

Assignment 1 (worth 40% of the final grade)

Scale Development – Equanimity

Requirements for Assignment 1:

The aim of this assignment is to learn about scale development and validation. Assignment 1 is in two parts:

1) Developing items to assess equanimity (5 per person), collating them with a group (4 people per group), and then going through the list of 20 items to identify those that appear to be the most appropriate for measuring equanimity.

- 20% of the Assignment 1 grade (8% of final grade)

2) Individually writing an Introduction to define what equanimity is, why it's worth measuring and the benefit of creating a new measure, and to justify hypotheses that can be used to provide evidence of whether or not the new measure of equanimity is valid.

- 80% of the Assignment 1 grade (32% of final grade)

NOTE: The Introduction in Assignment 1 (Introduction) will connect with Assignment 2 (i.e., Method, Results, Discussion), so think of them as one big lab report that's split in half so you can receive feedback after doing the Introduction. The hypotheses you come up with in Assignment 1 will be those you run analyses for in Assignment 2.

To provide an outline of what's expected throughout the unit and how the assignments are linked:

1) Read over background articles (see p. 4 of this handout) to determine what equanimity is.

2) Develop 5 items individually and submit them to your group. As a group, work together to determine which items are the most appropriate for assessing equanimity.

3) Individually write an Introduction that covers the relevant areas (see p. 3) - you could start this while reading over articles and writing your items.

4) After the items are submitted by each group, Brad will release a survey to collect data for Assignment 2. This survey will include a collection of items submitted by each group and the validating measures (see p. 5) that you'll use as the basis for your hypotheses. Survey participation is not compulsory but it is recommended.

5) When this data is released (after the Introduction for Assignment 1 is submitted), make a start on Assignment 2 (i.e., Method, running analyses based on your Assignment 1 hypotheses for the Results section, Discussion).

GROUP SUBMISSION (due by 11.55pm, April 5):

Requirements

- Each group member individually develops 5 items
 - All items you develop will be measured on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree) and should be worded accordingly.
- Each group member's items should be compiled together using the 'Assignment 1 item submission table' document (in the Assignment 1 folder)
- As you will be in groups of 4, each group will submit a list of 20 items. However, the group will need to briefly report on which items seem suitable for measuring equanimity and which might have problems.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- **You must submit your items to your group by 11.55pm March 22 - a week prior to the deadline for the group submission.** This is to ensure that you do not put unfair pressure on other group members to incorporate your items at the last minute. It also takes time to reflect on a list of items and figure out which ones might be appropriate or not, and by submitting late you are undermining your group members' ability to do this accurately.
 - **If you do not submit your items in time the group is permitted to continue working without you, and will not receive marks for the group component.**
 - By submitting a list of 5 items to your group at least a week before the deadline you automatically earn 5 marks. The remaining 15 marks are based on the group submission of the 'Assignment 1 item submission table'. **If you submit items but do not participate in the development of this document, you will only receive marks for developing your own items.**

Format and Content Requirements

- No word limit on the items or justifications (a 1-2 sentence justification for each item is sufficient).

Marking

- Automatic 5 marks for submitting items to your group by 11.55pm, March 22.
- Remaining 15 marks are based on the mark (out of 100) for the group submission, which will involve assessing the overall quality of the items and the ability to identify items that are appropriate or could be problematic.

Submission requirements

You must check that your assignment submission has correctly uploaded, in an acceptable file format, **well in advance of the deadline**. Allow plenty of time to correct any technical difficulties, as they will not be considered the basis for any extension.

As per the unit outline, a penalty of 10% of the given mark per working day applies for late submissions, and submissions more than 5 days late will receive zero marks. **These penalties will apply to all group members equally for the items.**

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION (due by 11.55pm April 26):

Requirements

This component of Assignment 1 involves writing a lab report Introduction. The reason why this is submitted on its own is so you can receive feedback on your hypotheses before needing to run analyses and write the rest of the lab report (Method, Results, Discussion) for Assignment 2.

1) Title Page (in APA style)

2) Introduction (Background, rationale and framework for the measure):

This section should:

- Provide a literature review of the construct (i.e., equanimity) to clearly define what it is.
 - **You must write everything in your own words. While you might have discussed and written up some ideas with your group, copying or paraphrasing the work of yourself or another group member(s) counts as plagiarism. This will result in all students involved receiving a mark of zero.**
 - Justify why it is useful or worthwhile to create this measure.
 - Review the literature to provide suitable justifications for your hypotheses.
- Include a hypothesis about the expected factor structure of the new scale (i.e., factorial validity)
- Using the measures on p. 5:
 - One convergent validity hypothesis
 - One discriminant validity hypothesis
 - One criterion validity hypothesis
 - One additional hypothesis based on a form of validity of your choosing.
 - The measures on p.5 will be included in the survey that will collect data for Assignment 2. If you do not use a measure from this list you will need to update your hypotheses prior to Assignment 2 because you will not be able to run any analyses otherwise.
 - You can use facet subscales of the validation measures for your hypotheses (e.g., a single personality trait rather than all personality traits that are measured).

3) References list

- All cited papers should be listed. All citations and the References list should be presented in APA 7th ed. style

Format and Content Requirements

- 1400 words ($\pm 10\%$) for the Introduction and hypotheses (not including title page and References)

Background information on the construct to be measured:

A growing body of evidence indicates that mindfulness (i.e., “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment”, Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145) contributes to increased wellbeing and beneficial outcomes in clinical settings. However, as noted by Van Dam et al. (2018), mindfulness has been conceptualised and measured in a range of ways that could undermine the accuracy of research and the quality of mindfulness-based applications.

In line with this, Desbordes et al. (2015) argue that equanimity – a balanced, impartial approach to all aspects of human experience - tends to be overlooked. Equanimity is viewed as a dispositional quality that arises from, and is the main point of engaging in, mindfulness. Indeed, some aspects of what is considered to be mindfulness may in fact be elements of equanimity.

Your task is to develop a measure of equanimity. While Desbordes et al. (2015) cover a range of areas in which equanimity could be displayed, for the purposes of this assignment and the development of your items, consider equanimity to be a unidimensional (i.e., one-factor) construct.

References

- Desbordes, G., Gard, T., Hoge, E. A., Hölzel, B. K., Kerr, C., Lazar, S. W., ... & Vago, D. R. (2015). Moving beyond mindfulness: defining equanimity as an outcome measure in meditation and contemplative research. *Mindfulness*, 6(2), 356-372. DOI: 10.1007/s12671-013-0269-8
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science & Practice*, 10, 144–156. DOI: 10.1093/clipsy.bpg016
- Van Dam, N. T., van Vugt, M. K., Vago, D. R., Schmalzl, L., Saron, C. D., Olendzki, A., ... & Fox, K. C. (2018). Mind the hype: A critical evaluation and prescriptive agenda for research on mindfulness and meditation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13(1), 36-61. DOI: 10.1177/1745691617709589

Measures for validity

You must develop your hypotheses based on some of the measures from the following list. If you do not use these measures you will need to change your hypotheses prior to assignment 2. (NOTE: validity will make more sense after the relevant lecture, or after reading Chapter 4A).

- Nonattachment Scale - Short Form (Chio, Lai, & Mak, 2018)
- Mindful Awareness Attention Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
- Experiences Questionnaire (i.e., Decentering; Fresco et al., 2007).
- Five-factor model of personality (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006)
 - Openness to experience
 - Conscientiousness
 - Extraversion
 - Agreeableness
 - Neuroticism
- Stress (from the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
- Satisfaction With Life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)
- Single item: “On average, how many hours do you meditate each week?”

References

- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822-848. Doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822
- Chio, F. H. N., Lai, M. H. C., & Mak, W. W. S. (2018). Development of the Nonattachment Scale-Short Form (NAS-SF) using item response theory. *Mindfulness*, 9(4), 1299-1308. doi: 10.1007/s12671-017-0874-z
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- Donnellan, M. B., Oswald, F. L., Baird, B. M., & Lucas, R. E. (2006). The mini-IPIP scales: Tiny-yet-effective measures of the big five factors of personality.
- Fresco, D. M., Moore, M. T., van Dulmen, M. H., Segal, Z. V., Ma, S. H., Teasdale, J. D., & Williams, J. M. G. (2007). Initial psychometric properties of the experiences questionnaire: validation of a self-report measure of decentering. *Behavior Therapy*, 38(3), 234-246.
- Lovibond, P. F., & Lovibond, S. H. (1995). The structure of negative emotional states: Comparison of the depression anxiety stress scales (DASS) with the Beck depression and anxiety inventories. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 33(3), 335-343.

Submission Requirements:

Your assignment should be typed and double-spaced using a standard 12-point font. Use APA formatting throughout. As your formatting guide, refer to the APA Publication Manual and <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/lib/studyhelp/referencingtool.html>

You must check that your assignment submission has correctly uploaded, in an acceptable file format, **well in advance of the deadline**. Allow plenty of time to correct any technical difficulties, as they will not be considered the basis for any extension.

As per the unit outline, a penalty of 10% of the given mark per working day applies for late submissions, and submissions more than 5 days late will receive zero marks.

Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances. Requests for extensions must be submitted to the convenor (Brad Elphinstone – belphinstone@swin.edu.au) before the assignment due date. All extension requests must be accompanied by appropriate documentation (i.e., a medical certificate for illness, a counsellor's/psychologist's letter for psychological issues or personal circumstances). The documentation should indicate the length of time for which the student was impacted by the illness/circumstance. Remember that pressure of other work (whether university work or paid work) does not count as a basis for an extension. Students should not assume that they will be granted an extension until they are notified of its approval.