



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Quality of life in the Spanish workplace

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This report is available in electronic format only.

Spanish workers' reported satisfaction with their work has been steadily increasing since 1999. According to the 2004 Spanish survey on quality of life in the workplace, workers declare that they are particularly satisfied with health and safety conditions at work, work organisation and relationships with colleagues. Other issues such as pay and participation issues are not regarded in such a favourable light. The survey also reveals that considerable differences remain between the sexes in carrying out household chores and in caring activities with children and older people.

Introduction

The [2004 Survey on quality of life in the workplace \(in Spanish\)](#) (*Encuesta de calidad de vida en el trabajo 2004*) is the sixth edition of a survey carried out on an annual basis by the [Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#) . The main goal of this survey is to examine the quality of life of the Spanish workforce, and to provide information on their social and labour situation, as well as on the workers' perception of their working conditions.

Following the survey analysis, this report presents the main results under six headings:

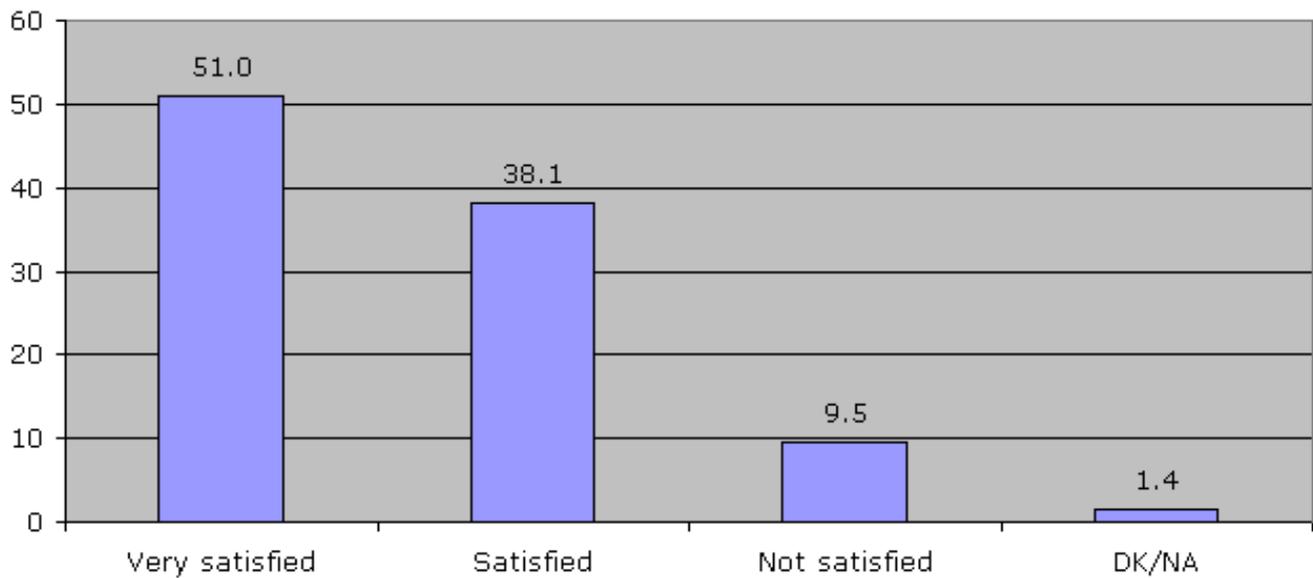
- satisfaction in the workplace;
- work environment;
- work organisation;
- training and career development;
- job mobility;
- work-life balance.

In addition, this report provides information on the main time trends identified in the six year period from 1999 to 2004, as well as a brief commentary. Methodological details are outlined in the Appendix.

Satisfaction in the workplace

The Spanish workers' average degree of satisfaction in the workplace is rather high (6.79 points on a scale from 0 to 10); and is slightly higher among men than among women (6.81 and 6.77, respectively). In percentage terms, almost 90% of Spanish people in work state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs (51% are very satisfied), whereas only 9.5% report that they are not satisfied with their job.

Figure 1: Level of satisfaction in the workplace (%)



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

In 2004, the highest average levels of satisfaction were reported by men, workers aged below 19 and above 55 years (the most satisfied group in 2003 were workers aged over 30 years), university degree holders and, generally speaking, people working in the service sector. Interestingly, business and public administration managers report the highest average satisfaction, in contrast with non-qualified workers, who show the lowest satisfaction levels.

Reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction

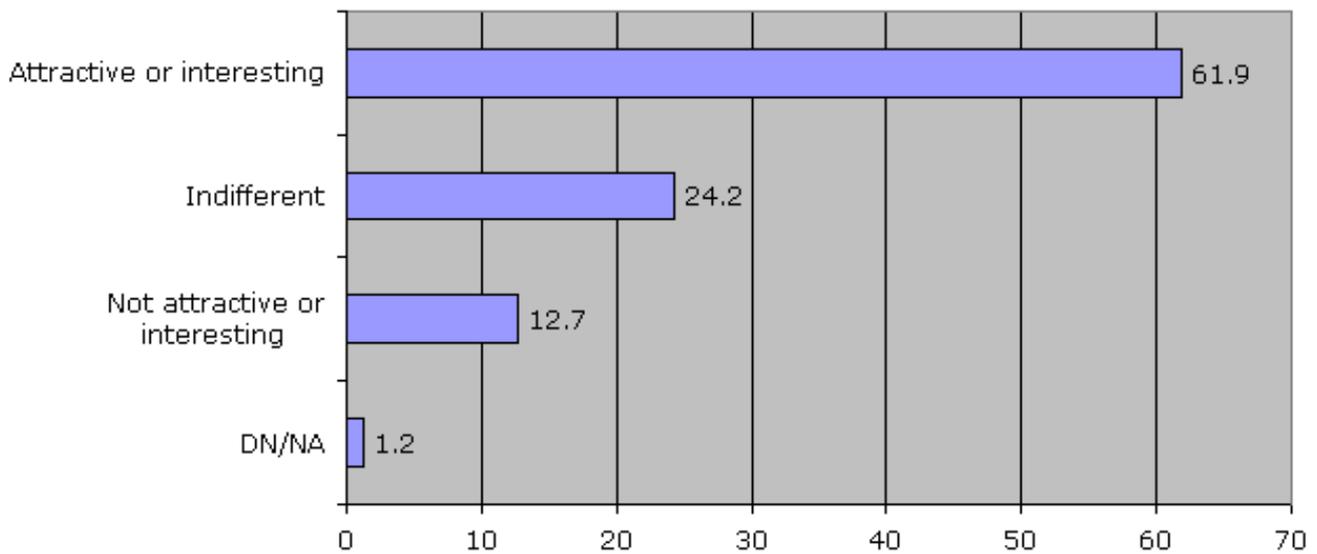
The main reasons underlying work satisfaction are 'enjoying the job' (22.9%), 'comradeship' (12.4%), a 'good salary' (9.4%) and 'suitable working hours' (7.8%). These reasons continue to be the same as in previous years. In general, men place more value on reasons such as 'good salary' or 'personal development', while women put more emphasis on reasons related to 'comradeship' or 'suitable working hours'.

The main reasons for dissatisfaction at work, among those workers whose satisfaction levels are below seven, refer to 'low salary' (24.6%), 'unsuitable working hours' (15.5%) and the 'toughness of the work' (8.6%). These reasons apply for both men and women.

Work environment

On average, Spanish workers rate the degree of attractiveness and interest of their work at 6.86 points on a scale from 0 to 10, and 61.9% of people find their work attractive and interesting. Men, older workers, university degree holders and managers rate this attractiveness higher.

Figure 2: % of Spanish workers who regard their job as attractive or interesting



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

In contrast, the average degree of monotony and boredom at work is 3.41 points on the same scale from 0 to 10. Men seem to be more bored at their work than women, but this boredom drops as educational attainment increases. More than half (54.9%) of workers state that they never or hardly ever get bored at work, whereas 13.3% report that they are always or very often bored.

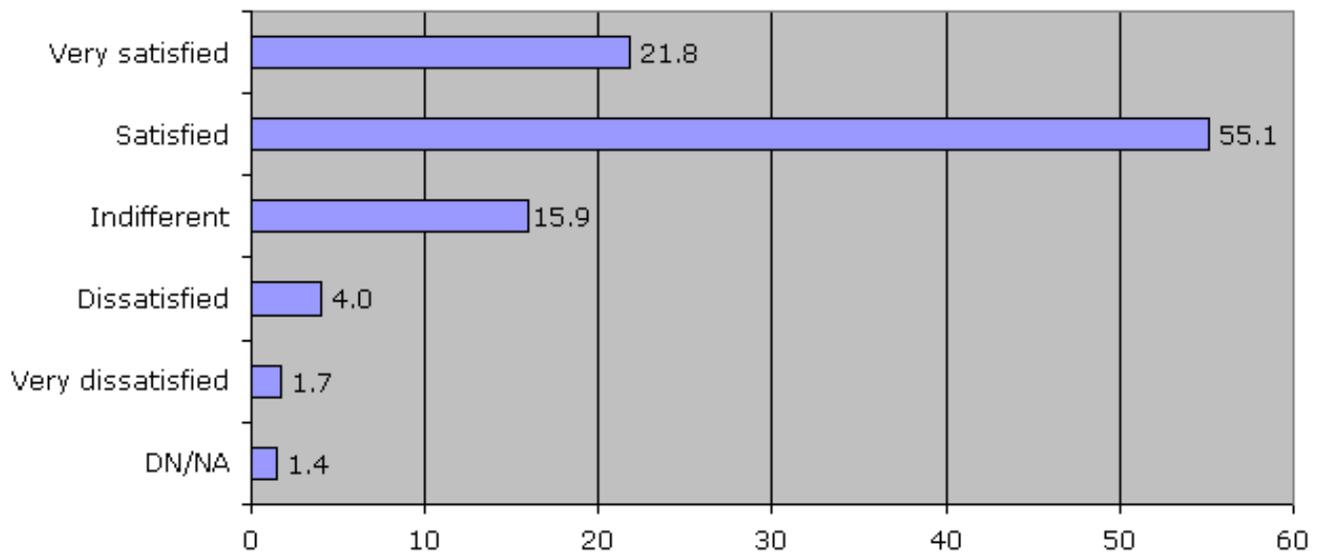
Stress and health and safety issues

The average level of stress at work is 4.5 points on a scale from 0 to 10, where 28.6% of Spanish workers state that they are always or very often in stressful situations, compared with 38.9% who never or very seldom suffer from stress at work. The groups particularly affected by stress include men, university holders, public sector employees, people employed in the financial sector, and those working in large companies.

Some 79% of Spanish people in work are satisfied or very satisfied with their physical work environment, whereas only 5.3% report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Half of all workers report a work environment that supports work improvements, while 20% find a discouraging work environment.

Around 76.9% of Spanish workers are satisfied or very satisfied with the health and safety conditions in their workplaces; only 5.7% of workers report these conditions as unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.

Figure 3: Satisfaction levels with health and safety conditions at work (%)



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

Some 12.9% of workers state that they always or very often work in dangerous conditions. The most dangerous sectors (according to the workers' self perception) include extractive industries, fishing and construction (49%, 36.6% and 29.2% of these workers state that they always or very often work in dangerous conditions). Around 73.3% of those workers in dangerous conditions always or very frequently protect themselves against risks, compared with 6.9% who never or hardly ever do so. More than two thirds (67.9%) of Spanish workers receive information on labour risks from their company or find it themselves, while 11.9% never or hardly ever have access to such information.

Type of contract and working hours

Around 72.8% of male and 70.2% of female employees have a permanent contract, whereas 23.9% and 26.0%, respectively, have a temporary one. Some 64.9% of male and 62.9% of female employees working on temporary contracts report that they are in this situation involuntarily. This involuntary rate is particularly present among the youngest people in work and also among employees in large companies. Compared to the 2003 survey results, the percentages of temporary employees have experienced a decline (27.7% of male and 34.4% of female employees were on a temporary contract in 2003), although the percentage of involuntary temporary employees increased in 2004.

Table 1: Distribution of employees by type of contract and reasons for temporary contracts, by sex (%)

Type of contract	Men	Women
Permanent	72.8	70.2
Temporary	23.9	26.0
Reasons for temporary contract:		
- Voluntary	18.7	16.8
- Involuntary	64.9	62.9
- Other reasons	10.1	12.0
- Don't know/Not applicable	6.2	8.3

Don't know/Not applicable	3.3	3.8
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Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004.

Some 86.9% of Spanish workers work full time, in contrast to 11.1% who work part time. The latter figure compares with 10% in 2003, confirming a steady year on year increase in the take-up of part-time work. However, more than a third of part-time workers are in this situation involuntarily. Gender considerations show that part-time contracts are more common among women, compared with men (19.6% and 5.7%, respectively). Women are also more likely than men to be working part time for involuntary reasons (39.3% and 35.1%, respectively).

With regard to unsocial working hours, 79% of Spanish employees never work at night, whereas four out of 10 employees report having had to work on at least one Saturday, and two out of 10 on at least one Sunday, during the last four weeks.

Wage conditions and social benefits

Around 51.7% of Spanish workers are satisfied or very satisfied with their salary, whereas 21.7% have a negative or very negative view on this issue. Men, university degree holders, entrepreneurs and professionals with employees report the highest levels of satisfaction.

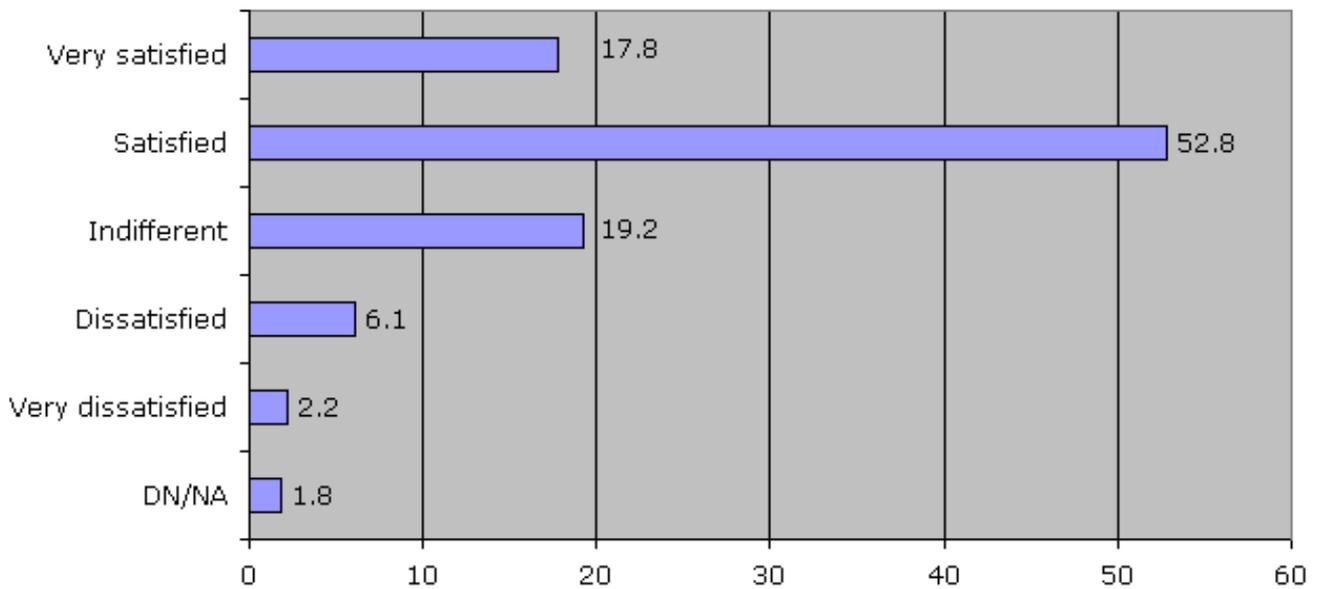
Regarding social benefits provided by companies to their employees, 21.2% and 18.6% of Spanish employees report benefits for training and for transportation, while 16.9% receive benefits for meals. Public sector employees benefit more than private employees from these allowances.

Finally, 50.3% of Spanish employees are satisfied or very satisfied with their collective agreement, whereas 16.2% state the opposite.

Work organisation

Around 70.6% of Spanish workers are satisfied or very satisfied with their work organisation, in comparison to 8.3% who are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, with an additional 19.2% who are indifferent in this respect.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with work organisation (%)



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

Supervisory role, job content and pace of work

Fewer than two out of 10 workers (17.6%) carry out supervisory tasks at work, and important gender differences can be found in this regard (21.1% among men in contrast to 12.2% among women). Older workers, university degree holders, managers and entrepreneurs are most likely to carry out supervisory tasks at work. Checking the completion of work and arranging work tasks are the two more frequent supervisory tasks.

Some 79.5% of Spanish employees carry out the same tasks in their job everyday, and this result is particularly common among women, older workers without third level education, private sector employees, and those working in the smallest enterprises. More than three out of five employees (61.8%) who change tasks need to acquire new knowledge and skills to do so.

Around 53.4% of workers never have to adapt to the pace of a machine, while 57.3% state that their work never depends on reaching a business target.

Social relationships and autonomy at work

Most of the Spanish workers (72.1%) have a good relationship with their colleagues, and 58.5% report that the relationship between managers and employees is good.

Over half of men and women (55.8% and 52.7%, respectively) are satisfied or very satisfied with the autonomy they are granted for carrying out their job.

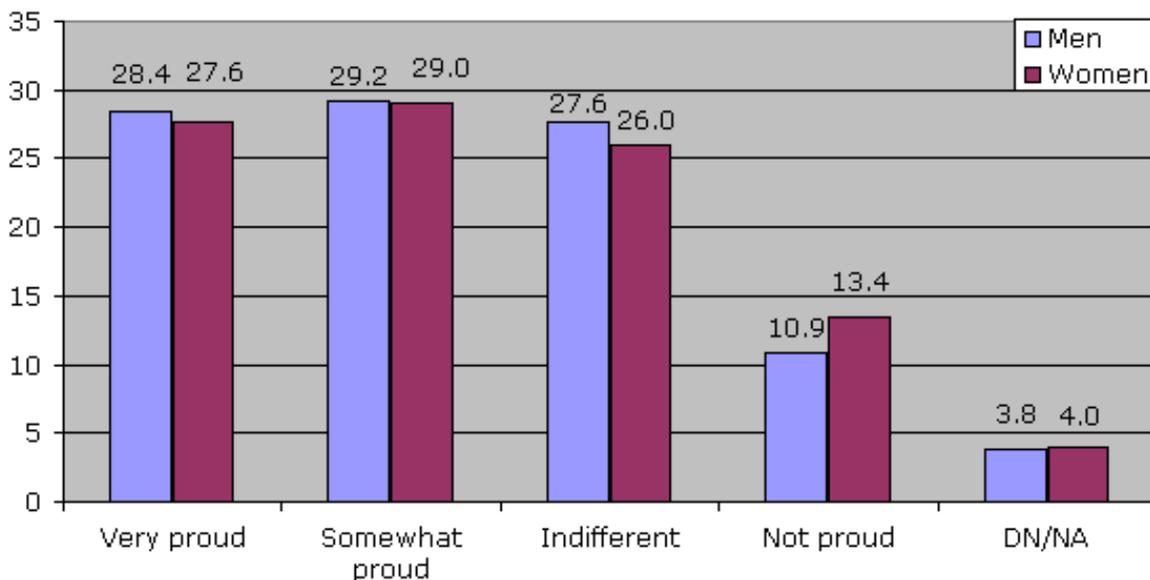
Involvement in the organisation

The survey results show that more than six out of 10 Spanish employees are aware of the goals and the organisation chart of their companies (65.2% and 61.3%, respectively), while 41.3% report a good or very good knowledge of their collective agreement. The average knowledge that employees have of their organisation's goals is set at 6.58 points on a scale from 0 to 10, with the highest levels found among university holders and business and public administration managers.

Some 38.4% of women and 44.1% of men are prepared to work longer hours to further the enterprise, and around

57% of Spanish workers are proud or very proud of working at their organisation.

Figure 5: Pride in working in their current organisation, by sex (%)



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

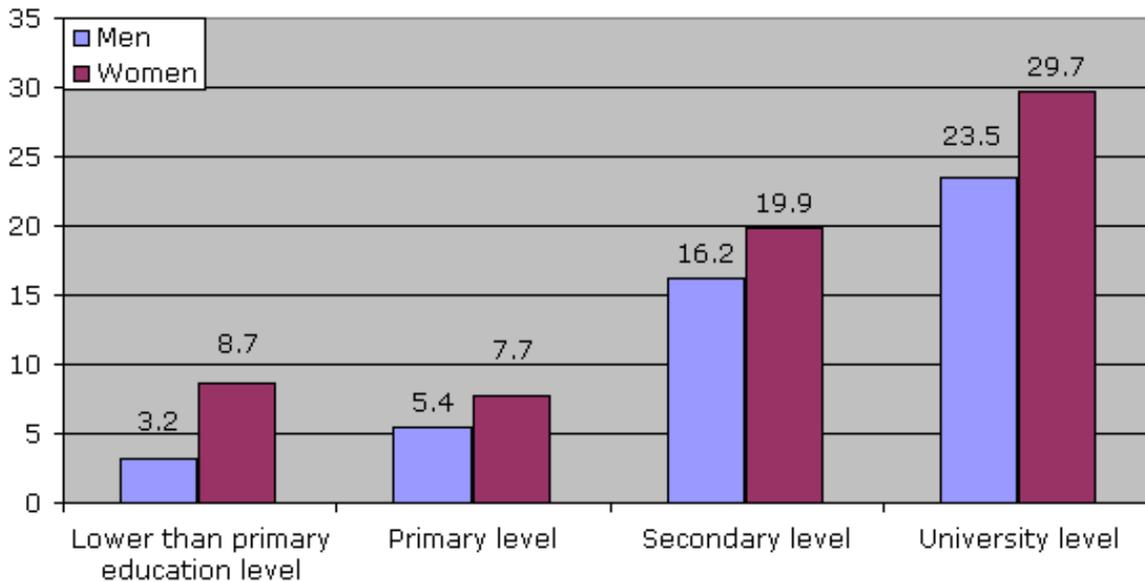
Thus, the average level of pride in their work is reported at 7.33 points on a scale from 0 to 10, being slightly higher among women than men (7.45 and 7.24, respectively). The highest levels of pride are reported among university degree holders, public administration employees, technicians and professionals, and among employees in the education sector. However, these results do not mean that workers always consider that the organisation's problems are their own, since only 20.3% of men and 16.2% of female workers feel related or very related to the organisation's problems.

Training and career development

Around 35% of Spanish employees have received continuing training supported by their companies in the last year, up from 31.7% in 2003. Employees working in large organisations and in financial activities show the largest percentages (65.2% and 74.7%, respectively), as well as those with university degrees and employees hired on a permanent basis.

Interestingly, 76.1% of workers believe that they have adequate training levels for their job, and 17.4% believe that they are overqualified. This negative perception is particularly present among women, in comparison with men (20.7% and 15.2%, respectively), as well as among university holders (26.5%), young people (27.6%), and those hired on a non-permanent basis (27.5%).

Figure 6: % of Spanish workers who believe that they are overqualified for their current job, by sex



At the same time, around half of Spanish employees suggest that their chances of being promoted are not related to their current qualification status, whereas 24.1% of employees identify a positive link between both variables. In addition, around four out of 10 Spanish employees believe that acquiring new knowledge through training does not increase their chances of being promoted. Meanwhile, around 82.7% of Spanish employees benefiting from training activities supported by the company report that training is useful for their work, while around 8% feel that it has been useless.

Job mobility

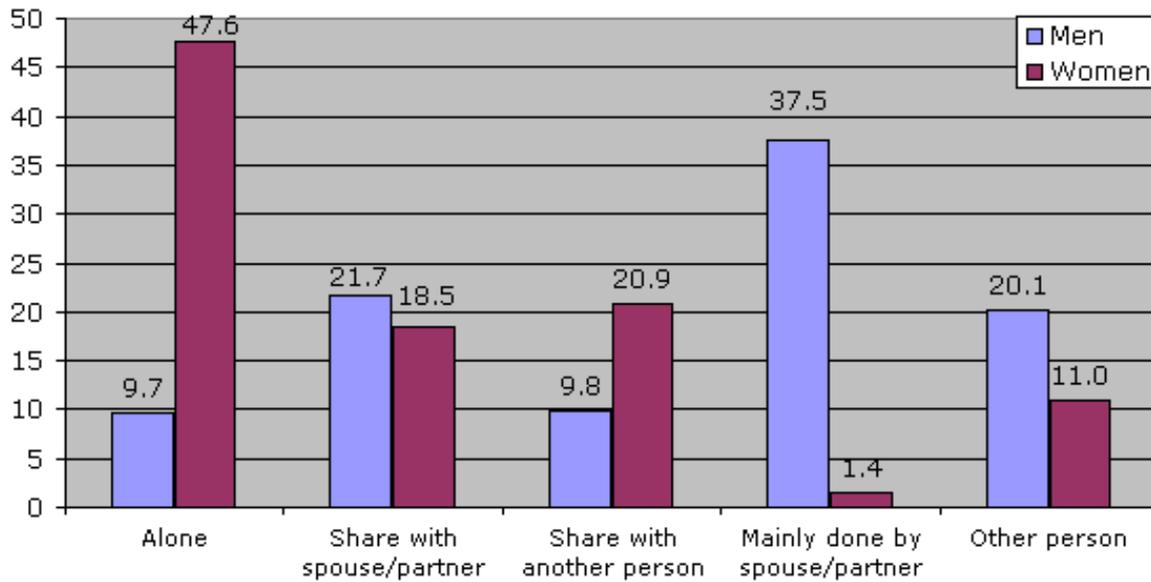
The available data suggest that seven out of 10 Spanish workers have changed job at least once in their working life, whereas the remaining 30.5% are still working in their first job. Interestingly, the occupational groups showing the highest labour mobility rates are men (70.5% compared with 67.9% among women), people aged between 30 and 44 (73.3%), employees in the private sector (73.7%) and low skilled people (74.4%). Professional promotion and better financial conditions are the two main reasons for changing job, across the different surveyed groups. Looking at the future, only 8.9% of workers are currently trying to find a new job, in clear contrast to the remaining 91.1% who are not. Generally, obtaining better conditions is the main reason behind this job search process.

As far as geographical mobility is concerned, around 26.3% of Spaniards in work pursue their professional life in a region different to the one where they were born, while the remaining 73.7% work in their region of birth. Andalusia, Castille-Leon and Castille-La Mancha are the Spanish regions that show the highest percentages of people working in other Spanish regions. In contrast, Madrid and Catalonia report the greatest intake of workers from other regions.

Work-life balance

This aspect reveals important gender differences. Almost five out of 10 women in work (47.6%) carry out household chores without any help, compared with 9.7% of men. Some 20.9% of Spanish women in work share these tasks with someone else other than their spouse or partner, and 11% delegate the tasks to a third person. Among men, these percentages are 9.8% and 20.1%, respectively.

Figure 7: Responsibility of household chores, by sex



Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spain, 2004

Meanwhile, 34% of female workers with children under 12 years old take care of them mainly by themselves outside of work (this percentage was as high as 40% in 2003), considerably above the rate for men (2.5%). At the same time, 44% of women and 57% of men in work with children share this task with their spouse/partner. These differences are also apparent in caring for older people, as 30% of women in work carry out this task without any help, compared with 12% among men.

Trends over the period 1999-2004

Table 2 below provides a selection of key indicators of the Survey on quality of life in the workplace and their evolution in the time period between 1999 (first year of the survey) and 2004 (latest available data). According to these results, the main trends that can be identified in the intervening time period may be summarised as follows:

- The average level of satisfaction in the workplace among Spanish workers has not fluctuated much, ranging between 6.5 and 6.9 points on a scale from 0 to 10. The workers also rate highly the attractiveness and interest of their work, always close to seven points. In all cases, men report slightly higher levels than women.
- In contrast, the average level of monotony and boredom at work remains very low in all years (less than 3.52 points on a 0 to 10 scale). Interestingly, the average level of stress has never surpassed five points, and the level among women shows a continuous slight downward trend since 2001.
- Women report a higher level of participation at work, where the average levels have fluctuated between five and six points on the 0 to 10 scale. The average level of pride in work has remained above seven points, whereas the level of knowledge of the company's goals has experienced significant time variations, although it has never fallen below six points nor risen above seven.

Table 2: Trends for selected indicators, 1999-2004 (0-10 scale)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Average level of satisfaction at work						
- Total	6.59	6.77	6.79	6.69	6.84	6.79

- Men	6.61	6.84	6.83	6.72	6.90	6.81
- Women	6.56	6.66	6.74	6.64	6.73	6.77
Average level of attractiveness and interest of work						
- Total	6.90	6.82	6.98	6.73	6.83	6.86
- Men	7.01	6.92	7.09	6.82	6.98	6.91
- Women	6.70	6.64	6.80	6.59	6.59	6.77
Average level of monotony and boredom at work						
- Total	3.52	3.48	3.21	3.40	3.24	3.41
- Men	3.55	3.52	3.22	3.42	3.23	3.48
- Women	3.47	3.42	3.19	3.38	3.26	3.31
Average level of stress at work						
- Total	4.86	4.69	4.78	4.68	4.44	4.50
- Men	4.96	4.77	4.84	4.76	4.45	4.57
- Women	4.69	4.56	4.68	4.55	4.42	4.40
Average level of participation at work						
- Total	5.90	5.72	5.73	5.44	5.21	5.78
- Men	5.82	5.68	5.62	5.44	5.13	5.61
- Women	6.04	5.78	5.87	5.45	5.23	6.03
Average level of pride with work						
- Total	7.61	7.49	7.48	7.51	7.54	7.33
- Men	7.61	7.57	7.54	7.59	7.57	7.24
- Women	7.62	7.38	7.38	7.38	7.41	7.46
Average level of knowledge of company goals						
- Total	6.44	6.20	6.10	6.25	6.90	6.58

- Men	6.49	6.15	6.05	6.32	6.93	6.58
- Women	6.36	6.28	6.18	6.12	6.85	6.58

Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004.

Commentary

The Survey on quality of life in the workplace (*Encuesta de Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo*) offers a wide perspective on Spanish workers' working conditions, complementing the results obtained from the other key statistical tool in Spain, the National Survey on Working Conditions (which primarily focuses on occupational health and safety issues).

The 2004 edition shows considerable levels of satisfaction among Spanish workers, both in general and with the different dimensions of their work life, as well as a great stability and consistency of the indicators resulting from the survey during the past six years. For example, in 2004, the general satisfaction level reached an average of 6.79 on a scale from 0 to 10 with little variation compared to five years earlier. Indicators such as monotony at work or stress score below five in the same scale, with similarly slight variations over time.

The survey also indicates that the working conditions for a number of occupational activities (i.e. mining, fishing, construction) can be regarded as particularly tough in comparison to the other activities, especially concerning health and safety issues. Finally, the survey highlights important gender differences, especially when referring to reconciliation of work and family life. The differences are particularly acute and clearly impose an additional burden on Spanish women in work.

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Appendix: Methodology

The [2004 Survey on quality of life in the workplace](#) provides statistical information on life quality at work in Spain. The survey's main goals can be summarised as follows:

- Finding out about life quality in the workplace for workers (employees and self-employed). In particular, the survey aims at gathering information on situations and activities at work, along with the subjective perception that people have of their working conditions and relationships, and their degree of satisfaction in the workplace.
- Obtaining information on the labour situation of workers (regarding their job, professional career, integration at work and promotion procedures, and the family structure and situation), since all these factors play a key role in assessing life quality in the workplace.
- Obtaining socio-economic data of workers in order to relate results to their labour situation.

The methodological details of the survey are set out in the table below.

Methodological details of the 2004 Survey on quality of life in the workplace

Items	Comments
Survey name	Survey on quality of life in the workplace
Organisation responsible	Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Time frequency	Annual. First edition: 1999. Latest edition: 2004
Geographical coverage	All of Spain except Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish territories in Northern Africa)
Surveyed population	Working people aged over 16 years old, living in

	family households
Sample	6,020 surveyed persons
Main characteristics of classification	Occupation, economic activity (NACE classification) and other variables (sex, age, level of studies, size of enterprise and size of living municipality)
Interviewing method	Interviews were carried out face-to-face (not by phone), at the households of the selected surveyed workers
Website address	http://www.mtas.es/estadisticas/ECVT/Ecvt2004/index.htm

Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace, Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004.

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