

The Happiness Pulse: A Measure of Individual Wellbeing at a City Scale, Development and Validation

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Abstract : As part of the Happy City Index Project, Happy City have developed a survey instrument to measure experienced wellbeing: how people are feeling and functioning in their everyday lives. The survey instrument, called the Happiness Pulse, was developed in partnership with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) with the dual aim of collecting citywide wellbeing data and engaging individuals and communities in the measurement and promotion of their own wellbeing. The survey domains and items were selected through a review of the academic literature and a stakeholder engagement process, including local policymakers, community organisations and individuals. The Happiness Pulse was included in the Bristol pilot of the Happy City Index (n=722). The experienced wellbeing items were subjected to factor analysis. A reduced number of items to be included in a revised scale for future data collection were again entered into a factor analysis. These revised factors were tested for reliability and validity. Among items to be included in a revised scale for future data collection three factors emerged: Be, Do and Connect. The Be factor had good reliability, convergent and criterion validity. The Do factor had good discriminant validity. The Connect factor had adequate reliability and good discriminant and criterion validity. Some age, gender and socioeconomic differentiation was found. The properties of a new scale to measure experienced wellbeing, intended for use by municipal authorities, are described. Happiness Pulse data can be combined with local data on wellbeing conditions to determine what matters for peoples wellbeing across a city and why.

Keywords : city wellbeing , community wellbeing, engaging individuals and communities, measuring wellbeing and happiness

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