

Social Emotional Health Surveys

Social Emotional Health Survey–Higher Education

This document provides, in chronological order, studies that have examined the psychometric properties of the Social Emotional Health Survey–Higher Education.

If you are a researcher and want to use/adapt the SEHS-HE (or other UCSB School Mental Health Collaborative assessments), [please contact us.](#)

[School Mental Health Collaborative Publications](#)

Overview SEHS Development and Conceptual Foundations

Paz, J. L., & Kim, E. K. (2022). Cultivating Psychosocial Strengths and Well-Being. In K-A. Allen, M. J. Furlong, D. Vella-Broderick, & S. M. Suldo (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools: Supporting process and practice* (pp. 38–55). Taylor & Francis.

This chapter highlights recent advancements in the Covitality framework, which integrates 12 positive psychological mindsets and has led to the development of the Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) to assess students' mental health. Key components include: (a) theoretical foundations, (b) the Covitality measurement model, (c) [research findings](#), and (d) school applications. It concludes with a discussion on diversity and how the SEHS promotes student well-being and success.

Social Emotional Health Survey–Higher Education

Original SEHS-HE Study California Sample

The first version of the Social Emotional Health Survey–Higher Education was published in 2017.

[UCSB School Mental Health Collaborative](#)

Furlong, M. J., You, S., Shishim, M., & Dowdy, E. (2017). Development and validation of the social emotional health Survey–Higher Education version. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 12(2), 343-367. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-016-9464-9>

This paper presents the development of the Social Emotional Health Survey for Higher Education (SEHS-HE), which is a multidimensional measure of covitality—the combined effects of various positive psychological constructs. The scale development process took 18 months and included five phases: conceptual grounding and item pool generation; cognitive interviews and item refinement; a pilot survey and item reduction; structural validation surveys and analyses; and validity and stability studies.

We began with a pool of 72 items and used a sample of 771 college students to select and reduce items. A second sample of 1,413 students (63.5% female, mean age 20.0 years) completed the refined 48-item measure. Confirmatory factor analyses indicated an acceptable fit for the SEHS-HE's higher-order covitality latent structure.

The final version consists of 36 items that represent four latent traits, each made up of three measured subscales:

1. Belief in Self (subscales: self-efficacy, persistence, self-awareness)
2. Belief in Others (subscales: family support, institutional support, peer support)
3. Emotional Competence (subscales: cognitive reappraisal, empathy, self-regulation)
4. Engaged Living (subscales: gratitude, zest, optimism)

The results showed complete invariance between male and female respondents, with minor differences in effect sizes for latent mean scores. Evidence supported the concurrent and predictive validity of the SEHS-HE total score for students' subjective well-being ($r = .72$, $r = .65$, respectively) and psychological distress ($r = -.56$, $r = -.45$, respectively). The stability coefficient for the SEHS-HE total score over four months was .82, indicating that it effectively measures trait-like psychological constructs.

The discussion emphasizes the potential applications of the SEHS-HE in supporting mental health programs and enhancing the conceptual understanding of the covitality construct.

The SEHS-HE items and response format are provided in [Table 1 of this article—standardized factor loadings for the social emotional health survey–higher education](#).

SEHS-HE Cross-Validation and Adaptation Studies

Spain, Mexico, and California Cross-Validation

Furlong, M. J., Piqueras, J. A., Chacón-Gutiérrez, L., Dowdy, E., Nylund-Gibson, K., Chan, M., ... & Martínez-González, A. E. (2021). Assessing College Students' Social and Emotional Strengths: A Cross-Cultural Comparison from Mexico, the United States, and Spain. *European Journal of Psychology and Educational Research*, 4(2), 123-137.

The SEHS-HE measures core psychosocial latent traits (Furlong et al., 2017). Its 36 items yield a hypothesized higher-order model comprising 12 first-order latent traits, four second-order latent traits, and a higher-order general factor called Covitality, referred to as the 1 (covitality) => 4 (domains) => 12 (subdomains) => 36 (items) model. The 12 first-order and four second-order factors are Belief in Self (which consists of self-efficacy, self-awareness, and persistence); Belief in Others (school support, peer support, and family support); Emotional Competence (emotion regulation, empathy, and behavioral self-control), and Engaged Living (gratitude, zest, and optimism). In its development with USA samples, Furlong et al. (2017) employed an incremental five-stage development process. The hypothesized factor structure showed good CFA fit, and there was complete invariance across males and females, with small effect-size differences in latent mean scores. Evidence supported the SEHS-HE total score's concurrent and predictive validity for students' subjective well-being ($r = .72$, $r = .65$, respectively) and psychological distress ($r = -.56$, $r = -.45$, respectively). The four-month stability coefficient for the SEHS-HE total Covitality score was .82, indicating it measures trait-like psychological constructs.

Translation. The Spanish versions of SEHS-HE were developed according to the guidelines of the International Test Commission [Muñiz et al., 2013], using an iterative translation method that began with several independent translations. The translation process was collaborative between authors from Mexico and Spain to adapt SEHS-HE into a common European and Mexican Spanish form. A joint committee composed of translators with knowledge of the Spanish language and culture, and specialists in the field of assessment, analyzed the adequacy of the adapted version.

Japanese Language Adaptation

Sugimoto, K., Takizawa, Y., Iida, J., Nakayama, H., & Furlong, M. J. (2024). Japanese cultural adaptation and validation of the Social Emotional Health Survey-Higher Education. *Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 41(2), 178-190.

The SEHS-HE (M. J. Furlong et al., 2017) is a 36-item self-report measure of social-emotional health, utilizing a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all true of me, 2 = unlike me, somewhat unlike me, 4 = somewhat like me, 5 = like me, 6 = very much true of me). The SEHS-HE has 12 subscales (three items per subscale) that assess four domains: (1) Belief-in-self (self-efficacy, persistence, self-awareness), (2) Belief-in-others (family support, institutional support, peer support), (3) Emotional competence (cognitive reappraisal, empathy, self-regulation,) (4) Engaged living (gratitude, zest, optimism). Studies have provided evidence supporting the factorial structure, indicating a single higher-order latent trait labeled covitality (M. J. Furlong et al., 2017). These studies have demonstrated reasonable internal reliability of subscales ($\alpha = .64-.96$), reasonable retest reliability of subscales ($r = .64-.70$). Additionally, they have shown significant SEHS-HE total score's concurrent and predictive validity for students' subjective wellbeing ($r = .72$, $r = .65$, respectively) and psychological distress ($r = -.56$, $r = -.45$, respectively) with university students in the United States (M. J. Furlong et al., 2017). The Japanese adaptation of the SEHS-HE in the present study followed the International Test Commission Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests translation guidelines (Gregoire, 2018), a multiphase translation process. Initially, two clinical/counseling psychology experts translated the English version of the SEHS-HE into Japanese. A third expert reviewed both translations, taking into account cultural nuances and readability. Subsequently, two additional experts back-translated the Japanese version of the SEHS-HE into English. After the translation, a different expert compared the back-translation with the original survey to ensure accuracy.

Turkish Language Adaptation

Arslan, G., Allen, K. A., Telef, B. B., & Craig, H. (2022). Social-emotional health in higher education: A psychometric evaluation with Turkish students. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(5), 743-756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2020.1789554>

The measurement of social-emotional health was conducted using the Social and Emotional Health Survey for Higher Education (SEHS-HE) developed by Furlong et al. (2017). This self-report measure comprises 36 items designed to assess the psychosocial strengths of university students. It includes 12 subscales, each represented by three items that align with four positive psychology traits, forming a second-order latent construct known as covitality (see Table 1).

Responses to all items are rated on a six-point scale, ranging from 1 (very much unlike me) to 6 (very much like me), with higher scores indicating a greater overall sense of covitality.

Previous research provides validation evidence for U.S. university students, demonstrating that the scale has adequate fit statistics and that all scales have adequate-to-strong internal reliability coefficients. Further research has provided evidence of the concurrent and predictive validity of the second-order covitality latent construct with subjective well-being and psychological distress (Furlong et al., 2017).

In the present study, the Turkish version of the SEHS-HE was created by translating the English version of the survey in accordance with the International Test Commission (ITC, 2018) Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests. A multiphase translation process was undertaken as follows: First, two independent experts in clinical and counseling psychology translated the English version of the SEHS-HE into Turkish. This translation was then reviewed by another expert, who assessed its cultural relevance and readability.

Next, the Turkish version of the SEHS-HE was back-translated into English by two additional experts. Following this, a different expert compared the back-translation with the original version of the survey. Similar to the original version, the Turkish SEHS-HE consists of 36 items scored on the same six-point Likert-type scale. The English version of the items is provided (see Table 1 in the article). The Turkish version of the survey can be obtained by contacting the corresponding author.