

Navigating Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction Among Working Americans

Shirley Chen, Jessica Im

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Introduction

Data

Based at the University of Chicago since 1972, the General Social Survey (GSS) is a project with the objective of monitoring and analyzing the intricacies of American society (1). The GSS Data Explorer makes it so that data retrieved from the project is a publicly available

resource, accessible to various types of people, such as educators, policymakers, or researchers through the National Opinion Research Center (NORC).

The dataset used for this paper was retrieved from The General Social Survey (GSS) Data Explorer website (citation). We retrieved survey data relating to work and job in the years of 1989, 1998, 2006, and 2016.

Source Data

All the survey data used was in relation to job and work in the Work Orientation Module; the specific variable names extracted from the dataset being `intjob`, `hlpoths`, and `hlp soc`, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: yup

Variable	NewName	Description	Example
<code>intjob</code>	<code>interesting_work</code>	Importance of interesting work in a job	Very Important
<code>hlpoths</code>	<code>helping_others</code>	Importance of helping others in a job	Neither
<code>hlp soc</code>	<code>social_usefulness</code>	Importance of social usefulness in a job	Not Important

Data Cleaning

The open source statistical programming language R was used to clean and analyze the data, along with producing the graphs. The main packages that supported this process included `tidyverse`, `ggplot2`, `knitr`, `kableExtra`, `here`...

The cleaning process involved filtering the specific data variables used for our analysis from the downloaded GSS dataset, and renaming any variables with meaningful names. For example, rather than “`intjob`” being the column name for “importance of interesting work in a job”, we renamed it to `INSERT NAME HERE`. Further, the numerical values representing the participants’ responses (1-5) were changed to the representative words/phrases (not important, very important, etc.).

Importance of a Job that Helps Others

Figure 1 displays the proportion of respondents to the prompt “A job that allows someone to help other people?”. From the first year of data collection in 1989 to 2006, “Important” was the most selected response. In 2016, “Very Important” surpassed “Important” by 1%. In general, you can see an increase in “Very Important” respondents across the years while there is little change in the proportion of “Not Important” and “Not Important At All” responses.

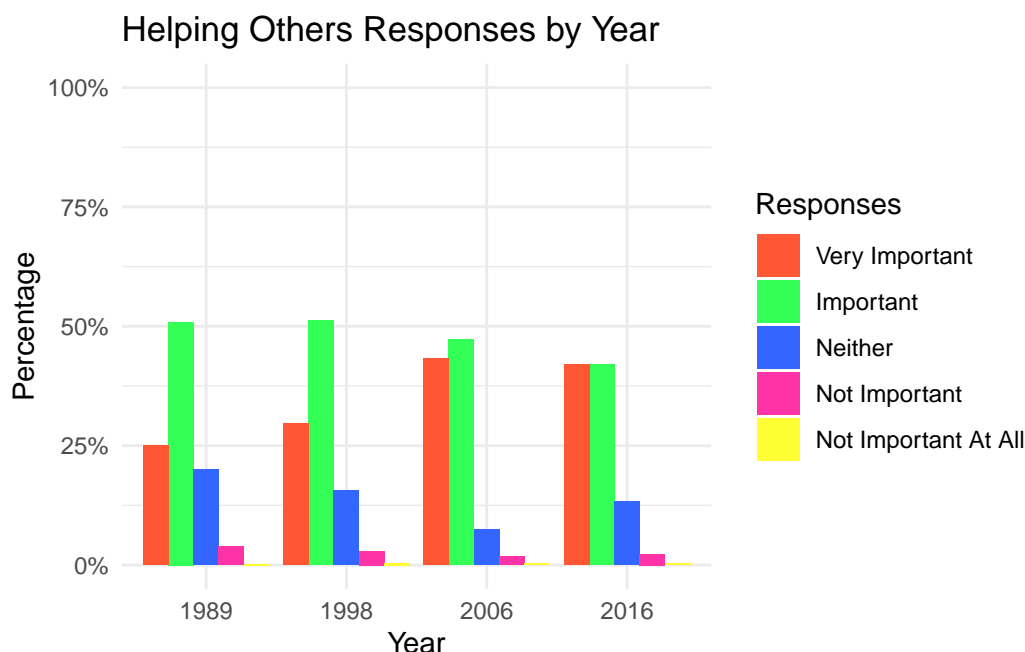


Figure 1: Q1 - “A job that allows someone to help other people?”

Importance of a Job that is Interesting

Figure 2 shows the proportion of responses for the prompt “An interesting job?”. In 1989, “Important” responses were most chosen at around 50%. The following survey, in 1998, showed an increase in “Very Important” responses, where it had a similar proportion to “Important” responses in 1989 and “Important” decreased to a proportion similar to “Very Important”.

Importance of a Job that is Useful to Society

Figure 3 displays the proportion of responses for the prompt “A job that is useful to society?”. There is a large increase in the proportion of “Very Important” responses from 1989 to 2016. In contrast, there is a gradual decline for both “Important” and “Neither”. There is little change in “Not Important” and “Not Important At All”.

Results

The response choices for each question and their respective code are as follows: Inapplicable (-100), No Answer (-99), Do Not Know/Cannot Choose (-98), Very Important (1), Important (2), Neither (3), Not important (4), and Not Important At All (5). For our graphs, we did not

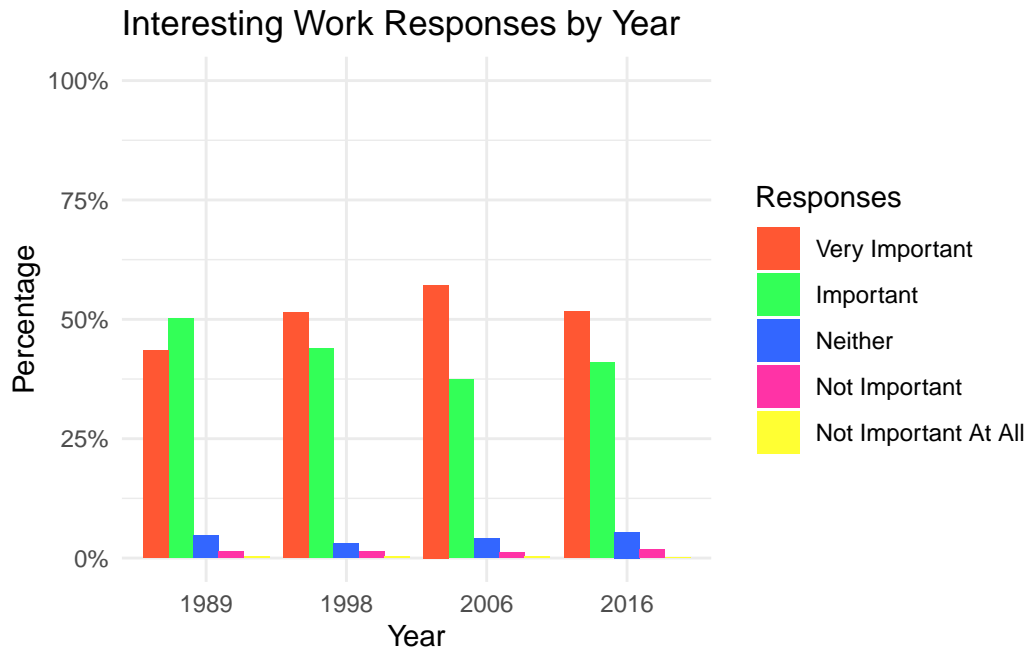


Figure 2: Q2 - “An interesting job?”

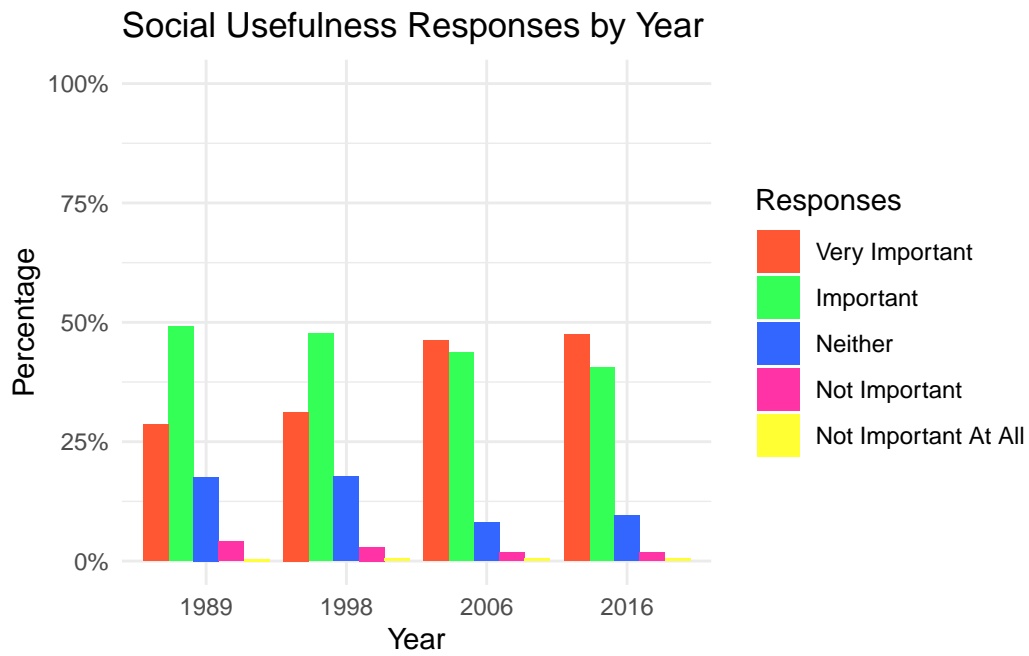


Figure 3: Q3 - “A job that is useful to society?”

include the Inapplicable, No Answer, and Do Not Know/Cannot choose responses to focus on the discernible participant responses. Each variable regarded a factor that

influencing job satisfaction succeeding the prompt “On the following list there are various aspects of jobs. Please circle one number to show how important you personally consider it is in a job:”. The results were drawn from the years 1989, 1998, 2006, and 2016.

Table 2: avg change for very important and important responses for helping others

Response Choice	Interesting Work	Helping Others	Social Usefulness
Very Important	5.67	9.96	11.07
Important	5.67	9.96	11.07

Discussion

Gender?

Culture?

Sources