

Question in Project:

Project "Best_FDM" - Questions on the Corona pandemic, religion, and household income (English Version)

Question Topic:

Social demographics

Construct:

Religion

General Information:

***Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.**

Question Text:

Which religious community do you belong to?
[Welcher Religionsgemeinschaft gehören sie an?]

Instruction:

INT: Read out answer options! *[INT: Antwortoptionen vorlesen]*

Answer Categories:

No religious community *[Keiner Religionsgemeinschaft]*
A Christian community *[Einer christlichen Religionsgemeinschaft]*
Another religious community *[Einer anderen Religionsgemeinschaft]*
Don't know [Weiß nicht]
No answer [Keine Angabe]

Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing

Findings for Question:

Intention of the question:

Questions 5 to 7 are intended to capture the respondents' religion.

Findings:

The frequency distributions of the answers are shown in table 5. As can be seen from table 5, no test person in the pretest belonged to a non-Christian religious community, which is why question 7 could not be tested.

The purpose of the pretest was to examine how respondents define their membership in a religious community and whether they base membership on their membership in a church (and, for example, paying church tax), their religiosity, or something else.

All but two respondents tied their religious affiliation to a formal status, i.e., whether they had been baptized, paid church tax, or had left the church:

- *"I was just thinking about the fact that I am Catholic. [...] I was baptized Catholic. So, whether I stand behind it or not, it doesn't matter."* (TP06, response question 5: A Christian community).
- *"I'm not baptized. That's what I was thinking about. So, it's not whether I believe in something, it's the formal status."* (TP08, response question 5: No religious community)
- *"I actually thought about the church tax."* (TP11, response question 5: A Christian community)
- *"I used to be Roman Catholic, but I left then."* (TP04, answer question 5: No religious community).

Of the two respondents who based their religious affiliation on their religiosity (TP01, TP05), one stated that he did not belong to any church in Germany but was a believer (*"Well, I'm not registered as a Christian in Germany, don't pay dues. But I am a believer."*, TP05, answer question 5: A Christian community). The second respondent asked whether the question was about formal status or whether one engaged in religious practices. In the end, she stated that she was not religious and (despite the fact that she had been baptized) chose the answer option "No religious community":

TP01: *"Is it a matter of whether I have been baptized or whether I still attend church regularly now?"*

INT: *"How would you answer the question in a survey?"*

TP01: *"Then I would answer 'No religious community.' [...] I was just thinking about whether I am religious."*

Two test persons (TP06, TP10) were unfamiliar with the term "community of faith." Subject 06 correctly concluded that (for Christians) this question is about belonging to a church. Subject 10, however, had difficulty answering question 5 without the context of the follow-up question 6:

TP10: *"What does the question mean? Whether I go to a church or have a religion? Now I have to think for a minute. I don't know, do you mean Protestant? I don't know exactly how to answer that. [...] So if I'm honest, I didn't quite understand you at the beginning. [...] I would ask directly what religion you have. Then I would understand it better. So, if now Protestant or Catholic or so, if that was asked directly, I think I would have understood it more."*

INT: *"Is it the word religious community that irritated you?"*

TP10: *"Yes, that irritated me a little bit."*

INT: *"And if the question had been: What religion do you belong to?"*

TP10: *"Then I would have answered directly with Protestant."*

Recommendations:

We recommend specifying question 5 and asking either about formal affiliation or perceived affiliation with a religious community.

Question 5: Proposal 1 (formal affiliation)

Are you a member of a church or com religious community?

Yes, of a Christian church or community

Yes, of another religious community

No, I do not belong to any church or religious community

Question 5: Proposal 2 (perceived affiliation)

Regardless of whether you are a member of a church or a religious community, do you feel like you belong to a particular religion?

Yes, a Christian religion

Yes, to another religion

No, I do not feel like I belong to any religion