

Multi-Item Scale for Project:

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2021 (English Version)

Question Text:

Now follow various statements that some people agree with, but others disagree with. What about you? For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

[Nun folgen verschiedene Aussagen, denen manche Leute zustimmen, die andere aber auch ablehnen. Wie ist das bei Ihnen? Geben Sie bitte zu jeder Aussage an, inwieweit Sie ihr zustimmen oder nicht.]

Answer Categories:

Completely disagree *[stimme überhaupt nicht zu]*

Rather disagree *[Stimme eher nicht zu]*

Neither agree nor disagree *[Teils-teils]*

Rather agree *[Stimme eher zu]*

Completely agree *[stimme voll und ganz zu]*

Findings for Multi-Item Scale:

One subject wished for a modification in the instruction:

"I forgot [to mention] this earlier [in question 10]. [...] 'Now follow various statements that some people agree with, but others disagree with.' [...] That makes no sense to me. It doesn't say anything. It is clear that people agree with certain topics and disagree with others. In my opinion, you could just delete the [sentence], just like 'How about you?'. By answering a questionnaire, you are being addressed personally. You could leave both of those out." (TP 03)

Recommendations for Multi-Item Scale:

Introduction & question: We recommend consistent wording for questions 10 and 15 with regard to the introduction and question wording. Response format: It might be worth considering reversing the scale poles, i.e. from "com-pletely agree" to "completely disagree". This should then be consistent across the entire survey.

Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing

All Items for Question(Question Text):

Now follow various statements that some people agree with, but others disagree with. What about you? For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

[Nun folgen verschiedene Aussagen, denen manche Leute zustimmen, die andere aber auch ablehnen. Wie ist das bei Ihnen? Geben Sie bitte zu jeder Aussage an, inwieweit Sie ihr zustimmen oder nicht.]

-> Tested Items:

Item Text:

a. Climate change is mainly caused by human activity. *[Der Klimawandel wird hauptsächlich durch menschliches Handeln verursacht.]*

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

Findings:

What do respondents think of when answering this item?

The majority of persons agreed "rather" ($n = 5$) or "completely" ($n = 2$) with the statement, two persons located themselves in the middle response category ($n = 2$), and one subject "rather disagreed" with the statement.

When answering the item, the test persons primarily addressed the CO₂ emissions caused by humans:

- *"Now, for example, all our big companies that then burn everything and emit all the toxins into the environment." (TP 01)*
- *"To the many SUV[-drivers] with their big cars and their fuel consumption and many original holidays with airplane and many business trips, which are made quickly times with the air-plane and where very much CO₂ is emitted. So, everything that is normal for many people [...], eating a lot of meat and so on. That [this] is all*

human activity, which could well be influenced by making people aware of these things." (TP 05)

Only one respondent explicitly mentioned climate change:

- *"Thinking about issues like temperature changes, weather events that weren't so common in the past, heavy rains and things like that. That's what I was thinking about." (TP 09)*

In addition, a few persons (TP 04, 06, 07, 08) addressed natural climate change - in addition to man-made - explaining their chosen response category:

- *"The climate has been changing for thousands of years without human influence. But still, humans have a part in forcing climate change. Hence 'neither disagree nor agree'." (TP 07, response: neither disagree nor agree).*
- *"Well, the climate is changing. I think it's due to something bigger that we have little influence on. Of course we have some influence, but when you see how much the sun is affecting it, and when it's gone, it immediately gets cool. That's why I don't say, 'completely disagree.' Humans have influence, but certainly not to the extent that people always like to portray it." (TP 06, answer: rather disagree).*

Question Topic:

Environment/ Climate protection

Construct:

Opinions on climate change

Item Text:

b. Germany is so small that it cannot make an effective contribution to protecting the global climate. [*Deutschland ist so klein, dass es keinen effektiven Beitrag zum Schutz des weltweiten Klimas leisten kann.*]

Recommendations:

We recommend that the item be reworded to avoid the negative:

"Germany is too small to make an effective contribution to protecting the global climate."

Findings:

What do respondents think of when answering this item?

The majority of persons "completely" ($n = 4$) or "rather disagreed" ($n = 3$) with the statement, two persons chose the middle answer category, and one subject "completely agreed" with the statement.

Most ($n = 8$) test persons stated that every country and every person could contribute to climate protection:

- *"For me it was clear that every contribution one can make is a contribution and can just be a role model and [one can also] indirectly exert influence [on the] climate."* (TP 03)
- *"The area of Germany is small, but the number of inhabitants is not small. Whether now many people make dirt in a small area or in a large area [...] is [...] irrelevant."* (TP 05)
- *"Every country can make a contribution, whether large or small, in my opinion, it doesn't matter."* (TP 07)

Only two respondents commented that Germany could not make a contribution, which suggests that they believe that nothing needs to be done (in Germany) either:

- *"Because I read that somewhere once. Germany is so small in relation to the world, I think we have a 1% share of CO₂. You don't have to make such a big deal out of it and think that we can save the world. Therefore, I have to say 'completely agree' that we cannot make an effective contribution."* (TP 06, response: completely agree)
- *"I once thought about the number of people in Germany and the number of people in India or China. There we would be at the ratio 1:20, 1:15. Then you think about whether 1:15 or 1:20 has a real meaning. I think we overestimate ourselves with our actions in Germany, where we have made relatively good progress on this issue."* (TP 09, answer: rather disagree; the direction of the scale was probably misinterpreted).

The chosen answer of respondent 09 did not match the given reason, which may be due to the negation in the question text. That the "double negative" (i.e., the need to select the "disagree" option when agreeing with the negated statement) was not optimal was also expressed by another respondent:

"Oh, double negation. That's where I get the crisis anyway. A positive formulation might be better. For example, 'Germany is big enough to make an effective contribution to protecting the global climate'." (TP 04)

One respondent also criticized the wording of the item itself:

"Germany is so small' - I thought about that, that there could be a better formulation, so small in relation to what, so, what do you compare yourself to. Or does it actually refer more to the size of the country or what exactly is meant by that? That was a little bit unclear. It's more of a colloquial thing for me." (TP 03)

Question Topic:

Environment/ Climate protection

Construct:

Opinions on climate change

Item Text:

c. The world climate is currently warming so much that it will have serious consequences for people's lives. [*Das Weltklima erwärmt sich momentan so stark, dass es gravierende Folgen für das Leben der Menschen haben wird.*]

Recommendations:

No changes recommended.

Findings:

What do respondents think of when answering this item?

The majority of persons agreed "rather" ($n = 3$) or "completely" ($n = 4$) with the statement, two persons selected "neither disagree nor agree" and one subject "rather disagree." For this item, most test persons thought of extreme weather phenomena such as drought, heat, melting of the poles, strong winds, floods as well as water shortages, inflows and outflows:

- *"That the world climate is changing so much. I first thought of Antarctica, where the ice is now melting away. You can see that it can have extreme consequences."* (TP 01)
- *"I thought about the fact that there will be unbelievable migration and immigration [...] and [...] immense problems due to climate change. [...] Also any cities that are going to be flooded because the sea level is rising."* (TP 04)

- *"That when I go outside the front door here in April, May, I'm almost blown out of my shoes because there's such a strong wind, and that wasn't 15 years ago. And if that continues, I'm going to need lead shoes so I can walk out here. Anyway, it's affecting me in some way." (TP 05)*
- *"If the world climate really changes as much as we're already experiencing, that the summers are getting hotter and hotter and drier weather in general, which means water shortages for agriculture and for people, that already has serious consequences." (TP 08)*

Two test persons commented that it was not as serious as it was often portrayed:

- *"Because it is just not so blatant, but it is just bad, I say times [...]. We should do something about it, especially we humans, but I don't think that it is so strong that I could say I 'rather disagree' or that I could say I 'rather agree'. That's why I chose 'neither disagree nor agree'." (TP 02, response: neither disagree nor agree)*
- *"That's where I traced back what the last few years have been. In my opinion, it can be a little warmer, but not uncomfortable. I agree that we don't have that much influence on the change. Of course, I have to say that, regardless of what is reported in the media, you have to take a more neutral view. There is also a lot of exaggeration." (TP 06, answer: rather disagree)*

Question Topic:

Environment/ Climate protection

Construct:

Opinions on climate change

Item Text:

d. The use of gender-neutral language (e.g., Bürger*innen) should be encouraged by the government [*Die Verwendung geschlechterneutraler Sprache (z. B. Bürger*innen) sollte vom Staat gefördert werden.*]

Recommendations:

Since some of the test persons interpreted the term "promote" in financial terms, we recommend using another term, such as "advance" or "support".

Furthermore, the position of the item within the battery on climate change irritated some respondents. The item should therefore be asked separately.

Findings:

Is the term "gender-equal language" preferable to the term "gender-neutral language"?

By the term "gender-neutral" language, the test persons understood quite different things. Some associated it only with the masculine plural form (citizens), others that both gender forms are mentioned in the plural separately (citizens), and still others that (through the asterisk) diverse is also integrated:

- *"That every person or every group is addressed with the formulations. Bürgerinnen und Bürger is a good example, because it addresses both men and women." (TP 01)*
- *"Both female and male and through the asterisk also divers people." (TP 05)*
- *"'Gender-neutral' language is just citizens and not female citizens. [...] When you talk about people and citizens, it doesn't have to mean female citizens and male citizens." (TP 08)*

Most of the test persons who grasped under it more than the female and male gender were in favor of the formulation "gender-equal language" (TP 03, 04, 05, 10):

- *"I think the term 'gender-equal language' is a bit more neutral. [With 'gender-neutral language'] you try to regulate something that can't be regulated. 'Equal' is more positively expressed [and] I think it's better in terms of language use." (TP 03)*
- *"'Gender-equal' just gets to the heart of the matter more. You've got the justice in there right away. But, of course, there's the valuation in there. 'Neutral' is maybe not as polarizing as when you have justice in there with the word, but ['equal'] I like better." (TP 10)*

Those who favored the phrase "gender-neutral language" (TP 01, 02, 06) reasoned that, in their opinion, it sounded better/neutral:

- *"The term just, to me, when I hear it that way now, it sounds better." (TP 01)*
- *"'Neutral' I find better, because otherwise people say again, 'That is now again not 'equal'. Then it's enforced again, then it's difficult again." (TP 06)*

Three test persons (TP 07, 08, 09) said that it made no difference to them. One of them "doesn't understand either" (TP 07). The second commented that both formulations included all genders, "[With 'gender neutral'] it includes women and men and children and everything. [With] 'gender-equal,' every-thing is also included." (TP 08) The third respondent (as well as another who had expressed support for "gender equitable") differentiated between the two terms:

- *"'Neutral' would be Bürgernde, instead of Bürgerinnen and Bürger - that doesn't work with the word. Mitarbeitende would be gender-neutral [and Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter fair]. The terms would have to be invented. That's why I would actually find 'gender-equal' language more appropriate." (SP 05)*
- *"It's not about better or worse, it's about right. So, [with] a 'gender-neutral language' [...] I remove the meaning of gender from the language use, whereas 'gender-equal' language names things as they should be. [...] 'Gender-neutral' means that I refrain from emphasizing a gender. [...] In the other variant, the gender is in the focus. 'Gender right' is to call a female table dancer also a Tabledancerin and not a Tabledancer, because there are actually no men." (TP 09)*

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Construct:

Opinions on climate change