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Quality of Employment in Canada

Relationships with co-workers, 2016

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Relationships with co-workers, 2016

Overview

In 2016, most employees in Canada had colleagues who often or always helped and supported them. However, employees who had a disability, who were in a population group designated as a visible minority, or who worked in business, finance and administration occupations, were somewhat less likely than others to report that they had supportive colleagues.

The relationship between employees and their colleagues is an important dimension of day-to-day life at work, especially in terms of increasing or reducing work-related stress. The degree of help an employee receives from his or her colleagues is the main indicator used to measure the quality of relationships between co-workers. The indicator is the proportion of employees who report that their colleagues or co-workers often or always help and support them.

Historical trends

Statistics Canada data from the General Social Survey (GSS) on the relationship between coworkers are currently available for one year. However, the International Social Survey Program (ISSP)—a survey managed by an international consortium of researchers—includes a question which asks about the quality of relationships between colleagues at the respondent's workplace. Data are available for Canada in 1997 and 2005. In 1997, 86.2% of employees in Canada reported that relations between colleagues at their work were either good or very good. This proportion edged down to 82.4% in 2005.

According to data from the GSS, in 2016 78.5% of employees in Canada often or always received help and support from their colleagues. While the GSS measure is different from what is examined by the ISSP, data from both surveys suggest that the vast majority of employees in Canada had good relationships with their colleagues in the recent past.

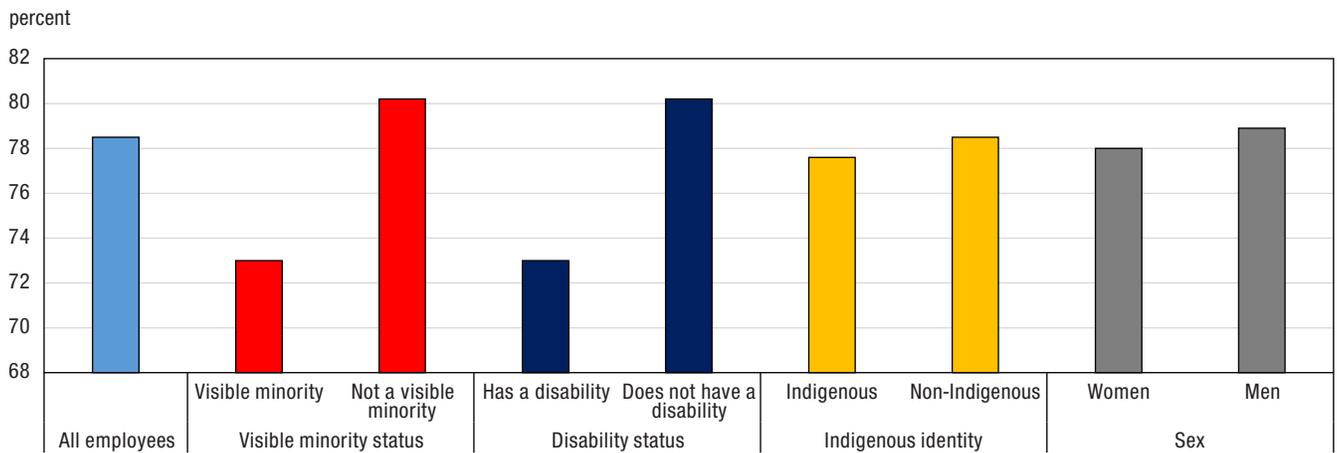
A recent snapshot

GSS data for 2016 indicate that the proportion of employees who often or always received help and support from their colleagues was high in the broad occupational category of natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations (88.1%) and relatively low in business, finance and administration occupations (73.6%).

Among industries, a large majority of employees in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (87.3%) and in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction (86.2%) reported having supportive colleagues in 2016. In comparison, the proportions were lower in administrative and support services (68.8%), and in real estate and rental and leasing (70.5%).

In 2016, being in a population group designated as a visible minority and having a disability were also characteristics associated with having less supportive colleagues. Among employees who were visible minority Canadians, 73.0% reported that they had colleagues who often or always helped and supported them, compared with 80.2% for non-visible minorities. There was a similar gap between those who had a disability (73.0%) and those who did not (80.2%). At the same time, there was virtually no difference between Indigenous employees living off-reserve and non-Indigenous employees, or between male and female employees.

Chart 1
Percentage of employees 15 years and over who often or always receive help and support from their colleagues, by selected demographic characteristics, Canada, 2016



Note: Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, custom tabulation.

In terms of work characteristics, part-time employees differed little from full-time employees in 2016, and there was no notable difference between term and permanent employees.

Along with the proportion of employees with supportive colleagues, two additional measures suggest that most employees in Canada had good relationships with their colleagues. In 2016, 90.2% of employees had at least one good friend at work. Furthermore, only 2.9% of employees in Canada frequently or always had conflicts with their colleagues or co-workers.

Information on the indicator

Description or definition

The **relationship with co-workers** indicator is the proportion of employees who report that their colleagues or co-workers often or always help and support them.

Information is also provided on the proportion of employees who frequently or always have conflicts with their colleagues or co-workers, and on the number of good friends employees have at work.

Source

General Social Survey: Canadians at Work and Home, 2016 (Cycle 30).

ISSP Research Group (1999): International Social Survey Programme: Work Orientations II - ISSP 1997. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA3090 Data file Version 1.0.0, [doi:10.4232/1.3090](https://doi.org/10.4232/1.3090).

ISSP Research Group (2013): International Social Survey Programme: Work Orientation III - ISSP 2005. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA4350 Data file Version 2.0.0, [doi:10.4232/1.11648](https://doi.org/10.4232/1.11648).

Information for interpretation

The mandate of the General Social Survey (GSS) Canadians at Work and Home is to explore people's views about work, home, leisure and well-being, and the relationships between these life domains. For more information on the methodology and collection, please consult [General Social Survey: Canadians at Work and Home \(GSS\)](#).

The International Social Survey Program is a cross-national collaboration programme conducting annual surveys on diverse topics relevant to social sciences. The "Work Orientations" module was collected in Canada in 1997 and 2005. For more information on the methodology and variables, please consult the pages for the [1997](#) and [2005](#) surveys.

Occupations are coded according to the National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2016, while industry coding is based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2012. Disability status is established on the basis of the [Disability Screening Questionnaire \(DSQ\)](#).

As the GSS is based on a sample, all estimates are subject to sampling variability. The analysis focuses on differences between estimates that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Due to rounding, estimates and percentages may differ slightly between different Statistics Canada products, such as analytical documents and data tables.

In the GSS, the concept of Indigenous people includes persons who reported being an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit), or those who reported more than one identity. Excluded from the survey's coverage are persons living on reserves and other Indigenous settlements in the provinces as well as those living in the territories.

The concept is distinct from others used in the Census of Population and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey because it does not depend on Registered or Treaty Indian status, membership in a First Nation or Indian band, or ancestry. As such, self-identification as belonging to an Indigenous group for the purposes of the GSS is entirely subjective. It is similar to the concept of "Indigenous identity" used in the Census.

Other related information

Data on the quality of relationships with supervisors from the GSS are included in the Statistics Canada publication: [Assessing Job Quality in Canada: A Multidimensional Approach](#).

Additional Statistics Canada data are available on the following subject:

[Equity and inclusion](#)