



The Body Appreciation Scale-2: Item refinement and psychometric evaluation



Tracy L. Tylka^{a,*}, Nichole L. Wood-Barcalow^b

^a Department of Psychology, The Ohio State University, Columbus and Marion Campuses, Marion, OH, United States

^b The Center for Balanced Living, Worthington, OH, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 May 2014

Received in revised form

24 September 2014

Accepted 27 September 2014

Keywords:

Positive body image

Body appreciation

Scale development

Psychometrics

Measurement invariance

Amazon Mechanical Turk

ABSTRACT

Considered a positive body image measure, the 13-item Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) assesses individuals' acceptance of, favorable opinions toward, and respect for their bodies. While the BAS has accrued psychometric support, we improved it by rewording certain BAS items (to eliminate sex-specific versions and body dissatisfaction-based language) and developing additional items based on positive body image research. In three studies, we examined the reworded, newly developed, and retained items to determine their psychometric properties among college and online community (Amazon Mechanical Turk) samples of 820 women and 767 men. After exploratory factor analysis, we retained 10 items (five original BAS items). Confirmatory factor analysis upheld the BAS-2's unidimensionality and invariance across sex and sample type. Its internal consistency, test–retest reliability, and construct (convergent, incremental, and discriminant) validity were supported. The BAS-2 is a psychometrically sound positive body image measure applicable for research and clinical settings.

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Introduction

Research on body image traditionally has focused on describing and predicting negative body image such as body dissatisfaction, body shame, and body preoccupation, with less focus on identifying, predicting, and promoting adaptive body attitudes (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005). Recently, however, the study of positive body image has gained considerable momentum, and body appreciation has been the central organizing variable within these investigations (Tylka, 2011a, 2013). *Body appreciation* has been defined as accepting, holding favorable opinions toward, and respecting the body, while also rejecting media-promoted appearance ideals as the only form of human beauty (Avalos et al., 2005). Indeed, two subsequent qualitative studies identified body appreciation as a key characteristic of positive body image, more narrowly described in these investigations as gratitude toward the body (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010; Wood-Barcalow, Tylka, & Augustus-Horvath, 2010). Other positive body image characteristics detected in these studies (body acceptance and love, inner positivity influencing outer demeanor, and a broad conceptualization of beauty)

appear to fit within the scope of Avalos et al.'s definition of body appreciation, which is operationalized and measured via the 13-item Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos et al., 2005).

The BAS has been utilized by researchers to understand features, correlates, and potential outcomes of positive body image. Body appreciation has been associated positively with adaptive characteristics and negatively with maladaptive characteristics among samples of women and men from Western countries, including the U.S., U.K., and Australia. More specifically, body appreciation is positively related to favorable appearance evaluation (Avalos et al., 2005), body esteem (Avalos et al., 2005; Swami, Steiger, Haubner, & Voracek, 2008), and multiple indices of psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem, optimism, proactive coping, positive affect, life satisfaction, and self-compassion; Avalos et al., 2005; Swami, Steiger, et al., 2008; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013; Wasylikiw, MacKinnon, & MacLellan, 2012). Behaviorally, body appreciation is positively linked to intuitive eating (i.e., eating according to physiological hunger and satiety cues; Avalos & Tylka, 2006; Hahn Oh, Wiseman, Hendrickson, Phillips, & Hayden, 2012; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013), women's sexual functioning (including overall sexual satisfaction and satisfaction with sexual arousal and orgasm; Satinsky, Reece, Dennis, Sanders, & Bardzell, 2012), and physical activity especially when the motive to exercise is not appearance-based (Homan & Tylka, 2014). Body appreciation is inversely related to body dissatisfaction, social physique anxiety, body image avoidance, body shame, body surveillance, body checking behaviors, and

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychology, Ohio State University, 1465 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Marion OH 43302, United States. Tel.: +1 740 725 6384; fax: +1 614 292 5817.

E-mail addresses: tylka.2@osu.edu, tracytylka@gmail.com (T.L. Tylka).

internalization of societal appearance ideals (Avalos et al., 2005; Swami, Hwang, & Jung, 2012; Tylka, 2013; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013). Body appreciation is also inversely related to pathology, such as eating disorder symptomatology (Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2013), neuroticism (Swami, Hadji-Michael, & Furnham, 2008), and maladaptive perfectionism (Iannantuono & Tylka, 2012).

Data support the distinctiveness of body appreciation in studies using the BAS. For instance, Avalos et al. (2005) found that body appreciation predicted additional variance in U.S. college women's psychological well-being (i.e., self-esteem, optimism, and proactive coping) after controlling for body preoccupation, body dissatisfaction, and self-perceived attractiveness. Also, Tiggemann and McCourt (2013) revealed that the strength of the link between body appreciation and body dissatisfaction for women became significantly weaker with age. Thus, body appreciation is not simply the absence of negative body image or the experience of self-perceived attractiveness.

Instead, body appreciation as measured by the BAS is a way of valuing the body and orienting cognitive processing to protect and promote a positive view of the body (Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Not only do women who appreciate their bodies critique unrealistic appearance ideals in the media (Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012) and resist consuming appearance-focused media (Swami, Hadji-Michael, et al., 2008), they also protect their body image when exposed to appearance-based media. Halliwell (2013) found that, after viewing images of thin female models, college women low in body appreciation placed increased importance on their appearance discrepancies (i.e., differences between how they would like to look and how they actually look), whereas women high in body appreciation did not place more importance on their appearance discrepancies. Halliwell further observed that the protective effect of high body appreciation extended to women known to be vulnerable to media exposure—those who have internalized the thin ideal. Specifically, after viewing thin female models, women who endorsed the thin ideal and had low body appreciation reported larger appearance discrepancies and placed more importance on their appearance discrepancies, while women who endorsed the thin ideal but had high levels of body appreciation downplayed the importance of their appearance discrepancies.

The many findings illustrating the adaptive value of body appreciation further provide construct validity for the BAS as a measure of body appreciation within Western countries. Moreover, the BAS consistently has been found to have internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas) at or above .90 for women and men from the U.S. and Australia (e.g., Augustus-Horvath & Tylka, 2011; Avalos et al., 2005; Kroon Van Diest & Tylka, 2010; Satinsky et al., 2012; Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013; Tylka, 2013; Wasylykiw et al., 2012). The BAS also has demonstrated stability over a 3-week period in U.S. women ($r = .90$; Avalos et al., 2005). Data from samples of college and community women and men from the U.S., U.K., and Germany (Avalos et al., 2005; Swami, Hadji-Michael, et al., 2008; Swami, Stieger, et al., 2008; Tylka, 2013), as well as adolescent girls and boys from Spain (Lobera & Ríos, 2011) support the BAS's unidimensional factor structure via exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses.

Nevertheless, the BAS's psychometric properties can be improved. In particular, five items (i.e., Item 7: "I am attentive to my body's needs;" Item 8: "My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight;" Item 9: "I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight;" Item 11: "I engage in healthy behaviors to take care of my body," Item 12: "I do not allow unrealistically thin [muscular] images of women [men] presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body") exhibit low item-factor loadings compared to the remaining items. Correlating the errors between Items 7 and 11, Items 8 and 9, and Items 9 and 12 were required to produce an acceptable-fitting model for

women and men via confirmatory factor analysis (Tylka, 2013). In non-Western samples, Items 8, 9, and 12 form a secondary factor, separate from the main factor, for Indonesian women and men (Swami & Jaafar, 2012), Malaysian and Chinese women (Swami & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008), Brazilian women and men (Swami et al., 2011), Zimbabwean women (Swami, Mada, & Tovée, 2012), and South Korean college women and men (Swami, Hwang, et al., 2012). However, the internal consistency reliability and factor loadings for this secondary factor are generally weak and therefore not interpretable (Swami et al., 2011; Swami, Mada, et al., 2012; Swami & Jaafar, 2012). Moreover, Items 7 and 11 did not load on the main factor for Malay and Chinese women (Swami & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008).

The original BAS has two additional limitations. First, women and men complete different forms due to the differential wording contained within Item 12 ("unrealistically thin images of women" versus "unrealistically muscular images of men"), which may be burdensome for data collection. Second, because the BAS was developed prior to comprehensive investigations of positive body image (see Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010; Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010), some items were written through antiquated lenses that consider certain features of negative body image as normative and/or positive body image as the absence of these features. More specifically, original BAS Items 4 ("Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is") and 13 ("Despite its imperfections, I still like my body") inherently assume that all participants perceive their bodies as containing "flaws" and "imperfections." Similarly, the original BAS Items 8 (i.e., "My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight") and 9 ("I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight") assume that high levels of positive body image would entail no investment or attention placed on weight and shape (i.e., the opposite of negative body image). Yet, research shows that inattention to body shape and weight may not be an integral aspect of body appreciation. For example, women with positive body image have revealed that they often take pride in their body shape—not because their bodies are similar to sociocultural images, but because they believed that all body shapes should be celebrated (Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Indeed, researchers are now investigating body-related pride as a facet of positive body image (Castonguay, Brunet, Ferguson, & Sabiston, 2012; Castonguay, Gilchrist, Mack, & Sabiston, 2013).

Therefore, in light of recent literature on positive body image and the aforementioned limitations of the original BAS, we revised and updated this scale, henceforth referred to as the BAS-2. Additional research on body appreciation is clearly needed to increase researchers' and clinicians' understanding of ways to promote positive body image (Tylka, 2011a). We conducted three studies to determine whether the BAS-2 could be a psychometrically sound measure used to guide this research.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to develop the BAS-2 and estimate its reliability and validity with college students. We first revised certain original BAS items that were sex-specific or biased toward negative body image and developed additional items that tap into the body appreciation construct (Avalos et al., 2005; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Second, we explored the factor structure of this item set. Third, we examined the internal consistency reliability, construct validity, concurrent validity, incremental validity, and test-retest reliability of the BAS-2. Worthington and Whittaker's (2006) recommendations for scale development were followed.

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