



Introjective Individuals Tend Toward Anhedonia: Self-Report and Experimental Evidence

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A broad line of research has conceptualized personality based on the interaction of two aspects: interpersonal relatedness and self-definition. This theoretical corpus understands these functions as two poles according to the patterns of interaction and relevance in personality. Additionally, the exacerbation of one of these poles generates a psychopathological model that identifies three types of depressive experience: anaclitic, introjective, or mixed pattern. Understanding the lack of interest as a key symptom of depression, this experiment evaluates a relation for anhedonia and the polarities of depression model configuration using an empirical and experimental protocol. We tested 177 individuals using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) subscale for anhedonia and a visual discrimination task with a specific reward system, which was implemented to study reinforcement sensitivity. Participants were classified into four groups by the polarities of experience model. The subscale's results showed that individuals with an introjective character exhibited an enhanced anhedonic symptomatology but no co-occurrence of this evidence on the experimental protocol. These results empirically support the two polarities of the depressive personality model and raise new questions regarding how to experimentally test this relation.

Keywords: polarities of experience, depression, anhedonia, reward sensitivity, introjective character

INTRODUCTION

Blatt's (1) Polarities of Experience (POE) model has been widely recognized as a clinical and theoretical approach based on how individuals deal with interpersonal relationships and build a sense of identity. This conceptual scheme has taken these two cornerstones as poles from which individuals organize their experience. These two poles are branched in three different characters: anaclitic, introjective, and mixed anaclitic/introjective (2, 3). The POE model has developed substantial literature regarding how these three characters construct a particular depressive configuration depending on whether such experience is focused on interpersonal relatedness or self-definition (1, 2, 4, 5). Importantly, in POE literature, anaclitic depression manifests through an excessive emphasis on interpersonal relatedness, leading to feelings of loneliness, low self-criticism, helplessness, and weakness (6). In contrast, introjective depression is determined by the pole of self-definition, generating high self-criticism, anhedonia, guilt, and feelings of inferiority/failure (7). Mixed anaclitic/introjective depression (mixed AI) involves combined