

Chapter 5

Operationalisation and statistical validity of various components of the quality of the working environment

This chapter describes the key dimensions and detailed job characteristics encompassed by the broad concept of “quality of the working environment”, explaining how and why they contribute to workers’ well-being. For each dimension and characteristic, the chapter presents questions from existing international and national surveys on how these dimensions have been operationalised and describes the extent to which questions from different international surveys produce consistent results across countries.

5.1. Introduction

The conceptual approach discussed in Chapter 4 rests on empirical evidence on how specific job features affect the well-being of workers. It defines the quality of the working environment as a combination of objective job characteristics having both direct and indirect effects on workers' physical and psychological well-being. These characteristics pertain to either the demands confronting workers or to the resources available to them to meet these demands. How these characteristics are combined at the level of each worker defines the working environment that they experience. An abundant literature – from sociology, occupational health, organisational psychology and human resource management – has identified the most important dimensions and sub-dimensions of the working environment that contribute to workers' well-being. In addition, various international, national, academic and commercial surveys (discussed in Chapter 2) have included questions on aspects of the quality of the working environment.

Chapter 4 introduced 17 key job characteristics, grouped into 6 broad dimensions, with each characteristic reflecting either a job demand or a job resource confronting workers. On this background, a first objective of this chapter is to provide a more detailed discussion of these dimensions and characteristics, drawing on an interdisciplinary literature; for each of the 17 characteristics, the chapter provides definitions and explains how these characteristics affect workers' well-being.

The second objective of this chapter is to illustrate *how* each of these characteristics has been operationalised in surveys. To this end, the chapter relies on the OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment, which, drawing on seven international surveys conducted between 1989 and 2014, compiles information on the specific questions included for each characteristic.¹ The seven international surveys covered by the inventory are the European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS), the European Social Surveys (ESS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), a series of ad hoc modules of the European Union Labour Force Surveys (EU-LFS),² the European Quality of Life Surveys (EQLS), the Gallup World Poll (GWP) and the Flash Eurobarometer on working conditions.³ A selection of questions from two national surveys, the British Skills and Employment Survey (2012) and the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* (2013), are also used in this chapter to show how questions on job characteristics have been implemented in more detailed national surveys (Box 5.1).⁴

Third, the chapter assesses the statistical reliability of existing measures for each characteristic of the working environment drawn from various surveys. This evidence draws on four of the seven international surveys included in the OECD Inventory: EWCS 2005 and 2010, ESS 2004 and 2010, ISSP 2005, and the Gallup World Poll 2006 to 2010. These surveys are used for the empirical analysis, as they contain similar questions on the same job characteristic, which allows contrasting alternative question formulations, while covering a set of countries with different labour-market institutions and working conditions (Table 5.1 lists the countries covered by each survey). This empirical assessment

Box 5.1. National surveys on the quality of the working environment

The **British Skills and Employment Survey** collects data on what people do at work, what skills they use and how they work. This cross-sectional survey (conducted in 1986, 1992, 1997, 2001, 2006 and 2012) allows monitoring changes over time in job quality and skills. In 2012, 3 200 workers were surveyed, with 1 100 of them questioned two years later in a shorter follow-up survey. The questions included in the survey cover broad features of the job; more detailed aspects; computing skills and qualifications; work attitudes; work organisation; pay; features of the job held 5 years ago; recent skill changes and future perspectives; well-being at work; personal details; follow-up, and workplace details. More information on the survey is available at: www.llakes.ac.uk/research-project/207/skills-and-employment-survey-2012 and www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/projects/view/117804-skills-and-employment-survey-2012.

The **French Enquête Conditions de Travail** has been administered since 1978 by the Directorate for Research, Studies and Statistics (DARES) of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Professional Training and Social Dialogue. It has been repeated every 7 years (i.e. in 1984, 1991, 1998, 2005 and 2013). Answers refer to working conditions as perceived by respondents. In 1978 and 1984, the survey was limited to employees while, since 1991, it covered all workers. Interviews are conducted at home by INSEE investigators based on a representative sample of the employed population aged 15 or older. The survey questions cover professional activity (occupation, job tenure, work contract, employer establishment and pay); working time (hours worked, part-time status, weekly and monthly working schedule, predicted hours, daily hours, leave); physical constraints, prevention and accidents; work organisation (rhythm of work, autonomy, working ambience, staff representation, means and use of computers); health status; family and professional background (training, professional trajectory); relations with co-workers, satisfactions and difficulties at work, daily work life). More information on the survey is available at: <http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/dares-etudes-et-statistiques/enquetes-de-a-a-z/article/conditions-de-travail-edition-2013>.

relies on cross-country correlation between pairs of surveys that were conducted around the same year (e.g. the 4th EWCS and the 3rd Work Orientations Module of the ISSP, which were both conducted in 2005) and that contain questions on the same job characteristic. The underlying assumption is that, if these surveys provide good measures of a component of job quality, then country measures should be highly correlated across sources and the survey questions can be considered to be reliable (Box 5.2). The empirical analysis relies on three criteria.

- First, correlation coefficients are calculated between pairs of surveys that include at least 10 common countries. In the analysis below, 24 countries are covered by both EWCS 2005 and ESS 2004, 19 by EWCS and ISSP 2005, 16 by ESS 2004 and ISSP 2005, and 23 by EWCS and ESS in 2010.⁵
- Second, the analyses use a threshold of 0.60 to assess the significance of these correlation coefficients (i.e. values above 0.60 are considered to indicate that the survey items provide reliable information).⁶
- Third, when calculating cross-country correlations, the chapter considers several indicators, such as countries' mean scores in each survey question and shares of respondents who report scores either below a low threshold (*bottom*) or above a high threshold (*top*)⁷; in

other words, the chapter examines whether two survey questions yield similar country values both for the average score and for the shares of people with a low or a high score on each survey question.

Evidence on these correlations for 14 job characteristics (those that are measured in broadly consistent ways by more than two surveys) is included in Annex 5.A.

Box 5.2. Testing the statistical reliability of a measure by comparing results from various international surveys

A reliable measure of a concept of interest allows distinguishing between differences due to a genuine change in the conditions being measured and differences due to measurement error. The reliability of a measure refers to whether a survey instrument produces the same result when carried out in the same conditions.

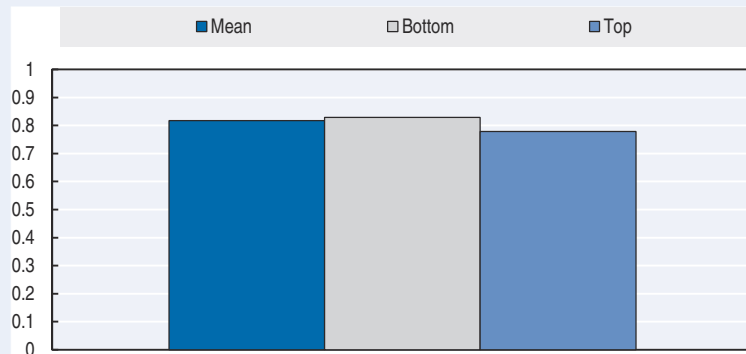
The reliability of a measure can be assessed in different ways. **Test-retest** reliability is assessed by administering the same test twice over a period of time to the same person: high correlation coefficients between scores in the two periods indicate good reliability for the measure. When multiple items are used to measure a single concept, **internal consistency** evaluates the degree to which different test items that probe the same construct produce similar results. **Parallel-forms** reliability is obtained by administering different forms of a question to the same group of individuals.

Since the methodology used in this chapter relies on international surveys carried out on separate cross-sectional samples, it does not strictly correspond to these tests of reliability. However, it does resemble parallel-forms reliability since it relies on comparisons between similar groups of people across surveys (i.e. employees aged 20 to 64, where sampling weights are applied). By restricting the analysis to the same population and using surveys carried out around the same year, the chapter aims to assess whether alternative versions of a question produce similar country results. Correlation coefficients should be interpreted with caution: while it is safe to assume that a strong correlation coefficient (e.g. $r \geq 0.60$) lends support to the reliability of a measure, low correlation coefficients ($r < 0.60$) could be the result of methodological differences between the two surveys. Thus, this chapter refrains from declaring a measure in a specific survey *unreliable* based on weak correlations.

Questions on the same item asked in different surveys differ not just in the wording but also in the response scale used. This implies that the measures of the share of respondents reporting *low* or *high* values of a specific job characteristic in two surveys will depend on the specific thresholds used. To address this problem, the analysis in this chapter relies on correlation coefficients calculated for different thresholds, with the highest correlation selected; in other words, when comparing data on workers' exposure to noise between the EWCS (which relies on a 1 to 6 response scale) and the ISSP (which uses a 1 to 4 scale), data on the share of workers deemed to be never or almost never exposed to *loud noise* are calculated for a cut-off of 1, 2 and 3 for the EWCS and a cut-off of 1 and 2 for the ISSP. The highest correlation is observed for a cut-off of 2 in the EWCS and 1 in the ISSP; in other words, across countries, the shares of people answering 1 or 2 in the EWCS correlate highly with the shares of people answering 1 in the ISSP (Figure 5.1). The same cross-country correlation is calculated for workers who are less exposed to loud noise and across all workers. These correlations are reported in Annex 5.A. For questions with a dichotomous response scale, only the average scores are reported.

Box 5.2. Testing the statistical reliability of a measure by comparing results from various international surveys (cont.)

Figure 5.1. Correlation coefficients across all different cut-offs for exposure to noise, EWCS and ISSP



Source: OECD calculations based on micro-level data from the EWCS and ISSP. The analyses are based on the 19 countries covered by both the EWCS and ISSP. Bottom performers are those with a score lower than 2 in the EWCS and equal to 1 in the ISSP. Top performers are defined by those with a score above 3 in the ISSP and equal to 6 in the EWCS.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606281>

5.2. Physical and social environment

One of the most important aspects of a job for workers' well-being is the physical and social environment in which work is undertaken. Whether or not a job is carried out in a hazardous environment, has extensive physical demands or is performed surrounded by hostile people clearly affects both workers' physical well-being and their psychological well-being. The physical and social environment includes three characteristics pertaining to job demands (physical risk factors, physical demand, and intimidation and discrimination at the workplace) and one to job resources (social support at work).

Physical risk factors

Physical risk factors (item A.1 in Table 4.1) refer to the degree to which a job involves risks that may impair workers' physical health. These risk factors can be either perceived or experienced, and typically differ across occupations and over time. For example, what is considered "dangerous work" has evolved historically (Jermier et al., 1989). Risk factors that are relevant in today's labour markets include working in extreme temperatures, loud noise, exposure to chemicals and the occurrence of work-place accidents, as well as workers' personal evaluations of whether their workplace is dangerous. Physical risk factors negatively affect workers' physical health and lower the quality of their working environment.

Physical risk factors are covered by all the seven international surveys examined in this chapter (Table 5.2). Among these surveys, those specifically designed to investigate labour-market outcomes (i.e. the EWCS, EU ad hoc modules of labour-force surveys and Eurobarometer Flash module) include various questions on the specific risk factors that workers are exposed to, such as noise, smoke, fumes and radioactive radiation. While the EWCS also enquires about the frequency of exposure to these risks, the EU ad hoc LFS modules ask about the occurrence of work injuries and accidents within the last 12 months

Table 5.1. **Countries covered by the surveys used in analysis of cross-country correlations**

	EWCS 2005	ISSP 2005	ESS 2004	Gallup World Poll 2005*	EWCS 2010	ESS 2010	Gallup World Poll 2010*
Australia		Yes		Yes			Yes
Austria	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	
Canada		Yes		Yes			Yes
Croatia	Yes				Yes	Yes	
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Denmark	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominican Republic		Yes		Yes			Yes
Estonia	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Israel		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Japan		Yes		Yes			Yes
Korea		Yes		Yes			
Kosovo					Yes		Yes
Latvia	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
Lithuania	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	Yes		Yes		Yes		
Mexico		Yes		Yes			Yes
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Zealand		Yes		Yes			Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Philippines		Yes		Yes			Yes
Poland	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	Yes			Yes	Yes		
Russian Federation		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
Slovak Republic	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
South Africa		Yes		Yes			Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Turkey	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Ukraine			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
United States		Yes		Yes			Yes

Note: * The Gallup World Poll adopts a modular approach in which some questions are included only in a selection of countries. For some of the job characteristics reviewed in this chapter, the Gallup World Poll has fewer than 10 countries that are included in the other three surveys. Those questions with 9 or fewer countries are excluded from the empirical analysis.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

and about the duration of absence from work that they cause. On the other hand, surveys that have a broader focus (i.e. the ISSP, ESS, Gallup World Poll and EWCS) ask respondents to provide only their general evaluation of how dangerous or unhealthy their workplaces are.

Table 5.2. **Survey questions on physical risk factors**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Are you exposed at work to vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc.? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust, etc.?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to radiation such as X rays, radioactive radiation? (2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to tobacco smoke from other people? (2010, 2005)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Are you exposed at work to handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious? (2010, 2005)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-2 (Yes-No)
European Social Survey	
• My health or safety is at risk because of my work (2004, 2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
International Social Survey Programme	
• How often do you work in dangerous conditions? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
• How often do you work in unhealthy conditions? (1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
Gallup World Poll	
• Do you work in dangerous conditions that could put your life at risk, or not? (2010)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• Do you work in unhealthy conditions that could make you sick, or not? (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013)	1-2 (Yes-No)
EU-Labour Force Survey ad hoc Modules	
• Accidents at work resulting in injuries occurred in the 12 months before the reference week* (2013, 1999)	None, 1, 2 or more
• Whether or not the most recent accident at work was a road traffic accident (2013)	Road traffic, other accident]
• Number of calendar days the person was unfit to work because of the most recent accident at work resulting in injury (2013)	0-9 (Still off work – Between 9 to 12 months)
• Physical or mental health problem(s) suffered by the person in the 12 months that were caused/made worse by work (2013)	[None, 1, 2 or more]
• Whether the most serious health problem caused by work limits the ability to carry out day-to-day activities at/outside work* (2013, 2007)	[No, Yes to some extent, Yes considerably]
• Number of calendar days unfit to work because of the most serious health problem caused/made worse by work* (2013, 2007, 1999)	0-9 (Still off work – Between 9 to 12 months)
• Exposure to noise or strong vibration (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to chemicals, dust, fumes, smoke or gases* (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to activities involving strong visual concentration (2013)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to risk of accidents* (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
• Accidental injury apart from illnesses during the past 12 months, at work or in the course of work (2007)	[None, One, Two or more]
• Type of the most recent accidental injury at work or in the course of work (2007)	[Road traffic accident, Other accident]
European Quality of Life Survey	
• How much do you agree or disagree: I work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions? (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Risks of accidents or serious injuries?	[Choose max three]
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Exposure to infectious materials or substances?	[Choose max three]
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Exposure to potentially dangerous chemicals?	[Choose max three]
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Exposure to noise or vibrations?)	[Choose max three]
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• Do you think your health and safety is at risk because of your work?	1-2 (Yes – No)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Are you exposed at work to breathing in smoke and dust?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Are you exposed at work to contact with dangerous products?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Are you exposed at work to risks of infection?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At work, do you run the risk of being injured or hurt?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Are you exposed to the risk of being involved in a road traffic accident in the course of your work?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: dirt?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: damp?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: draughts?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: bad smells?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: high temperatures?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: low temperatures?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Table 5.2. **Survey questions on physical risk factors (cont.)**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
● Is your work or workplace exposed to the following inconveniences: absence, or bad condition, of sanitary facilities?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Does your employer provide personal protective equipment such as gloves, eyewear, safety footwear, a harness?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Over the past 12 months, have you been informed of the risks that your work poses to your health and safety?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did the information come from your company/administration (manager, specialised service or consultant)?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did the information come from staff representatives (employee representative, union representative, member of employee representative committee or committee for health, safety and working conditions, etc.)?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did the information come from the medical officer or occupational health physician?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did the information come from your colleagues?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did the information come from another source?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Over the past 12 months, have you received safety training provided by your company/administration?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Over the past 12 months, have you received documentation from your management describing the work-related risks in your business (DUER or single assessment document for professional risk)?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Were you consulted for the drafting of this document?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Over the past 12 months, has the medical officer or occupational health physician visited your work unit?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● In order to ensure your health and safety at work, do you receive any guidelines or written instructions in addition to evacuation instructions in the event of a fire?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Is it possible to apply them?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Is your supervisor (or the heads of the company or organisation) aware that you are unable, or only partially able, to apply them?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● In the past 12 months, in the course of your work, have you had one or more accidents, even harmless ones, which have required you to receive treatment?	1-3 (One accident – Three accidents or more)
● Did the accident occur in your current job?	[Date]
● On what date, approximately, did this accident take place?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did you have to take a leave of absence from work as a result of the accident?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● How many days were you absent from work?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Did you inform your employer of the accident?	1-2 (Yes – No)
● Since the accident, has your employer taken measures to reduce the risks involved?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

The two national surveys reviewed here use different approaches for measuring physical health risk factors at work (Table 5.2). The British Skills and Employment Survey includes a single question on this aspect, asking respondents whether they think their health and safety are at risk at work. Conversely, the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* devotes an entire section of its questionnaire to gather detailed information on specific risk factors (e.g. exposure to infectious products, accidents), physical working conditions (e.g. exposure to dirt, humidity, low and high temperatures), health and safety measures taken by the firm (e.g. provision of safety equipment, health and safety information, and medical checks) and the occurrence and nature of workplace accidents (e.g. if and how many accidents happened, number of working days lost due to the accident, whether the employer took precautions since the accident).

Cross-country coefficients between survey items on specific physical risk factors and overall assessments of general safety at the workplace correlate strongly with each other (Table 5.A.1 in the Annex). For example, the ISSP 2005 question “How often do you work in dangerous conditions?” shows a positive and strong (above $r = 0.60$) correlation with the EWCS 2005 items measuring the frequency of exposure to vibrations from hand tools and machinery, loud noise, breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust, handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances, or breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners. This is true for the average score, but also for the population shares of low and high scores (high and low achievers).

Similarly, most of the detailed EWCS questions on the frequency and exposure to various physical risk factors correlate positively with the ESS 2004 question “My health or

safety is at risk because of my work” (Table 5.A.1). However, the correlation coefficients are weaker with the ISSP question, and are above or close to $r = 0.60$ only for the EWCS item measuring the frequency of exposure to loud noise. The same pattern emerges from the analysis of the 2010 wave of both surveys: most EWCS 2010 items have a high positive correlation with the ESS 2010 question; the two specific aspects of exposure covered in EWCS 2010 also have coefficients that are close to or above 0.60 (Table 5.A.1).

However, the overall evaluations of workplace safety across surveys are not strongly correlated with each other. Country-average scores from the EWCS question asking whether employees think their health or safety is at risk because of their work are only moderately correlated with the similarly worded question from the ISSP ($r = 0.45$, Table 5.A.1) and from ESS 2004 ($r = 0.55$); in particular, the correlation coefficient between the EWCS and ESS surveys in 2010 are much weaker and negative ($r = -0.07$), while the overall safety assessments from ISSP 2005 and ESS 2004 have a correlation coefficient of 0.47.

This analysis implies that country scores based on questions on specific risk factors are more consistent across surveys than those based on an overall safety assessment provided by the respondents. This suggests that surveys should ideally measure specific physical risk factors with more specific questions. If questionnaire space does not allow this, the question on overall safety assessment needs to be carefully worded and, where possible, applied after cognitive testing.

Physical demands

Physical demands (item A.2 in Table 4.1) refer to work that requires hard physical effort such as standing and walking for long periods, working in tiring positions, or lifting and carrying heavy objects. Even though these demands may not constitute an immediate risk factor, they have a damaging effect on workers’ well-being in the medium and the long run, especially when combined with low levels of autonomy and social support at work.

The existence and extent of physical demands are assessed in four of the seven surveys reviewed here (Table 5.3). Among these four surveys, those specifically designed to evaluate the labour conditions of European workers (i.e. EWCS, EU-LFS ad hoc modules and the Flash Eurobarometer on working conditions) asked workers whether their jobs involved specific physical demands such as lifting or moving heavy objects, doing repetitive hand and arm movements, or working in tiring positions. Additionally, the EWCS asked about the frequency of such physical demands. The ISSP, which has a more diverse geographical coverage and wider thematic focus, asks about physical demands in a more general manner, i.e. how often the job involved hard physical work and how often respondents return home from work exhausted, which is an indirect proxy of physical demands of work.

The two national surveys reviewed here both cover physical demands with multiple questions. The British survey has one general question on whether respondents return home from work exhausted, and two on whether physical stamina and physical strength are important in one’s job. The French survey contains a larger and more detailed batch of questions, asking whether the job involves specific physically-demanding tasks such as standing, walking long distances or standing in tiring positions.

The correlation coefficients of country scores between the EWCS 2005 questions on specific physical work demands and the general ISSP 2005 questions show that, in general, these items are positively correlated with each other (Table 5.A.2). However, correlation coefficients between country values based on EWCS questions on working in tiring and

Table 5.3. **Survey questions on physical demands**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Does your main paid job involve tiring or painful positions? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your main paid job involve lifting or moving people? (2010, 2005)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your main paid job involve carrying or moving heavy loads? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your main paid job involve standing or walking? (2010, 2005)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your main paid job involve repetitive hand or arm movements? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
International Social Survey Programme	
• How often applies: do hard physical work? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
• How often: come home from work exhausted? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc Modules	
• Exposure to difficult work postures or work movements (2013)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to handling of heavy loads (2013)	[Choose one]
• Exposure to difficult work postures or work movements or handling of heavy loads (2007)	[Choose one]
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Lifting, carrying or moving loads on a daily basis	[Choose max three]
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Repetitive movements or tiring or painful positions	[Choose max three]
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• How often do you come home from work exhausted?	1-5 (Always – Never)
• In your job, how important is physical strength (for example, to carry, push or pull heavy objects)?	1-5 (Essential – Not important at all/Doesn't apply)
• In your job, how important is physical stamina (to work for long periods on physical activities)?	1-5 (Essential – Not important at all/Doesn't apply)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• In order to do your work, are you required to stand for long periods of time?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to remain in another position which is painful or tiring after a while?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to walk long distances or travel frequently on foot?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to make painful or tiring movements?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to keep your eyes permanently focused on your work?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to read letters and numbers in small print, or which have been badly printed or badly written?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In order to do your work, are you required to examine very small objects and distinguish fine details?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

painful positions, lifting or moving people, and repetitive hand movements with the corresponding values based on ISSP items on physical demands and coming home exhausted are weak, and in some cases negative. Focusing on the average score, only the EWCS item on carrying and moving heavy loads displays a correlation coefficient with the ISSP item above 0.60. The EWCS heavy loads question also correlates strongly for low achievers based on the ISSP question on coming home exhausted.

Intimidation and discrimination at the workplace

Workplace intimidation (item A.3. in Table 4.1) refers to being exposed to intentional and malicious behaviour from co-workers or supervisors that make the individual feel inadequate or afraid. Conversely, discrimination refers to situations when workers feel that they are treated less favourably than another person because of their race, gender, religion, disability or nationality. Intimidation and discrimination at the workplace are closely linked to distress, depression and absenteeism, especially in the absence of social support at work. While fewer workers report having experienced intimidation and discrimination at work compared to physical health risk factors or physical demands, those who do experience it typically incur a large decline in their well-being (OECD, 2013 and 2014).

Despite its importance for workers' well-being, only three of the international surveys analysed here include questions on this aspect of the working environment (Table 5.4). Since 1996, the EWCS has included a number of questions about whether respondents have been

Table 5.4. **Survey questions on intimidation and discrimination at the workplace**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● And over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Physical violence?* (2010, 2000, 1996) ❖ Bullying /harassment? (2010, 2005) ❖ Sexual harassment? (2010) ● Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not been subjected at work to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sexual discrimination/discrimination linked to gender?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996) ❖ Age discrimination? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996) ❖ Discrimination linked to nationality? (2010, 2005, 2000) ❖ Discrimination linked to ethnic background/race?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996) ❖ Discrimination linked to religion? (2010, 2005) ❖ Discrimination linked to disability? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996) ❖ Discrimination linked to sexual orientation? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996) ● Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not been subjected at work to intimidation? (2000, 1996) ● Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not been subjected at work to unwanted sexual attention? (2005, 2000, 1996) 	<p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p>
EU-Labour Force Survey ad hoc Modules	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exposure to harassment or bullying (2013, 2007) ● Exposure to violence or threat of violence (2013, 2007) 	<p>[Choose one]</p> <p>[Choose one]</p>
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the main health and safety risks you face at the workplace? Exposure to violence and harassment (list of items) 	[Choose max three]
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How anxious are you about being unfairly treated through discrimination? ● How anxious are you about victimisation by management? 	<p>1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)</p> <p>1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)</p>
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the last 12 months, have you experienced the following difficult situations at work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Being ignored, treated as if you do not exist ❖ Being prevented from expressing your opinion ❖ Being exposed to public ridicule ❖ Having your work unfairly criticised ❖ Being given useless or degrading tasks to do ❖ Having your work undermined, being prevented from working properly ❖ Hearing it suggested that you are mentally ill ❖ Being the target of obscene or degrading language ❖ Being the object of repeated sexual advances ❖ Being the object of hurtful or tasteless jokes, being teased ● Is/are the perpetrator(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One or more people in your company or your organisation ❖ One or more of your clients, users, patients ● Do you think this behaviour is determined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Your gender (the fact of being either a man or a woman) ❖ Your state of health or a disability ❖ The colour of your skin ❖ Your origins or your nationality ❖ The way you dress ❖ Your age ❖ Your sexual orientation ❖ Your profession ● In the past 12 months, in the course of your work, have you been the victim of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Verbal abuse from your colleagues or your managers ❖ Physical or sexual abuse from your colleagues or your managers 	<p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p> <p>1-2 (Yes – No)</p>

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

subjected during the last 12 months to various forms of intimidation, harassment or discrimination at work, such as bullying, sexual or gender-related discrimination, unwanted sexual attention, or discrimination linked to age, nationality, religion or disability. The EU-LFS ad hoc modules and Eurobarometer Flash module inquire about intimidation and

discrimination at work as a health risk factor, providing respondents with a list of factors to choose from, some of them relating to intimidation and discrimination.

In contrast to international surveys, both the British and French surveys include questions on intimidation and discrimination at the workplace (Table 5.4). The British Skills and Employment Survey contains two questions asking respondents how anxious they feel about being unfairly treated through discrimination, and about victimisation by management. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* has a whole section on intimidation and discrimination, with questions on different experiences of workplace intimidation (e.g. being ignored, being given degrading tasks, being insulted) and the source of these acts (whether from someone in the firm or from clients/customers). The *Enquête* also asks respondents if they think these acts of intimidation were related to their age, gender, skin colour, religion, disability, the way they look, sexual orientation or profession, as well as whether respondents experienced verbal, physical or sexual assault by colleagues or managers/supervisors in the past 12 months.⁸

Social support at work

Social support (item A.4. in Table 4.1) includes support received from supervisors and co-workers when needed, having a friendly atmosphere among the staff and management, and being able to discuss work problems with management and workers representatives. Social support at work affects employee well-being by providing buffers against the negative consequences both of extensive work demands (Johnson and Hall, 1988; Johnson et. al., 1989) and of intimidation and discrimination at the workplace.

At least one of these types of social support at work is covered in five of the seven international surveys under study (Table 5.5). Among these, the EWCS (since 1991) has included questions on these various components; until 2010, these related to the extent and nature of discussion of work-related problems with management, colleagues and representatives, whereas more recent surveys also include questions on the presence of a friendly and supportive environment. The 2010 EWCS has a particular focus on whether respondents feel at home at work and are surrounded by friends. The ESS covers this aspect of the working environment with a single question on whether the respondent can get support from co-workers when needed, whereas the ISSP focuses on the nature of the relationship between management and employees, and between co-workers. The Gallup World Poll includes a single-item question on the presence of a co-worker or a supervisor who encourages one's development at work. Finally, Flash Eurobarometer enquires whether the respondent has discussed work-related problems with colleagues in the past 12 months.

Social support also features in the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail*, which asks respondents if they can get support from supervisors or colleagues when they face difficult and delicate work tasks, if they have colleagues who help them out to get the work done, and whether colleagues are friendly. All these four items are measured with a "Yes/No" response scale (Table 5.5).

All four international surveys analysed include data for at least 10 countries on social support at work, which allows a comprehensive analysis of cross-country correlations (Table 5.A.3 in the Annex). Country averages and frequencies from the EWCS 2005 questions on assistance from colleagues/supervisors/external sources and the friendliness of the social atmosphere at the workplace are correlated with those from the two ISSP 2005 questions on relations between management and employees, and between co-workers (Table 5.A.3).

Table 5.5. **Survey questions on social support at work**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it (2005, 2000, 1996)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Your colleagues help and support you (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Your manager helps and supports you (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it (2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You can get external assistance if you ask for it (2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• I feel myself “at home” in this organisation (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• I have very good friends at work (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• In order to carry out your work do you have sufficient support from superiors or colleagues? (1991)	1-2 (Yes-No)
European Social Survey	
• I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed (2004, 2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
International Social Survey Programme	
• How would you describe relations at your workplace – between management and employees? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Very good – Very bad)
• How would you describe relations at your workplace – between workmates/colleagues? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Very good – Very bad)
Gallup World Poll	
• Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not? (2006, 2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes – No)
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... discussed work related problems with your colleagues?	[Choose max three]
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• If you are having problems with painstaking or complicated work, do you receive support from your line managers?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• If you are having problems with painstaking or complicated work, do you receive support from the other people with whom you work regularly?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• The colleagues with whom I work help me successfully complete my work	1-4 (Strongly disagree – Strongly agree)
• The colleagues with whom I work are friendly	1-4 (Strongly disagree – Strongly agree)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

The single-item ESS 2004 question, on the other hand, is strongly correlated ($r > 0.60$) with most of the EWCS 2005 questions on various components of social support (Table 5.A.3). Country scores based on the ESS question “I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed” have correlations of around 0.60 with respect to those based on the EWCS item “You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it”, the EWCS item “You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it”, and the EWCS item “You can get external assistance if you ask for it”, when considering the mean score and the shares of low or high achievers. For the other EWCS 2005 items, the correlation coefficients are weak (below 0.60). The two ISSP 2005 questions on social support at work and the single-item ESS 2004 question are also only weakly correlated across the 24 countries covered by both surveys.

Country data from the single-item question in the Gallup World Poll (“Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not”) are positively correlated (in the expected dimension) with the ESS 2004 single item on support from co-workers when needed ($r = 0.65$), but weakly with other questions. Finally, the 2010 questions on social support at work from the EWCS and ESS produce a mixed pattern.

This analysis suggests that social support at work is in itself a multidimensional concept, some aspects of which are more subjective than others. Nevertheless, the question items that focus on the same sub-dimension (e.g. getting support from colleagues or supervisors when needed) display sufficiently strong correlation coefficients to lend support to their reliability.

5.3. Job tasks

One crucial dimension of the working environment is the way in which job tasks are carried out by workers. While jobs are defined by the specific tasks that need to be undertaken, the conditions under which they are carried out vary hugely from one workplace to another as well as within workplaces. The intensity of these tasks and the emotional burden that they impose on workers constitute job demands that may significantly reduce workers' well-being. Conversely, the discretion that an employee is given to carry out job tasks represents a resource that will generally improve workers' working environment.

Work intensity

Work intensity (item B.1 in Table 4.1) is high when jobs involve working for long hours, with high effort, for tight deadlines and at high speed. Intensive work can bring higher pay, enhanced promotion opportunities and higher economic output; however, it can also lead to work accidents (some fatal) and absenteeism and sickness leave, and interfere with family life. These costs tend to be stronger in settings where health and safety measures are inadequate. Work intensity also causes work-related distress, especially when work arrangements do not allow workers much autonomy. Therefore, work intensity can have negative consequences for both the physical and psychological well-being of workers and implies a low-quality working environment.

Work intensity is a component of the quality of the working environment that is well covered by all the surveys reviewed here (Table 5.6). All of the seven surveys contain questions on the length of working hours, and, among these, six also have questions on the intensity at which work is performed. The first aspect – length of the working time – refers to the *experienced*, rather than *contractual*, hours of work, and all seven surveys provide information on this concept of hours worked. For example, both the EWCS and the ESS ask how many hours respondents usually work per week in their main job,⁹ whereas the EQLS further specifies that working hours should include both paid and unpaid overtime, with a similarly worded question. Both the Gallup World Poll and the ISSP ask about the number of hours worked in a typical week, while the EU-LFS ad hoc modules do not include a question on hours worked, as this is covered in the core EU-LFS. Finally, the Flash Eurobarometer, rather than asking about the number of weekly hours worked, asks respondents whether, in practice, their working day does not exceed a total of 13 hours, and whether respondents can get at least one day off every week. Even though these questions are informative about the length of the work week, they do not provide as precise information on working hours as the Labour Force Surveys do.

Work intensity encompasses the speed of work, the tightness of deadlines, and the time pressure and effort required to accomplish work tasks. The EWCS includes detailed questions on how intensely work is carried out, with items on the frequency of working at very high speed and of working to tight deadlines. Even though speed and tight deadlines are highly correlated with each other (e.g. in EWCS 2010, the correlation coefficient is 0.64), they measure two distinct aspects of intensity, which may be experienced to different extents by different workers; while non-manual workers (e.g. senior officers, managers and professionals) are more likely to work to tight deadlines than at very high speed, the reverse applies to manual workers (e.g. service workers, craft workers, plant and machine operators). Therefore, information on both dimensions of work intensity should generally be collected to assess work intensity.

The EQLS also includes questions on whether work involves tight deadlines. The “effort” aspect is also captured by the ESS (with the question “My job requires that I work very hard”), ISSP and EQLS (with an item on the frequency of coming home from work exhausted). Finally, the time pressure aspect is also covered by the international surveys reviewed here: by the EWCS, with a statement “You have enough time to get the job done”; by the ESS, with “I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job”; and by the EU-LFS ad hoc modules, through questions about exposure to severe time pressure or being overloaded at work.

Work intensity features in both of the national surveys reviewed in this chapter (Table 5.6). The British Skills and Employment Survey uses an approach similar to the EWCS; in addition to asking about the duration of working hours, it has questions about how frequently respondents work at very high speed and to tight deadlines, as well as questions on the amount of effort and extra time that need to be put to complete tasks. The questions included in the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* cover both the length of working time (e.g. weekly working hours, overtime work, and whether workers have 48 consecutive hours of rest per week) and intensity of the work performed (whether workers are asked to perform an excessive amount of work, work under pressure, or have to think about too many things at the same time).

An analysis of the cross-country correlation of questionnaire items on work intensity indicates that those questions that address hours worked weekly are well correlated across all surveys and all waves (Table 5.A.4). This is, however, not the case for items covering other aspects of work intensity, such as the ESS and ISSP questions on coming home exhausted or the EWCS and ESS question on time pressure.

Emotional demands

Emotional demands (item B.2 in Table 4.1) refer to having to deal with feelings of frustration, anger, sorrow and desperation while at work. These conditions may arise due to stressful interactions with colleagues, clients or customers. Emotional demands and the stress arising from them are likely to cause psychological distress, anxiety, depression, lower productivity and absenteeism.

The EWCS is the only survey that directly measures the emotional demands that jobs involve, with the 2010 wave of this survey asking about the frequency of tasks and demands that are emotionally draining, such as dealing with angry clients, hiding one’s feelings and doing things that are in conflict with one’s personal values or where one has to become emotionally engaged (Table 5.7).

Emotional demands can be assumed to bear a psychological cost that is reflected in employee stress and worry. Five international surveys contain questions on worry and stress that can be considered as a proxy of a job’s emotional demands: the EWCS, ESS and ISSP ask how often respondents find their work stressful or keep worrying about work problems outside of work hours; the Gallup World Poll focuses on the consequences of stress, asking respondents whether, in the past 30 days, they experienced work stress that caused them to behave poorly with friends or family; the EQLS asks whether individuals agree with the statement that work is too demanding and stressful; while the Eurobarometer lists exposure to stress as a health and safety risk factor.

The gold standard in this field is the EWCS questions, which directly ask about tasks that are emotionally demanding. No other survey includes similar questions that would

Table 5.6. Survey questions on work intensity
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Does your job involve working at very high speed? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your job involve working to tight deadlines? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	[Numeric]
• You have enough time to get the job done* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day? (2005)	[Numeric]
European Social Survey	
• Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime? (2004, 2010)	[Numeric]
• My job requires that I work very hard (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• How often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home? (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Never – Always)
International Social Survey Programme	
• How many hours, on average, do you usually work for pay in a normal week? (1989, 1997, 2005)	[Numeric]
• How often do you come home from work exhausted? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Always – Never)
• Agree or not: my job leaves a lot of leisure time (1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
Gallup World Poll	
• What is the minimum number of hours you are required to work per week in order to keep your job? (2010)	[Numeric]
• In a typical week, how many hours do you work? (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)	[Numeric]
• On an average day, roughly how much time do you spend on the following activities: Working to earn money? (2008, 2011)	Spend no time; Less than 1 hour; 1-2 hours; 3-5 hours; 6-8 hours; 9 hours or more
EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc Modules	
• Exposure to severe time pressure or overload of work (2013, 2007)	[Choose one]
• Overtime hours in reference week (2004, 2001)	[Numeric]
• Weekly hours of work – core LFS	
European Quality of Life Survey	
• How many hours do you normally work per week in your main job, including any paid or unpaid overtime? (2012, 2007, 2003)	[Numeric]
• How much do you agree or disagree: I constantly work to tight deadlines (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• How often I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done? (2012, 2007, 2003)	1-5 (Several times a week – Never)
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• In practice, at work do you generally benefit from... at least one break after six hours?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In practice, at work do you generally benefit from... working days that do not exceed a total of 13 hours?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In practice, at work do you generally benefit from... at least one day off every week?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In practice, at work do you generally benefit from... at least four weeks of paid holidays every year?	1-2 (Yes – No)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• How many hours per week do you usually work?	[Numeric]
• My job requires that I work very hard	1-5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree)
• I work under a great deal of tension	1-5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree)
• How often does your work involve working at very high speed?	1-7 (All the time – Never)
• How often does your work involve working to tight deadlines?	1-7 (All the time – Never)
• I often have to work extra time, over and above the formal hours of my job, to get through the work or to help out	1-4 (Very true – Not true at all)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Do you generally have enough time to carry out your work properly?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• I am often given an excessive workload	1-4 (Strongly disagree – Strongly agree)
• How often do you find yourself in the following situations at work?	
❖ I work under pressure	1-4 (Always – Never)
❖ I have too many things to think about at the same time	1-4 (Always – Never)
• How many hours do you normally work per week in your main job?	[Numeric]
• Do you benefit from at least 48 consecutive hours of rest in a week?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do you find yourself working overtime?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

allow analysis of cross-country correlations. The empirical analysis thus compares the EWCS items on emotionally demanding tasks with stress/worry items, as well as comparing stress/worry items across surveys (Table 5.A.5). The stress and worry items in ESS 2004 and ISSP 2005 are positively correlated, with $r = 0.57$. However, the EWCS questions on specific

emotional demands are not correlated strongly, or even consistently (in terms of direction), with the stress and worry items from the ESS and ISSP.

Both the British and French questionnaires include questions capturing the emotional demands of jobs (Table 5.7). The British Skills and Employment Survey asks whether the job requires dealing with people and managing one's own feelings, whether employees find that the values of their organisation match their own values, and whether the firm's values cause them a serious emotional burden. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* (2013) includes a large number of questions on emotional demands, i.e. whether the job involves dealing with clients or people in distress or calming down people. The survey also asks whether individuals have to do things that they disagree with or hide their emotions and restrain themselves from giving their opinions, all of which are likely to imply an emotional burden for workers.¹⁰

Table 5.7. Survey questions on emotional demands

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Does your main paid job involve handling angry clients? (2010)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• You find your job emotionally demanding (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Your job involves tasks that are in conflict with your personal values (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You get emotionally involved in your work (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You experience stress in your work (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Your job requires that you hide your feelings (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
European Social Survey	
• How often do you keep worrying about work problems when you are not working? (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Never – Always)
International Social Survey Programme	
• How often do you find your work stressful? (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
Gallup World Poll	
• In the past 30 days, have you had three or more days where the stress of work caused you to behave poorly with your family or friends? (2006, 2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes-No)
• In the past month, have there been days when the stress of work caused you to behave poorly with family or friends, or not? (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013)	1-2 (Yes-No)
European Quality of Life Survey	
• How much do you agree or disagree: My work is too demanding and stressful (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• What are the main health and safety risks you face at workplace? Exposure to stress (list of items)	[Choose max three]
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• In your job, how important is dealing with people?	1-5 (Essential – Not important at all/Doesn't apply)
• In your job, how important is managing your own feelings?	1-5 (Essential – Not important at all/Doesn't apply)
• I find that my values and the organisation's values are very similar	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Do you experience tension in your dealings with the public (users, patients, pupils, travellers, clients, suppliers, etc.)?	1-2 (Yes-No)
• In the course of your work, do you come into contact with people in distress?	1-2 (Yes-No)
• In the course of your work, do you have to calm people down?	1-2 (Yes-No)
• How often do you find yourself in the following situations at work?	
❖ I have to do things of which I disapprove	1-4 (Always – Never)
❖ I have to hide my feelings or pretend to be in a good mood	1-4 (Always – Never)
❖ I have to refrain from giving my opinion	1-4 (Always – Never)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Task discretion and autonomy

Task discretion (item B.3 in Table 4.1) refers to the ability of employees to influence the way that they carry out their immediate work activities, including their working method, effort, pace and quality standards. Empirical research indicates that task discretion is closely

associated with workers' job satisfaction, has a positive impact on physical and psychological well-being and provides a buffer against the damaging effect of high work intensity (Karasek, 1979; Karasek and Theorell, 1990). In addition to its positive impact on individuals' well-being, task discretion leads to learning at work and skills acquisition (Inanc et al., 2015), increases creativity at the workplace and has a positive impact on workers' discretionary effort, i.e. the work effort workers make beyond what is strictly required of them, thereby increasing organisational performance.

Four of the seven surveys reviewed in this chapter contain questions on task discretion and autonomy (Table 5.6). Since 1991, the EWCS has included three questions on task discretion, namely on the ability to choose or change work orders, methods of work, and the speed or rate of work, and, since 2010, a question on autonomy in choosing working partners; all these task discretion questions are answered with a "Yes/No" binary answer scale. The ESS Family, Work and Well-being modules asked in 2004 and 2010 the same two questions on task discretion used by the EWCS, i.e. whether management can decide how daily work organised, and concerning workers' ability to choose or change the pace of their work. The ISSP includes one question on autonomy (i.e. agreement with the statement "I can work independently") and another question on how daily work tasks are organised, which focuses on the level of choice that employees have. The EQLS also included an item on task discretion in 2003 and 2007, asking whether respondents have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do their work.

Questions on task discretion and autonomy have also featured in the British Skills and Employment Survey and the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* (Table 5.6). The first survey includes four questions on task discretion, asking how much influence individual respondents personally have on how hard they work, what tasks need to be done, how these tasks are to be performed and the quality standards to which workers work, in addition to a general question on the degree of choice that workers have on how they do their job. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* adopts a more indirect approach, asking workers about the features that determine the pace of their work, such as pace being determined by automated processes, by co-workers or by production standards. While these questions capture whether workers have discretion over their work pace, another question asks whether workers can pause their work when they want. The *Enquête* also contains questions on the degree to which workers have to follow instructions and/or directions given by supervisors or whether they can decide themselves how to do the job, exercising discretion on how to perform tasks.

The cross-country correlations for task discretion and autonomy are generally strong and in the expected direction across surveys, and this holds for both average scores and the population shares with high and low scores. Both of the ISSP items correlate strongly with the EWCS items on choice on the order of tasks ($r = 0.67$ and 0.75 , Table 5.A.6) and the method of work ($r = 0.69$ and 0.76). The cross-country correlations for the choice of speed/rate of work and choice of work partners are somewhat weaker.

The cross-country correlations between the ESS and EWCS items are even stronger, both in 2004/2005 and in 2010. The ESS item on workers' influence over how daily work is organised is highly correlated with the EWCS item on being able to choose/change the order of tasks, with $r = 0.85$ in 2004 (Table 5.A.6) and 0.82 in 2010; with the EWCS item on being able to choose/change the methods of work, with $r = 0.74$ in 2004 and $r = 0.84$ in 2010; and with the EWCS item on having an influence over the choice of working partners, with

$r = 0.69$ in 2004 and $r = 0.54$ in 2010. Data based on the second ESS question on workers' amount of influence on the pace of work is also strongly and positively correlated with the similar EWCS items.¹¹ The cross-country correlations for this second ESS item with the EWCS item on choice over the speed/rate of work is weaker, whereas that between the ESS item about influence over the speed of work and the EWCS similar item is very strong, with a correlation coefficient of 0.91 in 2010.

All in all, these correlations indicate that questions on task discretion produce similar cross-country scores, especially those that focus on the same aspect of discretion, which suggests that the available international questions are fairly reliable.

Table 5.8. Survey questions on task discretion and autonomy

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Are you able to choose or change your order of tasks? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Are you able to choose or change your methods of work? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Are you able to choose or change your speed or rate of work? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• You have influence over the choice of your working partners (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
European Social Survey	
• How much the management at your work allows you to decide how daily work is organised? (2004, 2010)	0-10 (No influence – Complete influence)
• How much the management at your work allows you to choose/change pace of work? (2004, 2010)	0-10 (No influence – Complete influence)
International Social Survey Programme	
• Agree or not: I can work independently (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• Which of the following statements best describes how your daily work is organised?*	[Choose one]
(1) I am free to decide how my daily work is organised	
(2) I can decide how my daily work is organised, within certain limits	
(3) I am not free to decide how my daily work is organised (2005, 1989)	
European Quality of Life Survey	
• How much do you agree or disagree: I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my work (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• How much choice do you have over the way in which you do your job?	1-4 (A great deal of choice – No choice at all)
• How much influence do you personally have on how hard you work?	1-4 (Very true – Not at all true)
• How much influence do you personally have on deciding what tasks you are to do?	1-4 (A great deal – Not at all)
• How much influence do you personally have on deciding how you are to do the task?	1-4 (A great deal – Not at all)
• How much influence do you personally have on deciding the quality standards to which you work?	1-4 (A great deal – Not at all)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Is your work rate imposed by:	
❖ The automatic movement of a product or part?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ The automatic speed of a machine?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Other technical constraints	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Immediate dependency on the work of one or more colleagues?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Production targets or deadlines to be met within one hour or longer?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Production targets or deadlines to be met within one day or longer?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ External demands (clients, public) requiring an immediate response?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do you have to fully comply with stringent control procedures (ISO certification, accreditation, EAQF, etc.)?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• You receive commands, guidance, instruction manuals. In order to do your job properly, do you:	
❖ Strictly follow the guidelines?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Do things differently in some situations?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Do things differently most of the time?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Can you take a short break from your work whenever you choose?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Your managers tell you what to do. As a rule, do they:	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Also tell you how to do it?	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Explain the end purpose of the task and leave you to choose how to accomplish it?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• I can organise my work as I see fit to best suit me	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

5.4. Organisational characteristics

The organisational characteristics of firms provide some critical resources to workers. Three types of resources are described below: organisational participation and workers voice; good managerial practices; and task clarity and performance feedback.

Organisational participation and workplace voice

Organisational participation and workplace voice (item C.1 in Table 4.1) refer to the possibility for employees to influence decisions at the workplace through direct consultation rather than through their representatives. This enables workers to communicate matters affecting their work and well-being to management, enhancing employers' awareness of workers' needs and helping employers to make a more efficient use of their resources. Workers' engagement in workplace decisions also facilitates organisational change: more engaged workers have a better understanding of the consequences of management decisions for how work is performed, are less likely to oppose these changes and may better anticipate risks.

Four of the seven international surveys included in the OECD inventory have questions on various forms in which employees are consulted and can voice their opinion to influence management decisions (Table 5.9). Since 1996, the EWCS has included questions on whether respondents can discuss work problems with different actors, while more recently it has introduced a question on workers' influence on work-related decisions. The ESS includes questions on employees' influence on decisions at work in general, and on their own working conditions and practices in particular, as well as a question on whether meetings with staff representatives are routinely organised. The Eurobarometer Flash Survey also contains questions on whether workers are consulted, informed or discuss work-related issues in their firm. Finally, the Gallup World Poll asks respondents whether they think that their opinions at work count.

Organisational participation and workplace voice feature in both of the national surveys reviewed in this chapter (Table 5.9). The British Skills and Employment Survey devotes several questions to organisational characteristics, organisational participation and voice, with a number of questions about the existence of informative meetings (e.g. whether management organises meetings where employees are informed about what is going on in the firm) and consultative meetings (e.g. whether at these meetings employees can express their opinions and if so in which areas, ranging from strategic decisions influencing the company's financial position and investment plans to practical issues such as training and health and safety regulations). The British survey also includes questions on the amount of influence that respondents think they have on decision-making processes relating directly to their work or on broader organisational decisions. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* captures organisational participation through a single question on whether, over the past 12 months, respondents have participated in discussions with an employee representative on issues related to their work.

An analysis of cross-country correlations shows that, across surveys, items measuring similar aspects of organisational participation and workplace voice, namely those on perceived influence on management decisions on work organisation, and those on whether management holds meetings to discuss work-related issues, are positively and strongly correlated across surveys (Table 5.A.7). For example, the mean country scores on levels of influence on work and policy decisions at the workplace have a correlation

Table 5.9. **Survey questions on organisational participation and workplace voice**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• You have influence over the choice of your working partners (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You are consulted before targets for your work are set (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You can influence decisions that are important for your work (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Within your workplace, are you able to discuss your working conditions in general? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Within your workplace, are you able to discuss the organisation of your work when changes take place? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place with your colleagues? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place with your superiors? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place with staff representatives? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place with outside experts? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place on a regular basis? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do these exchanges of views take place on a formal basis? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Within your workplace, are you able to discuss the organisation of your work when changes take place? (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the last 12 months have you been consulted about changes in the organisation of work and/or your working conditions? (2005, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the last 12 months have you discussed work-related problems with an employee representative? (2005, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation? (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
European Social Survey	
• How much the management at your work allows you to influence policy decisions about activities of organisation? (2004, 2010)	0-10 (No influence – Complete influence)
• At your workplace are there regular meetings between representatives of the employer and employees, in which working conditions and practices can be discussed? (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• How much influence would you say these discussions generally have on decisions that affect your working conditions and practices? (2010)	1-4 (Not much or no influence – A great deal of influence)
Gallup World Poll	
• At work, do your opinions seem to count, or not? (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes-No)
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... discussed work-related problems with your manager?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... been consulted about changes in the organisation of work and/or working conditions?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... discussed work-related problems with employee representatives?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... been informed about the situation of your company or organisation regarding its financial situation and its future, including possible restructuring?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you or not... been consulted on health and safety issues at work by your employer or a health and safety representative?	1-2 (Yes – No)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• My job allows me to take part in making decisions that affect my work	1-4 (Very true – Not true at all)
• At your workplace, does management organise meetings where you are informed about what is happening in the organisation?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... the financial position of the organisation?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... the investment plans of the organisation?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... planned changes in working practices?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... planned changes in products or services?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... health and safety issues?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At these meetings can you express your views about... training plans?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Suppose there was going to be some decision made at your place of work that changed the way you do your job. Do you think that you personally would have any say in the decision about the change or not?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• How much say or chance to influence the decision do you think that you personally would have?	1-3 (A great deal – Just a little)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• In the past 12 months, have you discussed work-related problems with a staff representative (employee representative, union representative, member of employee representative committee or committee for health, safety and working conditions, etc.)?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

coefficient of 0.58 between ESS 2004 and EWCS 2005; of 0.68 between ESS 2010 and EWCS 2010; and of 0.59 between the Gallup World Poll and EWCS 2005. Similarly, questions on whether management holds regular meetings that allow employees to voice their views have a correlation coefficient of 0.77 between ESS 2010 and EWCS 2010.

Good managerial practices

For workers who work under a supervisor, managerial skills affect their job quality to a significant extent. Good management practices include taking (good) actions to organise work, resolve conflict, treat workers with respect, and encourage them to take part in organisational decisions. Good managerial practices (item C.2 in Table 4.1) increase employee motivation, engagement and productivity, provide workers with a social support mechanism, and help them to lower their work-related stress.

Only two of the seven international surveys reviewed in this chapter focus on managerial practices (Table 5.10). The 2010 wave of the EWCS asks employees who have an immediate manager or supervisor whether their manager respects them as a person; is good at resolving conflicts, planning and organising work; and encourages them to participate in important decisions. The Gallup World Poll also has an item asking whether one's supervisor acts like a boss or a partner with them.

The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* includes a number of items on managerial qualities (Table 5.10), asking respondents whether their supervisor pays attention to what they say, helps them to carry out their work tasks and treats people working under them with respect, as well as whether those at the workplace who are responsible for performance evaluation have a good knowledge of the work of those being evaluated.¹²

Table 5.10. Survey questions on good managerial practices

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• In general, your immediate manager/supervisor: Respects you as a person (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In general, your immediate manager/supervisor: Is good at resolving conflicts (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In general, your immediate manager/supervisor: Is good at planning and organising the work (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In general, your immediate manager/supervisor: Encourages you to participate in important decisions (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
Gallup World Poll	
• Does your supervisor at work treat you more like he or she is your boss or your partner? (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012)	1-2 (Boss – Partner)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• My manager listens to what I have to say	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• My manager helps me to successfully complete my tasks	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• The people evaluating my work are fully aware of what it entails	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• My manager treats everyone working for him equally	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Task clarity and performance feedback

This job characteristic refers to whether work tasks are well defined and well communicated to workers and whether employees receive feedback on their performance on these tasks, either from their immediate supervisors or through formal assessment tools and other human management practices. Regular feedback from managers fosters learning, increases job competence and the likelihood of being successful in achieving work goals, and improves communication between the supervisor and the supervisee; conversely, a lack of feedback may cause “role ambiguity” (i.e. being unclear or uncertain

about what is expected from oneself at the workplace) and stress. Regular feedback may also reduce workers' tendency to worry about work when at home, thereby reducing home-work interference, and buffer the negative consequences of work overload and exhaustion.

Questions on task clarity feature in two of the seven international surveys reviewed in this chapter (Table 5.11). The EWCS 2010 contains an overall evaluative question asking respondents if they know what is expected from them at work, with answer categories ranging from "Almost always" to "Almost never". The Gallup World Poll asked a similar question in 2010, with a Yes/No answer format. Performance feedback features only in the EWCS, with three binary questions on whether the immediate manager provides feedback on the respondent's work, whether the employee had a frank discussion with their boss on their work performance, and whether they regularly undergo a formal assessment of their work performance.

Table 5.11. **Survey questions on task clarity and performance feedback**

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• You know what is expected of you at work (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• In general, your immediate manager/supervisor: Provides you with feedback on your work (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Had a frank discussion with your boss about your work performance? (2005, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Have been subject to regular formal assessment of your work performance? (2010, 2005)	1-2 (Yes – No)
Gallup World Poll	
• Do you know what is expected of you at work? (2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• Do you have a formal appraisal system at your workplace?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Have you been formally appraised at work in the last 12 months?	1-2 (Yes – No)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Are you given conflicting or contradictory instructions?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do you have at least one performance evaluation a year?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Is the evaluation based on specific and measurable criteria (objectives, results, skills development)?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• As a rule, are you given clear and sufficient information to help you successfully carry out your work?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• How often do you find yourself in the following situation at work: I know in advance what work I will have to do next month	1-4 (Always – Never)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Task clarity also features in the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail*, whereas performance feedback is included in both the French and British surveys. The French survey contains three items related to task clarity: whether or not employees receive contradictory information; whether they receive clear and sufficient information to perform their job; and whether they know a month in advance what tasks they will be asked to do. Performance feedback, which is included in both national surveys, is measured through questions on the presence of a formal assessment in the British Skills and Employment Surveys (whether there is a formal appraisal system at the workplace, and whether the respondent has been assessed in the last 12 months), and in the French one through questions on the existence of a formal assessment at the workplace and on the criteria the assessment is based on (e.g. against set objectives, skills and outcomes).

While, in general, task clarity and feedback can improve the quality of the working environment, feedback that is too frequent, negative and unconstructive may also cause frustration and lower self-confidence and a sense of autonomy. Questionnaires exploring performance feedback should include items that distinguish between useful and unconstructive feedback, in addition to the receipt of feedback *per se*.¹³

5.5. Working-time arrangements

Beyond the actual length of working time, working-time arrangements bear importantly on worker's well-being, either negatively (when they imply an unsocial work schedule) or positively (when they provide workers with flexibility in setting their working hours). Working-time arrangements are also important for the work-life balance of workers and their families, and are thus one of the 11 dimensions of the well-being framework used by the OECD in its *How's Life?* publications (OECD, 2017). While the work-life balance is not considered in this report as a job characteristic *per se*, as it is also shaped by the family situation of each person and by factors relating to the place of residence, transport, etc., most of the surveys reviewed in this chapter include specific questions about it (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3. Work-life balance

The work-life balance denotes a state of equilibrium between people's work and their private lives. The work-life balance is enhanced by workplace arrangements that provide various types of formal leave (maternity, sickness, child-related, etc.), working hours that allow fulfilling family responsibilities, work demands that do not spill over into personal life, as well as public facilities that prevent care responsibilities from interfering with work life. Work-life conflicts, which arise due to incompatible demands between work and family roles, cause psychological distress, demotivation and lower productivity. By definition, the work-life balance is hampered by a spill-over either from work to family life or from family life to work. A work-life imbalance that arises as a result of a spill-over from work to family matters may be the result of the length, structure or inflexibility of work hours or pressure from work demands.

Five of the seven surveys reviewed include questions on the work-life balance. Some of these are general assessments of whether or not working hours interfere with family/personal life. For instance, the EWCS asks workers whether their working hours fit with their non-work commitments; the ESS asks how often work prevents employees from devoting enough time to family; the ISSP asks whether or not one's job leaves a lot of leisure time; the EU-LFS ad hoc modules ask whether shift or on-call work is convenient for family life; and the EQLS asks whether one's working hours fit with family and social life, and whether workers find it difficult to fulfil family duties because of time spent at work. The EWCS includes additional questions on the degree to which working hours interfere with non-work time, such as working outside of normal working hours, taking work back home or being contacted off-hours for work reasons. Both the EWCS and the ISSP include a question on working-time flexibility asking whether workers can take off a few hours from work to attend personal matters.

Most surveys also contain questions on the extent to which pressure and job demands interfere with family and personal life. The ESS has a question on family conflict inquiring whether family members are fed up with one's work pressure, while the ISSP assesses how frequently work demands interfere with family life. The EQLS asks how often respondents return home from work too tired to perform household chores that need to be done. In addition to these job-specific questions, in 1996 the EWCS contained a number of employer-related questions, such as whether or not the employer provided additional sick child leave, maternity/paternity leave and child day care.

The work-life balance is one of the job characteristics covered by the two national surveys reviewed in this chapter. Both the British Skills and Employment Survey and the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* include a question on the possibility of taking a few hours

Box 5.3. Work-life balance (cont.)

off during work hours to take care of personal or family matters, i.e. similar to the questions included in the EWCS and the ISSP. The French survey also contains a general assessment item on whether working hours are well suited to the respondent's family and/or personal commitments.

The correlations for most questions on various aspects of the work-life balance are not strong, or with a consistent sign, across the three surveys for which we have a sufficient number of countries ($n > 10$). This is also true when looking at items that focus on the same aspect of the work-life balance. The only strong correlation is the one between the ESS 2010 item on how frequently one's job prevents devoting time to family and the EWCS 2010 item on the difficulty of taking off a few hours to take care of personal or family matters ($r = 0.76$). For the other cases, the correlations are low and change sign across cut-off points, which could (at least partially) reflect differences in the wording of the questions being compared. The association is especially weak between questions that prime respondents that work-family interference is undesirable (or that it exists but with varying degrees) and those that have a more neutral wording. For example, the negative-sounding ESS questions "How often does the job prevent giving time to family" and "How often is the partner or family fed up with one's work demands" have weak and/or inconsistent associations with the (more neutral) EWCS question on whether working hours fit family and social commitments.

Unsocial work schedule

An unsocial work schedule (item D.1 in Table 4.1) refers to working hours that involve working non-standard shifts, such as evenings, nights, Saturdays or Sundays. Even though some employees may choose to work unconventional schedules, research suggests that, on average, unsocial hours have a negative impact on workers' family relationships, social life and psychological well-being.

The EWCS, ESS, EU-LFS ad hoc modules and Flash Eurobarometer contain specific questions on unusual work schedules (Table 5.12). The EWCS and ESS ask about the frequency of specific unsocial work schedules (e.g. working at weekends and evenings), while the EU-LFS ad hoc modules collect information on the type of shift-work that employees do and that can be considered as unsocial work hours. The Flash Eurobarometer asks respondents a batch of questions on reasons for dissatisfaction with their work hours (where respondents can choose up to three factors from among being "constrained by shift work or other forms of irregular working time", "working exclusively or mainly at night", being "constrained by standby periods at home", and being "constrained by on-call periods at the work place"). The Flash Eurobarometer questions are possibly better formulated than the EWCS and ESS questions, since they distinguish between those respondents who choose (or do not mind) irregular and unsocial work hours and those who are negatively affected by them. However, these questions also prime respondents on the constraining aspect of unsocial work hours and may thus lead to overestimating the incidence of unsocial schedules in the workforce. Conversely, respondents who do not consider any of these factors as unsatisfactory may still be suffering from lower psychological well-being and worse family relations without realising this in the short term, leading them to underestimate the well-being impact of unsocial work hours. These considerations suggest that it is more informative to ask about unsocial schedules directly, as it is done in the EWCS and ESS.

Among the national surveys, the French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* has a set of questions on patterns of working hours, some of which measure their “unsociability” (Table 5.12). For instance, the survey asks whether respondents work on Saturdays, Sundays, and on night shifts and, if so, how many times a year. For those who work on Sundays or on night shifts, the French survey further explores whether this work is paid or compensated with rest time. The survey also contains questions on working schedules that are bad for one’s social life, such as whether respondents work between 5 and 7 a.m., or between 8 p.m. and midnight.

Table 5.12. **Survey questions on unsocial work schedule**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
● Normally, how many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10:00 p.m. and 05:00 a.m.?* (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996, 1991)	[Numeric]
● And how many times a month do you work in the evening, for at least 2 hours between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.? (2010, 2005, 2000)	[Numeric]
● And how many times a month do you work on Sundays? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	[Numeric]
● And how many times a month do you work on Saturdays? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	[Numeric]
● And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day? (2010, 2005, 2000)	[Numeric]
European Social Survey	
● How often work involves working evenings/nights? (2004, 2010)	1-7 (Never – Everyday)
● How often work involves having to work overtime at short notice? (2004, 2010)	1-7 (Never – Everyday)
● How often work involves working at weekends? (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Never – Every week)
EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc Modules	
● Semi-continuous shift work, usually three-shift system; Two-shift system, double day shift; Sometimes night, sometimes day shift; Fixed assignment to a given shift (2001)	[Choose one]
● Shift work pattern, continuous shift work, usually four-shift system; Semi-continuous shift work, usually three-shift system; Two-shift system, double day shift; Sometimes night, sometimes day shift (2004)	[Choose one]
● Shift work is convenient for personal life situation; On-call work is convenient for personal life situation; Shift work or on-call work is not convenient for personal life situation (2004)	[Choose one]
● Work in the evening, at night or during weekend is convenient for personal life situation; Work in the evening, at night or during weekend is not convenient for personal life situation (2001)	[Choose one]
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? Constrained by shift work or other forms of irregular working time	[Choose max three]
● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? Working exclusively or mainly at night	[Choose max three]
● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? Constrained by standby periods at home	[Choose max three]
● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? Constrained by on-call periods at the workplace	[Choose max three]
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
● Do you work on Saturdays?	1-3 (Regularly – Never)
● How many times a year do you go to work on Saturdays?	[Numeric]
● Do you work on Sundays?	1-3 (Regularly – Never)
● How many times a year do you go to work on Sundays?	[Numeric]
● Is there specific compensation for time worked on Sundays, in the form of additional payment or time off?	1-3 (Specific compensation – Time off)
● Does your main paid job involve working between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.?	1-3 (Regularly – Never)
● Do you work between 8:00 p.m. and midnight?	1-3 (Regularly – Never)
● Do you work nights, between midnight and 5:00 a.m.?	1-3 (Regularly – Never)
● How many nights a year do you go to work?	[Numeric]
● Is there specific compensation for nights worked, in the form of additional payment or time off?	1-3 (Specific compensation – Time off)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

The empirical analysis of the reliability of questions on an unsocial work schedule draws upon the EWCS and the ESS (Table 5.A.8). The comparable questions in the two surveys are those inquiring about the frequency of evening/night work and the frequency of weekend work. The cross-country correlations are rather weak between the questions

on evening work and night work. However, country scores for questions on weekend work are strongly and positively correlated between the two surveys, especially in 2004/5. For example, the correlation coefficient between the ESS question “How often does your work involve working at weekends” and the EWCS item “How many times a month do you work on Sundays” is 0.74, while that with the EWCS question on working on Saturdays is 0.76.

Flexibility of working hours

The flexibility of working hours (item D.2 in Table 4.1) refers to workers’ ability to choose or influence their working-hour arrangements, e.g. in terms of the start and finish of one’s working day, breaks and holidays. This is a crucial aspect of employee well-being, as it allows a better fit between people’s personal and working lives. Flexible working hours help to sustain the work-life balance, increase personal control over the work schedule, reduce burnout due to overload, and allow individuals to work when they can accomplish the most.

Six of the seven international surveys reviewed here contain questions on the flexibility of working hours, focusing on aspects of working-time flexibility such as autonomy over the setting of the starting/finishing time of work, opportunities for teleworking and ability to take breaks (Table 5.12). The EWCS, especially the 2010 survey, includes questions on all these aspects of worktime flexibility, with response scales that capture the frequency of most items well. The ESS includes a single question on working-time flexibility, focusing on the degree of autonomy that employees have over the start and finish hours. The ISSP, EQLS and EU-LFS ad hoc modules include questions on whether the work schedule is flexible or not and who decides the start and finish time, and possibilities for taking breaks at work, while the EU-LFS ad hoc modules ask in more detail about the types of flexiwork arrangements available to employees. Finally, the Flash Eurobarometer asks about dissatisfaction with work hours due to the respondent’s inability to influence their own work schedule and lack of flexible work arrangements.

Table 5.13. **Survey questions on flexibility of working hours**

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• You can take a break when you wish (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You are free to decide when to take holidays or days off (2005, 2000, 1996)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You can influence your working hours (2000)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Does your main paid job involve – teleworking from home with a PC?* (2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• Does your main paid job involve – working at home, excluding telework* (2005, 2000, 1996)	1-7 (All of the time – Never)
• How are your working-time arrangements set? (1) They are set by the company/ organisation with no possibility for changes (4) Your working hours are entirely determined by yourself (2010, 2005)	1-4 [Choose one]
• Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly? (IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes? (2010, 2005)	1-5 (No – Several weeks in advance)
• Would you say that for you arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is...? (2010)	1-4 (Not too difficult – Very difficult)
European Social Survey	
• I can decide the time I start and finish work (2004, 2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
International Social Survey Programme	
• My job has flexible working hours (1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• Which of the following statements best describes how your working hours are decided? (By working hours we mean here the times you start and finish work, and not the total hours you work per week or month) (1) decided by my employer and I cannot change them on my own (2) I can decide within certain limits (3) I am entirely free to decide when I start and finish work (2005, 1997)	1-3 [Choose one]
• How difficult would it be for you to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters? (2005)	1-4 (Not difficult at all – Very difficult)

Table 5.13. **Survey questions on flexibility of working hours (cont.)**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc Modules	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Variable working time: [Choose one] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fixed start and end of a working day or carrying working time decided by the employer (2) Flexitime/Working-time banking (3) Daily number of hours fixed, but some flexibility within the day (4) Determines own work schedule (no formal boundaries at all) (2010) ● Variable working times: [Choose one] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fixed start and end of a working day (2) Staggered working hours, banded start/end (3) Working-time banking with possibility to only take hours off (4) Working-time banking with possibility to take full days off (5) Start and end of working day varying by individual agreement (6) Determines own work schedule (no formal boundaries) (2004) ● Variable working time: [Choose one] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fixed start and end of a working day (2) Annualised hours contract Working-time banking (3) Working times by mutual agreement (4) Determines own work schedule (no formal boundaries) (2001) ● Possible to vary start and end of working week for family reasons (at least one hour) (2010, 2005) 1-3 (Generally possible – Not possible) ● Possible to organise working time in order to take whole days off for family reasons (without using holidays) (2010, 2005) 1-3 (Generally possible – Not possible) 	
European Quality of Life Survey	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your current job: I can vary my start and finish times (2012) 1-2 (Yes – No) ● In your current job: I can accumulate hours for time off (2012q13a) 1-2 (Yes – No) ● In your current job: I can take a day off at short notice when I need to (2012) 1-2 (Yes – No) 	
Eurobarometer – Flash Module 398 (2014)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? [Choose max three] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unable to influence your work schedule ● Which of the following are reasons for dissatisfaction with your working hours? [Choose max three] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of opportunities for flexible working such as telework 	
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can decide the time I start and finish work 1-5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree) ● Would you say that for you arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is....? 1-4 (Not difficult at all – Very Difficult) 	
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you take time off during working hours, even just a couple of hours, to take care of unforeseen personal or family matters? 1-3 (Yes, easily – No, it is impossible) ● When unforeseen events occur, can you reorganise your working time with your colleagues? 1-2 (Yes – No) ● Who decides on your working time? 1-3 (The company or administration with no possibility of modification – Yourself) 	

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Both the British and the French surveys include questions on the flexibility of working hours. The British Skills and Employment Survey contains one question on whether individuals can decide the starting and finishing times of their work, and another on the possibility of taking a few hours off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* contains a similar question on the possibility of taking off a few hours during work hours, as well as questions on whether workers can change their work schedules based on arrangements between colleagues when facing unforeseen circumstances, and about who takes decisions on work hours, including whether these matters are set entirely by the employer or whether the employee has a say on them.

Most of these aspects of worktime flexibility are inter-related, as in the case of firms that adopt flexible working-time arrangements. As a result, the cross-country correlations

between many items in the EWCS, ESS and ISSP are generally strong (Table 5.A.9). Focusing on questions on similar aspects of worktime flexibility, the empirical analysis shows that items on autonomy over working hours are highly correlated between the EWCS and ISSP 2005 ($r = 0.81$) and between the ISSP 2005 and ESS 2004 ($r = 0.65$). The correlation is even larger for top achievers. Another aspect of work-time flexibility that is assessed by several surveys is the ability to take breaks/holidays, with correlations in this field also relatively strong. The cross-country correlation between the ISSP item on the difficulty of taking a few hours off to take care of personal/family matters and the EWCS item on whether employees can take a break when they wish is 0.69, while that between this ISSP item and the EWCS item on autonomy in taking holidays is 0.60. This suggests that measures of the flexibility of working hours are robust to slight variations in question wording across surveys.

5.6. Job prospects

Job prospects shape people's working environment in different directions: negative, when workers face job insecurity; and positive, when jobs provide workers with opportunities for training, learning and career advancement.

Perceptions of job insecurity

Perceptions of job insecurity refer to workers' anticipation or fear of losing their jobs within the foreseeable future, e.g. in the next 6 or 12 months. These worries are generally well founded, as research has shown that workers' perceived job insecurity is a strong predictor of future job losses, indicating that employees have a good sense of the prospects of their workplace. The effects of perceived job insecurity on individual well-being are comparable to the effects of unemployment itself (Burchell, 2011; De Witte, 1999). For instance, workers who worry about losing their jobs are as likely as the unemployed to experience cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and chronic depression. Additionally, job insecurity can hamper the "psychological contract" at work, undermining the effort-reward balance and lowering workers' commitment and discretionary effort.

Questions on perceptions of job insecurity feature in five of the seven international surveys considered here, and are formulated in broadly similar fashion (Table 5.14). Three of these five surveys, i.e. the EWCS, Gallup World Poll and EQLS, contain a question asking respondents about their perceived likelihood of losing their job within the next 6 or 12 months. Two of these surveys (i.e. the EWCS and EQLS), as well as the ESS's "My job is secure" item, follow up this question with an item on "perceived employment insecurity", which asks employees to assess the likelihood that they could find a similar job if they lost their current one. Earlier waves of the EWQS and ESS, as well as of the ISSP, contained only a single question asking respondents whether they think that their job is secure, without inquiring about the difficulty of finding a similar job. Both the ISSP and the Gallup World Poll also contain questions on how worried respondents are about losing their jobs.

The two national surveys reviewed here contain several questions on perceptions of job insecurity. The British Skills and Employment Survey asks respondents whether they may lose their jobs and become unemployed within the next 12 months, while follow-up questions ask about the perceived likelihood of this happening and assess the future employability of respondents through a question on the perceived difficulty of finding a job as good as the current one. The French survey has similar questions, with different wording: it asks respondents whether they fear losing their jobs within the next year, but

not about the likelihood of this happening; a supplementary question asks if respondents think that they will have to change their jobs or qualifications within the next three years.

The country scores for the perceived job insecurity items are relatively well correlated across international surveys (Table 5.A.10). The items on whether one perceives his/her job as secure have strong positive correlation coefficients between the ESS 2004 and ISSP 2005 ($r = 0.55$). The perceived likelihood of job loss is available only in the EWCS, but this item correlates well with the “my job is secure” question in ESS 2004 ($r = -0.70$). Similarly, the ISSP item on being worried about job loss is also strongly correlated with the ESS 2004 item on the job being secure ($r = -0.68$). Strong correlations are also observed between questions on *perceived employability*. The ESS and EWCS questions asking respondents how easy/difficult it would be to find a similar job, if they lost their current one, has a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.90$ in 2010, despite the fact that these questions contain opposite wording (i.e. easy vs. difficult) and different response scales (i.e. extremely difficult/easy vs. strongly disagree/strongly agree). In addition, the correlations appear to be large between average scores and shares of people with top scores. This supports the idea that perceptions of employability, as well as of job insecurity, can be measured in a robust manner using existing questions in the international social surveys.

Training and learning opportunities

Training and learning opportunities are critical elements for advancing in one’s career or for moving to a better job (Table 5.15). Workplace learning can be both formal and informal: the first refers to structured training opportunities, which can be assessed in terms of incidence (i.e. whether a worker received any workplace training over a recent period), duration (i.e. the length of training received) and quality (i.e. the extent to which the training received raises earnings capacity and skills); the second refers to learning that takes place through immediate work activities and the social relations embedded in them. Training and learning opportunities are crucial for preventing skill obsolescence, reducing the risk of unemployment, and increasing job satisfaction, work motivation and chances for promotion. They are, therefore, an integral component of workers’ well-being.

Key aspects of training and learning opportunities have been investigated in five of the international surveys reviewed here (EWCS, ESS, ISSP, EU-LFS ad hoc module and EQLS). Questions on the incidence of training feature in all five of these surveys and are assessed with a 12-month reference period.¹⁴ Among these surveys, the EWCS and ESS distinguish between employer-provided training and self-initiated training, whereas the EU-LFS ad hoc module asks whether training took place during working hours. Questions on the duration of the training received feature in EWCS 2005 (measured in days); ESS 2010 (days); EU-LFS 2003 ad hoc module (hours); and EQLS 2003 (in interval days). The EWCS and ESS are the only two surveys that contain questions on the quality of the training: this is done in the ESS through a single, general question on the usefulness of the training received for another employer, and in EWCS 2010 by asking whether training improved the way one works, job security or career prospects.¹⁵

Information is much more limited in the case of informal learning. The EWCS is the only survey that includes specific questions regarding immediate work tasks that allow learning-by-doing, whether or not the job involves complex tasks and whether it requires solving unforeseen problems on their own. General questions on learning at work are included in the EWCS, ESS and ISSP: the first two surveys ask whether the job involves/

Table 5.14. **Survey questions on perceptions of job insecurity**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• You have a secure job (1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• I might lose my job in the next 6 months (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job with similar salary (2010)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
European Social Survey	
• My job is secure (2004, 2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
• I may have to move to a less interesting job in my organisation in the next 12 months (2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
• How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you had to leave your current job?* (2004, 2010)	0-10 (Extremely difficult – Extremely easy)
• How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left? (2004, 2010)	0-10 (Extremely difficult – Extremely easy)
International Social Survey Programme	
• Agree or not: My job is secure (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• To what extent, if at all, do you worry about the possibility of losing your job? (2005, 1997)	1-4 (I worry a great deal – I don't worry at all)
Gallup World Poll	
• Are you worried about losing your job, or not? (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Do you think you could lose your job in the next 6 months? (2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes – No)
European Quality of Life Survey	
• How likely do you think it is that you might lose your (main) job in the next 6 months? (2012, 2007, 2003)	1-5 (Very likely – Very unlikely)
• If you were to lose or had to quit your current job, how likely or unlikely is it that you will find a job with a similar salary? (2012)	1-5 (Very likely – Very unlikely)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• If you were looking for work today, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to find as good a job as your current one?	1-4 (Very easy – Very Difficult)
• Do you think there is any chance at all of you losing your job and becoming unemployed in the next 12 months?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• How would you rate the likelihood of this happening?	1-5 (Very likely – Very unlikely)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Do you have any concerns about job security in the coming year?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In the next three years, do you think that you will have to change either your professional classification or your profession?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• If you were to lose or leave your current job, would you find it easy to find another job with a similar salary or pay package?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Table 5.15. **Survey questions on training and learning opportunities**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• Does your main paid job involve: learning new things? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the past 12 months, have you undergone any of the following types of training to improve your skills or not?*	
❖ Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	[Tick if applies]
❖ Training paid for by yourself (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	[Tick if applies]
❖ On-the-job training (co-workers, supervisors) (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	[Tick if applies]
❖ Other forms of on-site training and learning (e.g. self-learning, on-line tutorials, etc.) (2005, 2000, 1996)	[Tick if applies]
❖ Other (2005, 2000, 1996)	[Tick if applies]
• The training has helped me improve the way I work (2010)	1-2 (Agree – Disagree)
• I feel that my job is more secure because of my training (2010)	1-2 (Agree – Disagree)
• I feel my prospects for future employment are better [because of training] (2010)	1-2 (Agree – Disagree)
• At work, I have opportunities to learn and grow (2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• Does your main paid job involve: complex tasks? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Does your main paid job involve: solving unforeseen problems on your own? (2010, 2005, 2000, 1996)	1-2 (Yes – No)

Table 5.15. **Survey questions on training and learning opportunities (cont.)**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Social Survey	
• During the last 12 months, have you taken any course or attended any lecture or conference to improve your knowledge or skills for work? (2004, 2010)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• About how many days in total have you spent on this training or education in the last 12 months? (2010)	[Numeric]
• How useful would what you have learnt be if you wanted to go and work for a different employer or firm? (2010)	1-4 (Very useful – Not at all useful)
• How much of this training or education was paid for by your employer or firm? (2010)	1-5 (All – None)
• My job requires that I keep learning new things (2004, 2010)	1-4 (Not at all true – Very true)
International Social Survey Programme	
• Agree or not: My job gives me a chance to improve my skills (2005)	1-5 (Never – Always)
• Over the past 12 months, have you had any training to improve your job skills, either at the workplace or somewhere else? (2005)	1-2 (Yes – No)
EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc Modules	
• Did you attend any courses, seminars, conferences or receive private lessons or instructions outside the regular education system within the last 12 months? (2003)	1, 2, 3 or any activities
• Duration in number of hours for taught activity (2003)	[Numeric]
• What were the main reason for participating in this taught activity?* (2003)	1-2 (Mainly job related – Mainly personal or social reasons)
• Did any part of this taught activity take place during working hours?* (2003)	1-4 (Only during work hours – Only outside paid hours)
European Quality of Life Survey	
• Have you taken an education or training course at any time within the last year? (2003)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• What kind of course is/was it? (2003)	Option 4: Training course related to your job or profession
• How long is/was this course? (2003)	[Numeric]
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• I am able to learn new skills through working with other members of my work group?	1-5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree)
• My job requires that I keep learning new things	1-5 (Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree)
• To what extent do these new things that you learn:	
❖ Make you think harder about different ways of doing your job?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Require following instructions or processes strictly?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Need to be memorised by heart?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Give you more independence in how you do your job?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
• In the last year have you done any of these types of training or education connected with your current job?	
❖ Received instruction or training from someone which took you away from your normal job	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Received instruction whilst performing your normal job	1-2 (Yes – No)
❖ Done some other work-related training	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Over the last year in your current job, on how many separate days have you done each of the specified training or educations?	[Numeric]
• Does this training or education involve costs such as fees or the need to buy books or materials?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• Who pays these costs?	1-3 (Employing organisation, Self)
• Is this training or education undertaken in... ?	1-3 (Normal working time, your time, both)
• To what extent did/does that training or education:	
❖ Make you think harder about different ways of doing your job?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Require following instructions or processes strictly?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Need to be memorised by heart?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
❖ Give you more independence in how you do your job?	1-5 (A great deal – Not at all)
• Would you say that this training or education has improved your skills... ?	1-3 (A lot – Not at all)
• Are you able to make use of these skill improvements in your current job?	1-2 (Yes – No)
• How useful would these skill improvements be if you were to work for another employer in the same industry or service?	1-5 (Very useful – Not useful at all)
• Would these skill improvements be useful if you were to work for another employer in a quite different industry or service?	1-5 (Very useful – Not useful at all)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• Can you learn new skills through your work?	1-2 (Yes – No)

Note: * Slight change in the question format between years. Refer to original questionnaires for details.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

requires learning new things, while the ISSP has a question on whether “my job gives me a chance to improve my skills”. The first type of question is more likely to cover informal learning, whereas the latter might also capture aspects related to formal learning.

Turning to the national surveys, the British Skills and Employment Survey 2012 covered training and learning opportunities extensively. Both formal and informal learning opportunities are explored comprehensively, as well as their quality and the types of learning gained (i.e. deep or more superficial learning); for instance, borrowing from the psychology of educational research, the survey asks whether learning makes respondents think harder about different ways of doing their job, requires following instructions or processes strictly, needs to be memorised by heart, and gives workers more independence in how they do their jobs – questions that measure the types of informal learning and training that facilitate work. The British survey also contains questions on the usefulness of the training received, asking workers whether the skills learnt are useful for their current job, for another job in the same industry and for another job in a different industry. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* contains only one general question on whether the job provides opportunities to learn new things, similar to the one used by the EWCS, ESS and British questions, but with a binary “Yes/No” answer scale.

The empirical analysis shows that country values of training incidence are strongly and positively correlated across the three surveys that include these types of questions. The ESS 2004 and EWCS 2005 questions on receipt of training have a correlation coefficient of 0.86 (Table 5.A.11). The ISSP 2005 items on receipt of training at work have correlation coefficients of 0.56, 0.69 and 0.68 when assessed with respect to the EWCS 2005 items on employer-provided training, on-the-job training and other forms of on-site training, respectively. The correlation coefficients between the ESS 2004 item on training incidence and the EWCS 2005 items on employer-provided training and on-the-job training are also positive and strong (0.86 and 0.69, respectively).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess the reliability of questions on the duration of the training received, as the EWCS asked about the duration of training only in 2005 while the ESS introduced a duration question in 2010. The cross-country correlations for questions on the quality of training, which are broadly similar between ESS 2010 and EWCS 2010, are only moderately strong, possibly as a result of using different criteria to assess this quality: while the ESS question asked about the usefulness of training in terms of transferrable skills, the EWCS questions focused on whether the training improved daily work and the security of the current job ($r = 0.36$). The correlation between this ESS question and the EWCS question on whether training makes one feel that employment prospects are better is stronger, with a coefficient of 0.55.

Finally, survey questions that ask about learning opportunities/requirements at work are strongly correlated across countries. Country scores based on the ISSP question on whether the job gives opportunities to improve one’s skills has a correlation coefficient of 0.63 with the EWCS item on whether the job involves learning new things. These ESS and EWCS questions are also strongly and positively correlated with each other ($r = 0.67$ in 2004/5 and 0.57 in 2010). Since the specific EWCS questions on immediate work tasks enabling workplace learning have no equivalent in other surveys, no reliability check could be performed for this item.

Opportunities for career advancement

Opportunities for career advancement (item E.3 in Table 4.1) refer to whether or not the current job offers career prospects, either with the same employer (through promotions) or with a different one. This includes opportunities for promotion as well as gaining transferable job skills. So-called “dead-end” jobs, with poor prospects for career advancement, tend to cause psychological distress and lead to stress-related physiological ill-being.

Five out of the seven surveys covered in the OECD Inventory asked about career opportunities at work (Table 5.16). Four of these surveys (EWCS, ESS, ISSP and EQLS) have a direct question on whether the job held offers good prospects for career advancement, whereas the Gallup World Poll adopts an indirect approach, asking whether someone at work encourages one's professional development. The ISSP includes additional questions on the degree to which one is able to use past work experience and skills in the current job and whether the current job is helpful for a new job.

Opportunities for career advancement also feature in the two national surveys reviewed in this chapter (Table 5.16). The British Skills and Employment Survey asks respondents to evaluate their chances of getting a significant promotion in their current job within the next five years, with answers in the form of a probability between 0 and 1. The survey also contains a set of questions measuring fears of demotion at work, such as whether future changes to the job may give the respondent less of a say on how it is done, may make it more difficult to use one's skills and abilities, may reduce pay, or may imply a risk of being transferred to a less interesting job within the firm. The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* includes two questions: the first, similar to the British one, asks respondents about their evaluations of a possible promotion in the near future, while the second enquires whether respondents have opportunities to develop their professional skills in their current jobs.

Table 5.16. **Survey questions on opportunity for career advancement**

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
● My job offers good prospects for career advancement (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
European Social Survey	
● My opportunities for advancement are good (2004, 2010)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
International Social Survey Programme	
● My opportunities for advancement are high (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Never – Always)
● How much use of past work experience and skills (2005, 1997)	1-4 (Almost none – Almost all)
● How helpful is present work experience for new job (2005)	1-4 (Very helpful – Not helpful at all)
Gallup World Poll	
● Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not? (2006, 2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes – No)
European Quality of Life Survey	
● How much do you agree or disagree: My job offers good prospects for career advancement (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
● How high do you think your chances are of being given a significant promotion with your present organisation in the next five years?	1-5 (100%/ Definite – 0%/ No chance at all)
● How anxious are you about these situations affecting you at your work?	
❖ Future changes to my job that may give me less say over how it is done	1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)
❖ Future changes to my job that may make it more difficult to use my skills and abilities	1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)
❖ Future changes that may reduce my pay	1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)
❖ Being transferred to a less interesting job in the organisation	1-4 (Very anxious – Not anxious at all)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
● In return for the efforts I make, I have satisfactory prospects for promotion	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
● I have the opportunity to develop my professional expertise	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

The country rankings on the direct questions related to the prospects for career advancement are moderately correlated across international surveys in 2005 (with $r = 0.75$ between ESS 2004 and ISSP 2005, $r = 0.56$ between EWCS 2005 and ESS 2004, and $r = 0.47$ between EWCS 2005 and ISSP 2005, Table 5.A.12).

5.7. Intrinsic job aspects

The intrinsic aspects of work are aspects related to the opportunities for self-realisation that they may provide to workers, as well as the intrinsic rewards associated with the feeling of performing tasks that are useful to others or, simply, of a job well done. Jobs that provide workers with these non-pecuniary rewards are most likely to raise firms' performance and productivity and provide workers with resources that make them more resilient to stress and risks.

Opportunities for self-realisation

Opportunities for self-realisation (item F.1 in Table 4.1) refer to the extent to which workers are able to apply their own ideas at work and perform at their best. The application of one's own ideas enables people to contribute personally to work tasks and to shape the product of their work. This is an important aspect of job quality, because it enhances employees' well-being by increasing their motivation and engagement and by protecting them from psychological exhaustion and distress.

Two of the seven international surveys that are included in the OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment contain questions on individuals' opportunity for self-realisation (Table 5.17). Among these, in 2005 the EWCS asked whether respondents have the opportunity to do what they do best, about how frequently they apply their own ideas at work, and whether they have the feeling of a job well done (in both 2005 and 2010). The 2010 wave also included an organisational-level question on whether the workplace motivates respondents to give their best job performance. The Gallup World Poll asks about the degree of self-realisation with three (binary) questions on whether or not respondents feel extremely productive, waste a lot of their time or have opportunities to do what they do best every day.

Table 5.17. **Survey questions on opportunities for self-realisation**

Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
• At work, you have the opportunity to do what you do best (2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
• The organisation I work for motivates me to give my best job performance (2010)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• You are able to apply your own ideas in your work (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
• Your job gives you the feeling of work well done (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
Gallup World Poll	
• In your current job, do you feel you are extremely productive, or not? (2011, 2012, 2013)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• At work, do you feel you have a lot of wasted time, or not? (2006, 2007)	1-2 (Yes – No)
• In your work, do you have an opportunity to do what you do best every day, or not? (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)	1-2 (Yes – No)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
• In my current job, I have enough opportunity to use the knowledge and skills that I have	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
• In the course of your work, how often do you feel the following?	
❖ The satisfaction of a job well done	1-4 (Always – Never)
❖ I have the opportunity to do things that I like	1-4 (Always – Never)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

Opportunities for self-realisation also feature in both of the national surveys reviewed in this chapter (Table 5.17). One question in the British Skills and Employment Survey asks respondents whether they have enough opportunities to use their knowledge and skills on their job (with a 1 to 5 agreement/ disagreement scale), while the French *Enquête Conditions de*

Travail contains two questions about how frequently respondents experience pride in a job well done and about opportunities to do the types of things that respondents value the most.

The correlations between country scores for questions measuring opportunities for self-realisation in the EWCS and Gallup World Poll are positive but weak (Table 5.A.13), suggesting that existing measures for this job characteristics are affected by the differences in question wording and survey methodology.

Intrinsic rewards

Intrinsic rewards (item F.2 in Table 4.1) refer to the extent to which workers find value and purpose in what they do, find their work useful for their clients or for society as a whole, and find it interesting irrespectively of how much they earn. Intrinsic rewards, even in the absence of monetary rewards, have a strong link with job satisfaction and employee well-being. Individuals whose jobs offer them intrinsic rewards are more likely to put in more work effort, which has a direct impact on productivity and promotes firm loyalty.

Work motivation is expected to fall with economic downturns, as people in these circumstances may attach greater importance to the monetary benefits of work over its intrinsic value. As a result, workers may report a lower sense of usefulness of their work as labour-market conditions worsen. Additionally, in these cases the sense of the usefulness of work may no longer lead to greater work efforts and more loyalty to firms. Therefore, changes in this indicator should be interpreted while taking into account business cycles, and they should be measured through high-frequency statistics.

Questions on intrinsic rewards feature in four of the seven international surveys from the OECD Inventory, although with very different wording (Table 5.18). On the usefulness of the job, the EWCS asks respondents whether they feel that they are doing useful work, while the ISSP asks whether the job performed is useful to society and whether respondents can help other people in their job. The ESS uses a general question on the reasons why individuals put in effort at work, asking whether this is because work is perceived as useful for others. While the ISSP includes a question on whether one's job is interesting, the EQLS queries the same concept but with a negatively worded question: "How much do you agree/disagree with the statement: my work is dull and boring".

Both the British and French surveys reviewed in this chapter include questions on intrinsic rewards (Table 5.18). The British Skills and Employment Survey focuses on the organisational aspect, asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with the statements "This organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance" and "I am proud to be working for this organisation". The French *Enquête Conditions de Travail* uses a similar question, asking whether respondents feel proud to work in their firm. Other questions included in the survey are whether one receives the respect that they deserve considering the effort they put in, and whether respondents feel they do useful work for others.

Empirical analysis was possible only for the EWCS and ISSP in 2005 and for the EWCS and ESS in 2010. The cross-country correlations between the items on the usefulness of work are rather low (Table 5.A.13). The highest correlation is obtained when comparing the ISSP item on whether individuals feel that they help other people with the EWCS item on doing useful work ($r = 0.57$), whereas they are much lower for the "My job is useful to society" and "You have the feeling of doing useful work" questions. The mean country scores based on the ESS 2010 item on the job being useful to others also correlates weakly

Table 5.18. **Survey questions on intrinsic rewards**
Selected international and national surveys

Question wording and variable name	Answer scale
European Working Conditions Survey	
● You have the feeling of doing useful work (2010, 2005)	1-5 (Almost always – Almost never)
European Social Survey	
● The main reason I put effort into my work is: because my work is useful for other people (2010)	[Choose one]
● The second reason I put effort into my work is: because my work is useful for other people (2010)	[Choose one]
International Social Survey Programme	
● My job is interesting (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
● In my job I can help other people (2005, 1997, 1989)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
● My job is useful to society (2005)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
European Quality of Life Survey	
● How much do you agree or disagree: My work is dull and boring (2007, 2003)	1-5 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
British Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	
● To what extent do you agree that this organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance?	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
● I am proud to be working for this organisation	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
French Enquête Conditions Travail (2013)	
● In return for the efforts I make, I receive the respect and recognition that my work deserves	1-4 (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
● In the course of your work, how often do you feel the following?	
❖ I am proud to work for this company, organisation	1-4 (Always – Never)
❖ I feel that I am doing something which is useful for other people	1-4 (Always – Never)

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

with the EWCS question. Intrinsic rewards seem to be affected heavily by the question wording, which is reflected in a low correlation even between survey items that measure the same intrinsic reward.

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed evidence on the six dimensions of the quality of the working environment presented in Chapter 4 and identified by the meta-review carried out for the OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment. Beyond describing these key dimensions of the work environment and the job characteristics included in each of them, the chapter has pursued two main goals.

First, it has presented how each job characteristic has been measured, drawing on seven international surveys that contain questions on the work environment and two well-established national surveys specifically designed to investigate working conditions in more depth. This review has shown that while these surveys provide good coverage of some aspects of the quality of the working environment, other aspects are less well covered. For example, all seven international surveys include questions on physical risk factors and work intensity, but only two of them (EWCS and Gallup World Poll) have questions on the opportunities that a job provides for workers' self-realisation and on the quality of the management practices within firms. The chapter has also highlighted the extent to which measures of the same job characteristics are comparable across surveys, describing differences in both question wording and response scales, and stressed that comparative information on several aspects of the working environment (e.g. physical demands, task discretion and autonomy, training and learning opportunities at work, intrinsic rewards of one's job, the work-life balance, unsociable work hours and the flexibility of working hours) is currently available only for European and a few other OECD countries.

Second, the chapter has presented an empirical analysis of the extent to which country scores for different job characteristics are consistent across surveys. Key results from this empirical analysis are summarised in Table 5.19, which shows, for each job characteristic, the items that exhibit the strongest convergent validity across surveys and waves, and which therefore constitute good candidates to be included in future surveys on the quality of the working environment. This empirical analysis of cross-country correlations between different survey questions shows that:

- Most of the job characteristics discussed in the chapter have been measured in fairly reliable ways across surveys. More specifically, survey questions on (aspects of) physical risk factors, training opportunities, perceptions of job insecurity, social support at work, opportunities for career advancement and for self-realisation, task discretion and autonomy, and the flexibility of working hours produced similar values for the countries investigated in different surveys. Results for other job characteristics, such as intrinsic rewards, are more sensitive to the question wording (e.g. negative or positive wording) and the response scales used.
- There is good evidence of convergent validity for a number of items. Regarding job demands, this is the case of data on working in noisy or polluted environments, carrying heavy loads, experiencing stress and worry due to work and working during weekends as well as the hours worked per week and the perceived risk of losing one's job in the short term. Regarding job resources, this concerns data on receiving assistance from co-workers, the ability to organise the order of tasks, the involvement of staff in work organisation, the ability to decide about breaks or holidays, the availability of training, learning new things on the job, and the existence of good opportunities for career advancement.

Table 5.19. Survey questions with strongest evidence on convergent validity

International surveys on the quality of the working environment

Dimensions	Job characteristics	
	Job demands	Job resources
A. Physical and social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.1: Physical risk factors: noise, air pollution • A.2: Physical demands: carrying heavy loads • A.3: Intimidation and discrimination at the workplace: inconclusive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.4: Social support at work: assistance from co-workers
B. Job Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.1: Work intensity: hours worked per week • B.2: Emotional demands: stress and worry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.3: Task discretion and autonomy: independence, ability to choose tasks order
C. Organisational characteristics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C.1: Organisation participation and workplace voice: involvement of staff in work organisation during meetings • C.2: Good managerial practices: inconclusive • C.3: Task clarity and performance feedback: inconclusive
D. Worktime arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D.1 Unsocial working schedule: working at weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D.2 Flexibility of working hours: deciding about breaks or holidays
E. Job prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.1: Perceptions of job insecurity: prospect of losing job, job-to-job mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.2: Training and learning opportunities: availability or take-up of training, learning new things • E.3: Opportunity for career advancement: good opportunities
F. Intrinsic aspects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F.1: Opportunities for self-realisation: inconclusive • F.2: Intrinsic rewards: inconclusive

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

However, this empirical analysis is limited by the fact that differences in question wording may lower comparability across surveys, implying that some important aspects may

be absent from Table 5.19 because of low comparability across survey questions. In other words, the absence of evidence about convergent validity for some items of the quality of the working environment does not imply evidence against their convergent validity. Rather, it underlines existing data gaps and the need for future research.

Notes

1. The OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment can be accessed via https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=JOBQ_I.
2. The EU-Labour Force Surveys ad hoc modules reviewed in the inventory include the 2013 module on “Accidents at work and other work-related health problems”, the 2010 module on “Reconciliation between work and family life”, the 2007 module on “Work-related accidents, health problems and hazardous exposure”, the 2005 module on “Reconciliation between work and family life”, the 2004 module on “Work organisation and working-time arrangements”, the 2001 module on “Lifelong learning”, the 2001 module on “Length and patterns of working time” and the 1999 module on “Accidents at work and occupational diseases”. These ad hoc modules are based on household samples of persons aged 15 and over.
3. Questionnaire booklets for each of these seven surveys are reviewed in the Inventory, with questions classified according to the job characteristic that they measure.
4. More concrete recommendations are presented in Chapter 6, alongside model questionnaires.
5. The number of countries common to the Gallup World Poll and the other surveys depends on the job characteristic considered, due to the modular aspect of the Gallup World Poll, which asks some questions only in some countries.
6. A fixed value of 0.60, rather than a statistical significance level, is used in the analysis as a threshold, as it allows comparing correlations across items. Because of the sample size of various surveys, correlation coefficients above 0.60 are also statistically significant at least at the $p < 0.01$ level.
7. For both survey questions, the cut-offs used to define the bottom and the top groups are chosen so as to maximise the cross-country correlation.
8. An analysis of cross-country correlations is not possible for this aspect of the working environment, as it is not covered by the surveys reviewed in this chapter (i.e. the ISSP, ESS and Gallup World Poll).
9. The ESS question is as follows: “Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?”
10. The Gallup World Poll asks questions on emotional demands in less than 10 countries, hence is not included in the correlation analysis.
11. The correlation with respect to the EWCS item “Able to choose/change your order of tasks” is 0.79 in 2004, and 0.65 in 2010; that with the EWCS item “Able to choose/change your methods of work” is 0.63 in 2004 and 0.85 in 2010; that with EWCS item “You have influence over the choice of your working partners” is 0.63 in 2004 and 0.78 in 2010.
12. Note that, since there are not a sufficient number of common countries between these surveys (i.e. more than 10), a correlation analysis was not performed.
13. Since there are not a sufficient number of common countries between these surveys (i.e. more than 10), a correlation analysis was not performed.
14. EU-LFS core surveys contain a question on training received in the previous 4 weeks, asked yearly.
15. Note that the ISSP question asks about both training receipt and training quality, with the wording “have you had any training to improve your skills”.

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ANNEX 5.A

Correlations of country scores on various job characteristics between different non-official surveys

Table 5.A.1. **Cross-country correlations regarding physical risks at work between non-official surveys**

		Question	Correlations			
			Mean	Bottom	Top	
Physical risk factors						
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005					
How often do you work in dangerous conditions?		A. Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work?	0.45	..	..
		B. Are you exposed at work to vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc.?	0.64	0.78	0.55	
		C. Are you exposed at work to noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice?	0.82	0.83	0.78	
		D. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious?	0.16	0.26	0.29	
		E. Are you exposed at work to high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working?	0.28	0.36	0.32	
		F. Are you exposed at work to tobacco smoke from other people?	0.36	0.53	0.27	
		G. Are you exposed at work to low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors?	0.31	0.30	0.43	
		H. Are you exposed at work to breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust etc?	0.62	0.81	0.63	
		I. Are you exposed at work to radiation such as X rays, radioactive radiation?	0.23	0.46	0.26	
		J. Are you exposed at work to breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners?	0.58	0.65	0.60	
		K. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances?	0.61	0.70	0.58	
ESS 2004						
My health or safety is at risk because of my work		A. Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work?	0.55	..	..
		B. Are you exposed at work to vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc.?	0.35	0.33	0.36	
		C. Are you exposed at work to noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice?	0.61	0.64	0.47	
		D. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious?	-0.23	0.08	-0.15	
		E. Are you exposed at work to high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working?	0.33	0.51	0.15	
		F. Are you exposed at work to tobacco smoke from other people?	0.09	0.39	0.00	
		G. Are you exposed at work to low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors?	0.27	0.42	0.16	
		H. Are you exposed at work to breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust etc?	0.55	0.56	0.51	
		I. Are you exposed at work to radiation such as X rays, radioactive radiation?	0.06	0.13	0.10	
		J. Are you exposed at work to breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners?	0.42	0.38	0.39	
		K. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances?	0.35	0.32	0.42	
ESS 2004	ISSP 2005					
My health or safety is at risk because of my work	How often do you work in dangerous conditions?		0.47	-0.05	0.54	
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010					
My health or safety is at risk because of my work		A. Are you exposed at work to low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors?	0.24	0.30	0.30	
		B. Are you exposed at work to breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust etc?	0.68	0.56	0.81	
		C. Are you exposed at work to breathing in vapours such as solvents and thinners?	0.50	0.50	0.54	
		D. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances?	0.35	0.40	0.33	
		E. Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work?	-0.07	..	..
		F. Are you exposed at work to vibrations from hand tools, machinery, etc.?	0.33	0.48	0.35	
		G. Are you exposed at work to handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious?	-0.03	0.09	0.07	
		H. Are you exposed at work to noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice?	0.57	0.78	0.58	
		I. Are you exposed at work to high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working?	-0.01	0.30	-0.08	
		J. Are you exposed at work to tobacco smoke from other people?	0.42	0.42	0.45	

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606357>

Table 5.A.2. **Cross-country correlations regarding physical demands at work between different non-official surveys**

		Question	Correlations			
			Mean	Bottom	Top	
Physical demands						
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005					
		A. Does your main paid job involve tiring or painful positions?	0.28	0.27	0.32	
How often applies: do hard physical work?		B. Does your main paid job involve lifting or moving people?	-0.04	0.03	0.20	
		C. Does your main paid job involve standing or walking?	0.55	0.56	0.45	
		D. Does your main paid job involve carrying or moving heavy loads?	0.71	0.65	0.77	
		E. Does your main paid job involve repetitive hand or arm movements?	0.33	0.24	0.45	
How often: come home from work exhausted?		A. Does your main paid job involve tiring or painful positions?	0.39	0.50	0.37	
		B. Does your main paid job involve lifting or moving people?	-0.42	-0.16	0.02	
		C. Does your main paid job involve standing or walking?	0.47	0.62	0.23	
		D. Does your main paid job involve carrying or moving heavy loads?	0.44	0.67	0.44	
		E. Does your main paid job involve repetitive hand or arm movements?	0.35	0.43	0.50	

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606376>

Table 5.A.3. **Cross-country correlations regarding social support at work between different non-official surveys**

Question		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Social support at work				
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005			
Relations at your workplace between management and employees	A. You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it.	0.06	0.20	-0.07
	B. You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it.	0.21	0.31	0.15
	C. You can get external assistance if you ask for it.	-0.08	0.10	-0.02
	D. I feel myself 'at home' in this organisation.	-0.36	-0.35	0.15
	E. I have very good friends at work.	-0.30	-0.24	0.18
	F. Discussed work-related problems with your boss.	0.07	..	..
	G. Discussed work-related problems with an employee representative.	0.11	..	..
Relations at your workplace between workmates/colleague	A. You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it.	0.34	0.37	0.00
	B. You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it.	0.32	0.37	0.09
	C. You can get external assistance if you ask for it.	0.25	0.41	0.20
	D. I feel myself 'at home' in this organisation.	-0.51	-0.42	0.10
	E. I have very good friends at work.	-0.43	-0.21	0.12
	F. Discussed work-related problems with your boss.	0.15	..	..
	G. Discussed work-related problems with an employee representative.	0.15	..	..
ESS 2004	EWCS 2005			
I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed	A. You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it.	0.64	0.62	0.59
	B. You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it.	0.61	0.53	0.62
	C. You can get external assistance if you ask for it.	0.57	0.56	0.55
	D. I feel myself 'at home' in this organisation.	-0.75	-0.47	-0.65
	E. I have very good friends at work.	-0.47	-0.26	-0.25
	F. Discussed work-related problems with your boss.	0.50	..	..
	G. Discussed work-related problems with an employee representative.	0.37	..	..
Gallup WP				
Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	A. You can get assistance from colleagues if you ask for it.	0.46	..	..
	B. You can get assistance from your superiors/boss if you ask for it.	0.32	..	..
	C. You can get external assistance if you ask for it.	0.43	..	..
	D. I feel myself 'at home' in this organisation.	-0.72	..	..
	E. I have very good friends at work.	-0.25	..	..
	F. Discussed work-related problems with your boss.	0.02	..	..
	G. Discussed work-related problems with an employee representative.	0.35	..	..
ESS 2004	ISSP 2005			
I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed	A. Relations at your workplace between management and employees.	0.23	0.42	0.40
	B. Relations at your workplace between workmates/colleagues.	0.55	0.57	0.33
Gallup WP	ISSP 2005			
Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	A. Relations at your workplace between management and employees.	0.06	..	..
	B. Relations at your workplace between workmates/colleagues.	0.37	..	..
Gallup WP	ESS 2004			
Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed	0.65	..	..
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
I can get support and help from my co-workers when needed	A. Your colleagues help and support you.	0.29	0.34	0.61
	B. Your manager helps and supports you.	0.00	0.05	0.39
	C. I feel myself 'at home' in this organisation.	-0.52	-0.40	-0.39
	D. I have very good friends at work.	-0.16	0.06	-0.14

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606395>

Table 5.A.4. **Cross-country correlations regarding work intensity between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Work intensity				
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005			
	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.87	..	..
How many hours, on average, do you usually work for pay in a normal week?	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.57	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	-0.49	..	..
	D. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	0.04	..	..
	E. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	0.18	..	..
	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.58	..	..
How often do you come home from work exhausted?	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.48	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	-0.70	-0.51	0.13
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.10	-0.20	0.16
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	-0.29	-0.09	0.26
	ESS 2004			
Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.93	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.73	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	0.34	..	..
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	0.53	..	..
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	0.33	..	..
My job requires that I work very hard	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.33	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.38	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	-0.08	0.06	0.15
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.04	0.21	0.20
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	0.09	0.38	0.35
I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	-0.46	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	-0.33	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	0.01	0.18	0.21
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.08	-0.05	0.16
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	-0.22	0.01	0.29
How often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.38	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.41	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	0.16	0.32	0.44
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	0.04	0.09	0.35
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	0.02	0.26	0.43
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.87	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.18	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	-0.09	..	..
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.37	..	..
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	-0.32	..	..
My job requires that I work very hard	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.36	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.29	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	-0.24	0.26	-0.21
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.35	-0.08	-0.08
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	-0.10	0.34	-0.13
I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	-0.05	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.15	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	0.39	0.62	0.36
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	0.20	0.07	0.27
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	0.21	0.31	0.17

Table 5.A.4. **Cross-country correlations regarding work intensity between different non-official surveys** (cont.)

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
How often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?	A. How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job?	0.47	..	..
	B. And how many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.33	..	..
	C. Do you have enough time to get the job done?	0.05	0.14	0.12
	D. Does your job involve working to tight deadlines?	-0.13	0.31	-0.09
	E. Does your job involve working at very high speed?	-0.20	0.26	-0.09
ISSP 2005	ESS 2004			
How many hours, on average, do you usually work for pay in a normal week?	A. Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?	0.85	..	..
	B. My job requires that I work very hard	0.30	..	..
	C. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job	-0.35	..	..
	D. How often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?	0.22	..	..
How often do you come home from work exhausted?	A. Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?	0.52	..	..
	B. My job requires that I work very hard	0.50	0.73	0.24
	C. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job	-0.11	0.00	0.06
	D. How often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?	-0.14	0.17	0.49

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606414>

Table 5.A.5. **Cross-country correlations regarding emotional demands at work between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Emotional Demands				
EWCS 2005	ISSP 2005			
You find your job emotionally demanding?	How often do you find your work stressful?	0.07	0.05	0.30
ISSP 2005	ESS 2004			
How often do you find your work stressful?	How often do you keep worrying about work problems when you are not working?	0.57	0.47	0.73
EWCS 2005				
You find your job emotionally demanding?	How often do you keep worrying about work problems when you are not working?	0.07	0.01	0.44
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
How often do you keep worrying about work problems when you are not working?	A. Does your main paid job involve handling angry clients?	-0.01	0.45	0.05
	B. Your job involves tasks that are in conflict with your personal values.	0.12	0.34	0.28
	C. You get emotionally involved in your work.	0.32	0.36	0.47
	D. Your job requires that you hide your feelings.	0.14	0.42	0.25
	E. You experience stress in your work.	-0.19	0.21	0.28

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606433>

Table 5.A.6. **Cross-country correlations regarding task discretion and autonomy at work between different non-official surveys**

		Question	Correlations			
			Mean	Bottom	Top	
Task discretion and autonomy						
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005					
I can work independently	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.67	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.69	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your speed or rate of work?	0.45	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.37	0.33	0.48		
I am free/not free to decide how my daily work is organised	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.75	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.76	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your speed or rate of work?	0.38	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.41	0.27	0.52		
ESS 2004	EWCS 2005					
How much the management at your work allows you to decide how your own daily work is organised?	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.85	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.74	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your speed or rate of work?	0.34	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.69	0.72	0.66		
How much the management at your work allows you to choose or change your pace of work?	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.74	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.59	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose/change your speed/rate of work?	0.38	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.56	0.62	0.54		
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010					
How much the management at your work allows you to decide how your own daily work is organised?	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.82	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.84	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your speed or rate of work?	0.39	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.54	0.46	0.65		
How much the management at your work allows you to choose or change your pace of work?	A. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your order of tasks?	0.61	..	..
	B. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your methods of work?	0.84	..	..
	C. Are you able, or not, to choose or change your speed or rate of work?	0.91	..	..
	D. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.55	0.50	0.78		
ESS 2004	ISSP 2005					
How much the management at your work allows you to decide how your own daily work is organised?	A. I can work independently	0.58	0.68	0.53		
	B. I am free/not free to decide how my daily work is organised.	0.71	0.39	0.69		
How much the management at your work allows/allowed you to choose or change your pace of work?	A. I can work independently	0.68	0.79	0.60		
	B. I am free/not free to decide how my daily work is organised.	0.67	0.33	0.71		

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606452>

Table 5.A.7. **Cross-country correlations regarding organisational participation and workplace voice between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Organisational participation and workplace voice				
ESS 2004	EWCS 2005			
	A. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.58	0.51	0.61
Management at your work allows you to influence policy decisions about activities of organisation	B. Over the past 12 months, have you been consulted about changes in the organisation of work and/or your working conditions?	0.27	..	..
	C. Over the past 12 months, have you discussed work-related problems with an employee representative?	0.33	..	..
Gallup WP				
	A. You have influence over the choice of your working partners.	0.59	..	..
At work, do your opinions seem to count, or not?	B. Over the past 12 months, have you been consulted about changes in the organisation of work and/or your working conditions?	0.15	..	..
	C. Over the past 12 months, have you discussed work-related problems with an employee representative?	0.25	..	..
ESS 2004	Gallup WP			
Management at your work allows you to influence policy decisions about activities of organisation	At work, do your opinions seem to count, or not?	0.5	..	..
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
At your workplace are there regular meetings between representatives of the employer and employees, in which working conditions and practices can be discussed?	A. You have a say in the choice of your working partners.	0.27	..	..
	B. You are consulted before targets for your work are set.	0.52	..	..
	C. You can influence decisions that are important for your work.	0.62	..	..
	D. You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation.	0.68	..	..
	E. Does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?	0.77	..	..
Management at your work allows you to influence policy decisions about activities of organisation	A. You have a say in the choice of your working partners.	0.53	0.37	0.65
	B. You are consulted before targets for your work are set.	0.24	0.28	0.23
	C. You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation.	0.69	0.64	0.75
	D. You can influence decisions that are important for your work.	0.69	0.69	0.70
	E. At your workplace, does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?	0.62	..	..
How much influence would you say these discussions generally have on decisions that affect your working conditions and practices?	A. You have a say in the choice of your working partners.	0.08	0.04	0.27
	B. You are consulted before targets for your work are set.	0.25	0.34	0.56
	C. You can influence decisions that are important for your work.	0.34	0.52	0.47
	D. You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of your department or organisation.	0.05	0.16	0.34
	E. Does management hold meetings in which you can express your views about what is happening in the organisation?	0.48	..	..

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606471>

Table 5.A.8. **Cross-country correlations regarding unsocial work schedule between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Unsocial working schedule				
ESS 2004	EWCS 2005			
How often does your work involve working evenings or nights?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	0.24	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	0.33	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	0.46	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.22	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.25	..	..
How often does your work involve having to work overtime at short notice?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	0.04	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	-0.01	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	-0.27	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.14	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	-0.24	..	..
How often does your work involve working at weekends?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	0.67	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	0.60	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	0.74	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.76	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.78	..	..
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
How often does your work involve working evenings or nights?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	0.33	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	0.20	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	0.33	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.46	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.33	..	..
How often does your work involve having to work overtime at short notice?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	-0.16	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	-0.09	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	0.2	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.31	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.46	..	..
How often does your work involve working at weekends?	A. How many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10.00 pm and 05.00 am?	0.34	..	..
	B. How many times a month do you work in the evening for at least 2 hours between 6 pm – 10 pm?	0.40	..	..
	C. How many times a month do you work on Sundays?	0.51	..	..
	D. How many times a month do you work on Saturdays?	0.77	..	..
	E. How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	0.48	..	..

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606490>

Table 5.A.9. **Cross-country correlations regarding flexibility of working hours between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Flexibility of working hours				
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005			
Starting/finishing times are decided by my employer/ I am entirely free to decide when I start/finish work	A. You can take your break when you wish.	0.68	0.32	0.62
	B. You are free to decide when to take holidays or days off.	0.68	0.44	0.66
	C. Does your main paid job involve Teleworking from home with a PC?	0.40	0.00	0.63
	D. Does your main job include working at home?	0.54	-0.04	0.71
	E. Your working time arrangements set entirely by employer/entirely by self.	0.81	0.35	0.95
	F. Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly? (IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes?	0.68	0.39	0.67
How difficult would it be for you to take an hour or two off during working hours, to take care of personal or family matters?	A. You can take your break when you wish.	0.69	0.63	0.74
	B. You are free to decide when to take holidays or days off.	0.60	0.63	0.48
	C. Does your main paid job involve Teleworking from home with a PC?	0.07	-0.12	0.21
	D. Does your main job include working at home?	0.21	-0.08	0.30
	E. Your working time arrangements set entirely by employer/entirely by self.	0.60	0.72	0.60
	F. Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly? (IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes?	0.46	0.42	0.36
ESS 2004				
I can decide the time I start and finish work	A. You can take your break when you wish.	0.57	0.61	0.45
	B. You are free to decide when to take holidays or days off.	0.49	0.53	0.47
	C. Does your main paid job involve Teleworking from home with a PC?	0.25	0.02	0.25
	D. Does your main job include working at home?	0.47	0.24	0.44
	E. Your working time arrangements set entirely by employer/entirely by self.	0.52	0.62	0.64
	F. Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly? (IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes?	0.23	0.44	0.20
I can decide the time I start and finish work	ISSP 2005			
	A. Starting and finishing times are decided by my employer/ I am entirely free to decide when I start and finish work	0.65	0.31	0.64
	B. How difficult would it be for you to take an hour or two off during working hours, to take care of personal or family matters?	0.17	0.13	0.01
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
I can decide the time I start and finish work	A. You can take your break when you wish.	0.54	0.59	0.32
	B. Your working time arrangements set entirely by employer/entirely by self.	0.71	0.75	0.87
	C. Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly? (IF YES) How long before are you informed about these changes?	0.71	0.75	0.67

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


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Table 5.A.10. **Cross-country correlations regarding job insecurity between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Job insecurity				
EWCS 2005	ISSP 2005			
I might lose my job in the next 6 months	A. My job is secure.	-0.43	-0.24	-0.51
	B. To what extent, if at all, do you worry about the possibility of losing your job?	0.68	0.43	0.82
ESS 2004				
I might lose my job in the next 6 months	A. My job is secure.	-0.70	-0.35	-0.70
	B. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you wanted?	0.67	0.61	0.74
	C. How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left?	-0.40	0.05	-0.25
ISSP 2005				
My job is secure	A. My job is secure.	0.55	0.65	0.47
	B. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you wanted?	0.45	0.19	0.53
	C. How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left?	-0.31	0.16	-0.07
To what extent, if at all, do you worry about the possibility of losing your job?	A. My job is secure.	-0.68	-0.36	-0.81
	B. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you wanted?	0.65	0.35	0.79
	C. How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left?	-0.36	0.18	-0.3
EWCS 2010				
I might lose my job in the next 6 months	A. My job is secure.	-0.39	0.00	-0.49
	B. I may have to move to a less interesting job in my organisation in the next 12 months.	-0.47	-0.28	-0.18
	C. How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left?	0.59	0.48	0.70
	D. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you wanted?	-0.35	-0.05	-0.18
How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you had to leave your current job?	A. My job is secure.	0.59	0.47	0.53
	B. I may have to move to a less interesting job in my organisation in the next 12 months.	-0.36	-0.32	-0.07
	C. How difficult or easy would it be for your employer to replace you if you left?	0.87	0.84	0.88
	D. How difficult or easy would it be for you to get a similar or better job with another employer if you wanted?	-0.48	0.00	-0.24

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606528>

Table 5.A.11. **Cross-country correlations regarding training and learning opportunities at work between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Training and learning opportunities				
ISSP 2005	EWCS 2005			
	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed. (Yes/No)	0.56	..	..
	B. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed (Duration in days)	0.04	..	..
	C. On-the-job training. (Yes/No)	0.69	..	..
My job gives me a chance to improve my skills	D. Other forms of on-site training and learning. (Yes/No)	0.68	..	..
	E. Other forms of training. (Yes/No)	0.37	..	..
	F. Does your main paid job involve, or not, learning new things?	0.63	..	..
	G. At work, I have opportunities to learn and grow.	0.47	0.54	0.51
	H. Does your main paid job involve, or not, solving unforeseen problems on your own.	0.51	..	..
	I. Does your main paid job involve, or not, complex tasks.	0.41	..	..
	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed. (Yes/No)	0.88	..	..
	B. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed (Duration in days)	-0.55	..	..
Over the past 12 months, have you had any training to improve your job skills, either at the workplace or somewhere else?	C. On-the-job training. (Yes/No)	0.75	..	..
	D. Other forms of on-site training and learning. (Yes/No)	0.62	..	..
	E. Other forms of training. (Yes/No)	0.54	..	..
	F. Does your main paid job involve, or not, learning new things?	0.81	..	..
	G. At work, I have opportunities to learn and grow.	0.63	..	..
	H. Does your main paid job involve, or not, solving unforeseen problems on your own.	0.66	..	..
	I. Does your main paid job involve, or not, complex tasks.	0.33	..	..
ESS 2004				
	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed. (Yes/No)	0.86	..	..
	B. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed (Duration in days)	-0.38	..	..
During the last twelve months, have you taken any course or attended any lecture or conference to improve your knowledge or skills for work?	C. On-the-job training. (Yes/No)	0.69	..	..
	D. Other forms of on-site training and learning. (Yes/No)	0.59	..	..
	E. Other forms of training. (Yes/No)	0.56	..	..
	F. Does your main paid job involve, or not, learning new things?	0.79	..	..
	G. At work, I have opportunities to learn and grow.	0.67	..	..
	H. Does your main paid job involve, or not, solving unforeseen problems on your own.	0.76	..	..
	I. Does your main paid job involve, or not, complex tasks.	0.58	..	..
	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed. (Yes/No)	0.70	..	..
	B. Training paid for or provided by your employer, or by yourself if you are self-employed (Duration in days)	-0.49	..	..
My job requires that I keep learning new things	C. On-the-job training. (Yes/No)	0.58	..	..
	D. Other forms of on-site training and learning. (Yes/No)	0.55	..	..
	E. Other forms of training. (Yes/No)	0.50	..	..
	F. Does your main paid job involve, or not, learning new things?	0.67	..	..
	G. At work, I have opportunities to learn and grow.	0.50	0.61	0.35
	H. Does your main paid job involve, or not, solving unforeseen problems on your own.	0.54	..	..
	I. Does your main paid job involve, or not, complex tasks.	0.64	..	..
ISSP 2005	ESS 2004			
My job gives me a chance to improve my skills	A. During the last twelve months, have you taken any course or attended any lecture or conference to improve your knowledge or skills for work?	0.63	..	..
	B. My job requires that I keep learning new things.	0.44	0.46	0.57
Over the past 12 months, have you had any training to improve your job skills, either at the workplace or somewhere else?	A. During the last twelve months, have you taken any course or attended any lecture or conference to improve your knowledge or skills for work?	0.83	..	..
	B. My job requires that I keep learning new things.	0.68	..	..

Table 5.A.11. **Cross-country correlations regarding training and learning opportunities at work between different non-official surveys (cont.)**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
ESS 2010	EWCS 2010			
During the last twelve months, have you taken any course or attended any lecture or conference to improve your knowledge or skills for work?	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.72	..	..
	B. On-the-job-training in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.72	..	..
	C. Generally, does your main paid job involve learning new things?	0.85	..	..
	D. Generally, does your main paid job involve solving unforeseen problems on your own?	0.74	..	..
	E. Generally, does your main paid job involve complex tasks?	0.39	..	..
	F. The training has helped me improve the way I work.	-0.52	..	..
	G. I feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	-0.68	..	..
	H. I feel my prospects for future employment are better.	-0.41	..	..
My job requires that I keep learning new things	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.59	..	..
	B. On-the-job-training in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.70	..	..
	C. Generally, does your main paid job involve learning new things?	0.57	..	..
	D. Generally, does your main paid job involve solving unforeseen problems on your own?	0.36	..	..
	E. Generally, does your main paid job involve complex tasks?	0.19	..	..
	F. The training has helped me improve the way I work.	-0.20	..	..
	G. I feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	-0.10	..	..
	H. I feel my prospects for future employment are better.	0.01	..	..
About how many days in total have you spent on this training or education in the last 12 months?	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	-0.40	..	..
	B. On-the-job-training in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.41	..	..
	C. Generally, does your main paid job involve learning new things?	-0.36	..	..
	D. Generally, does your main paid job involve solving unforeseen problems on your own?	-0.29	..	..
	E. Generally, does your main paid job involve complex tasks?	-0.40	..	..
	F. The training has helped me improve the way I work.	0.53	..	..
	G. I feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	0.38	..	..
	H. I feel my prospects for future employment are better.	0.41	..	..
How useful would what you have learnt be if you wanted to go and work for a different employer or firm?	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	-0.11	..	..
	B. On-the-job-training in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	-0.06	..	..
	C. Generally, does your main paid job involve learning new things?	-0.20	..	..
	D. Generally, does your main paid job involve solving unforeseen problems on your own?	-0.18	..	..
	E. Generally, does your main paid job involve complex tasks?	-0.07	..	..
	F. The training has helped me improve the way I work.	0.44	..	..
	G. I feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	0.36	..	..
	H. I feel my prospects for future employment are better.	0.55	..	..
How much of this training or education was paid for by your employer or firm?	A. Training paid for or provided by your employer in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.57	..	..
	B. On-the-job-training in the last 12 months. (Yes/No)	0.57	..	..
	C. Generally, does your main paid job involve learning new things?	0.66	..	..
	D. Generally, does your main paid job involve solving unforeseen problems on your own?	0.70	..	..
	E. Generally, does your main paid job involve complex tasks?	0.57	..	..
	F. The training has helped me improve the way I work.	-0.65	..	..
	G. I feel that my job is more secure because of my training.	-0.63	..	..
	H. I feel my prospects for future employment are better.	-0.62	..	..

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933606547>

Table 5.A.12. **Cross-country correlations regarding opportunities for career advancement between different non-official surveys**

Questions		Correlations		
		Mean	Bottom	Top
Opportunities for career advancement				
EWCS 2005	ISSP 2005			
My opportunities for advancement are good	A. My opportunities for advancement are high.	0.47	0.60	0.48
	B. How much of your past work experience and/or job skills can you make use of in your present job?	-0.14	-0.18	-0.21
	C. If you were to look for a new job, how helpful would your present work experience and/or job skills be?	0.45	-0.32	0.59
Gallup WP				
Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	A. My opportunities for advancement are high.	0.35	..	..
	B. How much of your past work experience and/or job skills can you make use of in your present job?	-0.46	..	..
	C. If you were to look for a new job, how helpful would your present work experience and/or job skills be?	0.29	..	..
ESS 2004				
My opportunities for advancement are good	A. My opportunities for advancement are high.	0.75	0.60	0.86
	B. How much of your past work experience and/or job skills can you make use of in your present job?	-0.09	0.19	-0.24
	C. If you were to look for a new job, how helpful would your present work experience and/or job skills be?	0.44	0.31	0.56
ISSP 2005				
My job offers good prospects for career advancement?	A. ESS: My opportunities for advancement are good.	0.56	0.69	0.49
	B. Gallup WP: Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	0.48	..	..
ESS 2004				
My opportunities for advancement are good	Gallup WP Is there someone at work who encourages your development, or not?	0.38	..	..
	My job offers good prospects for career advancement	0.28	0.44	0.36

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.



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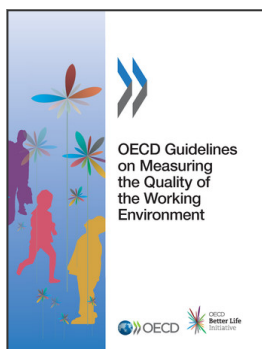
Table 5.A.13. **Cross-country correlations regarding opportunities for self-realisation at work between different non-official surveys**

Questions	Correlations			
	Mean	Bottom	Top	
Opportunity for self-realisation and intrinsic rewards				
Gallup WP	EWCS 2005			
In your work, do you have an opportunity to do what you do best every day?	A. At work you have opportunity to do what you do best.	-0.33	..	..
	B. You are able to apply your own ideas in your work.	-0.18	..	..
	C. Your job gives you the feeling of work well done.	-0.29	..	..
At work, do you feel you have a lot of wasted time, or not?	A. At work you have opportunity to do what you do best.	0.24	..	..
	B. You are able to apply your own ideas in your work.	0.40	..	..
	C. Your job gives you the feeling of work well done.	0.42	..	..
EWCS 2010				
In your work, do you have an opportunity to do what you do best every day?	A. You are able to apply your own ideas in your work.	0.49	..	..
	B. Your job gives you the feeling of work well done.	0.56	..	..
EWCS 2005				
ISSP 2005				
You have the feeling of doing useful work	A. My job is interesting.	0.48	0.53	0.64
	B. In my job I can help other people.	0.57	0.42	0.33
	C. My job is useful to society.	0.32	0.32	0.02
ESS 2010				
EWCS 2010				
The main reason I put effort into my work is because my work is useful for other people	A. Your job gives you the feeling of work well done.	0.47	..	..
	B. You have the feeling of doing useful work.	0.38	..	..

Note: Questions shown in bold are those exhibiting mean correlation coefficients above 0.60. For correlations at the top and bottom of the distribution, the cut-off points used are those that generate the highest correlations between the two surveys considered.

Source: OECD Inventory of Survey Questions on the Quality of the Working Environment.

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