

## Social Paradigm Belief Inventory (SPBI)

Likert Version

### Instructions

This version of the scale is a variation of the original, forced-choice version, whose development and validation is described in an article by Deirdre A. Kramer, Patricia E. Kahlbaugh, and Ruth B. Goldston, "A measure of paradigm beliefs about the social world," **Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences**, 1992, **47**, P180-P189.

In the original version of the scale, subjects are asked to choose which of three statements--an absolute (formistic or mechanistic), relativistic, or dialectical statement--is closest to their own beliefs. The likert version of the scale involves two changes to the original. First, each of the statements was converted from a forced-choice to a likert one, such that subjects now rate **each** statement on a six-point scale. This allows for an independent assessment of each of the paradigms. Second, whereas the original scale contained one general **absolute** subscale, which included both formistic and mechanistic items, the present scale has separate formistic and mechanistic subscales. Thus, if the absolute statement from a given item on the original scale was formistic, a corresponding mechanistic statement was written, and if the original absolute statement from a given item was mechanistic, a corresponding formistic item was written. The resulting likert scale, then, contains 14 statements each from the following four paradigms: formistic, mechanistic, relativistic, and dialectical, for a total of 56 items.

Subjects are asked to rate each statement from *one* to *six* indicating their degree of agreement with the statement. **One** indicates strong disagreement, while **six** indicates strong agreement. Scores are summed across the 14 statements within each paradigm for a separate score for each.

When a single "stage score" is required, a method which typically produces a definitive and discriminating classification is to convert subjects' frequencies (for each statement) into z-scores, and assign the subjects to a level based on their **highest attained z-score**. This provides a classification which is **relative to the sample**. In other words, convert the formistic scores to z-scores, the mechanistic scores to z-scores, the relativistic scores to z-scores, and the dialectical scores to z-scores, and choose the highest of these four z-scores: that statement type becomes the person's classification. Alternative methods, neither of which we have found to be effective, involve a) assigning a subject to a level based on the greatest number of statements chosen, or b) using median splits to determine one's classification. The former (a) results in a preponderance of people at the dialectical (or, in the case of adolescents, relativistic) level and very few, if any, at the absolute (formistic or mechanistic) levels; as such, it is not very useful for research (or, in all likelihood, applied) purposes. The latter method (b) often fails to produce unambiguous classifications, as several people typically will have identical percentiles for two of the statement types. In this way, the z-score method has produced more definitive classification.

The items corresponding to each of the four paradigms are as follow:

**formistic:** 6, 8, 13, 14, 25, 27, 34, 38, 40, 41, 45, 46, 51, 54

**mechanistic:** 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 21, 28, 37, 39, 43, 44, 55

**relativistic:** 10, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 30, 31, 33, 47, 48, 50, 53, 56

**dialectical:** 1, 2, 3, 7, 16, 20, 24, 29, 32, 35, 36, 42, 49, 52

### **BELIEF INVENTORY**

This questionnaire is about how people think about people, relationships, and social institutions. There are no right or wrong answers--we are just interested in the ideas you have about human nature.

Read each item and, **on the separate answer sheet**, circle the number of the response that indicates the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the statement, as follows:

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>   | <b>4 = Slightly Agree (A)</b>    |
| <b>2 = Moderately Disagree (MD)</b> | <b>5 = Moderately Agree (MA)</b> |
| <b>3 = Slightly Disagree (D)</b>    | <b>6 = Strongly Agree (SA)</b>   |

**Note:** If you agree with one part of the statement, but not the other part, base your answer on the second part (the part that states "*this is because...*").

1. There is no one right person for anyone. This is because characteristics you find attractive will also seem unattractive in some ways.
2. Personality may or may not be molded in childhood. This is because it is continually influenced by the environment, but also influences it, so we can't say for sure where personality comes from.
3. Our country can try to do what's right. This is because when principles and reality conflict, we can redefine them in exploring solutions which take both into account, but are not perfect.
4. Men and women may find change difficult. This is because they were socialized into certain roles as children, and it takes a lot of push from the outside to overcome them.
5. Experience tells you whether you can work with someone. This is because over time you'll discover whether your work experiences with that person are rewarding or not.
6. Personality determines whether you can work with someone. This is because there are certain types of personalities which are innately compatible and you know immediately whether you can work with such a person.
7. When someone is not doing a good job, this can be changed. This is because he or she probably has a related strength which is not being utilized.
8. It is possible to predict whether a marriage will last. This is because marriage involves finding the right person, and when two people who are right for each other get married, it should be a success.
9. The most powerful countries have the right to use their power. This is because the world operates by survival of the fittest and if the strong do not maintain their power their existence is threatened.
10. Our country sometimes does not do what's right. This is because questionable actions are sometimes necessary to bring about needed results.

11. Dissension is a dangerous thing. This is because surrendering to dissenters places you at the mercy of anyone who wants to impose his or her ideas on society.
12. Our country generally does what is right. This is because it has learned from past experience what is best, and we use this experience to solve world problems.
13. Our country generally does what's right. This is because we have moral imperative on our side when we make political and economic decisions.
14. There is a right person for everyone. This is because some people just belong together since they have the same type of personality and as a result are perfectly compatible.
15. There may someday be a perfect society. This is because with the development of technology and the social sciences we should be able to rid the world of its medical, psychological and economic problems.
16. The most powerful countries do not have the right to use their power. This is because we're all interrelated and will sink or swim together, so countries have got to be understanding and cooperative.
17. There is no one right person for anyone. This is because relationships form on the basis of who's there at the time, whether these people want a relationship, and can make it work.
18. Personality is molded in childhood. This is because it's influenced by one's parents, peers, teachers, etc., and once it's formed in this way, it's set.
19. The most powerful countries do not have the right to use their power. This is because what one country views as right and just, another may see as unfair and unjust.
20. There can never be a perfect society. This is because every feature of a society carries with it advantages and disadvantages, so that no society has only good points.
21. When someone is not doing a good job, he or she can be made to change. This is because with the right feedback and encouragement from the boss he or she can learn to do a better job.
22. There can never be a perfect society. This is because everyone has a different conception of what such a society would be like, and there can never be enough consensus on what to work toward.
23. A person's behavior is basically inconsistent. This because each person is a unique, random mix of behaviors, so that he or she can be generous one moment and stingy the next.
24. Dissension is a healthy sign. This is because if you oppress others unnecessarily you might destroy yourself in the process and become inhuman.
25. Dissension is a dangerous thing. This is because dissenters threaten the stability and moral fabric of a culture, endangering its future success.
26. Personality is not molded in childhood. This is because it continually changes to fit the immediate environment, in order to adapt and obtain what's needed to get along in life.

27. There can be a perfect society. This is because there is a right order to things; however, it is our task to discover what this order is and put it into action.
28. A person's behavior is essentially consistent. This is because a person is socialized to behave according to the expectations of his or her culture, and can do so with little problem.
29. Problem solving is a question of developing new perspectives. This is because a good decision maker is able to see many sides of a problem and encourage a dialogue in which everyone will be heard and contribute to each other's thinking.
30. People are essentially contradictory. This is because people are simply full of contradictions in how they act, and we cannot hope to understand these contradictions, no matter how hard we try.
31. Dissension is not necessarily dangerous. This is because you can never say for sure that giving in to dissenters will cause problems later because life is unpredictable.
32. It is difficult to predict whether a marriage will last. This is because marriage depends on the active commitment of the partners, and if the commitment is there, existing differences can be appreciated and worked out.
33. Frame of mind sets the stage for whether you can work with someone. This is because if you like someone and expect to work well with him or her you probably will, but if you have a bad attitude you may not.
34. When someone is not doing a good job it's unlikely that he or she will change. This is because people stay essentially the same and either have the ability to do the job or lack it.
35. A person's behavior is generally consistent. This is because each person works to make sense of him or herself and act in a manner consistent with this image; inconsistencies that arise are used to develop this sense of self further.
36. People are essentially contradictory. This is because people are always changing and becoming someone new, which contradicts the old self.
37. It is possible to predict whether a marriage will last. This is because having enough information about the person you're going to marry allows you to predict how he or she will react to different situations, and to prepare accordingly.
38. The most powerful countries have the right to use their power. This is because they got to be powerful by following important ideals, and strive to do what's best for the world.
39. People are not essentially contradictory. This is because, generally speaking, people learn how to behave in ways that are consistent with the actions and expectations of others in the society.
40. Solving problems requires quickly coming up with the best solution. This is because there is a correct way of doing things, and a good decision maker, recognizing this, decisively wastes no time putting it into action.
41. People are not essentially contradictory. This is because you see contradictions in another's actions only if you are thinking in a faulty manner, or in other words, if you are making an error.

42. It's difficult to tell what influences whether you can work with someone. This is because feeling uncomfortable with a new person can generate a vicious cycle of feelings between you, with neither knowing how these came about.
43. Solving problems requires a thorough consideration of all the information. This is because a good decision maker needs to be knowledgeable about the basic facts in order to make a sound judgement.
44. People should be discouraged from acting deviantly. This is because people operate according to their own self-interest, and it is society's job to keep this self-interest within reasonable bounds.
45. Men and women are not likely to change. This is because it is in the nature of things that people are content with the way things are, so men will continue to perform some roles, and women others.
46. A person's behavior is basically consistent. This is because certain types of behaviors are always together, so that a person wouldn't be generous one moment and stingy the next.
47. Men and women constantly change. This is because people are always changing and trying out whatever new roles happen to be facing them at the time, and there is no real order to this process.
48. People should be allowed to act deviantly under some circumstances. This is because you can't judge another's actions unless you know about his or her home life, education, philosophy, etc., and how he or she saw the situation at the time.
49. People should be allowed to act deviantly under some circumstances. This is because rules are useful guides, but only when used flexibly; you have to consider the specifics of the situation and try to fit the rule to it.
50. It is not possible to predict whether a marriage will last. This is because the selection of a spouse and the success of a marriage has a lot to do with factors beyond your control.
51. People should never be allowed to act deviantly. This is because norms of behavior are good for society and must be respected if we are to have order.
52. Men and women periodically change. This is because people seek change and growth and express more parts of themselves as they get older.
53. When somebody is not doing a good job, he or she can change. This is because all that's needed to do a good job is to put your heart into it and then you can do just about anything.
54. Personality is not molded in childhood. This is because a person is born with certain temperaments which, because they are present at birth, persist despite environmental influences.
55. There is a right person for everyone. This is because through experiences dating and the process of trial and error, you can discover who best satisfies your needs.
56. Solving problems requires realizing that there is no right solution. This is because there are many different sides of a problem and depending on what side you look at, a good decision maker needs to recognize that there are different solutions.

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SAB  
RDSSC/LA-Answer

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- 2 = Moderately Disagree (MD)
- 3 = Slightly Disagree (D)

- 4 = Slightly Agree (A)
- 5 = Moderately Agree (MA)
- 6 = Strongly Agree (SA)

	SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA
29.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56.	1	2	3	4	5	6