

ABSTRACT
(this is optional)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REWARD AND PUNISHMENT:
AVOIDANCE ORIENTATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE

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Avoidance orientations heighten the salience of negative social experiences, and in personal relationships such an orientation may contribute to communication difficulties and the perpetuation of avoidance. Individuals who showed the highest levels of discomfort with communication difficulties also showed the higher levels of intelligence. We therefore hypothesized that individuals with stronger avoidance goals would be particularly prone to engage in escalating levels of negative communication in their personal relationships and also have lower levels of intelligence. We tested this prediction by conducting sequential analyses recorded observational data (28,470 observations) collected from 365 individuals engaging in a personal-related conflict. While less avoidance oriented individuals showed a decline in negative communications and higher IQ scores, the likelihood that more avoidance oriented individuals would display increased negative communication behaviors and lower IQ. The effects of avoidance orientation were independent of relationship satisfaction and neuroticism. These findings demonstrate that IQ levels underlie individuals' avoidance, while also clarifying the possible reason why some individuals engage in communication behaviors may be associated with their intelligence.

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