Psychometric evaluation and sex invariance of the Spanish version of the Body and Appearance Self-Conscious Emotions Scale

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the psychometric properties of a Spanish translation of the Body and Appearance Self-Conscious Emotions Scale (BASES; Castonguay et al., 2014) in a sample of university Spanish students. A total of 815 participants enrolled in two public universities located in Almería and Elche, Spain, completed the BASES along with measures of social physique anxiety and positive/negative affect. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed that one item failed to load clearly on the hypothesized factor (guilt). Once it was removed, results supported the hypothesized four-factor structure. Evidence of invariance of the four-factor structure across sex was obtained. Scores on the BASES showed adequate internal consistency and acceptable convergent validity. Compared to men, women reported significantly higher body and appearance-related guilt and shame, and significant lower authentic and hubristic pride. Preliminary evidence supporting the validity and reliability of the Spanish translation of the BASES is provided.

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1. Introduction

An ample body of evidence supports the role that body image-related concerns can play in the onset and development of a wide range of health-related outcomes (Bucianeri & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014; Peat, Peyerl, & Muehlenkamp, 2008). However, research also suggests that considering both negative and positive body image constructs may lead to a deeper understanding of these health-related consequences (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). One theoretical framework previously employed to explain the influence of negative and positive body image experiences on several health-related outcomes is the process model of self-conscious emotions (Robins, 2004, 2007;).

According to Tracy and Robins (2004, 2007), self-conscious emotions of guilt, shame and authentic/hubristic pride are experienced as a result of a reciprocal social judgment process whereby individuals evaluate themselves against a set of established standards. In this regard, guilt and shame are considered as negative emotions that arise when the individuals believe they have failed in their attempt to meet these standards. Nevertheless, guilt and shame can be distinguished by the cognitive attribution of the implicit self-evaluation process. Thus, guilt would be characterized by the presence of a feeling of regret derived from a negatively evaluated behaviour. Likewise, shame would imply the existence of a feeling of inferiority elicited by a negative evaluation of the global self (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Meanwhile, pride is considered a positive emotion that arises when the individuals perceive that they themselves are credited as the cause of a socially valued outcome that they personally endorse. As with guilt and shame, authentic and hubristic pride may be differentiated depending on whether they are elicited by a positive evaluation of a specific behaviour or by the global self, respectively (Tracy & Robins, 2007).

Past research has positively (or negatively) associated body and appearance-related guilt and shame with several disruptive (or adaptive/healthy) behaviours and cognitions. For instance, body guilt and shame have been positively related to social physique anxiety, negative affect (Castonguay, Sabiston, Crocker, & Mack, 2014), and depressive symptoms (Brunet, Pila, Solomon-Krakus, Sabiston, & O’Loughlin, 2017; Castonguay et al., 2014). Conversely, guilt and shame have been negatively associated with physical activity (Castonguay, Pila, Wrosch, & Sabiston, 2015) and positive affect (Brunet et al., 2017; Castonguay et al., 2014). Meanwhile, authentic and hubristic pride have been positively associated with positive affect (Castonguay et al., 2014). On the other hand, both authentic and hubristic pride have been negatively associated with social physique anxiety and depressive symptoms (Castonguay et al., 2014).

To address some of the limitations (e.g., the presence of content related to exercising and eating behaviours) of previously...
developed instruments for the assessment of body and appearance-related self-conscious emotions (Conradt et al., 2007; Thompson, Dinnel, & Dill, 2003; Weingarden, Renshaw, Tangney, & Wilhelm, 2016, Castonguay et al. (2014) proposed the Body and Appearance Self-consciousness Scale (BASES). The validation study for the BASES in Canadian adults provided evidence supporting a hypothesized four-factor correlated structure (i.e., guilt, shame, authentic pride, and hubristic pride). Additionally, adequate levels of internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha: 85 < r < 91) and temporal stability within a 2-week period (intraclass coefficient; 75 < ICC < 88) were found. Finally, large correlations between shame and guilt (r = .73) and authentic and hubristic pride (r = .73), as well as moderate to large correlations between the four self-conscious emotions and several theoretically and empirically related variables were found.

Even though Castonguay et al. (2014) provided some evidence supporting the BASES as a valid and reliable instrument to measure the body and appearance-related self-conscious emotions of guilt, shame and authentic/hubristic pride, the instrument’s development and validation process included several shortcomings. Firstly, the factor structure of the BASES was tested solely through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in a single sample of Canadian adults. Although conducting a CFA allows us to test whether a hypothesized model fits the data, the information derived from such analysis does not preclude the possibility that an alternative model fits the data better. Conversely, conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA) allows researchers to examine the dimensionality of scale scores without any a priori limitations in terms of modeling; this may be especially appropriate with newly developed measures or when using a newly translated scale in a novel linguistic context.

Secondly, the need for an instrument that could be applied to both men and women was one of the main reasons for developing the BASES (Castonguay et al., 2014). In this regard, it should be noted that men and women frequently differ in the intensity with which they experience body image constructs (Peat et al., 2008; Tytka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Notwithstanding, the accuracy of these comparisons depends on whether the measurement instrument can be similarly interpreted across the groups of interest (i.e., if it is invariant, in this case by sex). Whichever the case, the invariant character of a psychometric instrument should not assumed; to the contrary, it must be empirically demonstrated (Brown, 2015). However, the original BASES validation study (Castonguay et al., 2014) did not provide empirical evidence supporting the instrument’s invariant character across sex. Therefore, to date, the accuracy of sex comparisons in body and appearance-related self-conscious emotions performed using scores derived from the BASES cannot be claimed.

Besides the limitations outlined above, past research has shown that the factor structure of instruments aimed to measure body image-related constructs are not always equivalent across cultural or linguistic groups (e.g., Ng, Barron, & Swami, 2015). Nonetheless, to date only one study has reported evidence regarding the psychometric properties of scores on a BASES translation (Razmus & Razmus, 2017). Despite not being a psychometric-focused work, the study by Razmus and Razmus (2017) showed some preliminary evidence supporting the original four-factor structure of BASES scores, as well as the adequate levels of reliability in samples of male and female Polish adults. Taking into account both the health-related implications that might result from experiencing body and appearance-related self-conscious emotions (Brunet et al., 2017; Castonguay et al., 2015, 2014) and the scarcity of evidence supporting the psychometric properties of the BASES in other linguistic groups, conducting further translational studies would be a useful contribution to the body image literature.

As a first objective, this study aimed to provide evidence of validity and reliability for a Spanish translation of the BASES. Based on previous theoretical and empirical research (Castonguay et al., 2014; Razmus & Razmus, 2017; Robins, 2004, 2007;), it was expected that scores on the Spanish version of the BASES would show a correlated four-factor structure through both EFA and CFA, as well as adequate levels of construct reliability. It was also expected that, providing evidence of construct validity, body and appearance-related guilt and shame (authentic and hubristic pride) would be positively (or negatively) correlated with social physique anxiety and negative affect, while being negatively (or positively) related to positive affect (Brunet et al., 2017; Castonguay et al., 2014). It was also hypothesized that, compared to shame-free guilt, guilt-free shame would be more strongly correlated with the aforementioned criterion variables (Castonguay et al., 2014).

As a second objective, this study aimed to investigate the BASES measurement invariance across sex. In this respect, it was hypothesized that BASES scores would be invariant across the sex of the respondents. As a third objective, we sought to test sex differences in latent mean scores of body and appearance-related self-conscious emotions. Past research suggests that women report higher levels of body-related guilt and shame than men both in general (Else-Quest, Higgins, Allison, & Morton, 2012) and specific body and appearance domains (Pila, Brunet, Crocker, Kowalski, & Sabiston, 2016; Solomon-Krakus & Sabiston, 2017). Likewise, past meta-analytic research reported very small differences in general pride experiences between men and women (Else-Quest et al., 2012). However, the few studies that investigated sex differences across sex in self-conscious emotions specifically referring to the body and appearance domain have reported either no pride differences using mixed methods (Castonguay, Gilchrist, Mack, & Sabiston, 2013) or the presence of moderately lower levels of authentic pride in women (d = 0.48; Pila et al., 2016). Consequently, it was hypothesized that women would display higher levels of body-related guilt and shame, as well as similar or, in any event, moderately lower levels of authentic and hubristic pride than men.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

2.1.1. Main sample

The participants comprised 815 students (47% women, 98% white) enrolled in two public universities located in the cities of Almería and Elche, Spain. The mean age of the participants was 21.63 years (SD = 4.02, range = 17–45 years) in the case of men and 20.76 years (SD = 4.14, range = 17–59 years) in the case of women. The mean self-reported body mass index (BMI) was 23.31 kg/m² (SD = 2.56, range = 17.26–36.33) in the case of men and 21.78 kg/m² (SD = 2.86, range = 16.36–36.20) in the case of women.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Body and appearance self-conscious emotions

Participants completed a Spanish translation of the Body and Appearance Self-Conscious Emotions Scale (BASES; Castonguay et al., 2014). This instrument comprised 16 items, which in the parent study were grouped into 4 factors of 4 items each that measure guilt, shame and both authentic and hubristic pride. Items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

1 A one-item self-esteem measure not previously validated for Spanish speakers was included in the questionnaire. However, following the suggestion of one of the anonymous reviewers, scores for this measure were omitted from the final manuscript.
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