

# Despite grumbling, most Americans say they are happy at work

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The survey found that job satisfaction increases with age, with workers over 65 among the most satisfied. The study shows that 86 percent of the people interviewed between 1972 and 2006 said they were satisfied at their jobs, with 48 percent saying they were very satisfied. Only four percent reported being very dissatisfied.

In addition to older workers, those with more education, those earning more money, and workers in the South Central states of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee were the most satisfied.

Blacks, Hispanics and people doing unskilled labor were the least happy, according to the report “Job Satisfaction in America: Trends and Socio-Demographic Correlates” by Tom W. Smith, Director of the General Social Survey at the National Opinion Center at the University of Chicago.

“The most important the factors contributing to more job satisfaction in descending order of importance are holding a job with high prestige, being older, being non-black and earning more from a job,” Smith said.

“Job satisfaction is especially high among those 65 and over because most people working at that age are not those forced to still work due to financial reasons, but those who choose to do so because they like their jobs,” he said. Of the people still working after age 65, 71 percent said they were very satisfied at their job. Workers under 29 had the lowest

amount of happiness on the job -- 42 percent said they were very satisfied.

Workers in the least prestigious 10 percent of job categories — unskilled manual and service occupations — reported the lowest level of satisfaction, with 35 percent that were very satisfied, compared to 57 percent satisfaction among those in the most prestigious 10 percent of occupations.

Job satisfaction rises according to income. The study found that 40 percent of the people earning less than \$12,500 per year said they were very satisfied while 68 percent for those making over \$110,000 per year said they were very satisfied. African Americans are less satisfied with their jobs than whites are (40 percent vs. 53 percent) and Hispanics have somewhat lower job satisfaction than non-Hispanics do (46 percent vs. 51 percent).

A job satisfaction study released in April by Smith showed that professions that focus on serving other people, especially those involving caring for, teaching, and protecting others and creative pursuits, provide people with the most satisfaction. This study lists the top and bottom 12 occupations in both job satisfaction and general happiness.

Source: University of Chicago

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