

Is There an Association Between Self-Esteem and Denial?

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Denial and Self-Esteem

Denial and Minimization

- Can be distinct concepts or can be placed on a continuum
- Some measures can include denying or minimizing any planning, sexual deviance, risk of recidivism or need for treatment

Self-Esteem

- Refers to whether one evaluates oneself as favourable or unfavourable
- Can be measured implicitly or explicitly

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Theory

Sexual offenders' denial or minimization of their guilt and other offence related aspects may be a consequence of low self-esteem. (e.g., Marshall et al., 2009; Xuereb et al., 2015)

Denial and minimization should be associated with lower self-esteem

Sexual offenders' denial or minimization may protect their self-esteem (e.g., Lord & Wilmot, 2004).

Denial and minimization should be associated with higher self-esteem.

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Literature Review

Higher levels of self-esteem are associated with coping with denial (Gudjonsson and Sigurdsson, 2003)

Denial is associated with higher levels of self-esteem in offenders (Xuereb, Ireland, & Davies, 2009; Xuereb, Ireland, Archer, & Davies, 2015)

Adolescent Sexual Offender admitters had lower self-esteem than their denier counter-parts (Sefarbi, 1990)

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Current Study

Examined the relationship between self-esteem and denial in child molesters

Included both explicit and implicit self-esteem.

Higher levels of denial will be associated with higher explicit self-esteem

No hypothesis was made for implicit self-esteem as there has been no previous research on the association between denial and implicit self-esteem

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Participants

30 males charged, convicted and sentenced for sexual offenses against children

Average age of participants at time of assessment was 41.50 years old

- Range of 22 to 67

76.7% of participants were white

23.3% of participants were Native or Metis

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Explicit Self-Esteem Measures

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

- 10-item self-report measure
- Total scores range from 10-90 with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem

Example

I take a positive attitude towards myself

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree

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Explicit Self-Esteem Measures

Short Self-Esteem Scale

- Eight binary (i.e. yes/no) items
- Yes responses scored with a '1' and no responses scored with '2'
- High scores equal higher self-esteem

Example

Do you think you can make a success of your life?

Yes No

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Explicit Self-Esteem Measures

Self-Esteem Semantic Differential

- 5 items that begin with the stem "I am..."
- Higher scores equal high self-esteem

Example

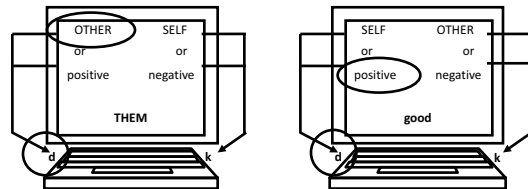
I am:

Unlikeable			Neutral			Likeable
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

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Implicit Self-Esteem Measure

Self-Esteem Implicit Associations Test



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Implicit Self-Esteem Measure

Self-Esteem IAT Examples

Positive: Peace Good Smile Happy Paradise	Negative: Rotten Poor Sickness Poison Bad	SELF: ME MY MINE MYSELF	OTHER: IT THEY THEM THEIR
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Denial Measure

Comprehensive Inventory of Denial – Sexual Offenders

- Completed through interview and a review of the participants official file
- 18 items scored on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 to 2
- Scores are added together
- Higher scores indicate higher levels of denial

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Denial Measure

CID-SO Clusters

Cluster A:
Denying sexually
deviant behaviours
and arousal

Cluster B:
Denying need for
treatment/management
of sexual offending

Cluster C:
Denying
responsibility

Cluster D:
Minimizing harm

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Results: Correlation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Denial	1. Total	.86**	.87**	.81**	.87**	.04	.02	-.08	-.13
	2. Cluster A		.78**	.65**	.69**	-.04	.13	-.10	-.03
	3. Cluster B			.66**	.78**	.16	-.01	-.14	-.21
	4. Cluster C				.58**	.16	.09	-.04	-.02
	5. Cluster D					.04	-.09	-.17	-.19
Implicit Self-Esteem	6. IAT						.08	-.08	-.06
Explicit Self-Esteem	7. SSES Total							.72**	.71**
	8. RSES Total								.60**
	9. SESD Total								

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Discussion

Results did not support our hypothesis as there was no significant relationship between denial and explicit self-esteem.

Results suggest that there is no relationship between the implicit self-esteem and denial.

Implicit and explicit self-esteem may not be associated with denial in sexual offenders against children.

Does not support the theory that denial and minimization protect a sexual offender's self-esteem nor does it support the theory that low self-esteem causes sexual offenders to deny their offences

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Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations

- Small, nonrandom sample
- One measure of denial and one measure of implicit self-esteem
- Some debate over how well the IAT measures underlying cognitions.

Future Directions

- Should be replicated
- A larger sample size
- more than one measure of denial and implicit self-esteem

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