



“Who does this body belong to?” The development and psychometric evaluation of the Body Experience during Pregnancy Scale

Anat Talmon*, Karni Ginzburg

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel Aviv University, Israel



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 28 November 2017
Received in revised form 18 May 2018
Accepted 18 May 2018

Keywords:

Pregnancy
Body image
Body experience
Body agency
Body estrangement
Body visibility
Instrument development

ABSTRACT

Women's experiences of their bodies during pregnancy may reflect their reactions to concrete physical changes as well as self-representations during the transition to motherhood. However, adequate measures of the body experience during pregnancy are lacking. This study aims to evaluate the psychometric properties of a new measure, the Body Experience during Pregnancy Scale (BEPS). In Study 1, the BEPS was administered to 423 pregnant women. In Study 2, 373 pregnant women completed the BEPS, as well as questionnaires assessing body shame, disrupted body boundaries, and well-being. Three BEPS subscales emerged from Study 1: body agency, body estrangement, and body visibility. In Study 2, a confirmatory factor analysis replicated the scale's structure. The factors were significantly correlated with measures of body shame, disrupted body boundaries, and well-being. The results of the present analyses suggest that the BEPS has good psychometric properties, making it useful in future research.

© 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Pregnancy is a somatic experience, during which a woman faces many rapid and dramatic physical changes. Occurring in the context of her upcoming motherhood, this body experience may reflect both the woman's reactions to the concrete changes taking place inside her, as well as the formation of a new self-identity during her transition to motherhood (Bailey, 2001; Stern & Bruschiweiler-Stern, 1998). While the body experience of pregnant women has yet to receive sufficient empirical examination, a few studies – mainly relying on qualitative interviews with pregnant women (for a review see Watson, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Broadbent, & Skouteris, 2015) – have revealed themes which seem to be shared by many women.

The first theme deals with women's feelings regarding the concrete changes that take place in the female pregnant body, both in terms of its appearance and functionality. Facing their transformed body size, shape, and weight, some pregnant women feel attractive during pregnancy (Bailey, 2001). Others, however, experience dissatisfaction with the appearance of their bodies (Hodgkinson, Smith, & Wittkowski, 2014; Johnson, Burrows, & Williamson, 2004)

and express concerns related to their ability to return to pre-pregnancy shape and size (Earle, 2003; Watson et al., 2015). In addition, some women are filled with a new sense of meaning derived from their bodies' ability to create life and experience body satisfaction due to their evaluation of its functionality rather than its aesthetic qualities (Clark, Skouteris, Wertheim, Paxton, & Milgrom, 2009a; Watson et al., 2015). Recognizing their bodies' abilities and functionalities, women may perceive their bodies as feminine, potent, and powerful (Bailey, 2001). However, others report a sense of loss of control as a result of the enormous changes taking place in their bodies (Hodgkinson et al., 2014; Neiterman & Fox, 2017; Warren & Brewis, 2004). Thus, the second theme deals with sense of control, potency, and femininity.

The third theme reflects the fact that pregnancy is a unique experience in which women share their bodies with another organism. Women react to this condition with a variety of feelings, ranging from one of comfort and pride, to one of being invaded and penetrated (Hodgkinson et al., 2014; Raphael-Leff, 2001). A sense of disrupted body boundaries may impact some women who have reported feelings of confusion regarding their body boundaries and their bodies' separation from both the fetus and the outer world (Johnson et al., 2004; Schmied & Lupton, 2001). This sense of disruption is connected to a perception of the pregnant body as vulnerable and fragile (Davidson, 2001).

Finally, the literature reveals a fourth theme, referring to the public nature of pregnancy. That is, although pregnancy is a per-

* Corresponding author at: School of Social Work, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel.

E-mail address: anattalmon@mail.tau.ac.il (A. Talmon).

sonal experience, the fact that it is so visible can turn this essentially private experience into a very public one, attracting attention (Draper, 2003). Although some women enjoy this attention, others feel that their bodies have become “public property” (Johnson et al., 2004). Pregnant bodies are identified as “sexed” bodies, indicating that these women are not virgins (Nash, 2013). Thus, the appearance of the pregnant body may expose the woman’s reproductive functioning (Johnston-Robledo, Sheffield, Voigt, & Wilcox-Constantine, 2007; Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001). In addition, the discrepancies between the social and/or personal “ideal look” and the perceived “actual look” of the pregnant women may be tolerated better by some women than by others, as they are viewed as reflecting the personal and social transformation that accompanies their transition to motherhood (Davies & Wardle, 1994).

The body experience during pregnancy is a specific and particular experience, and yet to date it has hardly been systematically studied. The lack of quantitative studies of the body experience during pregnancy may be attributed to the lack of adequate measures. While there are various measures of body image and/or body satisfaction, their applicability to women’s experiences of their bodies during pregnancy is insufficient (see, for example, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Skouteris, Watson, & Hill, 2012). A few measures have been used to assess women’s body images and/or attitudes during pregnancy, for example the Attitude to Body Image Scale (Strang & Sullivan, 1985), Body Attitudes Questionnaire (Ben-Tovim & Walker, 1991), Figure Rating Scale (Davies & Wardle, 1994), and the Body Image in Pregnancy Scale (Watson, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Broadbent, & Skouteris, 2017). These measures, however, are mostly limited to women’s evaluations of their physical appearances, indicated by their ratings of their weight and perceived attractiveness. Although the Body Image in Pregnancy Scale (Watson et al., 2017) also refers to the perceived functionality of the pregnant body, these measures do not refer to women’s psychological representations of their bodies. The purpose of this paper is therefore to describe the Body Experience during Pregnancy Scale (BEPS), a new measure of the psychological representations of the body experience during pregnancy, and to present the results of two studies assessing its psychometric properties. In these studies, we developed the BEPS, evaluated its structure (exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses), and the reliability (internal consistency) and validity (construct and incremental) of its scores.

2. Study 1

In this study, we aimed to develop a tool to measure the body experience of pregnancy. The purpose of Study 1 was to design the items that comprise this scale, to conduct an initial examination of its factor structure by exploratory factor analysis, and to estimate its internal consistency.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

A convenience sample of 423 pregnant women was recruited. The average age of the participants was 30.82 years ($SD = 4.64$, range 19–45). Their average number of years of education was 15.96 ($SD = 2.44$; range 8–25). Twenty-five percent ($n = 105$) of the participants reported that their income was similar to that of the average Israeli wage, 45.9% ($n = 193$) reported that it was below the average wage, and 29.1% ($n = 122$) reported that it was above the average wage. The vast majority of the sample, 97.4% ($n = 406$), reported that they were heterosexual, and 96.7% ($n = 408$) reported that they were currently in intimate relationships. Half of the women ($n = 223$, 52.8%) reported that they had children. At the time of questionnaire completion, 11.8% of the women were in their first trimesters

of pregnancy (≤ 13 weeks), 28.2% were in their second trimesters (14–26 weeks), and 60% were in their third trimesters (≥ 27 weeks).

2.1.2. Measures

2.1.2.1. Socio-demographics and obstetric history. Participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire assessing age, education, sexual orientation, relational status, and number of children. They also provided information about their obstetric status, such as fertility treatment, pregnancy risk, and gestational week.

2.1.2.2. The Body Experience during Pregnancy Scale (BEPS). The BEPS was developed to assess the body experience during pregnancy. Item generation was based on a deductive approach (Hinkin, 1998). After reviewing the existing literature on the body experience during pregnancy, which was presented in the Introduction, the following themes were formulated: (1) sense of joy and attractiveness versus dissatisfaction; (2) sense of control, potency, and femininity versus a feeling of loss of control; (3) sense of invasion versus comfort and pleasure in the developing fetus; and (4) a sense of the pregnancy being a public versus a private experience. Based on the descriptions of the manifestations of the body experience during pregnancy, an initial pool of 39 items was created.

The aforementioned list of manifestations, along with the items, were presented to three professionals in the field of women’s health. These professionals were asked to carefully read the items and indicate to what extent they thought each described an expression of the body experience during pregnancy (*not at all; to a certain extent; very much*). In addition, they were encouraged to suggest changes in the wording of the existing items and to make note of any items they felt were missing, or of any redundancies.

To examine whether the questionnaire would be clear to laypeople, it was also given to two pregnant women who were not familiar with this research study. These individuals were given the same instructions as the professionals, as well as to read the items and mark any item whose meaning they were not sure they understood. Subsequent to these two parallel processes, a few minor changes were made in the wording of the items, and nine items were omitted due to redundancy or lack of congruity with the theoretical conceptualizations. In its final version, the questionnaire included a total of 30 items. Respondents were asked to rate on a 4-point Likert-type scale the extent to which the item was relevant to them, during the last month (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *often*, and 4 = *always*).

2.1.3. Procedure

After receiving approval from Tel Aviv University Institutional Review Board, and obtaining informed consent from the participants, data were collected. Participants were recruited via social media (e.g., Facebook, online forums decimated for pregnancy and transition to motherhood). Pregnant women were asked to participate in a study that examines the implications of life experiences for pregnant women’s perceptions of their bodies and selves. Each participant was given the opportunity to take part in a gift voucher lottery. Participants used Qualtrics Research Software to complete the questionnaires.

2.1.4. Data analysis

Missing data analysis indicated that, across variables, 0–6.4% of values were missing. Little’s Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) model (Little, 1988), aimed at analyzing missing values, revealed that the data were missing completely at random, $\chi^2(738) = 782.99$, $p = .12$. Hence, missing data were replaced with maximum likelihood estimations based on all variables in the model, a procedure referred to as expectation maximization.

First, descriptive analyses of the items were examined. Since the items were normally distributed, The BEPS’s structure was examined by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with maximum-likelihood

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7262924>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7262924>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)