

Multi-Item Scale for Project:

A Ranking Measure of Life Satisfaction (RankMe) (English Version)

Question Text:

In your opinion, has your life improved or worsened in the following areas in the last 12 months?

Evaluate the changes from today's perspective.

[Hat sich Ihr Leben Ihrer Meinung nach in den folgenden Bereichen in den letzten 12 Monaten verbessert oder verschlechtert?

Bewerten Sie die Veränderungen aus heutiger Sicht.]

Findings for Question Text:

The question of how their own lives have changed in the following areas in the last 12 months is answered by between 79 and 81 respondents in each case. While almost 35 percent of the respondents in the first question stated that their life has remained the same, the evaluation of question 2 shows a much more differentiated picture: While here, too, in the areas of "work" and "financial situation", slightly more than 35 percent of those surveyed stated that nothing has changed in this area, almost half of the respondents stated that nothing has changed in the areas of "own family" (48.1 percent) and "leisure time" (46.3 percent), and in the areas of "friends" (60 percent) and "neighborhood" (64.6 percent) even far more than half of those surveyed stated that nothing has changed. Looking at the two answer categories indicating an improvement - "improved considerably" and "improved marginally" - it becomes apparent that, across all areas of life, fewer respondents choose the more positive answer category. Similarly, fewer respondents choose the answer that their life has "worsened considerably", but more often choose the answer category "worsened marginally" (with the exception of the area of life "work", where an equal number of respondents choose both answer categories).

When asked whether, after answering this question, respondents felt the need to change their answer to the previous question (question 1), only two persons indicated that they did so. The reasons for this need are as follows:

- *"Well, I have now thought about the question a bit more intensively, mainly because there are certain areas in my life that have improved."* (Answer to question 1 "stayed the same")
- *"When all factors are taken into account (leisure time, family, friends, etc), the overall situation has not gotten any worse. Nevertheless, the increasing dissatisfaction with work is an important factor, but it should not determine everything."* (Answer to question 1 "worsened marginally")

When asked how easy respondents found it to answer question 2, nine respondents (11%) said they found it "rather difficult" (8) or "very difficult" (1). These respondents cite the reason for their difficulties,

- that there has been little overall change in their life (2 respondents) (*"Because only little things have changed."*; *"My life runs in an orderly fashion, there are hardly any serious events."*)
- that the period of 12 months goes back far into the past and is therefore difficult to remember (2 respondents) (*"12 months is a long period in which a lot (good & bad) can happen"*; *"Because it was difficult for me to review the past"*)
- that they find it difficult to make a self-assessment here (3 respondents), due to their personal situation (*"I am currently hanging something in the air: old job finished, new training/study is imminent"*; *"I observe myself too little"*; *"one can feel different regarding the topics"*)
- that it is difficult to answer using the scale (*"Because I find it difficult to break down the evaluation of my life into such a scale."*)

One test person gives no reason for his or her difficulties.

When we asked how the lives of the respondents had changed in different areas of their lives in the last 12 months, we also wanted to find out with a further question when the events or changes that the respondents thought of when answering the question mainly took place. The table you will find in the corresponding pdf-file of this report shows the respondents' answers for each area of life. When answering this question, the respondents had the possibility to select several points in time per area of life (multiple answers), for example if changes in an area took place at different times. However, a maximum of three respondents made use of this possibility over the entire question.

Of the 82 respondents, between 28 and 50 state that no changes or events have taken place in the last 12 months in the areas of life mentioned. This is most frequently the case in the "Neighborhood" area, followed by the "Friends" area, where about half of the respondents state that no changes or events have taken place here. A comparison of how many events took place in the first half of the year (7 to 12 months ago) and how many events took place in the second half of the year (maximum 6 months ago) shows that the events or changes that were thought of in the areas "friends" and "leisure" when answering the questions are distributed equally over the two halves of the year (leisure: 21 mentions vs. 20 mentions; friends: 17 mentions vs. 15 mentions). In all other areas of life, considerably more events or changes are considered that took place in the second half of the year, i.e. in the period of the last 6 months (family: 15 mentions vs. 25 mentions; work: 14 mentions vs. 28 mentions; neighborhood: 9 mentions vs. 16 mentions; financial situation: 19 mentions vs. 24 mentions).

What is striking in this question is again the number of people who state that they

have thought about changes or events that took place more than 12 months ago. A total of between five ("Neighborhood") and 15 respondents ("Own family") indicate that they were thinking about events or changes that took place more than 12 months ago when answering the question. Among them, however, there are again people who state that no changes have taken place in these areas: a total of eight for "Family", four for "Work", two for "Leisure", five for "Neighborhood" and one each for "Friends" and "Financial situation". Apart from these persons, one should not exaggerate the proportion of people who also chose this answer category. It seems plausible in many areas that events started more than 12 months ago and are now slowly changing. An example would be a person who became unemployed more than 12 months ago and has only recently found a permanent job. Here it seems plausible that the person, when answering the question, also thinks of a period longer than 12 months ago, since the event "unemployment" occurred more than 12 months ago and lasted until a few weeks ago. Such scenarios are also quite conceivable in the private sphere, for example an event such as a separation or the death of a relative that occurred more than 12 months ago and, measured against this, the changes that have taken place since this event.

Finally, the respondents had the opportunity to make comments or suggestions for improvement on this question in an open text field. A total of six respondents made use of this opportunity. Of these, three respondents were positive about the question (*"The subject areas and time intervals are well chosen"; "Everything understandable, good and interesting question"*). Another person noted that the area of health was not covered by the question and two respondents made further remarks on their respondent behavior:

- *"I have only been able to pin the answers to months after the time of the changes in work, leisure and finances. All other changes affecting the social sphere have developed slowly. These changes have not come about through individual events, but through a gradual change in my own attitudes towards others and towards myself [...]."*

Recommendations for Question Text:

No changes recommended.

On the basis of the results of the first question, one could consider including "health" as an additional area in the survey of the individual areas of life, as this appears to play an important role for the interviewees in the assessment of their life satisfaction in addition to the areas already mentioned.

Answer Categories:

improved considerably [*deutlich verbessert*]
improved marginally [*leicht verbessert*]

stayed the same [*gleich geblieben*]
worsened marginally [*leicht verschlechtert*]
worsened considerably [*deutlich verschlechtert*]
don't know [*weiß nicht*]

Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing

All Items for Question(Question Text):

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Evaluate the changes from today's perspective.

[*Hat sich Ihr Leben Ihrer Meinung nach in den folgenden Bereichen in den letzten 12 Monaten verbessert oder verschlechtert?*

[*Bewerten Sie die Veränderungen aus heutiger Sicht.*]

-> Not Tested Items:

Item Text:

Own family [*Eigene Familie*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

Item Text:

Work [*Arbeit*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

Item Text:

Spare time [*Freizeit*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

Item Text:

Friends [*Freunde*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

Item Text:

Neighborhood [*Nachbarschaft*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

Item Text:

Financial situation [*Finanzielle Situation*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction