

## Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

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## 2 **German and Tagalog Happiness** 3 **Scales**

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### 7 **Synonyms**

8 [Subjective happiness scale \(SHS\)](#)

### 9 **Definition**

10 Subjective happiness refers to the measurement  
11 of happiness from the point of view of partici-  
12 pants themselves. Subjective happiness has been  
13 found to be associated with self-perceptions of  
14 well-being, satisfaction with life, and improved  
15 interpersonal relationships.

### 16 **Description**

17 The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) was  
18 developed as “a global, subjective assessment of  
19 whether one is a happy or unhappy person” as  
20 measured through self-reports (Lyubormirsky &  
21 Lepper, 1999, p. 139). The scale consists of four  
22 items, two of which assess self-perceptions based  
23 on absolute ratings of well-being and ratings rel-  
24 ative to peers. In two further items, participants  
25 are presented with descriptions happy and

unhappy individuals and are asked to rate the 26  
extent to which the descriptions are accurate 27  
descriptions of participants themselves. 28  
According to Lyubormirsky and Lepper (1999), 29  
the SHS is superior to other scales of subjective 30  
well-being because it measures global subjective 31  
assessments, rather than focusing on multiple 32  
aspects of happiness. 33

Several studies have examined the psycho- 34  
metric properties of the SHS and have reported 35  
that it has good internal consistency and test- 36  
retest reliability, as well as good discriminant 37  
and convergent validity (Lyubormirsky & 38  
Lepper, 1999; Mattei & Schaefer, 2004). The 39  
SHS has also been translated into a number of 40  
different languages, including Russian 41  
(Lyubormirsky & Lepper, 1999), Japanese 42  
(Shimai, Otake, Utsui, Ikemi and Lyubormirsky 43  
2004), and Malay (Swami, 2008). Each of these 44  
translated versions of the SHS has been shown to 45  
have a one-dimensional factor structure as well as 46  
good psychometric properties, including high 47  
internal consistency, good test-retest reliability, 48  
and patterns of divergent and convergent validity. 49

Swami et al. (2009) further presented trans- 50  
lations and validations of German and Tagalog 51  
versions of the SHS. They argued this was impor- 52  
tant in order to confirm the extent to which the 53  
SHS is suitable for use in different linguistic and 54  
cultural groups and in order to facilitate cross- 55  
cultural research on happiness. In two studies, 56  
therefore, they translated the SHS into German 57  
and Tagalog and examined its psychometric 58  
properties in Austria and the Philippines, 59

60 respectively. In addition, they also conducted  
 61 a cross-cultural comparison of SHS scores  
 62 among participants from Austria, the Philippines,  
 63 Malaysia (these data being obtained from Swami,  
 64 2008), and Britain (a novel dataset).

65 Results of the study showed that the German  
 66 version of the SHS, when tested with 960 indi-  
 67 viduals from the community in Vienna, had  
 68 a one-dimensional factor structure and good  
 69 internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .82).  
 70 In addition, the German SHS was significantly  
 71 associated with other measures of subjective hap-  
 72 piness (including single- and multi-item mea-  
 73 sures of well-being), suggesting a good pattern  
 74 of convergent validity. Swami et al. (2009) also  
 75 argued that, to the extent that the strengths of  
 76 these correlations were small to medium, the  
 77 SHS can be conceptually distinguished from  
 78 other similar scales.

79 Similarly, the Tagalog version of the SHS,  
 80 when tested with 182 members of the community  
 81 in Manila, was found to have a one-dimensional  
 82 factor structure and good internal consistency  
 83 (Cronbach's alpha = .78). Furthermore, the Taga-  
 84 log SHS was found to correlate positively with  
 85 other measures of subjective well-being. Based  
 86 on these results, Swami et al. (2009) reported  
 87 that both the German and Tagalog versions of the  
 88 SHS had good psychometric properties, although  
 89 they also noted that their examination did not  
 90 specifically examine test-retest reliability. In addi-  
 91 tion, they also noted that they did not conduct  
 92 validation checks that overcome the general limi-  
 93 tations of using self-reported data.

94 In terms of the cross-cultural comparisons of  
 95 British, Filipino, German, and Malaysian partici-  
 96 pants, Swami et al. (2009) initially predicted that  
 97 members of individualist cultures (Austria and  
 98 Britain in their study) would have higher SHS  
 99 than participants from collectivist cultures  
 100 (Malaysia and the Philippines). This was based  
 101 on the suggestion that happiness is constructed as  
 102 a personal achievement in individualist cultures,  
 103 whereas it is predicated upon the realization of  
 104 positive social relationships in collective cultures  
 105 (Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita and Rayes 2001).  
 106 The results of Swami et al.'s (2009) cross-cultural  
 107 comparison generally supported this hypothesis.

Specifically, Swami et al. (2009) found that, 108  
 controlling for participant age, British and Aus- 109  
 110 trian participants had significantly higher scores  
 111 than Filipino and Malaysian participants. They  
 112 argued that this supports the hypothesis that partic-  
 113 ipants from individualist cultures are more  
 114 likely to report positive emotions and well-  
 115 being than their counterparts in collectivist cul-  
 116 tures. However, their results also showed that  
 117 Filipino participants had significantly higher  
 118 SHS scores than Malaysian participants. Swami  
 119 et al. (2009) considered a number of explanations  
 120 for this finding, including the possibility on  
 121 national differences in conceptions of health and  
 122 well-being as well as limitations of their collec-  
 123 tivism-individualism dichotomy.

**Cross-References**

- ▶ Cross-Cultural 125
- ▶ Happiness 126
- ▶ Subjective Well-Being 127

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