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Comparison of Alexithymia and the Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems in Students with Rumination and Normal Students

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Abstract

Objective: Given the significant role of rumination in the development and maintenance of emotional disorder symptoms, the present study aimed to compare alexithymia and the Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems (BAS/BIS) between students with rumination and normal students.

Methods: This causal-comparative (ex post facto) study was conducted among female students residing in the dormitories of the Chalus Branch of Islamic Azad University. The sample consisted of 106 students, including 53 students with rumination and 53 normal students, who were selected through random sampling. Data were collected using the Rumination Questionnaire, the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS), and the Behavioral Activation System/Behavioral Inhibition System (BAS/BIS) Questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the independent samples t-test.

Results: The findings indicated a significant difference between students with rumination and normal students in terms of alexithymia and its three subscales, namely difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, and externally oriented thinking ($P < 0.05$). However, no significant differences were found between the two groups regarding the Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems or their four subscales, including sensitivity to punishment, reward responsiveness, drive, and fun seeking. Conclusion: The findings highlight the important role of alexithymia in students with rumination and support its association with ruminative thinking. In contrast, the results did not support a significant role for the Behavioral Activation/Inhibition Systems in distinguishing students with rumination from normal students.

Keywords: Rumination, Alexithymia, Behavioral Activation System (BAS), Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS), Affective disorders

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