Emotional Complexity and Empathic Accuracy in Romantic Dyads

This study examines the association between emotional complexity and empathic accuracy in committed romantic relationships. Using a videotaped dyadic interaction and a daily diary questionnaire completed by both partners in cohabiting couples, two competing hypotheses were tested: (a) individuals who show more emotional complexity (differentiation and variance of emotions) in their daily diaries will be more empathically accurate towards their partners (in both the dyadic interaction and the daily diaries) due to their greater emotional differentiation; (b) alternatively, it may not be the individual’s level of emotional complexity but rather the match between partners’ complexity levels that determines an individual’s empathic accuracy within the relationship.