



HIGHLIGHTING THE EXISTENCE OF INTRAPSYCHIC CONFLICTS THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL REACTIONS IN ORDINARY AND AMPLIFIED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

Intrapsychic conflict represents a central construct for understanding human behavior because it emerges at the intersection of conscious and unconscious processing. Contemporary research in cognitive neuroscience and psychophysiology suggests that such conflicts can be investigated through objective physiological indicators, not only through self-report. Amplified States of Consciousness (ASC), especially those induced through hypnosis, provide an experimental framework for reducing executive filtering and increasing access to implicit processing.

The study included 40 participants (27 females, 13 males; M age = 21.6 years, SD = 2.78), in a within-subject design comparing Ordinary States of Consciousness (OSC) with Amplified States of Consciousness (ASC). Psychophysiological reactivity was recorded using the Lafayette LX4000 polygraph, while ideomotor responses were captured through a Force Sensitive Resistor sensor. Normality diagnostics indicated non-normal distributions; therefore, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to compare response times across conditions and states of consciousness.

Response time was significantly higher in ASC than in OSC both for stimuli referring to the somatic self ($Z = -5.92$, $p < .001$, $r = .66$) and for stimuli referring to the psychological self ($Z = -6.37$, $p < .001$, $r = .71$). Descriptive statistics showed a systematic increase in response latency in ASC, and 82.5% of participants presented higher values in ASC than in OSC.

The results support the hypothesis that intrapsychic conflicts manifest through measurable psychophysiological responses and that ASC facilitates access to deeper unconscious processes. The ideomotor signal appears to add incremental value by indexing subtle dynamics that are not fully captured through explicit verbal responding.

Keywords: *intrapsychic conflict; hypnosis; psychophysiology; ideomotor signal; states of consciousness*

1. INTRODUCTION

Intrapsychic conflict has traditionally been regarded as a key mechanism of psychological functioning because it reflects tension between incompatible tendencies,

motives, or representational systems. In contemporary research, this construct can be reformulated in terms of interactions between automatic and controlled processes, between implicit and explicit forms of cognition, as well as between emotionally charged responses and deliberately regulated responses. Such an expanded formulation allows a dialogue between psychodynamic theory, cognitive science, and psychophysiology.

Dual-process approaches emphasize that information processing in humans unfolds through at least two partially dissociable systems: a rapid, automatic, low-effort mode and a slower, more controlled, and reflective mode (Evans & Stanovich, 2013; Kahneman, 2011). Intrapsychic conflict becomes particularly visible when these systems generate incompatible outputs, forcing the organism to manage discrepant tendencies at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels. In parallel, neurocognitive models identify the anterior cingulate cortex and the associated prefrontal networks as essential for conflict monitoring and regulation (Botvinick et al., 2004, Manolea 2017).

Psychophysiological research also suggests that internal conflict is not exclusively symbolic or introspective, but is expressed through measurable bodily changes. Electrodermal activity, cardiovascular adjustments, and other autonomic indicators provide observable correlates of emotional salience, cognitive effort, and self-regulatory demands (Critchley & Garfinkel, 2021). These markers are especially valuable when the investigated process operates partly outside awareness, because they provide an indirect yet objective index of covert processing.

Amplified States of Consciousness (ASC) are especially relevant in this context because they reduce the dominance of ordinary executive control and allow the freer emergence of implicit dynamics. Hypnosis has been described as a useful experimental tool for modulating top-down control, suggestibility, and metacognitive monitoring, thereby facilitating access to latent or weakly articulated processes (Hilgard, 1991; Lush et al., 2021; Terhune et al., 2017, Manolea 2022).

Within this framework, ideomotor signaling has a distinct theoretical significance because it provides a behavioral pathway through which unconscious tendencies can be expressed without extensive conscious mediation (Cheek, 1962; Rossi, 1986, Manolea 2022).

In this article, we examine the following issue: Does psychophysiological response time differ between Ordinary States of Consciousness (OSC) and Amplified States of Consciousness (ASC) when participants answer questions referring to the somatic and psychological facets of the Self? The study also considers the ideomotor signal as a complementary indicator of unconscious processing and proposes a temporal model linking conscious verbal response, physiological activation, and ideomotor expression.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was to investigate the presence of intrapsychic conflicts through psychophysiological and ideomotor responses across different states of consciousness, using hypnotically induced ASC as an experimental condition.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

H1 General hypothesis. There are significant differences in psychophysiological responses between OSC and ASC when participants answer questions referring to facets of the Self.

H2 Specific hypothesis. Response time is significantly higher in ASC than in OSC both for stimuli referring to the somatic Self and for those referring to the psychological Self.

3. METHOD

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The experimental sample consisted of 40 students recruited from university psychology programs (27 females and 13 males), aged between 18 and 26 years ($M = 21.6$, $SD = 2.78$). All participants provided informed consent prior to participation. The study is consistently framed as a non-clinical laboratory investigation of psychophysiological and ideomotor responses in two states of consciousness: Ordinary State of Consciousness and Amplified State of Consciousness.

3.2 APPARATUS AND MEASURES

The Lafayette LX4000 polygraph was used to record psychophysiological indices, the main dependent variable being defined as electrodermal response time. A Force Sensitive Resistor (FSR) sensor was used to detect ideomotor responses during ASC. Hypnotic depth and hypnotic responsiveness were assessed using the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Form C (Weitzenhoffer & Hilgard, 1962).

3.3 PROCEDURE

The procedure was conducted in two successive phases. In the OSC phase, participants answered structured questions concerning the somatic and psychological facets of the Self while psychophysiological signals were recorded. In the ASC phase, participants first underwent hypnotic induction, which resulted in an ASC of cataleptic hypnotic trance type, after which they were asked the same questions. During this second phase, both psychophysiological and ideomotor responses were recorded. The overall procedure was designed to compare the way identical stimuli are processed when conscious executive mediation is more dominant (OSC) versus when access to implicit dynamics is amplified (ASC).

3.4 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The study used a repeated-measures within-subject design, with state of consciousness (OSC vs. ASC) as the independent variable and response time as the main

dependent variable. Preliminary inspections of histograms and boxplots, together with the reported normality tests, indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Consequently, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to assess differences between conditions, and effect sizes were expressed as the correlation

4. RESULTS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics indicated a clear increase in response time from OSC to ASC for both domains of the Self. Means, medians, and ranges converged in indicating slower responding in ASC conditions.

Table 1. Response Time (Seconds) as a Function of Condition/State of Consciousness

Variable	Condition	M	SD	Median	Min	Max
Somatic·Self	OSC	3.18	0.96	3.12	1.21	5.02
Somatic·Self	ASC	5.91	1.58	5.80	2.88	9.12
Psychological·Self	OSC	3.46	1.05	3.40	1.33	5.78
Psychological·Self	ASC	6.28	1.74	6.11	2.95	9.84

Note: OSC = Ordinary States of Consciousness; ASC = Amplified States of Consciousness.

4.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS

Wilcoxon signed-rank tests indicated statistically significant differences between OSC and ASC both for the Somatic Self and for the Psychological Self, with large effect sizes in both cases.

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Somatic Self

Comparison	Z	p	Effect Size (r)	Interpretation
Somatic Self: OSC vs. ASC	-5.92	< .001	0.66	Large effect

Note: OSC = Ordinary States of Consciousness; ASC = Amplified States of Consciousness.

Table 3. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Psychological Self

Comparison	Z	p	Effect Size (r)	Interpretation
Psychological Self: OSC vs. ASC	-6.37	< .001	0.71	Large effect

4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF DIRECTIONAL CHANGES

The analysis of directional changes reinforced the inferential results. Most participants showed higher response times in ASC than in OSC, whereas only a small minority showed the opposite pattern.

Table 4. Distribution of Directional Changes Between Conditions

Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
ASC > OSC	33	82.5%
No difference	4	10.0%
OSC > ASC	3	7.5%

4.4 TEMPORAL PROCESSING MODEL: A REDUCTIVE ILLUSTRATION

In the temporal model of intrapsychic processing, t_0 represents the conscious verbal response recorded in OSC, t_1 the physiological response emerging at a subconscious level in OSC, t_2 the physiological response in ASC, and t_3 the ideomotor response in ASC. This model indicates deeper and more prolonged processing in ASC, while the ideomotor channel offered a faster route for the expression of unconscious material than simple autonomic responding.

Table 5. Temporal Processing Model

Level	Description
t_0	Conscious verbal response
t_1	Subconscious physiological response
t_2	Unconscious physiological response
t_3	Ideomotor response

Table 6. Illustrative Model of Temporal Response by Condition/State of Consciousness

Participant	t_0 (OSC verbal)	t_1 (OSC physiological)	t_2 (ASC physiological)	t_3 (ASC ideomotor)
P1	2.1	3.4	5.9	2.8
P2	1.9	3.0	6.2	2.6
P3	2.4	3.8	6.5	3.1
P4	2.0	3.2	5.7	2.7
P5	2.3	3.6	6.8	3.0

Note: The values in Table 6 are presented as an illustrative example of the temporal model.

5. DISCUSSION

The compiled results support the hypothesis that ASC systematically modifies psychophysiological processing, changing the organization of the response rather than merely adding random variance. Both in the conditions referring to the somatic self and in those referring to the psychological self, response time increased substantially under hypnotically induced ASC. Because electrodermal response time indexes the duration of physiological response following stimulation, the observed increase can be interpreted as evidence of

deeper, more sustained, or more complex processing when conscious executive filtering is reduced.

Effect sizes were large for both domains of the Self, suggesting that the observed differences are not only statistically reliable but also practically meaningful. The fact that 82.5% of participants presented higher values in ASC additionally indicates that the effect is not driven by a narrow subgroup. On the contrary, the pattern appears robust enough to support the broader claim that ASC enable access to latent intrapsychic dynamics that remain less visible in ordinary consciousness.

The ideomotor component strengthens this interpretation. If verbal responding in OSC captures the layer of processing available to consciousness, then psychophysiological recovery and ideomotor expression may index additional layers of activation unfolding outside complete conscious mediation. In this sense, the ideomotor signal functions as a complementary, not competing, channel: it does not replace physiological data, but helps highlight the way unconscious conflict may become behaviorally legible through subtle motor output.

The temporal model proposed in the source documents is particularly useful from a theoretical standpoint. It suggests that conscious verbal responding, physiological activation, and ideomotor signaling may be organized in a hierarchy of processing depth.

This model remains provisional, yet it offers a useful framework for future research seeking to integrate psychodynamic constructs with contemporary measures of autonomic and motor response. Consequently, the study contributes to an emerging bridge between theoretical explanations of intrapsychic conflict and experimentally observable indicators.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Three main conclusions can be supported.

First, intrapsychic conflicts can be investigated through objective psychophysiological indicators, not only through verbal report.

Second, Amplified States of Consciousness appear to facilitate access to unconscious or weakly articulated processes, as reflected by longer response times in ASC.

Third, ideomotor responses provide additional diagnostic and theoretical value, complementing autonomic measures through a more direct behavioral expression of covert processing.

Taken together, these findings support the inclusion of hypnosis-based methodologies in experimental and clinical research on Self processes, conflict, and implicit regulation.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Several limitations must be acknowledged. In this study, we used a within-subject design without a separate control group, which limits causal specificity regarding the mechanisms responsible for ASC effects. The sample was homogeneous, consisting mainly of psychology students, which restricts generalization to other age groups and clinical populations. In addition, variability in hypnotic susceptibility may have contributed to individual differences in the magnitude of response.

Finally, the temporal model and ideomotor examples were presented descriptively and would benefit from more formal quantitative testing.

Future research should expand the design in at least three directions.

First, replication in clinical populations could clarify whether the observed markers differentiate normative conflict from maladaptive or symptom-related conflict.

Second, multimethod designs integrating neuroimaging or additional autonomic indices could clarify the neural and physiological architecture of the proposed processing hierarchy.

Third, longitudinal and intervention-based studies could evaluate whether these indicators change over time and whether they predict therapeutic outcome, emotional integration, or symptom reduction.

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