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## The Virtues Mirror: a new online self-evaluation questionnaire to support moral development.

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### Abstract

*The Virtues Mirror is a questionnaire for online self-evaluation of moral behaviour. The questionnaire approaches virtues as state (not trait) to promote practicing virtues. It is created according to social sciences standards in questionnaire construction and is user-friendly and easy worded. This helps to increase the motivation for repeated use in the Dutch self-development website MijnDeugden.nl (MyVirtues). Preliminary results (n=190, all Cronbach's alpha  $\geq$  .89) show good internal consistency of the six Virtue Role scales: Likeable, Brave, Enthusiastic, Careful, Balanced and Thankful Person. The preliminary conclusion is that the questionnaire offers a good starting point for moral development.*

The Virtues Mirror is key module in MijnDeugden.nl, a Dutch portal for moral self-development. This portal provides online coaching with positive practical assignments. It is based on the classical knowledge of virtues and strengthened with contemporary psychological and educational insights. The Virtues Mirror helps individuals to reflect on their virtuous behaviour.

Virtues are defined as positive personal qualities, such as integrity, courage and wisdom. They are expressed as positive behaviour. Virtues can be acquired by repetitively practice. They require a synthesis: a balance between virtues to ensure balance in behaviour. Together they form a moral compass during everyday moral dilemma's, put into practice when needed. They give expression to universal values desired by every society, and let people and societies flourish.

The Virtues Mirror approaches virtues as state (not trait) to promote practicing virtues. It is created according to social sciences standards in questionnaire construction, is user-friendly and easy worded. This helps to increase the motivation for repeated use.

Development started with a scientific and popular list search. 493 virtue descriptions were drawn from 14 scientific (e.g. van Oudenhoven et al. 2014) and six popular lists (e.g.

<https://www.actonvirtues.nl/product/virtues-reflection-cards>). Virtue descriptions were clustered using the classifications of Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) and Chun (2005) as a starting point. Seventeen

behaviour clusters were identified and grouped in 6 Virtues Roles (6 scales, see Table 1). Together they make a 'Beautiful Person'.

Statements were constructed for the 6 scales with 10 items each (total 60 items) using a 1–7-point Likert scale ("Not at all" to "Completely").

Data is collected from a convenience sample of n=190 MijnDeugden.nl participants.

Scores were obtained by adding item scores within scales, and transformed linearly to a 0-100 scale.

*Table 1 - Descriptions of the Virtues Mirror questionnaire (n=190)*

Scale	Item Examples	M (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
	<i>In the last week, I..</i>		
Likeable Person	had a good time.	72.69 (23.05)	.91
Brave Person	took care of someone in distress.	67.50 (22.81)	.89
Enthusiastic Person	tried new things.	67.22 (24.49)	.92
Careful Person	did what had to be done.	66.25 (21.47)	.92
Balanced Person	had confidence in myself.	66.91 (22.40)	.94
Thankful Person	felt connected to all life.	63.32 (23.07)	.92
Beautiful Person	[Total sum score]	67.28 (21.19)	N.A.

In general, values of  $\geq 0.7$  are regarded as satisfactory for comparing groups and  $\geq .90$  for judgments on individual level. The preliminary conclusion is that the questionnaire offers a good starting point for moral self-evaluation.

## References

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