

LETTER OF REVIEWERS

Reviewer A:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

Relevance: High

Novelty: Moderated

Presentation and writing: Moderated

Comments for authors:

Introduction

1. In the introduction, I suggest considering the removal of the section in the first paragraph that discusses emotions in animals. Although it is an interesting point, it deviates from the psychometric focus of the study and may dilute the presentation of the central problem.
2. In the third paragraph of the introduction, where it is stated that the DERS “has strong empirical support,” I recommend adding one or two references to substantiate this claim, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of the introduction.
3. In the third paragraph, the phrase “the results of this study and other previous research...” appears, which may be confusing, as the introduction should focus on prior evidence rather than the results of the current study. It would be advisable to rephrase or remove this statement to avoid prematurely presenting findings.
4. In the third paragraph, it is mentioned that the Awareness dimension tends to behave problematically across different validation studies; however, the reasons for this are not specified. It may be useful to include a brief conceptual or psychometric explanation to justify its exclusion.
5. In the final paragraph of the introduction, the objective is stated as: “(b) a final brief version was generated that maintained a clear factor structure...”. This could be reformulated in a more neutral tone, as it currently suggests an anticipated result. It may be more appropriate to present it as a goal to be evaluated.
6. In the Results section, a measurement invariance analysis by sex is presented; however, this aspect is not justified in the Introduction. It may be useful to include a brief theoretical or methodological rationale for the relevance of assessing invariance by sex in this scale.

Data Analysis

7. While residual correlations are used as a criterion for item evaluation and a .30 threshold is specified in the first paragraph of the Data Analysis section, the rationale for selecting this cutoff is not clearly justified nor supported by references. Providing a brief justification or citing relevant literature would strengthen the transparency and methodological rigor of the item selection process.

Discussion

8. Given that the brief version does not include the Awareness dimension, it would be useful to address in the discussion the conceptual implications of this exclusion. A brief reflection on what is gained (e.g., greater factorial coherence) and what is lost (e.g., reduced conceptual coverage) would help clarify the interpretation of the brief version.
9. It would be important to note as a limitation the absence of analyses based on Item Response Theory, as these approaches allow for a more precise evaluation of item functioning and the information provided by the brief version.
10. It would also be important to acknowledge as a limitation the absence of a specific measure of emotion regulation to assess convergent validity. Although the BAI and the BDI provide relevant information, they do not constitute direct indicators of emotion regulation.

Interacciones seeks greater transparency in the review process and to provide credit to reviewers. If the editors decide to accept the manuscript, would you like your name to appear as a reviewer of the article?

Yes, I agree to have my name indicated as a reviewer.

Reviewer B:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

Relevance: Moderated

Novelty: Moderated

Presentation and writing: Moderated

Comments for authors:

This is a psychometric article that tests the 15-item version of the Emotion Regulation Difficulties Scale (DERS). Research on the analysis of psychometric properties and the adaptation of scales to different populations is necessary. The scale analyzed aims to measure a construct that is clinically relevant due to its association with various types of psychological disorders.

In the introduction, it is necessary to include additional references to other abbreviated versions of the scale, specifying the populations with which each version was tested. It is also important to explain, for each of these prior studies, the resulting internal structure of the scale, as well as which items were eliminated and for what reasons. It seems essential to justify why a version that appears not to have performed well previously was selected, rather than other brief versions or the full Spanish version.

In the Methods section, under Participants, the sociodemographic information could be presented more efficiently in a table. Additionally, it is stated that participants were contacted in connection with a psychological intervention project. Were these individuals diagnosed with psychological disorders, or experiencing distress that led them to seek psychological treatment? Could they be considered a clinical population?

The description of the instruments is insufficient. In the case of the DERS, it is necessary to specify in detail which items correspond to each of the two factors in the DERS-15 version (and to which factors in the original version they belong). Information regarding scoring (including reverse-coded items) and interpretation of results should also be provided.

The background information on the Beck Anxiety and Depression Scales is neither very clear nor recent. Are there no validation studies of these scales with Mexican adults that report their full psychometric properties? In the Results section, more information and justification are needed regarding the decisions made about item elimination. Bartlett's test of sphericity and the KMO measure are not reported prior to conducting the EFA. Since it was not specified which items correspond to which factor, this section of the results is very difficult to interpret. With which other items was item 15 expected to load within the Awareness dimension? Do items 1 and 2 belong to the same factor? This information is crucial for evaluating the rationale for eliminating items. The same issue arises with the removal of items 10, 13, and 4.

The Discussion section is very limited. The final structure of the scale is not presented or discussed beyond mentioning the seven retained items. It is unclear which dimensions of the original scale were maintained, with which items, and how scoring and interpretation should proceed. A theoretical explanation is needed to justify item elimination. Although some studies on the psychometric analysis of brief versions of the scale are mentioned, they are not discussed in depth. Greater analysis is needed regarding what has occurred in other scale-shortening processes. Other factorial solutions (e.g., bifactor models) are mentioned; why were these not tested?

The study's limitations need to be revised (for example, the issue of limited generalizability to men is mentioned).

There is also a lack of depth regarding the potential implications (advantages and disadvantages) of using the seven-item version.

Interacciones seeks greater transparency in the review process and to provide credit to reviewers. If the editors decide to accept the manuscript, would you like your name to appear as a reviewer of the article?

No

RESPONSE LETTER

To the Editorial Board of *Interacciones*

Re: Manuscript ID-512

Title: "Can the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale be even shorter? Development of the DERS-7"

Authors: Pablo D. Valencia, Anabel De la Rosa-Gómez, Mariana Cabral-Familiar, Alejandrina Hernández-Posadas, Lorena A. Flores-Plata

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript. We also want to thank the reviewers for their careful reading of our work and their constructive feedback, which has undoubtedly helped us improve the quality of our paper.

Below, we provide a point-by-point response to each of the reviewers' comments. The reviewers' original comments are presented verbatim in bold, followed by our responses. Any modifications made to the manuscript are indicated below our response and have been highlighted in red font within the revised manuscript document.

Response to Reviewer D

Comment D1: "1. In the introduction, I suggest considering the removal of the section in the first paragraph that discusses emotions in animals. Although it is an interesting point, it deviates from the psychometric focus of the study and may dilute the presentation of the central problem."

Response: The first paragraph of the Introduction has been revised by removing the animal emotion reference and the Campillo (2021) citation. Only the definitions of the three emotional elements (cognitive, physiological, behavioral) and emotion regulation (Gross & Thompson, 2007) have been retained.

Comment D2: "2. In the third paragraph of the introduction, where it is stated that the DERS "has strong empirical support," I recommend adding one or two references to substantiate this claim, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of the introduction."

Response: References Hallion et al. (2018) and Kämpf et al. (2023) have been added after the statement that the DERS "has strong empirical support." The latter corresponds to the meta-analysis suggested by the reviewer.

Comment D3: "3. In the third paragraph, the phrase "the results of this study and other previous research..." appears, which may be confusing, as the introduction should focus on prior evidence rather than the results of the current study. It would be advisable to rephrase or remove this statement to avoid prematurely presenting findings."

Response: The expression "the results of this study and" has been removed from the sentence that originally began: "the results of this study and other previous research (Bardeen et al., 2012; Hallion et al., 2018) suggest..." Thus, the Introduction now focuses exclusively on previously available evidence.

Comment D4: "4. In the third paragraph, it is mentioned that the Awareness dimension tends to behave problematically across different validation studies; however, the reasons for this are not specified. It may be useful to include a brief conceptual or psychometric explanation to justify its exclusion."

Response: A paragraph has been added explaining that the Awareness dimension loads weakly on the general dysregulation factor and behaves as a separate component because, unlike the other dimensions (which capture maladaptive responses), it refers to the ability to attend to and recognize one's own emotions (Bardeen et al., 2012; Hallion et al., 2018; Muñoz-Martínez et al., 2016).

Comment D5: "5. In the final paragraph of the introduction, the objective is stated as: "b) a final brief version was generated that maintained a clear factor structure...". This could be reformulated in a more neutral tone, as it currently suggests an anticipated result. It may be more appropriate to present it as a goal to be evaluated."

Response: The original text stating "a final brief version was generated that maintained a clear factor structure, as well as good psychometric properties" has been replaced with: "a final brief version was evaluated in terms of its factor structure and psychometric properties."

Comment D6: "6. In the Results section, a measurement invariance analysis by sex is presented; however, this aspect is not justified in the Introduction. It may be useful to include a brief theoretical or methodological rationale for the relevance of assessing invariance by sex in this scale."

Response: Thank you for your comment. We have revised the Introduction to include a brief rationale for assessing measurement invariance by sex. Specifically, we now note that psychometric instruments are often assumed to function equivalently across women and men; however, invariance testing is infrequently conducted, which may allow potential biases in research findings to go undetected.

Comment D7: "7. While residual correlations are used as a criterion for item evaluation and a .30 threshold is specified in the first paragraph of the Data Analysis section, the rationale for selecting this cutoff is not clearly justified nor supported by references. Providing a brief justification or citing relevant literature would strengthen the transparency and methodological rigor of the item selection process."

Response: We thank the reviewer for this observation. We have added a justification and reference for the .30 threshold in the Data Analysis section. This cutoff was chosen based on the guidelines proposed by Ferrando et al. (2022), who categorize residual correlations between .20 and .30 as "low doublets," while values above .30 represent "medium" to "high" doublets. By setting the threshold at .30, we aimed to eliminate items with medium-to-high levels of redundant variance to ensure the resulting scale was strictly unidimensional.

Comment D8: "8. Given that the brief version does not include the Awareness dimension, it would be useful to address in the discussion the conceptual implications of this exclusion. A brief reflection on what is gained (e.g., greater factorial coherence) and what is lost (e.g., reduced conceptual coverage) would help clarify the interpretation of the brief version."

Response: Thank you for this suggestion. We have added a brief discussion noting that the Awareness dimension was excluded due to its low factor loadings and weak association with the general dysregulation factor, improving factorial coherence

Comment D9: "9. It would be important to note as a limitation the absence of analyses based on Item Response Theory, as these approaches allow for a more precise evaluation of item functioning and the information provided by the brief version."

Response: Thank you for this insightful comment. We agree that the lack of Item Response Theory (IRT) analyses is a limitation of the present study. Although we relied on classical test theory and factor analytic approaches to examine the psychometric properties of the DERS-7, IRT could offer a more detailed understanding of how individual items perform and the information they provide across different levels of emotional dysregulation. We have now acknowledged this limitation in the manuscript and suggest that future research incorporate IRT methods to further strengthen the evaluation of the brief version.

Comment D10: "10. It would also be important to acknowledge as a limitation the absence of a specific measure of emotion regulation to assess convergent validity. Although the BAI and the BDI provide relevant information, they do not constitute direct indicators of emotion regulation."

Response: Thank you for this suggestion. We have now acknowledged in the limitations the absence of a specific measure of emotion regulation to assess convergent validity.

Response to Reviewer E

Comment E1: "In the introduction, it is necessary to include additional references to other abbreviated versions of the scale, specifying the populations with which each version was tested. It is also important to explain, for each of these prior studies, the resulting internal structure of the scale, as well as which items were eliminated and for what reasons. It seems essential to justify why a version that appears not to have performed well previously was selected, rather than other brief versions or the full Spanish version."

Response: We thank the reviewer for this observation. We have updated the Introduction to include a comparison with other abbreviated versions, specifically the DERS-16, DERS-SF, and DERS-18. We explain that while versions developed in English-speaking populations often retain multi-factor structures, recent Latin American evidence supports a unidimensional approach after excluding the Awareness dimension. We also clarified that the DERS-15 was selected for refinement due to its linguistic proximity to the Mexican context and its current use as a primary outcome measure in ongoing telepsychological trials, making its psychometric optimization a practical necessity

Comment E2: "In the Methods section, under Participants, the sociodemographic information could be presented more efficiently in a table. Additionally, it is stated that participants were contacted in connection with a psychological intervention project. Were these individuals diagnosed with psychological disorders, or experiencing distress that led them to seek psychological treatment? Could they be considered a clinical population?"

Response: Thank you for your comment. We have addressed the first point by creating a table, which presents the sociodemographic characteristics of both samples in a clear and concise format. Regarding the nature of the participants, neither sample included individuals diagnosed with psychological disorders; therefore, they cannot be considered a clinical population. Participants were recruited in the context of psychological intervention projects, but inclusion was based on willingness to participate rather than a formal diagnosis or confirmed clinical condition. Thus, they are described as a treatment-seeking sample rather than a clinical population, as noted in the abstract.

Comment E3: "The description of the instruments is insufficient. In the case of the DERS, it is necessary to specify in detail which items correspond to each of the two factors in the DERS-15 version (and to which

factors in the original version they belong). Information regarding scoring (including reverse-coded items) and interpretation of results should also be provided."

Response: The description of the DERS-15 instrument has been expanded to specify which items correspond to each factor, which item is reverse-coded, and how scores are interpreted. The following information has been added:

Factor 1 (Dysregulation): Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, corresponding to the Non-acceptance, Goals, Impulsivity, Strategies, and Clarity subdimensions of the original DERS-36.

Factor 2 (Awareness): Item 15 ("I am attentive to my feelings"), which is reverse-coded prior to summation.

It is also indicated that higher scores reflect greater difficulties in emotion regulation. The reference De la Rosa-Gómez et al. (2021) has been added as evidence of factorial validity in Mexican adults, in addition to the existing reference Muñoz-Martínez et al. (2016).

Comment E4: "The background information on the Beck Anxiety and Depression Scales is neither very clear nor recent. Are there no validation studies of these scales with Mexican adults that report their full psychometric properties?"

Response: The general description of the psychometric properties of the BAI has been replaced with a description focused on validation evidence in Mexican populations, incorporating Robles et al. (2001) as a classic reference in Mexico and Padrós Blázquez et al. (2020) as more recent evidence. Similarly, the description of the BDI-II has been updated to include validation evidence in Mexico, citing González et al. (2015) as a previous reference and Rodríguez-Pérez et al. (2021) as a more recent study documenting high internal consistency, as well as adequate sensitivity and specificity in clinical samples.

Comment E5: "In the Results section, more information and justification are needed regarding the decisions made about item elimination. Bartlett's test of sphericity and the KMO measure are not reported prior to conducting the EFA. Since it was not specified which items correspond to which factor, this section of the results is very difficult to interpret. With which other items was item 15 expected to load within the Awareness dimension? Do items 1 and 2 belong to the same factor? This information is crucial for evaluating the rationale for eliminating items. The same issue arises with the removal of items 10, 13, and 4."

Response: We appreciate this constructive feedback. We have revised the Exploratory Factor Analysis section to include the KMO and Bartlett's test results, which confirmed the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Additionally, we have clarified the original dimensions of the items involved in the elimination process.

-Item 15 (Awareness): In the DERS-15, Item 15 is the sole indicator of the Awareness dimension. It was expected to load on a second factor, but as noted, its loading on the general factor was near zero, and the parallel analysis suggested a single-factor solution.

-Items 1 and 2 (Clarity): These items both belong to the original Clarity dimension. Their high residual correlation (.70) and raw correlation (.79) indicated they were redundant.

-Items 10, 13, and 4: These were eliminated because they formed highly correlated "doublets" with other items from their same original dimensions: Item 10 was redundant with Item 7 (Goals), Item 13 with Item 11 (Impulse), and Item 4 with Item 8 (Impulse).

We have added these details to the manuscript to ensure the rationale for each elimination is clear.

Comment E6: "The Discussion section is very limited. The final structure of the scale is not presented or discussed beyond mentioning the seven retained items. It is unclear which dimensions of the original scale were maintained, with which items, and how scoring and interpretation should proceed. A theoretical explanation is needed to justify item elimination. Although some studies on the psychometric analysis of brief versions of the scale are mentioned, they are not discussed in depth. Greater analysis is needed regarding what has occurred in other scale-shortening processes. Other factorial solutions (e.g., bifactor models) are mentioned; why were these not tested?"

Response: Thank you for this thoughtful and detailed comment. We have substantially expanded the Discussion section to address these concerns. First, we describe the final structure of the scale. The DERS-7 comprises items representing the original domains of Non-acceptance, Goals, Impulse, Strategies, and Clarity, thereby preserving the conceptual scope of emotional dysregulation while achieving a strictly unidimensional structure. Second, we specify although alternative factorial solutions (e.g., bifactor models) can capture the multidimensional and hierarchical structure of the DERS, the consistent dominance of the general factor supports the use of more parsimonious unidimensional approaches when the goal is to obtain a global score. Accordingly, the DERS-7 can be treated as a unidimensional measure of emotional dysregulation for scoring and interpretation. Third, we expanded the justification for item elimination. The item reduction process was guided by both statistical and theoretical criteria.

Comment E7: "The study's limitations need to be revised (for example, the issue of limited generalizability to men is mentioned)."

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. The limitations section has been revised to include the potential influence of gender differences in emotional regulation and its expression.

Comment E8: "There is also a lack of depth regarding the potential implications (advantages and disadvantages) of using the seven-item version."

Response: We have expanded the Discussion to reflect on the conceptual and practical trade-offs of the DERS-7. We added a brief reflection clarifying that while the version provides a psychometrically "cleaner" global score for efficient screening, it sacrifices facet-level granularity, shifting the focus from specific regulatory deficits (like Awareness) to a general measure of maladaptive emotional reactivity.

Sincerely,
Pablo D. Valencia