

Multi-Item Scale for Project:

Translation of established public health measurement instruments into Arabic and Dari (ENSURE) (English Version)

Question Text:

When you think about your time in Germany, how often were you discriminated against in everyday situations?

[Wenn Sie an Ihre Zeit in Deutschland denken, wie oft wurden Sie in alltäglichen Situationen diskriminiert?]

Answer Categories:

Never *[Nie]*

Rarely *[Selten]*

Sometimes *[Manchmal]*

Often *[Oft]*

Always *[Immer]*

Not specified *[Keine Angabe]*

Findings for Multi-Item Scale:

The introductory question text and item 4 were systematically tested. For the other items, only spontaneous responses of the test persons are available, if at all.

Introductory question text) What do the test persons understand by "being discriminated against" and what do they count as "everyday situations" in which this happens?

The test persons showed a very broad understanding of discrimination that went beyond the expression of prejudice or disadvantage and included in particular open xenophobia, verbal and even physical violence. One test person emphasized that discrimination included many facets ranging from trivialities to serious experiences (DA04). Most of the test persons named several and variously drastic forms of discrimination: Discrimination manifested itself in the way one was treated, in words or insults, with looks, how one was judged and one's own performance, and finally in physical violence. Most frequently, the test persons stated that they experienced or witnessed discrimination on the basis of external characteristics. These included in particular the wearing of a headscarf (SY02, SY03, SY06, IR01, IR03, IR06, DA05), but also a foreign or Arabic appearance (SY02, IR03, DA01), for example by wearing a beard (SY02) or by clothing (DA05). In addition, language (DA05) and number of children (SY06, IR02) were mentioned as reasons for

discrimination.

With regard to everyday situations in which they had experienced discrimination, the test persons mainly referred to incidents in public spaces, i.e., on the street, in stores, on public transport, when applying for jobs or at work. Regarding experiences in public transport, one test person said that the door was not always opened for her when she wanted to get on, but if a German person joined her, the door would be opened (IR01). Two others said that Germans avoided sitting next to them on the bus or tram and that they let them sit next to them; they would put bags on the seats if necessary (SY02, IR06). One test person mentioned that she had been insulted and yelled at on the bus in the presence of her children by people who accused her of taking everything from the Germans (IR02).

The Arabic-speaking test persons in particular reported discrimination against migrant women. For example, one test person reported how a German woman had counted her children in the street in order to indicate that she had too many children (IR01). Another test person told how a woman had to justify her headscarf to a stranger on the open street (IR03). A third had been spat at on the sidewalk by young men from a car and had received rude hand signals (SY03). In addition, two test persons recounted violence against women. Someone stranger had hit a subject's wife in the back on the open street without cause and walked on (SY01). One test person said she had been hit with a bag by strangers and loudly insulted (IR01).

A total of five test persons mentioned cases of discrimination in the professional context. These included disadvantages in the application process (SY01, IR01), non-recognition of foreign degrees (DA03) and discrimination in the workplace (DA06), for example in dispute situations (SY01). One test person said that a colleague did not agree with her living and working in Germany (DA02). Two test persons said that they were treated worse as customers in stores (IR02) and did not always get an answer when they approached someone (IR01). Finally, one test person explained that although people often only think of discrimination by Germans, discrimination also occurs within different migrant groups, citing the relationship between Eastern European and Arab migrants as an example (DA05).

The test persons from Afghanistan cited examples in a professional context somewhat more frequently and cases of verbal or physical violence less frequently than the Arabic-speaking test persons. However, there were no differences in the definition of discrimination by language or country of origin, but only by personal experience.

One test person from Afghanistan also did not know the word "discrimination" (DA02). The test person was illiterate and had difficulties with several terms. The interpreter explained the term, whereupon the test person was able to answer the items without further problems.

Other findings

Five Arabic-speaking test persons, especially from Syria, first answered the question text instead of the individual items (SY01, SY04, SY05, SY06, IR04). Thus, they indicated in general terms how often they had been discriminated against in everyday situations. In all cases, the interpreters intervened to clarify the misunderstanding and directed the test persons to the first item.

Three test persons showed problems with the answer scale. SY02 spontaneously stated when reading the question that she would prefer to represent her answers as a percentage. When answering the items, she further commented that she had already been threatened once and would therefore answer here with "hundred percent". Discussing her answers later, the test person made another suggestion. It would fit the question better if the answer choices reflected the number of incidents experienced, i.e., "once, twice, three times, four times". The interpreter commented that the Arabic translation of the introductory text was more like "how many times" rather than "how often", which caused the test person to feel that the answer categories did not fit the question. Another test person could not decide on a scale value for the first two items and fluctuated between "rarely" and "sometimes" (IR02). She justified this by saying that these events would occur again and again, so that it could not be described as "rare", but they would also not occur "always", but at irregular intervals. A third test person, while selecting values based on the response scale when asked, answered the items first with "Yes, it happened to me" or "No, it did not happen to me" when reading. These cases all indicated that the use of relative frequencies in the response scale caused problems for this question.

Four Arabic-speaking test persons spontaneously mentioned physical attacks they had experienced in relation to the question text or the first item. Nevertheless, all of these test persons selected the answer "never" for item 9, which testifies to a very narrow understanding of the word "threatened". Having been threatened seemed, at least for these test persons, to refer exclusively to situations in which one knows the threatener personally and this person threatens violence or other negative consequences but does not become physical. For example, SY02 recounted that she was once pushed off her bicycle by strangers on the street, her bicycle was destroyed, and she was beaten. She answered "never" to Item 9 because she did not know these people and they had not made any threats before attacking her. Test person SY04 recounted that she had once been accosted and yelled at in the open street by a strange man whom she classified as a Nazi. She had not understood enough German to be sure what he had said to her and answered "never" to Item 9. Another respondent told that she had been beaten by Nazis (IR04). IR05 related that she had once been thrown to the ground and beaten on a train without cause. However, she related this experience to the first item on unfriendly behavior and answered item 9 with "never".

Recommendations for Multi-Item Scale:

Introduction: The introductory question text should not be phrased as a question and should be presented above the matrix to avoid test persons trying to answer the introduction instead of the top item:

"Please indicate how often you have been discriminated against in everyday situations in Germany in the following ways."

["Bitte geben Sie an, wie oft Sie in Deutschland auf die folgenden Arten in alltäglichen Situationen diskriminiert wurden."]

All items: We recommend to put all items into the imperfect tense.

Item 1: No changes recommended.

Item 9: No changes recommended.

Additional Item: Since many test persons perceived physical violence as a possible form of discrimination, we recommend to list this in a separate item:

"They were beaten or otherwise physically assaulted."

["Sie wurden geschlagen oder auf andere Weise körperlich angegriffen."]

Response format: We recommend not to design the response scale with relative frequencies.

For most test persons, the decisive factor was whether they had already had such experiences. If a dichotomous query is sufficient, the introductory question text and the answer options can be formulated as follows:

"Please indicate whether you have been discriminated against in the following ways in everyday situations in Germany."

["Bitte geben Sie an, ob Sie in Deutschland auf die folgenden Arten in alltäglichen Situationen diskriminiert wurden."]

"No, this has never happened to me in Germany before."

["Nein, dies ist mir in Deutschland noch nie passiert."]

"Yes, this has already happened to me in Germany."

["Ja, dies ist mir in Deutschland schon passiert."]

If a multi-level scale is to be used, we recommend the introductory question text above and a specific query about the number of experiences:

"No, never"

["Nein, noch nie"]

"Yes, once"

["Ja, einmal"]

"Yes, two to three times"

["Ja, zwei- bis dreimal"]

"Yes, four times or more"

["Ja, viermal oder öfter"]

Cognitive Techniques:

Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing, Emergent Probing

All Items for Question(Question Text):

When you think about your time in Germany, how often were you discriminated against in everyday situations?

[Wenn Sie an Ihre Zeit in Deutschland denken, wie oft wurden Sie in alltäglichen Situationen diskriminiert?]

-> Tested Items:

Item Text:

People act as if they think you are stupid. (4) *[Leute tun so, als hielten sie Sie für dumm. (4)]*

Recommendations:

We recommend formulating the item less abstractly, but by means of an example:

"Someone spoke to you as if you were stupid."

["Jemand sprach mit Ihnen, als wären Sie dumm."]

Findings:

What does it mean to "think someone is stupid"?

Four test persons expressed problems with the wording of the item (SY05, SY06, IR05, DA02), and in all cases the core of the misunderstanding was ambiguity about whether it was about "acting stupid" or "being thought stupid". In addition, one of these test persons asked whether it was about someone else behaving in a way that made them think they were stupid, or whether it was about behaving stupidly oneself (IR05). Two other test persons understood the item to mean that they were considered stupid if they said illogical things (SY06, DA02). For another test person it remained unclear whether she had understood the item text. She claimed not to be able to explain how "thinking someone is stupid" is expressed, because she had never experienced anything like it (IR01, answer: rarely).

The other 13 test persons showed a good understanding of the item. Two test persons from Syria and four from Afghanistan stated that "thinking someone is stupid" is

expressed primarily in the way one is spoken to. One test person gave the example of professional instructions being repeated several times, even though they were already clear the first time (SY01). Another test person explained that she understood German quite well but could not express herself well in German. This bothered her, for example, when she could not articulate herself well in conversations while shopping and her counterpart behaved as if she did not understand anything (SY04). Another test person also expressed frustration that others thought they did not understand even simple sentences (DA03). One test person explained that the tone of the other person's voice also changed (DA04). Another suggested that Germans pretend not to understand them as an excuse to treat them worse (DA05).

The Arabic-speaking test persons in particular also mentioned cases in which they were made fun of or teased. For example, two test persons said they were taken for fools when someone made fun of them (IR06) or when someone took something from them (IR03) and pretended it was fun. One test person felt sold for stupid when Germans demanded that she stand up for them on the bus and clear the seat (SY03). Another test person said that she was kind-hearted and liked to give, which was often interpreted as naivety (IR04).

Question Topic:

Personality/ Social interaction

Construct:

Discrimination

-> Not Tested Items:

Item Text:

You were treated rudely or unkindly. (1) [*Sie wurden unhöflich oder unfreundlich behandelt. (1)*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Social interaction

Construct:

Discrimination

Item Text:

You were threatened. (9) [*Sie wurden bedroht. (9)*]

Question Topic:

Personality/ Social interaction

Construct:

Discrimination