

Question in Project:

European Working Conditions Survey 2024

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Number of jobs

General Information:

Note: The item was tested in English, German and Polish.

Question Text:

English version: Do you have one, or more than one job or business?

German version: Haben Sie ein(en) oder mehr als ein(en) Beruf bzw. Unternehmen?

Instruction:

English version:

Having more than one job or business may mean:

- doing paid side jobs (such as babysitting, gardening, ironing)
- working extra hours in a shop or café
- being involved in the platform economy (such as UBER, Task Rabbit)
- carrying out creative work which can be payed with copyrights
- developing a new business activity

German version:

Mehr als einen Beruf bzw. mehr als ein Unternehmen zu haben kann Folgendes bedeuten:

- bezahlte Nebenjobs (bspw. Babysitting, Gartenarbeiten, Bügelservice)
- Zusatztätigkeiten in einem Geschäft oder Café
- Tätigkeiten in der "Plattformökonomie" (bspw. bei Uber, JOBRUF oder twago)
- kreative Arbeit, die in Form von Urheberrechten vergütet wird
- neue Geschäftsideen entwickeln

Answer Categories:

English version:

One job or business

More than one job or business

German version:

Einen Beruf bzw. ein Unternehmen

Mehrere Berufe bzw. Unternehmen

Cognitive Techniques:

Web probing: Open-ended and Closed Specific Probing

Cognitive interviews: Category Selection Probing, Difficulty Probing, Specific Probing

Findings for Question:

Findings Web Probing:

In Germany and the UK, 14% of respondents reported to have more than one job or business; in Poland, this figure was significantly lower at only 8% ($\chi^2(2,792) = 6.196, p = .045$). In all countries, respondents with more than one job or business were considerably more likely to be self-employed in their main paid job (55%, $n = 52$) than respondents with one job or business (36%, $n = 249$).

Which additional jobs did respondents with more than one job or business name?

Respondents who indicated that they had more than one job or business in QN1 were asked to describe their additional job(s) or business(es) (P1_QN1). This applied to 95 respondents, of which 83 gave a substantive description of their additional work. Respondents named a wide variety of answers ranging from unofficial side jobs, such as babysitting pets or mowing other people's lawn, to owning and managing several businesses and serving in the management board. Responses named by several respondents included cleaning ($n = 7$), bookkeeping ($n = 3$), assisting in a shop ($n = 3$), being a landlord ($n = 3$), working in a laundry outlet ($n = 2$) and carrying out newspapers ($n = 2$). Producing and/or selling products, online and/or offline was named by nine respondents, with products ranging from calendars and T-shirts to toys and barbecues. Many respondents named vague sales-related jobs, such as "sales", "arranging sales" or "commissioning". Ten respondents named art- or media-related (presumably freelance) work, such as work as an author, painter, musician, graphic designer, TV producer or teaching musical instruments. Several respondents included conducting workshops, for instance on health or safety. Translation services and scientific consultation (for instance

as an art historian) were named. Finally, two respondents referred to social media content they produce, those being online videos and posting. All in all, respondents who had indicated that they have more than one job or business named a wide range of activities.

Did respondents who report having one job or business answer correctly (or did they actually have more than one job or business)?

Respondents who answered that they only had one job or business in QN1 were asked a closed follow-up probe in which they were presented a list of side jobs and were asked to indicate whether (and if so, which) of these side jobs they had carried out against pay in the past month (P2_QN1). In Germany and the UK, 19% and 18% of respondents named a side job they had not included in their answer to QN1. In Poland, 30% of respondents named at least one side job in answer to the probing question. Thus, 33% ($n = 88$) of respondents in the UK, 32% ($n = 84$) in Germany, and 38% ($n = 99$) in Poland should be considered with multiple jobs or businesses. In all three countries, *more* respondents with multiple jobs were identified using the probing question than using QN1. This strongly indicates that many respondents did not read the instruction to QN1 in detail, or if they did, remained hesitant to include all side jobs they carried out.

Findings Cognitive Interviews:

The findings from web probing indicated that many respondents did not consider all of their jobs or businesses when responding to QN1. The aim of the cognitive interviews was to examine whether respondents read and understand the instructions and found the given examples suitable and helpful.

Did respondents with multiple jobs or businesses respond correctly?

All respondents who indicated that they had multiple jobs or businesses responded correctly. In Germany, this applied to seven respondents. Of these, four referred to their main job and their side job. One respondent (DE01) indicated working in multiple student jobs. Finally, two respondents (DE04, DE09) worked as slashers, meaning that they were self-employed in several professions. Participant DE04 was a freelancer working as an actor, author, and sound designer for multiple clients; DE09 stated that he was self-employed and working as a lecturer, consultant, and appraiser for multiple businesses.

In Poland, eight respondents indicated that they had multiple jobs or businesses. These respondents either held several jobs in parallel ($n = 3$) or were both employed and running their own business ($n = 2$), had their own business and performed freelance activities (PL15) or had one business and were involved in several other businesses (PL09).

The majority of respondents found the question "very easy" (DE: $n = 13$; PL: $n = 11$) to answer. Only in Poland, two respondents stated that the question was "rather" or "very difficult". However, in both countries there were cases in which respondents

stumbled over the wording of the question text and response options, sometimes leading them to incorrectly answering that they had only one job or business.

For one, both in German and in Poland, the **translation of the word "job"** caused respondents with multiple jobs or businesses to classify themselves incorrectly as only having one:

- In Germany, one respondent had two employment contracts with two different employers, but because both contracts were for her trained profession as a nurse, she answered "one job or business" (DExx). She explained that it was *"one job/profession, but two employers"*. This misunderstanding was due to the German word *"Beruf"* meaning both job and profession.
- In Poland, a respondent who worked in tourism, but also held art classes incorrectly classified herself as working in "one job or business" (PL13), despite explaining that these were different jobs with differing legal frameworks. The Polish question text and response options translated the word "job" as *"place of work"*. Therefore, the respondent explained that she chose "one job or business" because she carried out both activities in one place, *"the countryside"*.

For some respondents, the **wording of the question text and response options** implied that one either had one or more jobs (meaning, one or more employments) *or* had one or more businesses (meaning, self-employed in one or multiple ways):

- In Poland, two respondents who were both self-employed and employed found the response options contradictory (PL09, PL10). Both explained that they *"worked in several places"*, but did not *"run several businesses"*.
- In Germany, one respondent remarked that the wording of the question text sounded as though only full-time, equally important jobs were meant, and that she would not have included side jobs until after having read the instructions (DE14)

Did respondents read the instructions, and were they comprehensible?

In Germany, all respondents, except one (DE06), read through the instruction. However, six of these respondents explained that they had only skimmed through the instruction or had only read parts of it. Participant DE06 stated that he did not read through the instruction because he only had one job and therefore the instruction was not important to him. In Poland, only eight respondents claimed to have read the instructions at all. Respondents who did not read or only skimmed the instructions argued that they were sure about their answer and therefore did not need to read the instruction:

- *"Yes, I skimmed it, let's say. Since it was clear to me that I only have one profession, it didn't interest me that much."* (DE05, one job)
- *"I only briefly skimmed it and did not read it carefully. Based on the question text, it was clear to me what applies to me and what does not."* (DE16, one job)

- *"When I fill in surveys, I usually do it quickly. I just read the main instructions in bold [...] I do not focus on explanations, unless I really find it hard to answer."* (PL10, more than one job).

Less than half of the respondents found the instructions "very understandable" (DE: $n = 6$; PL: $n = 7$). Many respondents freely admitted that they were not familiar with all of the named jobs or business activities in the instructions but were confident that they would know these terms if they applied to them, or that they could be useful to other respondents.

- *"There are some terms, such as 'platform economy', that I do not understand. But I also assume that it simply doesn't apply to me and that those to whom it applies understand it accordingly."* (DE04, more than one job)
- *"Yes, I find the examples helpful. For me, the second point 'additional activities in shops or cafés' is something classic that students do in addition to their main job as a student. It wasn't clear to me what was meant by 'activities in the platform economy'. But the person who feels addressed knows what is meant by it. Everyone else would probably find themselves in everything else."* (DE10, multiple jobs)

There were, however, some difficulties in comprehension that arose from the instructions. The first example named in the instructions is "**doing paid side jobs**", which in Polish is translated as "carrying out additional work for which remuneration is received". This caused three Polish respondents to question whether the question was meant to include having two equally important, or complementary jobs, which is not unusual in Poland.

Many respondents ($n = 12$), particularly in Germany ($n = 9$), spontaneously mentioned that they were unfamiliar with term "**platform economy**" in the stated examples. Only one German respondent clearly understood and spontaneously defined the term "platform economy", but suggested replacing it with the term "Portal(e)" (DE09). In Poland, two respondents seemed to be familiar with the examples "UBER" and "BOLT" but criticized that these should be listed as taxi-related activities (PL04) and that the current wording implied that these were by nature side jobs, when in reality they could be the main source of income (PL05).

Regarding the last part of the instruction, two German and three Polish respondents commented that they were uncertain how to understand "**developing a new business activity**". All of these respondents asked whether this included unpaid work in the course of developing an idea for a new business or even unpaid work in the early stages of launching a new business.

Summary:

- In web probing, respondents who were self-employed were significantly more likely to indicate that they have more than one job or business in response to QN1.

- In web probing, many respondents who claimed to have only one job or business as per QN1 indicated that they carried out at least one side job for pay in the last month. This indicates that respondents are likely not to include all side jobs when answering QN1. This problem also occurred in the cognitive interviews, though to a smaller extent.
- Regarding the wording of the question text, the translation of the word "job" into German and Polish caused difficulties for some respondents in the cognitive interviews. Moreover, the wording of the response options caused uncertainty among some respondents in Poland who were employed and self-employed.
- Respondents in Germany assumed that multiple jobs or businesses mainly implied having one main job and one or more side jobs. In contrast, several respondents in Poland felt that the wording "additional job" in the instructions excluded people with two or more equally important jobs.
- Regarding the instruction, the term "platform economy" and the notion of "developing a new business activity" were unclear to some respondents in both countries.

Recommendations:

The **question text** should clearly address employed and self-employed respondents:

"Regardless of whether you are employed, self-employed or both:

Do you have one, or more than one job?"

Moreover, the translation of the word "job" should cover both employed and self-employed, and be unambiguous, so as not to refer to the vocational training, but the employed/self-employed work, for instance to ensure that respondents working in two different contracts within the same profession identify as having multiple jobs. A respective translation note should be added to this question regarding the definition and translation of the word "job".

In German, this would mean employing the term "berufliche Tätigkeit" (work-related activity) instead of "Beruf", which can mean "job" or "profession":

"Unabhängig davon, ob Sie angestellt und/oder selbständig oder freiberuflich tätig sind: Gehen Sie einer, oder mehr als einer beruflichen Tätigkeit nach?"

In Polish, the word "praca" is maintained for job:

"Niezależnie od tego czy jest Pan(i) zatrudniony (-a), samozatrudniony(-a) czy też dotyczy Pana(-ią) obie te sytuacje:

Proszę powiedzieć czy ma Pan(i) jedną pracę czy więcej?"

The **response options** should be simplified (so as not to name jobs and businesses), and correspond to the question text:

"I have one job"

"I have two (or more) jobs"

German:

"Ich gehe einer beruflichen Tätigkeit nach"

"Ich gehe zwei (oder mehr) beruflichen Tätigkeiten nach"

In Polish, the exact translation of the second response option is "I have more than one job", as the Polish word for job is not specific in the plural:

"Mam jedną pracę"

"Mam więcej niż jedną pracę"

We recommend slight changes to the **instruction** to avoid misunderstandings. Regarding the source, we recommend the following changes:

- The word "platform economy" should be replaced by "online platforms"
- The instruction "developing a new business activity" should be omitted or explained in more detail (i.e., to include or exclude unpaid work prior to launching a new business)

The examples should be checked for their country-specific applicability in the course of translation.

In addition, a **follow-up question** to QN1 may be considered to attain a more precise measurement of respondents with multiple jobs or businesses in a self-administered context. The probe P2_QN1 can be used to this purpose:

"Have you carried out any of the following types of casual work or a part-time job for pay and outside the family in the past month?"