

## Multi-Item Scale for Project:

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (English Version)

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### Question Text:

English version: For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your work situation....

German version: Bitte wählen Sie für jede der folgenden Aussagen die Antwort aus, die Ihre Arbeitssituation am besten beschreibt.

### Answer Categories:

English version:

Always

Most of the time

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

*Don't know*

*Refusal*

*Not applicable*

German version:

Immer

Meistens

Manchmal

Selten

Nie

*Weiß nicht*

*Verweigert*

*Trifft nicht zu*

### Findings for Multi-Item Scale:

#### Online Probing:

In general, it is striking how many respondents select the "not applicable" answer category if it is explicitly shown. The design of the online pretest differs from the actual face-to-face survey in this respect. This was done intentionally to analyse the adequacy of the items for different sub-populations (i.e. self-employed versus employed, but also across industries). For several items, the results indicate that respondents have difficulty

applying the items to their work situation. Though not as strikingly, this also applies to questions 50 and 89, and possibly also other questions that were not part of the online pretest. On basis of the current data, it is unclear how respondents would answer these questions if the "not applicable" category was not explicitly shown, but the items do not apply to them. This is an aspect worth examining in the upcoming face-to-face cognitive pretest.

The following item-level analyses provide more detailed explanations of how participants came to their response choices.

In question 61, Item A, Item C, Item D, Item E, and Item G were probed to get a better understanding of what respondents are thinking of when answering these items.

### **Cognitive Interviews:**

In the actual EWCS, question 61 is a rather long battery ranging from items A to O. In the pretest, the first five items were asked, and of these two (items A and C) were probed. The aims of the probes were to examine the understanding and range of the work community, so who is considered a colleague (item A), as well as the understanding of the terms 'being consulted' and 'work objectives' (item C). The emphasis lay on possible different interpretation between employed and self-employed respondents and typical versus atypical working situations.

Across both countries, about half of the respondents (nine in Germany, eight in Poland) spontaneously commented on at least one of the items, indicating the necessity to provide additional clarification to their survey responses.

### **Recommendations for Multi-Item Scale:**

Filter: We recommend filtering items in Q61 according to their applicability to respondents. As most items only apply to employees, the simplest solution consists of not showing this question to the self-employed.

However, given that there are also employees without colleagues who refer this question to their boss instead, the optimal solution consists of assessing the social work environment (whether a respondent has direct colleagues or a boss) and filtering the items accordingly, even within the group of employees.

Answer categories: No changes recommended.

### **Cognitive Techniques:**

Specific Probing. (OP)

General/Elaborative Probing, Specific Probing, Comprehension Probing. (CI)

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## All Items for Question(Question Text):

English version: For each of the following statements, please select the response which best describes your work situation....

German version: Bitte wählen Sie für jede der folgenden Aussagen die Antwort aus, die Ihre Arbeitssituation am besten beschreibt.

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-> Tested Items:

### Item Text:

English version:

A. Your colleagues help and support you

German version:

A. Ihre Kollegen helfen Ihnen und unterstützen Sie

### Recommendations:

This item should only be shown to respondents with colleagues.

Assuming that "help and support" can be understood in both a task-related way and in terms of social support, no change of wording is recommended.

### Findings:

#### Online Probing:

Self-employed are much more likely than employees to indicate that this statement does not apply to them (UK: 55% vs. 5%; DE: 48% vs. 3%; PL: 33% vs. 3%).

As a first step of the analyses, we examined why respondents answered that the statement does not apply to them or that they receive no/little help and support. 90 respondents claim that this statement does not apply to them. All but seven of these respondents are self-employed. These seven either explain that they are the only person with these responsibilities; one respondent explains that he is the boss, so he has people working for him, but no direct colleagues. All respondents who answer with "not applicable" (n=90) give as a reason that they have no colleagues. "I have no colleagues" and "I work alone" are the most common answers:

- "I am a freelancer, and don't have colleagues in a strict sense, only in a broader sense, so other free-lancers" (R396DE, self-employed)
- "I only hire people when I need them. I work alone most of the time" (R237UK, self-employed)

Eight respondents answer that they "never" receive help or support from colleagues. Of these, five indicate that they have no colleagues; these people should have answered with "not applicable". Two respondents claim that they have colleagues who, however, do not help them. For one respondent, the probing answer does not give a clear indication of the reason.

Twenty respondents answer that they "rarely" receive help or support, exactly half of which are employees and self-employed. The named reasons are evenly distributed between employees and self-employed. The most common answer (n=11) is that the respondent does not have colleagues or no direct colleagues (again, these respondents should have indicated that the statement doesn't apply to them). The second most common answer is that they do not need help (n=3) and in two cases that they do not often receive help although they want it (n=2). In four cases, the probing answer is inconclusive.

- "We are all freelancers [freelance teaching] – we do our job. If I experience problems with a participant, I speak to colleagues about that. When I have problems with the equipment, I can ask other colleagues. But actually, we all try to do our job as autonomous as possible." (R367DE, self-employed, "rarely")

Next, we examined respondents' understanding of the term "colleagues". Most respondents who receive help and support from colleagues are referring to the team they work in, so people that they share their work place or work tasks with:

- "We're a team in a doctor's office; we help each other, for instance to take blood samples or do the accounting" (R38DE, employee, "most of the time")

Of the 247 respondents who at least "sometimes" receive help and support from their colleagues, 216 (87%) either explicitly refer to their direct colleagues and team, or the answer remains unclear (but it is to be assumed that they mean their direct colleagues). Six respondents, all of them self-employed, explicitly refer the statement to peers, but not direct colleagues. They are referring to other self-employed people who carry out comparable work and whose advice they seek. For the most part, they seem to be freelancers:

- "I don't have direct colleagues. We are several people doing this job in the region, but everyone is on their own" (R322DE, self-employed, "sometimes")
- "I mostly work independently, but sometimes I ask my work colleagues for advice." (R186UK, self-employed, "sometimes")

More important, there are 13 respondents who explicitly name help and support from superiors or subordinates instead of referring to a peer group:

- "I make decisions about the tasks and the team then does what I decide" (R373DE, self-employed, "most of the time")
- "I make decisions about the tasks and the team then does what I decide" (R373DE, self-employed, "most of the time")

- "They work for me" (R228PL, self-employed, "always")
- "I can always contact my team leader" (R129PL, employee, "most of the time")

Finally, we examined respondents' understanding of the term "help and support". The majority of respondents refer to task-related issues when it comes to help and support. Next to direct tasks, such as lifting objects or work division, asking for and receiving advice is the most commonly named shared work:

- "We help whoever has the most to do" (R63DE)
- "Lifting or carrying heavy things" (R126DE)
- "We all have to complete targets so its handed over to another colleague at shift end" (R188UK)

However, 25 respondents (10%) name both task-related help and social support, and another 28 respondents (11%) only name social support as their understanding of the term. This dimension is described as follows:

- "I have kind colleagues who are always there for one another" (R406DE, self-employed, "always")
- "Because they help and support me. Even just showing the will to support is what helps, because I feel the support" (R935PL, self-employed, "most of the time")
- "I was thinking that I can always rely on their help, for instance when answering Emails, for instance when I have no energy left of when they support me psychologically" (R1188PL, self-employed, "always")

### **Cognitive Interviews:**

In Germany, all respondents except one (DE03) gave an answer to this question. In Poland, two self-employed respondent chose "not applicable", while all others gave answers.

Employed respondents had the least cognitive difficulties answering the question. However, they, too, make decisions on whom to include in their set of colleagues. Most refer to direct team members in terms of the organizational structure and/or the people they carry out most of their daily tasks with:

- "There are closer colleagues and ones further away in the company structure. But it's difficult, because there are colleagues that aren't directly part of the same team as me, but with whom I work very closely, and the other way around. So it's hard to choose exactly who this refers to" (DE01, "most of the time")
- "I was referring to the people who are closest to me in terms of our work structure, so the people who are officially in the same team as me, as colleagues, and not necessarily the people with whom I work the most" (DE01, "most of the time")

- "Then I talk to my colleagues who do a similar job [giving guided tours]" (PL02, "always")

Three employed respondents spontaneously reported difficulty differentiating their answer to item A (help and support by colleagues) from their answer to item B (help and support by boss) because both are the same person:

- "In my case, my boss is my colleague, so it's the same answer for the first and second item" (DE05, "always")
- "We're only two people, so my colleague and my boss are the same person" (DE14, "always")
- "My colleague is also my boss. We're a team of two, so to say" (DE15, "always")

Self-employed respondents have to make their own interpretation of colleagues. Freelancers (without employees) tend to think of other freelancers in the same area or other people that are geographically close to them.

- "I thought about other authors" (DE02, "most of the time")
- "When I have a patient, and am uncertain about the diagnosis, then I get the advice from a colleague [another doctor], and we discuss therapy together" (DE10, "always")
- "In the building where I have my business there are people I could call colleagues. They are not directly linked to my company, but they sometimes support me in my job" (PL01, "sometimes")

However, not all self-employed respondents interpreted the term "colleagues" in this sense. This was the case for the self-employed respondents who chose not to answer the question:

- "I have some friends who deal with similar things but this should be excluded" (PL09, "not applicable")

Self-employed respondents with employees of their own tend to think of the people who work for them, or even their clients or business partners and contractors:

- "Colleagues – the question is who is meant by this. I would say those are my employees" (DE08, "most of the time")
- "Certainly, when my employees have time, so aren't at a client, then they support me" (DE09, "most of the time")
- "Contractors who are usually designers in the other fields" (PL10, "always")

Another decision respondents have to make when answering the question is whether receiving support means that colleagues (or the boss) are **willing**, or whether they are **capable** of doing so:

- "When I need help, regardless in which matter, there are always people, colleagues, who are around to help me" (DE05, "always")
- "I was thinking of my employee; she just isn't always around." (DE08, "most of the time")
- "Certainly, when my employees have time, so aren't at a client, then they support me" (DE09, "most of the time")
- "Employees and people who perform assigned tasks" (PL13, "most of the time")
- "I was thinking about my colleagues and their character [...] I cannot imagine that they wouldn't be willing to help me. It's a big difference whether you can't help because you don't know the answer or whether you don't want to. I chose my answer assuming that as long as someone is able to help me, they would" (DE07, "always")

### **Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

### **Construct:**

Working situation

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### **Item Text:**

English version:

C. You are consulted before objectives are set for your work

German version:

C. Sie werden gefragt, bevor Ziele für Ihre Arbeit festgelegt werden

### **Recommendations:**

In the current wording, this item should only be shown to employees.

However, there are also other possibilities of revising this item. Even employed respondents sometimes have difficulties answering this item, as they don't feel that they have objectives that they are measured by. Therefore, another solution could be asking respondents whether they have work objectives, and what type (daily business, annual development), and consequently, who sets them (themselves, direct superior, predetermined by business goals). Such a question could potentially also be asked to self-employed respondents.

## Findings:

Again, self-employed are much more likely than employed to indicate that this statement does not apply to them, though this difference is most pronounced in the UK, followed by Germany and then Poland (UK: 48% vs. 5%; DE: 43% vs. 13%; PL: 31% vs. 5%). Again, self-employed are much more likely than employed to indicate that this statement does not apply to them, though this difference is most pronounced in the UK, followed by Germany and then Poland (UK: 48% vs. 5%; DE: 43% vs. 13%; PL: 31% vs. 5%). Again, self-employed are much more likely than employed to indicate that this statement does not apply to them, though this difference is most pronounced in the UK, followed by Germany and then Poland (UK: 48% vs. 5%; DE: 43% vs. 13%; PL: 31% vs. 5%).

- "I determine my own goals because I work alone" (R147DE, self-employed, "never")
- "Because I make my own goals, for instance a book project – who could consult me beforehand?" (R342DE, self-employed, "never")

However, the majority of both employees and self-employed answer this question in a manner that they are at least rarely consulted. The answers were coded according to two dimensions. The first dimension depicts who the respondents are consulted by or who is setting their objectives. Interestingly, a total of 16 respondents, all of whom are self-employed, explicitly answer that they set their own objectives. They give answers ranging from "always" to "never" being consulted regarding work objectives:

- "Because I'm a freelancer, I can decide for myself" (R370DE, self-employed, "always")
- "As the owner, I make all decisions" (R698PL, self-employed, "always")
- "I determine my own goals and implement them on my own" (R328PL, self-employed, "some-times")
- "As I set my own goals, for instance a book project – who should consult with me in advance?" (R342DE, self-employed, "never")

One respondent is actually answering that he consults with his employees before setting their objectives:

- "I always consult with my employees and teams regarding projects." (R268UK, self-employed, "always")

When answering this question, it is also only self-employed who state that their objectives are directly set by their clients:

- "The client determines everyday work" (R593PL, self-employed, "always").

Unsurprisingly, only employees specifically name their boss as the person who sets their objectives (n=15), regardless of whether and how often they are consulted before the objectives are set:



- "My boss always runs through work that needs doing and how to complete the task before setting it" (R382UK, employee, "most of the time")
- "There are requirements for the upcoming fiscal year and targets are set. Employees are allowed to contribute to this. But in the end, the management decides" (R61DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "The employer sets the goals" (R93PL, employee, "rarely")

The second dimension of coding refers to the type of objective. Most of the objectives that are named consist of generally worded goals, such as "getting the job done", "daily/ weekly/ monthly chores" or "project work" (n=158, 43%). They differ according to the industry the respondent works in, and range from concrete chores to more abstract, strategic business goals:

- "The chore of the day, for instance which meal should be prepared today and which other products there are" (R51DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "That all orders and jobs are done before I leave" (R57DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "Pupil attainment" (R24UK, employee, "sometimes")
- "Quality objectives" (R92UK, employee, "most of the time")
- "Increasing efficiency" (R333PL, employee, "sometimes")

Meeting deadlines or achieving a certain work pace is named by 22 respondents and sales targets are named by another 16 respondents. These answers apply to employees and self-employed alike.

There is no indication in the answers that being consulted before objectives are set is viewed negatively.

### **Cognitive Interviews:**

Respondents used the entire scale from "always" to "never" to answer this question. In Germany, three respondents (DE05, DE09, DE13) felt that this statement did not apply to them and chose "not applicable"; in Poland, this was the case for two respondents (PL01, PL08). Four of these five respondents are self-employed. Though the case numbers are very small, self-employed respondents seem to either agree with this statement or decide that it does not apply to them.

The probing question examined respondents' understanding of the item. Employed respondents name a wide range of objectives, referring to daily tasks (DE01, DE05, DE12, DE14, DE15), project goals (DE07, DE16), or also long-term or yearly goals (DE01, DE06). Two respondents specifically name their annual employee appraisal interviews, in which goals are written down (DE04, DE11). Examples of objectives include:

- "For instance, which bicycle I wish to repair. So whether I would prefer to carry out an inspection for five bikes or spend my entire working day with a more complex automation" (DE14)

- "So, for instance, whether I want to plan a new type of seminar, or how many courses I have planned for the upcoming year" (DE04)
- "We get our tasks from the priest, so how he wants a certain event to be organized" (DE15)
- "I work in a big company. The objectives there are varied, both global ones of the entire company, and the objectives of my unit. [...] This is usually set by [...] upper level managers and that's why it hardly involves a graphic designer" (PL03, "sometimes")

Self-employed respondents generally recall situations that make it clear that they make their own objectives; however, they don't state this explicitly. They also refer to specific work-related tasks or customer satisfaction, but are much more likely to focus on goals related to business development:

- "My objectives are my orders, my clients" (DE08, "most of the time")
- "I have to make a profit, so I can pay my assistants. So I need to decide on measures to make this profit. Those are my objectives" (DE10, "most of the time")

Self-employed respondents who did not answer the question directly relate this to their self-employed status:

- "When I heard objectives, I thought of the personal goals that I decide on with and for my employees. But that obviously doesn't count for me, as the owner" (DE09, "not applicable")
- "I do not know who I could possibly consult objectives of my work or who could consult it with me" (PL01, "not applicable")
- "I understood them as objectives the client sets and his expectations. They are not consulted with me in that I define them with a client myself" (PL08, "not applicable")

One respondent in multi-activity (DE16) again refers to both of her activities when answering the question, instead of focusing on her main paid job only.

## **Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

## **Construct:**

Working situation

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## Item Text:

English version:

D. You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation

German version:

D. Sie sind an der Verbesserung der Arbeitsorganisation oder der Arbeitsabläufe Ihrer Abteilung oder Firma/ Organisation beteiligt

## Recommendations:

This item should only be shown to employees.

## Findings:

### Online Probing:

As a first step of the analyses, we examined respondents' understanding of the terms "being involved", "improving" and "work processes" in this item.

"Being involved" is described as having the opportunity to voice opinions, be it in direct communication with a team leader or the management, in conferences or team meetings.

"Improving" means optimizing procedures and work flow, making daily chores easier for operational staff, and innovation management. Most respondents give general and vague descriptions of "work processes":

- "Daily routine" (R63DE, employee, "always")
- "Division of work" (R104DE, employee, "always")
- "Situations are discussed and alternatives considered" (R195DE, self-employed, "always")
- "New ideas" (R20UK, employee, "most of the time")
- "My colleagues and I are often consulted and asked to give our views and ideas about how the office environment can be realistically improved" (R225UK, employee, "sometimes")

Others name examples from their work life:

- "The facilities and infrastructure of the lawyer's office, technical equipment, work processes and all are discussed by my colleagues and myself" (R319DE, self-employed, "most of the time")
- "Optimizing IT-supported work processes" (R52DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "Writing the menu" (R106DE, employee, "most of the time")

Next, we examined why respondents chose their respective answers and we did so for employees and self-employed separately. Employees generally answer the question in the intended manner. Many respondents who answer that they are "always" involved or "most of the time" are in a managerial position or work closely with the management, but single respondents in an operative position also feel involved in improving work processes:

- "I am in a managerial position and work closely with the company owner" (R905DE, employee, "always")
- "I am the manager, so am involved to various degrees in all department changes" (R45UK, employee, "always")
- "If anyone finds a better way of doing something, it is shared and we all help in making things work better" (R66UK, employee, "most of the time")
- "Because we are directly involved in routines, we care that the patients receive two rolls with marmalade and cheese a day, and that they are cut correctly. We use the answer cards that come with the meals" (R258DE, employee, "always")

Employees who answer that they are "sometimes" involved correctly indicate that the opportunity for involvement exists, but their influence is limited:

- "We can make suggestions in conferences" (R34DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "We can gladly make suggestions. But implementing them doesn't always work" (R55DE, employee, "sometimes")
- "If procedure is no longer fit or can be improved it's revised" (R98UK, employee, "sometimes")
- "I get to discuss with my boss new ways of improving and streamlining our work methods" (R382UK, employee, "sometimes")

Explanations of employees who are "rarely" or "never" involved in improvement vary, but are all in line with the question intention. Either superiors decide and show little interest in employee opinions, or the employees themselves feel it is not part of their job to be involved in establishing and improving work processes, they see no room for improvement, or their employment situation (i.e. non-permanent contracts, shift work) make it difficult for them to contribute to structural change:

- "It doesn't matter what I think; I have to function like a machine" (R75DE, employee, "never")
- "The work rules are made by management" (R70UK, employee, "rarely")
- "This is done by management" (R5UK, employee, "never")

- "There are hardly opportunities; the work just needs to be done, there isn't much to change " (R120DE, employee, "rarely")
- "No responsibility" (R79PL, employee, "rarely")
- "Team leaders decide these things, not me" (R107DE, employee, "rarely")
- "That is my boss' job" (R108DE, employee, "not applicable")
- "I don't work directly in the department, but I can voice my opinion" (R301PL, employee, "rarely")
- "I am a temporary worker" (R142DE, employee, "never")
- "My tasks are separate from the rest of my department" (R25UK, employee, "never")

Turning to self-employed respondents, in all three countries, these are highly likely to either fully agree with this statement ("always": UK 37% self-employed vs 20% employed; DE 47% vs 24%; PL 31% vs 17%) or insist that it does not apply to them (UK: 35% vs 3%; DE: 32% vs 11%, PL: 27% vs 12%). This indicates that self-employed are split into two groups, of which one group applies the question terms "your department or organisation" to their working situation as self-employed, while the other does not.

The results of the probing question support this assumption, as all self-employed give the same reasoning to their answer - regardless of whether they answer "always" or "not applicable" (n=57) – stating that their employment status as self-employed is the reason for their answer:

- "I decide how I organize myself and what my processes are" (R98DE, self-employed, "not applicable")
- "I decide on all processes" (R211UK, self-employed, "not applicable")
- "As a freelancer, I'm the boss, and I decide on all processes and organization" (R349DE, self-employed, "always")
- "As the head of the organisation, it falls on my shoulders to make sure my business is successful" (R283UK, self-employed, "always")

This clearly demonstrates that the question cannot be answered by respondents and interpreted by researchers in an unambiguous way.

Also interesting are the 28 respondents who are self-employed, but indicate that they are "never", "rarely" or "sometimes" integrated. Of those, some again give their self-employment and decision-making as the reason:

- "I am self-employed" (R355DE, self-employed, "never")
- "It's only me involved" (R216UK, self-employed, "never")

- "I work on my own, I don't need improvement" (R147DE, self-employed, "never")

Others give a more logical answer, stating that despite being self-employed they are dependent on other circumstances:

- "I never know what's coming" (R13UK, self-employed, "never")

Two respondents are self-employed, but working for a company which they cannot influence:

- "I work as self-employed for a company. So I have nothing to do with their decisions" (R322DE, self-employed, "never")
- "It's not my place to change the organisations and processes in place" (R130UK, self-employed, "rarely")

## **Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

## **Construct:**

Working situation

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## **Item Text:**

English version:

E. You have a say in the choice of your work colleagues

German version:

E. Sie haben ein Mitspracherecht bei der Auswahl der Arbeitskollegen, mit denen Sie zusammenarbeiten

## **Recommendations:**

This item should only be shown to respondents with colleagues.

## **Findings:**

### **Online Probing:**

There is a systematic difference in the responses of employed and self-employed. Employed respondents are less likely to answer that they always have a say in their choice of work colleagues. Self-employed are more likely to answer that this is always the case

(UK: 28%, DE: 50%, PL: 48%) or that this does not apply to them (UK: 48%, DE: 33%, PL: 19%), with self-employed in the UK most likely to claim it does not apply and self-employed in Germany most likely to claim it always applies. This either speaks for a different understanding of the item's meaning between self-employed in the different countries, or for truly different working situations of the self-employed.

We therefore took a closer look at the reasons that self-employed respondents provided for why they selected their answers. In Poland and Germany, most self-employed (PL: 68%, DE: 58%) argue that they are either the boss of their enterprise or that they work as free-lancers who can decide on a case by case basis who to work with. Hence, it makes sense that they predominantly answer "always" in response to Item E. In the UK, only about 35% of the self-employed argue along these lines.

■ "It's my business so I have the choice of choosing who I work with." (R500UK)

■ "As a free-lancer, I can decide who to work with." (R370DE)

A second line of reasoning, which is provided most often by the UK respondents (UK: 52%, DE: 33%, PL: 25%), is that respondents have no work colleagues, but work alone:

■ "I have no work colleagues." (R218UK)

■ "I work alone." (R768PL)

This explanation is almost exclusively provided by respondents who selected the "not applicable" answer category. Again, this indicates that self-employed respondents understand the item unambiguously and that differences in the answer distributions across countries are most likely due to differences in the sample composition (i.e., the UK respondents work more often on their own than the German and Polish respondents).

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1. Most respondents (DE: 52%, UK: 54%, PL: 69%) explain that – to a certain degree – they can influence the choice of their colleagues. How often this is the case mainly depends on one's position in the job: Respondents in leading positions tend to say that they "always" have a say in the choice of their work colleagues (e.g., "As a senior employee this is part of my job." – R38DE, always) while those further down on the corporate ladder tend to select the "sometimes" or "rarely" answer category (e.g., "If a new person has his or her trial day, then the manager asks us about our opinion." – R37PL, sometimes).

2. Some respondents (DE: 43%, UK: 43%, PL: 21%) argue that they simply "have no decision making powers" (e.g., R47DE, never) or "don't hire the staff" (e.g.,

R85UK, never). Interestingly, a few German (n=3) and Polish (n=5) respondents who argue along these lines selected the "not applicable" instead of the "never" response option. Given that the "not applicable" option should be reserved for respondents who do not have any work colleagues, these few cases hint at a potential problem of the presentation or wording of the answer options.

3. A few respondents (DE: 3, UK: 2, PL: 1) argue that they "don't have colleagues" (e.g., R21UK) or "work alone" (e.g., R91PL). Some of these respondents selected the "never" answer category (n=2) instead of "not applicable" (n=4). Again, these first two cases hint at a potential problem in the presentation or wording of the answer categories.

Next, we examined how respondents understand the term "having a say". Depending on one's position in the job, "having a say" is interpreted as ranging from (informally) being asked about one's opinion on a potential new colleague (e.g., unskilled worker) to making the final decision about hiring a colleague (e.g., CEO). There are no systematic differences in the interpretation of this term between the three countries:

- "As the CEO I have a say in everything." (R325DE)
- "We are asked what we think of people who want to join the team." (R196UK)
- "I am in a leading position and can influence the choice of work colleagues." (R81PL)

Finally, we investigated what sorts of colleagues respondents think about when answering this item. Across all three countries, most respondents (DE: 71%, UK: 77%, PL: 67%) think about colleagues in general when answering this item with no specific focus on either direct colleagues on the same hierarchical level, superiors, or subordinates:

- "Colleagues from the same company." (R126DE)
- "Other employees below, above and level with my position." (R52UK)
- "The whole department." (R337PL)

Some (mostly self-employed) respondents specifically refer to their subordinates/employees when answering this question (DE: 20%, UK: 14%, PL: 22%) while a few other respondents solely refer to co-workers on the same hierarchical level (DE: 8%, UK: 8%, PL: 11%):

- "I thought about my employees." (R349DE, self-employed)
- "People that I employ." (R181UK, employee)
- "Drivers who subordinate me." (R927PL, self-employed)
- "Colleagues on the same level." (R336DE, self-employed)
- "My management team." (R 268UK, self-employed)
- "Colleagues working in a similar position as me." (R89PL, employee)



## Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

## Construct:

Working situation

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## Item Text:

English version:

G. You have enough time to get the job done

German version:

Sie haben genug Zeit, um die Arbeit zu erledigen

## Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

## Findings:

### Online Probing:

This question shows no large or systematic differences in answer behaviour; neither between self-employed and employed, nor between countries. Self-employed are more likely to answer with "always" or "most of the time", indicating that self-employment serves the goal of better determining work pace than employment. However, the majority of all respondents answer with "always" or "most of the time" that they have enough time to get the job done. Only very few respondents respond that this statement does not apply to them.

The three respondents who answer that this question does not apply to them also gave inconclusive answers to probing.

Of the twelve respondents who answer that they "never" have enough time to get the job done, all of them describe a situation of work overload in answer to the probing question. Employees are more likely to answer in this way than self-employed, though both groups deliver answers:

- "In 5 ½ hours, I have to fill shelves, clean, control prices, bring products, help at the cash registers, carry out orders, help out in sanitary area and the garden. The customer comes first" (R75DE, employee, "never")
- "We have too much to do in very short time" (R31UK, employee, "never")

- "Breaks are predetermined and must be kept exactly. Every additional break, also an individual one, influences the process; that is why there are penalties and additional breaks are not possible" (R156PL, employee, "never")
- "A self-employed person is like a hamster in a wheel – he is never free of time pressure" (R760PL, self-employed, "never")

A total of 24 respondents say that they "rarely" have enough time to get the job done, almost exactly half (n=11) of these are self-employed. These respondents give more detailed and varied answers as to the cause of the lack of time. These include work overload, lack of employees / colleagues, bureaucracy, and sinking quality as a result of time restrictions:

- "Extreme workload compression and more bureaucracy" (R53DE, employee, "rarely")
- "Too much bureaucracy, too little time for personal consultation" (R338DE, employee, "rarely")
- "Because everything has to go quickly" (R56DE, employee, "rarely")
- "Lack of personnel; and it's not possible to achieve the same quality with fewer employees, without harming yourself or others" (R258DE, employee, "rarely")
- "Of course, I want to sign as many projects as possible. But it's not possible to do this in part-time" (R322DE, self-employee, "rarely")
- "I get too much work to do in my contract hours, and if we do everything, the managers always give us more work to do" (R163UK, employee, "rarely")
- "I'm always behind" (R247UK, employee, "rarely")

Two respondents describe a general work overload, not only related to their job, but to their schedule as such. Both of these are self-employed:

- "I just think there's never enough hours in a day to do everything including my job" (R248 UK, self-employed, "rarely")
- "I am also responsible for the household and helping my parents' daily routine" (R768 PL, self-employed, "rarely")

However, the majority of respondents explain that they "always" or "most of the time" have enough time to get their job done. A clear coding is best possible when coding the answers of the respondents who answered with "always"; this applied to 104 respondents. The most common explanation given is that they are able to choose their working hours, schedule or order of tasks (n=38). This explanation is mostly given by self-employed (n=32, 84% of the respondents who gave this explanation). Four respondents, all of whom are self-employed, argue the other way around – so not that they have enough time to finish their work, but that they can choose the amount of work to fit the time they

have. The next most common explanation is that the work load is manageable in the amount of time (n=26). This reasoning is provided more often by employed respondents (n=16) than self-employed (n=10). Another ten respondents explain that timelines and deadlines are not relevant to their job (n=10, 6 of these are employees). For instance, this applies to one respondent who works as a receptionist (R129UK), or another one who works as a security guard (R51UK).

### **Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

### **Construct:**

Working situation

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-> Not Tested Items:

### **Item Text:**

English version:

B. Your manager helps and supports you (Employees only)

German version:

B. Ihr Vorgesetzter/Chef hilft Ihnen und unterstützt Sie (Nur Angestellte)

### **Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

### **Construct:**

Working situation

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### **Item Text:**

English version:

F. You can take a break when you wish

German version:

F. Sie können eine Pause machen, wenn Sie möchten

**Question Topic:**

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

**Construct:**

Working situation