



# CARE WORK IN THE TIME OF COVID-19:

Addressing Gender Norms  
in the Philippine BPO Industry

BASELINE REPORT



INVESTING IN WOMEN  
SMART ECONOMICS  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT



OXFAM

# CARE WORK IN THE TIME OF COVID-19: Addressing Gender Norms in the Philippine BPO Industry

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>BPO</b>	Business Process Outsourcing
<b>F</b>	Female
<b>f</b>	frequency
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEDSI</b>	Gender Equality, Diversity, and Social Inclusion
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>LGBTQIA+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual Plus
<b>M</b>	Male
<b>NA</b>	No Answer
<b>NB</b>	Non-binary
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NP</b>	Non-partnered
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PD</b>	Positive Deviance
<b>RGA</b>	Rapid Gender Assessment
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WP</b>	With Partner

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the number of COVID-19 cases increased dramatically at the height of the pandemic, so did the demand for invisible and unpaid labor when most people were forced to stay home during periods of lockdown and community quarantine. Consequently, women and girls bore most of the burden. Yet, while this was the case, the crucial contributions of unpaid care and domestic work remained unaccounted and largely ignored in the Philippine government's COVID response.

This baseline research is designed to surface gender norms or the narratives of unpaid care work and women's breadwinning among urban millennials in the BPO sector while coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The BPO sector was chosen as the focus of this research because they have been dubbed "female-friendly workplaces," with women making up 71% of the total BPO global workforce (Hultgren, 2018). In the Philippines, women account for at least 53.2% of the BPO workforce (BPO Industry Employees Network, 2019). With the high rate of women's participation in BPOs, the study views the sector as a potential space for shifting gender norms.

This study reveals how persistent gender norms still surround unpaid care work (UCW) and breadwinning. It also highlights potential positive deviances from the traditional gender norms that can pave the way towards more equal sharing of UCW. The research also identifies possible recommendations or strategies to support shared responsibilities and women's breadwinning, particularly in relation to Oxfam's campaign on unpaid care work.

Data were generated through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, through a self-administered survey and the conduct of focus group discussions with identified BPO employees. The survey captured responses from 232 respondents -- BPO workers aged 23-38 years or those within the same age bracket who have worked in a BPO in the last two years. Of the survey participants, 56% were female, 38% were male and 1.7% were non-binary. Most survey respondents (63%) were unpartnered while 33% were in a domestic partnership.

Four focus groups -- (1) all male; (2) all female; (3) LGBTQIA+ and non-binary; and (4) a mixed group of single households -- heads were convened. A total of 17 participants composed of seven females, seven males and three LGBTQIA+ persons attended the FGD sessions. Most of them were not survey respondents.

To analyze the results of this study, the Investing in Women (IW) Norms Framework was used to identify potential positive deviances.

# SUMMARY FINDINGS

Research participants perceive that traditional gender norms within households do not dominate their daily lives. They also think household and childcare responsibilities should be shared within their households.

But in practice, the data clearly indicate that **women still take on much of these responsibilities**. Such is still true even when respondents say they rely on others for help, with most of them specifying they get support from their mother or mother-in-law, sister or daughter.

In the same manner, respondents believe in equality between males and females outside of the family, particularly in terms of income earning and performance in the workplace. They do not think that that earning the family's income is the sole responsibility of men. Yet in most households they know, **breadwinning or income earning is a responsibility that is still mostly taken up by men**.

In terms of job segregation, participants strongly believe that jobs have no gender, and what really matters are qualifications and credentials. But this is contradicted by their own narratives affirming that **women continue to be held against very high standards, especially when seeking to apply for traditionally male roles**.

When it comes to leadership, even when trends among respondents indicate a belief that women are capable of and should, in fact, take on such roles, **traditional gender norms that describe men as decisive, intentional and strong – making them more preferable leaders than women who are characterized as tentative, emotional and indecisive leaders – remain pervasive**.

While majority of participants said they did not experience discrimination or disapproval based on their sex or gender, two respondents who identified as non-binary said they experienced discrimination. While they constitute a small portion of the total number of respondents, it is still indicative that **workplace discrimination based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity still happens**.

While there is no drastic shift in terms of respondents' contribution to household and childcare responsibilities before and during the pandemic, various changes were noted particularly as an effect of the work from home setup. For most FGD respondents, **balancing work responsibilities with unpaid care and domestic responsibilities had been difficult**. Survey results showed an increase in cases of performing UCW alone which indicates that the pandemic did not increase sharing of UCW, despite most household members being home due to lockdown restrictions.

Most respondents are satisfied with the support they received from their employers. These are support for the work from home setup which included providing equipment and internet subsidies, allowing them to work flexible hours, supplying information on COVID-19, financial support plus goods and other packages. However, majority of respondents also felt that their employer could have handled the pandemic better and that substantial changes in the workplace must happen if this is to be achieved. FGD participants also noted the need for more support in terms of the overall mental health and well-being of employees.

The following were the potential **positive deviances identified in the study:**

1. Household work should be shared equally, negotiated and discussed.
2. Longer parental leaves are needed for women so that they can recover. Longer parental leaves are needed for men because they should share in the care of the newborn.
3. Women are playing the role of breadwinners. The need for dual or multiple-income sources for households and women's ability to fill this need are acknowledged.
4. Jobs should be based on skills.
5. Women are seen to fit into "female jobs" for their perceived strengths and not for their weaknesses to take on "male jobs."
6. Women, men and non-binary people report cases of workplace discrimination.
7. During the pandemic, children's (boy's and girls' at the same rate) contribution to UCW increased.

## **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations drawn from the research:

1. Changing gender norms surrounding UCW should aim for the following: 1) Men should do their fair share of care work in the household, 2) Advocate national policies that compel workplaces to support men doing UCW (e.g., parental leaves not based on sex or gender of parents but on the magnitude of new care work responsibilities following the birth of their newborn and the time needed to adjust to it) and provide care work to employees and their households (income, health and well-being), and 3) Establish a mechanism for community care work (community kitchens, daycare, etc.).
2. Care work should not only be performed; it needs to be managed. Include men in UCW management (make UCW part of men's mental load). Long-term plans on this could include intervention in young people's socialization. Sites for intervention could be households, barangays, schools and other spaces where young people can be reached.

3. Femininity has been undergoing transformation in people's collective minds, but masculinity is not being targeted for change as much. Not performing UCW is part of the masculinity construction. Campaigns can promote performing and management of UCW as part of what it takes to be a man. Men need to know that there are myriad ways to be a man. Instead of making care work gender-neutral, emphasize its role in constructing and preserving masculinity since gender identity and expression are important to those who possess them. Such efforts should not be construed as trying to emasculate men but transforming masculinity so that doing UCW would be seen as making them more of a man than reducing their manhood.

While women breadwinners are seen as empowered, men staying at home and doing UCW can be deemed emasculating. This, again, is why masculinity should be targeted so that women's double burden can be avoided.

4. Institutional support for women breadwinners should include campaigns and workshops for men who receive women's financial support. This is necessary since men who experience emasculation can resort to violence to reassert their masculinity. They need to be guided on how to be a man in a more gender-equal society.
5. Design strategies must be based on the identified positive deviances in this study. Regarding job skills, for example, women and men can be convinced – using the Care Theory – that skills are not gendered but life-sustaining. Skills are prerequisites for people to be able to do the things that make them women, men or non-binary. Another step is to capitalize on the perception of women's strengths and how strength is not a finite resource. It must be emphasized that women's strengths do not take anything away from men.
6. Further research on UCW needs to consider the following:

The lack of data on household income means responses cannot be disaggregated based on social class or financial status, an important factor in determining the need for multiple income sources, the capacity for household members to stay at home full time to perform UCW and other related matters.

Non-binary and LGBTQIA+ people were still largely invisible in the study results despite their inclusion in data gathering. This is because questions on perceptions and practices related to gender-nonconformity were not included in the survey or FGD questions. While survey data from non-binary respondents reveal the most deviance from traditional gendered perceptions on paid and unpaid work, the matter begs further systematic, scientific and qualitative exploration since it only came from four individuals and cannot be considered representative of non-binary experiences, perceptions and aspirations.

# I. BACKGROUND

The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action but preparations for the celebration of what had been accomplished during this period by women's rights and gender equality advocates were sidelined by the spread of COVID-19. In the Philippines and in the world, the pandemic brought to light long existing gender inequalities and exacerbated women and girls' vulnerabilities. The effects that immediately followed when borders were closed to mitigate its rapid spread -- economic instability, job loss, near collapse of the healthcare system, political volatility, increased poverty and people's declining mental health, to name a few -- resulted in declining access to sexual and reproductive health care services, loss of economic opportunities, rising cases of gender-based violence, and an overwhelming burden to women and girls due to unpaid care and domestic work.

As the number of COVID-19 cases increased dramatically, so did the demand for invisible and unpaid labor as most people were forced to stay home during lockdowns and community quarantines, with women and girls bearing the brunt due to long standing gender norms. Yet even with the rising demand, the crucial contributions of unpaid care and domestic work have remained unaccounted and largely ignored in the Philippine government's COVID response.

The Investing in Women Report indicates that six out of 10 families have lost all or most of their income because of suspended work,

reduced hours and pay, or forced unpaid leaves (Impact of COVID-19 on Employees in the Philippines, 2020). The same report noted that mental and physical health issues heightened as many take on increased child and elderly care, household responsibilities and unduly burdened by financial worries. Similarly, the Rapid Gender Assessment conducted by Oxfam, UN Women, and Plan International revealed that 44% of surveyed individuals reported an increase in intensity of care work at home. Of this figure, 68% were women who said they spent more than five hours a day doing unpaid care work" (Dizon and Medina, 2020).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines unpaid care work as non-remunerated work activities that "entail everyday routine household maintenance work such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, doing the laundry, caring for children, etc" (Antonopoulos, 2009). It refers to "activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied" (ILO, 2018). Care work may be classified into two categories: direct and indirect work activities. Direct, face-to-face, personal care work activities, also known as "nurturing" or "relational" care, include "feeding a baby, nursing a sick partner, helping an older person to take a bath, carrying out health check-ups, or teaching young children." Indirect care work, also known as "non-relational care" or "household work," includes cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry and other household maintenance tasks (ILO, 2018).

There is stark evidence that shows women bear the brunt of unpaid care work. A study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019) notes:

*On average, girls aged 5-14 spend up to 50% more time on household chores than boys of the same age. This difference increases to 200% in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia regions (UNICEF, 2016[15]). In Ethiopia, Peru and South Africa, time use data is available for girls and boys from age ten, revealing that ten-year-old girls spend on average 44 minutes in unpaid care work compared to 24 minutes for boys of the same age. In Peru, 15-year-old girls spend on average around two hours, while boys of the same age spend a little over one hour...More positively, Oxfam (2018[2]) finds that in Uganda, Zimbabwe, and the Philippines, men whose fathers engaged in care activities when they were children are more likely to contribute to unpaid care work themselves.*

According to Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka (2014), the gender gap in unpaid care work has major ramifications to the kind or quality of employment available to women and to their overall participation in the labor market. Women who are responsible for the majority of unpaid care work are less likely to be employed, and those who are employed are more likely to work part-time or in informal settings, earning less than their male counterparts. This situation severely impacts women's economic participation and only exacerbates an already wide gender gap in terms of earnings, political representation and decision-making (UNESCAP, 2019). In the Asia-Pacific region, 80% of unpaid care work is performed by women, pushing them into informal employment that may, on one hand, offer some flexibility but, on the other, put them in vulnerable conditions of work and pay (UNESCAP, 2019). Unpaid care work also limits women's opportunities to learn, to rest and expand their life choices (ADB, 2020).

The unequal distribution of unpaid care responsibilities perpetuates gendered notions and behaviors towards women's breadwinning (Kowalewska and Vitali, 2019). The Social Norms, Attitudes and Practices Survey (2019) of Investing in Women also found that "women

were more likely than men to see their salary contributing to the family income; and more men than women claim to be main income earners. In many cases, when a breadwinner is a woman, households usually have less income (Kowalewska and Vitali 2019). Also, "among the persistent female breadwinner families, where role reversals were most likely to be identified, the men...did not typically take on the levels of housework and child care that role reversal would suggest," while men in households where incomes are shared "appeared more committed to creating equality than to taking over traditional female roles in the family" (Black, Drago, and Wooden, 2004).

To address burgeoning issues arising from the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, it is important to examine deeply rooted and entrenched gender norms and stereotypes. Such effort includes examining and highlighting cultural and ethnic differences in household practices and attitudes on unpaid care work (Ferrant, et. al, 2014 and ADB, 2020), and involves working not only with women and girls but also men and boys across generations (OECD, 2019). Doing so can significantly change people's understanding of unpaid care work and bring about a significant shift in attitudes

and expectations from one that completely puts the onus on women towards shared responsibilities within households.

Additionally, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment notes that a push for change should be aimed not only at individual behavior but also at norms that "regulate institutions, structures, and policies," and include gendered social and economic norms in order to "address the devaluation of care work and the stigmatization of the informal economy" (United Nations, 2017, as cited in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019).

The role of governments must also be emphasized especially in providing access to public services such as health and child care, public transportation and other social services (Antonopoulos, 2009). Governments must also push private sectors to ensure care work-friendly working policies such as maternity leave public subsidies of 14 weeks, equal amounts of maternity and paternity leave, and care work-friendly working conditions (Ferrant, Pesando, and Nowacka, 2014). The regular and efficient collection and analysis of time use data must also be ensured to properly measure and monitor the redistribution of unpaid care work.

The ensuing pandemic and government response to the health crisis has severely restricted the movement of people, goods and services. Lockdowns and various other restrictions also had lasting impacts on businesses. Among those greatly affected are industries where the employment of women is highly concentrated such as retail, hospitality and the service sector which includes BPO companies.

The Philippine BPO industry, as part of the service sector, contributes nearly \$30 billion to the economy each year. It is estimated that 1.3 million Filipinos were employed in over 1,000 BPO companies in 2019 and figures show 8%-10% growth every year. (Talmage-Rostron, 2021). BPOs or call centers are dubbed "female-friendly workplaces" with the global industry having women as 71% of its total workforce (Hultgren, 2018). In the Philippines, women form at least 53.2% of the BPO workforce (BPO Industry Employees Network, 2019).

The Philippines saw a dramatic 16.5% drop in GDP, leading to negative growth of industry by 23% and services by 16%. A report published by Investing in Women on the impact of COVID-19 on Employees in the Philippines (2020) showed that among women and men surveyed, six out of 10 families have lost income because of suspended jobs, reduced hours or pay, or being forced to take unpaid leaves. The pandemic also had severe impact on their mental and physical health as they took on increased child and elderly care as well as other household responsibilities while worrying about how to make ends meet.

Millennials are "anyone born between 1981 and 1996, ages 23 to 38 in 2019" (Dimock, 2019). During the pandemic, this generation "suffered the most from job disruption [and] financial stress" (The Lasting Impact of COVID-19 by Generation, 2021). The increase in stress may be due to many factors, including the additional responsibilities working parents face. From online school to lack of childcare, working parents have been challenged for months "to juggle heavy workloads and keeping their children on task with schoolwork or occupied during the day" (The Lasting Impact of COVID-19 by Generation, 2021).

Evidently, the pandemic has intensified pre-existing unequal gender division of labor and feminization of the double burden of paid and unpaid work. UN Women (2020) notes that school closures and stretched healthcare systems have contributed to increased unpaid care and domestic work especially among women. Many women found themselves responsible for homeschooling their children even while working from home, caring for the elderly and performing other household responsibilities.

For example, initial results of the Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) of the pandemic jointly conducted by various international and local humanitarian actors in the Philippines show that 44 % of those surveyed reported an increase in intensity of care work at home (Dizon and Medina, 2020). Of this figure, 68% were women who said they spent more than five hours a day doing unpaid care and domestic tasks. While there is evidence that males shared in care and domestic responsibilities during the pandemic, the RGA notes that such behavior may not necessarily mean a shift in beliefs and attitudes towards care work (Dizon and Medina, 2020). Although there have been shifts in the roles of men within households, women continue to bear the burden disproportionately since many of them also assumed roles as community or volunteer local health workers.

With the high rate of women's participation in BPOs, the study views the sector as a potential space for shifting gender norms. Millennial BPO workers have been identified as a group that has been disproportionately impacted by the double burden of unpaid care work and paid work during the pandemic. Urban dwellers were chosen as research participants for ease of access.

This baseline research focused on gender norms and potential positive deviances of urban millennials working in the BPO sector to inform Oxfam's larger campaign to influence change in gender norms in the time of COVID-19. The campaign aims to create a positive shift towards supporting and recognizing women's participation in the formal economy.

## II. RESEARCH DESIGN

### A. Research Objectives

The research is guided by the following objectives:

1. To surface gendered norms or narratives of unpaid care work, job segregation, women's breadwinning role, and leadership among urban millennials in the BPO sector while coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To identify potential positive deviants within the BPO sector and highlight how they have challenged these norms, adopted new practices at home and in the workplace, and framed such behaviors within the context of their overall response to the challenges posed by the pandemic.
3. To collectively determine, with the research participants, possible recommendations and strategies to support shared responsibilities and women's breadwinning role.

### B. Research Framework

To analyze the results of this study, the IW Norms Framework will be used to identify potential positive deviances. Perceptions and practices will be examined separately per area of inquiry. Such effort may reveal consistency or dissonance between the two. It could also be a way to explore the relationships of perception and practice. The following rubric will be used to classify perceptions and practices:

- **P** - progressive (+1) (perception/practice that can potentially result to equal sharing of UCW among men and women)

- **N** - neutral (0) (does not affect sharing of UCW)
- **T** - traditional (-1) (perception/practice can result to further delegating UCW to women only)

From this scoring technique, insight can be gained on the strength of each P, N and T perceptions and practices among the sample population (disaggregated by gender). Simply put, those that would be identified as P would serve as the potential positive deviance from UCW gender norms.

### C. Research Methods and Sampling

To attain these objectives, multiple research approaches and participatory methods were employed. Data were generated through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These data were gathered through:

**Review of related literature.** This refers to the review of existing studies on care work and women's economic rights as cited in the introduction.

**Care survey among urban millennials.** An online self-administered survey was conducted to get a general sense of gender norms and the perceptions that shape them among urban millennials working in the BPO sector. The survey captured responses from 232 BPO workers aged 23 to 38 years or those within the same age bracket who have worked in a BPO in the last two years. Respondents were gathered through a snowball method, with the link to the tool widely disseminated among the network and partners of the Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) and among Oxfam's partners. The tool was based

on Oxfam's household care survey and IW's Social Norms, Attitudes, and Practices Survey (SNAPS). All data collected were automatically recorded and encoded in Survey CTO and analyzed through SPSS.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).** To supplement data from the survey, FGDs were conducted. The sessions were held via Zoom from August 24 to September 18, 2021 according to the following groupings: (1) all female, (2) all males, (3) a mixed group of female and male single-headed households, and (4) LGBTQIA+-headed households. Participants were employees from the BPO, ICT and related sectors who were considered urban millennials aged 23 to 38 years. Before each session began, the research team secured an informed consent from each participant, and all sessions were recorded on audio and video for documentation purposes. Participants' profile information were also collected. Each session was facilitated by one of the researchers while documentation and technical support was provided by other members of the team.

Each session lasted from three to four hours. The FGDs produced data used to deepen analysis on gender norms and narratives of unpaid care work and women's breadwinning role among urban millennials in the BPO sector. Such data also provided insights on how they have challenged these norms, adopted new practices and strategies to support shared responsibilities and women's breadwinning role. It highlights participants' diverse experiences and reflections about their social relations in various contexts as they cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## C. Research Limitations

Initially, the research aimed to capture responses from a total of 924 survey participants -- 50% of whom would have been primary respondents, BPO workers aged 23-38 years while the other 50% would have been secondary respondents, nominated household members of primary respondents. However, because of the slow uptake of the survey among BPO workers, the target number was reduced by half to a total of 462 primary respondents only.

The survey was sent out to 462 respondents but only 232 (50.21%) met the inclusion criteria of being an urban millennial (specifically, being 23-38 years old). Additional primary respondents could not be reached due to time constraints on data collection. There were also more female than male and non-binary respondents. There was also an unequal number of unpartnered and partnered respondents. Analysis of the data was limited by the characteristics of this sample population.

Moreover, most FGD participants were not from the roster of survey respondents as conventionally practiced. While a number of survey respondents indicated an interest to participate in FGDs, they either did not provide the correct contact information or did not respond to calls and email messages. Oxfam had also requested delinking the FGDs from the survey so that both activities could be conducted simultaneously to meet project deadlines. As such, the researchers were unable to validate trends found in the survey quantitatively from the survey respondents themselves.

Finally, while this study is inspired by the Positive Deviant Approach (PDA), which requires research participants to identify issues and deviant attitudes or behaviors, the researchers make no claims that identified behavioral shifts have been derived using this approach. Rather, behavior which are deemed to be potential positive deviances were identified based on the trends from the survey and FGD data.

The PDA rests on five important principles: (1) research participants are considered experts who can provide solutions to their own problems, (2) research participants are self-organizing entities with enough resources to implement the identified solutions, (3) the identification of issues and finding solutions are done collectively, (4) the approach is sustainable, meaning it enables the community/research participants to discover solutions to their own problems, and (5) the behavior change is being practiced. Research using a PDA requires longer time to immerse and engage with the research respondents, especially since determining PD individuals must be done through observation apart from data analysis, and the research respondents should be the ones to identify the positive deviants among them. Such approach also emphasizes that the uncommon practices or behaviors are results of their realization of the problem and which they were empowered. However, the researchers could not make such a claim because the behavior shifts could be because of the pandemic and not because they thought the gender norms in the household were, by themselves, problematic.

### III. PROFILE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

All survey respondents are employed in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. There are two types of participants in this research: the survey respondents and the FGD participants.

Most of them work and live in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu. Their ages range from 23 to 38 years. One hundred twenty-nine (129) or 56% of the survey participants were female, 89 (or 38%) were male, and 4 (or 1.7%) were non-binary. Ten (10) of them did not disclose their gender identity.

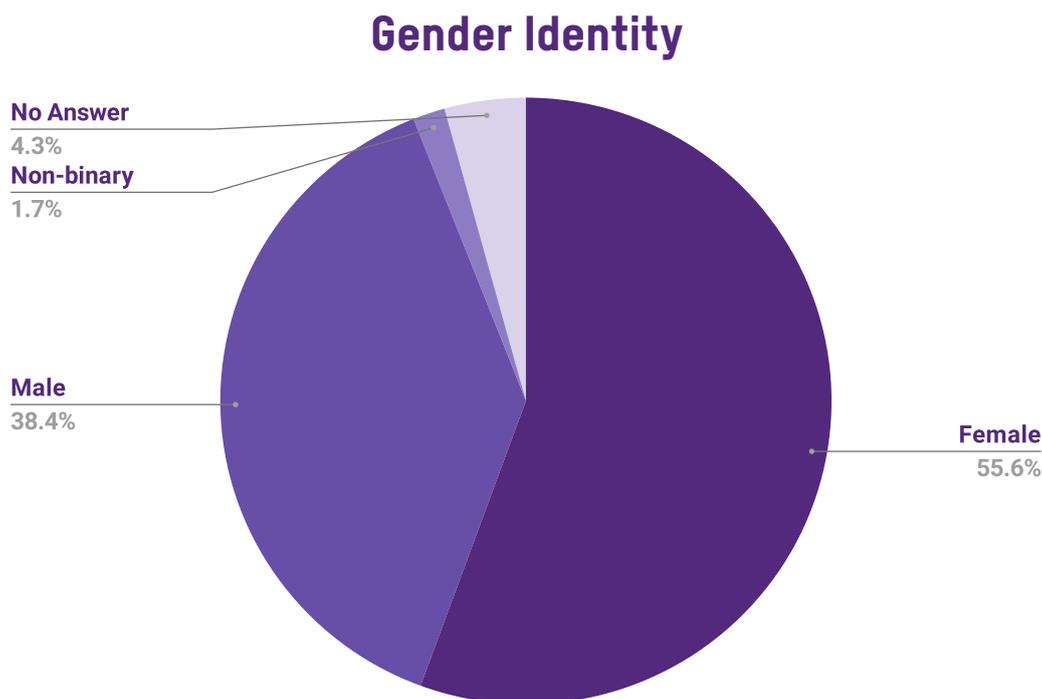


Figure 1. Gender Identity of Respondents

Out of 232 participants, 113 (48.7%) declared themselves as household heads where household sizes ranged from 1 to 13 individuals and had an average of 4.3 household members.

All respondents in this research noted that they were full-time BPO employees, with working hours per week ranging from 30 to 100 hours. Their mean or average gross income per month is Php 40,583.00.

Most survey respondents (146 or 63%) reported they were currently unpartnered while 76 or 33% said they were in a domestic partnership, and 10 or 4% did not indicate their partnership status. Among the unpartnered, 91 were female, 54 were male and 1 was non-binary. Among the partnered, 38 were female, 35 were male and three were non-binary.

## Partnership Status

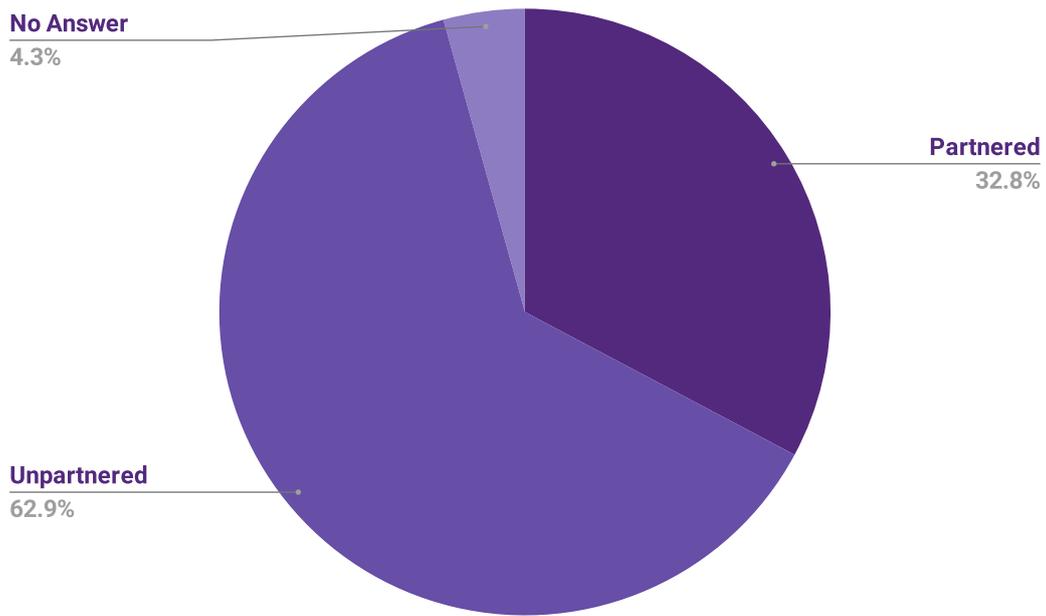


Figure 2. Partnership Status of Respondents

Ages of the FGD participants ranged from 25 to 38 years, with the majority in their 30s. There were two who did not indicate their age. Seven were female and the other seven were males while three were LGBTQIA+ persons. They are currently employed in BPO and/or ICT-related companies and are residents of Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan and Cavite.

# IV. FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS, BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES ON GENDER NORMS

## A. Gender Norms within Households

### 1. Household and Childcare Responsibilities

Among survey respondents, household responsibilities such as cleaning, washing and cooking are often equally shared with someone else in the household. Of the total number of respondents, 27% indicated that they were sharing tasks equally with their spouse/partner, while 23% said they assumed most of the responsibility. There are 22% who said household work was done by other family members, and 19% said it was shared equally with other members of the household or paid staff. Only 1% said that most housework was done by paid staff.

Among females, however, 79.07% do household work whether shared or alone. Among men, the number is smaller at 62.92%. Among partnered females, 34.2% do UCW alone while among partnered males, only 14.2% do UCW on their own.

Majority of female respondents who reported being unpartnered took care of household responsibilities, either shared with other household members or alone. More unpartnered females participated in household work than unpartnered males. Only 19.78% of unpartnered females left household work to others while 42.59% of unpartnered males did not participate in household work at all. For partnered males, 25.71% had no part in household work, almost equal to females at 23.68%.

Unpartnered females tend to participate in household work more than unpartnered males while partnered females and males tend to share household responsibilities with their partners. Unpartnered males have the least participation in household work.

## Household Responsibilities

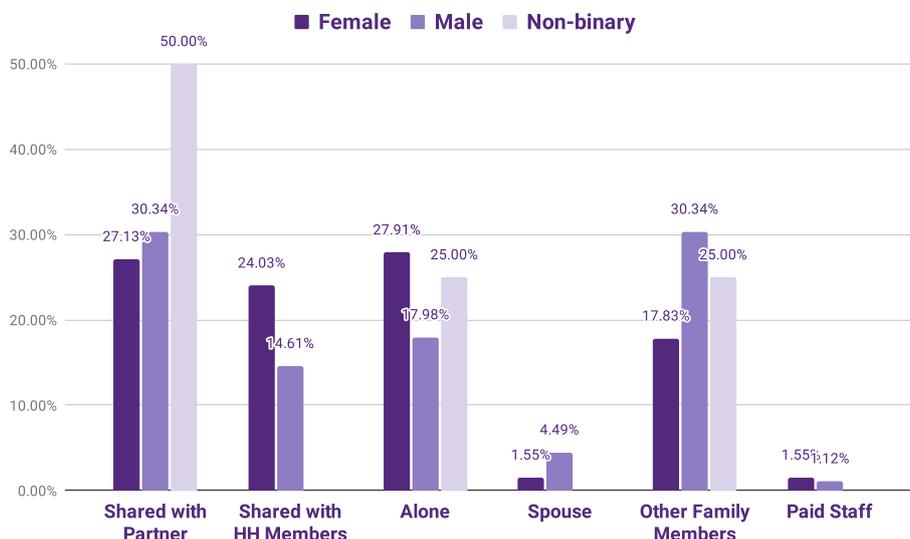


Figure 3. Which is true regarding household responsibilities within your household?

A similar trend was observed among FGD participants who found it common to share household responsibilities. Male participants shared various arrangements in their households: (1) tasks are distributed among family members, and (2) each does own chores like washing dishes or laundry depending on one's availability. Except for one participant who said monthly family meetings were held to determine the distribution of household tasks, all others said that they simply arrived at their arrangement without any formal discussion.

While sharing of responsibilities was common among survey and FGD respondents, further nuancing shows that household responsibilities were still taken up mostly by women. Females who do household work alone spend an average of six hours per day while men who do the work alone spend an average of 4.6 hours. That adds up to a difference of nearly 10 hours a week.

In the midst of the pandemic, women still assumed most responsibility in domestic life. While it is evident that there are a good number of male participants who signified that they shared household duties equally with their partners, many of them admitted that routine domestic work such as cleaning, washing and cooking were primarily fulfilled by other members of their households.

FGD discussions also showed that while shared responsibilities were common, most housework was still done by female members of the household including female kasambahay or helper. Men were found to take up chores that are more traditionally assigned to men such as repairs and tasks that involve heavy lifting. One

participant shared, ***"nagwowork po ang tatay ko... kaya si nanay talaga gumagawa sa bahay, siguro ang tulong lang ni tatay ay repair lang, yung mga mahirap gawin [My father works so it's really my mother who does most of the household work. My father helps but mostly in doing repair and in work that's difficult to do.]"***

Nevertheless, FGD participants believe that sharing household responsibilities and unpaid care work develops or enhances an individual's sense of responsibility. It teaches children about equality and emphasizes that there are no chores which are specific to men or women. Moreover, encouraging compromise and communication among family members about shared and equal responsibilities can potentially break stereotypes and make unpaid care work more socially acceptable among the younger generation.

There was consensus among FGD participants that unpaid care is a responsibility towards their families or partners done willingly out of love. And that unpaid care is everyone's responsibility, not only by women. They agree that it is a responsibility that can contribute to their personal growth and even nurture relationships among family members. One male participant said that doing household work allowed him to bond with his siblings, nephews and nieces, and expressed belief that it is good training to prepare him for the time when he has his own family.

There is a similar trend when it comes to childcare. Of the survey respondents, 28.02% said that this responsibility was shared within households. Only 3.45% said that childcare was solely done by their partner or spouse.

## Childcare Responsibilities

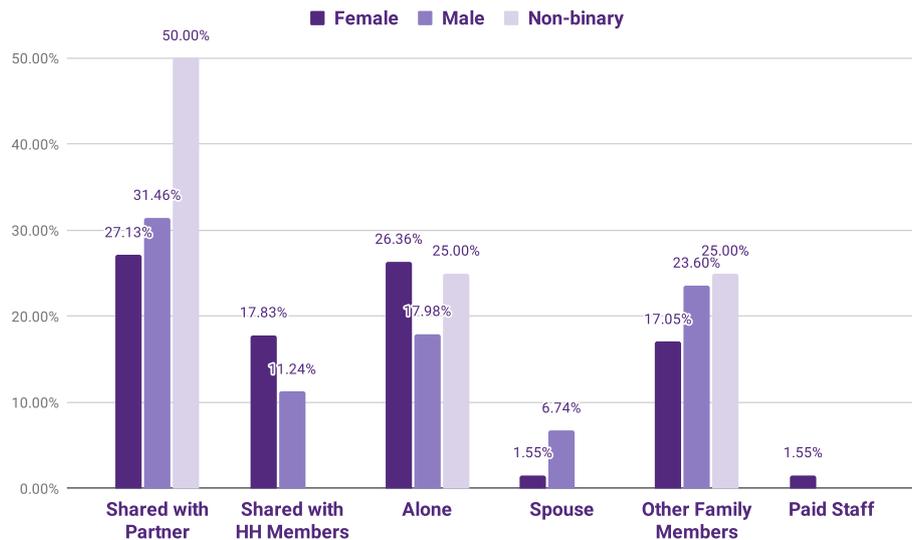


Figure 4. Which is true regarding childcare responsibilities within your household?

Among females, however, 71.32% did childcare work whether shared or alone. Among men, the number is smaller at 60.67%.

Majority of female respondents who reported being unpartnered took care of childcare responsibilities, either shared with other household members or alone. More unpartnered females (68.13%) participated in childcare work than unpartnered males (57.41%). Only 21.98% of unpartnered females left childcare work to others while 37.04% of unpartnered males

did not participate in childcare work at all. For partnered males, 20% had no part in childcare work, while only 15.79% of partnered females did not take part.

Similar to the trend in household work, unpartnered females tended to participate in childcare work more than unpartnered males. There was more incidence of sharing childcare responsibilities among partnered individuals. Unpartnered males had the least participation in childcare work.

## “Childcare should be more of a woman’s responsibility than a man’s”

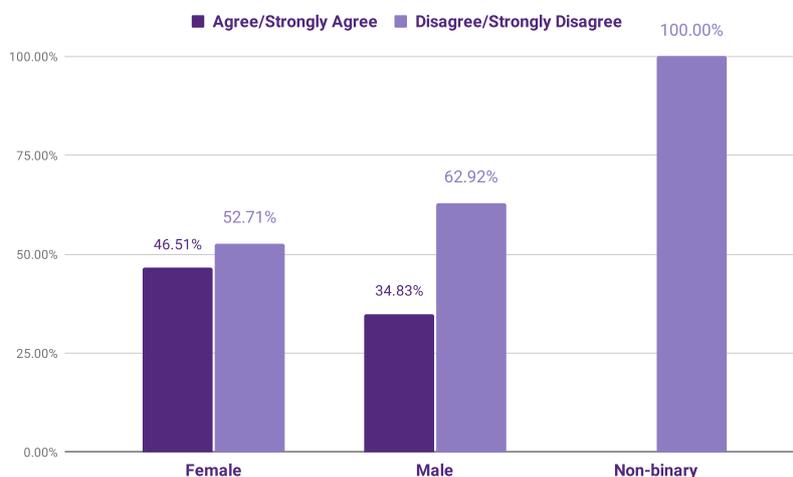


Figure 5. Agree or Disagree: “Childcare should be more of a woman’s responsibility than a man’s”

When it comes to perceptions on whose responsibility childcare is, 38% of survey participants disagreed that childcare is primarily a woman's responsibility, but quite a number of them, 26%, agreed that it is.

Of the survey participants, 68 women (52.71%) said they disagree/strongly disagree that childcare is more of a woman's responsibility than a man's. Almost equally, however, 60 women (46.51%) said they agree/strongly agree that childcare is a woman's responsibility. Similarly, while 46.61% of men disagree/strongly disagree that childcare is a woman's responsibility, the number of those who agree/strongly agree with the statement was almost as high at 34.83%. This finding suggests that gender stereotypes surrounding childcare still pervade among millennial men and women who took part in the study.

This prevalence may be a result of strong traditional beliefs and practices in Filipino households where women automatically assume the role of primary caregivers and are comfortable with it. It should be noted, though, that while many women seem comfortable in caregiving roles, there are also some who hold unconventional views about childcare and do not conform to the "primary caregiver" stereotype.

Finally, non-binary participants appeared to have a more unified stand on the statement cited. All of them disagree/strongly disagree that childcare is more of a woman's responsibility than a man's. Comparing these responses with those elicited from males and females, it can be noted that non-binary millennial participants hold more gender-neutral views on childcare compared to their cis-heteronormative counterparts.

## Do most people you know agree with "childcare should be more of a woman's responsibility than a man's"

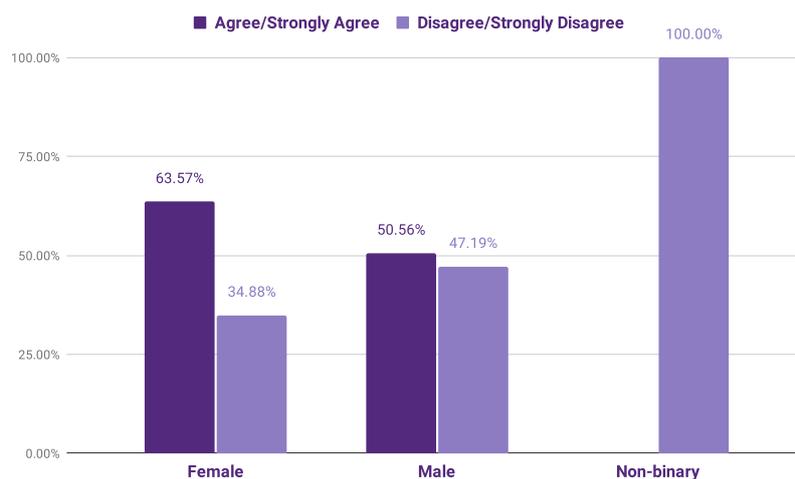


Figure 6. Agree or Disagree: Do most people you know agree with "childcare should be more of a woman's responsibility than a man's"?

The contradicting responses among male and female respondents may be reinforced by the realities to which respondents are exposed. While they mostly do not adhere to gender norms on childcare, most of them think that other people agree that childcare is a woman’s responsibility. Figure 7 shows the perceptions of male, female and non-binary participants of this research about who assumes more childcare responsibilities in other households they know. Across gender groups, survey participants generally exhibit agreement with the statement above. However, differences may be observed when each gender group is examined individually.

## In most households I know, women take more responsibility for childcare than men



Figure 7. Agree or Disagree: In most households I know, women take more responsibility for childcare than men

It may be noted that 86.05% of women, 80.90% of men and 50% of non-binary participants agree/strongly agree that women take more responsibility than men when it comes to childcare in most households they know. Even when almost half of men and women and all non-binary participants disagree that childcare is a woman’s responsibility, households they know of who model the practice of shared childcare work are few. Although there are some families where men take the lead in childcare, data from this research suggest that it is still more common for women to take charge of childcare responsibilities.

Even when a strong traditional view of gender norms surrounding childcare work persists

among many of the research participants, an overwhelming majority of them disagree that other people they know will disapprove of them if their partners started to share more in childcare responsibilities.

In the case of male participants, 50 or 56.2% of them disagreed with the statement. Yet, the option with the second highest number of responses is “agree” with 22 or 24.7% of male respondents marking such response. This was followed by 10 or 11.2% of male respondents strongly disagreeing with the statement. Only 4 or 4.5% of male respondents said they strongly agreed with the statement. From these results, it may be inferred that male participants who disagree with this statement feel that they

would not be judged if their partners did most of the childcare. This may be because it is a norm for women to take on more childcare duties than men. Meanwhile, those who responded “agree” could be men who think that putting additional burden on their partners may be taken against them.

For female respondents, 73 or 56.6% of them disagreed when presented with the statement above. This shows that these women feel secure that others will not take it against them or their partners if their partners are more involved in childcare duties. This also indicates female participants’ openness to new dynamics between them and their partners in terms of caring for children. For this group, it may also be observed that there are significantly more participants who disagree than agree that other people they know will disapprove of them if their partners started to share more childcare responsibilities. Women respondents who agree/strongly agree with the above statement are in the minority, accounting for 34 or 26.6% of the total. These outcomes point out that while there are more women who feel confident that it is alright in the eyes of others for their partners to become more involved in childcare, there are some who believe relieving themselves of childcare work will be disapproved by other people.

At least 75% of non-binary participants disagreed that other people they know would disapprove of them if their partners got more involved in childcare. Only 1 or 25% of them expressed agreement to it. From these results, it may be concluded that non-binary participants of this survey are more open to shared parenting and more equitable sharing of childcare duties.

When asked who would disapprove of them sharing in childcare duties, the top five answers were: (1) in-laws, (2) social community, (3) partner, (4) neighbors, and (5) mother. There were also others who said those who would disapprove could include their colleagues, relatives or other family members and strangers.

### **Satisfaction with current arrangements on unpaid care work responsibilities**

Majority of survey respondents or 87.5% said they were satisfied with the current division of tasks or chores in their households. While this is the case, around 84.9% of respondents also said they would like their partner or other members of their household to help them with particular tasks. When asked what these tasks are, the top five answers were: (1) cleaning, (2) buying food, groceries and other household supplies, (3) cooking, (4) laundry, and (5) childcare including home schooling.

It was mostly males (96.63%) who reported being satisfied with their current arrangement although the majority of females (88.37%) also reported being satisfied. Dissatisfaction came from non-binary individuals (25%) and females (11.63%).

Among unpartnered females who take on household and childcare responsibilities the most, 90.11% were satisfied. Most of them (65.93%) often asked for help in doing unpaid care work. Yet an overwhelming majority of them still think or desire to do more.

Among unpartnered males who take on household and childcare responsibilities the least, 92.59% were satisfied. They asked for

help the least among all male and female respondents (55.56%). They were also the group who desires the least to do more in the household (83.33%).

It was among partnered females and males who mostly share household and childcare responsibilities with their partners or other household members that a discrepancy in satisfaction was observed. All of the partnered males were satisfied while 15.70% of partnered females were not.

At least 60.53% of partnered females often asked for help, which could indicate a need to offload some of the burden on unpaid care work to other household members. Interestingly, even more partnered males (77.14%) asked for

help doing unpaid care work while 94.29% of them felt that they could be doing more in the household.

Among non-binary individuals who were most open to shared unpaid care work responsibilities, 75% were satisfied while 50% often asked for help, often or rarely received help and received it. In the same manner, 50% of them felt that they could still be doing more.

## 2. Breadwinning

Of the survey respondents, 63% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “earning the family’s income should be more of a man’s responsibility than a woman’s,” yet 33%, which is still quite a big number, agreed or strongly agreed with it.

### “Earning the family income should be more of a man’s responsibility than a woman’s.”

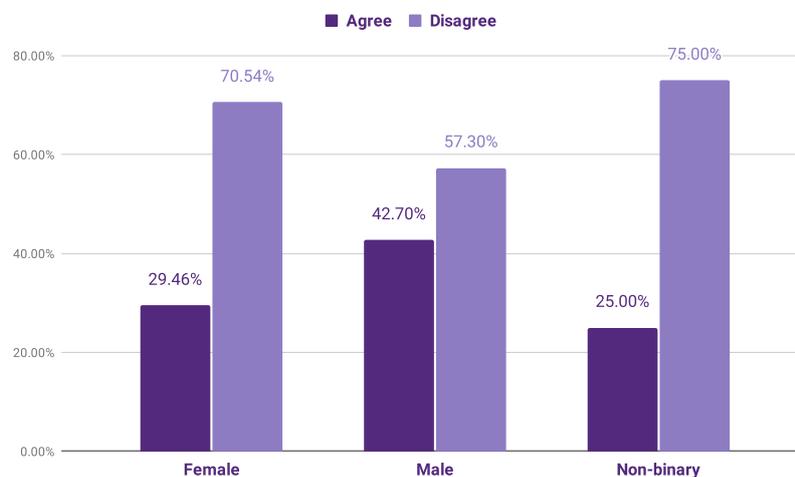


Figure 8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Earning the family’s income should be more of a man’s responsibility than a woman’s?

At a glance, it is evident that most respondents disagreed with the statement. The traditional perception of a breadwinner that considers it a man’s responsibility was not held by majority of female, male and non-binary millennial BPO respondents.

The group who showed disagreement the most was non-binary participants. All of the partnered non-binary participants expressed disagreement with the traditional perception of a breadwinner. They were closely followed by females, particularly unpartnered females of whom 71.4% said they

disagree/strongly disagree with the statement. Among males, 66.67% of unpartnered respondents disagreed with the statement but the majority of partnered men still agreed that it is their responsibility to earn an income. Partnered males were the only group where more respondents agreed (57.14%) with the traditional take on a breadwinner than those who disagreed (42.86%).

Data from the FGDs show that there are men who are comfortable with the notion of women as primary breadwinners. Participants across all FGD groups indicated high regard for women breadwinners. One male participant shared, **“Hands down to them that they are able to break the norm...I look up to women leaders showing that women and men can do the same thing.”** Yet upon closer examination, persistence of gender stereotypes can still be picked up in some narratives. For example, a male participant reflected that he would be uncomfortable if his wife was the main income earner, saying it is **“off with me if I found myself in the reverse situation.”** He said that as a man, he should be providing for the family and that his wife, because she is taking care of their children, should not be burdened with paid work. This was affirmed by another male participant who cited possible reasons why a husband may not be supportive of his wife becoming a breadwinner: (1) feelings of worry about a wife’s health due to additional burdens at work, (2) husbands are dominant and too proud, and (3) simply wanting to retain their role as the family’s breadwinner.

Some female FGD participants found the role of a woman breadwinner very fulfilling especially when they get promoted, saying it could give them an opportunity to make a difference and

serve as role models for their children. But a female participant from the single-headed household group said, **“it should be the man -- the normal situation is that the man should be the breadwinner. But if you don’t have a choice then you really have to work hard. If I had a husband, I’d rather choose to do care work than work outside.”** Another participant said, **“Kung kaya ng lalaki, why not stay at home? [If the man can do it, why shouldn’t women stay at home?]”**

Across all FGD groups, participants emphasized that it is important for couples to discuss the matter of a wife assuming a breadwinner role to avoid potential conflict that often arises from the typical view among Filipino families that a wife should not be working. They said this could affect how the husband is viewed by other people, including relatives. Such an arrangement could put into question a man’s position as head of the family and, consequently, as primary breadwinner and economic provider.

Also, while most survey respondents generally felt that being a breadwinner shouldn’t be primarily a man’s job, majority of them expressed belief that most people they knew believed that it must be the case.

## **B. Gender Norms in the Workplace**

### **1. Job Segregation**

Data show that while many agree that work roles should not be associated with gender, most participants still thought that there are types of work which are best for males or females only. Among the participants, 75% non-binary individuals, 47.29% female and 57.3% male

## “There are some work roles better suited to men and some better suited women.”

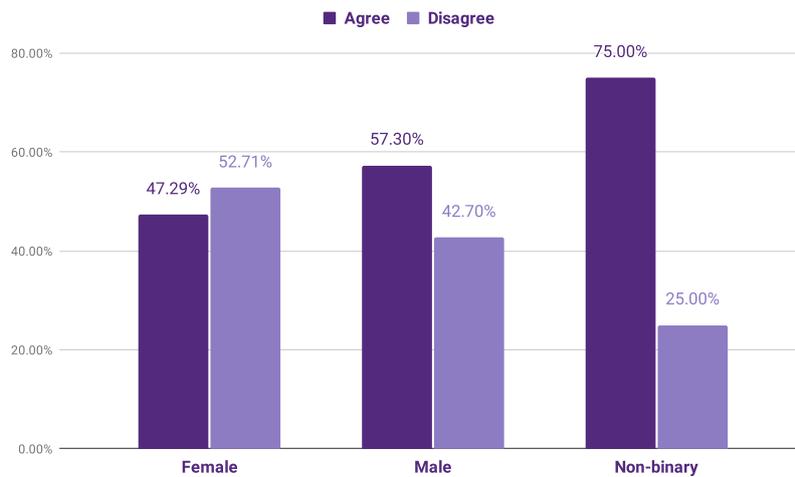


Figure 9. Agree or disagree: There are some work roles better suited to men and some better suited to women

agreed that job segregation by gender makes sense. Majority of women, however, (52.71%) disagreed that there are some work roles better suited to men and some to women. It was only among partnered females that the majority (60.53%) disagreed.

These results indicated the strength of the traditional norms around gendered division of work in workplaces.

Male, LGBTQIA+ and some female participants shared the view that “roles or jobs have no gender,” and those qualifications and skills are more important in determining who is fit for a role. Most of them perceive job segregation as “old thinking” or an “archaic idea.” While this is the case, gender stereotypes remained evident in some of their narratives.

Several participants across different groups thought that there are jobs more suited for a particular gender, depending on the requirements of the role. For example, a male participant believed that women would be more suitable in roles involving marketing and promotion while men are better for roles

requiring physical strength like construction. A female participant from the single-headed household FGD group also said she believed jobs that require technical skills such as engineering are more suited for males. Similarly, another female participant said, **“hindi pare-pareho ang kakayanan ng mga lalaki so ganun din ang mga babae, [men and women have different skills and capabilities]”** and noted that there are still jobs that need a “feminine touch.”

Many still think that women need to prove themselves and must exhibit certain characteristics to be considered qualified for a job that is typically dominated by men. Male participants agreed that a woman must show confidence in her skills plus a deep sense of awareness of her capabilities and what she can potentially bring to the workplace when she is vying for a promotion or a spot in a male-dominated team.

Most glaring is that narratives also reflect the need for women to discuss or seek the approval of their partners and family to pursue roles in workplaces or teams that are largely dominated

by males. Female participants raised this as an important consideration in accepting a role along with personal fulfillment, financial security and job satisfaction (including a supportive work environment and a good mentoring program). While male participants said that women should do what makes them happy, pursue their passion and not to take other people's opinions seriously, they also agreed that a woman should consider the opinion of her husband and seek his permission or approval to avoid potential marital issues.

Single participants, particularly those from the female and LGBTQIA+ groups, said they should pursue any opportunity that is presented to them no matter the circumstances. Moreover, male participants recognized that a more even mix of women and men across all occupations would have positive implications. ***"Ideas will vary, discussions will be richer and will result in more creative ways of working,"*** said one male participant. ***"There are things that each man and woman excel at so sharing of experiences would potentially benefit each other,"*** said another.

According to the FGD participants, companies would be able to encourage more women to apply for roles in male-dominated teams by: a) developing and sharing messages that encourage women to pursue their interests and aspire for leadership roles, b) setting clear expectations for everyone so employees can better prepare themselves and judge if they fit specific roles, and c) providing opportunities for mentorship and exposure so women are able to share their stories and inspire and empower other women. LGBTQIA+ participants said that companies should avoid descriptions in job advertisements that highlight a preferred gender for a specific role.

## 2. Women's leadership

FGD results reflected a diversion from gender norms. Some participants said that men and women sharing leadership roles in workplaces was now the norm. Many of them emphasized that what men could do, women are also capable of doing and that having more women in leadership allows for a diversity of ideas and can inspire other women to pursue leadership roles, too. They said that it proves women can contribute just as meaningfully as men at work. But while this diversion was observed, strong adherence to traditional norms still prevails, as bared by the FGD participants.

All FGD participants acknowledged that men tend to assume more leadership roles. They said that this was because of men's "naturally strong personality," a characteristic that supposedly makes people better leaders. According to a female participant, many still believe that the traditional setup where the man is considered the head of the family is the natural order of things, and therefore should also be mirrored in other contexts like work.

Participants also identified barriers to women's representation in leadership roles. All of them agreed that not many females possess strong personalities that are traditionally associated with the qualities of a male leader. Additionally, they mentioned how gender norms that are deeply embedded in the Filipino culture were influencing many women's decision to prioritize their family over their careers. They said that once women get married, their career track and goals could also change because of the demands of family life that are often defined by gendered expectations, particularly in relation to unpaid and domestic care. They also noted the limited leadership training opportunities for women employees.

Across all FGD groups, there was a notion that females who aspire for leadership roles need to prove themselves. Female participants agreed that when women aspire for leadership roles, they should think carefully because leadership tasks are different from their ordinary workload. They also claimed that women must assess themselves first in terms of their physical, emotional, and mental preparedness as well as their time management skills before taking a leadership position. The participants emphasized the need for women to have courage so they could perform the role properly. They also noted the importance of support coming from their immediate community, especially their family.

In terms of preference, most participants across all FGDs groups expressed stronger preference for male leaders who, they said, are

direct to the point and can provide immediate solutions to problems, compared to female leaders who are awkward and tend to strictly follow processes and protocols by the book. Some participants said they preferred an LGBTQIA+ manager because they work harder since they have much to prove to others. Still others said that regardless of sex or gender, they would look for a leader or manager who is able to “cater to our needs and treat the whole team well.”

### 3. Workplace discrimination and support services

In terms of team compositions, 72.41% of the survey participants were part of teams with equal number of men and women while 15.09% belonged to teams composed mostly of women. Only 6.47% belonged to teams made up mostly of men.

## I have experienced some form of discrimination or harassment at work

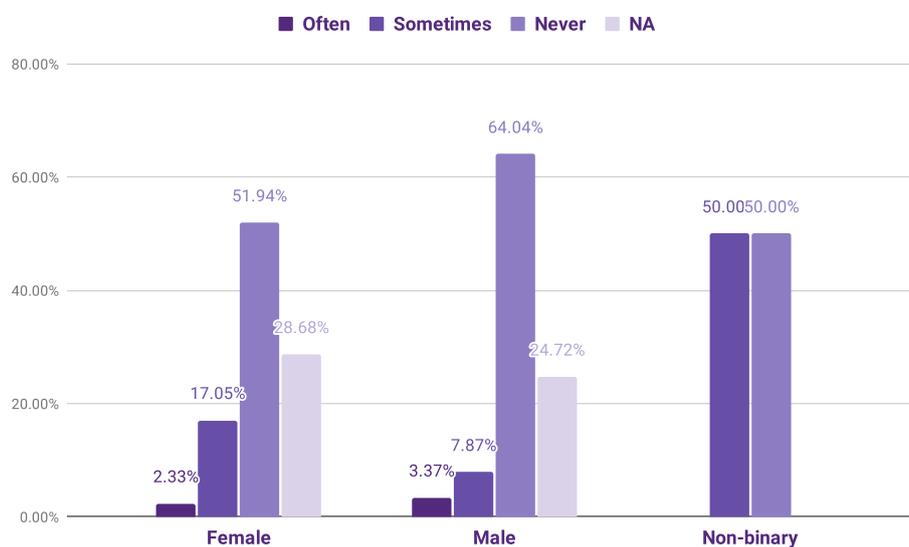


Figure 10. I have experienced some form of discrimination at work

Most survey respondents across the three earlier mentioned categories of team composition have never felt disapproval based on their gender. Among those who did, two males (18.18%), seven females (63.64%) females and two non-binary individuals (18.18%) experienced feeling of disapproval in a team of mostly women. Four males (100%) experienced a feeling of disapproval in a team composed mainly of males while four males (36.4%) males and seven females (63.6%) experienced a feeling of disapproval in a team of similar number of males and females.

In teams under the first and second categories, it was women who felt the most disapproval from their team. In teams of mostly men, all who reported belonging to one who were all males, felt disapproval from their team. In teams of mostly women, 50% of non-binary respondents felt disapproval from their team. Of the non-binary participants, two out of four or 50% experienced being discriminated against which could be because of their not being cis-heteronormative. There were also 25 of female participants (19.37%) who experienced discrimination in the workplace which could be gender-based. Male participants (10 or 11.23%) also felt some form of workplace discrimination. Most male and female survey respondents have never felt disapproval due to their sexual orientation and gender identity probably because they conformed or were seen to conform to cis-heteronormative social standards.

Among participants who experienced discrimination, all non-binary individuals reported about it often. Only 48% of females and 50% of males reported instances of workplace discrimination. But overall, more of the respondents who experienced discrimination (54%) reported it.

Majority of those who experienced workplace discrimination 25 or 67.57% received support services from their company including 11 respondents who never reported their cases. Those who never received support services included four respondents who reported about their experience. Such support services included counselling, access to legal assistance and medical and health exams, mediation and monetary compensation. There were some who mentioned consultation and financial assistance.

Respondents who experienced workplace discrimination but were not able to receive support services coped with their experience by resigning (two females), taking a leave of absence (one female), reporting the incident to the police (one female), filing a labor case (one female) and confiding in their family and friends (one male). One non-binary respondent said "nobody cares enough to report or take action".

When it comes to support services for employees who experience harassment or violence in the home, 65.1% of respondents said they were unaware if these services were available or accessible. However, there was a small number of respondents who said that these were available (18.1%) while even a smaller number (12.1%) indicated that there were no such services offered by their employers. When available, respondents said these services included counselling, access to physical and mental examination, access to legal assistance, mediation and HR support.

#### **4. Work benefits**

Survey respondents were also asked about their level of satisfaction with the benefits they received from their jobs. Most respondents (84%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the benefits they received. A minority or 11.64%, majority of which were women, indicated they were not. See Table 1 for the ranking of benefits they would like to have more of. Those who chose "others" specified them to be salary increase and retirement pay.

Table 1. Work benefits that survey respondents need more of

<b>Work benefits that survey respondents need more of</b>	<b>f</b>
Bonuses/allowance	180
Better health care benefits	148
Work from home options	119
Programs to support employees' mental health, wellness and wellbeing	107
More opportunities for promotion	86
Educational scholarships for children	80
More efforts towards safety and security of employees	78
Flexible working hours	74
Longer parental leave	51
More opportunities to influence decision making	47
Childcare allowance or facility	46
Inclusion of women's reproductive and sexual health in medical health benefits	46
Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ dependents and partners in medical health benefits	45
Access to HIV-related information and services	25
Others	13

Among female respondents, the average number of paid maternity leave they were entitled to amounted to 73.6 days. When asked if they thought this should be increased, 89.2% said "yes." See Table 2 for respondents' ranking of reasons why women need longer paid maternity leave. Other reasons included mental health matters.

Table 2. Reasons women need longer paid maternity leave

<b>Reasons women need longer paid maternity leave</b>	<b>f</b>
Women need more time to recover from childbirth	188
Women need more time to bond with their newborn	133
It is the obligation of the company to ensure mothers' health and well-being, including childbirth	116
Women are the primary caregivers	96
Others	5

Among male respondents, on the other hand, the average number of paid paternity leave amounted to 15.1 days. But 81% of them said this should be increased. The top reasons they cited were the following: a) men should provide support to their partner/spouse while recovering from childbirth; b) men should share care duties for newborn; c) it is the obligation of the company to ensure the well-being and health of fathers; and d) fathers need as much rest as mothers.

It is interesting to note that while a majority of participants felt paid paternity leave days should be increased, there were 14.7% who disagreed, reasoning out that "men need to work" but it is not necessarily the obligation of the company to provide this benefit.

## C. Challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic

### 1. Changes in unpaid care and domestic responsibilities

Majority of respondents (172 or 74%) said they made the most contribution in unpaid and domestic work in their households prior to the pandemic. Of the respondents, 87 or 37.5% ranked their spouse/partner second in terms of contribution to unpaid care and domestic work before the pandemic. Still, 71 respondents (30.6%) relied on other members of the household. Sixty-two respondents (26.7%) relied on their mother or mother-in-law for household responsibilities while 37 respondents (15.9%) relied on their father or father-in-law. Very few sought the help of their children (20 or 8.6%) or paid staff (7 or 3%).

Before the pandemic, 74.14% of respondents contributed the most to UCW either by themselves or along with other household members. Respondents' partners, children and paid staff never performed UCW totally on their own, always with other household members. More than a third or 36.63% of the respondents who contributed to UCW did it alone. The only other household members who performed UCW on their own were mothers/mothers-in-law and fathers/fathers-in-law although there were more of the former (14.52%) than the latter (2.63%).

Majority of male (70 or 79%), female (98 or 76%) and non-binary (100%) respondents believed that they made the most contribution to unpaid and domestic care in their households before the pandemic. This could be due to the fact that most respondents are unpartnered and do not have children.

Table 3. Household member contribution in unpaid and domestic care before vs during the pandemic.

	Overall		Working on their own		Working with others	
	Pre-pandemic	During Pandemic	Pre-pandemic	During Pandemic	Pre-pandemic	During Pandemic
Myself	74.14%	72.41%	36.63%	39.29%	63.37%	60.71%
Partner	37.50%	33.62%	0.00%	8.97%	100.00%	91.03%
Mother/mother-in-law	26.72%	24.57%	14.52%	12.28%	85.48%	87.72%
Father/father-in-law	16.38%	14.22%	2.63%	3.03%	97.37%	96.97%
Daughter	3.88%	6.03%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Son	4.74%	6.03%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Paid staff	3.02%	4.74%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Others	30.60%	32.33%	32.39%	41.33%	67.61%	58.67%

During the pandemic, most respondents reported being the biggest contributors to unpaid and domestic care. Similarly, most respondents also said that they had been mainly responsible for caring for people in their household who exhibited COVID-19 symptoms.

What changed was a slight decrease in respondents performing UCW on their own or with other household members by 1.73% while there was an increase in respondents (2.66%) and their partners (8.97%) doing UCW on their own. Males doing UCW on their own or with others decreased by (3.37%). Among females, there was a slight 0.78% increase.

Moreover, respondents identified buying food, groceries and other household supplies as the most problematic activity during the pandemic, a task that most respondents said they were responsible for. Respondents ranked cleaning, cooking, laundry and childcare as the next most problematic activities (See Table 9 below). Those who indicated "others" specified pet owner responsibilities, going outside, sending allowance and house maintenance.

For FGD participants, responses were varied when asked about the changes brought about by the pandemic. Some LGBTQIA+ and male participants said the pandemic prompted them to have a greater sense of responsibility. One participant shared that because they and their siblings needed to move back home with their parents, household tasks were divided more equally and allowed them to be better at handling chores and managing the household.

According to the female participants, there was an increase in awareness about the roles they performed in the family and that, in turn, allowed them to be aware of how to help each other out. For example, one participant said her dad was now responsible for going to the market to buy food (pamamalengke), something her mother used to do before the pandemic. While this may be understood to be a shift in normative behavior, the participant also admitted that this practice may not be sustained because her father would need to go

back to work. It should be noted that lockdown policies only allowed one adult to leave the household and narratives from the FGDs suggested that this task was often assigned to males in the family. Female participants said they were often responsible for reminding other family members to observe safety protocols. Females were also in charge of sanitizing all household items, which required them to devote more time for cleaning and adjusting their daily routine to make sure this task was done.

When asked about the challenges they faced, many survey respondents cited an increase in household expenses, family members or respondents getting sick, difficulty in accessing government support, difficulty in obtaining basic necessities and difficulty in balancing work and domestic responsibilities as the top answers.

An increase in expenses was a subject that FGD participants also talked about. A female participant who was promoted during the pandemic shared that while the promotion gave her more money to spend for the family, she also had additional costs and expenses. The added income she got from her promotion was only enough to cover an increase in her utility bills as well as food expenses because of the work-from-home setup.

The pandemic also posed a challenge in terms of time management. A participant from the single-headed household FGD group shared: "Working from home has a lot of challenges and puts more pressure on me, especially when it comes to childcare. I stay at home but have less time with my kids...so working from home doesn't necessarily mean I have more time for the family. The pandemic has had a huge impact on the roles I have at home."

## 2. Changes in the workplace

Majority of survey respondents indicated that they were working at home full time to describe their work situation during the pandemic. Almost an equal number of respondents indicated dividing their time between working from home and going to the office and working full time at the office. There were two who said they were laid off or made redundant.

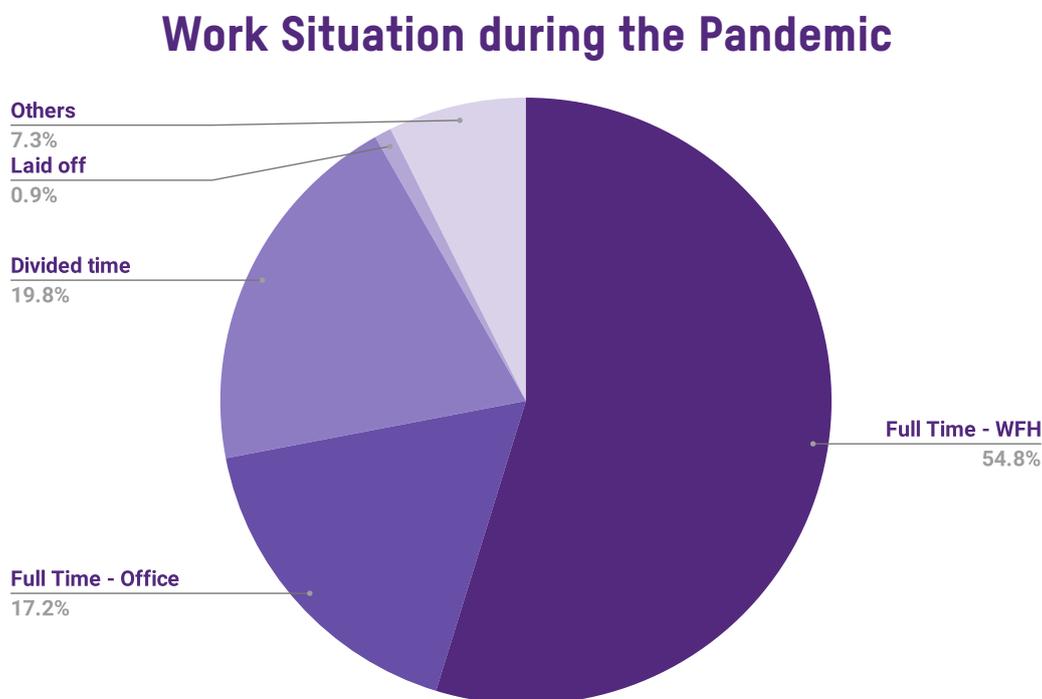


Figure 11. Work situation during the pandemic

Respondents noted that work-related changes included working longer hours and an increase in workload because other members of their team were laid off. Some said they received a pay increase for the additional workload while others had to forgo some or part of their benefits such as 13th month pay, incentives, salary increase and health benefits.

In terms of respondents' satisfaction about how their employers handled the pandemic, more than 75% of them said they were satisfied/extremely satisfied. This could be because a lot of them (more than 50%) received the support they expected their employers to provide. When asked what the support included, their top answers were flexible working schedule, COVID-19 related information, financial support, and goods and other services including food packages and childcare support.

While there was a high rate of satisfaction among survey respondents, majority of them still felt that their employer could have handled the pandemic better. They also expressed the belief that substantial changes in the workplace policies must be made to better address similar problems in the future.

To the question of how to achieve these changes, the most common response given by survey respondents was having regular kamustahan (catch-up) sessions between and among employees and their teams (160 responses). Other ways they cited in which these changes could be obtained included having learning sessions or seminars for employees (146 responses) and information dissemination or campaign drives (122 responses). Those who mentioned “others” gave specific proposals for change such as having COVID-19 patient benefits and stricter implementation of safety and health protocols. To bring about these changes, survey respondents felt they should provide honest feedback to people concerned, speak out when wronged or treated unjustly and participate actively in activities of their employees’ association. They emphasized the need for safe spaces for open communication and conversations at work as well as encouragement and support from their colleagues and their boss.

### 3. Effects on overall health and well-being

Despite the small difference between the performance of unpaid care and domestic work before and during the pandemic, data showed that 34.5% did not have enough time for personal care and hygiene during the pandemic, 13.7% said they suffered physical illness and 9% suffered from mental health problems as a result of unpaid domestic work or caring for people. Most of these respondents said no one took over their tasks while they were sick or unable to perform them. Others said their mother or mother-in-law, father or father-in-law, siblings or other relatives or their children took over their responsibility.

For FGD participants, the work-from-home setup took a toll on their psychological health and impacted their work productivity. One participant shared that it was difficult to focus because there were many distractions when working from home. He said: ***“Employers think that because we are at home, we are more productive. In reality, there are more responsibilities. Before the pandemic, one simply followed office hours and then work was done. Now, because of the work-at-home arrangement, it is more difficult to focus because you also have to deal with issues at home.”***

The same participants shared that it was difficult to find time to relax and unwind. The same participant added: ***“Sometimes you feel so stressed because of work but you also have responsibilities at home that you must take care of. There is limited time to relax, and due to mobility restrictions, we can’t go out to see our relatives or friends. There is also no time to take breaks like we used to when we go out for lunch or pick up coffee [from a coffee shop].”***

### 4. Coping with the challenges during the pandemic

Regarding coping with challenges caused by the pandemic, survey respondents ranked the following as the top five responses: (1) working on a very strict schedule to accomplish all tasks/responsibilities, (2) encouraged family members to follow health protocols, (3) spent more time in social media, watch TV, Netflix, etc., (4) sought the support of other family members, and (5) sacrificed some of their leisure/rest time in order to have more time for multiple responsibilities.

Respondents who sought support mentioned that they asked help in childcare and household chores from other household members. Some said they requested financial assistance while others said they asked for moral support. Such support was mainly provided by their spouses, parents (mother/father) and children.

FGD participants shared the ways their employers helped them cope with the effects of the pandemic. These ways included the conduct of regular town hall meetings to keep them informed, kamustahan sessions and online classes for yoga and Zumba. Some participants said their company provided them with mental health hotlines. Accommodation and transportation were likewise provided for those who needed to work on site while those who were working from home were provided with internet allowance. There was one participant who also shared that their employer had an emergency fund that was easily accessible to all employees needing financial assistance. Someone also talked about an "open door" policy that allowed the staff to get in touch with management.

Participants also suggested ways BPOs could help their employees cope with the pandemic. These included: (1) ensuring employment preservation such that no one will be laid off or lose their job during the pandemic; (2) making benefits easily accessible by ensuring faster and more efficient systems to claim benefits; (3) provision of mental health support such as hotlines or counseling; (4) holding non-work related team building activities or fun games during office hours to help employees cope with being away from each other during the lockdown; (5) conducting weekly huddles and communication sessions between management to and staff to check up on each other; and (6) ensuring that all efforts were aligned with companies' goals and vision.

## V. ANALYSIS

To analyze the results of this study, the IW Norms Framework was used to identify potential positive deviances. The following rubric was used to classify perceptions and practices:

- **P** - progressive (+1) (perception/practice that can potentially result to equal sharing of UCW among men and women)
- **N** - neutral (0) (does not affect sharing of UCW or no data)
- **T** - traditional (-1) (perception/practice can result to further delegating UCW to women only)

From this scoring technique, insight can be gained on the strength of each P, N and T perceptions and practices among the sample population (disaggregated by gender). Simply put, those that would be identified as P would serve as the potential positive deviance from UCW gender norms.

Table 4. Rating of perceptions and practice based on the IW Norms Framework

	Perception			Practice		
	Women	Men	NB persons	Women	Men	NB persons
Household work	1	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1
Childcare work	-1	-1	+1	-1	-1	+1
Satisfaction with UCW arrangement	-1	-1	0	-1	-+1	0
Maternity/ paternity leaves	+1	+1	0	-1	-1	0
Breadwinning	-1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1
Job Segregation and Leadership	-1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1
Workplace discrimination	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1
Pandemic	0	0	0	-1	-1	0

### **Unpaid care work**

Regarding perceptions on household work, women, men and non-binary participants mostly agreed that household work should be shared equally, negotiated and discussed. But when it comes to childcare, almost half of the women and men participants still think it's a woman's job. Non-binary participants consistently rejected gender norms on UCW even when it comes to childcare.

In practice, majority of the unpartnered or partnered women participants performed unpaid care work whether on their own or shared with other household members. Less than 20% of unpartnered women were leaving UCW to others compared to the number of unpartnered males which was almost 50%. Among partnered respondents, almost 35% of women were doing UCW alone while less than 15% of men did UCW on their own.

The trend is similar to childcare. Even in the midst of a pandemic and work-from-home scenarios, women were still burdened with UCW disproportionately compared with men.

Using the IW Norms Framework and the rubric developed for this study, it can be said that women and men have progressive perceptions on household work but hold more traditional perceptions on childcare. Women and men's practices on household work and childcare remain traditional where women do the bulk of the work and feel the need to ask for help. The need to ask for help implies that the UCW load on women does not simply include actual work but also management of the workload.

### ***Satisfaction with UCW arrangement***

Most men and women participants expressed satisfaction with their UCW arrangement. If the current UCW arrangement among men and women remains traditional, it could mean that there might be less impetus among these women and men to make their arrangements more equal.

While this might be their predominant perception, women – in practice – still find themselves asking for help in performing UCW. This may be an indication that they have realized, at least in a practical sense, that more hands are needed on deck. A lot of the women still expressed a desire to do more than what they were already doing. Such mindset could mean that there is always work that remains to be accomplished. It was unpartnered men who performed UCW the least, who found themselves not needing to ask for help and also expressed little desire to do more UCW. Women who were more exposed to, familiar with and cognizant of care work that needed to be done were able to see more work than men

who have been socialized to not perform UCW. These findings point to an important reflection question: **If men remain unable to see that there is care work that needs to be done, how can they go about performing their fair share?**

The discrepancy between respondents' perception and practice in terms of satisfaction with their current UCW arrangement may provide insight that men need to be convinced not only to share in the performance of UCW but also in the management of the workload.

### ***Parental Leaves***

Childbearing is seen as work that is so taxing to an individual (woman) that they need a long recovery period after giving birth and plenty of support from their partners. Longer parental leaves are needed for women so that they can recover. Longer parental leaves are needed for men because they should be able to share in the care of the newborn. These can be considered as progressive perceptions.

In practice, women only get an average of 73.6 days of maternity leave, which is not enough for recovery. Men only get an average of 15.1 days of paternity leave, which is not enough to support their partners while in recovery or to share in the care of their newborn. The parental leaves, however, is not contingent on women and men but on company and legal policy. The huge discrepancy between the average days of parental leave of men and women suggests strong institutional support of traditional gender norms surrounding UCW.

## ***Breadwinning role***

Women who perform paid work are seen as empowered by other women while there are also men who think highly of working women. This proves how a working woman stands out. It is not considered commonplace but something to aspire for. A woman breadwinner is still considered unusual and not ideal.

For men, breadwinning is still important in the construction and preservation of masculinity, their self-image and their perception by others. A breadwinner role assigned solely to males is still considered ideal. Such persistent perceptions are deemed traditional.

In practice, women are playing the role of breadwinners. This can be considered a progressive practice. A potential positive deviance arising from the study is that the need for dual/multiple-income sources for households and women's ability to fill this need are acknowledged. A hindering factor here is the traditional practice of men not participating more in UCW even when women participate in income-generation. This creates a double burden for women. While women assuming breadwinner roles is considered a progressive practice, the usual practice of men not doing their fair share of UCW appears to be cancelling it out.

## ***Job segregation and leadership***

Results of this study indicate the strength of the traditional perceptions around gendered division of work in workplaces. The thinking that division of roles in workplaces should be based on gender is still prevalent among women and men while non-binary people have a progressive perception on the matter.

Women and men respondents thought that jobs should be based on skills which can constitute a potential positive deviance, although this perception was qualified with a "but women and men have different skills" assertion. By this statement, the respondents meant that men are "naturally strong" and "decisive" or that some jobs need a "feminine touch." They cited women's and men's different strengths based on gender stereotypes (e.g., men are strong physically while women are strong emotionally).

While such perception is still considered traditional, at least women are not disqualified from "male jobs" for their "weaknesses" but only seen as right for "female jobs" because of their "strengths." This is a very minor potential positive deviance. Moreover, the study results showed that women can take on "male jobs" and leadership roles but will have to prove themselves first or do better than men. Male leaders are also preferred due to strongly held gender stereotypes that were mentioned earlier. The same study showed that permission from husbands should be secured by married women before getting into "male jobs" to protect their husband's masculinity.

In practice, women occupy "male jobs" but this causes marital conflict for married people. Unpartnered women may occupy "male jobs" while single but could expect it to be an issue when they get married which, in the current Philippine context, can only be with a man. Propping up men's masculinity should not be the job of the women in their lives. It seems that it is the hidden additional burden that comes with women assuming a breadwinner role and UCW and it can be very draining, even more so than the other two.

## ***Workplace discrimination***

There were non-binary, women and men respondents who had experienced discrimination which could be gender-based in nature. At almost 50%, non-reporting of cases is considered significant. Respondents also established that support was given even for non-reported cases. But they noted alarming instances where reports were made but support was not received.

Unfortunately, no data were collected regarding their perceptions on why they experienced discrimination or harassment or the impact of such acts on them.

## ***COVID-19 Pandemic***

Study participants saw an increased need for more income and access to health services which could largely be due to the threats they encountered since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They noted that UCW practices, did not change dramatically but took an interesting twist. The pandemic forced respondents to work from home and saw more household members staying at home for longer periods than before the pandemic. Yet, stay-at-home protocols did not lead to an increase in the sharing of UCW. In fact, the data collected from this study showed an increase in cases of individuals performing UCW all on their own. The contribution of children (boys and girls at the same rate) to UCW did increase as well as the paid staff's. This could be due to longer working hours rendered by the respondents while they and their companies were adjusting to the new normal.

The decrease in contribution of older family members could be due to mobility restrictions or sickness. It is possible that older household members were the ones who did paid work before the pandemic or UCW done outside the home such as grocery shopping. This could mean that UCW that they used to do pre-pandemic was delegated to household members who were not performing paid work (children) or who were paid to do care work (paid staff).

## VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### *Gender norms, perceptions and practice*

Research participants shared the perception that traditional gender norms within households do not dominate their daily lives. They were also of the belief that household and childcare responsibilities should be shared within households among respondents.

But in practice, data clearly indicate that women still take on much of these responsibilities. Such is true even when respondents said they relied on others for help, with most specifying they got support from their mother/mother-in-law, sister or daughter.

In the same manner, respondents expressed belief in equality between males and females outside of the family, particularly in terms of income earning and performance in the workplace. They expressed the same belief that the family income is the sole responsibility of men. Yet, in most households they knew, being a breadwinner or income earning is a responsibility that is still mostly taken up by men.

In terms of job segregation, participants strongly believed that jobs have no gender, and what really matters are qualifications and credentials. But this belief was contradicted by their own narratives affirming that women continue to be held against very high standards, particularly when seeking to apply for traditionally male roles.

Even when trends among respondents indicated a belief that women are capable of and should, in fact, take on leadership roles, traditional gender norms that describe men as decisive, intentional and strong – making them more preferable leaders than women who are characterized as tentative, emotional and indecisive -- remain pervasive.

While majority of participants said they did not experience discrimination or disapproval based on their sex or gender, two respondents who identified themselves as non-binary said they experienced discrimination. The two may represent a small portion of the total number of respondents, but their claim is indicative that workplace discrimination based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity still happen.

It was also established that there was no drastic shift in terms of respondents' contributions to household and childcare responsibilities before and during the pandemic, but various changes were noted particularly as an effect of the work-from-home setup. For most FGD respondents, balancing work responsibilities with unpaid care and domestic responsibilities had been difficult. Survey results showed an increase in cases of performing UCW alone which indicates that the pandemic did not increase sharing of UCW, despite the fact that most household members were home due to lockdown restrictions.

Most respondents were satisfied with the support they received from their employers. Such support included the provision of equipment and internet subsidies, the consent allowing them to work flexible hours, the provision of information on COVID-19, financial support plus goods and other packages. However, majority of respondents also felt that their employer could have handled the pandemic better and that substantial changes in the workplace was necessary if better handling was to be achieved. FGD participants also noted the need for more support in terms of the overall mental health and well-being of employees.

### ***Potential Positive Deviances***

- 1.** Household work should be shared equally, negotiated and discussed.
- 2.** Longer parental leaves are needed for women so that they can recover. Longer parental leaves are needed for men because they should share in the care of the newborn.
- 3.** Women are playing the role of breadwinners. The need for dual/multiple-income sources for households and women's ability to fill this need are acknowledged.
- 4.** Jobs should be based on skills.
- 5.** Women are seen to fit into "female jobs" for their perceived strengths and not for their weaknesses to take on "male jobs."
- 6.** Women, men and non-binary people report cases of workplace discrimination.
- 7.** During the pandemic, the contribution of children's (boys and girls at the same rate) to UCW increased.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations that can be drawn from the research:

- 1.** Changing gender norms surrounding UCW should aim for the following: 1) Men should do their fair share of care work in the household; 2) Advocate national policies that compel workplaces to support men doing UCW (e.g., parental leaves not based on sex or gender of parents but on the magnitude of new care work responsibilities following the birth of their newborn and the time needed to adjust to it) and provide care work to employees and their households (income, health and well-being); and 3) Establish a mechanism for community care work (community kitchens, daycare, etc.).
- 2.** Care work should not only be performed; it needs to be managed. Include men in UCW management (make UCW part of men's mental load). Long-term plans on this could include intervention in young people's socialization. Sites for intervention could be households, barangays, schools, and other spaces where young people can be reached.
- 3.** Femininity has been undergoing transformation in people's minds, but masculinity is not being targeted for change as much. Not performing UCW is part of the masculinity construction. Campaigns can promote performing and management of UCW as part of what it takes to be a man. Men need to know that there are myriad ways to be a man. Instead of making care work gender-neutral, emphasize its role in constructing and preserving masculinity since gender identity and expression are important to those who possess them. Such efforts should not be construed as trying to emasculate men but transforming masculinity so that doing UCW would be seen as making them more of a man than reducing their manhood.

While women breadwinners are seen as empowered, men staying at home and doing UCW can be deemed emasculating. This, again, is why masculinity should be targeted so that women's double burden can be avoided.

- 4.** Institutional support for women breadwinners should include campaigns and workshops for men who receive women's financial support. This is necessary since men who experience emasculation can resort to violence to reassert their masculinity. They need to be guided on how to be a man in a more gender-equal society.
- 5.** Design strategies must be based on the identified positive deviances in this study. Regarding job skills, for example, women and men can be convinced – using the Care Theory – that skills are not gendered but life-sustaining. Skills are pr-requisites for people to be able to do the things that make them women, men or non-binary. Another step is to capitalize on the perception of women's strengths and how strength is not a finite resource. It must be emphasized that women's strengths do not take anything away from men.

**6.** Further research on UCW needs to consider the following points:

The lack of data on household income means responses cannot be disaggregated based on social class or financial status, an important factor in determining the need for multiple income sources, the capacity for household members to stay at home full time to perform UCW and other related matters.

Non-binary and LGBTQIA+ people were still largely invisible in the study results despite their inclusion in data gathering. This is because questions on perceptions and practices related to gender-nonconformity were not included in the survey or FGD questions. While survey data from non-binary respondents reveal the most deviance from traditional gendered perceptions on paid and unpaid work, the matter begs further systematic, scientific and qualitative exploration since it only came from four individuals and cannot be considered representative of non-binary experiences, perceptions and aspirations.

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