

 Happiness Assessment 4 min. Client Yes

The Scale of Positive and Negative Experience

Subjective well-being refers to the evaluation of one's life (Diener et al., 1999). These evaluations are both affective and cognitive. High levels of subjective well-being are experienced when people feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience and when they are satisfied with their lives. In an informal context, subjective well-being is often referred to as "happiness".

A commonly-used scale to measure positive and negative affect in the context of well-being is the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE; Diener et al, 2009). The SPANE is a 12-item questionnaire and includes six items to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings. For both the positive and negative items, three of the items are general (e.g., positive, negative) and three per subscale are more specific (e.g., joyful, sad).

Goal

The goal of this questionnaire is to measure the affective component of subjective well-being. The scale is able to measure the pleasant and unpleasant emotional feelings but also other states such as interest, flow and engagement, and physical pleasure.

Advice

The SPANE may be self-administered or administered in an interview and generally takes less than 5 minutes to complete. Its short form makes it very suitable for repeated measurements. For instance, the scale can be administered several times during an intervention.

Scoring

Each item is scored on a scale ranging from 1 ("very rarely or never") to 5 ("very often or always"). After completing the scale, a positive feelings scale score (SPANE-P) a negative feeling scale score (SPANE-N) and an overall affect balance score (SPANE-B) can be computed.

The SPANE-P is computed by adding the scores for the positive items of the scale. Scores vary from 6 (lowest possible) to 30 (highest positive feelings). The SPANE-N is computed by adding the scores for the negative items of the scale. Scores vary from 6 (lowest possible) to 30 (highest negative feelings). Finally, the SPANE-B is computed by subtracting the total SPANE-N score from the total SPANE-P score. The SPANE-B can vary from -24 (unhappiest possible) to 24 (highest affect balance possible).

Although cut-off scores and population norms are not available for this instrument, the following mean scores can be used as a frame of reference: SPANE-P (M = 22.1, SD = 3.7), SPANE-N (M = 15.6, SD = 3.9), and SPANE-B (M = 6.5, SD = 6.7). These mean scores were reported by a sample of 573 healthy adults in an university setting.



Suggested Readings

Diener, E., Suh, E., Lucas, R. E., & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, *125*, 276-302.

Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Biswas-Diener, R., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., & Oishi, S. (2009). New measures of well-being. In E. Diener & E. Diener (Eds.), *Assessing well-being: The collected works of Ed Diener* (pp. 247-266). New York, NY: Springer.

Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2010). New well-being measures: Short scales to assess flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, *97*(2), 143-156.

Tool Description

Instructions

Please think about what you have been doing and experiencing during the past four weeks. Then report how much you experienced each of the following feelings, using the scale below. For each item, select a number from 1 to 5, and indicate that number on your response sheet.

| | Very rarely/ Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often/ Always |
|---------------|--------------------|--------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1. Positive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Negative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Pleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Unpleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Happy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Sad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Afraid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Joyful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Angry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Contented | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Scoring sheet:

| Score Negative Feelings (SPANE-N) | Score Positive Feelings (SPANE-P) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2. | 1. |
| 4. | 3. |
| 6. | 5. |
| 8. | 7. |
| 9. | 10. |
| 11. | 12. |
| Total: | Total: |

Balance score (SPANE-B) = (Total SPANE-P) - (Total SPANE-N):

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-24 0 24

(unhappiest possible)

(highest affect balance possible)