

Abstract

Two studies were conducted to investigate the effects of embodiment on conflict management. Past studies demonstrated that physiological states i.e., bodily postures, could affect emotional and cognitive proceedings of a person. The present work extended beyond past research to examine how physiological states affected decision-making of two interacting individuals. Study one replicated past findings that participants holding a high-power posture perceived more power than participants holding a lower-power posture, and that two participants holding either a high-power or a low-power posture interacted with each other in the same room in an integrative bargaining game. Participants holding a high-power posture proposed a significantly higher initial offer at the beginning of the bargaining and proposed a higher final offer at the end of the bargaining than participants holding a low-power posture. Study two was an extension of study one in that participants could not see each other (i.e. in different rooms) while bargaining through an online portal. It replicated the finding that posture had a main effect on participants' sense of power. However, the effect did not translate into the bargaining outcomes. This may suggest that embodiment is as much a social mechanism as a visceral mechanism.