

Brief research report

Validation of the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 among a random sample of Jordanian women

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Abstract

Measuring the impact of westernization on body image is an important element in understanding body dissatisfaction and eating disorders in countries undergoing cultural transitions. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the validity and reliability of the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3, a measure of societal and media impacts on body image, in a non-western population. Factor analyses identified the same four subscales found in the original validation with high Cronbach's alpha coefficients and Guttman split-half coefficients, and low item cross-loadings. Furthermore, mean score comparisons by demographic variables on each subscale indicated that subscale scores were only affected by age. The results suggest that the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 is a valid and reliable instrument for Jordanian women. The high level of validity and reliability for this population lends support for the possible use of this scale in other non-western populations after appropriate pretesting.

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Introduction

It has been noted in many countries that as westernization increases there is a corresponding increase in preference for body thinness over plumpness, partly due to increased exposure to western media (Hawks et al., 2004). These changes have been reported in many countries including India and China (Griffiths & Bentley, 2001; Gunewardene, Huon, & Zheng, 2001). Not surprisingly, previous research indicates that advertising and media portrayals of idealized body images have led to increases in body dissatisfaction and eating disorders

among adolescents and women in both developed and developing countries (Paquette & Raine, 2004).

In order to compare the impact of westernization on body image across cultures, it is important to identify valid, reliable measures with cross-cultural relevance. The present study evaluates the Sociocultural Attitude Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3) as a possible instrument with cross-cultural validity. The SATAQ-3 was developed by Thompson and is a 30-item Likert-type scale that includes four subscales: Information, Pressures, Internalization-General, and Internalization-Athlete, which measure the societal and media impacts on body image (Thompson, van den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda, & Heinberg, 2004). While the SATAQ-3 has been shown to be useful in western populations, the SATAQ-3 has not been evaluated for reliability or validity in a non-western population.

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There is currently no data on the effects of Western advertising and media on body image among Jordanian women. Jordan is a small Arab country with approximately 5.8 million people, 95% of whom are Muslim (Department of Statistics, 2004). Over the last decade, Jordan has increasingly opened its doors to foreign investment resulting in a dramatic increase in exposure to western media, magazines, and movies. Data from the 2004 Census in Jordan indicate that 97.2% and 46.9% of homes in Jordan own a television and a satellite, respectively, and 16 new movie theaters have appeared over the last 5 years, mostly dedicated to Hollywood productions (Department of Statistics, 2004). Understanding the societal and media impact on body image is crucial for this population, which is currently undergoing rapid westernization and modernization.

Method

Participants

The target population for this study was Jordanian women from a variety of religious, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds living in Jordan during the winter of 2005. The sample for this survey was based on the data provided by the 1994 Jordanian Population and Housing Census. The population from which the sample was derived excluded the population living in remote areas, as well as those living in collective dwellings, such as hotels, hospitals, work camps, prisons, and the like.

This study focused specifically on women in one governorate, identified by the Department of Statistics (a governmental agency involved in data collection) as the most representative of Jordan. This governorate is located in the Northern part of Jordan and does not include Amman. Within this governorate, the population localities were divided into categories according to the population size in the locality, and were ordered according to their geographical succession. The sample size for this survey consisted of 10 primary sampling units, out of which 10 households in each unit were selected as ultimate sampling units using a systematic random procedure. From each household, only one woman ages 18 or over was randomly selected to participate in the study. Pregnant women were excluded. Thus, the sample size was 100 women.

The demographic analysis indicated that the mean age of the respondents was 33.6 (range = 18–60) with 17% of the sample between 18 and 24 years of age, 42%

between 25 and 34 years of age, 30% between 35 and 44 years of age, and 11% above 45 years of age. The majority were married (66%), Muslim (99%), with a high school degree or less in education (63%), and of middle income families (73%). Interestingly, only 40% of the women were considered of normal (Body Mass Index (BMI) = 18.5–24.9), while 35% were considered overweight (BMI = 25.0–29.9), 25% obese (BMI = 30+), and the mean BMI was 27.1 ($SD = 5.3$).

Measures

The original SATAQ (Heinberg, Thompson, & Stormer, 1995) was modified by Thompson et al. in 2004. The SATAQ scale was revised to update and extend the measurement of the social and media impact on body image and eating disturbances. Thompson et al. reviewed the literature and developed items related to media influence: Awareness, Internalization, Pressures, Information, and Sports (Thompson et al., 2004). Items were used only if their loading on the primary factor was at least .40 and no more than .25 on the secondary factor; the rest were deleted. As a result, the awareness items were all deleted, and internalization items were split into two factors: Internalization-General and Internalization-Athlete. The final scale included 30 items and four subscales with high Cronbach's alpha: Information (.96), Pressures (.92), Internalization-Athlete (.95), and Internalization-General (.96).

Procedures

Professional interviewers from the Department of Statistics met with the women in their homes. Data was collected by the interviewers using a survey instrument. Results were entered manually into a spreadsheet and rechecked to ensure accuracy. There were 100 surveys completed and returned, which represented 99% of the women approached to participate in the study. An informed consent form was provided to the women explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and that personal identifying information was not requested. Before the survey process began, a focus group was also held with five Jordanian women to assess face validity and ensure comprehension of the survey in its intended format. In addition, height and weight measurements were used to calculate the BMI of the participants. The survey instrument included the SATAQ-3, which was translated to Arabic by a native speaker and then independently back translated to ensure accuracy. Furthermore, demographic

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