

Question in Project:

PIAAC-Longitudinal (PIAAC-L) 2016 - Background Questionnaire (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Start of employment

General Information:

Note: This item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording. The translation does not correspond exactly to the wording in the English [PIAAC source questionnaire](#).

Question Text:

When you think of your professional career: In which year did you start at your current, or if you are not working at the moment, at your last employer? If you are or were self-employed, count your business or your company as an employer.

[Wenn Sie an Ihre berufliche Laufbahn denken: In welchem Jahr haben Sie bei Ihrem derzeitigen, bzw. falls Sie im Moment nicht arbeiten, bei Ihrem letzten Arbeitgeber begonnen? Falls Sie selbstständig sind oder zuletzt waren, zählen Sie Ihren Betrieb oder Ihre Firma als Arbeitgeber.]

Instruction:

INT: Only if the answer to question 6 was "Yes". *[INT: Nur wenn bei Frage 6 "Ja" geantwortet wurde.]*

INT: Open entry of the year. *[INT: Offene Erfassung der Jahreszahl]*

INT: If the respondent has several employment relationships, he/she should refer to that with the highest gross earnings, for employment relationships with the same merit on the most important for her/him. *[INT: Falls die/der Befragte mehrere Arbeitsverhältnisse hat, soll sie/er sich auf das mit dem höchsten Bruttoverdienst beziehen, bei Arbeitsverhältnissen mit gleich hohem Verdienst auf das für sie/ihn wichtigste.]*

INT: Repeated employment with the same employer is not considered as change of employer. This also applies to time off work, for example, if after parental leave, the job with the old employer was taken up again. *[INT: Wiederholte Tätigkeitsaufnahmen]*

bei demselben Arbeitgeber gelten nicht als Arbeitgeberwechsel. Das gilt ebenso für Arbeitsfreistellungen, z.B., wenn nach der Elternzeit wieder der Job beim alten Arbeitgeber aufgenommen wurde.]

Answer Categories:

Open entry [*Offene Antwort*]

Cognitive Techniques:

Information Retrieval Probing, Confidence Rating, Comprehension Probing

Findings for Question:

The other questions on professional biography were only asked to those test persons who stated in the previous question 6 that they had already been employed. As the table shows, this applies to all test persons except TP 04. The information on the professional career was collected in a total of three rounds, i.e. the test persons were asked up to three times at what point in time they started work. Before the results of the individual questions are discussed, it should be noted that two test persons (TP 02, 10) were irritated by the long introductory text:

- TP 10: *"At what age did I start my first job or what?"*
- INT reads the question again.
- TP 10: *"The current employer or do you mean the last one?"*
- INT: *"The current one."* TP 10: *"02.11.2015"*

Only after the question is read out once more can both test persons answer correctly.

In order to find out how the test persons determine the year in which they start work, they were asked about their train of thought. There are various ways in which the test persons proceed with remembering. On the one hand, those test persons who started working for their current employer directly after their training or after an internship follow their professional career as follows:

- *"I've been thinking about when my apprenticeship started."* (TP 01; answer: 2012)
- *"I was able to memorize this well because I started my training at my current employer. And you actually remember the date."* (TP 02; answer: 2008)/li>
- *"I started there with an internship and on January 15, 2014 I started there."* (TP 03; answer: 2013)

On the other hand, some test persons can remember because of the short period of time:

- *"I remembered it because it wasn't that long ago."* (TP 09, answer 2015)

The test persons, who are/were employed at their employer for more than ten years (TP 05, 07, 13, 14, 15), respond to the probe as a matter of course. The certainty of the test persons is based on the few job changes which are connected with a long-term employment.

- TP 14: *"Yes, because I know it for a fact, that's when I entered the correctional facility."*
- INT: *"Did you remember anything to help you remember the year?"*
- TP 14: *"Ahh, I'll remember when I joined my last employer."* (answer: 1973)
- *"You just know. It's my 25th anniversary this year."* (TP 05; answer: 1990)

In addition, the perceived relevance of the job increases as a result of many years of activity, which has a positive effect on memory. Accordingly, TP 07 (year: 1997) does not think about this for the first time: *"I know for sure that I have been there for 17 years. We've only just calculated that."*

Only TP 08 (answer: 1997) differs from the other test persons in terms of the certainty of his answer. While all other test persons assess the correctness of their statements as "very sure", TP 08 states to be "rather sure". On the basis of his inner train of thought, it becomes apparent that he associates two circumstances which are not in harmony with each other: *"This became so clear to me because I then thought of the class I attended at the School of Education, which was somehow called Educator Class 94, and then I thought, ah yes, then it was 1995. But then I remembered that my older son was in the first class when I started."* Their slight insecurity is thus based on the wrong connection to other memories, which most likely can no longer be clearly assigned due to the long period of time.

In summary, it can be said that all test persons can remember well. While a part of the test subjects makes it plausible that they have not been employed by their current or last employer for a long time, the security of the test subjects whose employment dates back more than ten years results from the increased relevance of the long-term job.

Furthermore, the test persons were asked what they understand by the term "employer". The answers show that an employer offers a job or activity. An employer is abstractly understood as the owner of a company or as the company itself:

- *"A person or legal entity that offers the opportunity to go to work There are all kinds of employers. Examples would be companies, the state itself."* (TP 01)
- *"That's what comes out of the word in the end, he gives me work. That's who owns the company, or the shareholders who own the company."* (TP 13)

Furthermore, some test persons point out that the employer remunerates the performance of the offered activity:

- *"He who pays me."* (TP 15)
- *"Someone who pays a salary for my work."* (TP 07)

What results in an employment relationship between employer and employees, as TP 05 explains: *"An employment relationship, one is an employee, the other is the employer."* This relationship is characterized by a hierarchy, which is why the word *"supervisor"* (TP 02) or *"boss"* (TP 11) is equated to the employer.

Recommendations:

Question: To make it easier to answer, the question should be restructured so that the actual question to be answered is at the end:

The following are questions about your professional career. If you are self-employed or have been recently, count your business or company as an employer. In which year did you start working for your current employer or, if you are not working at the moment, for your last employer?

[Im Folgenden geht es um Fragen zu ihrer beruflichen Laufbahn. Falls Sie selbstständig sind oder zuletzt waren, zählen Sie Ihren Betrieb oder Firma als Arbeitgeber. In welchem Jahr haben Sie bei Ihrem derzeitigen, bzw. falls sie im Moment nicht arbeiten, bei Ihrem letzten Arbeitgeber begonnen?]

Answer options: No changes recommended.