

Question in Project:

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Working time: days per week

General Information:

Note: The item was tested both in English and German.

Cognitive Interviews

Question Text:

English version: How many days per week do you usually work in your main paid job?

German version: Wie viele Tage pro Woche arbeiten Sie normalerweise in Ihrem Hauptberuf?

Answer Categories:

English version:

Number of days per week: _____

Don't know

Refusal

German Version:

Anzahl der Tage pro Woche: _____

Weiß nicht

Verweigert

Cognitive Techniques:

Information Retrieval Probing, Specific Probing, Difficulty Probing.

Findings for Question:

The probes aimed to uncover the retrieval process and calculation or estimation of the working hours and days per week. For respondents in multi-activity, probing should reveal whether these questions are correctly answered for their main paid job only.

One common information retrieval strategy of employees is referring to the work contract, regardless of the number of hours they believe they actually work:

- "I took my contractual information, so what we agreed on and wrote into my work contract. And that states that I am supposed to work 30 hours a week, spread out over five days. The reality is, probably, that I'm working more" (DE01)
- "40 hours a week; well, that's what my contract says. Well, sometimes it's more. But that's what my contract says." (DE04)
- "My full time job in the company means 40 hours a week, which means a 9 to 5 job every day, Monday to Friday." (PL03)
- "Because that's what I work and what the Polish labour law defines as full time employment – it means working 8 hours a day, 5 days a week." (PL05)
- "Actual status and conditions in the contract." (PL15)
- "Working 5 days a week I work 40 hours, which is defined in my full time employment contract." (PL16)

Some employed respondents name their contractual agreement, adding that they couldn't properly estimate their number of hours if they had to:

- "It depends strongly on the current requirements. I'd say the average of 25 hours makes sense if you look at a longer period. Perhaps, it's hard to tell. In church, high times like around Christmas, or when there are concerts, certainly require much more work. We are flexible, and that works for us." (DE15)

Two Polish respondents report the number of hours they believe they actually work, that is what is stated in their contract plus overtime (PL04, PL07).

Then, there are self-employed respondents with very steady hours that are easy to calculate:

- "I thought about what time I arrive in the doctor's office, that's between 8:00 and 8:30 in the morning. I usually stay there until 22:00. That's how that answer came about." (DE10)
- "Usually at work, it takes ca 8 hours but sometimes I stay longer." (PL01)
- "20 hours is the total number of hours I devote for my clients a week, and which I get a flat fee for, and I work 4 days a week approximately. It could be one day, these are not statistically 5 hours a day, I devote my time for clients on not less than 4 days" (PL08)

Four German respondents and three Polish respondents spontaneously comment that their working hours and days vary strongly, and they are forced to calculate an average (DE03, DE05, DE11, DE14, PL02, PL10, PL13).

- "I may work 20 days 24 hours a day, because my work does not end at the end of a day [...] I often need to go to hospital if anything happens at night [...] I am on a tour and I am at work all the time, I take care of the whole group." (PL02)

Especially self-employed seek other reference points to arrive at their estimation. One respondent in Germany and one in Poland, who are mainly self-employed, but also have a part-time job, try to compare the amount of time they spend in both jobs:

- "It's difficult to state a typical average amount of time as a freelance artist. I thought about how much I work in my employed job, which is 19 or 20 hours a week. Then I took my gut feeling. I believe I work a bit more in freelance, so perhaps about 25 hours a week. That way, I have a total of 45 hours a week." (DE02)
- "3 days is total number of hours, because I may spend some part of day for my full time employment and the other part for my business, yet it is hard to measure" (PL10)

One respondent from Poland was not able to calculate the number of hours she usually work per week because her work is seasonal. In summer she would work 5-8 hours a day, 7 days a week, while in the winter it amounts to a total of 10 hours a week. For that reasons, the respondent opted for the answer category "don't know" (PL13). All respondents correctly refer this question to their main paid job only.

Recommendations:

Question: No changes recommended.

Answer categories: No changes recommended.