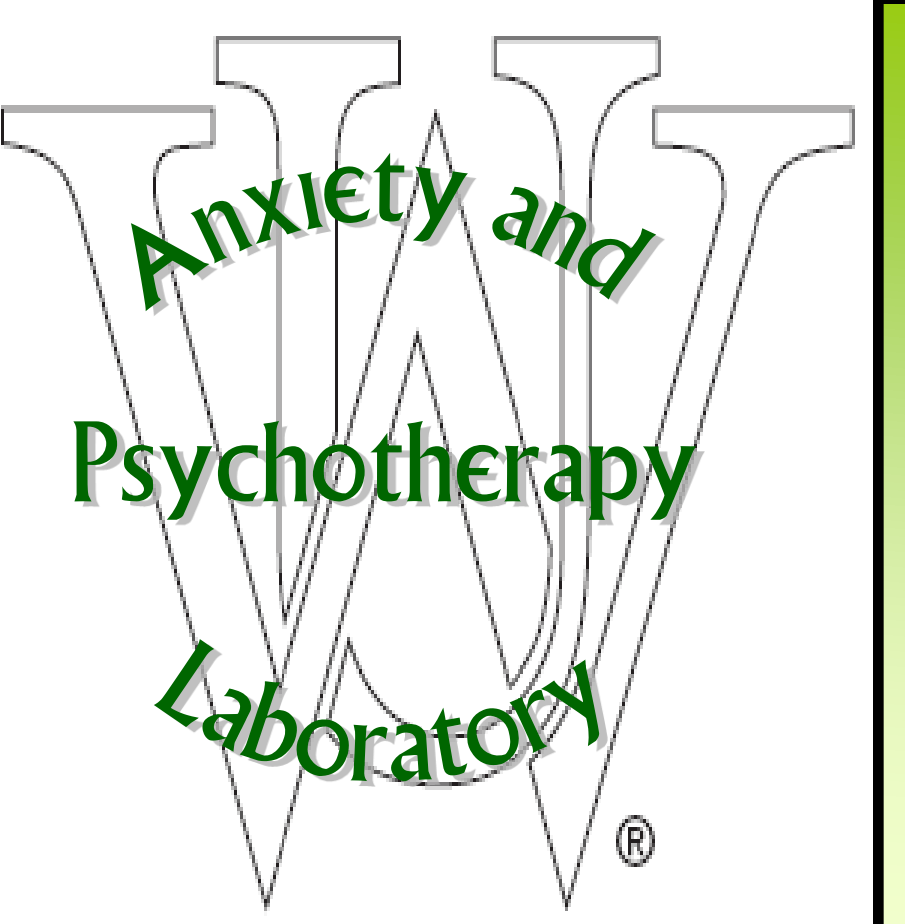




# The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale: A Valid Measure of Appearance Anxiety

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS; Hart et al., 2008) was developed to assess fear of situations in which one's appearance may be evaluated. We sought to further evaluate its convergent and predictive validity.

**Method:** We assessed if the SAAS would predict anxiety before and after a body measurement manipulation. Undergraduates ( $n = 95$ ) filled out a packet of questionnaires and then participated in a body evaluation.

**Results/Discussion:** The SAAS exhibited excellent convergent and predictive validity. Our results indicate that the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale is a valid measure of appearance anxiety.

## Introduction

- The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS; Hart et al., 2008) was developed to assess fear of situations in which one's appearance may be evaluated

- The SAAS was shown
  - To be a psychometrically valid measure of social anxiety regarding appearance
  - To be a unique predictor of social anxiety over and above negative body image measures (Hart et al., 2008)

- Hart et al. called for further research on its convergent and predictive validity

## Hypotheses

- SAAS would predict state anxiety related to a body evaluation
- SAAS would relate to BMI, body fat content, and current exercise
- the SAAS would relate to self-esteem, exercise self-efficacy, and trait anxiety

## Participants

- 95 undergraduates
- Participants were
  - Mostly female ( $n = 62$ ; 65%)
  - Mostly white ( $n = 66$ ; 70%)
  - Mean age of about 19 ( $M = 19.34$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ )

## Measures

**Social Appearance Anxiety Scale** (SAAS; Hart et al., 2008)

- Contains 16 items regarding anxiety about one's appearance in social situations
- Positively associated with measures of social anxiety
- Unique predictor of social anxiety over and above body image measures

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Measure** (RSEM; Rosenberg, 1965)

- 10-item measure of global self-esteem

**Exercise Self-Efficacy Measure** (ESEM)

- 5-items assess exercise self-efficacy (*I am confident that I could work out/ exercise at a public gym where strangers also work out*), 4-items assess gym avoidance (*When I go to the gym I think people are judging me*), 3-items assess exercise importance (*How important is exercising as an activity to maintain a healthy lifestyle?*)

**State-Trait Anxiety Inventory** (STAI; Bieling et al., 1998)

- 7-item measure of trait anxiety

**Brief State Anxiety Measure** (BSAM; Berg et al., 1998)

- 6-item measure of state anxiety
- Measured anxiety before and after body assessment

**Social Interaction Anxiety Scale** (SIAS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998)

- 20-item measure of anxiety in social situations

**Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation** (BFNE; Leary, 1983)

- Brief version of the original FNE (Watson & Clark, 1969)

- Measures fear of being negatively evaluated

**Social Phobia Scale** (SPS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998)

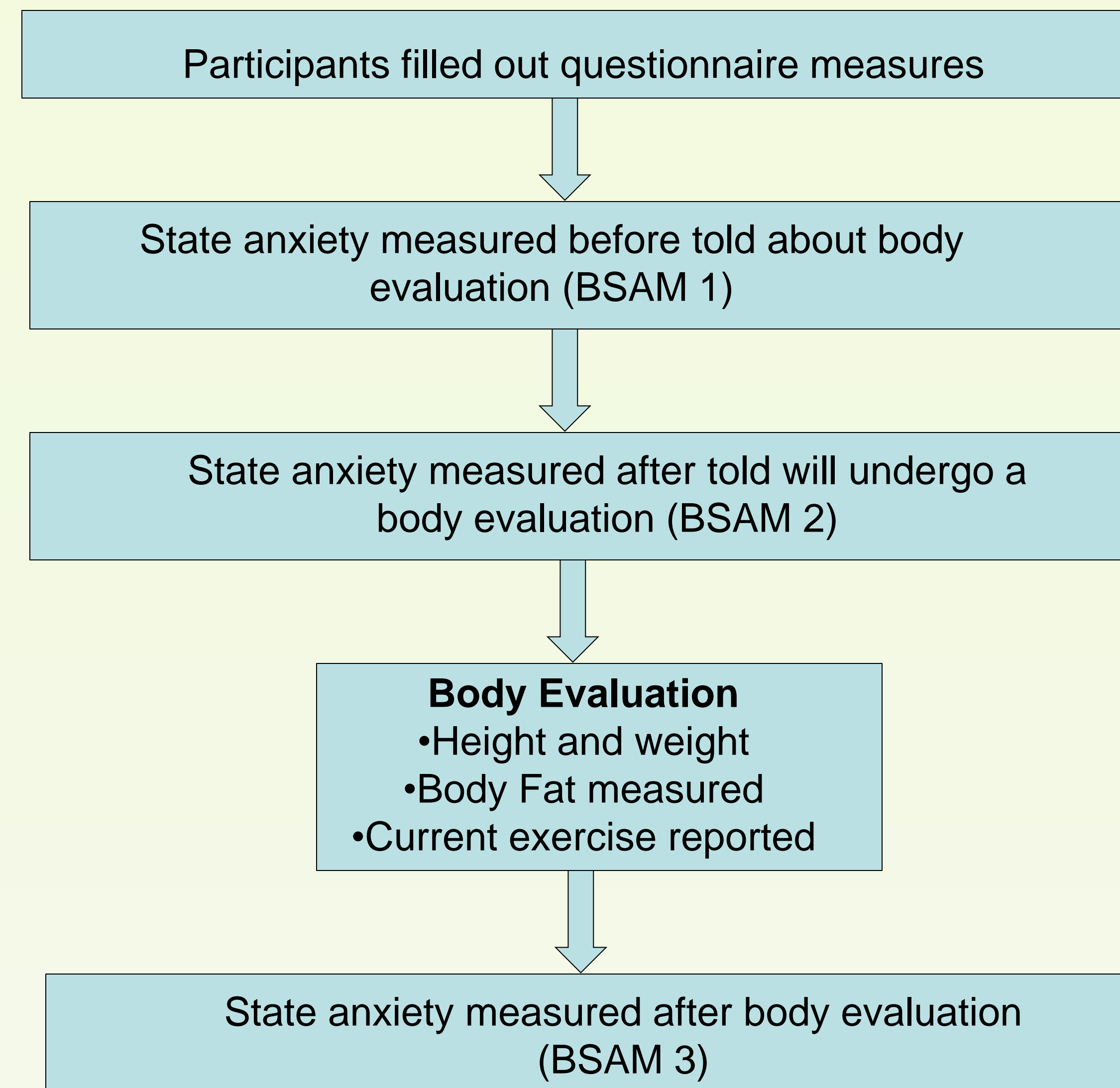
- 20-item measure that assesses *fear of scrutiny*

**Mini- International Personality Item Pool Inventory** (MINI-IPIP; Donnellan et al., 2006)

- 20-item short form measure of five basic factors of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness.

- Used to measure neuroticism

## Procedure



## Results

- State anxiety measured before and after the body evaluation (BSAM 2 & 3) were combined to create a measure of state anxiety experienced from the body evaluation
- In multiple regression, the social appearance anxiety scale (part  $r = .28$ ,  $p = .009$ ) significantly predicted state anxiety over and above state anxiety before the task was explained (part  $r = .70$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Table 1. The relationship between the SAAS and measures taken during body evaluation

	SAAS	BMI	Body Fat	Exercise
SAAS	.95	.12	.21*	-.45**
BMI		X	.59**	-.42**
Body Fat			X	-.35**
Exercise				X

Note. SAAS = Social Appearance Anxiety Scale; Diagonal is Cronbach's alpha. \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .001$

## Results

Table 2. The relationship between the SAAS, self-esteem, exercise measures, and trait anxiety.

	SAAS	SE	ESE	GA	EI	Anx
SAAS	.95	-.46**	-.24*	.53**	-.06	.60**
SE		.86	.27*	-.31**	-.14	-.48**
ESE			.90	-.61**	.27*	-.38**
GA				.89	-.20	.47**
EI					.77	-.12
Anx						.81

Note. SAAS = Social Appearance Anxiety Scale; SE = Self-esteem; ESE = Exercise Self-Efficacy; GA = Gym Avoidance; EI = Exercise Importance; Anx = Trait Anxiety; Diagonal value is Cronbach's Alpha; \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .001$

- In multiple regression, the social appearance anxiety scale (part  $r = .27$ ,  $p = .010$ ) significantly predicted gym avoidance over and above neuroticism, fear of scrutiny, fear of negative evaluation, and social interaction anxiety

## Discussion

- The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale is a valid measure of appearance anxiety
  - Predicted anxiety over a body evaluation
  - Significantly correlated with body fat and current exercise (but not BMI)
  - Significantly correlated with trait anxiety and self-esteem
- SAAS played a unique role in predicting gym avoidance
  - Appearance anxiety may cause individuals to avoid exercising
  - Could lead to health problems
- Future research should explore if this is a causal link and if exposures designed to reduce SAA decrease exercise avoidance