

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE SPANISH VERSION OF THE WHITE BEAR SUPPRESSION INVENTORY^{1,2}

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Summary.—This study examined the validity and reliability of the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory in a sample of 833 Spanish students. The internal consistency of the inventory was high (Cronbach alpha = .88), and the test-retest correlation after 4 wk. was satisfactory ($r = .72$). Pearson correlations of scores on the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory with criterion measures (Beck Depression Inventory, Trait subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, and Satisfaction With Life Scale) were in the expected directions. In conclusion, the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory had appropriate reliability and validity as in previous studies with the English version.

Thought suppression is a common form of mental control. However, research has indicated that deliberate thought suppression can be counterproductive, as it can result in a frequency of unwanted thoughts that we would hope to avoid (Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000).

People vary in their usual tendency to suppress unwanted thoughts. Wegner and Zanakos (1994) developed the White Bear Suppression Inventory as a 15-item self-report measure of the habitual tendency to suppress thoughts. This inventory asks people to indicate on a 5-point scale the extent to which they agree (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree) with statements such as: "There are things I prefer not to think about," "I have thoughts I cannot stop," and "There are thoughts that keep jumping into my head." A total score can be calculated by summing individual items, producing a score that can range from 15 to 75. The inventory has shown good internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .89; Wegner & Zanakos, 1994) and test-retest reliability ($r = .80$; Muris, Merckelbach, & Horselenberg, 1996).

As to validity, scores on the White Bear Suppression Inventory have correlated positively with other individual-difference variables, such as depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive behavior (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994; Purdon, 1999; Höping & de Jong-Meyer, 2003).

In this study, we examined the reliability of the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory and its association with criterion variables.

¹This research was supported by Spanish Ministry of Education and Science Grant BSO2003-02573. The Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory used in this study is available from the authors, free of charge, for research purposes only.

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METHOD

Participants

Participants were 833 Spanish students (324 males, 509 females; age range 16 to 58 years, $M=20.0$, $SD=5.7$) who completed questionnaires voluntarily.

Procedure

Participants completed a series of questionnaires including the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory, the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Beck & Steer, 1987), the Trait subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1994), and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) as criterion variables. The order of presentation of scales was counterbalanced. The Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory was administered to a subsample ($n=74$) on two occasions over an interval of 4 wk. to estimate the test-retest correlations.

The White Bear Suppression Inventory was translated and back-translated by two authors, one of whom was not familiar with the original English text. The final translation was established by consensus. This work was done with permission of D. M. Wegner, the test author, and the Journal of Personality who hold the copyright.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean score of our sample on the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory was lower ($M=42.7$, $SD=11.9$) than the means reported by Wegner and Zanakos (1994; $n=735$, $M=51.3$, $SD=8.5$; $t_{1566} = -16.29$, $p < .001$). Females ($M=43.5$, $SD=12.1$) showed slightly, but significantly, higher thought suppression scores than males ($M=41.6$, $SD=11.4$; $t_{807} = -2.09$, $p < .05$). As in previous studies of the reliability of the original English version the internal consistency of the scale was high (Cronbach alpha = .88). A Pearson product-moment correlation was the estimate of test-retest correlation over a 4-wk. interval. This correlation was satisfactory: $r = .72$ ($n = 74$).

To examine the validities of the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory, we examined the correlations with criterion measures (see Table 1). As expected, the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory was positively associated with scores on the Beck Depression Inventory and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Finally, the Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory was negatively associated with the Satisfaction With Life Scale. These findings suggest that people who report a strong tendency to thought suppression have higher scores on depression and anxiety, and lower scores on satisfaction with life.

TABLE 1
 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF ALL SCALES AND PEARSON CORRELATIONS AMONG SCORES ON SPANISH VERSION OF THE WHITE BEAR SUPPRESSION INVENTORY AND CRITERION VARIABLES (N = 833)

Scale	M	SD	Spanish Version
Spanish White Bear Suppression Inventory	42.7	11.9	
Beck Depression Inventory	6.8	6.9	.38*
State-Trait Anxiety Inventory	43.0	9.0	.53*
Satisfaction With Life Scale	4.8	1.2	-.28*

* $p < .001$.

In summary, this Spanish version of the White Bear Suppression Inventory showed an appropriate reliability and validity as in previous studies with the original English version. This Spanish version can be used to extend the interest in the study of thought suppression in several international psychological forums.

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Accepted February 20, 2004.