# Association Between OCPD Traits and Feelings of

# Emptiness

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## INTRODUCTION

- Emptiness is the absence of emotional experience.
- At high levels, emptiness is disruptive, leading to painful detachment from oneself and others.
- Emptiness is closely associated with borderline personality disorder.
- It may also be associated with other PDs, including obsessive compulsive personality disorder (OCPD).
- In the AMPD, OCPD consists of four traits: intimacy avoidance, perseveration, restricted affectivity, and rigid perfectionism.
- Restricted affectivity and intimacy avoidance may be most linked with emptiness since they entail absence of emotional and interpersonal engagement, respectively.
- However, this has not yet been examined empirically.

### METHOD

- Participants were 300 people recruited from MTurk with an average age of 38 years (SD = 10; see Table 1)
- Measures: Subjective Emptiness Scale, OCPD subscales of Personality Inventory for DSM-5
- We tested our hypothesis using multiple regression

### RESULTS

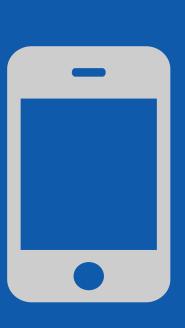
- Correlations between OCPD personality traits and emptiness were high on average (r<sub>mean</sub> = .75; see Table 2).
- OCPD traits accounted for a large amount of variance in emptiness (see Table 3).
- Perseveration was the strongest predictor of feelings of emptiness.

### DISCUSSION

- That perseveration was the strongest predictor of emptiness suggests that excessive fixation and rumination can leave people feeling empty.
- This raises the question of whether emptiness may be a problem for other disorders where perseveration is a symptom (e.g., GAD, OCD).
- Future research might thus examine the degree to which emptiness is characteristic of other mental health problems.

# Of OCPD traits, perseveration is most associated with feeling empty





#### Table 1

Demographic Information

n	%
165	55%
134	45%
14	5%
11	4%
3	1%
266	88%
3	1%
3	1%
	165 134 14 11 3 266 3

#### Table 2

**Correlations Between Study Variables** 

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Emptiness	(.92)				
2 Intimacy Avoidance	.74	(.82)			
3 Perseveration	.80	.77	(.93)		
4 Restricted Affectivity	.75	.77	.81	(.90)	
5 Rigid Perfectionism	.72	.72	.85	.83	(.93)

*Note.* Cronbach's alpha on diagonal; all correlations are statistically significant at *p* < .05

#### Table 3

Relative Influence of OCPD Traits on Emptiness

	β	В	95% CI	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Intimacy Avoidance	.24*	1.50	[.80, 2.19]	.82*
Perseveration	.45*	2.69	[1.86, 3.52]	
<b>Restricted Affectivity</b>	.21*	1.28	[.49, 2.06]	
<b>Rigid Perfectionism</b>	01	06	[95, .82]	

*Note.* \* indicates value is statistically significant at p < .05

