

Abstract

This study of solitude investigates how individual differences in self-construals (independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal) and traits (extroversion and emotional stability) influence the experience of solitude. The experiential variables included thoughts, feelings, perceptions of consequences, in self-reported states of solitude and everyday instances of being alone. One hundred and ninety three undergraduate students participated in this study, and reported personal experiences based on conceptualized self-report (an open-ended questionnaire) and real situational self-recording (Experience Sampling Method). Binary logistic regression and linear regression were used to analyze the predictive ability of the individual differences on the experiential variables in solitude and being alone. The results indicate that extroversion is the best predictor of more negative emotions in the situation of being alone, suggested that lack of stimuli results lower baseline of arousal in the extroverts. Moreover, interdependent self-construal, which is characterized with increasing sensitivity to situational cues, is the best predictor of one's thought processes. On the other hand, individual differences are more significant to predict thoughts of being alone than solitude. Findings confirm the need to distinguish conceptualized solitude from everyday life situations of being alone. Further study may focus on modifying data collection of solitude experience, and measuring the same facets to report experiences of solitude and being alone.