

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF SPANISH VERSIONS OF THE
RUMINATIVE RESPONSES SCALE–SHORT FORM AND THE
DISTRACTION RESPONSES SCALE IN A SAMPLE OF SPANISH
HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS¹

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Summary.—This study investigated the construct validity and reliability of the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form, and the Distraction Responses Scale of the Response Styles Questionnaire for a sample of 727 Spanish high school and college students who responded anonymously and voluntarily to a questionnaire (293 men, 434 women; ages 16 to 29 years, $M=18.8$, $SD=3.0$). In addition to the above scales, the questionnaire included the Spanish forms of the Beck Depression Inventory, the Trait Anxiety Scale from the State–Trait Anxiety Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the Subjective Happiness Scale. The internal consistency of the scales was satisfactory (Cronbach $\alpha=.86$ for the Ruminative Responses Scale and $.78$ for the Distraction Responses Scale). As expected, scores on the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale showed positive correlations with those on the Beck Depression Inventory and the Trait Anxiety Scale and negative associations with the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale. Conversely, the Spanish Distraction Responses Scale was negatively correlated with the Beck Depression Inventory and positively associated with the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale. These results provide evidence of appropriate reliability for research purposes. Furthermore, the correlational analysis supported prior findings that ruminative response and distraction response styles are differentially associated with reported depressed and positive moods.

Depressive symptoms are experienced by a vast majority of individuals at some stage in their lives (Smith & Weissman, 1992). Numerous theories have been proposed in an attempt to explain and understand the etiology and maintenance of depression (Beck, 1983; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987; Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989). Nolen-Hoeksema's (1987, 1991) Response Styles theory of depression is one of the most widely known cognitive theories of depression. Such theory has received strong empirical support both in adult samples (Butler & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1994; Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000) and in children or adolescent populations (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994; Schwartz & Koenig, 1996; Abela, Van derbilt, & Rochon, 2004).

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Response Styles theory posits that individuals have consistent styles of responding to a depressed mood and the way in which people respond to their depressive symptoms influences both the severity and the duration of these symptoms. The two main response styles posited by the theory are rumination and distraction (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1993). According to this theory, the ruminative response style involves a passive focus on one's feelings, symptoms, and on the mood's possible consequences and causes, without taking effective action about such symptoms or to solve the problems. Nolen-Hoeksema (1991) proposed that individuals who exhibit a ruminative response style when they become depressed are more likely to exacerbate transient negative mood states leading to longer duration. Conversely, distraction responses involve engaging in pleasant, enjoyable activities to divert one's attention from one's symptoms of depression before attempting to solve the problem. This theory argues that distracting responses are thoughts and behaviors that take one's mind off of one's depressed mood and its consequences and turn it to pleasant thoughts and activities that are absorbing and capable of providing positive reinforcement. Such distracting activities are hypothesized to ameliorate depressed moods and shorten depressive episodes.

Numerous longitudinal, correlational, and experimental studies have shown that individuals who engage in ruminative responses reported more severe depressive symptoms over time after controlling for previous severity of depressive symptoms. Conversely, people who engage in distracting responses to depressed mood experience shorter and less severe periods of depressed mood than those who use ruminative responses (see Butler & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1994; Strauss, Muday, McNall, & Wong, 1997; Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999; Trask & Sigmon, 1999; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000; Vickers & Vogeltanz-Holm, 2003).

Along the same lines, researchers have found that the tendencies either to ruminate or to engage in distracting activities are correlated positively or negatively with a broad array of variables, including indexes of well-being, psychological symptoms, or personality traits. Specifically, cross-sectional studies have indicated that, while ruminative responses are positively correlated with depression and anxiety and negatively correlated with positive mood, distracting responses show an opposite pattern of correlating positively with higher positive mood and negatively with anxiety and depression (Locke & Keltner, 1993; Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1993; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000; Cox, Enns, & Taylor, 2001; Chang, 2004).

One of the most commonly used measures to assess response styles is the Response Styles Questionnaire (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991). The Response Styles Questionnaire contains 71 items that measure dispositional responses to depression by asking participants what they generally do and

the frequency with which they typically engage in a variety of thoughts and behaviors when they feel sad, down, or depressed. The Response Styles Questionnaire includes four scales: Ruminative Responses, Distraction Responses, Problem Solving, and Dangerous Activities (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991). Ruminative Responses and Distraction Responses have been the most widely used in clinical and research settings of the four scales. In the present study, the reliability of the Spanish versions of the Ruminative Responses Scale-Short Form and the Distraction Responses Scale of the Response Styles Questionnaire was assessed, as was concurrent validity with various related variables. Also, we examined the construct validity of the above scales by analyzing their relationships with a range of variables theoretically related and whose links have been empirically supported by findings in earlier research using the English version: depression, anxiety, life satisfaction, and subjective happiness. Our hypothesis here was that the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale-Short Form, would be positively associated with depression and anxiety and negatively associated with life satisfaction and subjective happiness, whilst the Spanish Distraction Responses Scale would be negatively associated with depression and anxiety and positively associated with life satisfaction and subjective happiness.

To examine the relationships between response styles and depression, anxiety, satisfaction with life and subjective happiness, four self-report measures with good psychometric properties of reliability and validity were administered. In short, to evaluate depression, the Beck Depression Inventory was used (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Beck & Steer, 1987) in its Spanish version (Sanz & Vázquez, 1998); dispositional Anxiety was evaluated by the Trait Anxiety Scale from the State-Trait Anxiety Scale (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970) in its Spanish form (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1994); the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) in its Spanish version (Atienza, Balaguer, & García-Merita, 2003) was used to evaluate perceived global life satisfaction and, finally, a total score on Happiness from the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) was obtained from its Spanish adaptation currently being prepared by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

A sample of 727 Spanish high school and college students were recruited to the study (293 men, 434 women; ages 16 to 29 years, $M=18.8$, $SD=3.0$). Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and participants completed the measures during regularly scheduled class periods. Institutional ethics approval was received for this study. A debriefing statement was provided to all students. In addition to completing the response style scales, participants

completed a number of scales selected with reference to the aims described earlier.

The Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form, consists of 10 items using 4-point Likert-type scales with scale anchors of 1: Never and 4: Always, that measure individual responses to negative emotions describing self- and symptom-focused responses to depressed mood, e.g., “I think about how alone I feel” and “I think about all my shortcomings, failings, faults, and mistakes.” The Distraction Responses Scale contains 11 items, using 4-point Likert-type scales with scale anchors of 1: Never and 4: Always, that assess responses not symptom- or self-focused, addressing how often participants engage in pleasant, safe activities in response to depression, e.g., “Do something you enjoy” and “Go to a favorite place to get your mind off your feelings.” Both scales have demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach alphas = .89 and .80, respectively; Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991) and validity for predicting depression, anxiety or life satisfaction (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000; Chang, 2004).

The Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form, and the Distraction Responses Scale were 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 and can be found in the Appendix (p. 150). This work was done with permission of Dr. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, the test author, who holds the copyright.

The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck & Steer, 1987) is one of the most widely used and investigated self-report measures of depression available. It contains 21 items which assess the tendency towards developing depressive symptoms. Although Beck and Steer have shown that this scale loads highly on just one factor, recent studies (Endler, Rutherford, & Denisoff, 1999; Endler, Macrodimitris, & Kocovski, 2000) have found that, when factor analyzed, this scale yields two separate factors, Cognitive-Affective and Physiological. In the present study, data were analyzed separately for the total Beck Depression Inventory and also for the Cognitive-Affective (BDI-Cognitive) and Physiological (BDI-Physiological) factors.

The Trait version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, *et al.*, 1970) is a 20-item scale which can be scored to give a Trait-Anxiety score, evaluating the general long-standing quality of anxiety. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, *et al.*, 1985) is a 5-item scale which provides a global life satisfaction score. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) comprises four items as an index of concurrent subjective happiness.

RESULTS

Means and standard deviations of scales, and Pearson correlations

among the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form, and the Spanish Distraction Responses Scale and the other measures are summarized in Table 1. Women ($M=23.1$, $SD=5.8$) showed significantly higher Ruminative Responses scores than the men ($M=21.9$, $SD=5.5$; $t=-2.83$, $p<.01$) which supports data from previous research with the English version (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991). No sex differences for Distraction Responses were found. In the present sample, internal consistency of the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form and the Distraction Responses Scale were similar to prior studies using the English version (Cronbach alphas = .86 and .78, respectively).

To examine the construct validity of the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale–Short Form, and the Distraction Responses Scale, correlations with other theoretically related measures were examined (see Table 1). As expected, scores on the Spanish version of the Ruminative Responses Scale showed positive associations with scores on the Beck Depression Inventory and its cognitive-affective and physiological factors, with higher correlations between the Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale and the cognitive-affective factor than with the physiological factor ($t=4.58$, $p<.01$). Scores on the Ruminative Responses Scale were positively correlated with scores on the Trait Anxiety Inventory and showed negative associations with scores on the Satisfaction With Life Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale. Interestingly, Ruminative Responses Scale correlations with scores on the Beck Depression Inventory were substantially stronger than those with the Trait Anxiety Inventory ($t=7.81$, $p<.001$). Conversely, the Spanish Distraction Responses Scale was negatively associated with the Beck Depression Inventory and its cognitive-affective factor, and positively associated with the Satisfaction With Life Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale. No significant correlations were found between the Distraction Responses Scale with the physiological factor of the Beck Depression Inventory or the Trait Anxiety Inventory.

The Beck Depression Inventory was positively associated with the derived cognitive-affective and physiological factors. There was a stronger relationship with the cognitive-affective factor than with the physiological factor ($t=11.84$, $p<.001$). The associations of the Beck Depression Inventory and its factors with the Trait Anxiety Inventory were positive with the Satisfaction With Life Scale and negative with the Subjective Happiness Scale, respectively. In particular, the correlations of the cognitive-affective factor of the Beck Depression Inventory with the Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Satisfaction With Life Scale, and the Subjective Happiness Scale were stronger than the correlations of the physiological factor with them (for all differences, $ps<.001$).

The Trait Anxiety Inventory was negatively correlated with the Satisfaction With Life Scale and the Subjective Happiness Scale.

TABLE 1
 MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SCALES, PEARSON CORRELATIONS AMONG SCORES OF SPANISH RUMINATIVE RESPONSES SCALE-SHORT FORM AND THE SPANISH DISTRACTION RESPONSES SCALE, AND CRITERION VARIABLES (N = 727)

Scale	M	SD	Pearson <i>r</i>							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale-Short form	22.7	5.7								
2. Spanish Distraction Responses Scale	28.0	5.1	-.04							
Beck Depression Inventory										
3. Total	6.8	7.0	.49*	-.13*						
4. Cognitive-Affective	3.9	4.5	.50*	-.15*	.94*					
5. Physiological	2.9	3.1	.38*	-.07	.87*	.67*				
6. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait	27.7	3.3	.18*	-.01	.27*	.30*	.17*			
7. Satisfaction With Life Scale	4.8	1.2	-.35*	.13*	-.46*	-.52*	-.27*	-.37*		
8. Subjective Happiness Scale	5.1	1.0	-.38*	.15*	-.51*	-.56*	-.35*	-.36*	.64*	

* $p < .001$ (with Bonferroni adjustment correction of $p_{.05}$).

DISCUSSION

The findings presented here are consistent with the literature on response styles and those obtained for research using the English versions of the Ruminative Responses Scale and Distraction Responses Scale (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1993; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000; Chang, 2004). Results supported prior findings that ruminative and distraction responses are differentially associated with reported depressed, anxious, and positive moods. Ruminative response style was positively associated with reported depressed and anxious moods and negatively correlated with reported satisfaction with life and subjective happiness. With regard to depressed and anxious moods, it is worth noting that even ruminative responses have been associated with both dimensions (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). Our results indicated that ruminative responses are much more strongly related to reported depression, in particular with cognitive and affective aspects, than with reported anxiety. These results are consistent with previous research which suggested that ruminative responses are composed by distinct facets differently related to depression and anxiety (Fresco, Frankel, Mennin, Turk, & Heimberg, 2002). However, people who showed higher scores on distraction responses also reported lower depressed mood and higher life satisfaction and subjective happiness. Similar findings have been reported in correlational, longitudinal and experimental research providing evidence that using distracting responses may have an ameliorative effect on depressive affect and, in fact, increase positive mood (Strauss, *et al.*, 1997; Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999; Trask & Sigmon, 1999; Vickers & Vogelanz-Holm, 2003).

In the same vein, the internal consistency reliability of the Spanish version of the Ruminative Responses Scale-Short Form and the Distraction Responses Scale were reasonable. Although Distraction Responses Scale showed slightly lower reliability than the Ruminative Responses Scale, internal consistency for both scales was satisfactory for research purposes and quite similar to prior research with the English versions (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991).

Finally, the correlation of scores on the Ruminative Responses Scale with the cognitive-affective factor of the Beck Depression Inventory was greater in magnitude than the correlation with the physiological one. This finding agrees with previous research about endogenous and hopelessness depression, showing that depressive symptoms which are endogenous in nature may be affected less by cognitive and emotional aspects, such as mood regulation skill or ruminative style, than symptoms of the hopelessness depression (Endler, *et al.*, 2000; Joiner, 2001; Williams, Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera, Ramos, & Joiner, 2004). This differential feature of depression has useful theoretical and clinical implications.

In conclusion, the Spanish version of the Ruminative Responses Scale

Short Form and the Distraction Responses Scale of the Response Styles Questionnaire have good reliability and show expected associations with reported depression, anxiety, satisfaction with life, and happiness. This study provides a new measure for clinical or research purposes for Spanish and/or Hispanic researchers to use in evaluating the ways in which individuals respond to depressed mood.

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APPENDIX

Instrucciones

Las personas piensan y hacen muchas cosas diferentes cuando se sienten deprimidas. Por favor, lee cada uno de estos ítems e indica abajo si tu "nunca," "a veces," "alguna vez" o "siempre" piensas o haces cada una de estas cosas cuando te sientes desmotivado, triste o deprimido. Por favor, indicanos lo que *generalmente* haces, no lo que crees que deberías hacer.

Spanish Ruminative Responses Scale-Short Form

1. Recapacito sobre lo solo que me siento.
2. Reflexiono sobre mis sentimientos de fatiga y dolor.
3. Pienso en lo difícil que es concentrarse.
4. Pienso en lo pasivo y desmotivado que me siento.
5. Pienso "¿Por qué no puedo avanzar?"
6. Reflexiono sobre una situación reciente que desearía que hubiera ido mejor.
7. Recapacito sobre lo triste que me siento.
8. Reflexiono sobre todos mis defectos, fallos, faltas y errores.
9. Pienso en que no me apetece hacer nada.
10. Pienso "¿Por qué no puedo manejar las cosas mejor?"

Spanish Distraction Responses Scale

1. Pienso "voy a hacer algo para sentirme mejor."
2. Ayudo a alguien para distraerme.
3. Me recuerdo a mí mismo que estos sentimientos no durarán mucho.
4. Voy a mi lugar favorito para olvidarme de mis sentimientos.
5. Pienso "me concentraré en otra cosa y no en cómo me estoy sintiendo."
6. Hago algo que me hizo sentir bien en el pasado.
7. Pienso "voy a salir y pasar un buen rato."
8. Me concentro en mis tareas.
9. Hago cosas que me diviertan.
10. Hago algo divertido con un amigo.

Note:— Response categories used anchors of 1: Never (Nunca), 2: Sometimes (A veces), 3: Often (Frecuentemente), and 4: Always (Siempre).