interviews were also taped at a slight angle to the counsellor to allow for a better view of the counsellor's trunk lean (Seay & Altekruise, 1979). An approximate distance of 55 inches was set between the counsellor and client in both videotapes. This distance is reported by Tepper and Haase (1978) to be the most unbiased in that it conveys a neutral feeling between the counsellor and client. A lamp set upon a small corner table was placed beside the counsellor's chair in order to make the atmosphere appear less clinical.

The responsive and unresponsive NVB conditions were approximately of the same length - seven minutes, 55 seconds, and seven minutes, 33 seconds, respectively.

Validation of the Stimulus Materials

The two videotaped interviews were validated in terms of the counsellor's nonverbal behavior, the counsellor and client's verbal content, and paralinguistic characteristics of the counsellor.

Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior. Two raters (female graduates in counselling) were trained to evaluate the nonverbal and verbal portions of the two counselling interviews. Prior to viewing the videotaped interviews, the raters received a stop watch, written instructions for

the recording procedure and the definitions of the target counsellor nonverbal behaviors (see Appendix C). The durations of occurrence were recorded separately for each of the five behaviors during five successive viewings of the video portion of the first tape. The specified behavioral durations for the two NVB conditions were determined by averaging the duration of each nonverbal behavior. As compared to a frequency measure, duration of occurrence better represents the influential role of the nonverbal channel of the communication process (Seay & Altekruise, 1979). Following a 15 minute break, the same procedure was repeated with the video portion of the second tape. High interrater reliability was found between the two videotapes for eye contact (.84), trunk lean (.99), body orientation (.99), facial expressiveness (.86), and head nodding (.90).

Counsellor and Client Verbal Content. The same pair of raters who judged the counsellor's nonverbal behavior assessed the similarity of the verbal content between the two videotapes by listening to the audio portion of the videotapes while following the pre-written script. A one-way analysis of variance indicated that the number of differences between each tape and the script were not significant, ($p < .05$).

Counsellor Paralinguistic Characteristics. To insure

that paralinguistic characteristics did not serve as an extraneous variable, four graduate-level counselling students independently rated the audio portion of the videotapes for differences in the counsellor's tonal qualities.

Two judges employed the Carkhuff Empathy Scale (Carkhuff, 1969) to test for any empathetic differences in the tonal quality of the counsellor's responses between tapes. Familiarity and practice with the scale had been established. After the raters received the written instructions (see Appendix D) the client-counsellor response segments on the first videotape were presented and rated one at a time. Each response segment was comprised of a client and immediate counsellor response. The individual presentations allowed for a comparison between the ratings of each response segment on the two tapes. The same procedure was employed to rate the audio portion of the second videotape approximately one week later.

High interrater reliability was obtained for the ratings of tapes one and two combined, $r = .86$. T-tests performed on the two sets of ratings failed to demonstrate a significant difference between the tapes, thus indicating the absence of a paralinguistic effect.

Another pair of raters (female graduates in counselling) employed a second measure in rating the paralinguistic characteristics of the counsellor responses.

The instrument used was a five-point Likert-type scale with most indifferent and most concerned as its anchor points. Raters were asked to make their ratings entirely on the basis of tonal qualities (pitch, rate, volume). This scale was employed by Tepper and Haase (1978) for the same purpose. The raters received the written instructions, definitions of the tonal qualities, and rating instrument (see Appendix E). The counsellor responses for each tape were individually presented and rated as they occurred. Approximately one week later the raters returned to repeat the same procedure with the second tape. There was perfect agreement between the two raters in that each response on both videotapes received a rating of 4 (somewhat concerned).

For both rating procedures, T-tests revealed no significant difference between the tapes based on the paralinguistic characteristics of the counsellor verbal responses.

Procedure

Upon arrival at the research room, subjects signed a written consent form (see Appendix F) and received a written description of the rationale and the instructions for the first part of the study (see Appendix G). Subjects were randomly shown one of the two videotapes individually or in groups of two to seven. The subjects were asked to make the interview as personalized as possible by imagining

themselves as the client and experiencing the problem as it best fit their life situation. Following the viewing of the videotaped interview, subjects completed the BLRI (Barrett-Lennard, 1964). Approximately one week later, subjects returned for the second part of the study. Written instructions (see Appendix H) were handed out and the experimental procedure for part one was repeated employing the other videotape not yet seen. Additionally, at the end of the second session the subjects completed the TSCS (Fitts, 1964). Subjects were then requested to indicate on the back of the questionnaire whether they had any previous counselling experiences which they felt might bias their ratings of the videotaped counsellor. Since no such experiences were reported, no subjects were excluded from the study for this reason. All subjects were informed of the date, time, and location where they could learn of the full details and results of the current study. The draw for \$25.00 took place shortly after the de-briefing session.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The self-esteem scores, as determined by the TPS, ranged from 286 to 421 out of a possible range of 90 to 450. A three-way median split performed on the total range of the subjects' scores determined the low, middle and high self-esteem groups. The means, standard deviations and distribution of the scores by self-esteem group are presented in Table 1.

A SPSSX three-way classification multivariate analysis of variance incorporating one within subjects factor (responsive and unresponsive NVB) was performed on the three dependent variables: counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard ratings. For the within subjects factor, the Wilks' criteria indicated a significant main effect on the combined dependent variables, $F(3, 75) = 16.31, p < .0001$. The results revealed that 39 percent of the variance in the rated perceptions of the counsellor was accounted for by the responsiveness or unresponsiveness of the counsellor's nonverbal behavior. No significant interaction (NVB condition X subject self-esteem) emerged from the analysis.

Univariate F-tests performed on the dependent variables indicated a significant effect on the three ratings: genuineness ($p < .002$); empathy ($p < .0001$); and, regard ($p < .0001$).

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the genuineness, empathy, and regard ratings for the two NVB conditions. Inspection of the means indicated that the counsellor in the responsive as compared to the unresponsive NVB condition received higher ratings on the facilitative conditions across self-esteem levels.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Distribution of Self-Esteem Scores by Self-Esteem Group

	Self-Esteem Group		
	Lse	Mse	Hse
<u>M</u>	316.36	353.32	392.91
SD	15.38	13.49	12.56
D	286-331	332-376	377-421
n	11	46	23

Note: Lse = Low Self-Esteem;

Mse = Middle Self-Esteem;

Hse = High Self-Esteem;

D = Distribution of Self-Esteem Scores.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Facilitative Conditions by
Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior

Facilitative Condition	Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior	
	R NVB	U NVB
Counsellor genuineness		
<u>M</u>	14.53	-2.99
SD	17.67	18.38
Counsellor Empathy		
<u>M</u>	15.43	.03
SD	16.04	18.73
Counsellor Regard		
<u>M</u>	22.16	-1.50
SD	13.80	19.68

Note: R NVB = Responsive Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior;

U NVB = Unresponsive Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior.

CHAPTER V
Discussion

The nonverbal behavior of the counsellor was found to play an influential role in how the counsellor was perceived by the subjects. A differential effect between responsive and unresponsive counsellor nonverbal behavior on the subjects' perceptions was revealed. The current study, however, failed to find an interactive relationship between counsellor nonverbal behavior and self-esteem. Possible explanations for this failure are given below.

The analysis of results confirms the first prediction by indicating that a significant difference exists in the subjects' perceptions of the counsellor in the responsive and unresponsive NVB conditions. The condition that yielded the highest ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard was the responsive NVB condition. The results of this study support previous findings (e.g. Fretz et al., 1979, Tepper & Haase, 1978, Tyson & Wall, 1983, Graves & Robinson, 1979, Seay and Altekruise, 1979, Reade & Smouse, 1980) relating responsive counsellor nonverbal behavior to increased ratings of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. The fact that the responsive NVB condition resulted in higher counsellor ratings than that recorded in the unresponsive NVB condition indicates the salient role played by the nonverbal channel in determining the total meaning of a message. The counsellor's

unresponsive nonverbal behavior may have been interpreted by the subjects to mean a lack of psychological closeness between them and the counsellor (Graves & Robinson, 1979). If clients expect a certain degree of rapport with the counsellor, then perhaps a lack of this rapport results in decreased perceptions of counsellor genuineness, empathy, and regard. This is consistent with Rogers (1957) who argues that facilitative conditions in counselling are associated with the clients' perceptions about the nature of their relationship with the counsellor.

Based upon the differential effects of self-esteem level demonstrated by Angle and Goodyear (1984), low self-esteem subjects in the current study were expected to rate the counsellor highest and lowest on the facilitative qualities depending upon the NVB condition employed. The results of the current study, however, failed to support the predicted interactive relationship between the counsellor nonverbal behavior and subject self-esteem.

The lack of a significant interaction effect could be explained in several ways. First, it is possible that the failure to find predicted results was due to the limited range of the subjects' self-esteem scores. Out of a possible range of 90 to 450, the self-esteem scores of the subjects in the current study fell only between the range of 286 to 421. Thus, the self-esteem level of the low self-esteem group may not have been low enough to affect

the subjects' perceptions of the counsellor's nonverbal behavior.

An alternative explanation involves the nature of the client concern presented in the observed counselling interaction. Although the presented problem was expected to facilitate the subjects in assuming the client's role, adjustment to university is, perhaps, non-threatening in that it is a commonly accepted concern among university students. If this is the case, then the presented concern in the current study may have failed to involve the self-esteem of the subjects.

Another explanation for the lack of a significant interaction concerns the analogue methodology employed in the study. Regardless of how well the subjects assumed the client's role, the observed interaction may have lacked a quality of realism necessary to trigger any self-esteem effect. Additionally, the voluntary role of the subjects emphasizes their prerogative to withdraw from the study at any time. Although clients in counselling are also free to terminate their participation, the personal interaction carries a sense of obligation through involvement not present in a research study. This sense of personal control in the volunteers may have served to psychologically limit the subjects' involvement in the videotaped interaction, thus minimizing the threatening potential of the confrontive responses.

Limitations

Several limitations of the current study that reduce the generalizability of the results are discussed below.

A major limitation of the current study often overlooked by researchers in this area concerns the measurement of counsellor nonverbal behavior. By having considered the durations of the nonverbal behaviors separately, it is assumed that the influential effect of each behavior is independent of one another. It is possible, however, that the influential effect of counsellor nonverbal behavior was actually a result of an interactive relationship among them. In other words, the influential effect of one nonverbal behavior may be largely due to its occurrence in combination with one or more nonverbal behaviors rather than its occurrence alone. For example, head nodding may not have as great an influential effect alone as it does in combination with facial expressiveness. Support for this argument is offered by Tepper and Haase (1978) who stated that (behavioral) cues ... operate as a system and depend heavily on the relative balance between the cues in terms of the message which is ultimately perceived, (p. 41). Studying nonverbal behaviors as independent rather than interactive influencing factors thus fails to present an accurate representation of their influential role.

Although the analogue nature of the study controlled

for extraneous variables, the use of videotaped interviews may have inhibited an effect otherwise present in the interpersonal influence process in counselling. Client motivation in seeking out counselling may be an important factor that interacts with self-esteem to influence perception of the counsellor. An actual counselling interaction would thus allow the researcher to assess the role that client motivation plays in determining counsellor evaluations as well as increase the external validity of the study.

Other limitations include the presentation of a single client concern, the brevity of the counselling interaction, and the use of only one verbal orientation. Because of these methodological limitations, the videotaped interviews do not portray an accurate representation of an actual counselling interview and thus decrease the external validity of the current study.

Finally, the lack of a male counsellor in the videotaped interviews as well as the use of only university students as subjects makes it difficult to generalize the findings beyond counselling interactions involving a female counsellor and university students as the client population.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The results of the current study have implications for both counselling practice and counsellor training. Within

the client-counsellor relationship, the nonverbal behavior of the counsellor has been found to be an important determinant of the client's perceptions of the counsellor as genuine, empathetic, and high in regard. Such perceptions of the counsellor comprise the three facilitative conditions critical to the therapeutic process and an eventual successful outcome (Rogers, 1957). It is important for both counsellors and counsellor trainees to make an effort to consciously maintain an awareness of the attitudes expressed by the nonverbal as well as the verbal channels of communication.

Future research might investigate the nonverbal behaviors of the counsellor as they occur naturally, that is in combination with one another. The nonverbal behavioral combinations (e.g. head nod, facial expressiveness and forward trunk lean) could be recorded and studied in relation to their influential effect on the client's perception.

Further investigation into the interaction between subject self-esteem and counsellor nonverbal behavior might employ actual counselling interactions where each client can express a personally-relevant concern. The increased involvement and more personalized experience inherent in that type of interaction may serve to heighten the potential effect of self-esteem. Additionally, the inclusion of several verbal orientations, or varying the

level of the same orientation, would allow for a comparison of the effects of nonverbal behavior and self-esteem with other aspects of verbal behavior.

A final suggestion for future research is the investigation of any effects due to sex differences. Counsellor gender was one factor found by Angle and Goodyear (1983) to interact with client self-esteem. The differential effects of both counsellor and client gender on client perceptions might merit research investigation.

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APPENDIX A**Definitions of Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior**

DEFINITIONS OF COUNSELLOR NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

Eye Contact: The counsellor's gaze is directly at the client's upper facial area (Seay & Altekruise, 1979).

Trunk Lean:

Forward - The upper portion of the counsellor's body (waist up) is leaning towards the client at least 20 degrees.

Backward - The upper portion of the counsellor's body (waist up) is leaning against the back of the chair (Tyson & Wall, 1983).

Body Orientation:

Direct - The counsellor's body and head are directly facing the client.

Indirect - The counsellor's body is turned at a 45 degree angle away from the front of the client (Graves & Robinson, 1976).

Facial Expressiveness: The movement of any facial muscle to express understanding or concern such as smiling, a furrowed brow, and pursed lips (Tepper & Haase, 1978; Seay & Altekruise, 1979; Tyson & Wall, 1983).

Head Nod: Head motions in an up and downward direction (Seay & Altekruise, 1979).

APPENDIX B

Script of Counselling Interview

SCRIPT OF COUNSELLING INTERVIEW

- Co: Perhaps you can start by summarizing some of the concerns that we've been discussing up until now.
- Cl: Okay, I guess what's really bothering me is my inability to adjust to university life. The usual concerns I suppose. There just doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to do all my studying and then continue with the outside activities that I think are important too.
- Co: So it sounds like you've got a lot on your plate right now.
- Cl: Yeah, and when I do study I never seem to get as much done as I intended to. I either waste time or get stuck while doing an assignment. But on top of that, I don't really feel all that seriously motivated to try any harder.
- Co: Okay, so in putting together some of the things you've been saying, I can see two themes emerging. You realize a need to better organize your time and to improve your study skills in order to get your academic work done and still have time for your social life. And yet on the other hand, you see yourself as lacking in any kind of serious motivation to do anything about it.

Cl: Yeah, that's what it feels like to me.

Co: I guess I see that a little differently. Your decision to come see me shows me that you really do have some motivation towards improving your situation. Perhaps we need to look at this motivation issue a little more closely.

Cl: I find it hard to be motivated when there's just so much to do. I mean, there's so many classes and some of the profs are really asking for a lot--a countless number of tests and assignments and readings. It adds up to a lot. It's unreal.

Co. So I gather you see the university as making a lot of unrealistic demands on you. I have another perspective. I see the univerity as demanding a good organization of your time, a serious effort to learn and...yeah, I guess you can call those demands and they can be seen as trying at times. But I find that they're more realistic.

Cl: Okay, I guess what you're saying is true. But sometimes it just seems like so much work.

Co: Yeah, I can see how it can feel like that sometimes.

Cl: Well, what I really mean to say is that I'm certainly no genius, but when I think about becoming a better student I have this image of having to become a perfect student. And perfectionism is unrealistic and ridiculous.

Co: Well, judging by your opinion about perfectionism it seems that you're really quite insightful. However, I wonder if you're not avoiding doing anything about improving your study skills by hiding behind that label of perfectionism. It's as if there's a little voice inside you and it's saying: Oh, what's the point of trying anyway? Who can be a perfect student? Now that's just a hunch. How does that fit?

Cl: Well, that might be true. I've never really thought of it that way before.

Co: It might be interesting to take a closer look at that sometime.

Cl: But I still don't have any idea why I lack motivation.

Co: You say that you have no idea and no insight, and yet when I think back to some of the conversations you and I have had together I think that you're quite aware of your thoughts and what's going on inside you. You mentioned earlier that the goal of becoming a perfect

student seemed to you to be unrealistic. What for you would be a realistic expectation?

Cl: Well, I'd like to improve my use of time and study skills to a point where I can be confident that I'll get good grades.

Co: Yeah, that sounds like a really good place to start.

Cl: But I'm not sure I can ever become a good enough student. After all, what is good enough anyways? Can anyone ever become good enough?

Co: You ask what's good enough and yet a moment ago you said that being good enough was getting good grades. In order to understand this discrepancy it seems important to go back to something else you said: Can I ever be a good enough student? And what that tells me is that you seem to be lacking in confidence in your ability to be a good enough student...almost to the point of fearfulness. I wonder if it's fear that's behind your lack of motivation?

Cl: Possibly. I am kind of worried that I won't do as well as I want no matter how hard I try. But you know, a lot of my friends in my classes feel the same way too. Some of them are wondering right now whether they should quit university and look for a job.

Co: Are you aware of what's happened just now? You changed the focus from talking about something that is a very personal issue for you and started to talk about your friends. Now you've been really open with me and I really appreciate the courage that it's taken. What's holding you back right now?

Cl: I don't know. I don't know if I want to face it. I mean, to disprove the fear I have to take the risk and if it doesn't work out I feel like I'll have a lot to lose...my career plans and all. It seems like such a big risk, doesn't it?

Co: Yeah, I can see where that can be really frightening to think about. And I hope that you and I will have some time to talk about that later. But right now what I'd like to do is to make a concrete start and try to minimize some of that fear by taking a look at some ways to improve your study skill habits. How does that sound to you?

Cl: Uh...yeah, that sounds okay to me. I guess we can start there.

Co: Okay, are you aware that the university offers workshops on study skills? I think that they might really benefit you.

Cl: Uh...I kind of remember hearing something about them. I probably didn't give it any serious thought because I was looking for an easier way out.

Co: Okay, how about you and I starting a contract together? You begin by signing up for a workshop of your own choice and make a really serious effort to improve your study skills. And I will arrange to keep on seeing you so that we can monitor your progress together and hopefully have a chance to work on some of your fears about being a good enough student. How does that sound to you?

Cl: Okay, I guess I'd be willing to do that.

Co: Okay.

APPENDIX C

Instructions for Rating Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RATING COUNSELLOR NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

You will be shown the video portion of two eight-minute videotaped counselling interviews. I would like you to focus on the following counsellor nonverbal behaviors, one at a time:

1. eye contact
2. body orientation
3. trunk lean
4. facial expressiveness
5. head nods

With the stop watch provided, you are asked to record the duration over which the specified nonverbal behaviors occurred in the interview. You will use this procedure for measuring each of the nonverbal behaviors.

The nonverbal behaviors are defined below:

1. Eye Contact: the counsellor's gaze is directly at the client's upper facial area (Seay & Altekruise, 1979).

2. Trunk Lean:

Forward Trunk Lean - the upper portion of the counsellor's body (waist up) is leaning toward the client at least 20 degrees.

Backward Trunk Lean - the counsellor's upper portion

of the body (waist up) is leaning against the back of the chair (Tyson & Wall, 1983).

3. Body Orientation:

Direct - the counsellor's body and head are directly facing the client.

Indirect - the counsellor's body is turned at a 45 degree angle away from the front of the client (Graves & Robinson, 1976).

4. Facial Expressiveness: the movement of any facial muscle to express understanding or concern, such as smiling, a furrowed brow, and pursed lips (Tepper & Haase, 1978; Seay & Altekruise, 1979; Tyson & Wall, 1983).

5. Head Nod: head motions in an up and downward direction (Seay & Altekruise, 1979).

APPENDIX D**Instructions for Empathy Ratings**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMPATHY RATINGS

You will hear the audio portion of an eight-minute videotaped counselling interview. Client-counsellor verbal response units (client response-counsellor response) will be presented separately. After each presentation you are to rate the counsellor's response using the Carkhuff Empathy Scale (Carkhuff, 1969) presented below. Make your ratings on the basis of both the content and verbal expressiveness of the counsellor's responses.

CARKHUFF EMPATHY SCALE

1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0
-+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

Level 1

The verbal and behavioral expressions of the helper either do not attend to or detract significantly from the verbal and behavioral expressions of the helpee(s) in that they communicate significantly less of the helpee's feelings and experiences than the helpee has communicated himself.

Level 2

While the helper responds to the expressed feelings of the helpee(s), he does so in such a way that he subtracts noticeable affect from the communications of the helpee.

Level 3

The expressions of the helper in response to the expressions of the helpee(s) are essentially interchangeable with those of the helpee in that they express essentially the same affect and meaning.

Level 4

The responses of the helper add noticeably to the expressions of the helpee(s) in such a way as to express feelings a level deeper than the helpee was able to express himself.

Level 5

The helper's responses add significantly to the feeling and meaning of the expressions of the helpee(s) in such a way as to accurately express feelings levels below what the helpee himself was able to express or, in the event of ongoing, deep self-exploration on the helpee's part, to be fully with him in his deepest moments (Carkhuff, 1969, pp. 174-175).

APPENDIX E**Instructions for Concern-Indifference Ratings**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONCERN-INDIFFERENCE RATINGS

You will hear the audio portion of an eight-minute videotaped counselling interview. I would like you to focus on the tonal qualities (pitch, rate, volume) of the counsellor's verbal responses. The Scribner-Bantam English Dictionary (1980) defines the tonal qualities as follows:

Pitch: elevation or depression of a tone, depending on the number of vibrations per second.

Rate: degree of speed of working or acting.

Volume: degree of loudness.

The counsellor's verbal responses will be presented separately. After each presentation you are to rate the response according to its level of communicated concern. Using the following scale, make your ratings on the basis of tonal qualities only:

least concerned

most

bordering on

most

indifferent

indifference

concerned

2

4

+-----+-----+-----+-----+

1

somewhat

3

somewhat

5

indifferent

concerned

APPENDIX F
Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in both parts of the present research project (212-85) studying the interaction of the counsellor and client in counselling.

I understand the following:

1. My participation in the study is totally on a voluntary basis and that a decision to withdraw from the study at any time will not result in any negative consequences.
2. My responses on both rating forms and the questionnaire will be strictly confidential and known only to the researcher. (A number code will be used to identify my questionnaires and answer forms.)
3. At the end of the experimental procedure I will be informed of the date, time and location where I can learn of the full details and results of the study. However, I understand that because research tests cannot be interpreted for individuals, I will not receive my score on any of the questionnaires.
4. Shortly after the completion of the research study, a \$25.00 draw will be held for those subjects who participated in both parts of the experimental procedure.

Date

Print Name

Signature

APPENDIX G

Instructions for Part One of Study

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART ONE OF STUDY

The present research project involves looking at the interpersonal process of a counselling interaction, (ie. the interaction between the counsellor and client in counselling). Your participation will involve observing two videotaped counselling interactions about a week apart, rating each observation and completing a final questionnaire. To insure against influencing the results in any unwanted manner, it is important that you refrain from discussing any aspect of this research either during your participation here or outside this room.

The experimental procedure for today is as follows:

1. You will be shown an 8-minute videotape of a counselling interaction. While viewing the tape you are to make the interaction as personalized as possible by imagining yourself as the client and experience the problem as it best fits your life situation.
2. Following the viewing, please complete the rating form provided at this time based on you experience of this counselling interaction.

Thank-You

APPENDIX H**Instructions for Part Two of Study**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PART TWO OF STUDY

Once again, you are reminded of the confidentiality of your responses and the voluntary nature of your participation. You are asked to continue to refrain from discussing any aspect of this research with others in order to insure uncontaminated results.

The experimental procedure for today is as follows:

1. You will be shown an 8-minute videotape of a counselling interaction. While viewing the tape you are to make the interaction as personalized as possible by imagining yourself as the client and experience the problem as it bests fits your life situation.
2. Following the viewing, please complete the rating form provided at this time based on your experience of this counselling interaction.
3. To complete your participation in the study, you are asked to fill out one final questionnaire which will be administered at this time.

Thank-You

VITA

Surname: Duma Given Names: Joanne

Place of Birth: Winnipeg Date of Birth: Dec. 9, 1958

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

University of Winnipeg 1977 to 1982

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Title of Thesis

Perceptions of Counsellor Genuineness, Empathy, and

Regard: Impact of Counsellor Nonverbal Behavior and

Subject Self-Esteem.

Author


(Signature)

JOANNE DUMA
(Name in block letters)

May 12, 1986
(Date)