5   CLASSIFICATION OF HAPPINESS MEASURES

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Accepted measures of happiness are classified in two ways: first by the substantive meaning they tap and second by their methodological characteristics.

Substance
The categorization of meaning involves the kind of happiness the question focuses on, for instance whether the focal point is on pleasant mood or on contentment. This is called the *focus* of the question. Further the questions are also classified by the period considered. For example, whether a question on happiness pertains to the last few years or to the mood of the moment. This is referred to as the *time frame* of the question.

Method

The classification of methodical aspects starts with the technique by which happiness is assessed. Questioning is the most common method but affect level can also be assessed by behavioural observation. Next to direct questioning, there are also indirect techniques, such as content analysis of diaries. These assessment methods are referred to as the question *mode.*

All assessments of happiness are scored in a way that allows a ranking. Mostly this is done by using numerical scales, but scores are also recorded on verbally labelled scales or on graphic scales. So, the next subject of classification is the *rating-scale* used. Both the scale-type and the scale range are recorded.

Given the many sub-divisions within these five classifications (to be shown below), the number of possible combinations is enormous, however in reality we see only a limited number of configurations. Many of the measures fit the same characteristics. The most common measure is a direct question on current life-satisfaction, rated on a numerical 10-step scale. Still such items often differ slightly in wording. To keep these differences in mind all question codes have an extension, which indicates the variant. This extension a character, where 'a' signifies the first (and often only) *variant*, and 'd' means that there are at least four variants of that question in the collection.

The classification is presented on scheme 5. The details of this classification system are explained in the next sections**.**

Scheme 5 Classification of happiness measures

Substantive meaning	**Focus**	The kind of happiness addressed.
	Time frame	The period considered
Method of assessment	**Mode**	The technique by which happiness is assessed
	Scale-type	How the observation is scored
	Scale range	Number of degrees of happiness distinguished
Sub-variant	**Wording**	Variation in phrasing of otherwise equivalent question

5/1　　**Classification by focus:** Kind of happiness addressed

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5/1.1　　**Focus on Overall appraisal of Life**

Focus Code	Description	Used N times in studies by July 2020

Self-estimate in response to question with keyword *happiness*

O-HL	Overall: Happiness in Life	2783
O-HP	Overall: Happy Person	230
O-H?	Overall: Happiness: item not reported	27
O-HV	Overall: Happiness various items	8

Self-estimate in response to question with keyword *life-satisfaction*

O-SLC	Overall: Satisfaction with Life-Course	58
O-SLL	Overall: Satisfaction with Life one Leads	2502
O-SLP	Overall: Satisfaction with Personal Life	133
O-SLS	Overall: Satisfaction with Life-Situation	14
O-SLu	Overall: Satisfaction with life (unspecified)	1993
O-SLW	Overall: Satisfaction with Life as a Whole	2918
O-SLV	Overall: Satisfaction with Life: mixed questions	5
O-SL?	Overall: Satisfaction with Life: question not reported	65
O-SP	Overall: Satisfied Person	4

Self-estimate in response to question with keywords *quality of life*

O-QOL	Overall: Quality of Life	42
O-QLS	Overall: Quality of Life Situation	23
O-SQL	Overall: Satisfaction with Quality of Life	21
O-QL?	Overall: Quality of Life, question not reported	23

Self-estimate in response to question with further keywords

O-DT	Overall: Delighted vs Terrible life	234
O-EL	Overall: Enjoyment of Life	0
O-GBB	Overall: Good-Bad Balance	8
O-LWL	Overall: Life Worth Living	1
O-V	Overall: Various questions	44

Sum Scores

O-Sum	Overall: Multiple questions on overall happiness	145

5/1.2   Focus on hedonic level of affect

Focus Code	Description	Used N times in studies by July 2020

Self-estimates in response to questions on how well one feels most of the time

A-AOL	Affect: Average Overall Level	225
A-TH	Affect: Time Happy	20
A-V	Affect: Various questions	13
A-Sum	Affect: Multiple questions about hedonic level of affect	7

Computed averages

A-AA	Affect: Average during activities	2
A-APA	Affect: Average affect during particular activities	
A-ARE	Affect: Average Repeated Overall Estimate	32
A-ASA	Affect: Average of Specific Affects	21

Computed Affect Balance (positive minus negative affects)

A-AB	Affect Balance: various	2370
A-BB	Affect Balance (Bradburn's 10 item index	271
A-Bbe	Affect Balance (Berkman index)	
A-Abn	Affect: Balance (Norlander)	
A-BBr	Affect Balance (Brenner's index)	5
A-BC	Affect Balance (Cohen's index)	1
A-Bde	Affect Balance (Derogatis)	2
A-BD1	Affect Balance (Diener's 8 item index)	4
A-BD2	Affect Balance (Diener's ABS)	11
A-BD3	Affect Balance (Diener 24 item index)	7
A-BF	Affect Balance (Fredrickson Differential Emotion Scale)	3
A-BH	Affect: Balance (Huelsman)	
A-BK	Affect: Balance (Kamman's index)	14
A-BL	Affect Balance (Lyubomirsky)	
A-BMc	Affect Balance: McGreal 'Depression-Happiness Scale'	16
A-BM	Affect Balance (McNear's POMS)	
A-BMr	Affect Balance (Mrozek)	3
A-BS	Affect Balance (Schultz's index)	1
A-BW	Affect Balance (Watson et al PANAS)	77

Ratings of affect level by others

A-CA	Affect: Cheerful Appearance	55
A-CP	Cheerful Person	22

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5/1.3   Focus on Contentment

Focus Code	*Description*	*Used N times in studies by July 2020*

Self-estimates in response to questions about getting what one wants in life

C-A	Contentment: Accomplishments in life	5
C-BW	Contentment: Best-Worst possible life	3408
C-RA	Contentment: Realization of Aspirations	52
C-RG	Contentment: Realization of Goals	19
C-W	Contentment: Getting things Wanted	31
C-sum	Contentment: Multiple questions on contentment	0
Computed fit of wants and achievements		
C-ASG	Contentment: Average Success in Goals	3

5/1.4   Mixed focus

Focus Code	*Description*	*Used N times in studies by July 2020*

Self-estimates in response to ambiguous questions

M-TH	Mixed: Time Happy	98
M-PL	Mixed: Pleasure in Life	17
M-FH	Mixed: Feel Happy	414
M-LS	Mixed: Life Success	0
Summed measures of different main-focus variants		
M-AO	Mixed: Affect + Overall	69
M-AC	Mixed: Affect + Contentment	7
M-CO	Mixed: Contentment + Overall	22
M-ACO	Mixed: Affect + Contentment + Overall	22

5/2　**Classification by timeframe**: Period of happiness addressed

Focus Code	Description	Used N times of studies by July 2020

c	currently (presently, today, these days)	7675
cm	last month, last few weeks	383
cq	last quarter	11
cw	last week	158
cy	last year	27
g	generally,	2213
h	hitherto	63
l	over lifetime	9
ly	last years	8
m	momentary, now	35
md	Last day	56
mh	last hour	27
mi	last instant	37
mp	last part of the day	6
se	since event	6
u	time frame not specified	5061
yd	yesterday	2518
*	various time frames (in case of mixed measures)	124
?	time frame not reported	204

5/3   Classification by observation mode: Method by which happiness is measured

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5/3.1 Self reports

5/3.2 Ratings by others

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5/3.1   Self reports

Focus Code	Description	Used N times In studies by July 2020

SELF-REPORT direct questions		
sq	single question	15350
sqr	single question repeated	36
sqt	single question asked twice	46
mq	multiple questions	3020
mqr	multiple questions repeated	33
mq?	multiple questions, items not reported	2
fi	focused interview	17
oq	open question	7
st	sorting task	
SELF-REPORT indirect inference		
cd	Content analysis of ego-documents	1
lr	Life review	2
pt	Projective test	

5/3.2   Rating by others

Focus Code	Description	Used N times in studies by July 2020

afa	automatic face analysis	1
rc	rating by clinician	17
Rf	rating by family	21
ri	rating by interviewer	24
rn	rating by nurses	4

rp	rating by peers	6
rt	rating by teachers	5
rv	ratings by various raters	10
tsb	time sampling of happy behaviours	15
*	multiple observations	4
?	observation method not reported	

5/4   **Classification by rating-scales:** How observations are scored
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5/4.1   SCALE TYPE

Code	Description	Used N tomes In studies by July 2020

Pictorial scales

Code	Description	Used N tomes
c	circles scale	5
F	faces scale	52
fn	faces + numerical scale	2
fv	faces + verbal scale	1
l	ladder scale	3394
lg	life graph	5
m	mountain scale	59
ol	open line scale (visual analogue scale, VAS)	43
pt	thermometer scale	
pw	weather scale	

Numerical scales

Code	Description	Used N tomes
n	Numerical scale	3853
nt	Numerical scale transformed to range 0-10	36
nv	Numerical scale + verbal labels	0
nvt	Numerical scale + verbal labels, transformed to range 0-1	10

Verbal scales

Code	Description	Used N tomes
v	verbal scale	10992
v*	verbal scales combined	6
vt	verbal scales transformed to range 0-10	15

Further scales

Code	Description	Used N tomes
r	ratio of happy/unhappy respondents	
ro	rank order of respondents	4
th%	% time happy	22

Code	Description	Used N tomes
?	rating scale not reported	66
*	multiple rating scales	56

X	not yet classified	1

5/4.2   SCALE RANGE
The number of steps indicates the scale-range.

Some examples:
verbal scale:	very, pretty, not too happy	*3 step*
numerical scale	1-10	10 step
	0-10	11 steps

Description	*Used N times in studies by July 2020*
2-step	87
3-step	1005
4-step	4774
5-step	1335
6-step	131
7-step	599
8-step	6
9-step	44
10-step	1317
11-step	5446
>11 step	14

5/5   Notation of variants

If a combination of the above characteristics is unique, the code gets an extension a. If there are more items of the same kind that differ only in wording, these variants are indicated with further letter extensions, following the alphabet. If a question-code has an extension 'd', this means that there are at least four variants of that question in the collection.

Example of classification of a single question:
'Taken all together, how would you say things are these days?   Would you say that you are....?'
3   very happy
2   pretty happy
1   not too happy

This question is classified as follows: O-HL/c/sq/v/3/aa

5/6   Equivalent measures of happiness

A main aim of the World Database of Happiness is to facilitate comparison across studies. Comparison requires that happiness is measured in the same way, in particular when average happiness in nations is compared, where differences are often small and scores are subject to language bias anyway.

Ideally, we should compare only averages obtained with *identical* measures, that is, typically single questions with the same measure code as discussed above. In practice, that requirement would limit cross-national comparison of happiness very much and that is why near-identical questions are sorted into types of *equivalent* measures. This sorting is based on the following aspects of measures of happiness

Identical aspects

- Conceptual focus   e.g. code O-HL   cf. section 5/1
- Method of measurement   e.g. single question   cf. section 5/3
- Rating scale   e.g. verbal scale   cf. section 5/4.1
- Scale range   e.g. 3-step   cf. section 5/4.2

Non-identical aspects

- Time-frame   e.g. currently   cf. section 5/2
- Wording variant   e.g. very happy highest   cf. section 5/5

An overview of equivalent measure type is given at
https://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/equivalent-measures/

Though the use of *equivalent* measures is defendable for comparison across nations, comparison of average happiness within nations can better limit to fully *identical* measures.

5/7 Derived measures

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The above measures of happiness can be combined with information on variable aspects of happiness (cf. chapter 2, section 2.4 of this introductory text), such as how lasting happiness is or how variable happiness is. Some such measures of 'qualified happiness' are given below.

5/7.1 **Happy Life Years:** Combinations of longevity and happiness (Veenhoven 1996)

D-YA	Years Lived in high Affect	0
D-YH	Years Lived Happy	6
D-YS	Years Lived Satisfied	2
D-YC	Years Lived Contented	1

5/7.2 **Inequality in Happiness** in a population
Typically measured with the standard-deviation (Veenhoven & Kalmijn 2005)

D-IH	Dispersion of responses to question on happiness	
D-IS	Dispersion of responses to question on life-satisfaction	2

5/7.3 **Inequality-Adjusted Happiness** (IAH) in a population (Kalmijn & Veenhoven 2006, 2014)

D-IAH	Combination of mean and SD life satisfaction	

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