SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF WOMEN WORKERS IN SELECTED MERCHANDISING FIRMS IN ILOILO CITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides first-hand information on the social and economic profile of the women workers in selected merchandising firms in Iloilo City. There were 75 female workers were surveyed from three merchandising firms in Iloilo City. The respondents were chosen through stratified random sampling. Data was gathered through a standardized questionnaire given to the respondents to answer and also through an interview which was participated by some of the women worker respondents.

The results of the study revealed many interesting facts about how the women workers in the selected merchandising firms fare in their job. More than half or 59 percent of the women workers surveyed were in their twenties. The median age of the women workers is 25 years old. Most of the women workers were college graduates. A great majority of them lived within the city limits. The majority of the women workers belong to a family of three or four. As for the job status of the women workers, the bulk of the women workers surveyed had either stayed in the company for at least one and a half years or they had been in the firm for three months or so. The average income earned by the respondents ranged from Php126.00 to Php130.00 daily. This could be translated into Php3,700.00 to Php4,500.00 a month.

The largest number of respondents (30 percent) hat two income earners meeting the household expenses. However, there were still some who only had one income

earner. There were some who were fortunate enough to have more than six income earners for the family.

Salary or wages remained as the primary source of income for the income earners of the women workers' households. Farming and fishing followed next while professional services came third.

The result of the regression analysis on the factors affecting the women workers' compensation scheme showed that only one factor affect monthly salary, that is, length of service. It showed that as the woman worker increases its stay in the firm by one month, salary increases by 3.30 pesos.

A majority of the respondents, 70 percent, would wish to pursue higher education if they be given a chance. Commercial and computer-related courses were the most preferred of the many courses offered by schools these days.

The result of the computation of the rate of return to the education of the women workers if they will pursue higher education showed that there is really an incentive to study or pursue higher education than remaining in the job they are in at present in terms of the increase due to the movement from one sector to another. The rate on return to education may be used as a ground for measuring the estimated increase in the income an individual if one chooses to invest on education. However, in reality, increase in income is the only concern of an individual but the greater problem of finding a job worth keeping with a more than subsistent income amidst the myriad of unemployed and underemployed members of the labor market.

The study showed that income still remains to be a motivating factor for the women workers. The high regard for money in relation to job contentment reflects the

greater need to satiate the basic needs of the women workers. Basic or physiological needs include food, shelter and clothing, among many others. Company policies and working environment do not in any way increase or decrease the job contentment of the women worker respondents.

The high degree of specialization required of many jobs in the country today forces the women worker respondents to take on the job they have at present. The majority of the respondents agreed that there are really not much job opportunities for women. Meanwhile, friends play a vital role in influencing the respondents' decision to work in their current occupation.

Remuneration or monetary compensation schemes definitely are determined by management using some criterion standard. However, since the researchers were not able to gain access to the policies observed the respective merchandising firms, the questions were addressed to the women worker respondents. A great majority of the women workers then strongly agreed that educational attainment plays a crucial role in their salary/ wages. There were those who agreed that the there are not many job opportunities for women and there are also not many who are qualified. There are also jobs that are off-limits to women. The respondents, however, strongly disagreed that sex is a determinant factor in determining how much do women workers earn vis-à-vis that of the male workers. In the same way, the respondents do not believe that gender differences put the women to a disadvantage since they are bound to receive lower salary as compared to men.

The study recommends that the government should orient economic policies towards the encouragement of local investors into venturing into businesses that would

generate more jobs for the people. It further recommends that studies on women be pursued not only on those working in merchandising firms but also in other fields of work.