Establishing cross-cultural equivalence for 'The European Working Condition Survey': cross-cultural and multimode cognitive pretesting on employment status and job quality

Patricia Hadler, Cornelia Neuert, Timo Lenzner and Natalja Menold

CSDI, 18 – 21 Warsaw

Agnès Parent-Thirion
Content of my presentation

- The study
- The context
- Selected results
- Concluding remarks

- Report published on Gesis pre test data bank and will also be made available on Eurofound’s web site
The objectives of the project: « stress test » – substantive and methodological questions

- Assess the comparability of our indices between self-employed and employees in different national contexts
- The substantive concerns
  - « destandardisation » of employment relations
  - blurring fronteers between dependant employment and self employment
  - changes in employment law (NFE)
  - legal uncertainties by some of their employment status
  - revision of ISCE .. A new emerging category dependant contractors / task-based work
- Improve the questionnaire for the next edition
- Concern about ' workers at the margin ' 
- What working conditions / job quality can they talk about when they have either / or in combination short term work / marginal work related earnings / may not have a strong occupational identity ?
- Assessing the suitability of the survey instrument to capture the working conditions of workers in these groups
## Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire focus</th>
<th>Employment status (first part of the questionnaire)</th>
<th>Job quality indices (second part of the questionnaire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pretesting task</strong></td>
<td>How do « workers at the margins » relate to the employment status?</td>
<td>How do employed and self employed understand job quality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Primary) Pretesting mode</strong></td>
<td>F2F cognitive interviews = 20 respondents in GE and PL, No focus on being representative (½ of the sample are workers at the margin, the second half are employed / self employed assist in elaborating results from online probing)</td>
<td>Online pretest(OP) in 3 countries UK, GE, and PL 365 employed and self employed Quota sampling age, sex and employment status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
European Working Conditions Survey

49 language versions

43,850 face to face interviews (CAPI) at worker’s homes

35 countries

106 questions

Sixth edition
Job quality

Employment status (Q7)

- (OP) Confidence rating, (CI)general / elaborative probing, specific probing, difficulty probing

- In some countries, the situation is not dichotomous self employed versus employees
  - Legal ambiguity
  - Respondents knowledge

- Country adaptation in some forms
  - Instruction
  - New category
  - Routing

People in multi-employment status

- They want to talk – earlier than we had given them the opportunity – about their second job

- Conclusions
  - clarify at the beginning of the questionnaire, the number of jobs people have
  - Be more explicit and systematic on whether the question refers to their main paid job, their second job and all their job taken together
Job quality

- Where filters were tested (eg self employed, multiple job holders), the questions work
  - confirmation and interpretation

- In some cases, interpretation is made by the respondent
  - In some of these, we should thank the interviewer for that
  - « I might lose my job in the next 6 months » could be reworded « I might go out of business in the next 6 months » bt interpreted ok a the moment

- Some questions have significant problems
  - Eg q 46 work in your free time
  - Question under construction

- A different set of variables than the employment status is relevant to address some of the problems
  - Eg social support by colleagues
  - NA in web

Some Self employed have « colleagues » and some employees don’t
Concluding remarks

• While many employed respondents have colleagues and most self-employed don’t, the working situations are less clear cut
  – Need for secondary sets of variables to compare workers and self-employed

• The mix of methods have allowed us to
  – Quantify the prevalence of differing question interpretation (via comprehension probing)
  – While still giving a voice to workers at the margins via F2F interviews, who would not usually get a voice in an online panel

• 3MC concern: « extrapolating » countries
Want to follow up on this?

- The report is available on gesis pretest databank ad will be made available on eurofound’s website

Contact us:

Patricia.Hadler@gesis.org
Agnes.Parent-Thirion@eurofound.europa.eu
Merci