

Question in Project:

International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2015 (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job motivation & attitudes

Construct:

Weighting of family and career

General Information:

Note: The 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 [ISSP source questionnaire](#).

Question Text:

Have you ever, just for the sake of your family life, maintained a professional activity that was not satisfactory for you - or would you do so if necessary?

[Haben Sie schon einmal, nur Ihres Familienlebens zuliebe, eine Berufstätigkeit beibehalten, die für Sie nicht befriedigend war — oder würden Sie das gegebenenfalls tun?]

Instruction:

(Only ONE cross possible!) *[(Nur EIN Kreuz möglich!)]*

Answer Categories:

Yes *[Ja]*

No, not yet, but I probably would *[Nein, bis jetzt noch nicht, aber wahrscheinlich würde ich es tun]*

No, not yet, and I probably wouldn't either *[Nein, bis jetzt noch nicht, und wahrscheinlich würde ich es auch nicht tun]*

Don't know *[Kann ich nicht sagen]*

Cognitive Techniques:

Think Aloud, General Probing, Specific Probing, Comprehension Probing.

Findings for Question:

In this question, five people answered "Yes", seven people answered "No, not yet, but probably I would" and three people answered "No, not yet, and probably I would not".

Based on the spontaneous comments of the test persons and the final assessment of the difficulty of answering the question, it is noticeable that seven persons initially had difficulties in answering the question. The difficulty for the test persons in reading the question for the first time is that the question is either unclear to them (TP 03, TP 06, TP 11, TP 13) or the formulation is more complicated than in the previous questions (TP 07, TP 08, TP 15). Unclear because three test persons initially had problems with the wording "family life" and test person 13 could not find himself in the answer categories at first, because he could not answer the question "in principle for his previous professional life", but would have preferred to answer "yes, but not always". Obviously, subject 13 missed the introduction "Have you ever...". The other three test subjects, who were initially unsure of the question, comment as follows:

- *"What is meant by "for the sake of family life" and "satisfying?" (TP 03)*
- *"For me it is true that I have a family, but there is this distance [TP leads a weekend-marriage], so it is not so easy to answer." (TP 06)*
- *"You can understand a lot about "family life"." (TP 11)*

The aspect of question complexity is pointed out by three test persons:

- *"But the question is asked in a complicated way, with the relative clause and then this and that." (TP 07)*
- *"Did I have to read it twice." (TP 08)*
- *"The question was a bit complicated at first. You have to read it carefully to understand it." (TP 15)*

The five respondents who answered "Yes" have, in one way or another, already had a job that was unsatisfactory for them and correctly chose this answer category. When answering the question, two test persons (TP 01, TP 02) remember that they have refrained from taking up their chosen occupation for the sake of their parents and have instead taken up another occupation and temporarily retained it. Test subjects 04 and 10 think of their own families:

- *"I started to work as a butcher after the middle school leaving examination, which I actually finished quite well. All the know-how I had to acquire for the final exams was completely unnecessary. It was kind of disappointing. But my girlfriend and my child had to be looked after." (TP 04)*
- *"My old company has been taken over by a new company and I had a very difficult position there, I was very bullied. I was the main earner at that time and I gritted*

my teeth. But at some point I said that it was no longer possible, we were talking about a severance package because it was no longer reasonable." (TP 10)

Test subject 13 states that at certain times, for the sake of the family, she maintained a professional activity that was not satisfactory without explaining the situation in detail.

The seven subjects who said "No, not yet, but I probably would." tend to explain their response behavior by saying that if it were financially necessary, they would also pursue an unsatisfactory activity - at least temporarily. The three test persons who would probably not do so, attribute a high priority to their jobs or believe that the job must be fun in the long run, otherwise they would change jobs.

There is a relatively wide range of answers to the question of what the test persons understand by *"a job that is not satisfying"*. In part, the respondents refer to the lack of intrinsic motivation aspects such as individual promotion/challenge, opportunities for promotion and further training, enjoyment of work/fulfilment, workload or senselessness of the job, in part to extrinsic aspects such as insufficient pay, poor working atmosphere / bullying, fear of losing their job or dissatisfaction with colleagues or superiors.

Recommendations:

We recommend a rewording of the question analogous to question 1 and question 2 (i.e. alternative 1 or alternative 2 as well as a more concrete definition of the term "family"). Since the wording "for the sake of your family life" causes unnecessary difficulties in answering the question, we recommend replacing it with the wording "your family or your partnership" - analogous to the two previous questions. Also analogous to the two previous questions, we recommend using the wording "professional activity".

Alternative 1:

Question 1:

"Have you ever maintained a professional activity for your family (or partnership) that was not satisfactory for you?" [*"Haben Sie schon einmal für Ihre Familie (oder Ihre Partnerschaft) eine berufliche Tätigkeit beibehalten, die für Sie nicht befriedigend war?"*]

Yes [*Ja*]

No [*Nein*]

If "no" was answered:

Question 2:

"If necessary, would you maintain for your family (or partnership) a professional activity that is not satisfactory for you?" [*"Würden Sie gegebenenfalls für Ihre Familie (oder Ihre Partnerschaft) eine berufliche Tätigkeit beibehalten, die für Sie nicht befriedigend ist?"*]

Yes, I probably would [*Ja, wahrscheinlich würde ich das tun*]

No, I probably wouldn't do that [*Nein, wahrscheinlich würde ich das nicht tun*]

Alternative 2:

"Have you ever maintained a professional activity for your family (or partnership) that was not satisfactory for you - or would you do so if necessary? [*Haben Sie schon einmal für Ihre Familie (oder Ihre Partnerschaft) eine berufliche Tätigkeit beibehalten, die für Sie nicht befriedigend war – oder würden Sie das gegebenenfalls tun?*"]

Yes, I have done that already and would probably do it again. [*Ja, das habe ich bereits getan und würde es wahrscheinlich wieder tun.*]

Yes, I did that already, but I probably wouldn't do it again. [*Ja, das habe ich bereits getan, aber würde es wahrscheinlich nicht wieder tun.*]

No, not yet, but I probably would. [*Nein, bis jetzt noch nicht, aber wahrscheinlich würde ich es tun.*]

No, not yet, and I probably wouldn't do it again. [*Nein, bis jetzt noch nicht, und wahrscheinlich würde ich es auch nicht tun.*]