

Question in Project:

PaCo - Mechanisms of panel conditioning in longitudinal surveys: Questions on social desirability, gender roles, and environment (English Version)

Question Topic:

Society & social affairs/ Attitudes to social groups

Construct:

Gender roles

General Information:

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

Question Text:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

[Inwieweit stimmen Sie der folgenden Aussage zu oder nicht zu?]

A full-time job is the best way for a woman to be financially independent.

[Eine Vollzeitbeschäftigung ist der beste Weg für eine Frau, finanziell unabhängig zu sein.]

Answer Categories:

1 Do not agree at all *[Stimmt überhaupt nicht zu]*

2

3

4

5

6

7 Fully agree *[Stimme voll und ganz zu]*

Don't know [Weiß nicht]

Cognitive Techniques:

Comprehension Probe, General Probe, Category Selection Probe, Difficulty Probe, Specific Probe

Findings for Question:

What do the test persons understand by "full-time employment"?

All test persons defined the term "full-time employment" as a full-time job, working about eight hours a day, five days a week:

- *"By full-time employment I mean a 40-hour week." (TP 04)*
- *"That you really work the whole day, so from eight to five o'clock, that's full-time. And that just five times a week." (TP 07)*

What do the test persons understand by "being financially independent"?

All test persons interpreted the term to mean not relying on other people or sources of money to finance their own lives:

- *"By this I primarily mean that the woman is not dependent on any other person, not the husband or the wife. But also not from the parents or the state." (TP 02)*
- *"For me, financially independent means not being dependent on funds from others. That a woman doesn't depend on her husband or wife, for example. Or on the employment office." (TP 03)*

Do test persons have trouble understanding or answering the question?

With the exception of test person 01, all persons were able to locate themselves on the answer scale. Test person 01 justified her "Don't know" answer by saying that, in her opinion, full-time employment is a good way to be financially independent, but not the best or only way:

- TP 01: *"I indicated 'don't know' because I also believe that there are other paths or that full-time employment is not the only path to financial independence."*
- INT: *"Then how come you didn't indicate 'disagree'?"*
- TP 01: *"Because I still think that full-time employment is still a way to be financially independent. I just don't think it's the best way or the only way. That's why I was undecided."*

Of the remaining nine test persons, the majority ($n = 7$) stated that they tended to agree or fully agreed with the statement (scale points 5 to 7). Only two test persons (TP 03, TP 05) (tended to) disagree with the statement (scale points 2 and 3).

In the cognitive interviews, the test persons were asked to explain their answers in more detail or to give reasons (General Probe, Category Selection Probe). This revealed that two test persons (TP 03, 06) interpreted the term "full-time employment" exclusively as

an activity in an employee relationship and excluded a self-employed or freelance activity. While this misinterpretation had only a minor influence on the answer to the question for test person 06 (she chose scale point 6 instead of 7), it led to a strong distortion of the answer for test person 03 (scale point 2 instead of 7):

- TP 03: *"I'm only just noticing that now: I assumed that this would involve a permanent employment relationship. And due to that I thought, no, it can also be self-employed, so that's not the best or only way. That's why I said I don't agree. I'm just noticing that now. Actually, I should have agreed due to that."*
- INT: *"And how would you answer if you interpret the term now in terms of the amount of working time?"*
- TP 03: *"Then I would answer 'completely agree'. Because if you want to be financially independent, you also have to provide an income. And as a rule, the best way to do that is to have a full-time job."*
- TP 06: *"Full-time employment is not the only way to be financially independent. In this case, I understand full-time employment to mean that I am employed full-time by a company. Or am I looking at this the wrong way now? Because I am not employed an-where, I am self-employed. And women can also be self-employed. So maybe I have misunderstood the question then."*
- INT: *"So, when you read full time, you say, does that mean an employee relationship for you?"*
- TP 06: *"Yes, I have now interpreted that as an employment relationship [and not included self-employment.]"*
- INT: *"And is that then why you didn't say 'agree fully'?"*
- TP 06: *"Yes, that is the reason. Because it would not be the only way."*

Are there any pre-established/strong opinions on the subject?

When asked, only two of the ten test persons stated that they first had to consider whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement (TP 01, 04). The other test persons stated that they had a firm opinion on this subject.

Recommendations:

Question: In order to avoid respondents associating the term "full-time employment" exclusively with a salaried job, we recommend rephrasing the question.

One possible rewording would be:

"Having a job is the best way for a woman to be financially independent." [*Einen*

Job zu haben ist der beste Weg für eine Frau, finanziell unabhängig zu sein."]

If the focus of the question is on women working full-time to address the issue of the large number of women with part-time jobs, we recommend the following alternative wording:

"Working full time is the best way for a woman to be financially independent." *style="font-weight: normal; font-family: Arial, sans-serif; font-size: 10pt"*["Vollzeit zu arbeiten ist der beste Weg für eine Frau, finanziell unabhängig zu sein."]

Response format: No changes recommended.