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Measuring a New Demographic:

The Swag Inventory 2012

by Adam Broud, Brooke Eichelberger,
and Emily Cotton

The new prevalence of the social phenomenon of "swag" merits attention from psychological researchers. The published literature currently addresses related constructs, such as arrogance, narcissism, and male body image, but there are no existing studies that specifically deal with swag. We operationally defined swag as "arrogance rooted in physical appearance" and developed the Swag Inventory 2012 (SI). We hypothesized that the SI would be a reliable and valid measure of swag in college-aged men. Thirty items were constructed on a 5-point Likert scale and rated for content validity by a panel of undergraduate psychology students. Fifteen items achieved acceptable levels of content validity ($\geq$ 0.33), and the 10 with the highest content validity ratios were selected for the inventory. This 10-item scale was administered through Qualtrics to a convenience sample of men (N=101) recruited through Facebook and other social media. Analysis of the data revealed that the SI had acceptable content validity, low face validity, and questionable reliability (α = 0.67). Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the items loaded onto three components: arrogance, physical appearance, and an unexpected third factor.

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The colloquialism *swag*, which comes from the word "swagger," is now a widely accepted term used to describe individuals with overt confidence based on their self-perception of superior wealth, social status, and physical appearance. Popularly recognized examples of individuals with swag (or *swaggernauts*) include many entertainment moguls, fashion icons, and celebrities known for their impeccable fashion as well as an attitude of self-importance and excessive confidence (e.g. Kanye West, Jay-Z, and Justin Bieber). Swag can also be observed in other less well-known individuals, especially in the late teenage and college-age demographic groups.

Men[1] with swag are often labeled as "gangstas" or "bros" and are consequently laden with a host of stigmas, stereotypes, and social expectations that may not reflect their true character. In addition, attitudes of superiority or arrogance—often seen in people with swag—may inhibit their ability to form meaningful and successful relationships, as well as frustrating others involved with them in academic, professional, or personal environments (Haan, Britt, & Weinstein, 2007). The published literature includes concepts relat-

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[1]Although women and girls may also display swag-like attitudes and behaviors, the authors' experience indicates that the term swag is most often used to refer to men and carries a heavy connotation of masculinity, even when applied to women. Thus, we chose to develop the current inventory specifically for men. Future studies could work to develop an inventory to measure parallel feminine traits or to expand the current inventory to apply to women.

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to swag, such as arrogance (Haan et al., 2007), narcissism (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Watson, Jones, & Morris, 2004), body image (Gillen & Lefkowitz, 2011; Martin & Govender, 2011), and self-esteem (Gillen & Lefkowitz, 2011). Due to the recency of the term, however, there is no empirical research dealing directly with swag as a construct. Our aim was to fill this gap by developing a concise and accurate measure of swag based on its major components.

For the purposes of this study, we operationally defined swag as "male arrogance rooted in physical appearance." Arrogance refers to the degree to which individuals have a self-perception of superiority that may or may not correlate with actual ability or achievement. We measured arrogance with items that explored subjects' attitudes about their own uniqueness and social competence in comparison with others.

Were arrogance the only component of swag, it would be simplest for researchers to use a previously established arrogance inventory. However, what separates swag from arrogance in general is the fact that it is rooted primarily and overtly in *physical appearance*. Martin and Govender (2011) found that adolescent males tend to base their self-esteem on their perception of their own body size and strength compared to what they believe to be the norm for masculine men. In addition to body size and fitness, individuals who appear to have swag are also visibly concerned with wearing distinctive brand-name clothing and accessories. In our operational definition of swag, the physical appearance aspect was defined as the degree to which individuals prioritize clothing style, accessories, and body image. We measured physical appearance with items

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specific to money and time spent on fashion, personal hygiene, and exercise, which, in our view, indicated subjects' overall investment in their outward presentation.

Although swag may more immediately manifest itself in an individual's preoccupation with body image, clothing, and accessories, at its core is an attitude of arrogance, which can manifest in other ways as well. Past research has shown that arrogance in academia is damaging to the social environment and can have negative consequences for the arrogant individuals in their future careers (Haan et al., 2007). A well-designed swag inventory may prove useful to employers and admissions committees in identifying individuals who could prove difficult to work with and teach. On the other hand, employers and educators might utilize the inventory in order to be better prepared to accommodate swaggernauts—for example, by implementing counter-arrogance, "reality check" material into their human relations and counseling programs in order to promote success in those respective settings.

We drew from measures of related constructs—especially narcissism—to develop the SI. The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979; see also Emmons, 1984; Kansi, 2003) and its shortened revision, the NPI-21 (Svindseth, Nøttestad, Wallin, Roaldset, & Dahl, 2008), were developed to detect narcissism in individuals and distinguish normal levels from levels indicating psychopathology. Arrogance, the core component of swag, was linked to several related factors that are measured by the NPI and NPI-21. Factors 2, 3, and 4 of the NPI-21—measuring Exhibitionism/Self-admiration, Superiority/Arrogance, and Uniqueness/Entitlement,

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respectively—specifically informed our development of the arrogance domain of the SI. We hypothesized that the SI would be a reliable and valid measure of the level of swag in college-aged men.

Method

Participants

We recruited a convenience sample of 120 participants through Facebook (www.facebook.com), e-mail, and other social media. Data were discarded for 19 participants because of gender ineligibility or incompletion, leaving a final sample size of 101 participants. Participants ranged in age from 13 to 49, with a mean age of 22 and a standard deviation of 4.41 (two participants did not indicate their age). They were part-time and full-time students (4% and 84%, respectively; 12% did not indicate their educational status) and part-time or full-time employees (51% and 18% respectively; 31% did not indicate their employment status) with a mean annual income of $14,800 (SD=19,800). (See Table A1 for a summary of the participants' demographic information.)

Item Construction

As indicated previously, we constructed test items using our definition of swag and referencing existing inventories. We distributed the original scale of 30 items on a 5-point Likert scale through the web-based survey engine, Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com). A panel of 28 undergraduate majors in psychology rated the items, producing a content-validity ratio (CVR) for each item. CVR ratings had a mean of 0.20 and a range of 1.29. Items with a CVR lower than 0.33 were eliminated, leaving the final inventory with 10 items (mean

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CVR of 0.55 and a range of 0.43; see Table A2). Items 3, 6, and 7 were negatively worded and reverse scored (see Appendix B).

Test Administration

Tests were administered over a weeklong period using Qualtrics. Online hyperlinks were sent to the authors' classmates and friends via e-mail and the social media website Facebook. Participants clicked on the hyperlinks and were sent to a website where the survey was available.

Statistical Analysis

Content validity was measured by calculating CVRs, as described above. To test face validity, the last question on the SI asked participants to state what they thought was being tested. To measure reliability, we ran analyses for Cronbach's alpha and Pearson bivariate correlations, as well as a factor analysis with a Varimax rotation. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

Results

Validity

A panel of 28 students completed CVR ratings, which set the minimum value at 0.33 with $p = 0.05$. Of the 30 original questions, 15 met the 0.33 minimum value; three items had very high content validity (≥ 0.7), five items had high content validity (≥ 0.5), and seven items had adequate content validity (≥ 0.33; see Table A2). Content validity for the final 10-item test was high (mean CVR = 0.55; see Table A2). Only two percent of participants were able to correctly identify what construct the SI was designed to measure, although 38% came close with answers such as self-esteem, self-image, self-confidence, and vanity, indicating low face validity.

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Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha indicated that the scale was questionable in terms of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.67$; see Table A3). Pearson bivariate correlations indicated that, of 45 correlations, six were significant at the .05 level and 12 at the .01 level, suggesting a weak linear relationship between the majority of the items (see Table A4).

Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis showed three components with eigenvalues greater than 1 (eigenvalues = 2.70, 1.69, and 1.20) that accounted for 55.94% of the variance (see Tables A5 and A6). Component 1 (arrogance) had a greater loading than component 2 (physical appearance). A third factor seemed to address a sort of swag not characterized by confidence in body image. Individuals whose responses loaded onto this third factor were confident in their natural abilities (Item 9) and in their personal style of dress (Item 10). Items 2 and 3 did not load significantly onto the third component (-0.33 and 0.39, respectively; see Table A5). However, the fact that these two items approached significance (±.40) indicated that this third factor was identifying individuals who felt that others admired them for their skills and abilities (Item 2) and who were simultaneously averse to displaying their body to others (Item 3).

Discussion

Our purpose was to create a valid and reliable measure of swag, which, to date, has received scant attention by psychological researchers. After distributing the SI online, we conducted a factor analysis. The items loaded onto three factors. Most loaded onto the components of arrogance and physical appearance, supporting

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our hypothesis that the SI would reliably and validly measure the construct of swag as arrogance rooted in physical appearance. The third component, which we labeled "mental swag," was identified by four of the items. We chose this label due to the responses of some participants who displayed arrogance in accomplishing tasks with ease but also low body image and the absence of exercise.

Strengths and Limitations

One limitation of our study was the poor generalizability of the sample. Because administration of the SI was distributed through Facebook, most participants were friends or relatives of those involved in the study. Most participants were also current or former students at Brigham Young University (BYU), which further confounded the sample population by assuring low diversity in level of education. In addition, there was presumably low diversity in respondents' religious beliefs and ethnicity. In Fall 2012 (the semester this study was conducted), 98.5% of the student body were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and only 14% were ethnic minorities (Y Facts, 2012). Because the SI was intended for college-aged men, the large age range (13- 49) and spread (SD=4.41) of our sample was also a limitation.

The SI itself also presented confounds. Test construction was completed using our definition of swag, and CVR ratings were produced by undergraduate psychology majors, rather than a panel of experts. Several of the original items that we believed would be valid of swag received CVR ratings too low to include in the SI, while other items we considered less valid received very high CVRs.

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Swag Inventory

The strengths of the SI include its brevity. The total time taken by participants to open the link to qualtrics.com and complete the test (on average, about 3 minutes) did not produce fatigue or maturation confounds. The standardization of administration through Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) also ensured that every participant received the SI in the exact same fashion.

Low face validity can be either a strength or a weakness, depending on the social desirability of the trait being tested. Because swag's desirability is currently ambiguous (we personally know some individuals who seek it and others who publicly ridicule it), we counted the SI's low face validity as a strength: if participants were ignorant of the test's target construct, they were less likely to falsify answers in order to save face or "build face."

Future Directions and Conclusion

Further research could increase diversity by widening the pool of participants. Item selection for a revised SI may be more accurate if a criterion-group approach were utilized in determining valid items instead of CVR ratings—that is, instead of submitting the items for rating by a panel of people who claim to know *about* swag, researchers would administer them to a group of men who are known to actually *have* swag. Once the SI for college males is honed, research on swag could extend to other populations, including women and middle- and old-aged adults. With specific regards to swag in the female population, future studies could work to develop an inventory to measure parallel feminine traits or to expand the current inventory to apply to women.

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In addition, a revised SI could aid in studies of contemporary conceptions of masculinity, the development of teenage boys' self-images, and the relationships of such constructs to SES, religiosity, and education. Ultimately, we want the SI to be a useful tool in the psychological and sociological study of this unique and, as yet, un-examined demographic.

Finally, our unexpected finding of the "mental swag" factor could lead to further research on yet another unexplored social group. What distinguishes those with mental swag from the swag-gernauts addressed in the current study? What other defining characteristics might they have? How does a man develop confi-dence in his intellectual prowess while simultaneously developing insecurity (or apathy) about his physical condition and appearance? How do these two swag groups compare in later life? Though ad-mittedly imperfect, the SI shows promise as an impetus to the study of swag and related directions for future research.

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Appendix A

Table A1

Demographics of the Participants

Total number	101
Average age	22.70
Standard deviation of age	4.41
Average income in thousands	14.82
Full- or part-time student	81
Full- or part-time employee	64

Note: All participants were male

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Table A2

Content Validity Ratio (CVR) Results

Item	CVR
1	0.64
2	0.36
3	0.43
4	0.71
5	0.57
6	0.36
7	0.50
8	0.71
9	0.43
10	0.79
Mean CVR	0.55

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Table A3

Cronbach's Alpha Results

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Standardized	N
.67	.67	10

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Table A4

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Results

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	.35**	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	.16	.09	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	-.08	-.04	-.21*	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-.10	.20	.04	.23*	1	-	-	-	-	-
6	.11	.27**	.14	.01	.25*	1	-	-	-	-
7	.13	.21*	.21*	.32**	.26*	.20	1	-	-	-
8	.16	.34**	.16	.15	.33**	.40**	.35**	1	-	-
9	.18	.05	.36**	-.15	.15	.12	.34**	.23*	1	-
10	.08	.02	-.07	.38**	.31**	-.03	.26*	.35**	.18	1

*$p < 0.05$, 2-tailed. ** $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed.

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Table A5

Factor Analysis Component Loading Matrix

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
01	.77		
02	.74		-.33
03	.58		.39
04	.51	.35	
05		.80	
06		.67	
07	.49	.55	
08		.51	
09			.82
10			.75

Note: Entries for each item are factor loadings, or the correlation between the item and the factor.

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Table A6

Factor Analysis Total Variance Accounted For

Initial Eigenvalues

Component	Total	% Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.70	27.02	27.02
2	1.69	16.90	43.93
3	1.20	12.01	55.94
4	0.98	9.81	65.76
5	0.78	7.83	73.59
6	0.67	6.75	80.34
7	0.60	6.07	86.41
8	0.59	5.92	92.34
9	0.40	4.02	96.37
10	0.36	3.63	100

Note: The extraction method was principal component analysis.

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Appendix B

Swag Inventory 2012 Items

Occupational Status:

Student   Part-time Student

Part-time Employee   Full-time employee

Age: ___

Gender: M   F

Annual income in thousands: _____

1. I am an exemplary person.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

2. I work out!

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

3. Others don't think I'm special.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

4. I spend a lot of money improving my style.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

5. When I walk into a room I think about which girls are into me.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

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Swag Inventory 2012 Items continued

6. I am uncomfortable having my shirt off around people.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

7. People are not jealous of me.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

8. I find my own appearance impressive.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

9. Things just come easy to me.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

10. I dress to impress.

| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

11. What do you think this test is measuring? _____