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A Review of the Clinical Utility and Psychometric Properties of the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10): Norms, Percentile Rankings, and Qualitative Descriptors

The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10), developed by Davies et al. (2010), is a concise yet comprehensive measure of emotional intelligence based on Salovey and Mayer's theoretical framework. This technical paper reviews contemporary research on the BEIS-10's psychometric properties and clinical utility, while providing enhanced normative data, percentile rankings, and qualitative descriptors to aid interpretation. Drawing from multiple international studies (N = 2,770), we present updated normative data and establish empirically-derived score ranges for both total emotional intelligence and its five constituent domains: appraisal of own emotions, appraisal of others' emotions, regulation of own emotions, regulation of others' emotions, and utilisation of emotions. This document aims to support clinicians in effectively administering, scoring, and interpreting the BEIS-10, enhancing its practical application in clinical settings.

View the BEIS-10 on NovoPsych.com.au

February 2025

Developer

The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) was developed by Davies and colleagues (2010):

> Davies, K. A., Lane, A. M., Devonport, T. J., & Scott, J. A. (2010). Validity and reliability of a Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10). Journal of Individual Differences, 31(4), 198–208. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000028

This document was developed by NovoPsych to review contemporary literature and to describe original scoring methodologies and to provide interpretation material, enhance normative data and provide qualitative descriptors.

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Description

The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) is a 10-item self-report measure designed to assess emotional intelligence (EI) in adults. The BEIS-10 was developed by Davies et al. (2010) as a shortened version of the 33-item Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS; Schutte et al., 1998). The BEIS-10 is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) theoretical framework which posits that emotionally intelligent individuals can accurately perceive emotions (both in themselves and others), use emotions to facilitate thinking and problem solving, understand the meaning of emotions, and manage emotions effectively. EI develops over time and represents a distinct type of intelligence that contributes to more adaptive psychological functioning.

The BEIS-10 measures five distinct EI dimensions:

1. Appraisal of Own Emotions - assessing an individual's ability to recognise and identify their own emotional states
2. Appraisal of Others' Emotions - measuring the capacity to interpret and understand emotions in others through verbal and nonverbal cues
3. Regulation of Own Emotions - evaluating an individual's perceived ability to control and manage their emotional responses
4. Regulation of Others' Emotions - assessing perceived ability to influence and manage the emotional states of others
5. Utilisation of Emotions - measuring how effectively individuals can use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity

For clinicians, assessing EI can provide valuable insights into client outcomes across multiple domains. Meta-analytic studies have demonstrated the predictive utility of EI across both health-related outcomes (including physical and mental health; Schutte et al., 2007) and performance-related variables (such as academic achievement and occupational performance; Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). This evidence suggests that understanding a client's EI profile can help inform interventions targeting both wellbeing and performance enhancement.

The BEIS-10's development addresses a significant need in clinical practice for a brief, theoretically-sound measure of EI that can inform case conceptualisation, treatment planning and approach to building the therapeutic relationship. Its structure permits examination of both overall EI and specific EI components, enabling clinicians to develop more targeted and effective interventions based on their clients' specific emotional processing strengths and challenges. The BEIS-10 highlights both areas of challenge that may become specific treatment targets as well as areas of strength considered protective or to be leveraged to support the therapeutic process.

Psychometric Properties

The BEIS-10 was developed by Davies et al. (2010) as a shortened version of the 33-item Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS; Schutte et al., 1998). Internal consistency reliability for the BEIS-10 has been demonstrated across multiple studies, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .74 to .91 for the total scale (Balakrishnan & Saklofske, 2015; Davies et al., 2010; Howell & Miller-Graff, 2014). At the subscale level, reliability coefficients are .60 - .84 for Appraisal of Own Emotions, .67 - .89 for Appraisal of Others' Emotions, .48 - .84 for Regulation of Own Emotions, .57 - .88 for Regulation of Others' Emotions, and .67 - .86 for Utilisation of Emotions.

The five-factor structure of the BEIS-10 has been supported through confirmatory factor analysis across multiple studies. Davies et al. (2010) found good model fit for the five-factor solution (CFI = .97, NNFI = .94, RMSEA = .06). This structure was later replicated by Balakrishnan and Saklofske (2015) who reported strong fit indices (CFI = .98, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .04) for the five-factor model.

Research has demonstrated expected relationships between the BEIS-10 and theoretically related constructs. Studies have found moderate negative correlations with neuroticism (r = -.18 to -.32), weak to moderate positive correlations

with conscientiousness (r = .15 to .18) and agreeableness (r = .12 to .29), and mixed or non-significant correlations with extraversion and openness to experience. These correlations align with theoretical expectations.

Norms were created for the BEIS-10 total score so that client's results could be contextualised compared to a community sample. For the normative data a variety of samples were sourced:

- Davies et al. (2010): 955 student athletes in the UK (M = 36.84; SD = 4.43)
- Rizzo & Schwartz (2021): 148 chronic pain patients in the USA (M = 37.10; SD = 7.10)
- Hatamnejad et al. (2023): 405 medical students in Iran (M = 34.60; SD = 6.16)
- Sharma (2024): 120 young adults (18 - 26) in India (M = 36.66; SD = 3.37)
- Coyne (2020): 142 nurses in the USA (M = 40.85; SD = 4.24)
- Balakrishnan & Sakofske (2015): 269 university students in Canada (M = 37.89; SD = 7.74)
- Testa & Sangganjanavanich (2015): 451 counsellors in the USA (M = 41.97; SD = 3.83)
- Moussa & Abdelrehim (2024): 280 students in Egypt (M = 38.41; SD = 4.84)

These were combined to provide an overall community sample of 2,770 where the mean was 37.82 and standard deviation was 5.19. The mean and standard deviation are used by NovoPsych to compute community percentiles for overall responses. Some of the aforementioned studies also provided means and standard deviations at the subscale level (Balakrishnan & Saklofske, 2015; Davies et al., 2010; Hatamnejad et al., 2023; Moussa & Abdelrehim, 2024) and these were combined (n = 1,909) to provide percentiles for subscales:

- Appraisal of Own Emotions: M = 7.18; SD = 1.36
- Appraisal of Others' Emotions: M = 7.42; SD = 1.42
- Regulation of Own Emotions: M = 7.29; SD = 1.42
- Regulation of Others' Emotions: M = 7.31; SD = 1.36
- Utilisation of Emotions: M = 7.57; SD = 1.39

Percentiles were then used to create descriptors for the total score and subscales of the BEIS-10 as follows:

- 5th percentile and below: Low
- 6th - 24th percentile: Below Average
- 25th - 75th percentile: Average
- 76th - 94th percentile: Above Average
- 95th percentile and above: High

Scoring & Interpretation

BEIS-10 scores consist of a total raw score (range from 10 to 50) and five sub-scale scores, with higher scores indicating greater self-perceived emotional intelligence capabilities. These scores are converted into percentiles based on a large combined normative sample (N = 2,770) drawn from multiple studies across different populations and countries.

Sub-scales are presented for the BEIS-10:

- Appraisal of Own Emotions (items 1, 2; range 2-10): Assesses an individual's capacity to identify and understand their own emotional states. This includes awareness of mood changes, recognition of physiological responses to emotions, and the ability to label emotional experiences accurately.
- Appraisal of Others' Emotions (items 3, 4; range 2-10): Measures one's ability to accurately perceive and interpret others' emotional states through both verbal and non-verbal cues. This includes recognition of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language.

- Regulation of Own Emotions (items 5, 6; range 2-10): Evaluates an individual's ability to manage and modify their emotional responses. This includes skills in emotional self-control, ability to calm oneself when upset, and capacity to maintain emotional balance.
- Regulation of Others' Emotions (items 7, 8; range 2-10): Assesses capability to influence and manage others' emotional states. This includes helping others feel better when down, providing emotional support, and facilitating positive emotional states in others.
- Utilisation of Emotions (items 9, 10; range 2-10): Measures how effectively individuals harness emotions to enhance thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. This includes using emotions to guide decision-making and leveraging emotional states for improved performance.

A percentile score interpretation framework provides qualitative descriptors ranging from Low to High emotional intelligence:

- Low: 5th percentile and below
- Below Average: 6th to 24th percentile
- Average: 25th to 75th percentile
- Above Average: 76th to 94th percentile
- High: 95th percentile and above

On first administration, a stacked bar graph is presented showing the percentiles for the total score and subscales with the descriptors in the background of the plot. If the scale is administered on multiple occasions, a graph is produced to track emotional intelligence development over time for both the total and the subscale percentiles.

Supporting Information

Percentile Calculations

The percentile rankings for the BEIS-10 were derived through a comprehensive statistical analysis of multiple international samples (Balakrishnan & Sakofske, 2015; Coyne, 2020; Davies et al., 2010; Hatamnejad et al., 2023, Moussa & Abdelrehim, 2024; Rizzo & Schwartz, 2021; Sharma, 2024; Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2015). For the total score, data from eight independent studies (N = 2,770) were combined using a weighted pooling method to account for varying sample sizes. The pooled mean was calculated using:

$$\hat{\mu} = \Sigma(n_i\mu_i)/\Sigma n_i$$

where $\hat{\mu}$ is the pooled mean, n_i is the sample size of study i, and μ_i is the mean of study i. The pooled standard deviation was computed using:

$$\hat{\sigma} = \sqrt{[(\Sigma((n_i - 1)\sigma_i^2) + \Sigma(n_i(\mu_i - \hat{\mu})^2))/(\Sigma n_i - 1)]}$$

where $\hat{\sigma}$ is the pooled standard deviation, σ_i is the standard deviation of study i, μ_i is the mean of study i, and $\hat{\mu}$ is the pooled mean calculated above. This formula accounts for both within-study variance (first term) and between-study variance (second term), providing a more accurate estimate of the true population variability. This yielded a pooled mean of 37.82 and a pooled standard deviation of 5.19 for the total score (see Table 1).

For subscale scores, data from four studies (n = 1,909; Balakrishnan & Saklofske, 2015; Davies et al., 2010; Hatamnejad et al., 2023; Moussa & Abdelrehim, 2024) that reported subscale-level statistics were analysed. The same pooling methodology was applied to each subscale independently, using the formulas above to account for both within-study and between-study variance in the subscale scores.

The resulting distributions were used to establish percentile rankings through standard normal transformation, with specific attention paid to clinically meaningful cut-points. These cut-points were established at the 5th, 25th, 75th, and 95th percentiles, creating five distinct descriptive categories: Low (≤5th percentile), Below Average (6th-24th percentile), Average (25th-75th percentile), Above Average (76th-94th percentile), and High (≥95th percentile).

This methodology ensures that the percentile rankings reflect both the statistical properties of the scale and its clinical utility, while accounting for the varying precision of estimates across different sample sizes and study contexts. The derived percentiles for the BEIS-10 total score are presented in Table 1 and subscale percentiles are presented in Table 2..

Percentile Table

Table 1. Scores, percentiles and qualitative descriptors for the BEIS-10 total score.

	M	**37.82**
	SD	**5.19**
Descriptor	**Score**	**Percentile**
	10	0
	11	0
	12	0
	13	0
Low	14	0
	15	0
	16	0
	17	0
	18	0
	19	0.01
	20	0.03
	21	0.06
	22	0.1
	23	0.2
	24	0.4
	25	0.7
	26	1.1
	27	2
	28	3
	29	4
Below	30	7
Average	31	9
	32	13
	33	18
	34	23
Average	35	29
	36	36
	37	44
	38	51
	39	59
	40	66
	41	73
Above	42	79
Average	43	84
	44	88
	45	92
	46	94
High	47	96
	48	98
	49	98.4
	50	99

Table 2. Scores, percentiles and qualitative descriptors for BEIS-10 subscales.

Appraisal of own emotions

M	7.18
SD	1.36

Score	Percentile
2	0.01
3	0.1
4	1
5	5
6	19
7	45
8	73
9	91
10	98

Regulation of own emotions

M	7.29
SD	1.42

Score	Percentile
2	0.01
3	0.1
4	1
5	5
6	18
7	42
8	69
9	89
10	97

Appraisal of others emotions

M	7.42
SD	1.42

Score	Percentile
2	0.01
3	0.1
4	1
5	4
6	16
7	38
8	66
9	87
10	97

Regulation of others emotions

M	7.31
SD	1.36

Score	Percentile
2	0.01
3	0.1
4	1
5	5
6	17
7	41
8	69
9	89
10	98

Utilisation of emotions

M	7.57
SD	1.39

Score	Percentile
2	0.01
3	0.1
4	1
5	3
6	13
7	34
8	62
9	85
10	96

Note. Qualitative descriptors are presented by colour in order of Low (pink), Below Average (orange), Average (blue), Above Average (light green), High (green).

Interpretive Text

NovoPsych uses the total score and subscale scores to derive interpretive text that will be useful in a clinical context. The BEIS-10's interpretive text is generated through a systematic decision-tree algorithm that considers both overall performance patterns and specific domain variations. This process ensures clinically meaningful interpretations that reflect both general emotional intelligence capabilities and domain-specific strengths or challenges.

Pattern Analysis

The algorithm first examines the consistency of performance across subscales through pattern analysis:

1. Pattern Consistency Check
    a. Calculates the percentage of subscales that match the total score descriptor
    b. A threshold of 80% (4 or 5 matching subscales) is used to determine if a profile shows consistent performance
2. Score Range Analysis
    a. For consistent profiles (≥80% match), interpretation focuses on overall pattern
    b. For variable profiles (<80% match), additional analyses of specific domains are conducted

Interpretation Generation Rules

The interpretive text is structured in three main components:

1. Initial Overview
    a. For consistent profiles (≥80% match):
        i. Low/Below Average: Emphasises general challenges across emotional intelligence domains
        ii. Average: Notes typical capabilities across measured aspects
        iii. Above Average/High: Highlights well-developed capabilities across domains
    b. For variable profiles (<80% match):
        i. Determines highest and lowest descriptors across subscales
        ii. Generates appropriate variability statements based on total score and range of performance
            1. Example: High total with some low subscales generates "some areas requiring development"
            2. Example: Low total with some high subscales generates "areas of notable strength"
2. Subscale Analysis
    a. Only included for variable profiles (<80% match)
    b. Focuses on subscales that differ from the total score descriptor
    c. Excludes subscales in the average range to highlight significant variations
    d. Provides detailed interpretations for each divergent subscale, including:
        i. Current functioning level
        ii. Impact on emotional intelligence
        iii. Potential implications for intervention
3. Additional Considerations
    a. For low or below average total scores:
        i. Includes analysis of lowest scoring items (maximum 4 items)
        ii. Items are presented with their original text to provide specific examples
        iii. Helps identify specific areas for targeted intervention

Interpretive Text Structure

Each interpretation follows a consistent structure:

1. Opening statement including total score and descriptor range
2. Pattern-based overview of performance
3. Detailed subscale analysis (if profile is variable)
4. Specific item analysis (for low/below average scores)

Clinical Utility

The interpretation algorithm is designed to:

- Highlight clinically significant patterns
- Identify specific areas for intervention
- Provide context for understanding emotional intelligence strengths and challenges
- Support treatment planning through detailed domain analysis
- Maintain consistency while allowing for individualised interpretation

This systematic approach ensures that interpretations are standardised yet personalised, based on empirically-derived thresholds, clinically meaningful and actionable, and comprehensive in addressing both overall patterns and specific domains.

Developer

Davies, K. A., Lane, A. M., Devonport, T. J., & Scott, J. A. (2010). Validity and reliability of a Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10). *Journal of Individual Differences*, *31*(4), 198–208. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000028

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Assessment Questions

NovoPsych

Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10)

Instructions:

Select the response that best matches each of the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I know why my emotions change	1	2	3	4	5
2	I easily recognise my emotions as I experience them	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	1	2	3	4	5
4	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognise the emotions people are experiencing	1	2	3	4	5
5	I seek out activities that make me happy	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have control over my emotions	1	2	3	4	5
7	I arrange events others enjoy	1	2	3	4	5
8	I help other people feel better when they are down	1	2	3	4	5
9	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
10	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	1	2	3	4	5

Developer Reference:

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Administer Now

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Sample Result

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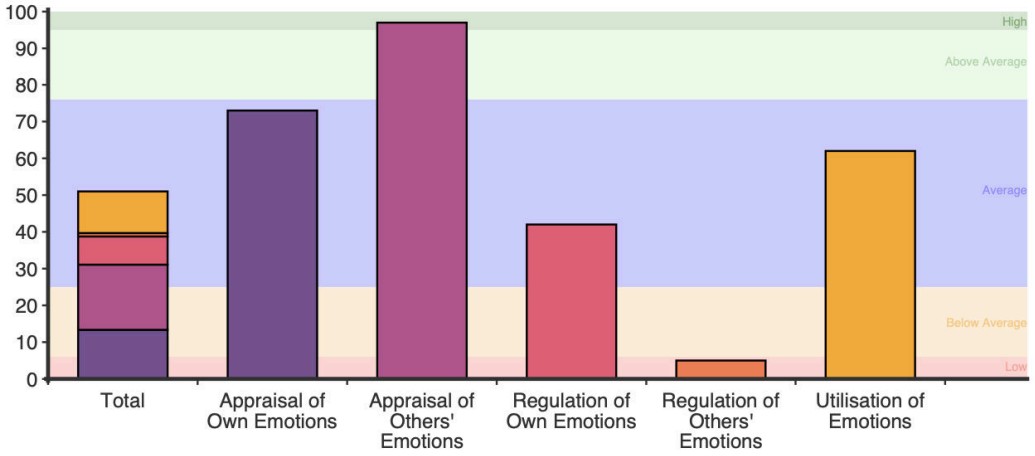
Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10)

Client Name	Generic Client	*Date administered*	22 Jan 2025
Date of birth (age)	17 Feb 1975 (49)	*Time taken*	9s
Assessor	Dr David Hegarty		

Results

	Raw Score	Community Percentile	Descriptor
Total	38	51	Average
Appraisal of Own Emotions	8	73	Average
Appraisal of Others' Emotions	10	97	High
Regulation of Own Emotions	7	42	Average
Regulation of Others' Emotions	5	5	Low
Utilisation of Emotions	8	62	Average

BEIS-10 Total and Subscale Community Percentiles



Interpretation

The client's total score on the BEIS-10 was 38, which is in the average range. Examination of specific domains reveals variability in emotional intelligence skills.

Subscale Analysis:
Appraisal of Others' Emotions: Results suggest the client has well-developed ability to perceive and interpret others' emotional states through both verbal and non-verbal cues, scoring in the high range in this domain. This may assist them in navigating social interactions effectively.

Regulation of Others' Emotions: The client reports significant challenges in responding to others'

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Client Name	Generic Client

Interpretation (cont.)

emotional needs, scoring in the low range in this domain. They may benefit from developing skills in providing emotional support and managing interpersonal emotional dynamics.

Scoring and Interpretation Information

For comprehensive information on the BEIS-10, see here.

BEIS-10 scores consist of a total raw score (range from 10 to 50) and five sub-scale scores, with higher scores indicating greater self-perceived emotional intelligence capabilities. These scores are converted into percentiles based on a large combined normative sample (N = 2,770) drawn from multiple studies across different populations and countries.

Sub-scales are presented for the BEIS-10:
- Appraisal of Own Emotions (items 1, 2; range 2-10): Assesses an individual's capacity to identify and understand their own emotional states. This includes awareness of mood changes, recognition of physiological responses to emotions, and the ability to label emotional experiences accurately.
- Appraisal of Others' Emotions (items 3, 4; range 2-10): Measures one's ability to accurately perceive and interpret others' emotional states through both verbal and non-verbal cues. This includes recognition of facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language.
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A percentile score interpretation framework provides qualitative descriptors ranging from Low to High emotional intelligence:
- Low: 5th percentile and below
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- Above Average: 76th to 94th percentile
- High: 95th percentile and above

On first administration, a stacked bar graph is presented showing the percentiles for the total score and subscales with the descriptors in the background of the plot. If the scale is administered on multiple occasions, a graph is produced to track emotional intelligence development over time for both the total and the subscale percentiles.

Client Responses

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Client Name	Generic Client

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I know why my emotions change	1	2	**3**	4	5
2	I easily recognise my emotions as I experience them	1	2	3	4	**5**
3	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	1	2	3	4	**5**
4	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognise the emotions people are experiencing	1	2	3	4	**5**
5	I seek out activities that make me happy	1	2	3	**4**	5
6	I have control over my emotions	1	2	**3**	4	5
7	I arrange events others enjoy	1	**2**	3	4	5
8	I help other people feel better when they are down	1	2	**3**	4	5
9	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	1	2	3	**4**	5
10	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	1	2	3	**4**	5