

Question in Project:

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

Question Topic:

Personality/ Mood & emotions

Construct:

Life satisfaction

General Information:

Note: This item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.

Introduction:

In the following we would like to know how you evaluate the development of your life in the last 12 months.

[Im Folgenden würden wir gerne von Ihnen wissen, wie Sie die Entwicklung Ihres Lebens in den letzten 12 Monaten bewerten.]

Question Text:

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

Evaluate the changes from today's perspective.

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

Bewerten Sie die Veränderungen aus heutiger Sicht.]

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:

Category Selection Probing, Specific Probing.

Findings for Question:

Of the 82 respondents in total, almost half (47.6%) state that their life has "considerably" (17.1%) or "marginally improved" (30.5%) in the last 12 months, while just over 15% state that their life has "marginally" (7.3%) or even "considerably worsened" (8.5%). The remaining 29 respondents (35.4%) state that their lives have neither improved nor worsened in the last 12 months. This is the reason given by the respondents in the subsequent Category Selection Probe ("*Could you please explain your answer in more detail? Why did you choose this answer?*"), on the one hand because nothing has changed in their lives (23 out of 29), but also because positive and negative changes are roughly in balance (5 out of 29).

One test person chooses the answer category "don't know" for question 1 and justifies this in the subsequent question with the fact that "*life is divided into various sub-areas, in which improvement / worsening is different*" and the question is too general.

The responses of those respondents to the Category Selection Probe, in which a change has taken place, make it clear that they have mainly considered the professional (15 mentions; 10 positive, 5 negative) and private situation (11 mentions; 9 positive, 2 negative) when answering the question. The respondents cite positive changes in their occupational situation as being, for example, the fact that they have been given a (better) training place/job, the start of retirement or the reduction in stress. By contrast, the increase in stress, growing dissatisfaction or a transfer to another department are cited as negative. Positive changes in the private sphere are interpersonal relationships, a new love, children or the family in general, while relationship problems or the death of relatives are reported as negative changes.

In addition, the respondents think about their own health or the health of people close to them (9 mentions, 4 positive, 5 negative). The current financial situation (6 mentions, 5 positive, 1 negative) and the living environment (3 mentions; all positive) also play a role, which includes buying a house or moving house. Five respondents said that their situation was positive overall:

- "*Became a father, married, world champion, positive financial development, good friends*"
- "*Because many things have changed positively*"
- "*In the last 12 months, my health and that of my family has improved greatly. In general, there has also been a significant improvement (housing, finances, environment).*"

Which areas of life the respondents had in mind when answering the question is also reflected in the following specific question (*"Which of the following areas of life did you have in mind when answering the question?"*), in which respondents were asked to tick all that applied. The answers are shown in a table you will find in the corresponding pdf-file of this report.

The most frequently mentioned areas are the own family (59 mentions), work (51 mentions) and the financial situation (45 mentions). Neighborhood was the least frequently mentioned (16 mentions). Twelve respondents stated that they had thought about another area of life in addition to the six areas mentioned. Under the category "other" they give the following information:

- Own home, housing situation (3 mentions)
- Health (3 mentions)
- Life in general (3 mentions)
- Relationship (1 mention)
- Daily schedule (1 mention)
- Material values (1 mention)

In addition, respondents should indicate when the changes or events they had in mind when answering the question took place and how many events took place at what point in time (Specific Probe: *How many of the changes/events they considered when answering the question took place more than 12 months ago?* etc.). The results are shown in a table you will find in the corresponding pdf-file of this report.

It is striking that there are ten people who state that all the changes or events they considered when answering the question took place more than 12 months ago and should therefore not have been taken into account in the original question. On closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that at least four of the respondents are persons who stated that their lives have "stayed the same" within the last 12 months and that the answer that possible changes or events took place before then seems plausible.

In order to systematize the results of this question, the answers of each subject were categorized according to whether most changes or events occurred in the period from 7 to 12 months ago (answers: 10 to 12 months ago/7 to 9 months ago) or in the period of the last 6 months (answers: 4 to 6 months ago/last 3 months ago), whether there were no changes/events or whether they were distributed relatively evenly over the last 12 months: 32 percent of the respondents state that the changes/events occurred mainly in the last 6 months, 14 percent state that they occurred more in the period from 7 to 12 months ago or occurred. For 28 percent, the changes/events were relatively evenly distributed over the entire 12 months and 19 percent stated that no events or changes took

place. The remaining seven percent (6 respondents in total) answered that all events took place 12 months ago, but at the same time answered that their lives had improved or worsened in the last 12 months.

When asked how understandable the respondents found the question, only two respondents (2.5%) indicated that they found the question "rather not understandable", while all others rated the question as "very understandable" (80.2%) or "rather understandable" (17.3%). The difficulties in understanding the question were explained by the fact that it was too general and by the fact that it was not constantly thought about.

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.