

THE EFFECTS OF PARENT'S MIGRATION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN THE PHILIPPINES

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**THE EFFECTS OF PARENT'S
MIGRATION ON THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND IN THE
PHILIPPINES**

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The Effects of Parent's Migration on the Rights of Children Left Behind in the Philippines
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Executive Summary

This study focuses on children left behind by their parent(s) working overseas and how their rights are addressed in the absence of one or both parents.

The rights of the child are broadly categorized into survival, development, protection and participation with the family as the primary duty-bearer. Parental care is undoubtedly important, but when one or both parent/s is/are away, there will surely be a reconfiguration of the roles and lines of responsibilities. This study aims to determine this reconfiguration and its effects on the extent to which the needs of children left behind are met. It also aims to recommend measures to mitigate the possible undesirable effects.

The study finds mixed effects of having an OFW parent on meeting the rights of the child, using proxy measures. In terms of survival, the economic advantage resulting from the presence of an OFW parent does not seem to have altered health-seeking behavior, which remains poor. The number of visits to medical personnel decreases as the older children are considered. There are also indications of a high incidence of hygiene-related health problems.

Children of OFWs are able to join academic organizations and extra-curricular activities. A significantly higher proportion (compared to children of non-OFWs) has received academic and non-academic awards. Most of the guidance and supervision is exercised by the school authorities. While there is communication between the OFW parent and the child, it probably lacks the depth that parenting requires. There is evidence that this communication becomes less effective as the younger children are considered.

An overwhelming majority of OFW children are not protected against economic shocks. Very few of the families have liquid assets, since they prefer to invest in new houses and only a few have private insurance coverage. They also appear to be more vulnerable to psycho-social shocks brought about by the splitting-up of families. Moreover, most children of OFWs do not feel that they have active participation in family decision-making. Compared to children of non-OFW parents, participation in community and civic organizations is lower.

Summarizing the extent to which the rights are met into a “utility” measure, the study finds that an increase in money and/or adult attention does appear to increase the degree to which children feel “satisfied.” The values that parents/guardians ascribe to money and adult attention inputs vary according to the conditions facing the household. Families with OFW parent ascribe higher value to money while families with no OFW parent ascribe higher value to adult attention inputs. With respect to families with OFW parent, parents/guardians value money and adult attention inputs differently from their children. Parents/guardians assign about equal weights to money and adult attention inputs while children tend to value adult attention more than money.

Many children of OFWs age 13-16 appear to be worse off than children of non-OFWs of the same age. Some receive less than average money inputs but all receive less than average adult attention. This can be explained by the fact that, on the average, there are fewer adults but still a substantial number of children in these household. This is in complete contrast with the

preference of children in this age group where they require more adult attention and more budget inputs than children in the other age groups.

There are government programs for OFWs, however there is low awareness and even lower utilization of the benefits. The low utilization of government programs for OFWs may indicate a disconnect between intended objectives of the programs and the needs of the OFWs and their families. Moreover, there is a serious lack of programs that address the needs of the children.

Recommendations

The extent to which the rights of children of OFWs are met, despite their special circumstances, can be improved with the involvement of the stakeholders. One general strategy is to encourage communication between the OFW parent and the children.

Parental care is undoubtedly important for the development of the child. However, there are cognitive and social stimulation theorists that maintain that there are ways to ensure the quality of child care environment apart from the presence of the parent. In fact, a well-qualified and well-intentioned caregiver may even be a better alternative.

The school also presents an obvious venue for learning values and skills that are usually learned in the home. Children can be taught how best to participate in decision-making concerning the family. During Parents-Teachers meetings, parents and guardians can be taught how best to involve their children in decision-making. Civic and community participation can be enhanced by involving school authorities.

For financial protection, the OFW parent and others left behind should be taught about economic security. Recently, the Central Bank has been conducting financial literacy programs to interested OFW families. Coverage can be increased by involving school organizations. Banks can also encourage saving behavior by facilitating access to saving and investment instruments. Some banks even offer higher interest rates for deposits in favor of the children, subject to certain conditions. For physical protection, school authorities and local officials should be trained on how to detect cases of child abuse. One possibility is to conduct regular physical and medical examination of the children. Civic organizations should be encouraged to offer psycho-social support.

Finally, it should be recognized that overseas work will likely persist over the medium to long term. The parent or guardian left behind and other stakeholders should be educated regarding the special circumstances facing the family of the OFW and especially the children. This should heighten the sensitivities of every one around them regarding their special needs and undertake proper measures to address them. Ultimately, the objective of programs and interventions should be to shift out the price line that confronts the family. Adult attention inputs need not decrease with parent's migration. By the same token, providing for the rights of the child need not involve much money.

In the end, it will be the individual families who will decide what is best for their children and governments should lay down policies which protect not only the migrants but their family members especially their children.

Resumen Ejecutivo

El estudio se centra en los niños que permanecen en su país de origen cuando uno o ambos progenitores trabajan en el extranjero, y analiza cómo se abordan sus derechos cuando uno o ambos progenitores están ausentes.

Los derechos del niño están generalmente divididos en varias categorías: supervivencia, desarrollo, protección y participación, correspondiendo a la familia la función de titular de las obligaciones. La atención de los progenitores es sin duda una cuestión importante, y cuando uno o ambos progenitores están lejos, se produce sin duda una reconfiguración en las funciones y responsabilidades de los unos y los otros. Este estudio tiene por objetivo establecer la naturaleza de esta reconfiguración y sus repercusiones en la medida en que se satisfacen las necesidades de los niños que permanecen en el país de origen. También tiene por objetivo recomendar medidas para atenuar los posibles efectos indeseables de esta situación.

El estudio concluye, mediante medidas sustitutivas, que las consecuencias para los derechos del niño de la ausencia de un progenitor que es un trabajador filipino emigrado son ambivalentes. En cuestión de supervivencia, las ventajas económicas derivadas de la salida al extranjero de un progenitor para trabajar no parecen haber mejorado sensiblemente el comportamiento en materia de búsqueda de atención médica, que sigue siendo muy limitada. El número de visitas médicas disminuye a medida que el niño se hace mayor. También hay indicaciones de una gran incidencia de problemas de salud vinculados a la higiene.

Los hijos de los trabajadores filipinos emigrados suelen integrarse en organizaciones académicas y participar en actividades extraescolares; en comparación con otros niños, una proporción considerablemente más importante de estos niños ha recibido distinciones escolares y de otro tipo. Son las autoridades escolares quienes ejercen generalmente las labores de orientación y supervisión. Aunque existe una comunicación entre los progenitores filipinos emigrados y sus hijos, no se trata del mismo tipo de comunicación que en el caso de las familias donde los progenitores están presentes y hay pruebas de que esto es menos eficaz cuando se analiza a los niños más pequeños.

Una gran mayoría de los niños hijos de progenitores filipinos emigrados no están protegidos contra las crisis económicas. Muy pocas familias tienen valores líquidos, ya que prefieren invertir en la compra de nuevas casas, y pocos tienen cobertura privada de seguro. Estos niños parecen ser más vulnerables a los problemas psicosociales que surgen cuando las familias se separan. Además, la mayoría de los niños de los trabajadores filipinos emigrados no sienten que participan activamente en la toma de decisiones familiares. En comparación con los niños de progenitores cuyos padres no han emigrado, la participación en las organizaciones comunitarias y cívicas es menos intensa.

Después de haber evaluado el respeto a los derechos de la infancia en el marco de una medida de “utilidad”, el estudio concluye que un aumento en dinero y/o atención por parte de los adultos parece aumentar el grado en que los niños se sienten “satisfechos”. Los valores que los progenitores y los tutores otorgan el dinero y a la atención de los adultos varía según las condiciones de los hogares. Las familias con un trabajador filipino en el extranjero otorgan un mayor valor al dinero, mientras que las familias sin un trabajador filipino en el extranjero

otorgan un mayor valor a la atención de los adultos. Con respecto a las familias con un progenitor trabajador filipino en el extranjero, los progenitores y los tutores asignan el mismo valor al dinero y a la atención, mientras que los niños suelen valorar más la atención de los adultos que el dinero.

Muchos hijos de trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero de 13 a 16 años parecen encontrarse peor que los niños de la misma edad cuyos padres no trabajan en el extranjero. Algunos reciben un apoyo financiero inferior a la media, pero todos reciben una atención promedio inferior por parte de los adultos. Esto puede explicarse por el hecho de que hay menos adultos en estos hogares, como promedio, pero que el número de niños es considerablemente en comparación con las familias donde no hay trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero. Esta situación contrasta totalmente con las preferencias de los niños de este grupo de edad que tienen necesidad de más atención de los adultos y mayores aportes presupuestarios que los niños de otros grupos de edad.

Aunque hay programas gubernamentales para los trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero, son muy poco conocidos y pocas personas se benefician de ellos. La escasa utilización de estos programas puede explicarse por una falta de conexión entre los objetivos de estos programas y las necesidades de los trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero y de sus familias. Además, hay una grave falta de programas que abordan la situación de la infancia.

Recomendaciones

A pesar de las especiales circunstancias de los niños de los trabajadores filipinos emigrados, sus derechos se respetarían mejor si las partes interesadas aumentaran su participación. Una de las estrategias generales sería alentar la comunicación entre los progenitores y sus hijos.

La atención de los progenitores es sin duda importante para el desarrollo del niño. Algunos teóricos de la estimulación cognoscitiva y social, sin embargo, mantienen que siempre hay métodos para garantizar la calidad de la atención del niño incluso cuando los progenitores están ausentes; en algunos casos, sugieren, un cuidador cualificado y bien intencionado puede incluso ser una mejor alternativa.

Las escuelas ofrecen igualmente la posibilidad de adquirir los valores y las competencias que por lo general se aprenden en el hogar. Se puede enseñar a los niños cómo participar en la toma de decisiones relacionadas con la familia. Durante las reuniones entre los progenitores y los maestros, los progenitores y los tutores pueden aprender también como incorporar a los niños en la toma de decisiones. La participación cívica y comunitaria puede mejorarse incorporando a las autoridades escolares.

Por lo que atañe a la protección financiera, es preciso enseñar a los progenitores trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero y a los miembros de la familia que permanecen en el país de origen sobre la seguridad económica. Recientemente, el Banco Central ha llevado a cabo programas de alfabetización financiera con familias interesadas de trabajadores filipinos en el extranjero, y es posible aumentar la cobertura incorporando las organizaciones escolares. Los bancos pueden alentar también el ahorro facilitando el acceso a instrumentos de ahorro e inversión. Algunos bancos ofrecen tasas de interés más elevadas para los depósitos en favor de la infancia, sujetas a determinadas condiciones.

Con respecto a la protección física, las autoridades escolares y los funcionarios locales deben recibir capacitación sobre cómo detectar el abuso infantil. Una posibilidad es someter a los niños a exámenes físicos y médicos sistemáticos. Es preciso alentar también a las organizaciones cívicas para que ofrezcan apoyo psicosocial.

Finalmente, es preciso reconocer que el trabajo en el exterior es un fenómeno destinado a perdurar a mediano y corto plazo. El progenitor o el tutor que permanece en el país de origen, así como otras partes interesadas, deben recibir educación con respecto a las circunstancias especiales que afronta la familia del trabajador filipino emigrante, especialmente los niños. El objetivo debe ser sensibilizar al entorno del niño con respecto a sus necesidades especiales y llevar a cabo medidas apropiadas para responder a estas necesidades.

Résumé Analytique

L'étude porte sur les enfants qui restent dans leur pays d'origine lorsque l'un ou leurs deux parents partent travailler à l'étranger, et elle analyse le problème du respect des droits de ces enfants en l'absence d'un parent ou de leurs deux parents.

Les droits de l'enfant sont grossièrement divisés en plusieurs catégories : survie, développement, protection et participation, la responsabilité de faire respecter ces droits incombant principalement à la famille. Les soins prodigués par les parents sont indubitablement importants, et quand l'un ou les deux parents sont loin, les rôles et les responsabilités des uns et des autres seront forcément reconfigurés. Cette étude a pour but de déterminer la nature de cette reconfiguration et ses conséquences dans l'optique de la satisfaction des besoins des enfants. Elle présente aussi des recommandations qui permettent d'atténuer les éventuels effets indésirables.

L'étude révèle, grâce à des mesures supplétives, les conséquences ambivalentes pour les droits de l'enfant de l'absence d'un parent qui est un travailleur philippin émigré (TPE). En termes de survie, les avantages économiques résultant du départ à l'étranger d'un parent pour travailler ne semblent pas avoir amélioré sensiblement la recherche de soins médicaux, qui reste toujours très limitée. Le nombre de consultations médicales diminue à mesure que l'enfant grandit. On constate aussi une forte incidence des problèmes de santé liés à l'hygiène.

Les enfants des TPE sont en mesure de fréquenter des établissements scolaires et de participer à des activités extrascolaires; comparés aux autres enfants, une proportion sensiblement plus importante de ces enfants a reçu des distinctions scolaires et autres. Les conseils et la supervision sont généralement assurés par les autorités scolaires. Bien que les parents philippins émigrés communiquent avec leurs enfants, les échanges parents-enfants ne sont pas aussi profonds que dans les familles où les parents sont présents, surtout quand les enfants sont très jeunes.

La très grande majorité des enfants de TPE ne sont pas protégés contre les chocs économiques. Très rares sont les familles qui ont des liquidités, car elles préfèrent investir dans la construction d'une maison, et très peu ont contracté une assurance privée. Les enfants semblent aussi être plus sensibles aux chocs psychologiques qui risquent de se produire quand les membres de la famille sont séparés. Par ailleurs, la majorité des enfants des TPE n'ont pas l'impression de participer activement aux prises des décisions familiales. Comparés aux autres enfants, les enfants d'émigrés sont moins présents dans les organisations communautaires et civiques.

Après avoir évalué le respect des droits de l'enfant dans le cadre d'une mesure « d'utilité », l'étude démontre qu'un apport supplémentaire d'argent et/ou d'attention de la part des adultes a un impact sur le degré de « satisfaction » de l'enfant. La valeur que les parents et les personnes responsables des enfants accordent à l'argent et à l'attention des adultes varie selon les foyers. Les familles dont un parent est TPE accordent davantage de valeur à l'argent tandis que les familles dont les parents ne sont pas TPE accordent davantage de valeur à l'attention que les adultes donnent aux enfants. Concernant les familles dont un parent est un TPE, les parents et les responsables des enfants accordent une valeur pratiquement égale à l'argent et à l'attention des adultes, tandis que les enfants ont tendance à priser davantage l'attention des adultes.

De nombreux enfants de TPE âgés de 13 à 16 ans semblent avoir plus de problèmes que les enfants du même âge dont les parents ne sont pas TPE. Certains reçoivent un soutien financier inférieur à la moyenne, mais tous reçoivent en moyenne moins d'attention de la part des adultes. Cela peut s'expliquer par le fait que, en moyenne, moins d'adultes sont présents dans ces ménages, mais qu'ils regroupent un nombre relativement important d'enfant si on les compare avec les familles sans TPE. Cette situation contraste totalement avec les préférences des enfants de ce groupe d'âge qui ont besoin de davantage d'attention de la part des adultes et d'apports budgétaires plus importants que les enfants des autres groupes d'âge.

Bien que les travailleurs philippins expatriés bénéficient de programmes gouvernementaux, ceux-ci sont mal connus et peu de personnes en tirent profit. La faible utilisation de ces programmes peut s'expliquer par un décalage entre les objectifs de ces programmes et les besoins des TPE et de leurs familles. Par ailleurs, les programmes répondant aux besoins des enfants font sérieusement défaut.

Recommandations

Malgré les conditions spéciales des enfants de TPE, leurs droits seront mieux respectés si les parties prenantes s'impliquent dans cette cause. L'une des stratégies générales pourrait consister à encourager la communication entre les parents et leurs enfants.

Les soins prodigués par les parents jouent indubitablement un rôle important dans le développement de l'enfant. Certains théoriciens de la stimulation cognitive et sociale assurent toutefois qu'il existe des moyens de garantir la qualité des soins aux enfants même lorsque les parents sont absents; ils affirment même que dans certains cas, la présence d'une personne qualifiée et bien intentionnée est un meilleur choix.

Les écoles permettent également d'acquérir les valeurs et les compétences qui sont généralement inculquées à la maison. On peut apprendre aux enfants comment participer au mieux aux prises de décisions qui concernent leurs familles. Lors des réunions parents-enseignants, les parents et les responsables des enfants peuvent aussi apprendre comment intégrer leurs enfants aux prises de décisions. La participation civique et communautaire peut être améliorée en faisant appel aux autorités scolaires.

En termes de protection financière, il convient d'informer les parents qui sont des TPE et les membres de la famille qui sont restés dans le pays d'origine sur la sécurité économique. Récemment, la Banque centrale a organisé des programmes d'initiation aux questions financières pour les familles de TPE intéressées, et la couverture peut être élargie aux organisations scolaires. Les banques peuvent aussi encourager l'épargne en facilitant l'accès à des instruments d'épargne et d'investissement. Certaines banques offrent des taux d'intérêt plus élevés pour l'argent déposé en faveur des enfants, à certaines conditions.

Concernant la protection physique, il convient de former les autorités scolaires et les responsables locaux de façon à ce qu'ils soient capables de reconnaître la maltraitance. Il serait par exemple possible de procéder régulièrement à des examens médicaux et physiques des enfants. Il faut aussi encourager les organisations civiles à fournir un soutien psychologique à ces enfants.

Enfin, il faut savoir que le travail émigré est un phénomène qui est destiné à perdurer. Les parents ou les responsables d'enfants qui sont restés dans le pays d'origine, ainsi que les autres acteurs, doivent être instruits des conditions particulières auxquelles les familles de travailleurs philippins émigrés, surtout les enfants, sont confrontés. Il faudrait se fixer pour but de sensibiliser l'entourage de ces enfants à leurs besoins particuliers et prendre les mesures qui s'imposent pour y répondre.

Les programmes et interventions devraient avoir pour objectif global d'alléger le fardeau qui pèse sur ces familles. Ce n'est pas parce qu'un parent a migré que l'attention que les adultes accordent à l'enfant doit diminuer. Le respect des droits de l'enfant n'implique pas de dépenses considérables. En fin de compte, chaque famille individuelle doit choisir ce qui convient le mieux à ses enfants, et les gouvernements doivent adopter des politiques protégeant non seulement les migrants, mais aussi les membres de leur famille, en particulier les enfants

Introduction

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the “family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding” is best for the “full and harmonious development” of the child’s personality. This is, no doubt, also foremost in the minds of most parents. To many, a family is composed of both parents and their children. However, some families find themselves in a situation where they will need to redefine the concept of family in order to provide for the “full and harmonious development” of their children. A very common example of this is the family with one or both parents working abroad.

In a country where unemployment is a huge and persistent problem, overseas work, and the corresponding remittances, offers a way out. It not only solves the unemployment problem, it augments the resources of households, and even society in general, to undertake human capital investments. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimates that as of 2006 there were 8.23 million Filipinos overseas. Of this number, 3.6 million are considered permanent migrants, 3.8 million are temporary migrants, and 0.87 million are considered ‘irregular’. If we start with the 2001 statistics, this figure represents a growth rate of 2.1% per year.

A 2007 Philippine Paper on Increasing the Impact of Remittances on Children’s Rights characterizes the pattern of Filipino migration as having a large percentage of temporary/undocumented workers, a young migrant population, a high percentage of migrants being married, and a growing feminization of temporary/undocumented workers.

In a Social Weather Station (SWS) survey, 28–31 March 2008, 1 out of 6 or 7 families in the country is found as an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) family. The survey implies that about 600,000 families are from the middle to upper income class. About 200,000 are considered very poor. The survey shows that OFW families are clearly better off in terms of material possessions and security from economic deprivation.

According to the survey, poverty among OFW families is only half that of non-OFW families. Poor OFW families have a median threshold of PhP 12,000 per month of home expenses to avoid being poor. Poor non-OFW families have a median of only PhP 6,000. Thus, OFW families also have much higher living standards than non-OFW families. The experience of hunger among OFW families (7.6%) is less than half as frequent as among non-OFW families (17%).

Domestic and international migration in the Philippines is clearly gendered. This may partly be a result of gendered socialization in the Philippines; it may also stem from gendered demands of foreign employers (Tyner 1997 in Carling 2005:9). Migrating Filipinas shift their care-giving responsibilities to other members of the family, particularly an elderly female, their older female children or a domestic household employee, who generally comes from a poorer family and a poorer part of the country and whose salary is a fraction of what a household worker makes overseas (Country Gender Assessment, 2008, ADB and ODA GAD Network).

John Bryant of the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, estimates 2 million Filipino children of overseas migrants. This implies that around 5% of Filipino children had one or two parents overseas in 2000.

A 2003 Children and Families Study spearheaded by the Scalabrini Migration Center reveals that children appear to benefit from remittances in terms of increased opportunities to attend better schools, eat well and have access to health services. However, the same study shows that the departure of one or two parents leaves an emotional mark on young children left behind.

From a societal perspective, there are positive as well as negative implications of overseas migration. The growth of the Philippine economy can be partly attributed to the transfers from abroad. But while remittances contribute to the economy, e.g., US\$14 billion in 2007, and to individual families, there is fear of both brain drain and care drain. Migration of educated health professionals exacerbates existing problems of the health system in the Philippines and compromises the quality of human capital needed to sustain economic development. And while migrants may afford to keep their children in school longer, the poor performance that may result from parents' absence may also lower the future human capital of the country (Country Gender Assessment, 2008, ADB and ODA GAD Network).

Given the impact of OFWs in Philippine economic development, the government has enacted laws to protect their welfare. In particular, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) was created in 1982 through Executive Order 797 to promote and monitor the overseas employment of Filipino workers. The Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) is the lead agency tasked to protect and promote the welfare and well-being of overseas Filipino workers and their dependants. It began as a welfare and training fund and was created only by virtue of a Letter of Instruction by then President Ferdinand Marcos to the Department of Labor in 1977.

RA 8042, also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, established the focus of policy on overseas workers. Among other things, it provided for deregulation of the functions of POEA and broadened the mandate of the OWWA. This was amended in January 2007 to strengthen the regulatory powers of the POEA. The new law, RA 9422, requires the POEA to inform OFWs of their rights as workers and as human beings and to provide mechanisms to "redress violation of their rights" as necessary. The law mandates that Filipino workers can only be deployed in countries where the Philippines "has concluded bilateral labour agreements or arrangements" and "that such countries shall guarantee to protect the rights of Filipino migrant workers," as well as "observe and/or comply with the international laws and standards for migrant workers."

This move to ensure the welfare of overseas Filipino workers is laudable, to say the least, but unfortunately the law is silent about the welfare of family members the OFW leaves behind, particularly the children. This study is not about to criticize policies concerning the OFW. Rather, it focuses on the children left behind – how best to ensure that the rights of the child are being realized despite the absence of one or both parents.

1. Objectives

General objective

To determine how parents' migration affects the extent to which the rights of children left behind are met.

Specific objectives

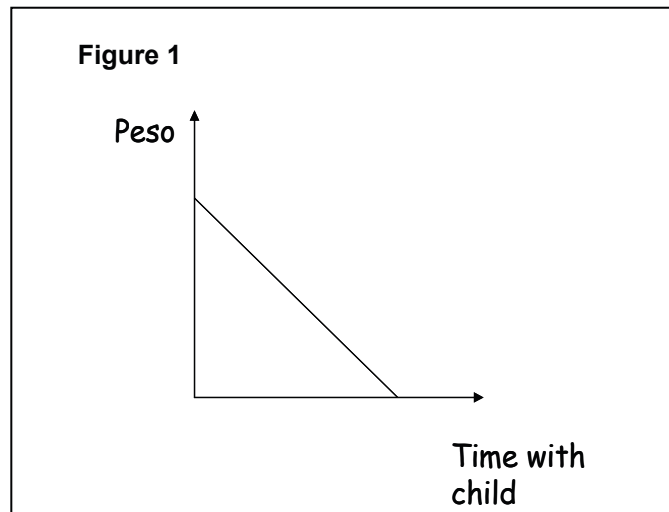
- To determine how time and money devoted by parents and other caregivers affect the extent to which the rights of the child are being met.
- To determine how the family's 'production process' is reconfigured when one or two parents migrate, with full consideration for the roles taken on by the other duty-bearers (state) and stakeholders.
- To determine how this reconfiguration affects the extent to which the rights of the child are met.

2. Analytical framework

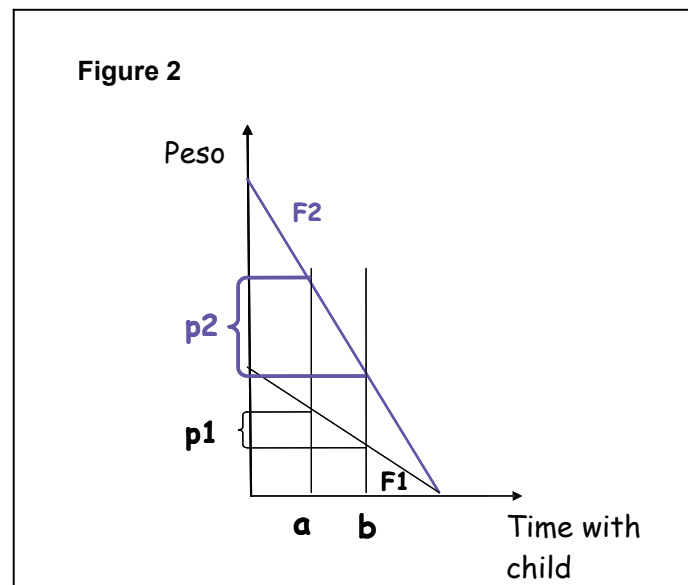
The study subscribes to a rights-based approach in determining the extent to which the rights of the child of an OFW parent are being met. This approach defines the outcomes in terms of the extent to which the rights are being met. Accountability is ascribed primarily to the duty-bearers, then to the stakeholders.

The rights of the child are broadly categorized into survival, development, protection and participation. The family is the primary duty-bearer; the state, by virtue of its commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others agreements, is also a duty-bearer; the community, civil society, et al., are stakeholders.

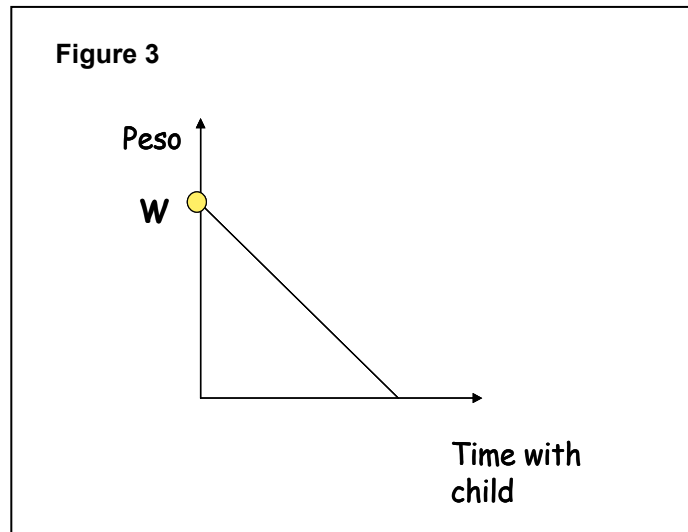
The family, as primary duty-bearer, needs to allocate resources in order to meet the rights of the child. Admittedly, the 'accomplishment', that is, the extent to which the rights of the child are met, is difficult to measure except for such components as health, education and participation in extra-curricular activities. Within the family, the main responsibility of meeting the rights of the child lies on the parents, then the other adults. It takes resources of both time and money to be able to meet the children's rights. In this study, we simply model the relationship between these two resources. Note that these two factors are usually inversely related. This means that more money is produced only after time given to the child is reduced. Figure 1 on the next page illustrates this inverse relationship.



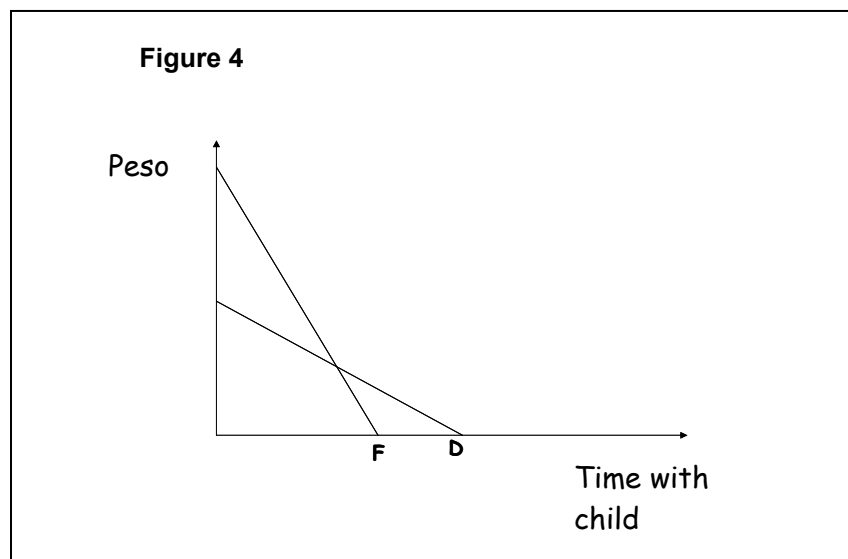
There may be families that are able to provide an additional peso for the child even with less time relative to another family. We may say that this is the price line faced by the family. Figure 2 illustrates the case of two families, F1 and F2. Note that F2 needs to give up p_2 money while F1 needs to give up only p_1 money, where $p_1 < p_2$, in order to increase, by the same amount, the time resources for the child. Another way of saying it is that for F2, time is more expensive than for F1. Most likely, the more educated parents or, in general, those who earn higher wages per unit time face the price line as in F2.



Some families may opt for a corner solution, given by the point W in the chart below. This may be the case of families with both parents working abroad; physical time with child is 0 and is fully substituted for with money provided to child.

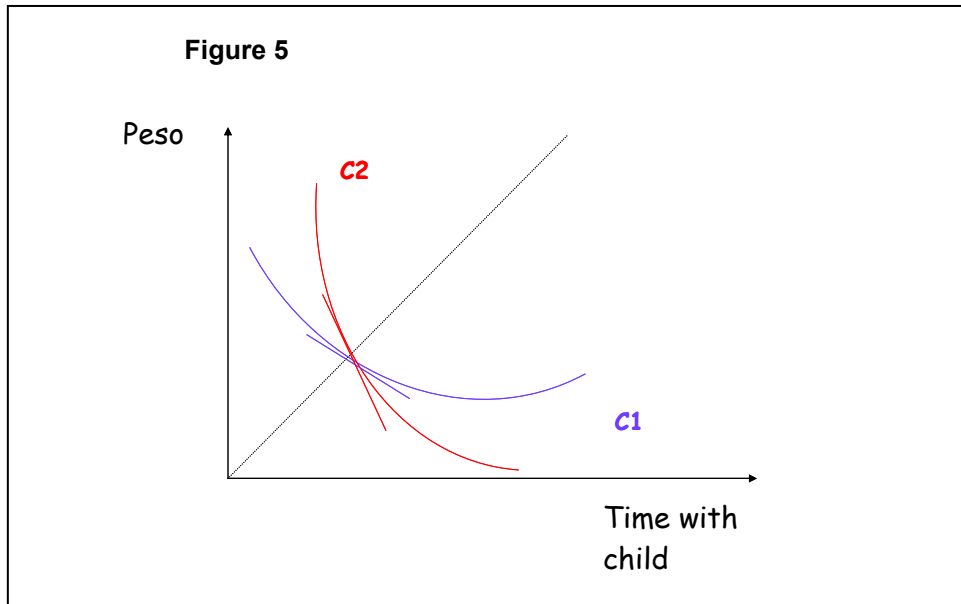


The more general case, however, is that there are substitutes to the parent's time with the child. This may be the caregiver's time, or some long distance means of communication. This means that the price line confronting the family may have shifted out, meaning that more money can be produced, say from D to F, even with the same time allocation, as shown in the following:

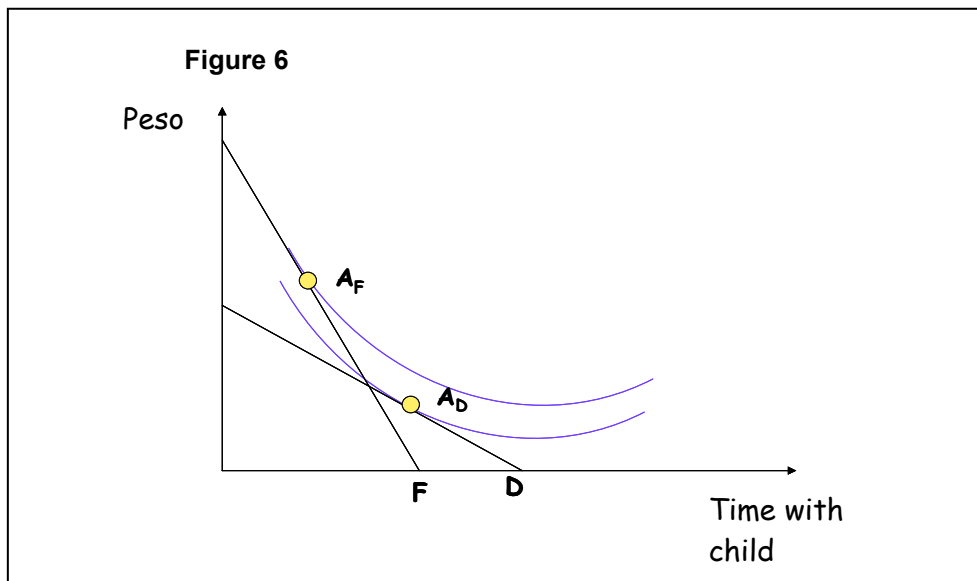


Now, each child demands both time and money in order to gain 'utility' or satisfaction. We know that, in theory, the consumption basket we observe is the result of a deliberate decision of the individual to maximize this utility given his or her income. However, this may not apply in the case of children because they may not have the choice over the consumption basket. If we assume that the child is also a rational individual, then we can hypothesize that his or her utility increases in both time and money and that this feeling of satisfaction may arise out of a feeling that their rights are being met.

Let us first consider the simple case where the child is able to make a choice over time or money, depending on her or his utility level. Consider the following utility curves corresponding to two 'types' of children, C1 and C2. C1 requires more money, while C2 requires more time. Perhaps C1 represents the utility of children in the later stages of their life cycle, while C2 represents those in the earlier stages.

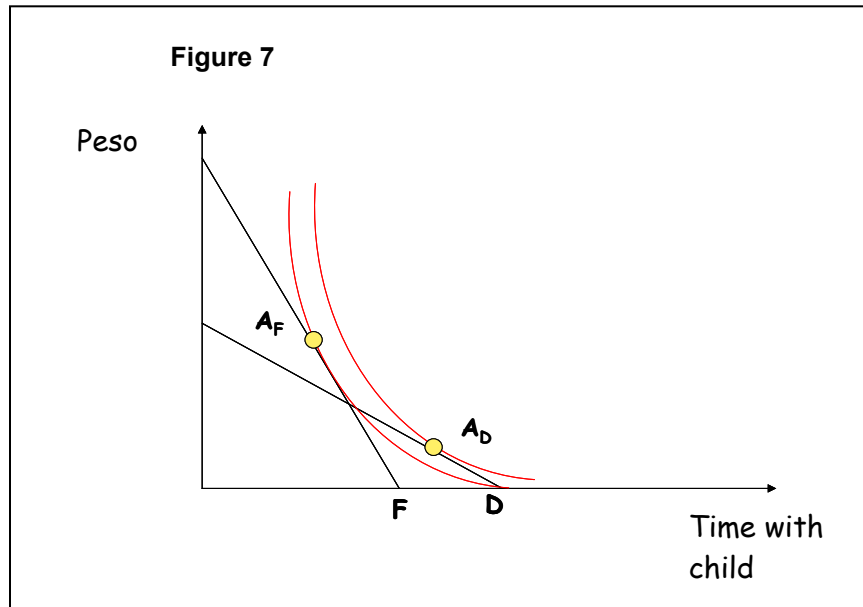


Suppose that the parent(s) is informed of the utility or preference curve of the child. Then, the parent spends time and money for the child in a way that maximizes the latter's utility. We begin with the price line given by D. The point that maximizes utility given this price line is the point A_D . Now, if the family is able to shift the price line from D to F, say by working abroad, the allocation becomes A_F . In this case, utility of the child is even higher than before.



Theoretically, there can also be a situation where the utility of child becomes worse when one or two parents become(s) an OFW. This is illustrated in Figure 7, where the new intersection A_F corresponds to a less desirable price line, say, A_D .

In such a case, the question that comes to mind is why one or two parents would decide to work abroad despite the expected reduction in utility of the child. One possibility is that the shape of the utility function is not known. Another is that there may be other justifications for the decision to work abroad, say previous indebtedness. In other words, the proper comparator to A_F is not A_D , but some point A that is inferior even to A_F .



It is the responsibility of the state to provide the conditions that would enable families to provide for the rights of the child that would then maximize the utility enjoyed by the child. In this second example, where the decision to work abroad made the child worse off, then the state should intervene to mitigate these adverse effects. Another option, which may be going to the extreme, is to limit the choices of parents regarding work abroad, say, only when the first scenario applies.

In this study, we take full cognizance of the fact that the time and money resources consumed by the child may not have been the result of utility-maximization. To determine which combination results in the desirable level of utility, we need to come up with a proxy for utility. We assume that this depends on the extent to which children's rights are observed, those pertaining to survival, development, participation and protection. Bradshaw et al. (2006)¹ recently developed an index of child well-being in the European Union. The final index is made up of 51 variables that can be structured to fall into 23 domains, ultimately forming 8 clusters. These clusters are:

¹ Bradshaw, Jonathan, Petra Hoelscher and Dominic Richardson, "An Index of Child Well-being in the European Union," Social Indicator Research (2006).

1. Material situation
2. Housing
1. Health
2. Subjective well-being
3. Education
4. Children's relationships
5. Civic participation
6. Risk and safety.

This study adopts some of these indicators, and these are subsequently discussed as they figure into the analysis. Children between the ages of 6 to less than 18 are included. They are grouped according to the following age brackets: 6–8, 9–12, 13–16, 17 to less than 18. The grouping coincides with the different stages in life cycle of the child, roughly coinciding with the grade level the child is expected to be in – primary, intermediate, secondary or early college.

3. Methodology

Secondary Data

The study uses three data sets from three different surveys – the Family Income and Expenditure Survey, the Labor Force Survey (January 2004 round) and the Survey on Overseas Filipinos (2003). These databases are merged to provide more in-depth information on the households. Following is a description of each survey.

Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES):

Collected every three years, the FIES is a survey of families done primarily to gauge living conditions. Information on the family's expenditures and disbursements and their sources of income and receipts are collected in this survey.

Labor Force Survey (LFS):

This survey is collected every quarter. It gathers information on employment, unemployment and underemployment of each member of the respondent household who is of working age (15 and above). Demographic characteristics are also gathered for members not of working age. This survey covers about 41,000 households.

Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF):

Conducted every year, this survey is a rider to the October round of the Labor Force Survey. It gathers information on Filipino overseas workers' socio-economic

characteristics such as age, sex, position in the family, marital status, educational attainment, occupation here and abroad, country of destination, and amount of cash and non-cash transfers made over a period of six months. The coverage is limited to Filipinos who have worked or are working abroad at any time during the months of April through September 2003. Immigrants are not included in the survey.

Primary data

Groenewold and Bilsborrow (2004) strongly advise that “to study the determinants and mechanisms of migration, it is important to examine the motivations, characteristics and circumstances not only of those who actually migrated but also of those who did not migrate.” This advice is followed in this study along with their “model sampling strategy.” The strategy begins with identifying geographical areas within the region of interest that have a high prevalence of households with international migration experience. Strata are created according to this prevalence, after which the sampling frame is constructed clearly classifying each household in the stratum as migrant or non-migrant. Samples are chosen per substratum.

Given the limits of financial resources, the issue is whether to include more areas but less samples per area, or less areas but more samples per area. It was decided to adopt the latter since the analysis requires grouping the children by age while controlling for the effects of culture and geography. This means that there should be adequate number of children per age group in each area. Primary data collection was confined to the municipalities of Batac and Vintar in Ilocos Norte.

The choice of the province, municipalities and barangays was guided by the following considerations: (a) proportion of families with an OFW in the household, based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, (b) presence of a collaborator who can assist in the data collection, and (c) willingness of households to participate in the study.

There were three rounds of data collection. The first round was conducted to construct the frame and was done in each sample barangay. The households were categorized into those with an OFW parent and those without; then further into those with a child or children members and those without. Key informants, usually the barangay captain, secretary and health worker, were interviewed for this. Those with no children members were excised from the list.

The second round was the interview of household respondents. The Asia-Pacific Policy Center (APPC) chose to partner with the Regional Center on Poverty Studies (RCPS) based at the Mariano Marcos State University in Ilocos Norte. This three-year-old centre was established under the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Region 1 as the repository for research on poverty in the region.

The survey operations started on 10 September 2007 and were completed 5 October 2007. There were four barangays covered in each of the survey municipalities. In each barangay, systematic random sampling was implemented to select the sample respondent households. The following table shows the number of household respondents allocated for

each barangay. The total number of respondents is 248: 122 OFW households or treatment households, and 126 non-OFW households or control households.

Table 1. Survey areas

Municipality	<i>Barangay</i>	Number of household respondents	
		OFW	Non-OFW
Batac	Baay	17	15
	Baligat	13	15
	Palongpong	15	15
	Tabug	15	15
Vintar	Dipilat	15	15
	Lubnac	15	16
	Alejo Malasig	16	15
	Tamdagan	16	20

Information was obtained to indicate child well-being, i.e., (1) material situation, (2) housing, (3) health, (4) subjective well-being, (5) education, (6) children’s relationships, (7) civic participation, (8) risk and safety. These variables make up the set of dependent variables. Of additional interest is the time provided by the parent and other caregivers to the children and the money being spent solely for the children. The former is proxied by identifying the caregivers’ affinity to the child as they take on certain roles that are deemed important to meeting the rights of the child. In addition to the usual socio-economic profile, questions considered such items as the reconfiguration of roles in the household, reasons behind the decision to migrate, participation of the child in the decision-making processes of the household, and long-term goals.

For the third round of data collection, children from the sample OFW households were gathered for a panel interview. They were grouped according to age: 6–8, 9–12, 13–16, and 17. Three major activities were conducted:

1. Physical examination by a qualified physician.
2. Group interview of 3 to 4 children of the same age group, with two facilitators in each group.
3. One-on-one interview of a child selected from each group.

A total of 130 children were interviewed, and 24 were interviewed individually.

4. Results

Results based on secondary data

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimates that as of 2006 there were 8.23 million Filipinos overseas (referred to as OFWs hereafter). Using the 2003 Survey on Overseas Filipinos, we find that the majority of OFWs² come from the National Capital Region (18.2%), followed closely by CALABARZON (18.1%), then by Central Luzon (12%) and Western Visayas (10%). More than 40% of families have at least one OFW member.

Table 2. Regional distribution of families with OFW members, 2003

Region	Number	Percentage
NCR	206,615	18.2
CAR	24,247	2.1
Ilocos Region	102,037	9.0
Cagayan Valley	68,164	6.0
Central Luzon	137,353	12.1
CALABARZON	206,147	18.1
MIMAROPA	13,941	1.2
Bicol Region	36,271	3.2
Western Visayas	115,971	10.2
Central Visayas	60,311	5.3
Eastern Visayas	21,500	1.9
Western Mindanao	21,588	1.9
Northern Mindanao	31,439	2.8
Southern Mindanao	30,872	2.7
Central Mindanao	34,438	3.0
ARMM	15,890	1.4
Caraga	11,194	1.0

Source: Author's estimate based on the 2003 Survey of Filipinos Overseas

Background profile

About 1 of every 10 OFWs is still considered as the head of their household; about one third is the spouse of the household head; the greater number, almost 40%, are children of the household head. This means that among families with OFW members, 45% of them have one or both parents as the OFW.

Overall, the ratio of male to female OFWs is almost 1:1. As a point of reference, in January 2004, only 38% of all employed individuals in the country were females. When only the OFWs who are either household head or the spouse of the household head are considered, then 2 out of 3 are males. In contrast, among those who are neither heads of households nor spouses, it is found that 2 out of 3 are females.

² The SOF definition of OFW does not include permanent migrants.

As expected, the OFWs have higher educational attainment. More than 2 of 3 OFWs have reached at least college level. Only about 11% have less than a high school diploma. The profile is maintained even if only the household head or their spouse is considered.

A majority of OFWs (90%) work in developed countries; most of them are in the Middle East (34%) or in East Asia (31%). Those in the US or Canada make up about 14%.

OFW vs. ‘similar’ non-OFW families

The profile discussed above proves there are quality differences in the human capital between OFWs and non-OFWs, in general. These differences may affect the way children are cared for, in addition to the migration experience of the parent(s). In other words, it is not enough to compare outcomes among families with OFW parent(s) against families with no OFW parent(s).

In this section, families with an OFW parent are compared against families where neither parent is an OFW. Essentially, we want to test the hypothesis that two families with the same quality of human capital (as far as parents are concerned) are able to realize better outcomes for their children because of the presence of an OFW parent. Note that the latter group may include families with an OFW member, perhaps, a son or daughter.

We estimate a logit model with the following specification to predict the likelihood that a parent would be an OFW.

$$\log\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) = \alpha + \beta'x \quad (1)$$

where

$\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right)$ is the odds that a parent would be an OFW

x is a vector of the quality of human capital of the parents – age and educational attainment.

We use the merged SOF, FIES and LFS data.

Table 3. Dependent variable: Probability of being an OFW parent

Parameter	β estimate	Standard error	Wald Chi-Square	Pr > ChiSq	
Intercept	-8.284	0.439	355.9	<.0001	***
Age of household head	0.179	0.022	66.2	<.0001	***
Age of household head, squared	-0.003	0.000	96.9	<.0001	***
Education of household head	0.359	0.026	190.9	<.0001	***
Age of spouse	-0.052	0.009	32.5	<.0001	***
Age of spouse, squared	0.001	0.000	60.0	<.0001	***
Education of spouse	0.306	0.028	124.1	<.0001	***
<i>Association of predicted probabilities and observed responses</i>					
Per cent concordant	80.2		Somers' D	0.617	
Per cent discordant	18.5		Gamma	0.626	
Per cent tied	1.4		Tau-a	0.035	
Pairs	50,263,950		c	0.809	

Note: *** denotes significance at 1% level.

Using this simple model, we arrive at a concordance rate of 81%. Interestingly, we find that age enters the model in a nonlinear fashion. A family with a younger head of household and older spouse is more likely to have an OFW parent, controlling for educational attainment of the parents.

Table 4. Comparison of demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Non-OFW		OFW	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Family size	4.91	1.63	4.35	1.67
Household members with age				
less than 1	1.02	0.26	1.00	0.29
1 to 6	1.46	0.86	1.40	0.83
7 to 12	1.48	0.88	1.39	0.82
13 to 16	1.30	0.72	1.37	0.77
17	1.06	0.36	1.10	0.40
18 to 22	1.56	0.80	1.43	0.74
23 to 64	2.49	0.91	2.47	0.86
greater than 64	1.14	0.42	1.10	0.31
Household members working	2.71	1.33	2.58	1.45
Household members working abroad	0.56	0.77	1.33	0.82
Age of household head	41.79	7.52	39.74	6.79
Age of spouse	42.72	9.29	41.52	7.23

We then constitute a sample of ‘neighbouring’ families, the sample of families with an OFW parent and their corresponding neighbour, or those families without an OFW parent but with similar likelihood of having an OFW parent. In other words, we have a group of families with parents who have the same opportunities to work abroad, except that some did while some did not. This comes up to 907 families – 370 with an OFW parent and 537 without.

Table 4 above gives the profile of these families. In particular, we find that families with parent OFW are smaller (4 vs. 5), with more OFW members (1.33 vs. 0.56), and have younger heads and spouses. We do not find significant difference in the age composition between the two groups of families.

Families with parent OFW have higher per capita income by at least PhP 20,000.00 (in 2003 prices) while per capita expenditure is higher by PhP 16,000.00 (in 2003 prices). We also find a significantly lower incidence of poverty among these families (0% vs. 3%). Interestingly, we find that families with OFW parent expend less labour, 65 hours per week vs. families without an OFW parent who work 102 hours per week. There is no significant difference in the number of workers in the two groups. This means that each worker in non-OFW-parent families puts in longer hours (38 vs. 25 hours), on the average.

Table 5. Comparison of economic indicators

Characteristic	Non-OFW	OFW
Household members employed	2.71	2.58
Number of hours at work per week	102.32	64.63
Educational attainment, household head	5.67	5.69
Per capita income, 2003 pesos	84,373	106,263
Per capita expenditure, 2003 pesos	61,924	78,192
Remittances from abroad, 2003 pesos	94,500	310,858
Poverty incidence, per cent	2.79	0.00

OFW parents were able to remit more than PhP 300,000.00, on the average in 2003, which exceeds the total spending of the family by an average of 15%.

Differences in spending habits

Considering only the families with children, we find that the group of OFW families spends a significantly higher proportion of their budget on fuel (6.8%), transport and communication (10%), education (7.2%) and current saving (21%) than similar non-OFW families. The proportion of food in their budget is also significantly lower than among similar non-OFW families.

It would be interesting to find out if having an OFW parent changes spending habits. We know that demand (as proxied by spending) depends on price given wealth (as proxied by income). Unfortunately, we do not have information on the price of non-food items by province. Thus, we simply model the consumption function pertaining to each of the items noted above. The hypothesis is that consumption will depend on the needs, as determined by the demographic structure of the family (number of children, number of adults), cultural variations (proxied by region of residence) and wants as a function of current income. We estimate the model separately for the OFW and non-OFW families and then estimate a pooled model.

Table 6. Share of selected expenditure items in the budget of similar OFW and non-OFW families (with children)

Expenditure item	Budget share (%)		Significance
	Non-OFW family	OFW family	
Food	38.3	35.1	****
Fuel, light and water	6.4	6.8	*
Transport and communication	8.7	9.6	**
Education	5.4	7.2	***
Medical care	1.8	2.1	
Durable furnishings	2.6	3.4	
Non-durable furnishings	0.2	0.3	
Current saving	15.2	20.8	***

Significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.0001$

The output is given in Annex A. We simply present the highlights of the estimated model, primarily the elasticity with respect to income. The elasticity measures the degree by which spending on the item increases when income increases.

Spending on food varies with the number of adults and children in the family, as well as with current income. As expected, food is income inelastic, at about 50%. This is true in both OFW and non-OFW families. Among OFW families, regional variations do not seem to matter. However, in non-OFW families, we find significant differences in the regions of Central Luzon, MIMAROPA, Davao and NCR.

Spending on fuel demonstrates a higher elasticity, though it is still income inelastic. It also varies with the demographic structure of the family. Some regional variables appear significant, indicating differences in mobility characteristics in NCR and CALABARZON compared with other regions. This profile is shared by both OFW and non-OFW families.

Spending on transport and communication exhibits almost unitary elasticity with respect to income. Among OFW families, spending for this item increases with the number of adults but does not vary with the number of children. In contrast, among non-OFW families, demographic structure does not come out as a significant determinant.

Education is income elastic, and even more so among OFW families (elasticity = 1.65) than among non-OFW families (elasticity = 1.42). In both families, spending for education also increases according to the number of children in the family. Another determinant among non-OFW families is the number of adults.

Medical expense is unitary elastic with respect to income. Curiously, it is negatively related to the number of adults in the family. The relationship is strongly significant among OFW families and mildly significant in non-OFW families.

Among OFW families, spending on durable furnishings is income elastic (elasticity = 1.84). We also find that families with more adults and/or more children tend to spend less, other things remaining the same. Among non-OFW families, however, we find that spending for this item is inelastic with respect to income. Demographic structure also does not exert significant influence on the spending.

Spending on nondurables among OFW families appears to vary only with respect to income, and is income inelastic. This contrasts with non-OFW families, where spending is income elastic. Regional differences are also apparent. Those residing in regions 2, 3, CALABARZON and NCR spend significantly less on nondurables than those in the other regions.

Saving out of current income in OFW families is income elastic (elasticity = 1.53). Families with more adults and/or more children experience downward pressure on saving, ceteris paribus. We also find that families in Region 11 save less. Saving is also income elastic in non-OFW families (elasticity = 1.67). It is negatively related with number of adults and is not significantly affected by the number of children.

We test for structural change using the Chow's test, as follows:

$$F = \frac{(RSS_R - RSS_{UR})/k}{RSS_{UR}/(n_1 + n_2 - 2k)} \quad (2)$$

Where RSS_1 and RSS_2 are the residual sum of squares corresponding to the models for the OFW and non-OFW families and RSS_{UR} is the residual sum of squares pertaining to the pooled regression; n_1 and n_2 are the number of observations in each group; k is the number of parameters estimate.

At the 5% critical level, we do not find any structural difference between the spending habits of OFW and non-OFW families on food, education, medical care, nondurable furnishings and saving. In other words, any difference we find can be explained by differences in income, demographic structure, and in some cases, regional location of residence.

On the other hand, we find significant structural differences in the spending on transport and communication between OFW and non-OFW families. The higher spending by OFW families is expected given the need for long-distance communication. Meanwhile, we find some difference, though significant only at the 15% level, in the spending on durable furnishing and fuel, light and water. This implies that OFW families spend more on these items than non-OFW families, even when they have similar income and demographic characteristics. This has been referred to as conspicuous consumption (Tabuga 2007; Asis 2004). Note, however, that our results only weakly support this finding.

characteristics. This has been referred to as conspicuous consumption (Tabuga 2007; Asis 2004). Note, however, that our results only weakly support this finding.

Table 7. Tests of significance of structural change in spending habits between OFW and non-OFW families

Expenditure item	Chow statistic	Significance
Food	0.814	
Fuel, light and water	1.428	*
Transport and communication	1.865	***
Education	1.087	
Medical expense	0.597	
Durable furnishings	1.337	*
Non-durable furnishings	0.834	
Saving (out of current income)	0.645	

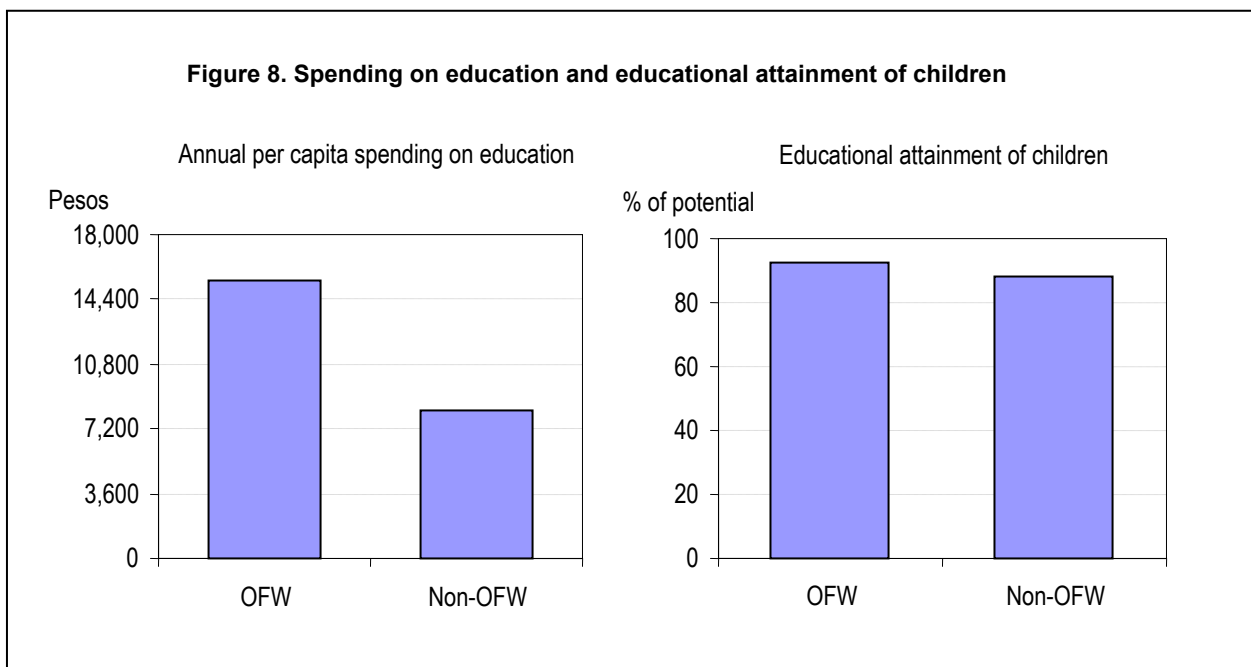
* significant at 15%, ** - 5% level, *** - 1% level

Indications of children's welfare

Neither the FIES nor the SOF contains explicit variables on the welfare of children. At the most, we can only infer this information from the spending on education, assuming that it is for the children.

Children of school age who belong to families with an OFW parent are more able to go to school. Compared to families of 'similar' parent characteristics where children are able to achieve 88% of their potential education, given their age,³ these children are able to achieve 93% of their potential education, given their age. This, however, pertains only to quantity of education.

³ We assume that if a child is already 8 years old, then she or he should have at least finished Grade 1; if 9 years old, then Grade 2, and so on.



Spending on education for these children is almost twice more, at PhP 15,400 compared to the other group of schoolchildren of only PhP 8,200. This amount includes tuition fees, books and school supplies. Hence, although the difference in quantity of education may be small, the difference in quality may be quite substantial. The children of OFW parents probably go to more expensive schools, or if they go to public schools, they enjoy more school supplies such as books and notebooks.

It would then seem that children of OFW parents are better off, if we base our conclusion on availability of education services. There are also indications that presence of adult supervision may not be an issue. We find almost the same number of adults in the family, and they spend fewer hours working, which may mean more time spent with the children. What remains to be determined is if the quality of adult supervision differs according to the relationship of the child to the caregiver.

It is reasonable to assume that culture plays a significant role in how a child is cared for. In this study, we take full cognizance of this fact and, therefore, we limited the primary data collection to only one province: Ilocos Norte.

Results based on primary data

The first wave of migrants, at least during the 1900s, came from Ilocos Norte, where the top destination was the US. Over time, the profile of countries has become more diverse. For instance, in the sample of OFW families,⁴ we do not find any OFW father who works in the US, and among OFW mothers, the proportion is less than 14%.

⁴ Unless otherwise specified, OFW families from hereon refers to families where one or both parents is/are OFW/s.

More than 70% of OFWs work in developed countries; however, we find disparity in the region of choice by gender of the OFW. The top destination among OFW fathers is the Middle East, while among mothers, it is East Asia.

Table 8. Destination of OFW parents in sample families, %

Father	
Middle East	54.4
South-East Asia	15.2
Western Europe	13.0
East Asia	10.9
South Asia	2.2
Commonwealth of Independent States	2.2
South-East Europe	2.2
Mother	
East Asia	53.4
Middle East	16.4
North America	13.7
Western Europe	6.9
South-East Asia	5.5
South-East Europe	4.1

There is more occupational diversity among OFW fathers than OFW mothers. More than 1 in 5 OFW fathers is employed as seaman. Some are employed in agriculture (13%), or as an unskilled construction worker (13%), an office worker (13%) or other skilled worker (13%). Very few (7%) are employed as professionals.

The majority of OFW mothers work in the service sector, mostly as domestic helpers (86%), caregivers (10%) or waitresses (1%). The remaining few (3%) are employed as factory workers.

Table 9. Work abroad of OFW parents in the sample families

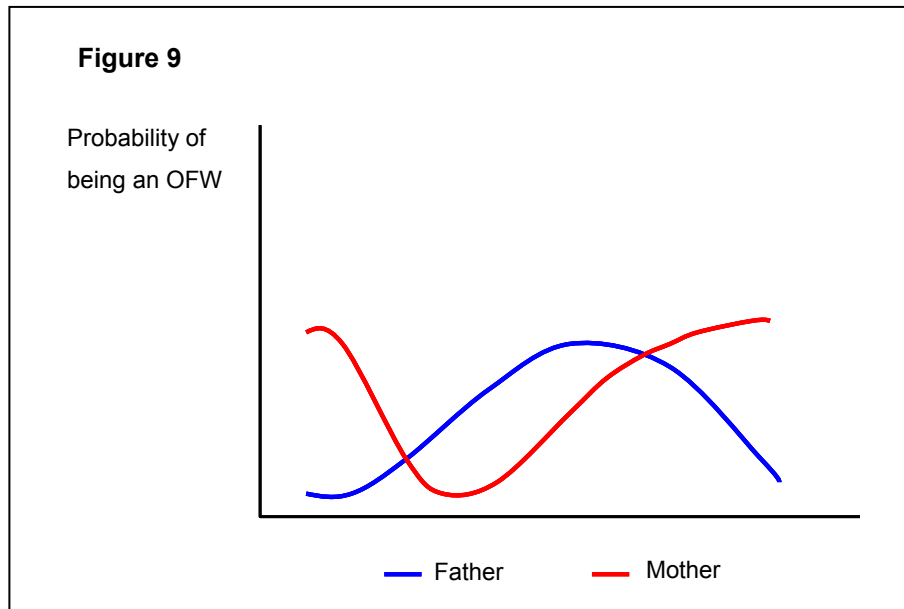
Type of employment	Number	%
<i>OFW Father</i>		
Workers in agriculture	7	13.0
Unskilled construction worker	7	13.0
Skilled construction worker	2	3.7
Supervisor, construction	2	3.7
Plant and equipment operator	4	7.4
Other skilled worker	7	13.0
Factory worker	2	3.7
Office worker	7	13.0
Professionals	4	7.4
Seaman	12	22.2
<i>OFW Mother</i>		
Domestic helper	63	86.3
Caregiver	7	9.6
Waitress	1	1.4
Factory worker	2	2.7

Reasons behind the migration:

Sample children interviewed number 130. Of these, 46% have OFW fathers, 50% have OFW mothers, and 4% have both parents working as OFWs. The primary reason behind the decision to work abroad is to provide a good education for the children. This is followed closely by the desire to have a better income.

Long-term vs. short-term stint as OFW:

More mother OFWs than father OFWs consider working abroad as a long-term engagement, 53% vs. 40%. Perhaps it is because the kind of work the mother does enables her to establish some roots. It may also be lenient in terms of age requirement, which indirectly implies that the OFW mother may be more concerned with stability than a career path. This is consistent with the logit model earlier estimated where the effect of age depends on whether it concerns the father or the mother.



If it concerns the father, then the impact of age is positive as he grows older up to a point where the advantage tapers off then turns to a disadvantage. If it concerns the mother, the impact is opposite: Older mothers are definitely preferred over younger ones. The cut-off appears to coincide with childbearing age.

Monetary benefits enjoyed by the family because of migration:

The amount being remitted depends on the gender of the OFW. It also appears to depend on whether it is a one- or two-parent OFW family. Unfortunately, we are unable to generalize the latter given the small incidence in the sample.

Table 10. Assets and investments acquired

Type	Acquired	Planning to acquire
Increased savings in the bank	18.5	13.9
House	53.6	29.1
Lot	29.1	21.9
Vehicle	35.1	17.9
Insurance		
Health	6.6	4.6
Life	6.0	4.0
Education	19.2	19.2
Bank account for the children	5.3	13.9
Decreased debt	13.9	11.9

Over the past six months, father OFWs coming from one-parent OFW families were able to remit an average of PhP 76,500 to their families while mother OFWs were able to remit PhP 40,300. Father OFWs in two-parent OFW families were able to remit a lesser amount, almost equal to that remitted by the mother OFW (also from a two-parent OFW family), PhP 46,375 vs. PhP 45,500.

A new house is the most common form of asset building among the sample OFWs. Interestingly, there are more families with father OFWs (54%) than with mother OFWs (29%) who were able to build a new house since the OFW began working abroad. Perhaps it may be due to the higher income being remitted by the father OFW or the better financial management of the mother who is left behind, or both. Bank savings are a less popular 'store of wealth' – less than 20% of families with OFW fathers and only 14% of families with OFW mothers have increased savings in the bank.

Changes in the household:

We find changes in household composition before and after the migration. It also appears to differ depending on who is the parent OFW. If it is the father, then we observe the following changes:

1. Increase in household size
2. Increase in the number of children who belong to the nuclear family
3. Increase in the number of children who do not belong to the nuclear family
4. Decrease in the number of adults belonging to the nuclear family
5. Decrease in the number of adults who do not belong to the nuclear family.

Table 11. Household composition

Household member	Father is OFW	Mother is OFW	Both are OFWs	
			Father	Mother
<i>Before migration</i>				
Household size	4.3	4.4	3.8	4.8
Nuclear family				
Adult	2.3	2.3	1.2	1.8
Children	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.5
Other household members				
Adult	1.2	1.2	2.0	2.4
Children	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0
<i>After migration</i>				
Household size	4.4	4.0	4.0	4.0
Nuclear family				
Adult	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.4
Children	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0
Other household members				
Adult	1.8	1.3	0.0	0.0
Children	0.5	0.6	2.6	2.6

If the mother is the OFW, we observe the following:

1. Decrease in household size
2. Decrease in the number of children who belong to the nuclear family
3. Increase in the number of children who do not belong to the nuclear family
4. Decrease in the number of adults belonging to the nuclear family
5. Increase in the number of adults who do not belong to the nuclear family.

Inputs provided to children

Availability of parental care

We find that about 17% of sample children who were included in the group interview were not yet born when the mother OFW first left to work abroad. This means that the children were born in-between ‘contracts’ overseas. Almost two thirds have not yet reached age 7. Those who are considered children (less than 18 years of age) when their mothers first left make up 60%.

Table 12. Age of child at first migration

Age	Father is OFW	Mother is OFW
Not yet born	42.8	17.0
1 to 6	31.7	49.1
7 to 11	24.4	30.2
12 to 17	1.22	3.8

Meanwhile, almost 43% of children in the sample households were not yet born when the father OFW first left to work abroad. Including those who have not yet reached age 7, the figure comes up to almost 75%.

The above profile reveals that a considerable proportion of children did not grow up with parental care of either or both parents.

Parent-child communication

All respondents claim that the OFW parent communicates with the children and adopts the same style with every child, regardless of age. The modal frequency of calls of the OFW mother is once a week to more than once a week; for the OFW father, the modal frequency is once a week to daily. The simple average for both is more than once a day.

The most common means of communication is the cellular phone, followed by the landline telephone. Apparently, there is preference for efficiency rather than effectiveness. In the box below, we illustrate the limits of effectiveness of the telephone.

Box 1: Keeping in Touch

Letter writing is an extremely uncommon means of communication among OFWs and their children in Ilocos. Only 9 out of 127 children mentioned that their OFW parent communicates with them through letters, or 'snail mail'. The more preferred means is by mobile phone. It is not really cheaper, but it is certainly faster. The more important consideration, however, is whether it is an effective means of communication.

Nineteen children, with ages ranging from 7 to 17, were asked to write a letter to their OFW parent. The most common content was thanks, expressed in 63% of the letters. One child even enumerated what they enjoy because of her mother's sacrifices:

Thank you for what you are doing so that we can go to school, and have money to buy food, fruits, rice, clothes, slippers. Thank you!

Joanne (8 years old; ed. translated from Filipino)

A 14-year-old boy, after thanking his mother, promised to continue his education and be responsible, and a 13-year-old girl promised to study hard so she could also help some day.

Almost half of the kids (47%) wrote the usual sentiments of "I love you" and "I miss you," with several repeating the statements fervently.

But mom, all I need is you because I miss you so much. I miss my mom who kiss me at night before I sleep. I can't express my feelings to you when you are calling me through cellphone. I can't show you how I miss you and how I love you. ... I hope that someday we will be a happy family and I want to hug and kiss you this time. I miss you mom and I love you. I always pray to God that our family will be happy someday. I miss you and I love you.

Sarah (16 years old; ed. excerpt as written)

Only five letter writers asked their parents, “Kumusta?” or “How are you?” – phone conversations usually begin with these niceties. In fact, this was the way letter writing was practiced and taught by elders.

Eight children told their parent(s) to take care, or not to neglect themselves, or not to worry. Only seven children directly asked for their parent to come home but two boys said it twice, and a little girl said it three times and it was the only content of her letter:

Dear Daddy,

I hope you will come home already because I miss you very much. Come take care of us. Just come home even without toys.

PS My wish this Christmas is for you to be here

Love,

Keren (7 years old; ed. translated from Filipino)

One of the more unusual requests was by a 10-year-old girl for a photograph and a package from her mother. Another was from an 8-year-old girl for her parents to reconcile; she first addressed a letter to her OFW mother, and then wrote the same letter addressed to her father.

Only one girl wrote substantial descriptions of how her family was doing — her school activities, her siblings' activities, the father's routine, their needs and their problems.

Ma, how are you doing over there? I hope you're doing well. As for the rest of here, although hard-up, we just endure with Papa. John can now read. Papa sometimes comes home late at night and rests immediately because he's tired. Karl helps Tata and Nana because they can't do some of the work.

Ma, about school, I'm very busy. Sometimes I go home late because of dance practice. But sometimes, I miss practice because I want to help at home. Papa also scolds me when I'm always at practice. We're paying for a lot in school. Sometimes when dad can't give us anything, he goes up to Uncle Jun's to ask. Uncle always gives us something so we get embarrassed. Papa doesn't have earn enough come Saturday. It's only enough for our school allowances, not for what we need at home. We just hang on. So, you too, Ma, do your work well there. We can't text you sometimes because the cellphone doesn't work. Even if papa is having a hard time, we help him.

John is brought to school by Manang [elder sister] Bes. He and Kole play when they're here. By the way, some of the pigs have not yet been sold. We're still owed a lot because things are really difficult here, ma.

Me, I study well. I'll send my [school report] card too. Always take care there. Do call often, or text. Ok, ma, I'll end here. Do write often. We love you Ma!

Always,

Lanie, Wel, Karl, John, Papa

Lanie (15 years old; ed. translated from Filipino)

Another girl wrote of things she could not tell her mother during their cellphone calls.

Dear Mama

... I write a letter for you to know and think is much better because I can express it and I don't have the fear to say/tell the bad things I have done. Mom, sorry because I tried to drink liquor when I was in high school. I know that it is not good to my health but I just want to taste it to experienced what they are saying "if you drink liquor you will forget your problems," but it is not true. We cannot run/forget our problems unless we face it. Sorry again mom. I can't say it to you because am scared to be scolded by you. I will not do it again.

Your daughter,

Sarah (16 years old)

Two boys (Elric, 12 years old, and Vince, 15) wrote short letters mentioning school and other activities. But one 16-year-old boy, Randy, wrote a long letter detailing various aspects and difficulties in his life and his reproach against his mother.

Ma!

Hi? How are you? If you were to ask about me and my sibs, we're okay. But you know I'm bored at home and always getting scolded. And you know, we're already starting to take care of pigs--I hope tomorrow it'll become a pig farm. In third year [high school], my friend Leo invited me to join a religious group. I agreed although father didn't want me to. There, I learn and find out a lot about the Lord; I get to know a lot of different people and I help, too. All the activities we've been doing have been a lot of fun and even though I don't get any support from you, I was able to support myself, by God's mercy. I was even a choir member at church. That's why when graduation was approaching, I was being convinced by my elders at church to study in BI [Batac Institute]. So when you came home and visited us I decided to ask you if you would fund my college studies. You even spoke to Sir Juliebert about church and school. And so the faculty members in church thought, from what you said, that I would be going to college; but you disappointed not just me but those who trusted in me. But even so thank you for everything. I can't bring myself to be angry with you. Thank you very much.

Your son,

Randy (16 years old; ed. translated from Filipino)

The above letters are very revealing. Letter writing affords them greater freedom to share their deepest feelings – whether of love, guilt or hurt. It really is a pity that writing letters seems to be a lost art. Encouraging it might benefit both the children and the OFW parent. It provides greater freedom of expression, and can even be therapeutic. The telephone is still the faster means of communication, but letter writing brings more depth to the exchange and promotes better bonding.

When the children are asked about communication with their parent OFW, we find that some responses differ from those of the guardian or parent left behind.

Among the 6- to 8-year-olds, more than half (54.3%) simply did not respond. It would seem that the question was understood since the others responded. Perhaps the former group did not consider the short phone conversations amounted to communication.

Some children in sample households said that the mother OFW usually calls to inform them that money is being sent. Others said this is true for their OFW fathers, but with less regularity. Children are aware that their fathers could only call when there is a signal, and

that communication even by cellphone is not easy, for example, when the OFW is working at sea.

Frequency of calls by the OFW father to the children is mildly significantly correlated with the age of the child. This means that the older child receives calls more often than her or his younger sibling does. One young child said, “My mother texts my [older] brothers and sisters and they are the ones who tell me that Mama said she loves us very much.”

Providing guidance and care

As expected, the person responsible to teach children about good manners, faith, saving, skills, etc., depends on who is the parent left behind. If the father is the OFW, then the roles are shared between the mother and a relative, usually the grandmother. If the mother is the OFW, then the roles are shared between the father and the grandmother. Concerning schoolwork, we find that the involvement of the relative depends on who is the OFW. If the father, then the relative is involved in only 12% of the cases, but if the mother, the relative is involved in 38% of the cases. The disparity becomes more pronounced when we consider the role of teaching household chores, 4% vs. 35%. A more disturbing result is that we find about 30% who said that no one is able to teach skills like woodwork or electrical repairs to the children – 33% in families with an OFW father and 27% in families with an OFW mother.

Other relatives step in to perform some tasks: the aunt to help in the schoolwork for children of OFW mothers; the uncle to fix or repair broken things and bring the children to and from school for children of OFW fathers.

Before either parent first left to work abroad, we find that in most cases, the roles are performed by the mother (about 20%) or by both parents (about 50%). We also find the mother to be more involved in helping children with schoolwork (32%) and in training them to do household chores (about 30%).

In families with no OFW parent, the roles are performed usually by both parents (at least 60% of the time). In almost 90% of families, either or both parents teach the children good manners, faith and how to save, as well as discipline them and train them to do household chores. Unlike the children of OFWs, we find that only 14% do not receive guidance on basic skills.

Visits to the doctor and dentist

In general, visits to the doctor and dentist are event-conditioned, meaning that an individual only seeks health care when he or she becomes ill. Apparently, being an OFW child does not alter this behaviour. This question was asked of the children themselves.

Among children aged 6–8 years, 2 in 3 children have visited the doctor during the year. This ratio goes down to 1 in 3 children among the 9–12 age group, then less than 1 in 4 among the 13–16 age group. Moreover, as expected, they said that they visited the doctor because they were ill.

Visits to the dentist are even less frequent: 1 out of every 3 from those 6–8 years old; 1 out of every 3 aged 9–12; and 1 out of every 4 from among the 13- to 16-year-olds. The most common reason for the visit to a dentist is to have tooth extraction.

Interestingly, one respondent admitted to also seeing an *arbolaryo* or traditional healer. An 8-year-old girl was brought by her grandparents to a faith healer, where she was diagnosed as having “evil spirits enter through her vagina.” Much later she was brought to a medical doctor, where she was diagnosed as having a urinary tract infection (UTI).

Budget for the child

Children of OFW parents enjoy more monetary benefits than those of non-OFW parents, particularly concerning food (PhP 7,800 vs. PhP 5,400), clothing (PhP 2,100 vs. PhP 1,100), education (PhP 7,500 vs. PhP 4,400) and money deposited in the bank under their names (PhP 1,500 vs. PhP 100). Recall that these children and their families face the same community, social and cultural conditions and the joint impact of these conditions is usually manifested in terms of preferences for food, clothing, and even attitude towards education spending and saving. We then see that the economic advantage of having an OFW overcomes these conditions, hence, the disparity in the level of spending in said items.

Table 13. Average spending per child, pesos

Expense	w/ OFW parent	w/o OFW parent
Total	18,899	10,984
Food	7,788	5,369
Clothing	2,093	1,088
Education	7,546	4,432
Bank deposit	1,472	95

Investments for the children’s future appear to be the advantage of the OFW children. Although only 5.8% have a bank account under his or her name, this is far from the 0.8% among children of non-OFW families with a bank account. There appear to be substitutes, however, since we observe that 2.5% of OFW children are covered by life insurance, 4.2% by health insurance and 9.2% have pre-need plans. Among children of non-OFW parents, the corresponding figures are: 1.6% with life insurance coverage, 0% with health insurance and 0.8% with pre-need plans.

Table 14. Investments for the child, % with

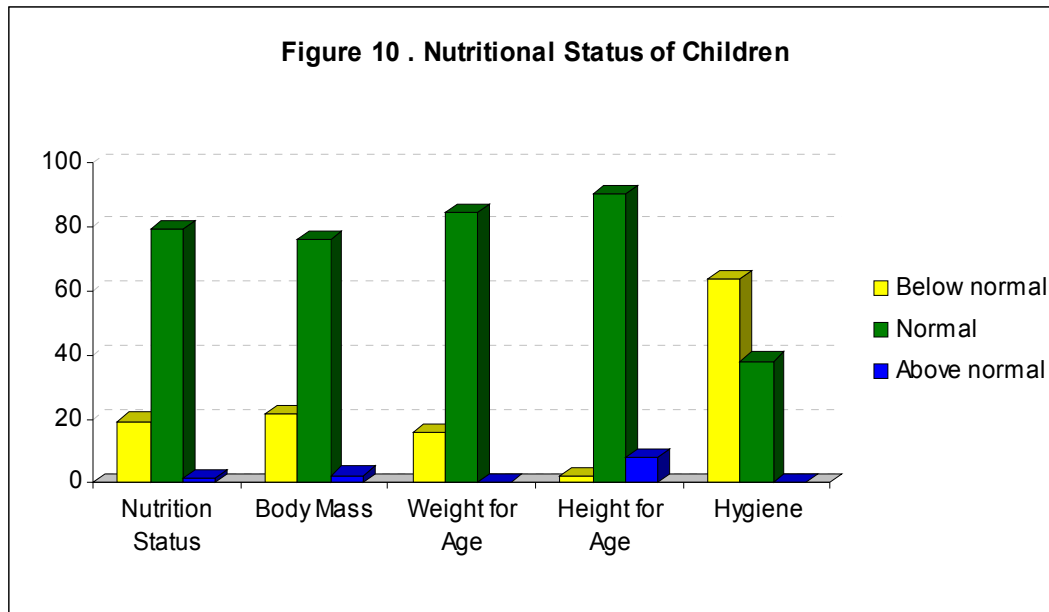
Type	w/ OFW parent	w/o OFW parent
Bank account	5.8	0.8
Life insurance	2.5	1.6
Health insurance	4.2	0.0
Pre-need plan	9.2	0.8

Outcomes

Survival (health status)

The study did not obtain information on the vaccination and immunization of the children since it was not possible to validate this. Instead, a medical examination was conducted on each of the sample children of OFWs. Anthropometric measures were likewise taken.

Data from the Department of Education’s School Health and Nutrition Programme covering the sample *barangays* indicate a “below normal” nutrition status prevalence rate of 17%. Of the sample children examined for the study, 19% were found to be below normal. Almost 2 of every 3 children were found to have hygiene-related problems involving any or all of the following: skin, scalp, ears and nose. Moreover, this problem is more prevalent among boys, observed in almost 4 in 5, than among girls, found in 1 out of 2. This difference in profile is highly significant at $p < 0.005$.



We also inquired about the health status of the child from the parent or guardian. There is no significant difference in the proportion of children rated as ‘satisfactory’ between those

from the treatment (86%) and control group (90%). Thus, we again have a case where the economic advantage does not seem to alter health outcomes. If we cross-reference this against the proportion who sought medical care and their reasons for seeking care, we may conclude that these hygiene and nutrition problems, perhaps, have not yet resulted in serious illness for the child.

Development

Children of OFW families have a significantly higher proportion of achievers than those in non-OFW parent families. They receive academic awards (47% vs. 32%); non-academic awards (25 vs. 12%); and they join academic organizations (41% vs. 24%). However, only 14% of them join or participate in socio-civic organizations, while among children of non-OFW parent families, the proportion is 23%.

The questionnaire also included qualitative questions about the emotional state of the children, and their relationships with their parents, siblings and other members of the family. Suppose we only consider answers like “very good,” “bad” and “very bad,” then we have the following results:

1. Less than 10% of children from OFW parent families are considered by their guardians as “very happy.” In fact, 2% of them are considered as “sad.” In the control group, the proportion of “very happy” is 15%.
2. Only 25% consider their relationship with the OFW parent as “very good.” In comparison, about 33% of children with non-OFW parents consider their relationship as “very good.”
3. There does not seem to be any significant difference in the relationship of the children with siblings and other members of the family, whether they come from an OFW parent family or otherwise.

Participation

Membership in academic organizations and participation in extra-curricular activities is more prevalent among children of OFWs.

The top club memberships are in the Math Teachers Association of the Philippines (MTAP) training guild, where children are screened and trained rigorously in math; the Science Club; and such special interest clubs as choir, drum, Lyre Corps, Banduria and Rondalla Club. Other clubs mentioned were Boy Scout, Girl Scout, athletic clubs and Pupil Government Organization (PGO).

Membership in these clubs, as well as participation in extra-curricular activities, usually requires some amount of money. This is possibly the reason why children of non-OFW parents refrain from joining them.

We find that a lesser proportion of OFW children are members of socio-civic organizations (14%). In contrast, we find 23% of children of non-OFW who are members. This disparity may be explained. During the focus group discussion conducted among

parents left behind, i.e., spouses of OFWs, they admit to being overprotective of their children. They would not want to be blamed by the OFW for any untoward incident that may befall the children. Socio-civic organizations are expected to meet outside school and beyond school hours. In contrast, school activities are performed on school grounds and within school hours, with an obvious figure of authority. Hence, the latter is preferred over the former in the case of OFW children.

Protection

The study did not find any reported incident of child abuse. There were stories, but even *barangay* officials would not confirm these. However, the study inquired about sleeping arrangements from the children and if these pose any risk of sexual abuse. The results do not appear to be a cause of concern.

More than half of children aged 9–16 do not sleep alone. The percentage varies according to the gender of the child. Among boys, 1 out of 3 does not sleep alone, regardless of age. Among girls, the proportion who do not sleep alone increases from 45% among the 9–12 age group to 51% among the 13–16 age group. For more than 90% of them, however, they are accompanied by a female.

Box 2: Split families

The family bears the primary duty of ensuring the rights of the child. Its effectiveness, however, may depend on whether the family has remained intact or has been fractured by the physical distance between two parents. Although the study did not explicitly inquire about this undesirable outcome, evidence of a split family was seen in the letter of one 8-year-old girl to her mother (which she also wrote to her father) saying, “*Mama, I wish you and dad would reconcile. I hope my wish that you reconcile will be fulfilled.*” The first wish she mentioned in the course of the interview was also for the reconciliation of her parents.

In another interview, a 9-year-old girl revealed that her OFW mother separated from her father since she was 5 years old due to her father’s affair, which she witnessed. Her father would bring her straight from school to the house of his mistress, and they would later go home. She chose to live with her mother’s parents instead of with her father and stepmother.

In another family where the father is the OFW parent, the 14-year-old boy said that his mother used to do most of the household chores but now it’s his aunt who does them.

He said he’s saddest when his parents quarrel. According to his 14-year-old sister, their mother lives in another province. Their older brother says he’s saddest when he remembers his mother.

From the perspective of the children

During the group interview, we asked children aged 9–16 how they would rate themselves compared to children of non-OFWs in certain respects. The table below gives the proportion who considers themselves as “better off.”

Table 15. Self-rated living condition of children

Aspect	% who are better off		
	Overall	Among 9–12	Among 13–16
Health	36	43	23
Education	40	52	17
Future	30	39	7
Happy family life	23	28	17
Acceptance by peers	29	39	10
Extra-curricular activities	38	44	25
Participation in family decisions	27	30	14

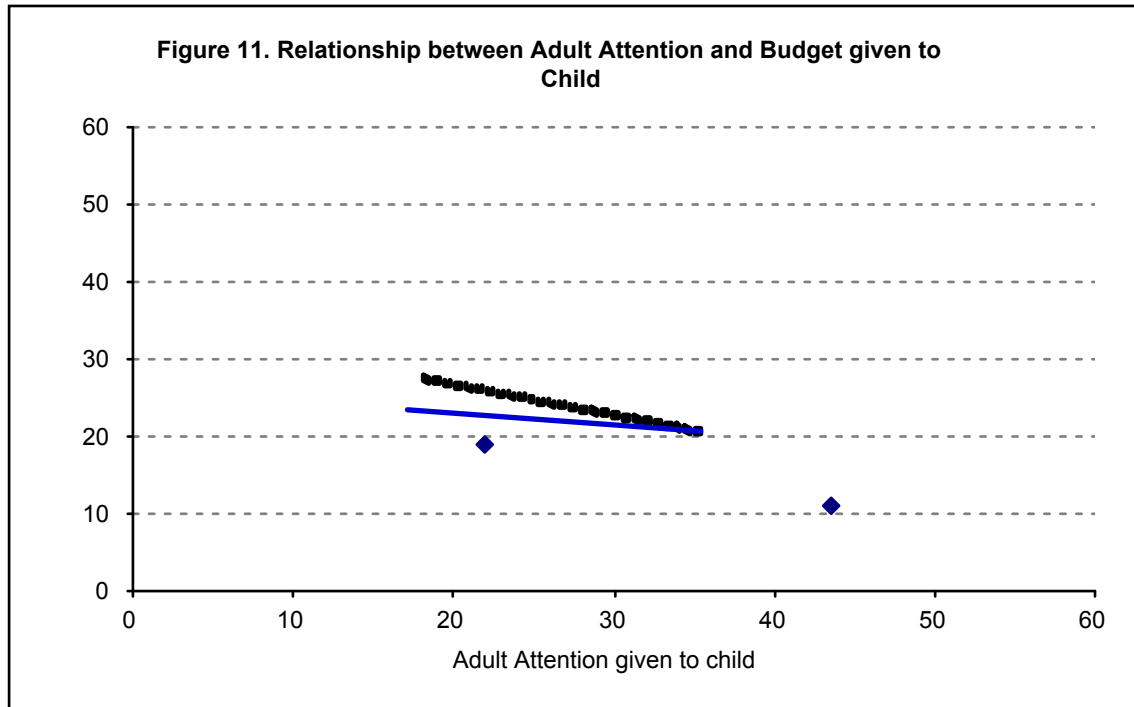
Note that it is in the aspects of having a happy family life and being able to participate in family decision-making where the majority of OFW children feel inadequate. Since this feeling of inadequacy coincides with feelings of adequacy in other aspects, mostly in association with financial advantages, we can say that this may be where the trade-off is taking place.

What is more disturbing is the very poor self-perception among OFW children aged 13–16. In particular, at least 9 in 10 feel insecure about their future and about acceptance by peers. Self-ratings in other respects are likewise very low. The above profiles appear to significantly differ by age group. Unfortunately, the sample size, especially of the 13–16 age group is too small to arrive at definitive conclusions.

The (relative) price line

The hypothesis is that a family is able to provide money inputs to the child by giving up time inputs to the child. In this study, *money inputs to the child* is operationally defined as the sum of the food, clothing, education and bank deposits in the name of the child. In cases where expenses for the child cannot be separated from the family budget, the total expenses for the item are simply divided by the household size. Time inputs provided to the child are proxied by a weighted score based on the affinity to the child of the adult who performs the following roles that connote adult guidance: helps the child with schoolwork, teaches saving, teaches good manners, teaches about God and discipline. The highest score is given if parents perform the task, consistent with the rights-based approach that identifies parents as the primary duty-bearer. Subsequently, we refer to this factor as adult attention (AA).

On the average, families with OFW parents are able to provide a higher budget to their children but lesser AA vs. families with non-OFW parents. Given only these averages, we would have expected better substitutability between budget and AA. In the figure below, we draw this with the broken line. When we consider each data point, we find money inputs for the child are more expensive than we initially thought.



The estimated production function is given below. Note, however that the predictive power is quite low ($R^2 = 0.0663$).

Table 16. Model of a family's production function: Pesos per capita as dependent variable

Variable	β estimate	Standard error	t Value	Pr> t	
Intercept	28758.0	5720.9	5.03	<.0001	*
Per capita adult attention	-136.5	74.1	-1.84	0.0670	*
Number of children, nuclear family	-1521.1	901.3	-1.69	0.0931	*
Number of other adults in the household	1327.6	1770.5	0.75	0.4543	
Age of household head	-169.3	92.8	-1.82	0.0697	*
Age of spouse	52.1	87.7	0.59	0.5534	
Years of schooling, household head	98.3	279.7	0.35	0.7255	
Years of schooling, spouse	-350.5	346.8	-1.01	0.3134	
<i>R-square</i>	0.0663				
<i>Mean of dependent variable</i>	13,799				
<i>Root MSE</i>	15,173				

Note: ***, ** and * denote significance at 1%, 5% and 10% levels, respectively.

The parameter estimates imply the following, assuming that other things remain the same:

1. The resources of the family in terms of both AA and money is finite, hence, there is competition. Having more children shifts down the price line.
2. The older the household head, then same amount of AA input exchanges for even less money inputs to the children.

Preference of the child

There is inherent difficulty in drawing preference curves, especially concerning those of the child. As already mentioned, the amount of money and AA ‘consumed’ by the child may not have resulted from a utility maximization process. A naïve methodology is to situate the welfare of the child into either of four quadrants, depending on whether she or he is given above average or below average money inputs, and then whether the child is given above average or below average AA. Suppose we label these quadrants I, II, III and IV according to Table 17.

Table 17. Utility situation of the child by quadrant			
		AA inputs	
		Below average	Above average
Budget	Below average	I	II
	Above average	III	IV

Those in quadrant IV are definitely better off; those in I, definitely worse off. Classifying those in II and III will involve a value judgement on which is the more preferred input. The data on ‘utility can be used to form this judgement.

In this study, utility is equated with the extent to which children’s rights are met. This is multidimensional, to say the least, and there is no agreement yet on how it should be measured. On the other hand, we can simply take the term ‘utility’ as being synonymous to ‘happy’. However, the only way this information can be obtained is by asking a qualitative answer, hence the problem of value endogeneity. This means that different people enjoying the same comforts in life may view their state of happiness differently.

In this study, we consider two options. The first one assumes that the parent left behind or the guardian is able to provide a more informed judgement on the utility of the child. The second is the self-evaluation of the child. There may be reservations on this second method on the grounds that the child may not really know what gives her or him utility. The box that follows may dispel some of these reservations.

Box 3: I wish

What do children who almost have everything wish for? It would probably depend on the stimuli they are getting – from family, friends, school, media, etc. In an interview of children of OFWs, it would seem that the child's age greatly determines the interpretation of this stimuli.

Among children 6–8 years old, the top wish was either for a specific toy or many toys (43%). Among those who did not mention toys as their top wish, 38% gave it as their second wish. Meanwhile, 17% wanted their family to be complete or together or for their OFW parent(s) to come home as their top wish. A means of transportation was the top wish of 11% of the children and second in the list of 18% of the younger children.

We need to mention that the children were asked about their wishes after hearing the story of 'Ang Tatlong Kahilingan ni Julian' (Rebecca Añonuevo 1999). Julian is a son of an OFW, and his ultimate wish is to have his parents back for good. That this did not figure as the young children's top wish is a significant finding.

On the other hand, among children 9–12 years old, the top wish of almost half (45%) was for a complete family. A toy or many toys was the top wish of 18%. Around one tenth wanted to finish their studies or to do better in school.

If we consider only the top two wishes, we find that while family-related wishes figure as the top, material things figure as a close second. This demonstrates that children are capable of independent choice and are not necessarily affected by the need to give a 'politically correct' answer.

The evaluation, in both methods, concerns the following aspects:

- Overall emotional state
- Relationship with parent OFW
- Relationship with siblings
- Relationship with other members of the household
- Health status
- Performance in school
- Security for the future
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Participation in family decision-making.

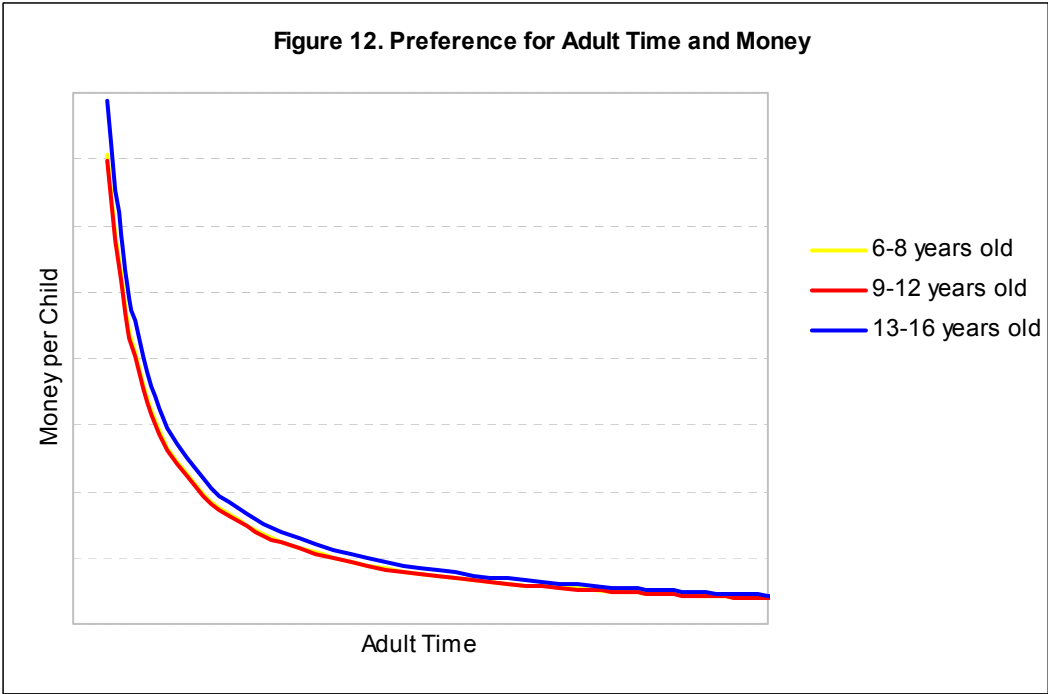
The following table gives the estimates of the first model.

Table 18. Model of a child's preference: Child's utility as dependent variable

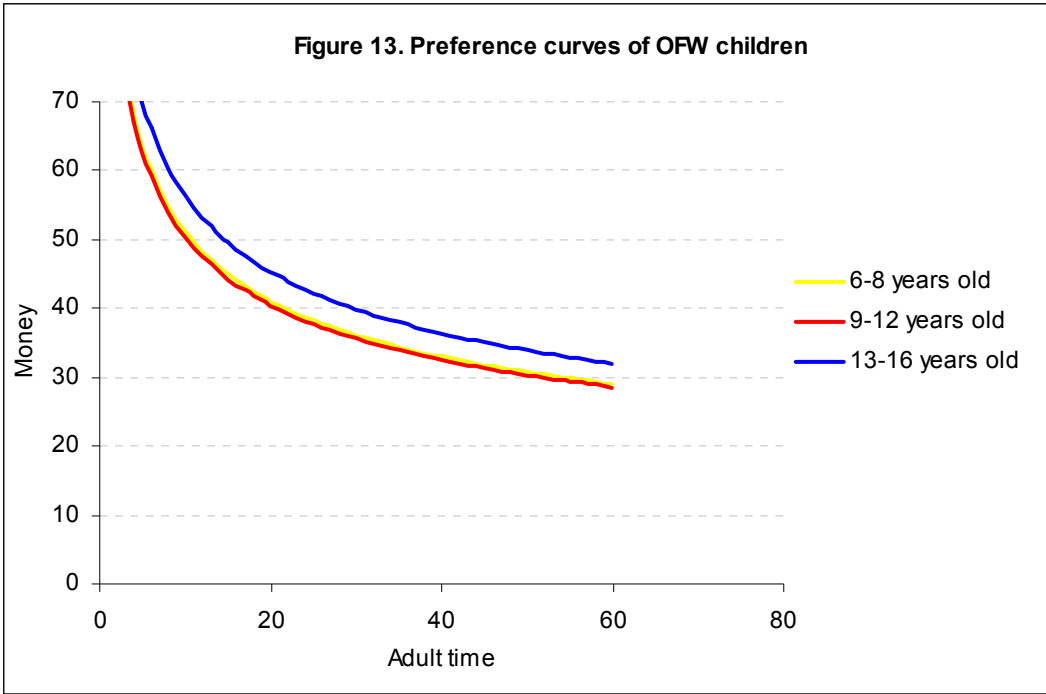
Variable	β estimate	Standard error	t Value	Pr> t	
Intercept	-0.625	0.158	-3.95	<.0001	*
Adult attention, log	0.050	0.022	2.28	0.0231	*
Money input, log	0.052	0.014	3.64	0.0003	*
If child is aged 6–8	0.590	0.037	16.12	<.0001	*
If child is aged 9–12	0.605	0.034	17.95	<.0001	*
If child is aged 13–17	0.482	0.035	13.66	<.0001	*
<i>R-square</i>	0.4904				
<i>Mean of dependent variable</i>	0.4773				
<i>Root MSE</i>	0.2308				

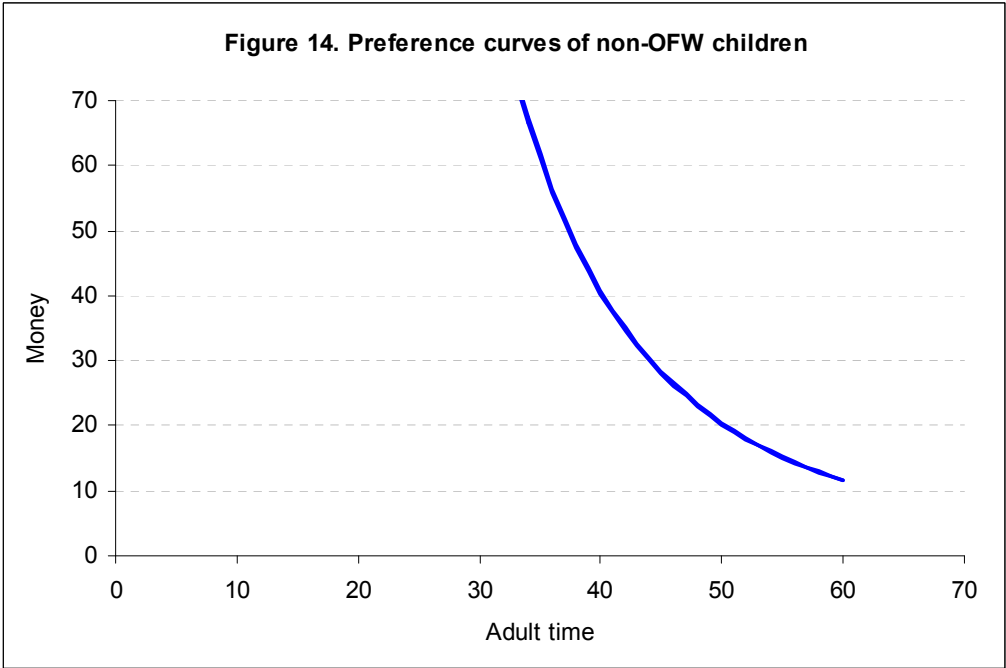
Note: ***, ** and * denote significance at 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

The model has reasonable predictive power, being able to predict about 50% of the variability observed in the left hand side (LHS) dependent variable. Recall that the LHS variable is the judgment of the parent or guardian left behind on the utility of the child. Essentially, the model confirms our hypothesis that utility is increased with increases in both AA and money inputs. These two factors appear to behave with similar elasticity. The age of the child significantly affects the utility level, but age does not affect the elasticity of the factors of AA and money inputs. The chart below is drawn for the same level of utility, but for the different age groups. We then see that the 'hardest' age group to please is aged 13–16 in the sense that they require the most AA and money inputs to reach the same level of utility as with the other age groups.

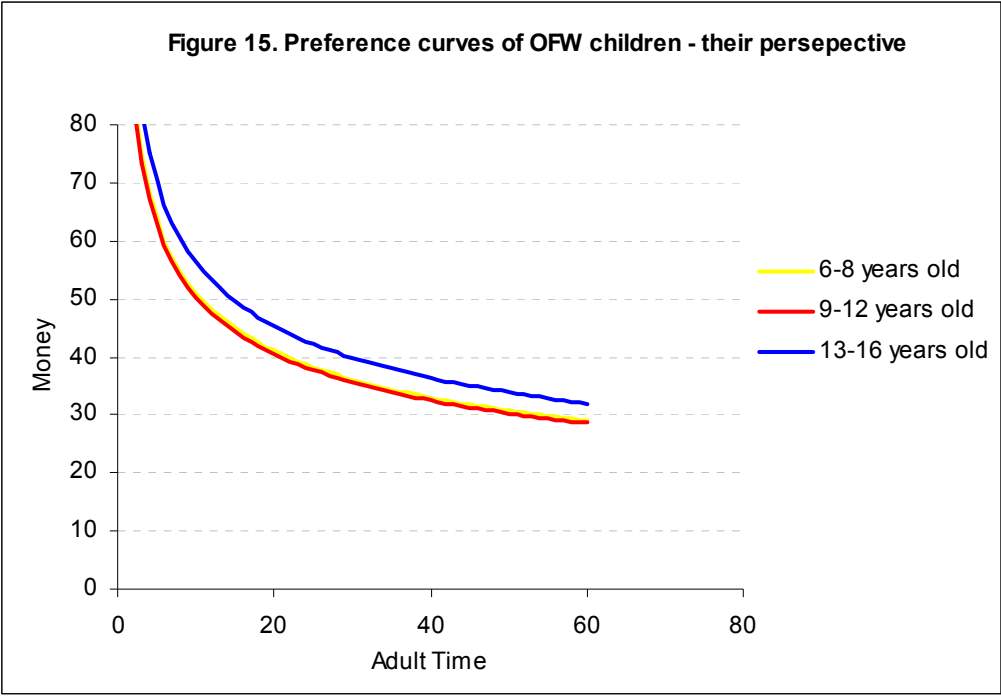


When the model was simulated and the residual computed, we find that it overestimates the utility of 77% of the sample OFW children and underestimates it for 68% of the sample non-OFW children. This may mean that these two groups face different utility functions. In the following charts, we illustrate this difference.





In the case of OFW children, money seems to be more preferred over AA while the opposite applies in the case of non-OFW children. Perhaps, the utility measure adjusts to the conditions confronting the family.

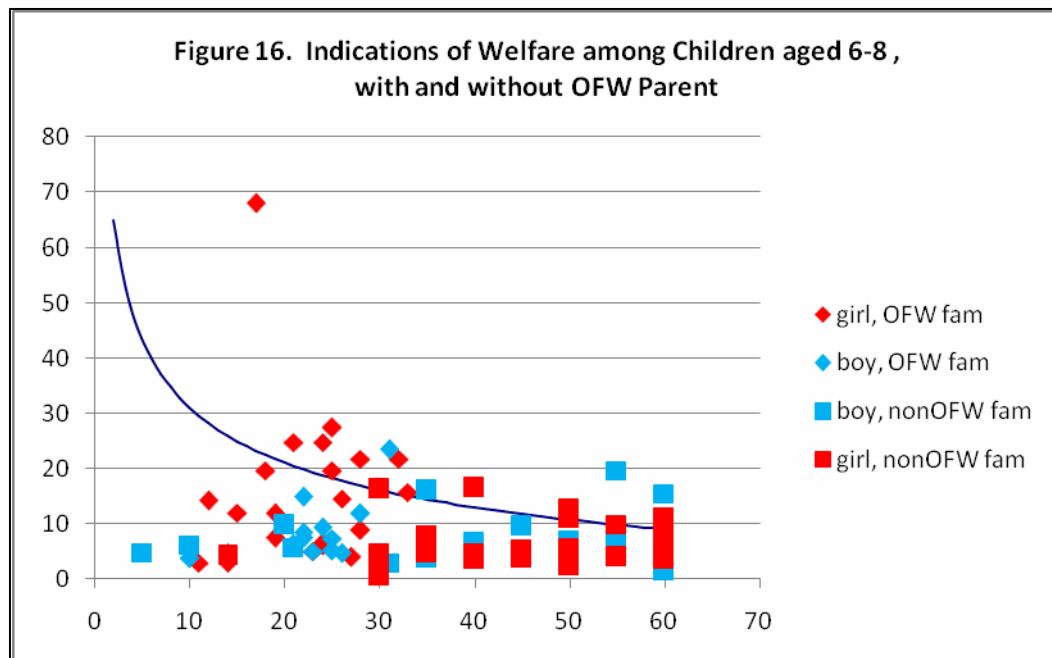


The second methodology evaluates the utility level of the child from his or her point of view. Unfortunately, we are able to cover only the sample OFW children because budget constraints did not allow for a group interview among the non-OFW children. The same aspects are evaluated, except health status. For this variable, the results of the physical and medical examination are used instead.

Note that the preference curve appears to be similar to the model earlier estimated. Actually, the difference is very distinct. In the first model for OFW children, money and AA are ascribed almost the same values. Using this second methodology, we find that AA is preferred more than money inputs. As before, we find that the ‘hardest’ to please is the 13–16 age group.

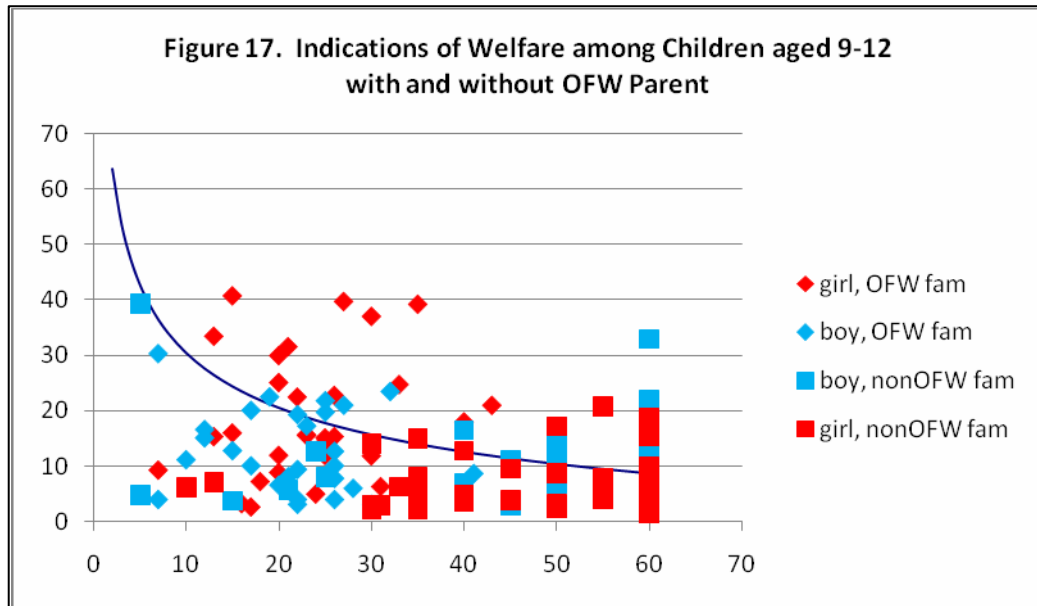
Who then is better off?

If the utility function of non-OFW children is imposed on OFW children, then the former are better off, except for the 6–8 age group.⁵ If, on the other hand, we use this latest specification of the preference curve, then we find that children of OFWs aged 6–8 are definitely better off than children of non-OFWs. The proportion of better-off non-OFW children increases among the 9–12 age group, although it is still lower than the OFW children. However, among the 13–16 age group the non-OFW children have the advantage. The charts below illustrate this finding. The diamonds represent the OFW children, while the squares represent the value for the non-OFW children; red for girls and blue for boys.

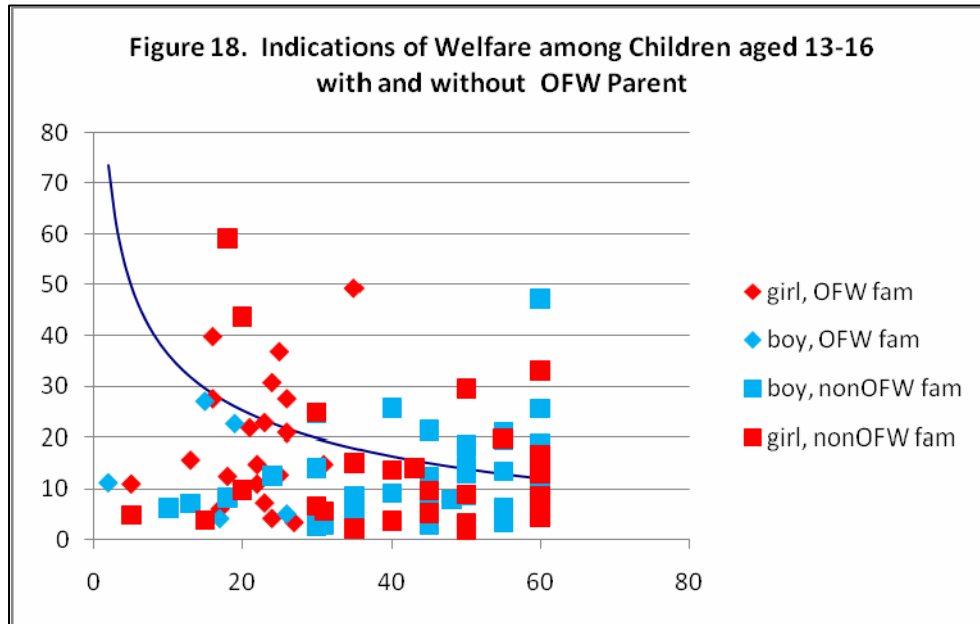


⁵ See Annex B for the figures on the indications of welfare using the preference curves of non-OFW children.

Children of OFWs aged 6–8 receive above average time inputs even if they only receive about average money inputs. This is a strong indication that they are better off than children of non-OFWs of the same age. Note that there are more ‘diamond’ points above the utility line than below. We also observe a higher proportion of girls than boys above the utility line.



Among the 9–12 age group, we find that children of OFWs receive less than the average time but usually more than the average money inputs. The opposite is true of the children of non-OFWs. Still, we find that keeping utility constant, there are more OFW children who are better off than their counterparts. We also do not find any significant difference in the inputs received by (and the implied welfare outcomes of) the boys and girls.



Children of OFWs aged 13–16 receive less than the average time inputs, and most of them receive less than the average money inputs. More boys appear to be worse off. However, the small sample size precludes any definitive conclusions. Note further that more non-OFW children are better off than their counterparts.

The study notes that OFW children own such devices as mobile phones, bicycles, remote-controlled cars and dolls. We then asked the children if they are willing to trade these toys and gadgets if they could have both parents stay in the country for good. The results are as follows:

Table 19. Are children willing to trade toys/gadgets for the chance to have their parents stay in the country for good?

Age Group	Willing to trade toys/gadgets?	Male	Female
6–8	Yes	5	4
	No	10	16
9–12	Yes	8	12
	No	18	22
13–16	Yes	7	11
	No	1	7

As with the previous results, we are unable to conduct conclusive tests of significance because of the small representation in some subgroups. Still, we can highlight the obvious discrepancy between the responses of the younger age groups with those of the 13–16 years age group. In particular, we note that among the children aged 13–16, a higher proportion is willing to trade their toys and gadgets if only to have both parents stay in the country for good. Since this appears to be an unlikely proposition,⁶ this result seems to indicate that the older children in OFW families are more unhappy with their situation relative to the other age groups.

Why do OFW children aged 13–16 seem worse off?

Since it is the 13–16 age group of OFW children that appears to be worse off, it is important to better understand the reasons behind this outcome. This study may not be able to resolve this satisfactorily, but we can use the estimated model in Table 15 to venture an explanation.

Table 20 describes the values of these important variables in the model. We do observe that the factors that affect the relationship between money and AA inputs are not in favour of this age group.

In general, families of non-OFW families have fewer adults but also fewer children. As we consider the older children, we find that household heads are also older. Recall that the price line is adversely affected by the number of children in the household and age of the household head; it is favourably affected by the number of other adults in the household.

Table 20 also shows that OFW children with aged 13–16 years old belong to families with the least number of other adults and have older household heads. They also have more siblings who are still children (compared to the 9- to 12-year-olds). There was a suggestion that perhaps these children were being assigned the care of their younger siblings and other responsibilities that are supposedly beyond their age.⁷

⁶ The value of the toys and gadgets is definitely lower than the differential incomes that the OFW parent can earn abroad vis-à-vis what she or he can earn in the country.

⁷ The information was volunteered by Dr. Asis of SMC during the PIDS-UNICEF workshop held 21 February 2008, where the first draft of the report was presented.

Table 20. Number of OFW children and adults in the household

Variables/age group	OFW families	Non-OFW families
<i>6–8 year olds</i>		
Number of children in the household	4.36	3.31
Number of other adults in the household	0.39	0.23
Age of household head	41.92	41.30
<i>9–12 year olds</i>		
Number of children in the household	3.86	3.30
Number of other adults in the household	0.31	0.23
Age of household head	41.30	45.46
<i>13–16 years old</i>		
Number of children in the household	4.12	3.07
Number of other adults in the household	0.25	0.26
Age of household head	42.89	48.40

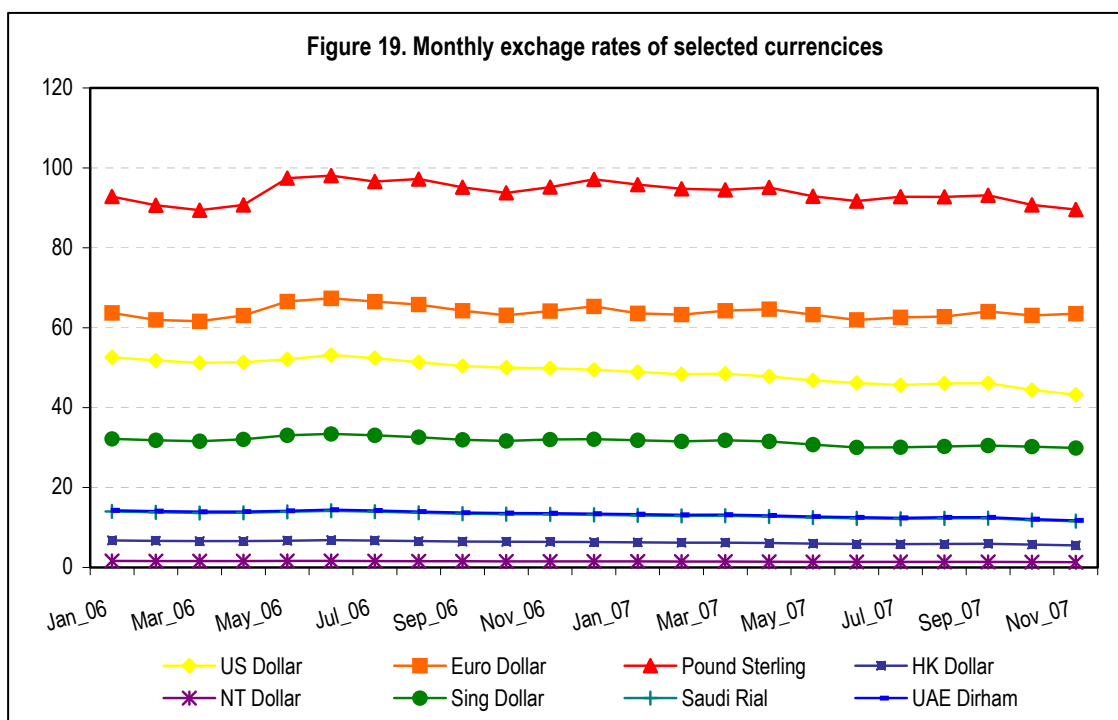
In terms of the model on the relative price line, we know that the number of children pulls down the relative price line, meaning that money input becomes relatively more expensive. If the family wishes to even just to maintain the same budget, they will need to sacrifice more AA inputs. This is one aspect where civil society can help perhaps by offering tutorial, counselling and even civic-oriented activities. The idea is to shift out the price line so that AA inputs are not drastically reduced. Equivalently, there can be more programmes to enable the family to afford the price of care, say, high school scholarship or even ‘study-now pay-later’ programmes, student fare discounts or public school buses, etc. It also becomes clear that an important component of home and family management is family planning.

Effect of foreign exchange fluctuations to OFW households and children

Recently, the peso has been gaining value. From its value in January 2006 to its value in November 2007, the peso has gained by more than 17% against the US \$, Saudi rial and UAE dirham, and by more than 18% against the HK \$ and NT \$. Figure 19 charts this trend.

Although this is supposed to be good news for Filipinos, it has a negative effect on OFW households who receive dollar remittances. A negative effect on the household may also have an impact on their children, especially among the 9–12 and 13–16 age groups. As it is, many of them are already receiving less than the average money inputs and less than average time inputs. Further reduction of money inputs will make them worse off.

We asked the household how they and their children are affected by appreciation and depreciation of the peso (in relation to dollars).



During the times that the peso appreciated in value, 35.6% said that they became thrifty and became more “budget-conscious.” When asked how their children are affected, 24.8% said the children are not affected, but 14.9% said their children suffered a decrease in their allowance.

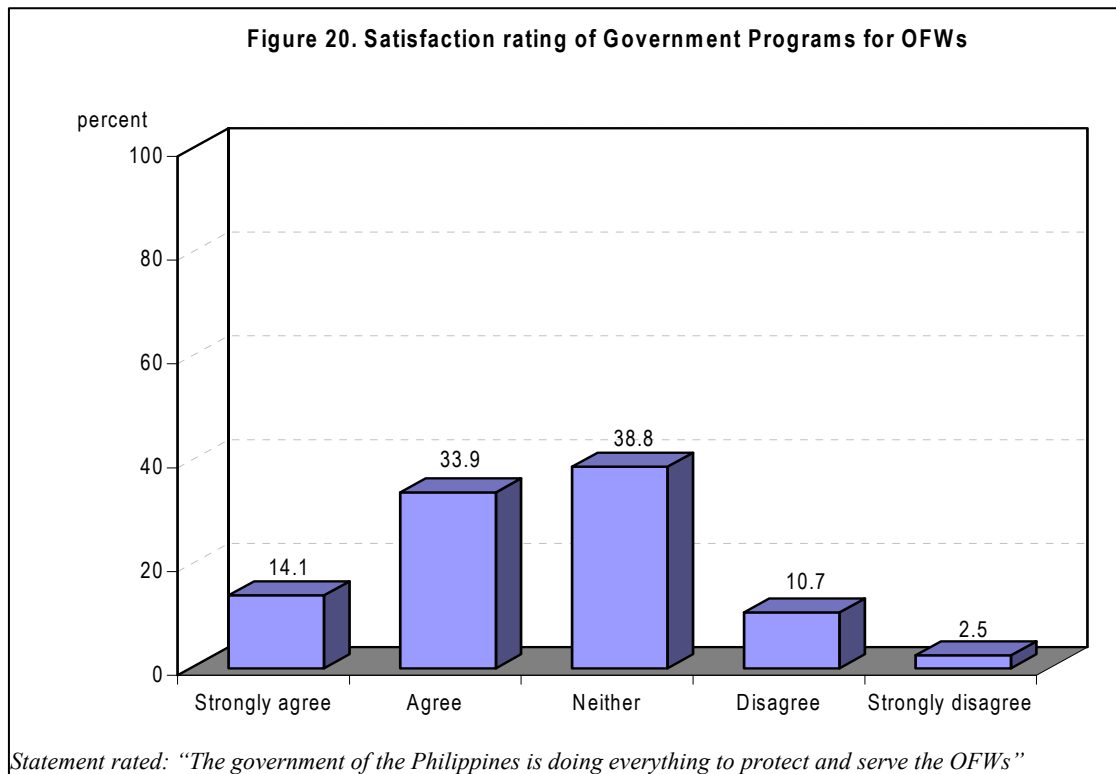
What these figures imply is that at least 15% of children were made worse off by the peso appreciation, assuming that AA have remained the same. Actually, if AA is bought using money inputs, say time of adults unrelated to the nuclear family, then the adverse effect on the child is more serious.

If, on the other hand, the peso depreciates, 12.0% of the households save while 13.9% said the peso depreciation has no effect on their household; 11.1% the respondents gave no response.

If the peso depreciates 11.8% of the children will likely enjoy an increase in their allowance while 27.7% reported that it will not have an effect on them; 27.7% did not respond. The lower percentage of children likely to enjoy a raise in their allowance when the peso depreciates than those who are likely to suffer a cut in their allowance when the peso appreciates means that children’s allowances face upward rigidities, a budget ceiling, so to speak.

Government programmes for OFWs

Almost 50% of OFW families in the sample think that government is “doing everything to protect and serve OFWs.” Still, 40% are non-committal and 13% disagree with the statement (Figure 20). This comes up to a net satisfaction rating of 37%.



Government programmes for OFWs can be classified into:

1. Insurance and health-care programmes
2. Family welfare and assistance programmes
3. Credit programmes
4. Training and education benefits.

The first two are event-conditioned, that is, the individual or family can only claim benefits when the (un)desirable event occurs (accident, disability, death, etc.). The next two programmes can be availed of by the OFW and family, as desired but subject to screening procedures. For labelling purposes, we will call these optional programmes.

We can further classify these with respect to incidence of benefits – OFW only, his or her family and, particularly, the child; and the coverage of benefits – psychosocial or economic. We summarize this information in Table 21, beginning on the next page.

Table 21. Government programmes for OFWs

Programme title	Description	Incidence of benefits				Coverage	
		OFW	Family	Dependent adult child	Dependent child	Psychosocial	Economic
<i>Insurance and health-care programme benefits</i>							
Life/accident insurance	> A member is covered with life insurance for the duration of her or his employment contract. The coverage includes P100,000.00 for natural death and P200,000.00 for accidental death.	√					√
Disability and dismemberment benefits	> A member shall be entitled to disability/ dismemberment benefits ranging from P2,000.00 to P50,000.00.	√					√
Total disability benefit	> In case of total permanent disability, a member shall be entitled to P100,000.00	√					√
Burial benefit	> A burial benefit of P20,000.00 shall be provided in case of the member's death.	√					√
<i>Credit programme for OFWs (loan guarantee fund under RA 8042 Section 21. Migrant Workers Loan Guarantee Fund)</i>							
Pre-Departure Loan (PDL)	> PDL is a loan window for ready-to-leave OWWA member-OFW that may be used to defray the cost of pre-departure requirements, such as payment for medical examinations, subsistence allowance, clothing requirements, pocket money and other pre-departure expenses.	√					√
Family Assistance Loan (FAL)	> FAL is a loan window for family/dependant or vacationing OWWA-member OFW that may be used for any emergency purposes or family needs. The OFW shall have valid employment with at least six (6) months remaining of the employment contract.	√	√				√

Table 21. Government programmes for OFWs, cont'd.

Programme title	Description	Incidence of benefits				Coverage	
		OFW	Family	Dep. adult child	Dep. Child	Psycho-social	Economic
<i>Education and training benefits</i>							
Education for Development Scholarship Program (EDSP)	<p>> The Education for Development Scholarship Program is a scholarship grant offered to qualified beneficiaries/ dependants of OWWA member-OFWs who intend to enrol in any 4- to 5-year baccalaureate course.</p> <p>> It is given in the form of a financial assistance amounting to P 30,000.00 per semester. The OWWA pays the tuition fee directly to the school and releases the remaining amount upon the scholars' submission of grades for the semester.</p>			√			√
Skills-for-Employment Scholarship Program (SESP)	<p>> The Skills for Employment Scholarship Program is a scholarship programme the OWWA offers in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to land-based or sea-based OWWA member-OFWs or their dependants/beneficiaries.</p> <p>> A qualified applicant may avail of either a one-year technical or a six-month vocational course offered following the regular school year calendar.</p> <p>> Upon receipt of the scholarship voucher, the grantee may enrol in any TESDA-registered programme; programme choices shall be supportive of the land- and sea-based skills requirement. Financial assistance for a one-year programme is P14,500.00 and is P7,250.00 for a six-month programme.</p>	√		√			√
Seafarer's Upgrading Program (SUP)	<p>> The Seafarers' Upgrading Program is intended to provide OWWA-member seafarers job-related training in priority maritime courses identified by the Maritime Training Council. It is designed to upgrade the skills and develop the expertise of Filipino seafarers in</p>	√					√

	accordance with technological advancements and international maritime standards.						
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Table 21. Government programmes for OFWs, cont'd.

Programme title	Description	Incidence of benefits				Coverage	
		OFW	Family	Dep. adult child	Dep. child	Psycho-social	Economic
DOLE-OWWA Tulay Microsoft Project	> In partnership with Microsoft Philippines, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and OWWA launched Tulay or Bridge Education Program, which provides OFWs IT training and access to technology that will enable them and their families to communicate through the Internet.	√	√				√*
Tuloy-Aral Project	> The Tuloy-Aral Project was launched in December 2004 with the objective of assisting the children of less fortunate former OFWs, as well as other poor and needy elementary and high school children. The DOLE and the OWWA regional offices, with the assistance of DSWD, identify children of former OFWs needing financial assistance to send to school. The DSWD or DOLE/OWWA prepares a family profile that shall serve as the basis for the selection of the beneficiary.	√			√		√
<i>Family Welfare and Assistance Program</i>							
Repatriation Program	> The Repatriation Program is a provision of services to facilitate immediate repatriation of distressed OFWs, medically ill OFWs, human remains, etc., including assistance upon arrival, domestic transport and temporary shelter.	√					√
Reintegration Program	> The Reintegration Program covers two (2) major components: economic and psychosocial components. The psychosocial component includes a community organizing programme, or	√	√			√	√

	<p>organizing of OFW family circles and such services as social counselling, family counselling, stress debriefing, and training on capacity building, value formation, etc. The economic component includes social preparation programmes for livelihood projects or community-based income-generating projects, skills training, and credit facilitation and lending. At present, the economic component has two (2) loan programmes: the OWWA-NLSF Livelihood Development Programs for OFWs (LDPO) and the OFW Groceria Project.</p>						
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Table 21. Government programmes for OFWs, cont'd.

Programme title	Description	Incidence of benefits				Coverage	
		OFW	Family	Dep. adult child	Dep. child	Psycho-social	Economic
<i>Family Welfare and Assistance Program</i>							
OFW Groceria Project	<p>> This project aims to improve the socio-economic situation of the overseas Filipino workers and their families by providing livelihood and self-employment opportunities through the establishment of 1,000 grocery stores nationwide.</p> <p>> The project is an interest-free loan assistance package extended in the form of merchandise goods worth P 50,000.00 per qualified OFW Family Circle (OFC) beneficiary nationwide.</p>	√					√
Model OFW Family of the Year Awards	<p>> The Model OFW Family of the Year Awards (MOFYA) is a medium for recognizing the achievements of OFWs and their families in managing the impact of overseas employment in family life. It serves as a strategic mechanism for exemplifying the best practices of OFW families towards optimizing the gains of migration.</p> <p>> The Award also recognizes the ultimate results of OFW family success in terms of enterprise development and</p>	√	√			√	

	generation of employment opportunities.						
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From the table, we see that most of the programmes cater to economic needs and only a couple address psychosocial needs. Moreover, only one caters to the potential needs of the children.

The test of relevance of the programmes is in the utilization. Table 22 shows the accomplishment of the different programmes as reported by the OWWA. The indicators mentioned are in terms of numbers approved, claims paid for or awarded. These are not in terms of proportions of applications, thus, we are unable to determine the demand for these programmes. From the numbers given, we note that the highest ‘accomplishment’ is the repatriation programme.

Table 22. Awareness and availment of OFW programmes in Ilocos Norte		
OFW Benefit Program	Highlights of government accomplishment for 2007	Awareness and utilization by Ilocos respondents
<i>Insurance and health-care programme benefits</i>		
Life/accident Insurance		22.1% of the respondents are aware of the Insurance and Benefit Program provided by the government Only 18.8% of the respondents who are aware chose to avail of the said benefit programme
Disability and dismemberment benefits	395 claims paid for disability and dismemberment	
Total disability benefit		
Burial benefit	1,122 claims paid for life insurance and burial benefits	
<i>Credit Program for OFWs (Loan Guarantee Fund under RA 8042 Section 21: Migrant Workers Loan Guarantee Fund)</i>		
Pre-Departure Loan (PDL)	137 Pre-Departure Loan (PDL) applications approved	Only 4.1% are aware of the Credit Program for OFWs
Family Assistance Loan (FAL)	543 Family Assistance Loan (FAL) Applications approved	2.5% of the respondents who are aware chose to avail of the said benefit programme
<i>Education and training benefits</i>		
Education for Development Scholarship Program (EDSP)	269 scholars for 4- to 5-year college programme maintained	Only 2.5% of the respondents are aware of the Education and Training Benefits for OFWs 2.5% of the respondents who are aware chose to avail the said benefit programme
Skills-for-Employment Scholarship Program (SESP)	> 999 scholars for 1-year technical course programme availed > 982 scholars for 6-month vocational course programme availed	
Seafarer's Upgrading Program (SUP)	2,177 scholarship grants for Seafarers' Upgrading Course availed	
DOLE-OWWA Tulay Microsoft Project		

Tuloy-Aral Project	For 2007–2008 there are 161 beneficiaries. This is slightly lower than the previous year (2006–2007) with 170 beneficiaries. During 2005–2006 there are only 132 beneficiaries.	
Table 22. Awareness and availment of OFW programmes in Ilocos Norte, cont'd.		
<i>Family Welfare and Assistance Program</i>		
Repatriation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Various assistance at the 24/7 Operations Center both local and overseas > 219 skills training classes at worksite abroad > 10,834 were repatriated 	<p>Only 0.8% of the respondents are aware of the Repatriation Program</p> <p>None of the respondents have availed of the said programme</p>
Reintegration Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 1,524 EDT training sessions conducted nationwide > 970 Batches of EDT training sessions nationwide > GoNegosyo Forum (Awarding of Outstanding OFW Entrepreneurs) > Business Forum in Taiwan (Taipei and Taichung) > Aqua-Culture Investment Opportunities in Al Khobar and Riyadh > 219 Skills training classes at worksite abroad 	<p>Only 0.8% of the respondents are aware of the Reintegration Program for OFWs</p> <p>None of the respondents have availed</p>
OFW Groceria Project	261 OFW Groceries established by OFCs/OFW organizations	<p>2.5% of the respondents are aware of the OFW Groceria Project</p> <p>0.8% of the respondents who are aware chose to avail the said benefit project</p>
Model OFW Family of the Year Awards	No accomplishment reported on the net	<p>2.5% of the respondents are aware of the Model OFW Family of the Year Award</p> <p>None of the respondents has been a recipient of the award</p>

Meanwhile, the last column gives the proportion of respondents in Ilocos who are aware and have utilized these programmes.

Overall awareness of the health and assistance programmes is very low, and the utilization rate is even lower. Availment of insurance benefits is about 4.2%,⁸ which is higher than the utilization rate recorded by PhilHealth in 2005. The low utilization rate may actually be because the need for the service has not arisen.

Awareness of the optional programmes is much lower, at most 4.1% in the case of the credit programme, and availment rate is even lower. The low awareness rate may be due to ineffective dissemination methodologies, but the lower availment rate may be because of difficulty in accessing programme benefits (distance to OWWA offices, stringent application and screening procedures, etc.) or even lack of correspondence between offered benefit and felt needs of the target beneficiaries. Without an evaluation study, we cannot know for sure where the problem lies.

The OWWA has recently conducted an internal evaluation of the OFW Groceria Project, after about three years of implementation. Note that the Groceria Project is intended to sustain the “interest of, and strengthen the capabilities of OFW Family Circles (OFCs) in participating in concerted/group activities,” although the OFCs have recorded a membership rate of only 0.5%.⁹ The results of the project are not very encouraging: Only 60% of the almost 1,500 OFCs availed of the Groceria project, 75% of which are still active; repayment rate stands at 30%; and there is a downward trend in collection rate of which the latest figure stands at only 51%.¹⁰ While a big part of the problem may be due to administrative issues and even lack of management skills of the OFWs, the bigger part may actually be due to lack of interest.

A greater concern, however, is the lack of programmes that address the psychosocial needs of the family, especially of the children. For the study, barangay LGU (local government unit) officials were also interviewed about their programmes that specifically cater to the needs of OFW families and their children. But before introducing any programme, there should be ample research to guide the design and strategies so they match the needs of the target clientele. With respect to the barangays sampled, there was none. There were also no NGOs nor civic groups operating in the area that address this gap. On the other hand, the benefit derived from OFWs is very obvious as demonstrated by the boundary markers of barangays and sitios that bore the name/s of OFW donors and the many school furniture, fixtures and even structures donated by overseas Filipino workers.

5. Concluding remarks

The study finds mixed effects of having an OFW parent on meeting the rights of the child:

⁸ 18% of those who are aware availed; those who are aware make up only 20% of respondents.

⁹ OFCs have membership of more than 42,000, representing 0.5% of the 8.3 million Filipinos abroad.

¹⁰ OFW Groceria Project Assessment Report as of June 2007.

Survival

The economic advantage resulting from the presence of an OFW parent does not seem to have altered health-seeking behaviour, which remains poor. The number of visits to medical personnel decreases as we consider the older children. There are also indications of a high incidence of hygiene-related health problems.

Development

Children of OFWs are able to join academic organizations and extra-curricular activities. A significantly higher proportion, compared to children of non-OFWs, has received academic and non-academic awards.

It should be noted, however, that most of the guidance and supervision is exercised by school authorities. Although there is communication between the OFW parent and the child, it probably lacks the depth that parenting requires. In fact, there is evidence that this communication becomes less effective as we consider the younger children.

Participation

Most children of OFWs do not feel that they have active participation in family decision-making. Compared to children of non-OFW parents, participation in community and civic organizations is lower.

Protection

The study did not find any evidence of abuse of children. Even the sleeping arrangements do not seem to pose a concern.

Moreover, the study finds that:

1. An increase in money and/or adult attention (AA) does appear to increase the degree to which children feel “satisfied.
2. We also find that the value parents/guardians associate with money and adult attention inputs vary according to the conditions facing the household. Families with OFW parent ascribe higher value to money, while families with no OFW parent ascribe higher value to adult attention inputs.
3. With respect to families with OFW parent, we also find that parents/guardians value money and adult attention inputs differently from their children. Parents/guardians assign about equal weights to money and adult attention inputs, while children tend to value adult attention more than money.
4. There is indeed a trade-off between adult attention devoted to children and money allotted to children. The estimated model shows that many factors affect the price line.

The same amount of money exchanges for less AA in families with more children, fewer adults and older household heads. Equivalently, we say that budget inputs are relatively more expensive than we initially thought. The predictive power of the model, however, leaves much to be desired. In a way, this is a good result because it means there are other factors that determine the budget-AA relationship.

5. Many children of OFWs aged 13–16 appear to be worse off than children of non-OFWs of the same age. Some receive less than average money inputs, but all receive less than average adult attention.
6. The low utilization of government programmes for OFWs may indicate a disconnection between intended objectives of the programmes and the needs of the OFWs and their families. Awareness is also very low, at least among those covered in the study.
7. There is a serious lack of programmes that address the specific needs of OFW children, whether from national government, local government or even civil society groups.
8. Despite the low awareness and even lower utilization rate of government programmes for OFWs, it is surprising that the net satisfaction rating still comes out as decisively positive.
9. Children of OFWs are vulnerable to economic shocks. The economic shocks may originate from political and economic crises in the rest of the world, incursions against foreign cultures and laws, peso appreciation, etc. Very few of the families have liquid assets because they prefer to invest in new houses, and only a few have private insurance coverage.
10. The psychosocial shock may be the higher risk of families splitting up when they are challenged by physical distance. The study also reveals the lack of economic security of OFW families and children, as well as the absence (in the sample areas) of systematic intervention from local government units (LGUs), NGOs, the school system, etc. that offers psychosocial support.

The extent to which the rights of children of OFWs are met, despite their special circumstances, can be improved with the involvement of the stakeholders:

1. There are general strategies such as encouraging communication between the OFW parent and the children. The communication should go beyond phone calls or text messages. Letter writing can be one of the school activities of the children, but it should be ensured that these reach the intended recipient.

Survival

2. The State should promote health-seeking behaviour among parents. A possibility is to require parents to submit a medical certificate on behalf of their children before the latter can be admitted to school.

Development

3. Parental care is undoubtedly important for the development of the child. However, there are cognitive and social stimulation theorists who maintain that there are ways to ensure the quality of childcare environments apart from the presence of the parent. In some cases, a well-qualified and well-intentioned caregiver may even be a better alternative.
4. The school also presents an obvious venue for learning values and skills that are usually learned in the home.

Participation

5. Children can be taught how best to participate in decision-making concerning the family. During parent-teacher meetings, parents and guardians can be taught how best to involve their children in decision-making.
6. Civic and community participation can be enhanced by involving school authorities.

Protection

7. The OFW parent and the one who is left behind should be taught about economic security. Recently, the Bango Sentral ng Pilipinas (Central Bank) has been conducting financial literacy programmes to interested OFW families. Coverage can be increased by involving school organizations. Banks can also encourage saving behaviour by facilitating access to saving and investment instruments. Some banks offer higher interest rates for deposits in favour of the children, subject to certain conditions.
8. School authorities and LGU officials should be trained on how to detect cases of child abuse. One possibility is to conduct regular physical and medical examinations of the children.
9. Civic organizations should be encouraged to offer psychosocial support.

This study does not claim to be comprehensive. It may be interesting to include more areas in the sample. Since the study did not cover a good number of the 17-year-olds, this may be the focus for later studies. In-depth interviews among children of non-OFW parents may also be useful. That OFW children aged 13–16 appear worse off should be examined in more detail. Choice modelling techniques may be applied to help in the identification and design of programmes for OFWs and their children.

This study, however, adopts the innovative approach of utilizing a rights-based approach. The framework can also inform the design of programme strategies. Ultimately, the objective of the programme should be to shift out the price line. We know that in the case of the 13–16 age group, the shift should be greater, for example, the money cost of care should be brought down.

We should recognize that overseas work will likely persist over the medium to long term. The parent or guardian left behind and other stakeholders should be educated regarding the special circumstances facing the family of the OFW and especially the children. The goal should be to heighten the sensitivities of everyone around them regarding children's special needs and undertake proper measures to address these needs.

Finally, we should state the obvious. Although children may not have an accurate assessment and understanding of the inputs of time and adult attention their parents provide, they certainly have an opinion. Taking the time to know this is the first step to ensuring that the rights of our children are met.

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