

Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ): Format, development, and utilization

Version 3.0 – August 2002

ã Geneva Emotion Research Group

Note for researchers wanting to use this instrument in their research

The Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ) has been developed by the members of the Geneva Emotion Research Group on the basis of Klaus R. Scherer's Component Process Model of Emotion (CPM). Its purpose is to assess, as much as is possible through recall and verbal report, the results of an individual's appraisal process in the case of a specific emotional episode. To do so, the instrument contains questions that tap the appraisal criteria suggested by Scherer's model (the Stimulus Evaluation Checks, SECs). The most recent version of Scherer's model with the current list of SECs (Table 5.4) can be found in the following reference:

Scherer, K. R. (2001). Appraisal considered as a process of multi-level sequential checking. In K. R. Scherer, A. Schorr, & T. Johnstone (Eds.), *Appraisal processes in emotion: Theory, methods, research* (pp. 92-120). New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The GAQ contains questions for all of these SECs. The following table identifies which questions are supposed to assess particular SECs:

	<i>GAQ Question no.</i>
<i>Stimulus Evaluation Checks</i>	
Novelty	
- Suddenness	6
- Familiarity	8
- Predictability	7
Intrinsic Pleasantness	4,5
- Goal/Need Importance	9
Goal/Need Significance	
- Cause: Agent	12, 13, 16
- Cause: Motive	14, 17
- Outcome Probability	18, 20, 21
- Discrepancy from expectation	19
- Conduciveness	22, 23
- Urgency	26
Coping Potential	
- Control	25
- Power	27
- Adjustment	28
Compatibility with Standards	
- External	10, 11, 24
- Internal	10, 15

In addition, the questionnaire contains questions on the timing and the social context of the emotional experience and the event, as well as questions on intensity, duration, and regulation of the emotional experience. As shown in the references provided below, this information may be necessary to understand the nature of the appraisal process and to test certain models.

Format and development

It should be noted that the questions are not posed in the order that is theoretically suggested by Scherer as the microgenetic sequence of the stimulus evaluation checks (see Scherer, 2001, pp. 99-102). Rather, the GAQ has been designed to elicit the information in a fashion that corresponds to a thematic clustering of different types of information as well as to ease the elicitation of information from respondents. A manuscript containing a detailed description of the development, the potential applications, and suggested analyses, including all pertinent references to earlier work, is currently in preparation. Its availability will be announced on the web page containing this document.

The current version of the GAQ is based on earlier questionnaires assessing appraisal that Scherer and his collaborators have used. The following papers document some of these preceding instruments and the data obtained with their help:

Scherer, K. R. (1993). Studying the emotion-antecedent appraisal process: An expert system approach. *Cognition and Emotion*, 7, 325-355.

Scherer, K. R., & Wallbott, H.G. (1994). Evidence for universality and cultural variation of differential emotion response patterning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 310-328.

Scherer, K. R. (1997). Profiles of emotion-antecedent appraisal: Testing theoretical predictions across cultures. *Cognition and Emotion*, 11, 113-150.

Scherer, K. R. (1997). The role of culture in emotion-antecedent appraisal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 902-922.

Utilization

The GAQ questionnaire, protected by copyright, can be used for noncommercial research purposes by appropriately trained researchers in psychology and other social and behavioral sciences without formal agreement. A Word document containing a complete copy of the basic question block of the GAQ can be requested by contacting the Geneva Emotion Research Group. This file can be integrated into other instruments as long as all questions are used and the formulation or answer format of the questions is not changed. The instructions for respondents provided on the first page can be modified according to the respective research purpose. In particular, the number of emotional episodes to be studied can be varied and the question blocks multiplied accordingly. If you use the questionnaire, we request that you cite at least the chapter mentioned above (Scherer, 2001), which describes the theoretical basis for the questionnaire, the version number used, and the current document and its web page address (Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ): Format, development, and utilization; <http://www.affective-sciences.org/researchmaterial>

Since we plan to establish a publicly available database with GAQ data, we would also appreciate receiving a copy of the data set after it has been published (or of the unpublished data).

Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ) Assessment of Emotion-Eliciting Events

Version 3.0 – August 2002

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Instructions

In this questionnaire, we ask you to recall moments when you experienced an intense emotion, either positive or negative. It could have been something that really happened or that you expected to happen (whether it finally happened or not). The events might have been brought about by you, by someone else, or by natural causes.

Now try to remember some of the strongest emotional experiences that you have had in recent times (for example, during the last year). Of those, please select X episodes that you thought of spontaneously. Try to recall as many details as possible that are pertinent to the chosen emotion episode.

Please respond to the questions on the following pages by placing a check mark in the appropriate space for the respective scale. If a particular question does not make sense in a specific situation, please mark the circle “does not apply”. **It is extremely important that you answer all the questions and that you select only one alternative for each question.**

Event X

Please describe the event that produced your emotional experience in a few sentences, mentioning what happened and the consequences this had for you.

Occurrence of the emotional experience

1. **How long ago** did this emotional experience occur?

hours days weeks months years ... ago

Some...

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2. **Where** were you when you experienced this emotion?

- In my own home
- In the home of friends or acquaintances
- At work
- In a public building or in a stranger's home
- On a (motor)bike, in a car, bus, train, or plane
- In the street or another public space
- In a natural setting

3. **Who was present** when you experienced the emotion?

- Nobody, I was alone
- A partner or friend
- Another person (acquaintance or colleague)
- Several friends or acquaintances
- One or more persons unknown to me
- A large crowd

General evaluation of the event

How would you evaluate this type of event **in general**, independent of your specific needs and desires in the situation you reported above? (*Note: To allow assessing ambivalent situations, we ask you to respond to both scales.*)

4. **pleasant**

not at all moderately extremely does not apply

--	--	--	--	--

○

5. **unpleasant**

--	--	--	--	--

○

Characteristics of the event

At the time of experiencing the emotion, did you think that ...

- | | not at all | moderately | extremely | does not apply |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. the event happened very suddenly and abruptly ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. you could have predicted the occurrence of the event? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. you were familiar with this type of event? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. the event would have very important consequences for you? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. the actions that produced the event were morally and ethically acceptable ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. the actions that produced the event violated laws or social norms ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Causation of the event *(Please note that, in many cases, several causes can be involved.)*

At the time of the event, to what extent did you think that one or more of the following factors caused the event?

- | | not at all | moderately | extremely | does not apply |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12. chance, special circumstances, or natural forces | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. your own behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. – If so, did you cause the event intentionally ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. – If so, was your behavior consistent with the image you have of yourself ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. the behavior of one or more other person(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. – If so, did (this) these other person(s) cause the event intentionally ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Consequences of the event

At the time of experiencing the emotion, did you think that the real or potential consequences of the event ...

- | | not at all | moderately | extremely | does not apply |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. had already been felt by you or were completely predictable ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. had been expected to occur at that time and in that specific form? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. could be clearly envisaged and might occur in the near future (with a fairly high probability)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. were rather unpredictable but might occur in the distant future (with uncertain probability)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Continued...At the time of experiencing the emotion, did you think that real or potential consequences of the event ...

22. did or would bring about **positive, desirable outcomes** for you
(e.g., helping you to reach a goal, giving pleasure, or terminating an unpleasant situation)?
23. did or would bring about **negative, undesirable outcomes** for you
(e.g., preventing you from reaching a goal or satisfying a need, resulting in bodily harm, or producing unpleasant feelings)?
24. were or would be **unjust** or **unfair**?
25. could have been or could still be **avoided** or **modified** by **appropriate human action**?

not at all moderately extremely does not apply

 ○

 ○

 ○

 ○

Reactions with respect to the real or expected consequences

After you had a good idea of what the probable consequences of the event would be, did you think ...

26. that it was **urgent** to act immediately?
27. that you would be able to **avoid the consequences** or **modify** them to **your advantage** (through your own power or helped by others)?
28. that you could **live with**, and **adjust to**, the consequences of the event that could not be avoided or modified?

not at all moderately extremely does not apply

 ○

 ○

 ○

Intensity and duration of the emotional experience

29. How **intense** was the feeling that you experienced during the emotional episode described above?
30. How **long** did the emotional experience last?
31. To what extent did you try to **reduce the intensity** of your emotional experience and to **shorten its duration**?
32. To what extent did you try to **control** or **mask the expression** of your feelings to keep them from being observed by others?

weak moderate strong

Several...
seconds minutes hours days weeks

not at all moderately extremely

not at all moderately extremely

Verbal description of the emotional experience

33. How would you describe this emotional experience in **your own words**? Please write a word or a short expression in the box provided to the right.

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34. Please decide which of the emotion terms listed below **corresponds best** to the emotional experience you reported above. Identify the term that comes closest to what you felt with a check mark. If you experienced an "**emotion blend**", or two different emotions simultaneously, you can check two of the terms. In this case, please identify the stronger of the two emotions with two check marks.

Sadness	
Joy	
Rage	
Anxiety	
Surprise	
Fear	
Irritation	
Shame	
Contempt	
Guilt	
Disgust	
Pleasure	
Despair	
Pride	
None of the emotion terms above corresponds to what I felt during this emotion episode	