

## Multi-Item Scale for Project:

Translation of established public health measurement instruments into Arabic and Dari (ENSURE) (English Version)

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### Question Text:

How often do you have the feeling, ...  
[*Wie oft haben Sie das Gefühl, ...*]

### Answer Categories:

Very rarely [*Sehr selten*]  
Rarely [*Selten*]  
Sometimes [*Manchmal*]  
Often [*Oft*]  
Very often [*Sehr oft*]  
not specified [*Keine Angabe*]

### Findings for Multi-Item Scale:

Items 2 and 3 were systematically tested. For item 1, only spontaneous responses of the test persons were available.

#### Do test persons perceive item 2 and item 3 to be the same or different?

In each case, half of the test persons gave the same answer (SY04, SY05, SY06, IR02, IR03, DA02, DA04, DA05, DA06) or different answers (SY01, SY02, SY03, IR01, IR04, IR05, IR06, DA01, DA03) for items 2 and 3. Here, there were no systematic differences between countries of origin or language versions. Regardless of the equality or difference of the answers given, as well as of the countries of origin and language versions, the vast majority of test persons ( $n = 16$ ) reported seeing a difference between the two items.

In the main, the difference was seen in the fact that item 2 asked whether one was ignored by others (SY02, SY03, SY05, IR02, IR03, DA01, DA03, DA04, DA05), whereas item 3 asked whether one isolated oneself from others (SY03, IR02, IR03, DA01, DA03, DA04, DA05). The key here is that "being on the outside" was understood as something that comes from others, i.e., others do to you, whereas "being socially isolated" was understood as your own doing. In addition, test person DA04 saw in item 3 the automatic consequence of item 2, that if one has the feeling of not being noticed, one automatically feels isolated and therefore withdraws. Two test persons (SY02, SY05), on the other hand, saw the difference in the fact that item 2 was about being generally

ignored by others, i.e., not being paid attention to, whereas item 3 was about active isolation, i.e., actively showing with looks or words that one was not wanted. Both are therefore initiated by others.

In the case of the two test persons who stated that they perceived both items as the same (IR05, DA02), it turned out upon closer examination that they did see a difference between the two. IR05 had made different statements for the items ("rarely" vs. "very rarely") and indicated that item 3 had more emphasis than item 2 (being isolated [item 3] vs. being ignored [item 2]). DA02 had given the same answer for both items ("often") and indicated seeing a connection of one item with the other and yet a difference, which she could not explain further.

During an interview with an Arabic-speaking test person, the interpreter noted that "to be left out" posed a problem in the translation because it was not entirely clear what it referred to. It would be better to translate it as "to be ignored", since this formulation always refers to the fact that it comes from others. "To be socially isolated", on the other hand, in the Arabic context always refers to oneself and is understood to mean that one isolates oneself or is shy of people. Accordingly, this formulation does not mean in Arabic that others isolate one socially. Since the same was also found in the Dari-speaking test persons, there seems to be a problem here that should be examined again.

### **Other findings**

For item 1, three respondents stated that they did not really understand what was meant by the question (SY03, DA01, DA05). One test person, who spoke fluent German, said when she was shown the German translation that it had nothing to do with the version in Dari and that the latter was worded strangely. She did not know whether it was about feeling uncomfortable when you are in a group of people or about not having enough of something that the others have, e.g., in a conversation topic, when you do not know as much about it as the others and then you cannot have as much of a say.

Three test persons would also have liked the answer category "never" (SY05, DA04, DA05).

### **Recommendations for Multi-Item Scale:**

Introduction: No changes recommended.

Item 1: We recommend that you consult translation experts once again, especially for the Dari-language wording, to ensure that the translation corresponds to the German original.

Response format: We recommend adding "never" as an additional response category.

## Cognitive Techniques:

Category Selection Probing, Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing, Emergent Probing

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## All Items for Question(Question Text):

How often do you have the feeling, ...  
[Wie oft haben Sie das Gefühl, ...]

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-> Tested Items:

## Item Text:

... being on the outside? (2) [... außen vor zu sein? (2)]

## Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

## Findings:

### What do the test persons understand by "being on the outside"?

With one exception, all test persons understood "being left out" to mean being excluded and ignored. There were neither country-specific nor language-related differences. In addition to the two expressions "being excluded" and "being ignored", terms such as not being noticed by others (SY01, SY02), feeling disinterested by others (SY06, IR02), not being paid attention to (DA01), feeling isolated and left alone (DA03), not being taken seriously (DA04), not being wanted (DA05), and being distanced by others (DA05) were mentioned. One test person also mentioned that she understood this to mean having a degree and being educated, but not being able to find a job or work (SY02).

Only test person IR06 understood "being on the outside" to mean the other perspective, i.e., with-drawing, excluding oneself from others and isolating oneself. However, this test person said shortly before that it rarely happened that, for example, a friend on the street pretended not to see her, and thereupon selected the answer category "rarely". Furthermore, she stated that she saw a difference between items 2 and 3, but could not explain it further, and made different statements for items 2 and 3 ("rarely" vs. "sometimes"). Therefore, the comprehension problem seemed to be minor or possibly due to a comprehension problem of the probing question and not of the item itself.

## Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

## Construct:

Loneliness

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## Item Text:

... that you are socially isolated? (3) [*... dass Sie sozial isoliert sind? (3)*]

## Recommendations:

The translated item is understood to mean that the respondent actively withdraws. We recommend checking whether there are translations into Arabic and Dari that are to be understood more strongly in such a way that (also) the external circumstances cause a feeling of isolation.

## Findings:

### What do the test persons understand by "being socially isolated"?

When the test persons were asked what they understood by "being socially isolated", two things immediately stood out. While on the one hand, with one exception, all those who had answered this item with "very rarely" or "rarely" stated what they understood by the opposite, i.e., by "not being socially isolated", those who had selected one of the other answer categories or had not stated anything explained the social isolation in question. On the other hand, this was only the case for the Arabic-speaking test persons. Without exception, the Dari-speakers stated what they understood by "being socially isolated", regardless of the answer category selected.

The Arabic-speaking test persons understood social isolation to mean having little or no contact with other people, be it family, friends, acquaintances, etc. (SY02, SY05, IR01), feeling lonely (SY02, IR04), withdrawing socially (SY01, IR06), and wanting to be alone (IR06). In addition, the lack of ability to interact with others or to build relationships with others (SY01, IR04, IR06) and the feeling of being in between the Arab and German cultures and not being able to connect to either the Arab or German cultures (IR02) were also mentioned. On the contrary ("not being socially isolated"), the Arabic-speaking test persons indicated sociability (SY04, SY06, IR03), having and maintaining contacts with other people, be it family, friends, acquaintances (SY03, IR05), and meeting new

people (SY06, IR03).

A further difference of a content-related nature was noted between the two language versions. While the focus of the Arabic-speaking test persons was on the pure fact of (lack of) contact with fellow human beings, the responses of the Dari-speaking test persons were on the emotional level and on their own active behavior. Accordingly, the test persons from Afghanistan understood social isolation to mean withdrawing socially (DA04, DA05), distancing oneself (DA03), not communicating with others (DA05), not making contact with unknown people (DA02), building a protective wall (DA01), not belonging to a social environment (DA04, DA05), not being noticed (DA04) and feeling left alone by society (DA06). Test person DA02 also stated that she understood this to mean not being able to afford many things if she did not have enough money.

However, the aforementioned differences did not lead to a "false" understanding of the term "being socially isolated".

### **Question Topic:**

Personality/ Mood & emotions

### **Construct:**

Loneliness

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-> Not Tested Items:

### **Item Text:**

...that you miss the company of others? (1) [*... dass Ihnen die Gesellschaft anderer fehlt? (1)*]

### **Question Topic:**

Personality/ Mood & emotions

### **Construct:**

Loneliness