

# Spanish Adaptation Of The Differentiation Of Self Inventory- Revised (DSI-R)

## Adaptación al español del Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R)

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### Abstract

This study introduces the Spanish Differentiation of Self Inventory (S-DSI) version, a 26 item measure, consisting of 2 subscales—Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff—focusing on adults (ages 25+) and their significant relationships, including current relations with family of origin. Translation of DSI into Spanish was conducted using a back translation method, with two independent teams for translation into Spanish and back-translation into English. A sample of 1047 adult men and women (living in Spain, native Spanish speakers) completed the Spanish-DSI scale and a socio-demographic questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on a randomly selected half of the sample, and results yielded a two subscale solution that closely conformed with the original DSI's Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff scales. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis cross-validated the measure's factor structure in the remaining sample. Implications for cross-cultural research and culturally-informed study of Bowen theory in Spanish populations are further discussed.

*Keywords:* cross-cultural research, family systems theory, Hispanic families, instrument validation, family assessment measure.

### Resumen

Este trabajo presenta la versión española del Differentiation of Self Inventory (S-DSI), un instrumento de 26 ítems, con dos subescalas –Reactividad Emocional y Corte Emocional-, orientado a población adulta (mayores de 25 años) y al estudio de sus relaciones significativas, lo que incluye las relaciones con la familia de origen y las actuales. La traducción del DSI-R al español se realizó a través del método de traducción inversa, con dos equipos de traducción independientes para la traducción al español y la traducción inversa al inglés. Una muestra de 1047 mujeres y hombres adultos (residentes en España y con el español como lengua nativa) cumplimentaron la traducción española del DSI-R y un cuestionario sociodemográfico. Se llevó a cabo un análisis factorial exploratorio con la mitad de la muestra seleccionada al azar. Sus resultados conducen a un modelo de dos subescalas que corresponden en gran medida con las subescalas originales Emotional Reactivity y Emotional Cutoff del DSI-R. Los resultados del análisis factorial confirmatorio realizado con la otra mitad de la muestra corroboran esta estructura factorial. Se discuten finalmente las implicaciones para la investigación transcultural y para el estudio culturalmente fundamentado de la Teoría de Bowen en poblaciones de habla española.

*Palabras clave:* Investigación trans cultural, Teoría sistemas familiares, Familias hispanas, Instrumento e validación, Medición familiar

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## Introduction

Differentiation of self is considered a foundational concept in Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST - Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988), arguably one of the most comprehensive theories of human functioning from a systems perspective (Home & Hicks, 2002; Nichols & Schwartz, 2004; Skowron, 2000). Since its introduction over 50 years ago into the field of family therapy, Bowen Theory remains a popular approach to working with couples and families in their clinical practice (e.g., Guerin, Fogarty, Fay & Kautto, 1996; Mc Goldrick & Carter, 2001; Schnarch, 1997; Titelman, 1998), with many adopting it as their main theoretical approach to practice (Miller, Anderson, & Keala, 2004). Among the six concepts that constitute Bowen Theory, differentiation of self is considered as fundamental to long-term intimacy, stability, and mutuality in marriage (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Nichols & Schwartz, 2004; Skowron, 2000).

Differentiation of self is defined as the degree to which one is able to balance (a) emotional and intellectual functioning and (b) intimacy and autonomy in relationships (Bowen, 1978). Of the various constructs that compose Bowen Theory, differentiation of self is the most critical to mature development and psychological health. Higher levels of differentiation of self have been linked with better psychological adjustment in adulthood (e.g., Bray, Harvey & Williamson, 1987; Greene, Hamilton & Rolling, 1986; Jenkins, Buboltz, Schwartz & Johnson, 2005), greater capacity for emotional self-regulation, self regulation of attention and behavior, adult attachment security (e.g., Skowron & Dendy, 2004; Skowron, Holmes & Sabatelli, 2003; Thorberg & Lyvers, 2006; Wei, Vogel, Ku & Zakalik, 2005), and fewer psychological symptoms and relationship difficulties (e.g., Bartle-Haring, 1997; Bartle-Haring & Gregory 2003; Peleg, 2002; Schwartz, Thigpen & Montgomery, 2006; Skowron, 2000; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Skowron, Stanley & Shapiro, 2009). Studies have also shown that higher levels of differentiation of self are linked to greater marital satisfaction among heterosexual and same-sex couples (e.g., Kosek, 1998; Montes-Berges, 2009; Parsons, Nalbone, Killmer & Wetchler, 2007; Peleg, 2008; Skowron, 2000; Spencer & Brown, 2007), and adults who report greater differentiation of self are at lower risk for engaging in child abuse and other forms of family violence (Skowron, Kozlowski, & Pincus, 2010; Skowron & Platt, 2005). Also, findings indicate that differentiation appears to moderate (Knauth, Skowron & Escobar, 2006; Murdock & Gore, 2004) and mediate (Skowron Wester & Azen, 2004), the effects of stress on coping and adjustment in emerging adults. Research investigating the impact of differentiation of self on

health-related behavior suggests it may enhance physical health functioning (e.g., Murray, Murray & Daniels, 2007; Peleg, 2002).

To date, most research on BFST in general, and differentiation of self in particular, has been conducted in the United States and with U.S. populations, and there has been considerable debate about its transcultural applicability (e.g., Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Carter & McGoldrick, 1999; Essandoh, 1995). While Bowen asserted that his postulates were applicable to diverse families, the evidence to date has been mixed in support of (e.g., Gushue & Sicalides, 1997; Peleg, 2002; Skowron, 2004; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000) and contrary to theoretical expectations (e.g., Roytburd & Friedlander, 2008). Research has shown that norms for social contact, interactional styles, and intergenerational family involvement may reflect the most salient differences across U.S. and Spanish cultures (e.g., Caballo, Salazar, Iruetia, Arias, & Hofmann, 2010). Cultural norms regarding physical proximity and optimal personal space in the context of interactions dictate greater separation in physical space, expectations of greater independence in one's children, and greater focus on the nuclear rather than extended family network in U.S. as compared to Spanish populations (Georgas, Berry, Von de Vijver, Kagitcibasi & Poortinga, 2006; Schmitt et al., 2004). Maintaining a family orientation is more prominent in Spanish and other Mediterranean cultures from Southern Europe, relative to cultural traditions of Northern European countries (Alonso-Arbiol, Balluerka, Shaver, & Gillath, 2008; Silverstein, Gans, Lowenstein, Giarrusso & Bengtson, 2010; Schmitt et al., 2004). Few studies have explored whether these cultural differences are independent of or reflected in measures of psychological constructs such as differentiation of self. We could not locate studies that directly examined the construct of differentiation in Spanish populations, however studies of related constructs provide some indirect support for some aspects of differentiation of self—namely emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff, as relevant to health and well-being of Spanish families. For example, among Spanish children of anxious mothers, lower emotional lability and better emotion regulation were linked with fewer internalizing and externalizing symptoms and social problems (Sineiro & Paz-Míguez, 2007). The capacity for emotional regulation has been shown to be a key correlate of positive affect, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction across the life span in Spanish populations (Chico & Ferrando, 2008; Márquez-González, Izal, Montorio & Losada, 2008). Research using the Spanish language version of the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale has documented similarities across cultures in the nature of associations between attachment avoidance and relationship cutoff (Alonso-Arbiol et al., 2008). Both

positive relationships with parents (Rodrigo et al., 2004) and successful individuation have been shown to predict psychological adjustment and healthy lifestyles in Spanish young adults (Valls-Vidal, Pérez-Testor, Guàrdia-Olmos & Iafrate, 2012).

At more than 450 million speakers (Instituto Cervantes<sup>1</sup>), the Spanish language is the third most spoken in the world, after English and Chinese (UNESCO<sup>2</sup>). BFST is now being taught in University and other academic and clinical training settings throughout Spanish-speaking countries such as Spain, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile (Rodríguez-González & Kerr, 2011; Rodríguez-González et al., 2011), thanks to growing international connections and economic development which has enable growing access to higher-education. Thus while training in Bowen's approach is occurring, basic tenets of the theory have not yet been tested in native Spanish-speaking populations. Responsible practice requires rigorous testing of the cross-cultural utility of key propositions in Bowen theory and of the effectiveness of Bowen theory-informed interventions, in order to determine the cross-cultural utility of the approach. As such, the goal of this study was to develop a psychometrically-sound Spanish language translation of the DSI.

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998) is a self-report instrument designed to operationalize Bowen's concept of differentiation of self. Originally comprising 43 items, it underwent revisions (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) to strengthen its subscale, Fusion with Others, which resulted in a 46-item revised DSI. The DSI is arguably the most recognised and widely used measure of differentiation of self from a BFST perspective (Licht & Chabot, 2006; Rodríguez-González et al., 2011). A search of *PsyInfo* from the period of 1980 to 2010, showed that approximately half of the published research on differentiation relies on it to operationalize the construct (Rodríguez-González et al., 2011). Further, psychometrically-sound versions of the DSI exist in English, Chinese (Lam & Chan-So, 2010), French, Russian, and Portuguese, whereas a Spanish-language version of the DSI has been missing (Rodríguez-González et al., 2011). For these reasons, we selected the DSI (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) as the most suitable questionnaire focused on measuring differentiation of self to translate for use with Spanish-language populations as a necessary tool for furthering research and practice informed by Bowen theory. In this study, we undertook rigorous translation of the 46-item DSI into Spanish, conducted individual item analyses and subjected items to an Exploratory Factor Analyses, and followed with cross-validation in a new sample using Confirmatory Factor Analysis to replicate the factor structure identified.

## Method

### *Sample and Procedures*

Participants were a sample of 1,047 adults (40.6% male, 59.4% females) of Spanish nationality, who were at least 25 years of age and were born and lived currently in Spain. Prospective participants holding dual-nationality and those who were not of Spanish origin were excluded to insure Spanish nationality and the corresponding ethnic/cultural background. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 68 years,  $M=38.9$  ( $SD=10.2$ ), and 34.7% were single, 41.3% married, 4.5% remarried, 8.9% cohabitating, 7.4% separated or divorced and 3.2% were widowed. The majority (71.3%) of individuals had obtained a bachelor's or master's degree, 17.6% were currently at university, 9.1% had completed the equivalent of high school and 2% left school early.

Prospective participants were solicited via an Internet or mail survey of interpersonal relationships and emotional self-regulation. A total of 1,371 Internet questionnaires were submitted, and from these 832 met inclusion criteria and provided complete data, thus were included on the sample. Participants who completed the survey via the Internet sample comprised the majority ( $n=832$ , 79.5%) of the sample. The remaining ( $n=215$ ; 20.5%) of participants were married or cohabitating couples who completed the mail-based survey. Research has documented the equivalence of internet-based and paper-and-pencil versions of questionnaires, irrespective of gender (Miles & King, 1998). No significant differences were found between the socio-demographic characteristics of the Internet and mail samples.

The total sample was divided in two subsamples in order to conduct analyses in one sample and then cross validate results in the second subsample. In order to minimize subsample artefacts, the Internet and mail surveys were each divided, with attention to sample gender and other demographics. Likewise, the mail survey comprised of couples data was split along couple lines, ensuring that one spouse/partner was in subsample 1 and the other in subsample 2, thus ensuring independence of data within each of the subsamples. Subsample 1 comprised  $n=522$  participants and subsample 2 was made up of  $n=525$  participants. No significant differences were observed across the subsamples on participant age,  $t(1045) = .788$ ,  $p = .431$ , gender,  $t(1045) = -1.398$ ,  $p = .162$  or relationship status; all married's and cohabitating together vs. all others together,  $t(1045) = .939$ ,  $p = .356$ . All surveys were anonymous, save for identifiers to link couple data and participants received no economic compensation.

### *Instruments*

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) is a 46-item, self-report measure of differentiation of self in adulthood and is grounded in BFST (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The four subscales of the DSI-R are as follows. The 11-item Emotional Reactivity (ER) scale assesses one's tendency to respond to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses, emotional flooding or lability. The 11-item I Position (IP) scale assesses the extent of one's clearly defined sense of self and ability to thoughtfully adhere to one's convictions even when pressured to do otherwise. The Emotional Cutoff (EC) scale (12 items) consists of items reflecting emotional and behavioral distancing and fears of intimacy or engulfment in relationships. The Fusion with Others (FO) scale contains 12 items that tap emotional over-involvement with others, over-reliance on others to confirm one's beliefs, decisions, and convictions, and a tendency to hold few clearly defined beliefs or convictions of one's own. Participants rate items using a 6-point, Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 6 (very true of me). Scores on select items are reversed and summed across scales, so that higher scores on each subscale and the full scale all reflect greater differentiation of self (i.e., less emotional reactivity, greater ability to take an "I" position in relationships, less emotional cutoff, or less fusion with others). Internal consistency reliabilities of the English DSI subscales are excellent: Cronbach's alphas for the full scale = .92, ER = .89, IP = .81, EC = .84 and FO = .86 (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003).

### *Demographic questionnaire*

The participants were asked to provide information about where they were born, their nationality or nationalities, country of residency at the time of study participation, age, gender, level of education, and relational status (e.g., single, cohabitation, married).

### *DSI translation to Spanish*

Following international guidelines (International Test Commission Guidelines), translation of the 46-item DSI into Spanish was conducted using a translation-back translation process, considered the most suitable procedure to preserve a test's content validity and to minimize some of the problems associated with adapting questionnaires across different cultures and languages (Geisinger, 1994; Hambleton, 2005). The translation committee was comprised of three professional, bilingual native Spanish speakers, who were familiar with

Spanish and US cultures, and knowledgeable about Bowen Theory. Two professionals conducted independent translations of each item, following which they met with the third to discuss discrepancies and produce a single consensual translated list of 46 Spanish language items. This item list was piloted with a group of 15 socioeconomically-diverse native Spanish adults who provided (written or verbal) feedback on item clarity, comprehension, etc. Based on this feedback, minor changes were made in the phrasing of two items.

Next, this Spanish version of DSI was given to two new professional translators (i.e., American native, fluent, bilingual English-Spanish speaker, and a Spanish native, fluent, bilingual speaker and senior researcher) to conduct the back translation. The translation committee in consultation with the DSI author compared the back-translated English version with the original version of DSI, to critically examine measure equivalence. Minor modifications in item wording were completed on 3 items as a result of this process, and resulted in consensus list of Spanish language DSI items to subject to exploratory and confirmation factor analyses.

## **Results**

### *S-DSI Scale Construction*

#### *Exploratory factor analysis.*

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using a principle components extraction method and orthogonal rotation in SPSS v. 19. Results of Bartlett's Test,  $\chi^2(1035) = 7557, p < .001$ , and KMO = .86 indicated significant inter-correlations among the items, as expected. Cattell's scree test produced four factors with eigen values ranging from 8.5 to 1.99, accounting for 35 % of the variance. Considering items that loaded at least .30 on a single factor, results indicated that Factors 1 (12.4 % variance) and 2 (9.6 % variance) largely correspond to the DSI Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff scales, respectively.

Analyses of the item-factor loadings showed that 18 items loaded onto the Emotional Reactivity subscale. Nine of the original 11 ER subscale items (i.e., not Items 6 and 38) loaded onto Factor 1, and thus closely reflect the original ER subscale. Item 6 (i.e., "When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time") diverged and loaded onto Factor 2 (Emotional Cutoff). Content analysis and discussion under the light of Bowen Theory led us to retain item 6 on Factor 2.

Item 38 (“*I often wonder about the kind of impression I create*”) loaded on both the ER and IP factors at similar weightings, and given the difficulty with conceptually meaningful translation into Spanish, it was deleted. Among the remaining items that loaded onto Factor 1, three were

retained on the S-DSI Emotional Reactivity subscale (items 29, 44 & 46). Items 29 (“*arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful*”), 44 (“*sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner*”) and 46 (“*I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or*

Table 1. *Matrix of communalities and factor loadings (Rotation Method: Varimax)*

Item	Communality	Factors			
		Emotional Reactivity	Emotional Cutoff	I Position	Fusion with others
dsi18	.58	.69	.26	.19	.01
dsi14	.51	.64	.28	.12	-.03
dsi34	.51	.60	.22	.23	.21
dsi43	.54	.58	-.08	.40	-.21
dsi1	.37	.57	-.14	-.12	-.06
dsi21	.51	.56	.23	.26	.29
dsi10	.31	.53	.16	.07	.03
dsi4	.43	.51	-.16	.23	-.29
dsi33	.46	.50	.25	.31	.23
dsi35	.52	.49	.30	.40	.16
dsi26	.31	.49	.21	.03	.16
dsi17	.52	.49	.21	.38	.32
dsi29	.39	.48	.06	.01	.39
dsi44	.32	.47	.10	-.16	.25
dsi40	.36	.45	-.02	-.38	.07
dsi5	.33	.44	.22	.26	.12
dsi30	.25	.40	.02	-.13	.26
dsi46	.28	.32	-.13	-.24	.32
dsi28	.38	.05	.61	.03	-.04
dsi3	.36	.04	.59	.11	.02
dsi36	.37	.16	.57	-.09	-.07
dsi8	.34	.07	.56	.00	-.13
dsi24	.31	.09	.54	-.05	.11
dsi20	.32	.19	.53	-.01	.03
dsi2	.29	.01	.49	.21	.04
dsi32	.27	-.03	.47	.18	-.08
dsi12	.22	.00	.47	.02	-.03
dsi42	.28	.15	.43	-.27	-.06
dsi13	.30	.34	.40	-.02	.13
dsi39	.20	.00	.39	.16	.13
dsi25	.30	.16	.36	.31	.21
dsi6	.20	.26	.36	.00	-.03
dsi16	.18	.24	.33	.08	.04
dsi41	.38	.06	.07	.61	.06
dsi23	.42	.37	.24	.48	-.04
dsi19	.20	.05	-.10	.43	.04
dsi31	.20	-.01	.11	.43	-.04
dsi11	.28	.07	.25	.42	.18
dsi27	.23	.26	-.01	.41	.03
dsi7	.17	.08	.07	.37	-.15
dsi15	.27	.33	.02	.36	-.16
dsi38	.40	.34	.28	.34	.30
dsi37	.07	-.05	-.05	.24	-.06
dsi9	.70	.08	.01	.06	.83
dsi22	.69	.13	.03	.04	.82
dsi45	.33	.09	-.23	-.15	.50

upset”) on the original FO subscale each load highly on the Emotional Reactivity subscale and refer to concrete aspects of relationship functioning that within the Spanish culture that characterize Emotional Reactivity. The remaining 6 items (43, 4, 33, 35, 17 & 5) from other DSI subscales were that loaded on the Factor 1 were deleted. Thus, Spanish-DSI ER subscale would finally be comprised of 13 items.

Analyses of the item-factor loadings indicated that Factor 2 was comprised of 15 items that loaded greater than .30. As shown in Table 1, all 12 items from the original DSI Emotional Cutoff subscale loaded highly on Factor 2. Regarding the other 3 items that loading onto Factor 2, Item 6 was originally part of the Emotional Reactivity subscale, item 6 (i.e., “When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time”) but diverged and loaded onto Factor 2 in this Spanish sample. The other two items show high loadings also in other factors, however neither reflect clear theoretical relationships with Emotional Cutoff (e.g., item 13 “when my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days” and item 25 “I often agree with others just to appease them”), hence they were deleted.

While results of the EFA yielded two conceptually clear and distinct factors reflecting Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff dimensions very well, the third and fourth factors reflected a mix items across the remainingsubscales of the original DSI-R without a clear pattern. Both the empirical and conceptual transcultural analysis of items grouped in the third and fourth factors of the EFA lead us to conclude that the dimensions “I position” and “Fusion with others”, behave in a manner significantly different in the Spanish culture, and thus were dropped from the Spanish-DSI.

#### *Spanish-differentiation of self inventory (S-DSI).*

The Spanish-Differentiation of Self Inventory (S-DSI), a self-report measure of differentiation of self for adults in Spanish is comprised of two subscales: a 13-item Emotional Reactivity scale and a 13-item Emotional Cutoff scale. All items on the S-DSI are reverse scored, and similar to the DSI, subscale and full scale scores are obtained by reversing scores on all items, summing them and dividing by

26 (Full scale score) or 13 (for subscale scores), such that higher scores indicate greater differentiation of self, or less emotional reactivity and less emotional cutoff, respectively.

Means and standard deviations on the S-DSI full-scale and subscales are  $M = 4.1$  and  $SD = .54$  (Full-scale),  $M = 3.5$  and  $SD = .67$  (ER), and  $M = 4.5$  and  $SD = .62$  (EC). Scores were normally distributed. Subscale inter-correlations (ER-EC) were moderate ( $r = .34$ ), and subscale-to-full-scale correlations were high at .84 and .79 for the ER and EC correlations with DSI Full scale scores. Internal consistency reliabilities calculated using Cronbach’s alpha were high for the two subscales and full scale: S-DSI full scale = .85, ER = .84, EC = .78. Alphas were calculated for each subsample, and no significant differences were observed on any of the subscales.

Demographic differences on the S-DSI were assessed. No age differences were found between different age groups ( $p > .05$ ), but there are a significant correlation between age and emotional cutoff ( $\alpha = -.105, p = .017$ ). Statistically significant gender differences were found in both samples (1&2) on differentiation of self (full-scale) and emotional reactivity. There are differences on emotional reactivity between men and women,  $t(523) = 6.35, p < .001, d = .57$ , with women reporting greater emotional reactivity ( $M = 3.44, SD = .70$ ) than men ( $M = 3.83, SD = .65$ ); recall that higher scores on the ER subscale signify less emotional reactivity. Differences on differentiation of self (full-scale) are in the same direction, with women reporting lower level of differentiation of self than men (Men,  $M = 4.18, SD = .53$ ; Women,  $M = 4, SD = .54$ ):  $t(523) = 3.77, p < .001, d = .34$ . No significant gender differences were observed on the Emotional Cutoff scale,  $t(523) = -.448, p = .654, d = .05$ . This two-dimensional factor structure then was subjected to cross-validation via factorial analysis with subsample 2.

#### *Confirmatory factor analysis.*

Confirmatory factorial analyses (CFA) were carried out using AMOS v.16 on the DSI responses from subsample 2. Two models were tested. First, a four-factor model of

Table 2. DS, ER and EC: gender differences

	Differentiation of self			Emotional reactivity			Emotional cutoff		
	<i>M</i>	IC 95%	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	IC 95%	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	IC 95%	<i>SD</i>
Man ( <i>n</i> = 202)	4.18	4.11-4.26	.53	3.83	3.74-3.92	.65	4.53	4.45-4.62	.60
Woman ( <i>n</i> = 323)	4.00	3.94-4.06	.54	3.44	3.36-3.52	.70	4.56	4.49-4.63	.63

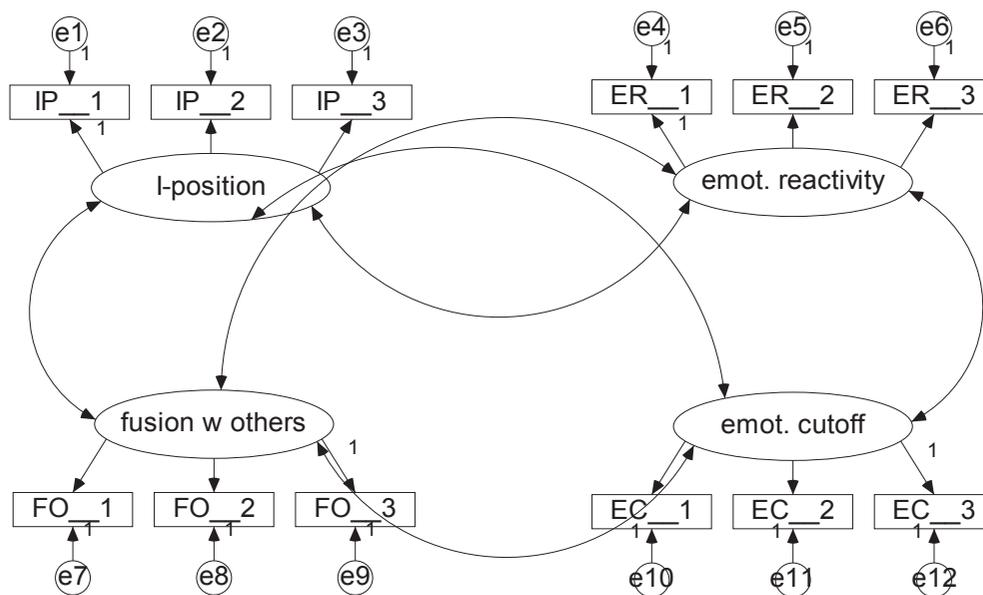


Figure 1.  
Four factors model

differentiation, corresponding to the four DSI subscales identified in Skowron and Friedlander's (1998) original DSI scale, was examined using all 46 S-DSI items (see figure 1). Second, a CFA was conducted using the 26 S-DSI ER and EC subscale items selected on the basis of the EFA conducted on subsample 1 (see figure 2). In both cases an item parceling procedure was used (Little, Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002) in an analogous manner to procedures employed in the original DSI scale development (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998), to enable direct comparison of factor structures across the English and Spanish language samples. Items were randomly summed into groups of three, nested with each of the four subscales, and used as the observed indicators. We employed a range of commonly used fit statistics to evaluate model fit (i.e., ratio  $\chi^2/df$ , RMSEA, CFI, GFI, AGFI, RMR, TLI, & SRMR; Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora & Barlow, 2006).

As can be seen in Table 3, the four factor solution modeled on the original structure of DSI-R on US-sample appears inadequate for the Spanish data: CFI = .72, GFI = .94 and an index of TLI = .62 (less than 0.95; Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora & Barlow, 2006). In contrast, the two factor solution corresponding to the two-subscale S-DSI constructed in this study demonstrates a good fit between the model and the observed data:  $\chi^2(8) = 28$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , a value of CFI = .98, GFI = .98, adjusted GFI = .96, a TLI = .97 and a RMSEA = .07.

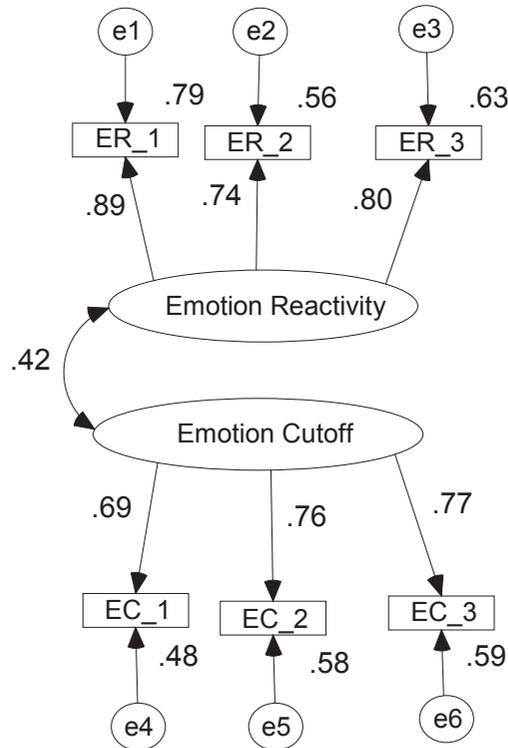
Table 4 shows the unstandardized and standardized coefficients for the two-factor solution, while figure 2 provides the standardized coefficients. Thus in summary, CFA of the S-DSI item responses from subsample 2 ( $n = 525$ ) indicates that the final 26 item Spanish-Version of DSI comprised of two subscales that overlap significantly with Skowron and Schmitt's (2003) Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff scales, demonstrates good internal consistency reliability, and support for its two-factor structure.

## Discussion

The aim of this work was to develop a reliable and valid Spanish language adaptation of DSI-R (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) for use with Spanish populations. In order to achieve this objective, translation of the DSI was completed by an interdisciplinary team, and subsequent back-translated by a second team. The 46 Spanish DSI items were subjected to exploratory then confirmatory analyses in Spanish population on the bases of responses from  $N = 1,047$  participants. Results of EFA (subsample 1,  $n = 522$ ) yielded a two subscale Spanish-DSI comprised of "Emotional Reactivity" (ER; 13 items) and "Emotional Cutoff" (EC; 13 items) subscales with good internal consistency and that are highly consistent across American and Spanish populations. Confirmatory factor analyses (subsample 2,  $n$

Table 3. *Goodness of fit for the four-factor model and two-factor model based on CFA*

	Chi	gl	p	Chi/gl	RMSEA	pclose	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMR	SRMR	TLI
4 factor model	194.4	48	p < .001	4.05	.08	< .001	.72	.94	.90	.05	.068	.62
2 factor model	28	8	p < .001	3.50	.07	.112	.98	.98	.95	.02	.036	.97

Figure 2. *Two factors model*Table 4. *Standardized and non-standardized coefficients for the two-factor model*

Observed variables	Latent construct	$\beta$	B	SE
ER1	Emotional reactivity	.89	1	
ER2	Emotional reactivity	.74	.89	.050
ER3	Emotional reactivity	.80	.86	.045
EC1	Emotional cutoff	.69	1	
EC2	Emotional cutoff	.76	1.10	.082
EC3	Emotional cutoff	.77	.90	.067

= 525) supported this solution and confirm the ER and EC subscales constructed as empirically distinct dimensions of differentiation of self.

With respect to possible cross-cultural variations in the construct of differentiation of self, results of this study indicate that two other aspects of differentiation of self, namely the ability to take an I position in one's relationships and the extent of fusion with others did not emerge in the Spanish sample as conceptually distinct dimensions

that are seen in the US population. Consistent with other studies on Russian, Chinese, Portuguese and Filipino populations (Glebova, Bartle-Haring & Strength, 2011; Lam & Chan-So, 2010; Rodríguez-González et al., 2011; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000), these two dimensions of differentiation of self have shown less cross-cultural stability, than ER and EC. In a sample of Russian participants, the ability to take I positions in relationships appear to overlap with other cultural expressions with different meaning and

are associated with social desirability biases (Glebova, Bartle-Haring & Strength, 2011). Tuason and Friedlander (2000) have documented cultural differences on IP and FO dimensions in their study with a Filipino population. Preliminary results suggest that the IP and FO dimensions of differentiation expressed in Portuguese culture also are less psychometrically distinct than are dimensions of ER and EC (Rodríguez-González et al., 2011). One exception though comes from a study conducted in Korean culture that documented the IP component of differentiation as a powerful predictor of self-esteem (Chung & Gale, 2006). Some have argued for specification of fusion with others in the Chinese population for example, to focus on “fusion with one’s family” in particular, to better reflect the phenomenon of fusion in Chinese culture (Lam & Chan-So, 2010).

In sum, the cultural context in which one’s relationship system is embedded is important for the expression of dimensions of differentiation of self. Further work is needed to operationalize Bowen’s notion of fusion with others within the Spanish culture. Well differentiated young adults in Spanish society are likely more involved with their parents, consider their parents opinions and input, in ways that extend beyond that typically observed in U.S. culture but stops short of anxious over-involvement. Fusion exists within the Spanish culture and takes the form of excessive dependency on others’ approval and the tendency to hold few solid beliefs of one’s own however, operationalization of this aspect of Bowen theory may require new measure construction. Likewise further research is needed to determine whether the ability to take an ‘I’ position in relationships is more closely associated with social desirability bias than is the case in U.S. samples. Culturally-grounded assessment of this aspect of differentiation is also needed, given that results of our analyses show the IP subscale did not emerge as a conceptually distinct dimension of differentiation in a Spanish sample as has been observed in the US. For their part, the S-DSI Emotional Cutoff and Emotional Reactivity subscales showed strong cross-cultural relevance, enabling the original DSI subscales to remain largely intact. Other research with a Spanish sample has shown that good inter-generational relationships (Rodrigo et al., 2004) are crucial for psychological adjustment and healthy life style, thus the costs associated with emotional cutoff may be especially high in a collectivist Spanish culture (Rodríguez-González & Cagigal de Gregorio, 2009; Silverstein et. al, 2010). Emotional reactivity also showed high consistency across American and Spanish populations in this study, supporting the central role of emotional self-regulation for well-being, positive affect across the life span, social relationships,

and psychological health in Spanish samples as well (e.g., Márquez-González, Izal, Montorio, Losada, 2008; Sineiro & Paz-Míguez, 2007; Valls-Vidal, Pérez-Testor, Guàrdia-Olmos & Iafate, 2012). In sum, both the S-DSI ER and EC subscales appear to be culturally-relevant dimensions of differentiation of self in the Spanish population.

Further research is need to examine the concurrent and predictive validity of the S- DSI, to ascertain the extent to which these aspects of differentiation of self are linked in theoretically-grounded ways with psychological and social functioning (e.g., marital satisfaction, interpersonal functioning, psychological health and adjustment and family well-being). Are differentiation of self and quality of attachment linked in Spanish samples, on the order of that observed in U.S. studies? Several studies have documented strong associations between the aspects of differentiation operationalized in the S-DSI and quality of attachment in U.S. samples (e.g., Skowron & Dendy, 2004; Wei, Vogel, Ku & Zakalik, 2005; Wei, Russell, Mallinkrodt & Vogel, 2007). For example, Skowron and Dendy (2004) reported strong associations between differentiation of self and attachment; attachment avoidance was linked with greater emotional cutoff ( $r = -.78$ ) and attachment anxiety linked with greater emotional reactivity ( $r = -.60$ ). The cross-culture universality of attachment is well-documented (e.g., Alonso-Arbiol et al., 2008). Do aspects of differentiation captured in the S-DSI also correspond with quality of attachment in Spanish samples as well and thus provide support for the universality of differentiation, or do critically variations emerge on the basis of the collectivist culture?

### Limitations and future directions

Several limitations of the current research should be noted. First, this study focused on scale construction and initial tests of factor structure to address evidence of construct-related validity. Further work is needed to continue examining the construct validity of the S-DSI with measures of trait anxiety, psychological adjustment and relationship health and functioning. Second, this study employed solely self-report measures and thus suffers from mono-method bias. Further investigations should employ a multi-method approach and assess the construct validity of S-DSI using data that are gathered using other assessment methods (e.g., clinical interview, physiological measures, or observational data) in addition to self-report measures.

The low academic diversity of the sample also is a limitation. More than 70 per cent of the sample has their

bachelor degree, which implies a limitation for generalizing these findings to diverse populations of other cultural levels. Although Bowen hypothesized that socioeconomic and educational levels should not factor into one's level of differentiation, research is needed to test this assumption directly. Future studies using the S-DSI should be conducted with low-income groups, different age groups (e.g., the elderly), and clinical populations.

Nonetheless, the aim of this effort, to construct a valid and reliable Spanish-language version of the DSI, has been achieved. The high similarity of the S-DSI to the original DSI subscales of Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cutoff, are expected to provide researchers with a viable, psychometrically sound measure of a core construct in Bowen theory. Creation of the S-DSI will enable rich, theoretically-grounded investigations regarding the transcultural applications of BFST to research and clinical practice with individuals, couples, and families in Spanish population.

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## APPENDIX – SPANISH DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF-REVISED (SDSI-R)

Estas son preguntas que tienen que ver con pensamientos y sentimientos sobre usted mismo y las relaciones personales con otros. Por favor, lea cada afirmación y decida cuales son normalmente ciertas en relación a usted, en una escala del 1 (nada ciertas) al 6 (totalmente ciertas).

Si cree que una afirmación no es aplicable a usted (por ejemplo: ahora mismo no está casado o comprometido en una relación o uno o ambos padres han fallecido) por favor, conteste la afirmación intentando aproximarse a lo que sus pensamientos y sentimientos serían en esta situación. Asegúrese de que responde a todas las afirmaciones e intente ser tan sincero y preciso como le sea posible en sus respuestas.

### Totalmente en desacuerdo (1) – Totalmente de acuerdo (6)

La gente suele decirme que soy excesivamente emocional	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tengo dificultades para expresar mis sentimientos a las personas que me importan	1	2	3	4	5	6
A menudo me siento inhibido cuando estoy con mi familia	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cuando alguien cercano a mí me desilusiona, me alejo de él/ella por un tiempo	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tiendo a distanciarme cuando la gente se acerca demasiado a mí	1	2	3	4	5	6
Desearía no ser tan emocional	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mi esposo/a o pareja no toleraría que expresase mis verdaderos sentimientos sobre algunas cosas	1	2	3	4	5	6
A veces mis sentimientos me desbordan y tengo problemas para pensar con claridad	1	2	3	4	5	6
Con frecuencia me siento incómodo/a cuando la gente se acerca demasiado (físicamente)	1	2	3	4	5	6
A veces sufro muchos altibajos emocionales	1	2	3	4	5	6
Estoy preocupado por perder mi independencia en las relaciones personales más cercanas	1	2	3	4	5	6
Soy excesivamente sensible a la crítica	1	2	3	4	5	6
Con frecuencia siento que mi esposo/a o pareja quiere demasiado de mí	1	2	3	4	5	6
Si he tenido una discusión con mi esposo/a o pareja tiendo a pensar en ello todo el día	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cuando una de mis relaciones personales es muy intensa siento la necesidad de alejarme	1	2	3	4	5	6
Si alguien está enfadado/a o entristecido/a conmigo, no soy capaz de dejarlo pasar fácilmente	1	2	3	4	5	6
Nunca consideraría acercarme a ninguno de los miembros de mi familia para buscar apoyo emocional	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fácilmente soy herido por otros	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cuando estoy con mi esposo/a o pareja normalmente me siento asfixiado	1	2	3	4	5	6
Con frecuencia me pregunto sobre qué tipo de impresión creo	1	2	3	4	5	6
Normalmente cuando las cosas van mal, hablar de ellas lo hace peor	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vivo las cosas más intensamente que otros	1	2	3	4	5	6
Si mi esposo/a o pareja me diese el espacio que necesito nuestra relación personal podría ser mejor	1	2	3	4	5	6
Las discusiones con mis padres o hermanos/as aún consiguen hacerme sentir fatal	1	2	3	4	5	6
A veces me encuentro físicamente mal después de discutir con mi esposo/a o pareja	1	2	3	4	5	6
Me preocupa que la gente cercana a mí se ponga enferma, esté triste o enfadada o les pase algo	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Subscales composition (all items reverse scored)

Emotional Reactivity: 1, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26

Emotional Cutoff: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23

*Note:* actual and original subscales correspondence (for a full revision of the original scale composition read Skowron & Schmitt, 2003)

Original DSI-R	1	2	3	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	21	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	39	40	42	29	44	46
Spanish DSI-R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26