

Impact of COVID-19 on employees in the Philippines, May 2020

Key findings

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on employment in the Philippines:

- A majority of employees reported their **job was suspended, hours and pay reduced**, or they were forced to take **unpaid leave**. Only 37% of employees could report that COVID-19 had no impact on their job.
- A total of 6 out of 10 families **lost income**.
- Over 60% of those affected began **working from home**.

However, nearly 70% of employees reported they were able to be **equally or more productive** during the crisis – 21% of women and 14% of men reported being more productive.

Overall, 4 in 10 adults felt pressure to do **more household work and child care**. Increased time spent on cleaning was reported by 77% of women and 72% of men.

Importantly, 48% of women and 39% of men reported a **negative impact on their mental well-being** due to COVID-19, and 4 in 10 respondents reported a **negative impact on their physical well-being** (43% of women and 41% of men).

What these findings mean for employers:

- Consider permanently adopting flexible work policies – most employees are equally or more productive working from home.
- Review how the firm manages performance, identifies talent, and develops leadership. The domestic situations of employees may not be obvious, and their contributions may be hidden or perceived differently, depending on factors such as how much ‘face time’ they have in the office.
- A high proportion of employees are suffering from mental health challenges. Consider employee assistance programs, mental health support, and the longer-term impact of this crisis on staff.
- Ensure women and men are both represented in COVID-19 management committees, to capture and respond to their different experiences.

Results and analysis

1. Impacts on employment situation

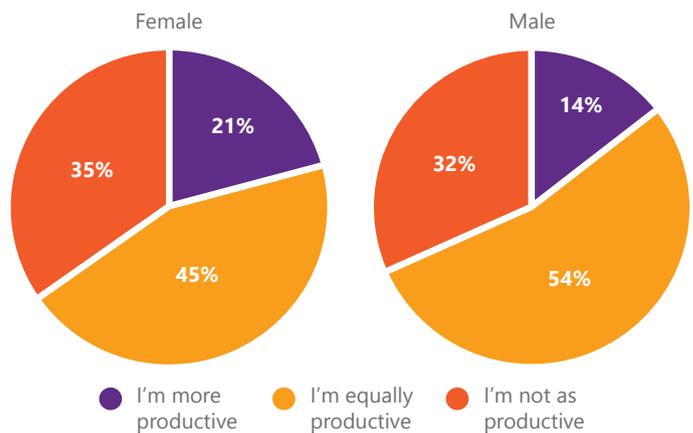
Many people lost their jobs in the lockdown; however, this survey focused on people still employed, to gain insights into managing a workforce during a crisis, which could assist firms during recovery.

Among those surveyed, 63% of employees reported their jobs had been affected, with 21% reporting their job was suspended until further notice, 17% with reduced hours and less pay, and 13% forced to take unpaid leave.

As the survey began, lockdown was still in place, but easing. At this time, 63% of female and 58% of male respondents were working from home; 4% of women and 6% of men were working in a new space set up by their firm, and 28% of respondents reported working from their normal workplace.

Despite the changes, nearly 70% of employees reported they were equally or more productive than before the crisis – with 21% of women and 14% of men reporting greater productivity (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Has COVID-19 impacted your work productivity?



For the 32% of male and 35% of female employees who said they were less productive at work, the main reasons were inadequate facilities (56% men and 46% women), and anxiety/stress about the situation (43% men and 50% women).

Figure 2: As a result of the COVID-19 situation, has your household income changed?

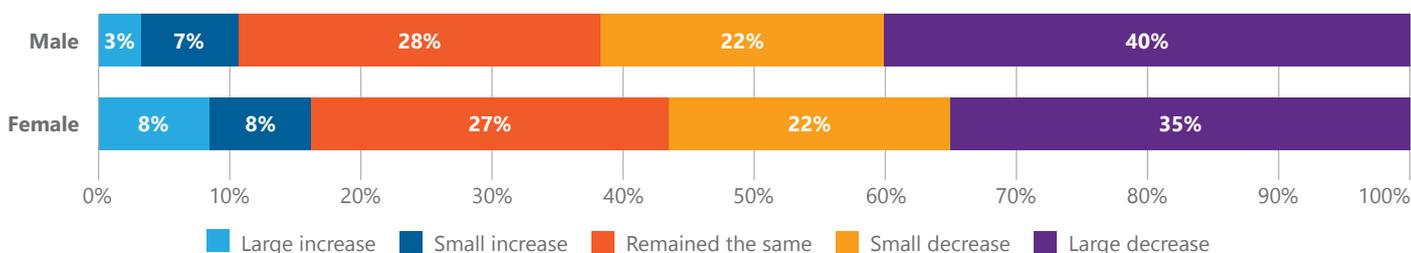


Figure 3: What has been the most challenging issue for you during COVID-19?



Throughout the crisis, many employers provided support to their employees. For example, 44% of those surveyed were offered flexible work arrangements with some technical support to work from home (27% men and 21% women). Full paid leave was offered to 40% of male and 31% of female respondents. Also, 19% received access to personal protective equipment, and 11% of men and 17% of women received support for stress management.

2. Impacts on household income and responsibilities

A total of 6 out of 10 adults reported a decrease in household income and feeling more pressure due to COVID-19.

Men were more likely than women to report a large decrease in individual income (40% compared with 35%), perhaps due to the gender pay gap (see Figure 2).

Along with income pressures, 77% of women and 72% of men reported spending increased time on cleaning, and a similar increase in time preparing food – mainly due to family members being home. Among parents surveyed, time spent on child care increased for 58% of men and 55% of women, but time spent on shopping and schooling decreased among 58% of men and 44% of women.

Overall, 4 in 10 people felt more pressure to do household work and child care, with no difference between women and men. A smaller proportion reported less pressure to do domestic work (26% of women compared with 15% for men). The top reasons for a decrease in time devoted to household responsibilities were a respondent’s spouse and/or children being at home to help.

3. Impacts on health

During COVID-19, employees reported that financial concerns was overall the most challenging issue for them (see Figure 3).

When it came to their health, 48% of women and 39% of men reported a negative impact on their mental well-being due to COVID-19.

Of these, 3 in 4 people reported that worries about the current situation and financial concerns were causing the negative impact on their mental well-being.

Caring for family members, being isolated, and challenges balancing work and family were also significant causes of a negative impact on mental well-being for around 40% of respondents.

A total of 4 in 10 respondents also reported a negative impact on their physical well-being due to COVID-19 (43% of women and 41% of men).

The main causes for this impact on physical health were reported as personal safety at risk (53% men and women), and inability to exercise (54% men and 48% women). Exhaustion due to domestic burdens was reported by 46% of women and 34% of men.

Overview of survey

The Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment and Investing in Women commissioned a survey of 300 men and 300 women employees, aged 18 to 60, from large private sector firms. Only respondents that remained employed during the survey period were eligible to complete the survey. Half of the respondents worked for firms with more than 1000 employees, and half with 200 to 1000 employees. A total of 64% reported they are the primary income earner in their household.

Respondents were from senior management (7%); middle management or technical experts (47%); and services, sales and clerical workers (37%). They represented a wide range of economic sectors, and 85% were in full-time, permanent positions. A census click methodology was used.

The aim of the survey was to understand impacts of COVID-19 on the work and personal lives of employees. The survey was open from 7 to 17 May 2020. During that period, an enhanced community quarantine was enacted in Luzon. This was effectively a total lockdown, restricting the movement of the population, except for necessity, work, and health circumstances. On 1 May, it was extended again until 15 May, but only in selected places considered high-risk areas, while low-risk to moderate-risk areas were placed under a less strict quarantine.