

Databook of Happiness

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September 19, 1996

Dear ~~Dr.~~ Veenhoven (Pitt)

I received your letter and apologize for being so late in responding to it. Regarding the happiness measures and the short term test-retest correlations, I do not know why they are so high. I am sending you a sheet with more extensive data that I have collected over the years. As you can see, the correlations vary. Note that the two or three day differences in short periods in time get up in the nineties, but as you stretch that to two weeks, a month, five weeks, you get lower and lower estimates. Also, bear in mind that the combination score is the one with the highest estimates. (The combination score is the scale, as well as the happy percent estimate ~~is~~ in equal weights.) It shows the two measures have a higher reliability than any one of them taken singularly. As you suggested, memory effects might be involved. I do not know whether subjects actually remember the number, but over a two day period, I would not be surprised. The only other reason I see is that the long standing finding in our field which shows how relatively stable happiness tends to be.

One additional note - in all of the studies, I have always given the happiness measures using the "in general" form. In other words, it asks people in general, "how have you been" rather than "how are you feeling today?" If indeed, subjects took these instructions seriously, it would be rather surprising. ~~It would be rather surprising~~ if the correlations were not as high as they are. I hope all this will be helpful to you.

It is always good to hear from you. I have been following your excellent work. I have not done much in the way of research in recent years. I have been concentrating instead on a rather lengthy book about happiness, but I am afraid I have had no success in trying to get it published. Have you any ideas about publishers either here or in Europe? I would certainly appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Mike Fordyce

P.S. Forgive my student  
typist - we have  
no staff help here...

TABLE 4 - 1

TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OVER NUMEROUS STUDIES  
USING THE HAPPINESS MEASURES (HM)

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HM Test-Retest Reliability Coefficients

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SAMPLE & TIME INTERVAL		COMB- INATION	SCALE SCORE	HAPPY% SCORE	UN-H % SCORE	NEUT % SCORE
1972c, Spring (4 months)	n= 27	.67**	.56**	.51**	.50**	.43**
1972d, Summer (three days)	n= 127	.96**	.94**	.94**	.91**	.87**
1976e, Fall (2 weeks)	n= 105	.86**	.89**	.87**	.77**	.78**
1978f, Fall (two days)	n= 111	.98**	.96**	.93**	.90**	.86**
1981a, Winter (4 months)	n= 71	.62**	.50**	.61**	.43**	.49**
1983b, Spring (two weeks)	n= 58	.88**	.78**	.81**	-.78**	-.74**
1984w, Spring (two weeks)	n= 46	.87**	.77**	.81**	.80**	.66**
1981b, Spring (1 month)	n= 57	.81**	.83**	.80**	.78**	.74**

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