

Question in Project:

SHARE Wave 9 – New items on financial decision making, successful ageing, eating habits, sleep, long-term care insurance, and long-term care expectations (English Version)

Question Topic:

Society & social affairs/ Generation 50+ & retirement

Construct:

Subjective ageing – satisfaction with own ageing

General Information:

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

Question Text:

Please look at card 1, on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not successfully at all, and 10 means most successfully, how successfully would you say you are ageing?

[Bitte sehen Sie sich Karte 1 an. Auf einer Skala von 0 bis 10, wobei 0 "überhaupt nicht erfolgreich" bedeutet und 10 "sehr erfolgreich": Was würden Sie sagen, wie erfolgreich altern Sie?]

Answer Categories:

0 Not successfully at all *[0 Überhaupt nicht erfolgreich]*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 Most successfully *[10 Sehr erfolgreich]*

Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing

Findings for Question:

1. What do respondents understand by "successfully ageing"?

Except for test person 07, all persons could answer the question and stated that they were ageing moderately to very successfully (range of answers: scale points 5 to 10). Test person 07 stated that he could not answer the question because he did not understand what the term "successfully ageing" meant: *"How successfully do I age? Oh dear, what do you mean by this? I have never heard these two words in context before. I do not understand the connection between ageing and success. [...] Well, I don't know what to do with that question."* (TP 07).

Of the nine test persons who answered the question, one (TP 05) ignored the term "successfully" and answered the question only in terms of whether or how much she was ageing (answer: 6): *"I can also see that a friend of mine is ageing now - the last two years. It's because of the movement, it doesn't work the way it used to."* A person who is not (successfully) ageing described the test person accordingly as someone *"who always stays young or always looks young."*

The remaining eight test persons associated the term "successfully ageing" mainly with being or remaining physically healthy. In addition, some subjects also associated the term with mental health (TP 01, 02, 03, 08), satisfaction with ageing (TP 02, 04, 08) or social participation in old age (TP 01, 02):

- *"[By this I mean] to eat healthy food, sleep well, exercise, social exchange. To belong [to so-cial life]. [...] If one remains efficient in mind for a long time and also in movement. If you simply do something to live a long life."* (TP 01)
- *"I'm 75 years old and I can still do anything. I am still totally fit in my head, I still go to work, do my household, I am healthy and have no troubles. I can't complain."* (TP 03)
- *"[By this I mean] that one is still physically and mentally fit. No longer the fittest, but that one is still fit, still can do something. That one does not just sit behind the corner of the stove and wait until death comes. [...] That you still have fun in life."* (TP 08)
- *"That you're healthy and you don't need to be in a doctor's office all the time. That's what I would define as successful for me."* (TP 10)

2. Do the respondents think about a general ageing process or do they think of old age accompanied by the deterioration of mind and body?

None of the test persons thought exclusively of old age when answering the question. Instead, they focused mainly on their current (health) condition and age and answered the question for the ageing process in general:

- *"[I have] thought about the ageing process in general. Not about old age, some people get dementia or a stroke or something like that already at 60 or 70 or even earlier."* (TP 03)
- *"Ageing is a process that basically begins at birth."* (TP 06)
- *"The ageing process begins with different people in different age groups. Some people think that ageing begins at 40, others at 50, so at almost 75 I count myself as one of the older or old people. But you can't pin that on a specific age."* (TP 09)

3. Is the showcard helpful or not needed?

Except for two test persons (TP 01, 02), all persons stated that presenting the card made it easier to answer the question:

- *"It just makes it easier to answer when it's in front of you."* (TP 05)
- *"This is more helpful than unnecessary. It's easier when you have it in front of you."* (TP 08)

Recommendations:

Question: We recommend rephrasing the question to avoid the term "ageing successfully". Possible formulations would be, for example:

- a. "How satisfied are you with how your ageing process is progressing?" [*"Wie zufrieden sind Sie damit, wie Ihr Alterungsprozess verläuft?"*]
- b. "How satisfied are you with the way you age?" [*"Wie zufrieden sind Sie damit, wie Sie altern?"*]

Alternatively, a definition of "successfully ageing" could be added to the question, such as:

"Successfully ageing is the ability to age actively and happily in spite of changing conditions and not being restricted by infirmity or disease." [*"Unter erfolgreich altern verstehen wir, dass man trotz sich verändernder Bedingungen aktiv und zufrieden altern und nicht*

durch Gebrechen oder Krankheiten dabei eingeschränkt wird. "]

Response options: If the question text is modified as suggested above, the endpoints of the scale would have to be changed to "Not satisfied at all" [*Überhaupt nicht zufrieden*] and "Very satisfied" [*Sehr zufrieden*].