

IAB-Colloquium zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung

The challenging task of questionnaire translation in cross-cultural survey research

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Comparability of cross-cultural survey data is a necessary prerequisite of any analysis using this data. Data comparability depends to a great extent on comparable questionnaire translations. Producing such questionnaire translations, however, is a challenging task. Often, translation is one of the weakest links in a survey (Harkness 2003; Smith 2003). On the one hand, high quality translations rely on appropriate translation and assessment procedures to be implemented, including appropriate personnel. On the other hand, they rely on a source questionnaire that is suitable for translation into other languages and cultures. Given the link between source questionnaire design and translation, in this presentation I will first discuss issues to consider in cross-cultural questionnaire design. I will then present translation and assessment procedures for questionnaire translation, notably the *team translation* method, a state-of-the art procedure that is based on parallel translations, extensive collaboration between experts from various fields and a multi-step approach. The presentation of the team translation method will include examples on what needs to be considered in translation and what can easily go wrong.

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