

Everything you wanted to know about the General Self-Efficacy Scale

but were afraid to ask

by Ralf Schwarzer, May 30, 2014

There is no other manual of the GSE. This is the only documentation. Don't send eMails asking for more!

There are currently scale versions adapted to 33 languages. See:

<http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscal.htm>

The purpose of this FAQ is to assist the users of the scales published at the author's web pages <http://www.ralfschwarzer.de/> Here you find lots of other resources.

Before attending to the questions below you might want to study our web pages. You might not have any questions after reading the web pages.

Do I need permission to use the general perceived self-efficacy (GSE) scale?

For a permission letter, see page 9. You do not need our explicit permission to utilize the scale in your research studies. We hereby grant you permission to use and reproduce the General Self-Efficacy Scale for your study, given that appropriate recognition of the source of the scale is made in the write-up of your study.

The main source is attached to this FAQ:

Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp. 35-37). Windsor, England: NFER-NELSON.

An additional source for the German version is:

Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Skalen zur Erfassung von Lehrer- und Schülermerkmalen: Dokumentation der psychometrischen Verfahren im Rahmen der Wissenschaftlichen Begleitung des Modellversuchs Selbstwirksame Schulen*. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.

I am not sure whether I want to measure general perceived self-efficacy (GSE) or specific health-related self-efficacy.

You have to decide which one fits your research question. If you intend to predict a particular behavior you are better off with a specific scale. You might be best off by designing your own items, tailored to your study, such as:

"I am certain that I can do ...xy..., even if ...zz ..." (1 2 3 4).

Health-specific self-efficacy scales can be found at:

<http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/healself.pdf>

For the English version of the teacher self-efficacy scale, see Schwarzer & Hallum (2008).

If you are interested in other health behavior constructs, consult the NCI Health Behavior Constructs Website:

<http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/constructs>

What is the scoring procedure for the GSE?

Add up all responses to a sum score. The range is from 10 to 40 points. Or use a mean score, such as:

COMPUTE SEFF = Mean (SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7, SE8, SE9, SE10).

In many samples the mean had been around 2.9

Occasionally, someone will not respond to some of the items. What do you recommend to do with missing data?

Our rule of thumb is to calculate a score as long as no more than three items on the ten-item scale are missing.

In SPSS, this is done by :

COMPUTE SEFF = Mean.7 (SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7, SE8, SE9, SE10).

However, there are also other methods such as regression, hot deck, or multiple imputations techniques (ask your advisor).

How can I categorize persons as being high or low self-efficacious?

We do not endorse the view that people should be categorized this way. There is no cut-off score. One could, however, establish groups on the basis of the empirical distributions of a particular reference population. One could do a median split, which is to dichotomize the sample, for example, at the cut-off point of 30 (if this is near the median in your sample).

Can I use some original data to compare with my own data?

Yes, there is an international data set as an SPSS SAV file that includes about 18,000 respondents. Available for free download at:

http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~gesund/gesu_engl/world_zip.htm

What are the psychometric characteristics of the GSE?

It depends on the sample and the study context. There are more than 1,000 studies that have used the scales in many countries and languages

Updated psychometric findings have been published recently, for example, in:

Scholz, U., Gutiérrez-Doña, B., Sud, S., & Schwarzer, R. (2002). Is general self-efficacy a universal construct? Psychometric findings from 25 countries. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 18*(3), 242-251.

Luszczynska, A., Gutiérrez-Doña, B., & Schwarzer, R. (2004). General self-efficacy in various domains of human functioning: Evidence from five countries. *International Journal of Psychology*.

 **Can you tell me more about the validity of the GSE?**

Concurrent and Prognostic Validity of General Perceived Self-Efficacy				
	1989		1991	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Depression	-.31	-.44	-.27	-.32
Loneliness	-.39	-.39	-.27	-.24
Anxiety	-.41	-.45	-.31	-.32
Shyness	-.47	-.47	-.33	-.29
Self-Esteem	.51	.59	.34	.40
Optimism	.48	.51	.20	.56
Pessimism	-.27	-.30	-.20	-.19

Note. The correlations were derived from a sample of East German migrants in 1989 and 1991.

n = 528 men and n = 380 women took part in the first wave of data collection, n = 122 men and n = 102 women participated also at the second point in time.

Correlations between Self-Efficacy and Other Personality Traits	
Extraversion (FPI)	.49
Neuroticism	-.42
Extraversion (PDE)	.64
Failure or action orientation	.43
Decision or action orientation	.49
Action centering	.15
Hope for success	.46
Fear of failure	-.45

Note. The correlations were derived from a sample of N = 180 university students. All correlations are highly significant.

 **What are the norms of the GSE?**

T-Norms of the General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale				
Heterogenous Adult Population		High School Students		US-American Adult Population

X	T	X	T	X	T
10	12	10	1		
11	14	11	3	11	14
12	16	12	6	12	16
13	18	13	8	13	18
14	20	14	11	14	20
15	22	15	13	15	22
16	24	16	16	16	24
17	26	17	19	17	26
18	28	18	21	18	28
19	30	19	24	19	30
20	32	20	26	20	32
21	34	21	29	21	33
22	36	22	31	22	35
23	38	23	34	23	37
24	40	24	36	24	39
25	42	25	39	25	41
26	44	26	41	26	43
27	46	27	44	27	45
28	48	28	46	28	47
29	49	29	49	29	49
30	51	30	51	30	51
31	53	31	54	31	53
32	55	32	56	32	55
33	57	33	59	33	57
34	59	34	61	34	59
35	61	35	64	35	61
36	63	36	66	36	63
37	65	37	69	37	65
38	67	38	71	38	67
39	69	39	74	39	69
40	71	40	76	40	70

Note.. Heterogenous Adult Population: The T-norms for the German version of this scale are based on a sample of N = 1,660 persons. The weighted mean was found to be 29.28, the weighted variance equalled 25.91.

High School Students: These T-norms were derived from a sample of N = 3,494 German high school students (12 to 17 years old). In this sample the mean was found to be 29.60, standard deviation equalled 4.0.

US-American Adult Population: These T-norms were derived from a sample of N = 1,594 US-American adults. In this sample the mean was found to be 29.48, standard deviation equalled 5.13. Gender was equally distributed, male 50.9%, female 49.1%.

Where can I read more about the scale and the research that has been conducted with it?

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 **We wish you much success with your research.**

DOWNLOAD of PDFs: http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/self/selfeff_public.htm

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Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp. 35-37). Windsor, England: NFER-NELSON.



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The source needs to be cited, the URL mentioned above as well as the book publication:

Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized Self-Efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp.35-37). Windsor, UK: NFER-NELSON.

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SELF-EFFICACY MEASUREMENT: Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

Whereas most studies of self-efficacy follow Bandura's (1977) approach in measuring situation-specific beliefs (the belief in one's ability to perform a specific action), there is a growing interest in generalized self-efficacy beliefs. These are general beliefs in one's ability to respond to and control environmental demands and challenges. Much of this work has been developed by Ralf Schwarzer and colleagues (Schwarzer, 1992) and it is their scale which is included here.

Directions for use

Description

The Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) is a ten-item scale, which has been translated by Mary Wegner from the original German version by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (in Schwarzer, 1992). It assesses the strength of an individual's belief in his or her own ability to respond to novel or difficult situations and to deal with any associated obstacles or setbacks.

Administration

This is a self-administered scale which normally takes two to three minutes to complete. Respondents are required to indicate the extent to which each statement applies to them.

Scoring

For each item there is a four choice response from 'Not at all true' which scores 1 to 'Exactly true' which scores 4. The scores for each of the ten items are summed to give a total score.

Interpretation

The score on this scale reflects the strength of an individual's generalized self-efficacy belief. Thus the higher the score, the greater is the individual's generalized sense of self-efficacy. For comparison purposes, Schwarzer (1993) presents accumulated data from 1,660 German adults who ranged in age from students to a group of older people, although the majority were adults in the community. The mean score for this whole sample was 29.28 (standard deviation = 4.6) and there were no age or gender differences found between samples.

Evaluation and psychometric status

All the normative data and psychometric analyses have been conducted with German samples. High internal consistency ratings have been found for each of the five samples studied and the alphas ranged from 0.82 to 0.93. In a sample of 991

migrants from what was then East Germany, the retest reliability was found to be 0.47 for men and 0.63 for women over a two-year period.

Concurrent validity (*see glossary*) has been established on the basis of appropriate correlations with other tests. Expected positive correlations have been found with measures of self-esteem (0.52), internal control beliefs (0.40) and optimism (0.49). Expected negative correlations have been obtained with general anxiety (-0.54), performance anxiety (-0.42), shyness (-0.58) and pessimism (-0.28).

Predictive validity has also been assessed in a one-year follow-up of East German migrants. In women, self-efficacy correlated positively with measures of self-esteem (0.40) and optimism (0.56) obtained two years later. However, less impressive correlations (0.20 and 0.34) were found for men over a two-year period.

The scale has been tested for unidimensionality with factor analyses (*see glossary*) and a single factor solution has been found, indicating that the GSES is measuring a unitary concept.

Comparison

This is a very new measure which has only been tested formally on German populations so far. It has been translated into eight other languages and is beginning to be quite widely used. However, as yet, there are no normative or other psychometric data on the English language version. Since it is a dispositional measure, it can be usefully compared with some of the measures described in 'Individual and Demographic Differences', particularly the self-esteem and optimism scales. Clearly these measures are somewhat similar but Schwarzer (1994) argues convincingly for their separateness.

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GENERALIZED SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

Name:.....

Date:..... Record Number:

	Not at all true	Barely true	Moderately true	Exactly true
1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4
2. If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want.	1	2	3	4
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	1	2	3	4
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	1	2	3	4
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	1	2	3	4
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	1	2	3	4
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	1	2	3	4
9. If I am in a bind, I can usually think of something to do.	1	2	3	4
10. No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it.	1	2	3	4

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