

LOST IN DARK TIMES : THE EFFECT OF DEPERSONALISATION EXPERIENCES ON TIME PERSPECTIVE

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Depersonalisation (DP) is a condition that typically manifests as a disruption of bodily self-awareness (Sierra & Berrios, 1997). **Time perspective (TP)** is a fundamental dimension of human experience (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2014), and has been found as a mediator for mental health conditions (i.e. depression; Wang et al., 2021). In this study, we look at **the relationship between Depersonalisation and Time Perspective factors**.

METHODS: QUESTIONNAIRES

The **Cambridge Depersonalisation Scale (CDS)** measures DP symptoms in the past six months (Sierra & Berrios, 2000). Four main factors have been extracted from the CDS: **Anomalous Body Experience, Emotional Numbing, Alienation from Surroundings,** and **Anomalous Subjective Recall** (Sierra & David, 2005).

The **Reduced Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory** (Orosz et al., 2015) consists in five factors: **Past Negative, Past Positive, Present Fatalist, Present Hedonistic,** and **Future**. We also controlled for time distortions by adding two questions about fast/slow time perception.

METHODS: PARTICIPANTS

n = 535 participants

Gender

Male (53%), Female (46%), Non-binary (1%)

Age between 18 and 60 years old

Between-group comparisons

Sample: non-clinical population recruited with the CDS

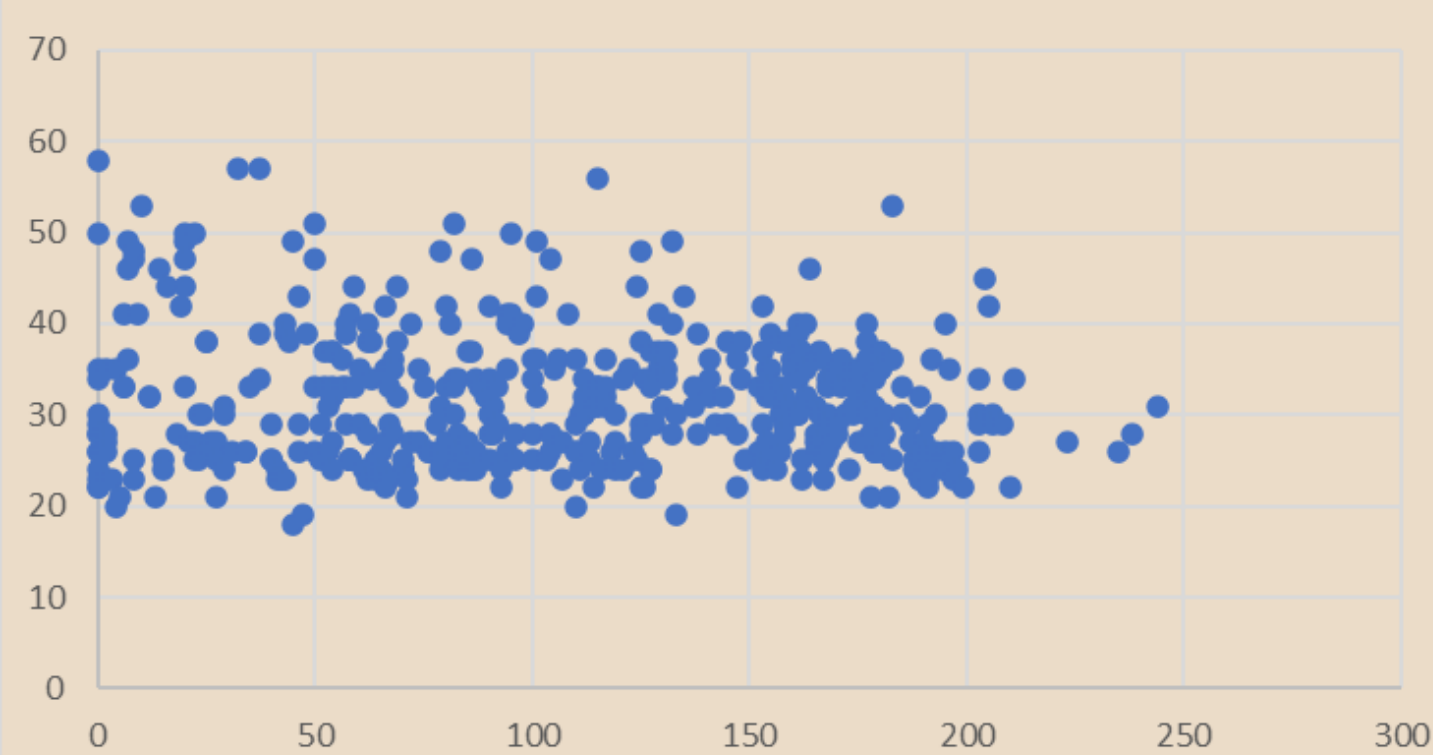
Controls n = 51 participants (CDS < 20)

High DP occurrences n = 51 participants (CDS > 50)

FINDINGS:

CDS scores are negatively correlated with the participants' age ($r = -.146$; $p < .001$, Fig. 2)

Fig. 1 Correlation between Age and CDS scores



FINDINGS: Based on Tables 1 and 2.

- In case of **high DP** occurrences, subjects were **more likely** to have a **Past Negative** perspective, and **less likely** to have a **Past Positive** perspective, compared to when DP occurrences are low. This is partially reflected in the CDS subscales.
- Subjects with **high DP** occurrences showed an increased tendency to adopt a **Present Fatalist** perspective, while exhibiting a **decreased** inclination towards the **Future** perspective, in contrast to subjects with lower DP occurrences. This is partially reflected in the CDS subscales.
- High DP** occurrences were linked to a **slower perceived time** in comparison to lower DP occurrences.

DISCUSSION:

As anticipated, higher occurrences of **DP experiences** correlate with **higher propensity to Past Negative** time perspective, and **lower propensity to Future** time perspective. This is consistent with DP self-reports of lacking a "plot" or a narrative in one's life (Ciaunica & Charlton 2018), and with the subjective experiences of being 'stuck' in a slow, negative here and now (Sierra and Berrios, 2000).

Study 1

How do Depersonalisation occurrences associate with Time Perspective?

Table 1. Pearson's correlation coefficients between CDS overall score and Time Perspective Subscales

	CDS
Past Negative	0.19*
Past Positive	-0.14*
Present Fatalist	0.25
Present Hedonistic	0.09*
Future	-0.29*
Slow Distortion	0.35*
Fast Distortion	0.145*

Table 2. Pearson's r correlation coefficients between CDS and Time Perspective subscales. The significance (p-value) is represented in graded green-yellow-red. * p < .05

		CDS Subscales			
		Anomalous Body Experience	Alienation from Surroundings	Emotional Numbing	Anomalous Subjective Recall
TP Subscales	Past Negative	0.190*	0.211*	0.194*	0.172*
	Past Positive	-0.148*	-0.133*	-0.145*	-0.119*
	Present Fatalist	0.229*	0.233*	0.252*	0.231*
	Present Hedonistic	0.090*	0.08	0.661	0.100*
	Future	-0.284*	-0.266*	-0.311*	-0.271*
	Slow Distortion	0.336*	0.294*	0.35*	0.328*
	Fast Distortion	0.139*	0.155*	0.143*	0.136*

Study 2

How do DP and LTM differ in their sense of self, body, and emotions?

How does this relate to their emotional embodiment?

Long-term meditators (LTM) have generally improved **interoceptive abilities, self-awareness,** and **emotion regulation** (Mehling et al., 2018; Guendelman et al., 2017). Strikingly, both LTM and DP report feelings of detachment from one's self and body (Ciaunica et al., 2021; Berkovich-Ohana et al., 2020). Yet, while the latter experience this disconnectedness as **deeply distressing** (Sierra & Berrios, 1977), LTM typically experience it as **positively valenced** (Dambrun et al., 2019).

METHODS:

The emBODY Task

(Numenmaa et al., 2014)

QUESTIONNAIRES

Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA-2) (Mehling et al., 2018); Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ-15) (Baer et al., 2008); Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Gross & John, 2003); Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) (Neff, 2003); Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Corry et al., 2008)

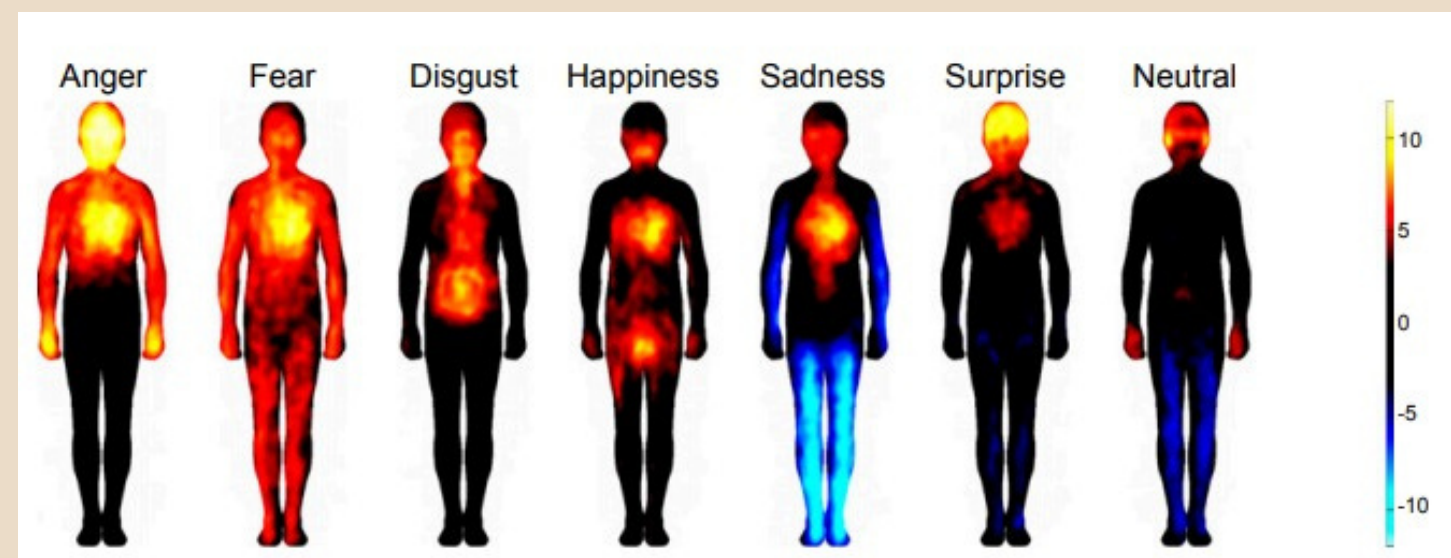
PARTICIPANTS

non-clinical population recruited with the CDS

Controls n = 40 participants (CDS < 20)

High DP occurrences n = 40 participants (CDS > 50)

LTM n = 40 participants practicing body-scan (S. N. Goenka Vipassana) for at least 3 hrs/week in the past 2 years.



This study explores **how emotions are experienced by long-term meditators** (S-N. Goenka Vipassana community) compared to people with **high depersonalisation occurrences**.

This comparison will allow us to better understand the relationship between **self-detachment and bodily perception**, with potential implications for therapy interventions.

Task Hypotheses

- Lower activation in body maps of subjects with high DP occurrences across emotions, compared to LTM and controls.
- Higher activation in body maps of LTM participants across emotions, compared to subjects with high DP occurrences, and controls.
- Lower activation of body maps for positive emotions in subjects with high DP occurrences, compared to controls and LTM
- Higher activation for positive emotions in LTM vs controls and subjects with high DP occurrences.

Questionnaires hypothesis

- High DP subjects are expected to have lower scores in MAIA, FFMQ-15, ERQ, compared to LTM and HC.
- LTM subjects are expected to have higher scores MAIA, FFMQ-15, ERQ, compared to DP and HC.
- Exploratory research question related to SCS and NPI

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