

Brief research report

German translation and psychometric evaluation of the Body Appreciation Scale

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Abstract

This paper examined the psychometric properties of the German version of the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS), a novel scale for the assessment of positive body image. Based on a community sample of 156 women and 144 men in Austria, results showed good internal reliability and construct validity for the BAS scores, as well as a unidimensional factor structure for both women and men. Specifically, Cronbach's alpha was high for both women ($\alpha = .90$) and men ($\alpha = .85$), and the BAS was correlated with the body esteem scale and self-esteem. In addition, women with lower BMIs reported greater body appreciation, but no such association was found for men. Finally, there were small sex differences in BAS scores, with men scoring more positively than women (Cohen's $d = 0.26$). The German BAS, a useful indicator of positive body image among Austrian adults, should prove valuable for the assessment of body image in German-speaking countries.

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Introduction

Within the body image literature, the primary focus of research has been on the extent, and impact of, negative orientation towards one's own body (Cash, 2002). That is, although body image is acknowledged as a multi-dimensional construct (e.g., Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999), research has been limited by a pathology-oriented focus. Accordingly, some scholars have called for much wider recognition of the predictors and outcomes of positive body image, which may be very different to that of negative body image (Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 1999; see also

Williams, Cash, & Santos, 2004). Such an endeavour is important because the isolation of factors that promote positive body image may lead to more effective interventions for those with negative body image.

To date, however, there remains a dearth of psychometric scales that explicitly measure positive body image. To rectify this oversight, Avalos, Tylka, and Wood-Barcalow (2005) recently reported on the development and psychometric evaluation of a measure that explicitly examines positive body image, namely the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS). The BAS is a 13-item scale that measures four aspects of positive body image: (a) favourable opinions of one's own body; (b) acceptance of the body in spite of imperfections; (c) respect for the body, particularly in relation to its needs; and (d) protection of the body, including rejection of unrealistic ideals. In four studies composed entirely of women, Avalos et al. (2005) reported results that

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supported unidimensionality of the BAS, test–retest reliability of the BAS scores after 3 weeks, and several facets of construct validity, discriminant validity, incremental validity, and internal consistency reliability.

For the BAS to be useful in studies of positive body image, however, three extensions to the work of Avalos et al. (2005) are required. First, it would be beneficial to examine the psychometric properties of the BAS in internationally diverse populations, which the present study sought to achieve through the development of a German translation of the BAS. Second, it is necessary to examine the validity of the BAS in relation to men's positive body image, which Avalos et al. did not report. Finally, given that Avalos et al. only examined college students, an additional purpose for the present study was to examine positive body image among a community sample. In short, the aim of the present study was to conduct a translation and validation of a German version of the BAS with male and female community samples.

Methods

Participants

Participants were a community sample of 156 women and 144 men, ranging in age from 16 to 80 years (age $M \pm SD$ women = 31.66 ± 13.60 , men = 33.31 ± 15.05). Data collection took place in Vienna and its environs, and represents volunteers from the general population. The mean body mass index (BMI) for male

participants was 24.01 kg/m^2 ($SD = 3.34$, range 17.81–36.92 kg/m^2), whereas that of women was 21.94 kg/m^2 ($SD = 3.82$, range 16.33–45.91 kg/m^2), both of which fall within the normal BMI range (underweight: 15–18.5 kg/m^2 , normal: 18.5–24.9 kg/m^2 , overweight: 25.0–29.9 kg/m^2). The majority of participants were Christians (81.0%; no religious affiliation = 16.3%). In terms of highest educational qualification, the majority of participants were educated to a secondary level (68.0%; university = 14.3%, apprenticeships = 10.3%, primary school = 7.0%).

Measures

All participants were presented with a three-page questionnaire, which comprised four sections in the following order:

Demographics

Participants provided their demographic information, namely sex, age, religion, highest educational qualification, height, and weight (the latter two variables were used to calculate BMI).

Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos et al., 2005)

This is a 13-item scale developed to measure four aspects of positive body image, as outlined above (see Table 1 for a list of items). Item 12 of the scale, which refers to the impact of media images, is sex-specific (Tylka, personal communication, 2007; refers to unrealistically thin images for women and unrealistically muscular images for men), and so two versions of

Table 1
Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) items and factor loadings from the exploratory factor analysis of the data

	Items	Factor loading	
		Women	Men
1	I respect my body	.84	.68
2	I feel good about my body	.81	.76
3	On the whole, I am satisfied with my body	.80	.80
4	Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is	.82	.78
5	I feel that my body has at least some good qualities	.69	.50
6	I take a positive attitude towards my body	.88	.88
7	I am attentive to my body's needs	.54	.53
8	My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight	.45	.41
9	I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight	.44	.39
10	My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part	.86	.71
11	I engage in healthy behaviours to take care of my body	.46	.44
12	For women: I do not allow unrealistically thin images of women presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body; for men: I do not allow unrealistically muscular images of men presented in the media to affect my attitudes toward my body	.40	.38
13	Despite its imperfections, I still like my body	.73	.81

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