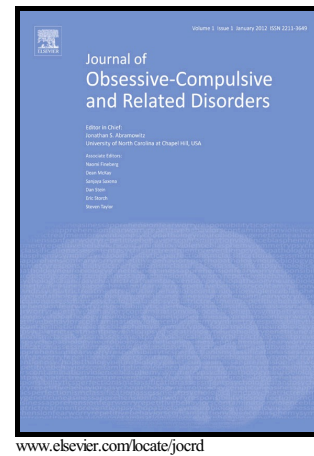


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Thomas A. Fergus, Wade C. Rowatt



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THOUGHT ACTION FUSION AND MENTAL CONTAMINATION

Examining Associations between Thought-Action Fusion and State Mental Contamination

Following an In Vivo Thought Induction Task

Thomas A. Fergus^{*} and Wade C. Rowatt

Baylor University, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

^{*}Correspondence should be directed to: Department of Psychology & Neuroscience, Baylor University, Waco, TX 76798. Voice: 1-254-710-2651; Fax: 1-254-710-3033.
Thomas_Fergus@baylor.edu

Abstract

Intrusive thoughts can evoke an internal cue of distress known as mental contamination and thought-action fusion (TAF) is a potentially important individual difference variable for understanding the experience of mental contamination following intrusive thoughts. A large sample of college students ($N = 320$) completed a thought-induction task to examine how (a) TAF relates to three indices of state mental contamination (dirtiness, number of perceived dirty body locations, urge to neutralize); (b) state mental contamination relates to in vivo TAF-relevant appraisals (morality, likelihood); and (c) TAF relates to the accessibility of cleansing-related concepts. TAF positively related to post-task dirtiness, number of perceived dirty locations, and the urge to neutralize. The three indices of state mental contamination positively related to in vivo morality and likelihood appraisals, with TAF positively relating to the accessibility of cleansing-related concepts. These relations generally remained intact while statistically controlling for pre-task dirtiness, religiosity, negative affect, disgust proneness, and obsessive-compulsive symptom severity. Differential relations between TAF and state mental contamination emerged when examining two separate TAF dimensions (moral, likelihood). Study results further indicate that TAF is relevant for understanding mental contamination and related phenomena experienced following intrusive thoughts.

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