



## Organization-based self-esteem scale – adaptation in an international context

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### ABSTRACT

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We report on a study in which the English-language original of a scale on the measurement of organization-based self-esteem was adapted in five further languages (German, Polish, Hungarian, Spanish, Malay) and validated. The employees of an international company were surveyed in seven countries (USA, Canada, Germany, Poland, Spain, Hungary and Malaysia). For purposes of validation, the job satisfaction, the self-rated job performance and the support of the employees in implementing the company values (commitment) were used. The results show that the adaptation proceeded successfully. In all cases, a reliable scale emerges, which correlates positively with the validity criteria.

*Keywords: organization-based self-esteem, job satisfaction, commitment, performance*

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### 1 Introduction

The progress of knowledge in psychology depends substantially on the quality of the measurement instruments used. Only when we are in a position to measure defined constructs in a broadly objective, reliable and valid manner can the value of these constructs in empirical studies become apparent. At the same time, such scales often provide an important tool for the practical work of psychologists. Due to the increasing internationalisation of psychological research, a translation of measurement instruments into many languages would appear to be imperative. In the framework of the current study, an adaptation of the scale for the measurement of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) of Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham (1989) was undertaken and validated in terms of an employee survey in an international company in seven countries.

#### 1.1 Adaptation of diagnostic instruments

If one wishes to apply psychological measurement instruments such as the scale for the measurement of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) in an international context, then as a rule, several language versions are required. If one is to take the classical route, then one endeavours to achieve as literal a translation as possible of the original version into the languages of interest (cf. Harkness, 1999; Harkness, Van de Vijver & Mohler, 2001). Using this procedure, one runs the risk that the translated wording does not always have the exact same meaning in different languages or cultures. As a consequence, the properties of the measurement instrument (factor structure, reliability, validity etc.) can change such that the comparability of the different versions is no longer a given. In order to bypass this problem, in the last few years the principle of adaptation has established itself. In this regard, we do not

strive to achieve a literal translation, but rather an analogous translation that takes into account linguistic and cultural differentiations. (Bartram, 2001; Hambleton, 2001; Hambleton, Merena & Spielberger, 2005; Harkness et al., 2001). The comparability of the different versions of a measurement instrument therefore moves on a content-based level, even if, purely in terms of form, the phrasing used in a particular language version deviates from the other versions to a greater or lesser extent. Whether and to what extent an adaptation is successful needs to be examined using statistical methods (Bartram, 2001; Hambleton, 2001; Hambleton, Merena & Spielberger, 2005). Central to this, in the sense of classical test theory, is comparability in terms of factor structure, reliability and validity of the applied scales. The aim of our study is not the translation, but rather an adaptation of the original English-language OBSE scale for five further language areas (German, Polish, Hungarian, Spanish, Malay).

#### 1.2 Self-esteem

As early as 1890, William James pointed out that people form an idea of their own individual characteristics (needs, abilities, attractiveness etc.) and therefore gain an impression of their own character. This impression is described in contemporary psychology as the self-concept (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984). However, self-concepts are not merely limited to a description, but rather also always contain an evaluation (Kanning, 2000; Mummeny, 1995; Schütz, 2003). This evaluation is described as self-esteem. As there are several self-concepts in each person, one and the same person shows several aspects of self-esteem. Thus, for instance, an employee may have positive self-esteem with regard to his professional qualifications but at the same time evaluate his social competencies negatively. In addition to the "content

dimension", different aspects of self-esteem vary with regard to their stability ("stability dimension"). In principle, each aspect of self-esteem can be changed, but the question is how easily such a change can take place. If, for example, an employee considers his performance in the handling of a sales pitch, the resulting evaluation in the next pitch with a different customer might turn out completely different. If, by contrast, the assessment of his professional training path forms the basis of the evaluation (e.g. academics vs. workers), the concern is with a comparatively stable aspect of self-esteem.

In the majority of cases, the research is interested in a very global and temporally stable aspect of self-esteem. With the help of self-assessment items, a participant has to indicate how he rates himself on the whole. The most prominent measurement instrument in this regard is represented by the Rosenberg scale (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991; Rosenberg, 1965). Analyses with these types of global instruments illustrate strikingly how important self-esteem is for the most diverse of phenomena of human behaviour and experience (for a summary: Kanning, 2000). For example, positive associations have been shown between self-esteem and general life satisfaction (Diener, 1984; Diener & Diener, 1995), popularity or social integration (Demo & Savin-Williams, 1992; Riggio, Throckmorton & DePaola, 1990; Riggio, Watring & Throckmorton, 1993) and negative associations have been found between self-esteem and alcohol or drug consumption (Dielman, Campanelli, Shope & Butchart, 1987; Zimmermann, Copeland, Shope & Dielman, 1997).

Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) see self-esteem as one of four aspects of a higher order construct they call "core self evaluation". Besides OBSE the construct contains the aspects generalized self-efficacy, internal locus of control, and emotional stability. Core self evaluation describes positive aspects of a person's self concept and was positively correlated with job satisfaction and job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). The assumption of a higher order construct whatsoever is disputed. From a methodical point of view the correlation of the four variables can partly be accounted for by common method. Furthermore, with regard to contents, the medium to high correlation of the variables does not automatically mean that they compose a common construct. Emotional stability is – for example – a relatively broad, abstract personality trait whereas self-esteem is a product of one's self evaluation. A person may be emotional unstable and still rate themselves or their characteristics in a positive way. Similarly, one can exhibit an internal locus of control and yet be emotional unstable. Unfortunately, by aggregating these variables in a higher construct, important differentiations are lost.

### 1.3 Organizational-based Self-Esteem (OBSE)

For personnel psychology, the concept of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), which was defined by Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham in 1989, is of particular importance. Organization-based self-esteem refers to the question of the extent to which a person believes himself to provide a valuable contribution to the organization, i.e. the company the person is working for. A high organiza-

tion-based self-esteem means that in his own opinion, a person adequately fulfils the tasks assigned to him. He experiences himself as important and effective with regard to organization-related goals. The bases for the development of a positive OBSE are diverse. In addition to structural aspects of the workplace (e.g. job complexity, participation) and feedback by others in one's own social environment (e. g. respect, trust, justice), one's own assessment of performance (feelings of efficacy and competence) constitutes a third source of a positive OBSE (overview: Pierce & Gardner, 2004).

The importance of the OBSE as a psychological construct has been shown in various studies (overview: Pierce & Gardner, 2004; cf. table 1). For instance, positive correlations were proven between self-esteem and intrinsic performance motivation, performance at the workplace, general job satisfaction as well as identification with and commitment to one's own organization (Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; Pierce et al., 1989; Tang & Gilbert, 1994). Persons with high organization-based self-esteem show a stronger career orientation or are less interested in slowing down on the job than people with low self-esteem (Carson, Carson, Lanford & Roe, 1997). Moreover, Pierce, Gardner, Dunham and Cummings (1993) were able to show that organization-based self-esteem acts as a type of "buffer" against the working conditions. Employees in the company they examined were less influenced by factors such as role conflict, overwork or social support from colleagues and managers the higher their organization-based self-esteem turned out to be. Dependent variables were the job satisfaction and the performance of the participants. These results are in accordance with the plasticity hypothesis of Brockner (1983). Brockner assumes that a positive self-esteem acts as a type of "shield" against the environment. Employees with a high self-esteem should, for example, be less influenced in terms of their feelings and actions by negative evaluations from managers or other unpleasant working conditions than persons with a low self-esteem.

As a facet of a complex self-concept, the organization-based self-esteem can have an influence on the general self-esteem in the sense of Rosenberg (1965). This can be expected above all when a person's job plays a particularly important role in their life, as a positive statistical association between general and organization-based self-esteem has also repeatedly proven (Jex & Elacqua, 1999; Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; Pierce et al., 1989; Tang & Gilbert, 1994). Analyses that relate the general self-esteem to organization-based variables reach very similar results to those established with regard to organization-based self-esteem. However, at the same time, the relationships turn out to be smaller in absolute terms (e.g. Jex & Elacqua, 1999). Kanning and Schnitker (2004) showed an incremental validity of the OBSE in terms of general self-esteem in the prediction of job satisfaction. Altogether, the organization-based self-esteem proves to be a promising concept both for the research and for the practice of personnel psychology.

**Table 1: Correlates of the OBSE**

Relationship of OBSE with	Correlation
Job satisfaction <sup>4, 9, 11, 10, 12, 16, 22, 26, 27, 29</sup>	.23 – .82
Commitment <sup>1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 22, 25, 26, 29</sup>	.12 – .64
Performance at the workplace <sup>2, 4, 11, 20</sup>	.15 – .47
Performance motivation <sup>9, 11, 14</sup>	.17 – .47
Career orientation <sup>3</sup>	.52
Satisfaction with career <sup>3</sup>	.17
Tendency to retreat from career <sup>3</sup>	-.31
Identification with occupation group <sup>26</sup>	.49
Organizational citizenship behaviour <sup>6, 9, 11, 13, 18, 23, 25, 27</sup>	.19 – .83
Turnover intention <sup>7, 19, 21, 22,</sup>	-.24 – -.49
Global self-esteem <sup>4, 5, 8, 26</sup>	.44 – .56
Self-efficacy <sup>4, 21, 24, 25, 29</sup>	.19 – .65
Collectivism <sup>15</sup>	.27
Team orientation <sup>26</sup>	.23
Trustworthiness <sup>15</sup>	.34
Acknowledgment from managers <sup>11</sup>	.30 – .52
Complexity of work <sup>11</sup>	.39 – .44
Job autonomy <sup>30</sup>	.57
Support from the work environment <sup>2</sup>	.41
Support from managers <sup>2</sup>	.35
Role ambiguity <sup>2, 8</sup>	-.34
Role conflict <sup>8</sup>	-.32
Stress <sup>9</sup>	-.41
Frustration <sup>8</sup>	-.24
Depression <sup>8</sup>	-.53
Anxiousness <sup>26</sup>	-.26
Organizational cynism <sup>30</sup>	-.55
Big five <sup>26</sup>	-.26 (neuroticism) – .34 (extraversion)

Note: 1) Holdnak et al. (1990); 2) Pierce et al. (1993); 3) Carson & Carson (1998); 4) Gardner & Pierce (1998); 5) Borycki et al. (1998); 6) Tang & Ibrahim (1998); 7) Wei & Albright (1998); 8) Jex & Elacqua (1999); 9) Tang & Gilbert (1994); 10) Gilbert & Tang (1998); 11) Pierce et al. (1989); 12) Carson et al. (1997); 13) Chattopadhyay (1999); 14) Hui & Lee (2000); 15) Van Dyne et al. (2000); 16) Ragins et al. (2000); 17) Tang, Kim et al. (2000); 18) Tang, Singer et al. (2000); 19) Vecchio (2000); 20) Wiesenfeld et al. (2000); 21) Gardner & Pierce (2001); 22) Riordan et al. (2001); 23) Chattopadhyay & George (2001); 24) Kark et al. (2003); 25) Lee (2003); 26) Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; 27) Gardner et al. (2004); 28) Mauno et al. (2006); 29) Xanthopoulou et al. (2007); 30) Naus et al. (2007).

In the framework of the validation of the OBSE scale translated by us, we draw on three variables that enabled clear relationships to be found in the previous studies: job satisfaction (e.g. Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; Tang & Gilbert; 1994; van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), performance (e.g. Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Pierce et al., 1989; Wiesenfeld, Brockner & Thibault, 2000) and commitment (e.g. Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; Lee, 2003; Pierce et al., 1989).

#### 1.4 Hypotheses

1.) Each version of the OBSE scale is positively correlated with the job satisfaction of the participants.

2.) Each version of the OBSE scale is positively correlated with the performance of the participants.

3.) Each version of the OBSE scale is positively correlated with the commitment of the participants.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Measures

The starting point for our study is the English-language *OBSE scale* of Pierce et al. (1989). The scale comprises 10 self-assessment items (cf. table 2), which were used in various studies by Pierce et al. with either a five or seven-point agreement scale. The internal consistency of the OBSE scale was demonstrated by Pierce et al. (1989) with seven different samples (Cronbach's Alpha between .86 and .96; average .91). The retest reliability over a period of five weeks lies between .75 and .87. Kanning and Schnitker (2004) undertook a translation of the OBSE scale into German and reached similarly good reliability values in three studies (Cronbach's Alpha .88 to .91). Both scales, namely the English original and the German translation, were presented in the current study to four translators, who in addition to these two languages, were also translators for one further language (Polish, Hungarian, Spanish and Malay). Their task consisted of adapting the items into the respective third language (cf. table 2). The aim was to produce an adaptation, and not a translation in the literal sense (see above). The selection of languages resulted from the general framework of the data collection. The study ran in cooperation with an international company that has branches in Germany, the USA, Canada, Poland, Hungary, Spain and Malaysia. Following the adaptation by the translators, each scale was presented to a manager of the cooperating company. The concern in this regard was with persons who, based on many years of experience abroad, possessed a differentiated knowledge of the respective target language. The managers compared the newly translated version with the English-language version and – if they also had very good knowledge of German – with the German-language version. If a manager deemed a different linguistic formulation to make better sense, this was clarified with the relevant translator and a consensus decision was brought about. All items for measuring the OBSE were dealt with on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "totally disagree" to 5 = "totally agree").

The validation criteria (job satisfaction, performance and commitment) were also measured with the help of a questionnaire through a self-description of the participants. To measure *job satisfaction*, we drew on a questionnaire that is regularly used in the company for employee surveys. With 33 items, it measures eight facets of satisfaction: Satisfaction with the direct managers (4 items), colleagues (7 items), opportunities for development in the company (3 items), workload (5 items), opportunities for co-determination (3 items), wage system (3 items), work contents (2 items) and the company organization (e.g. regulation of breaks and holidays; 6 items).

**Table 2: Items of the OBSE scale**

English	German	Polish
1. I am taken seriously.	1. Man nimmt mich ernst.	1. Jestem traktowany/a poważnie.
2. I am trusted.	2. Man vertraut mir.	2. Ufają mi.
3. I am important.	3. Ich bin wichtig.	3. Jestem ważny/a.
4. I can make a difference.	4. Ich kann etwas bewirken.	4. Coś ode mnie zależy.
5. I am valuable.	5. Ich bin wertvoll.	5. Mam swoją wartość.
6. I am helpful.	6. Ich bin hilfreich.	6. Jestem pomocna/y.
7. I count around here.	7. Man zählt auf mich.	7. Liczą na mnie.
8. I am cooperative.	8. Ich bin kooperativ.	8. Jestem kooperatywna/y.
9. There is faith in me.	9. Man glaubt an mich.	9. Wierzą we mnie.
10. I am efficient.	10. Ich bin leistungsfähig.	10. Jestem wydajna/y.

  

Hungarian	Spanish	Malay
1. Komolyan vesznek.	1. Se me toma en serio.	1. Saya sentiasa dipandang serius.
2. Megbízna bennem.	2. Confían en mí.	2. Saya amat dipercayai.
3. Fontos vagyok.	3. Soy importante.	3. Saya amat penting.
4. Számít, hogy itt vagyok.	4. Puedo ejercer influencia.	4. Saya boleh membawa perubahan.
5. Értékes vagyok.	5. Se me valora.	5. Saya amat dihargai.
6. Segítségre vagyok.	6. Soy servicial.	6. Saya suka menolong.
7. Vagyok valaki.	7. Se cuenta conmigo.	7. Saya amat berkira.
8. Együttműködő vagyok.	8. Soy cooperador.	8. Saya suka bekerjasama.
9. Bizalommal vannak irántam.	9. Se cree en mí.	9. Saya adalah seorang yang boleh dipercayai.
10. Hatékony vagyok.	10. Soy eficiente.	10. Saya seorang yang effisyen.

**Table 3: Results of structural equation analyses**

Sample	Chi <sup>2</sup>	df	GFI	CFI	AGFI	NFI	RSMEA
Germany	63.82**	26	.97	.99	.94	.98	.06
Poland	22.01	20	.98	.99	.94	.98	.02
USA/Canada	65.78**	18	.96	.98	.89	.98	.09
Hungary	30.17	25	.95	.99	.80	.91	.05
Spain	27.12	29	.90	.99	.91	.94	.00
Malaysia	60.60**	26	.95	.96	.88	.96	.07
Total sample	109.39**	19	.98	.99	.95	.98	.06

Note: \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

The reliability of the individual scales is satisfactory (cf. table 4). In addition, the scales showed a high content validity, as it was always directly asked: "How satisfied are you with...". Across the individual scales on job satisfaction, a general value of job satisfaction was calculated. This scale also showed a very good reliability (cf. table 4). Furthermore, the general satisfaction with a single item scale was measured ("On the whole, how satisfied are you with everyday professional life in your company?"). All items were recorded on a five-point scale (1 = "very dissatisfied" to 5 = "very satisfied").

To measure *performance*, a single-item scale was used: "How do you rate your professional performance in comparison to your colleagues?". The employees were provided with seven response categories for this purpose, from 1 = "below average" through 4 = "average" to 7 = "above average".

The *commitment* of the employees was operationalised through their support of the company values. The company has given itself six company values: flexibility, independence, innovation, partnership, passion to achieve top-rate performances, and quality. With one item for each value, the employees were asked to what extent they actively engage in realising the corresponding company value (five-point scale from 0 = "not at all" to 4 = "very much"). Across the six items, the scale "commitment" was calculated. The scale showed a very satisfactory reliability (cf. table 4). All of the items for validating the OBSE were also translated into the various languages following the procedure described above.

## 2.2 Sample & Procedure

Participants in the survey were employees of an internationally operating company that manufactures industrial products. The company manufactures a very wide range of plastic packaging. The work takes place at various machines, with four successive work steps: 1<sup>st</sup> melting down the plastic granules, 2<sup>nd</sup> producing plastic sheets, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing the sheets and 4<sup>th</sup> cutting and welding the sheets into bags, which are then delivered to other companies. The company's workforce is comprised of skilled workers and unskilled workers, who as a rule have a school-leaving qualification below the level of the German "Abitur" (A-level or university entrance-level equivalent). The survey referred to all employees from production. In total, 2812 questionnaires were distributed in seven countries (Germany, USA, Canada, Poland, Hungary, Spain, Malaysia). The response rate for the total sample amounted to 52.6% (1478 questionnaires). The highest response rate was achieved in Malaysia, with 91.6%, and the lowest was in Spain, with 36.4%. As the questionnaires distributed in the USA and Canada were the English-language original, the two samples were combined in the further analyses. In absolute figures, the following sample sizes were achieved: Germany  $N = 503$ , USA/Canada  $N = 348$ , Poland  $N = 208$ , Hungary  $N = 113$ , Spain  $N = 55$  and Malaysia  $N = 251$ . For reasons of anonymity, the gender of the employees was not recorded. Based on the gender distribution in the company, however, it can be assumed that samples consisted highly predominantly of men. The questionnaires were sent by post with the monthly payslip in order to ensure that all employees actually received a questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected in an urn in the respective location of the company.

## 3 Results

In a first step, the six OBSE scales were examined. In each sample, first of all an exploratory factor analysis was carried out. In each case, a strong variance factor emerged (explanation of variance between 42% and 63%). In addition, each scale was tested with the help of a structural equation model. Here, too, the one-factor structure of the OBSE scale was confirmed in all six variants (cf. table 3). For the samples Germany, USA/Canada and Malaysia, the Chi<sup>2</sup> test was significant, which is not surprising in view of the sample size (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The examination of internal consistency of the OBSE scales in all six samples resulted in a satisfactory reliability value in each case (Cronbach's Alpha between .80 and .94, cf. table 4). The mean values range above the middle point of the five-point response scale. There are no significant differences between the six countries in the OBSE value (cf. table 4).

The scales used to validate the OBSE also show a satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha between .70 and .96, cf. table 4). Significant differences emerge between the countries both for the individual satisfaction scales and for commitment and self-rated performance. Accordingly, the satisfaction in the USA/Canada, Poland and Malaysia turns out to be frequently lower than in Germany and Spain. In terms of commitment, lower val-

ues are found in the samples from the USA/Canada and Poland than in the samples from Hungary and Spain. With regard to self-rated performance, only one significant difference can be found: the participants from the USA/Canada rate their performance as significantly higher than the participants from Malaysia.

In the next step, the validation was carried out. For the individual facets of job satisfaction, partial correlations were calculated for each sample, with the facets of satisfaction as predictors and the OBSE as the criterion. Table 5 presents the partial correlations ( $r$ ), the squared partial correlations ( $r^2$ ) as well as the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). For the other validation criteria (general job satisfaction, commitment, performance), table 6 presents the correlations with the OBSE as well as the explanation of variance.

In terms of job satisfaction, *hypothesis 1* cannot be confirmed on the level of the individual facets of satisfaction, but it is confirmed on the level of general satisfaction. The partial correlations are only significant in a small number of cases. This applies three times for the German sample, twice for the USA/Canada, and only once for Poland (cf. table 5). The picture is quite different when we consider the multiple correlations, which are significant in every case, with the explanation of variance being lowest for the Malaysian sample, at 8% and highest for the Spanish sample, at 48%. If we look at the single items scale for measuring general job satisfaction, the same picture emerges (cf. table 6). In all samples, there is a significant association between satisfaction and the OBSE. The explanation of variance is lowest for Malaysia, at 5% and highest for Spain, at 35%.

The testing of *hypothesis 2* turned out to be positive throughout. For all six variants of the OBSE scale, a positive association with the self-assessed work performance was shown (cf. table 6). The higher the organization-based self-esteem, the better the performance the employees showed at the workplace by their own account. The explanation of variance fluctuates between 7 % (Germany) and 20 % (Hungary).

*Hypothesis 3* was also confirmed. For all six variants of the OBSE scale, a positive significant association with commitment was established (cf. table 6). The higher the organization-based self-esteem, the more intensively the employees, by their own account, committed to realising the company values. On the whole, the explanation of variance turns out to be higher and fluctuates between 12 % (Malaysia) and 40 % (Spain).

**Table 4: Results Mean values, standard deviation and reliability of the scales (Cronbach's Alpha)**

Sample	Facets of job satisfaction												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Germany	3.13	3.32	2.87	3.21 <sup>a</sup>	3.39	3.11 <sup>a</sup>	3.47 <sup>a</sup>	3.19 <sup>a</sup>	3.28 <sup>a</sup>	3.53 <sup>a</sup>	2.84	5.62	3.89
	1.01	0.74	1.00	0.76	0.97	0.99	0.85	0.75	0.66	0.91	0.70	0.82	0.71
	.88	.86	.86	.78	.77	.86	.70	.79	.95	-	.81	-	.91
Poland	3.47	3.49 <sup>a</sup>	2.54 <sup>a</sup>	2.86 <sup>b</sup>	3.11 <sup>a</sup>	2.42 <sup>b</sup>	3.36 <sup>a</sup>	3.31 <sup>a</sup>	3.14 <sup>ab</sup>	3.16 <sup>b</sup>	2.64 <sup>a</sup>	5.53	3.85
	0.89	0.60	1.16	0.83	0.94	1.12	0.77	0.85	0.66	1.08	0.90	1.00	0.70
	.84	.80	.91	.75	.80	.88	.67	.87	.95	-	.91	-	.86
USA/Canada	3.33	3.16 <sup>b</sup>	2.72	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	3.31	2.53 <sup>b</sup>	2.79 <sup>b</sup>	2.91 <sup>b</sup>	3.08 <sup>b</sup>	3.08 <sup>b</sup>	2.67 <sup>a</sup>	5.85 <sup>a</sup>	3.85
	1.12	0.77	1.01	0.75	1.05	1.15	0.98	0.87	0.78	1.06	0.87	0.92	0.84
	.91	.89	.86	.78	.84	.92	.77	.85	.96	-	.91	-	.94
Hungary	3.37	3.44	3.06 <sup>b</sup>	2.91 <sup>b</sup>	3.46	2.37 <sup>b</sup>	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	3.11	3.15 <sup>a</sup>	3.35	3.03 <sup>b</sup>	5.49	3.69
	1.00	0.66	0.87	0.60	0.83	0.99	0.75	0.70	0.56	0.83	0.60	0.71	0.73
	.89	.83	.87	.72	.76	.89	.63	.80	.92	-	.84	-	.92
Spain	3.62	3.69 <sup>a</sup>	3.21 <sup>b</sup>	3.01	3.82 <sup>b</sup>	3.22 <sup>a</sup>	3.72 <sup>a</sup>	3.13	3.49 <sup>c</sup>	3.97 <sup>a</sup>	3.13 <sup>b</sup>	5.48	3.94
	0.96	0.68	1.23	0.91	1.09	0.99	1.07	0.80	0.65	1.02	0.69	1.18	0.66
	.85	.81	.89	.81	.86	.77	.80	.76	.93	-	.81	-	.89
Malaysia	3.38	3.35	2.69	2.83 <sup>b</sup>	3.57 <sup>b</sup>	2.69 <sup>b</sup>	2.93 <sup>b</sup>	3.03	3.10 <sup>b</sup>	3.18 <sup>b</sup>	2.87	5.49 <sup>b</sup>	3.79
	0.87	0.72	0.96	0.70	0.96	0.93	0.87	0.70	0.59	0.91	0.73	1.10	0.55
	.87	.88	.79	.76	.81	.71	.70	.76	.92	-	.90	-	.80
Total	3.31	3.33	2.78	3.04	3.40	2.74	3.17	3.10	3.17	3.31	2.81	5.62	3.84
	0.99	0.73	1.02	0.76	0.99	1.07	0.92	0.79	0.68	0.99	0.78	0.94	0.71
	.88	.86	.86	.77	.80	.85	.73	.81	.94	-	.87	-	.89

Note: Satisfaction with 1 = managers, 2 = colleagues, 3 = opportunities for development, 4 = workload, 5 = opportunities for co-determination, 6 = wage system, 7 = work contents, 8 = company organization, 9 = general job satisfaction calculated over all facets, 10 = general job satisfaction single item scale, 11 = commitment, 12 = self-rated performance single item scale, 13 = OBSE; upper row = arithmetic mean, middle row = standard deviation, lower row = Cronbach's Alpha. Two mean values differ significantly if they show different indices in a column ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5: Correlation between OBSE and facets of job satisfaction**

Sample	Facets of job satisfaction																
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		
	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	r	r <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>
Germany	.14*	.01	.06	.00	.09	.00	.00	.00	.14*	.01	.01	.00	.29**	.07	.01	.00	.29**
Poland	.01	.00	.02	.00	.13	.01	.18	.02	.06	.00	.04	.00	.12	.01	.41**	.07	.25**
USA/Canada	.05	.00	.05	.00	.06	.00	.19*	.02	.22**	.02	.02	.00	.12	.01	.04	.00	.34**
Hungary	.35**	.12	.02	.00	.13	.02	.10	.01	.17	.03	.12	.01	.37**	.12	.08	.01	.36**
Spain	.22	.05	.02	.00	.29	.07	.14	.02	.18	.02	.08	.01	.25	.02	.11	.01	.48**
Malaysia	.05	.00	.14	.01	.03	.00	.03	.00	.06	.00	.15	.02	.17	.02	.12	.01	.08**
Total	.11**	.01	.03	.00	.08**	.00	.03	.00	.15**	.02	.03	.00	.21**	.03	.08*	.00	.26**

Note: Satisfaction with 1 = managers, 2 = colleagues, 3 = opportunities for development, 4 = workload, 5 = opportunities for co-determination, 6 = wage system, 7 = work contents, 8 = company organization, 9 = general job satisfaction calculated over all facets; r = partial correlation, r<sup>2</sup> = squared partial correlation; \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 6: Correlation between OBSE and job satisfaction, support of company values, performance**

Sample	general job satisfaction		self-rated performance		commitment	
	single item scale					
	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Germany	.44**	.19	.26**	.07	.58**	.34
Poland	.40**	.16	.39**	.15	.47**	.22
USA/Canada	.51**	.26	.31**	.10	.58**	.34
Hungary	.43**	.19	.45**	.20	.57**	.32
Spain	.58**	.34	.41**	.17	.63**	.40
Malaysia	.23**	.05	.33**	.11	.35**	.12
Total sample	.42**	.18	.32**	.10	.51**	.26

Note: \* *p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01

#### 4 Discussion

The adaptation of the OBSE scale was widely successful. The scale of Pierce et al. (1989) is now available in six languages, in which it has proved itself to be consistently reliable and valid. The results speak very clearly for the quality of the OBSE scale. A adaptation into so many different languages is a strict test, which, indeed, many psychological measurement instruments would not pass as well as the scale of Pierce et al. (1989).

The current study cannot make any statements about the direction of the association between the organization-based self-esteem and the three validity constructs. For example, it may well be the case that a high performance also contributes to a higher organization-based self-esteem. Further research needs to be carried out to provide information in this regard.

On a critical note, it should be pointed out that all validity criteria only reflect the subjective point of view of those surveyed. For the construct of job satisfaction, this is not a problem as job satisfaction represents, by definition, a subjective experience of the employees. With regard to performance and commitment, however, third-party assessments by managers and colleagues would appear to be desirable, or in terms of performance also objective measurements such as productivity. In the framework of our cooperation with the company, there was unfortunately no opportunity to record such measures. Here, too, further research is required.

Using a variety of data sources (self description, behavioural data, assessment by others) would furthermore be helpful in guarding against the problem of common method variance (e.g. Johnson, Roden & Djurdjevic, 2011; Lindell & Withney, 2001). If data from only one source are correlated, there is always a risk that the correlations are at least partly accounted for by common method variance. In this, our work is no exemption from all the other studies using only self-descriptions. Future examinations must show if our results can be confirmed by using other sources of data in addition. Moreover, there is a need of longitudinal studies to estimate the relation of cause and effect. Technically, both directions are possible: OBSE can influence job satisfaction/performance and vice versa. Also important in addition to the direction is the search for mediators and moderators of the relationship.

Another weakness of our study is the use of a single item scale for the measurement of job performance. We have no information about the reliability of this scale. However, single item scales have by no means in principle a low reliability. By now there has been a variety of studies proving a satisfactory reliability and validity of single items scales (e.g. Shamir & Kark, 2004; Woods & Hampson, 2005). Grubb (2006) could show, however, that multiple item scales occasionally achieve a higher predictive validity.

So far the incremental validity of the OBSE has been documented concerning ratings of self-esteem in the context of job satisfaction (Kanning & Schnitker, 2004). Further studies dealing with the issues of job performance are to be expected, as well as examinations of the validity of OBSE compared to other predictors (e.g. internal locus of control, emotional stability). Regarding the practical application of OBSE, for example in the context of human resource managements, one must examine the relevance of OBSE in interaction with job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Even though many questions remain unanswered, the results show clearly the promising aspects of OBSE as an instrument for human resource management. A positive OBSE correlates with numerous variables which are of a high importance for the well-being and the job performance (cf. table 1). Therefore, executive managers should see the advancement of their associate's OBSE as one of their objectives.

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