

Notes Statistics Netherlands on happiness and satisfaction with life data

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Life situation surveys

Statistics Netherlands collects data on happiness and satisfaction with life are collected in life situation surveys since 1977 by means of the question “To what extent do you consider yourself a happy person?” (in Dutch: “In welke mate vindt u zichzelf een gelukkig mens?”) with response options “Very happy”, “Happy”, “Neither happy nor unhappy”, “Not very happy” and “Unhappy” and the question “How satisfied are you with the life you currently lead?” (in Dutch: “In welke mate bent u tevreden met het leven dat u op dit moment leidt?”) with response options “Extraordinarily satisfied”, “Very satisfied”, “Satisfied”, “Fairly satisfied” and “Not very satisfied”. Over time, three different surveys have been fielded to collect the data. The first Life Situation Survey (LSS: ‘Leefsituatie Onderzoek’) was held in 1977, 1980, 1983 and 1986. After this data were collected continuously by the Continuous Life Situation Survey (DLO: ‘Doorlopend Leefsituatie Onderzoek’), from 1987 until 1997. In 1997 the Continuous Survey Life Situation (POLS: ‘Permanent Onderzoek Leefsituatie’) was implemented by which data are collected continuously as well since then up to present. The items (question and response options) on satisfaction with life and happiness remained the same over time.

In 2001 an additional item on happiness was added to ‘POLS’: “During the past 4 weeks..... Have you been a happy person?” (in Dutch: “Hoe vaak gedurende de afgelopen 4 weken was u een gelukkig mens?”) with response options “All of the time”, “Most of the time”, “A good bit of the time”, “Some of the time”, “A little of the time” and “None of the time”.

Although the items did not change over time, there are differences between the designs of the three surveys which have to be taken into account when comparing data across different years:

- *Sample design*: the samples for ‘LSS’ and ‘DLO’ were drawn from addresses in the Netherlands, for ‘POLS’ this was changed to a sample from persons in the Netherlands. In addition, during the ‘POLS-survey’ participants get a second approach when there is no-contact or refusal. ‘LSS’ and ‘DLO’ therefore have higher non-respons rates.
- *Continuous approach*: since ‘DLO’ and ‘POLS’ every month new participants are interviewed instead of one sample once a year as was the practice in ‘LSS’. This minimizes the bias of seasonal effects.
- *Interview mode*: ‘DLO’ was a paper and pencil questionnaire, ‘LSS’ respondents got and ‘POLS’ respondents get a computer assisted personal interview by a pollster. The additional question on happiness in ‘POLS’ is paper and pencil based.
- *Age of participants*: participants in ‘LSS’ are 18 years and older, participants in ‘DLO’ are 13 years and older and participants in ‘POLS’ are 12 years and older.
- *Weighing*: Data in ‘LSS’ and ‘DLO’ are weighted by gender, urbanisation and age. Data in POLS are weighted by gender, age, marital status, urbanisation, province, domestic size and since 2001 also by month of interview.

Survey on family formation

In 2008 in the survey on family formation (FS: ‘Onderzoek Gezinsvorming’) the same item on happiness as in the life situation surveys was incorporated once only. The FS aims at the collection of data on the course of the relation and family formation in The Netherlands. The target group was the Dutch population in between 18 and 62 years old from which a sample of persons was drawn. Pollsters held computer assisted personal interviews with the respondents. The data were weighted on bases of gender, age, degree of urbanisation, country of origin, marital status and for women the number of children they had given birth to.

Data description and access (partly in English, partly in Dutch):

<https://easy.dans.knaw.nl/ui/home>

<http://www.dans.knaw.nl/en/content/access-cbs-data>

The tables below give an overview of the weighted response for each year and each survey.

Table 1

To what extent do you consider yourself a happy person?										
Survey	Year	Very happy %	Happy %	Neither happy nor unhappy %	Not very happy %	Unhappy %	Total %	Number of respondents		
								Valid	DK/NA	Total
LSS	1977	21,1	61,6	14,4	2,5	0,3	100,0	3.976	7	3.983
	1980	24,2	61,6	11,4	2,1	0,6	100,0	2.843	22	2.865
	1983	20,2	64,5	12,4	2,6	0,4	100,0	3.985	14	3.999
	1986	20,8	64,4	12,0	2,3	0,4	100,0	4.028	12	4.040
DLO	1989	26,4	60,9	9,8	2,5	0,4	100,0	3.098	2	3.100
	1990	23,9	63,9	9,7	2,0	0,5	100,0	4.935	4	4.939
	1991	26,0	62,0	9,2	2,2	0,5	100,0	6.055	6	6.061
	1992	25,1	62,7	9,2	2,5	0,5	100,0	6.433	7	6.440
	1993	25,1	63,4	9,1	2,1	0,4	100,0	6.363	4	6.367
	1994	20,7	63,8	11,4	3,5	0,7	100,0	3.416	7	3.423
	1995	22,3	63,4	10,8	3,0	0,5	100,0	4.031	7	4.038
	1996	21,3	64,9	10,3	3,2	0,4	100,0	3.904	10	3.914
	1997	21,6	65,0	10,0	3,2	0,3	100,0	1.197	3	1.200
POLS	1997	20,6	67,9	8,7	2,3	0,5	100,0	9.232	1.666	10.898
	1998	20,5	69,2	7,9	2,1	0,4	100,0	7.900	1.423	9.323
	1999	19,6	69,0	8,6	2,4	0,4	100,0	8.370	12	8.382
	2000	21,1	68,1	8,3	1,9	0,5	100,0	8.400	19	8.419
	2001	20,4	69,0	7,5	2,5	0,5	100,0	8.196	13	8.209
	2002	21,2	66,6	9,0	2,7	0,4	100,0	8.256	12	8.268
	2003	20,9	67,4	8,0	3,2	0,5	100,0	8.369	18	8.387
	2004	20,8	67,5	8,5	2,6	0,6	100,0	9.432	19	9.451
	2005	20,3	67,4	8,7	2,7	0,9	100,0	8.813	21	8.834
	2006	20,4	68,6	8,3	2,3	0,4	100,0	8.180	11	8.191
	2007	21,0	67,6	8,3	2,5	0,6	100,0	7.450	17	7.467
	2008	22,5	66,8	7,8	2,4	0,6	100,0	8.118	1.381	9.499
2009	24,1	65,3	7,4	2,5	0,6	100,0	7.793	1.325	9.118	

Table 2

How satisfied are you with the life you currently lead?										
Survey	Year	Extraordina ry satisfied %	Very satisfied %	Satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Not very satisfied %	Total %	Number of respondents		
								Valid	DK/NA	Total
LSS	1974	8,1	29,4	43,4	13,1	6,0	100,0	4.602	46	4.648
	1977	8,5	25,7	45,1	13,7	7,0	100,0	3.954	29	3.983
	1980	11,6	30,2	41,0	10,7	6,6	100,0	2.836	28	2.864
	1983	7,0	26,6	47,3	14,3	4,7	100,0	3.986	13	3.999
	1986	8,5	30,2	44,4	12,0	4,9	100,0	4.032	8	4.040
DLO	1989	17,9	36,2	31,8	10,0	4,1	100,0	3.098	2	3.100
	1990	16,2	36,6	33,5	9,8	3,8	100,0	4.938	1	4.939
	1991	16,6	37,0	33,8	8,2	4,3	100,0	6.054	7	6.061
	1992	15,9	36,9	34,2	8,9	4,1	100,0	6.438	2	6.440
	1993	15,8	38,2	33,7	8,4	3,8	100,0	6.364	3	6.367
	1994	11,8	35,4	34,8	11,8	6,2	100,0	3.422	1	3.423
	1995	13,0	35,7	34,8	11,8	4,8	100,0	4.031	7	4.038
	1996	12,0	36,0	36,8	10,1	5,1	100,0	3.909	5	3.914
1997	12,4	36,9	36,7	8,9	5,1	100,0	1.196	1	1.197	
POLS	1997	8,0	32,6	46,7	9,3	3,4	100,0	9.237	1.661	10.898
	1998	8,3	32,8	46,6	9,5	2,9	100,0	7.900	12	7.912
	1999	8,4	32,9	46,7	8,6	3,4	100,0	8.375	6	8.381
	2000	8,5	32,7	47,4	8,0	3,3	100,0	8.409	10	8.419
	2001	8,4	33,5	46,6	8,1	3,3	100,0	8.202	6	8.208
	2002	8,4	34,8	44,4	8,1	4,3	100,0	8.262	6	8.268
	2003	8,7	33,1	45,9	8,8	3,6	100,0	8.374	13	8.387
	2004	8,0	33,1	46,8	8,2	3,9	100,0	9.443	8	9.451
	2005	7,7	31,6	47,7	8,8	4,1	100,0	8.825	9	8.834
	2006	7,8	33,5	46,3	9,1	3,4	100,0	8.188	3	8.191
	2007	7,7	34,5	46,0	8,4	3,4	100,0	7.464	2	7.466
	2008	8,4	35,5	45,1	7,6	3,4	100,0	8.125	1.374	9.499
2009	10,1	35,0	43,2	8,2	3,6	100,0	7.794	1.324	9.118	

Table 3

During the past 4 weeks..... Have you been a happy person?												
Survey	Year	All of the	Most of the	A good bit	Some of	A little of	None of the	Total	Number of respondents			
		time	time	of the time	the time	the time	time		%	Valid	DK/NA	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
POLS	2001	15,5	52,1	16,0	12,6	2,8	0,9	100,0	6.194	2.015	8.209	
	2002	15,5	52,4	16,0	12,3	2,6	1,3	100,0	6.026	2.243	8.269	
	2003	17,1	51,4	16,7	11,3	2,4	1,1	100,0	6.850	1.538	8.388	
	2004	15,3	52,4	16,0	12,3	3,1	0,9	100,0	7.835	1.616	9.451	
	2005	15,4	51,1	16,6	12,4	3,2	1,3	100,0	7.268	1.566	8.834	
	2006	16,1	50,4	17,9	11,8	3,0	0,9	100,0	6.698	1.307	8.005	
	2007	15,8	51,8	17,0	11,6	2,8	0,9	100,0	5.969	1.498	7.467	
	2008	15,5	53,0	17,1	10,7	3,0	0,8	100,0	6.298	3.201	9.499	
	2009	16,4	50,7	17,7	11,6	2,6	1,0	100,0	6.001	1.810	7.811	

Table 4

To what extent do you consider yourself a happy person?											
Survey	Year	Very happy	Happy	Neither	Not very	Unhappy	Total	Number of respondents			
				happy nor				happy	Unhappy	%	Valid
		%	%	unhappy	%	%	%				
		%	%	%	%	%	%				
FS	2008	24,9	65,4	6,7	2,3	0,7	100,0	7.770	38	7.808	