



Factor structure and psychometric properties of the Body Appreciation Scale-2 among adolescents and young adults in Danish, Portuguese, and Swedish

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the study of body image shifted from focusing on the negative aspects to a more extensive view of body image. The present study seeks to validate a measure of positive body image, the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) in Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden. Participants ($N = 1012$) were adolescents and young adults aged from 12 to 19. Confirmatory factor analyses confirmed the one-dimensional factor structure of the scale. Multi-group confirmatory factor analyses indicated that the scale was invariant across sex and country. Further results showed that BAS-2 was positively correlated with self-esteem, psychological well-being, and intuitive eating. It was negatively correlated with BMI among boys and girls in Portugal but not in Denmark and Sweden. Additionally, boys had higher body appreciation than girls. Results indicated that the BAS-2 has good psychometric properties in the three languages.

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, research on body image has focused on the negative aspects of body image or on body dissatisfaction (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005). However, over the last decade, scholars have shifted their attention to a broader view including both negative and positive components of body image (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). Indeed, positive body image is a unique construct that is not merely the opposite of negative body image (Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 1999). Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015a) defined body appreciation as “accepting, holding favor-

able opinions toward, and respecting the body, while also rejecting media-promoted appearance ideals as the only form of human beauty” (2015a, p. 53).

Avalos et al. (2005) created a measure, the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS), to measure body appreciation. The BAS is a 13-item scale which possesses good psychometric properties among both females (Avalos et al., 2005) and males (Tylka, 2013). The BAS is a one-dimensional scale, and its scores evidenced good reliability, consistency, and convergent validity with college women (Avalos et al., 2005). Later, Tylka (2013) also found measurement invariance in BAS scores between college women and men. Although some studies replicated the one-dimension structure of the scale, others have found that the BAS has a multi-dimensional factor structure (Alexias, Togas, & Mellon, 2016; Atari, Akbari-Zardkhaneh, Mohammadi, & Soufiabadi, 2015; Swami, Özgen, Gökçen, & Petrides, 2015; for a review of studies before 2015, see Webb, Wood-Barcalow, & Tylka, 2015). As the BAS does not

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measure exactly the same concept in different languages, the comparison of body image across cultures is impeded.

Recently, in order to address this issue and to be in keeping with recent developments of the concept of positive body image, Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015a) created the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2), a 10-item updated version of the scale. Original BAS Items 4 and 13 were modified because they contained terms which were associated to a negative body orientation (e.g., “Despite its imperfections, I still like my body”). Original BAS Items 8 and 9 were deleted because they referred to the ignorance of one’s appearance rather than the celebration of one’s body (e.g., “My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight”). The original BAS Item 12 was deleted because it was sex-specific (“I do not allow unrealistically thin [muscular] images of women [men] presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body”). Additional items were created for the BAS-2 that were based on findings from qualitative positive body image studies (e.g., Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010).

In samples of college and community women and men, Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015a) found that the final 10-item BAS-2 had a one-dimensional structure and its scores were internally consistent and stable across a 3-week period. Following the validation of the BAS-2 in English, Tiggemann (2015) called for an examination of its factorial equivalence among different cultures. Since then, the BAS-2 has been validated in Cantonese (Swami & Ng, 2015), Standard Chinese (Swami, Ng, & Barron, 2016), Dutch (Alleva, Martijn, Veldhuis, & Tylka, 2016), French (Kertechian & Swami, 2017), Icelandic (Pálmarsdóttir & Karlsdóttir, 2016), Japanese (Namatame, Uno, & Sawamiya, 2017), Persian (Atari, 2016), Polish (Razmus & Razmus, 2017), Brazilian Portuguese (Alcaraz-Ibáñez, Cren Chiminazzo, Sicilia Camacho, & Teixeira Fernandes, 2017), Romanian (Swami, Tudorel, Goian, Barron, & Vintila, 2017), Serbian (Jovic, Sforza, Jovanovic, & Jovic, 2016), and Spanish (Swami, García, & Barron, 2017).

These studies have shown that, across many geographic regions, scores on the BAS-2 have evidenced good convergent validity. The BAS-2 is positively correlated with various well-being indices, including self-esteem (e.g., Atari, 2016; Swami, García et al., 2017; Swami & Ng, 2015), life satisfaction (e.g., Atari, 2016; Swami, García et al., 2017; Swami et al., 2016), intuitive eating (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), positive affect (Razmus & Razmus, 2017), positive life orientation (Razmus & Razmus, 2017), subjective happiness (Swami, García et al., 2017), and proactive coping (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Among women, the BAS-2 is also negatively correlated with actual-ideal weight discrepancy (Swami & Ng, 2015; Swami et al., 2016) and positively correlated with optimistic life orientation (Alleva et al., 2016). The results regarding the relationship between the BAS-2 and body mass index (BMI) are not so clear: Swami, García et al. (2017) and Swami, Tudorel et al. (2017) found a negative relationship between the BAS-2 and BMI, while other studies found no relationship (Swami & Ng, 2015; Swami et al., 2016).

Furthermore, studies have revealed measurement invariance (i.e., equivalence) of the BAS-2 between women and men (e.g., Kertechian & Swami, 2017; Swami, García et al., 2017; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), which indicates that men’s and women’s scores on the BAS-2 can be meaningfully compared. Although Swami et al. (2016); Swami, García et al. (2017), and Razmus and Razmus (2017) found no difference between men and women in mainland China, Spain, and Poland respectively, most studies reported that men have significantly higher body appreciation than women, with a small or moderate effect size, Cohen’s $d = 0.13$ – 0.58 (e.g., Atari, 2016; Kertechian & Swami, 2017; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a).

As body image is at its most vulnerable state during adolescence (Littleton & Ollendick, 2003), it is important to investigate

its development during this particular period. Findings regarding the evolution of positive body image during adolescence are mixed. Some research studies found that positive body image was stable during adolescence (Soest & Wichstrøm, 2009) while other results indicated either a decrease (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Paxton, 2006) or an increase (Holsen, Jones, & Birkeland, 2012). The inconsistency of these results may be due to the variability of the instruments used to measure positive body image. According to our knowledge, only three studies have used the BAS-2 among children and adolescents (Alcaraz-Ibáñez et al., 2017; Halliwell, Jarman, McNamara, Risdon, & Jankowski, 2015; Halliwell, Jarman, Tylka, & Slater, 2017). Halliwell et al. (2015) examined the changes in body appreciation, after a body image intervention, among 14- and 15-year old girls. Alcaraz-Ibáñez et al. (2017) examined the factor structure of the BAS-2 among Brazilian adolescents. Halliwell et al. (2017) created the Body Appreciation Scale-2 for Children (BAS-2C), an adapted version of the scale that can be used among children as young as 9 years old.

Moreover, in order to compare the level of positive body image among different cultures, it is essential to examine the cross-cultural equivalence of the BAS-2 (Swami, García et al., 2017). Even though the BAS-2 has been used among more than 10 culture groups (e.g., Atari, 2016; Kertechian & Swami, 2017; Namatame et al., 2017), its cross-cultural measurement invariance has not been tested. Although the BAS-2 has been validated in many countries, it has not been validated in Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden. The validation of the BAS-2 in these additional three countries will increase its cross-cultural validity. Cross-cultural classifications (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) grouped Denmark and Sweden in the same cluster (i.e., Nordic Europe) while Portugal is either grouped with other southern European countries (i.e., Latin Europe) or with countries from South America (i.e., Latin America). Therefore, by comparing the level of body appreciation between these three countries, we can assess cross-cultural differences, whether small (expected between Denmark and Sweden) or large (expected between Denmark and Portugal and between Portugal and Sweden).

The present study aimed to validate the BAS-2 among adolescents and young adults from three different countries: Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden. First, we examined the factor structure of the BAS-2 among adolescent and young adult males and females in these countries. As all studies that examined the BAS-2 factor structure found that the BAS-2 is composed of one dimension (e.g., Atari, 2016; Kertechian & Swami, 2017; Swami, García et al., 2017), it was hypothesized that the BAS-2 has a one-factor structure in all samples. Second, the measurement invariance of the BAS-2 across sex and country was assessed. As previous studies reported a similar factor structure and good psychometric properties (e.g., Alleva et al., 2016; Swami et al., 2016; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), it was hypothesized that the BAS-2 is invariant across sex and country. Third, we examined the convergent validity of the Danish, Portuguese, and Swedish versions of the BAS-2 by examining their correlations with self-esteem, psychological well-being, intuitive eating, and BMI in both sexes. Taking into account the results found in other validation studies (e.g., Atari, 2016; Swami, García et al., 2017; Swami & Ng, 2015; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) and results using the BAS among adolescents (Atari, Jamali, Bahrami-Ehsan, & Mohammadi, 2017), it was hypothesized that the BAS-2 will be positively correlated with self-esteem, psychological well-being, and intuitive eating and negatively correlated with BMI in all samples. These variables were selected as they were used to assess convergent validity in previous validation studies of the BAS-2. Finally, differences between sex and country were assessed. In accordance with previous results (e.g., Atari, 2016; Kertechian & Swami, 2017; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a), it was expected that girls would have lower body appreciation than boys, but that

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