

The Effect of Marriage, Childbearing and Migration on
the Labor Force Participation of Women

by

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S u m m a r y

This study aims to measure the effects of marriage, childbearing and migration on the labor force participation of women using the life cycle approach.

Secondary analysis of a nationwide survey was used for this study. The survey was conducted in 1975-1976 by survey research centers affiliated with the Philippine Social Science Council. The subjects were 1598 women and 399 men sampled from rural, small urban and large urban areas.

The findings of the study are:

1. Fewer women than men are in the labor force and among those women who do work, they are employed for a fewer number of years than men.
2. Women who are not in the labor force tend to be best skilled than those who are employed.
3. Marriage does not have much immediate effect on employment status. However, marriage does seem to have an increasing impact on younger women causing them to leave the labor force. It also has an effect on the types of job a woman holds.
4. Childbearing also has a minimal effect on whether a woman works or not. Even the number of children a Filipino has does not seem to be related to whether or not she works.
5. Migration had a limited effect on employment. As with marriage and childbearing, the effect may be delayed so that the change in employment does not occur in the same year as the move.

6. It seems therefore, that the difference in male and female labor force participation cannot be explained by effects of marriage, childbearing and migration. This leads to the conclusion that other factors (most likely attitudes and tradition) prevent women from being fully utilized in the development process.

Suggestions for Future Indicators

The following indicators are suggested:

1. Length of labor force participation.
2. Interruptions in labor force participation.
3. Change in labor force participation at time of marriage.
4. Change in labor force participation at birth of children.
5. Change in labor force participation at time of migration.
6. Interrelationships of marriage and migration:

The indicators are feasible since the data they require can be obtained from surveys. The survey, however, should include a complete chronology of life events and relationships between them to adequately provide the information required to measure the above life cycle indicators.

Policy Implications and Recommendations:

The surprising minimal effect of marriage, childbearing and migration on employment may suggest that no policy changes are indicated. Some intervention, however, are necessary since women are underutilized in the labor force.

1. Women could be helped to gain employment through training and skill development as well as the provision of community child care services or cooperative child care.
2. Another needed change is the attitude of husband and relatives which often hinders women from working. The growing acceptance of working women and positive experiences of such women being publicized may help change this attitude.

3. Since employment lessens fertility (and thus aid in population control), female labor force participation should be encouraged.
4. If people are to be encouraged to stay in rural areas, more job opportunities of various types are necessary. Regional development is important to offer rural residents not only more jobs but social and recreational services as well.