

Decent work in platform work: Gendered takeaways from an online survey in the Philippines

CONNIE BAYUDAN-DACUYCUY AND LORA KRYZ BAJE
May 27, 2021

Gender parity in the education front although critical gender gaps remain.

- Women's labor force participation is currently the lowest in Southeast Asia.

1994	2014	2020
47.244%	49.524%	46.195%

Source: WDI

- 2019 LFS: 51% of women at least 25 years old are working vs men's 81%

Can be attributed to housework. 74% of women expressing household and family duties as main reasons for not looking for work (vs 15% of men).

- Evidence on pay gap favoring a specific gender is not conclusive.

Favoring men: (Briones 2018, Valientes 2015, Sakellariou 2006) and representation at the top-level managers, senior managers/executive role holders, and middle managers is low (MBC 2019).

Favoring women (Chow et al. 2019, David et al. 2018).

There are benefits from digital labor platforms.

➤ Bring together markets

tangible (e.g. Amazon, eBay, Etsy) and **non-tangible goods** (e.g. Netflix, Spotify) and **labor** (e.g. Grab, Food Panda, Upwork, Crowdfunder, Amazon Mechanical Turk)

➤ **Labor platforms:** On demand work vs. crowdwork

- ❖ Access to economic opportunities that the local labor market may not be able to provide;
- ❖ Flexible work hours, self-supervision, and the reduction of financial and health costs associated with travel and road congestion;
- ❖ Help achieve SDG targets: women empowerment and gender equality;
- ❖ Address the age old conflict of market and non-market work;
- ❖ Help in developing skills that are relevant to offline work.

There are asymmetries on platforms that result in structural inequalities and issues on decent work.

➤ Asymmetries (value, risk, Information, power)

❖ Lack of collective representation

No formal mechanisms (e.g. social dialogue and collective bargaining) that negotiate on behalf of the platform workers

❖ No mechanisms to resolve disputes and redress grievances

❖ Absence of platform-led skills and career development

❖ Absence of/limited social protection

Do platforms exacerbate existing gender issues? Are platforms new vehicles of delivering old inequalities?

- Like informal work, the precariousness is substantially observed in developing economies and greatly experienced by women.
- Misclassifying workers to shift the risks to workers is a practice prior to the platform work, a throwback to the early Industrial Revolution when piecemeal work and task-based payment were the standard (Berg et al 2018; Churchill and Craig 2019).
- How these old practices are facilitated and how work is organized are new, however.
 - Jobs are broken down into simple tasks that platforms sell to firms/clients who seek to benefit from the lower cost of labor due to labor arbitrage (Berg et al 2018).
 - Platforms use algorithmic data management to save on the costs of management of human resources and tasks, quality control, and review/rating systems (Heeks 2017).
- Work is relatively fluid: affected by 1) fluctuations in demand and 2) potential oversupply

There is still no consensus on which gender is present more on the platform.

Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Developed economies: More men participate in the platform economy❖ Developing economies: only 1/5 workers are women (Berg et al 2018)
Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Many women are on AMT in the US, a platform specializing in routine tasks (Kuek et al 2015, Ipeirotis 2010, Ross et al 2010).❖ More men are AMT and Crowdfunder workers in India (Berg et al 2018).
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ More women in the age groups 36-45 and 46 above have performed platform tasks in 2017 (Berg et al 2018).
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ women outnumber men: Customer service, administrative and support, translation, writing, and sales/marketing:❖ men outnumber women: Engineering and architecture, data science and analytics, and information technology and networking

High quit rates, gender pay gap are observed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Women freelancers earn 84% of the average hourly rate of men freelancers across all fields (Payoneer 2020)❖ Female workers in Upwork charges only 74% of the male's median asking price (Foong et al 2018)❖ Women's average hourly rate is 37% lower than those of men in a US crowdwork platform (Barzilay and Ben-David 2017).
Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Men are more preferred than women in some jobs❖ Women evade this bias by using usernames that are gender neutral (Hyperwallet 2017).
Geographical location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Crowdworkers from North America, Europe, and Central Asia earn more than those from Africa and the Asia Pacific❖ Workers from non-western economies receiving lower compensation in the online work

Online survey of market and non-market work, May-Dec 2020

- In collaboration with ICT Literacy and Competency Development Bureau (ICT-LCDB) of the DICT

Conducts the *digitaljobsPH* program: to assist economically-disadvantaged areas and rural communities through the creation and promotion of ICT-enabled jobs.

- Rider activity to the *digitaljobsPH* training in 2020

- **Purposive/non-random sampling**

Difficult to get a sampling frame for this type of workers

Merely intends to describe and results generated from the analyses are true only for the online survey samples. These caveats hold in the conditional analysis.

- Despite the non-representativeness of the online survey samples, some of the findings are consistent with the broad findings of studies abroad that used nationally-representative surveys.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by involvement in platform work

	Currently involved in platform work				Have ever done platform work		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
No (%)	79.30	71.53	74.39	Never did platform work (%)	66.88	57.67	61.05
Yes (%)	20.70	28.47	25.61	Ever did platform work (%)	33.12	42.33	38.95
# observations	314	541	855	# of observations	314	541	855

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by work portfolio, before and during the ECQ, %

	All		Male		Female	
	Before the ECQ	During the ECQ	Before the ECQ	During the ECQ	Before the ECQ	During the ECQ
Platform work only	13.22	13.57	7.96	7.96	16.27	16.82
Both platform/non-platform work	7.72	6.55	7.96	7.96	7.58	5.73
Non-platform work only	39.88	26.67	46.50	31.21	36.04	24.03
No platform/non-platform work	39.18	53.22	37.58	52.87	40.11	53.42

Source: May-December, 2020 PIDS-DICT Online Survey of Market and Non-Market work

Note: Total, male, and female respondents are 855, 314, and 541, respectively.

➤ **Reasons for attending the DICT training**

Future engagement in platform work: majority of the male (74%) and female (67%) respondents

Future plans of using online tools for businesses: 45% and 41% of male and female respondents, respectively.

➤ **Reasons for non-involvement in platform work**

Lack of opportunities and inadequate skills, connectivity issues: higher in rural communities

Men and women have been affected by the COVID-19. However...

a higher percentage of women	a higher percentage of men
have indicated they suffered financial/opportunity losses.	have experienced unemployment
have indicated hampered mobility and issues on access to services, which include the lack of transportation to take sick household members to health care facilities and to buy groceries.	have reported depletion of savings due to the lack of income.

Similar percentage of men and women have indicated a reduction of online work.

- 23%: termination of contract, loss of clients, and reduction of work hours in platform work.
- Issues on connectivity that is aggravated by limited mobility

The lockdown had forced people to stay in one place that can have connection problems or without technicians to troubleshoot connection issues.

“The Internet connection is my ultimate problem because per customer service representative they don't have technician in our area.” Female, Negros Occidental

“I decided to stay in the province with my family during this pandemic. It was hard to get involved in any online work because of slow internet connection in our area.” Female, Quezon

“The competition is fiercer as more workers shift to freelancing. The low demand for work also means I have to take a pay cut.” Female, Cebu

“There was a decline in working hours in my online work. I experienced loss of clients due to the closure of small start-up companies.” Female, Rizal

“It is hard to find online work. Other clients decided to stop their work because of the pandemic.” Female, Rizal

Reduction of online work is an expected outcome of global slowdown.

- There are certain types of online work that are resilient.
- Macrotasks, such as software development/technology were unaffected.
- Creative/multimedia and sales/marketing support had been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Table 4: Types of platform work done by respondents, %

	Did platform work in the last 12 months before the ECQ	Doing platform work one month before the ECQ
Clerical and Data entry	28.92	24.32
Creative and multimedia	17.67	16.22
Financial services/bookkeeping	2.41	3.38
Internet Marketing (SEO, Content Writing)	8.43	16.89
Sales and marketing support	16.06	16.22
Software development and technology	4.82	2.7
Tutorial services	9.24	10.14
Web design/development	7.63	6.08
Writing and translation	4.82	4.05
Total observations	249	148

Source: May-December, 2020 PIDS-DICT Online Survey of Market and Non-Market work

Motivations in online work participation differ between men and women.

Women	Men
a higher proportion have done platform work due to housework and due to the pursuit of other interests.	the pursuit of other interests is the main consideration for a higher percentage of male respondents while housework is important only to a small proportion of male respondents.
savings from travel costs and better pay	

Challenges faced by men and women on platforms are not the same.

Women	Men
Slow connectivity and the absence or inadequacy of social protection : 53% of the female respondents indicated these as challenges	Connectivity is also a challenge reported by the highest proportion of male respondents (46%)
Higher proportion of women compared to men have reported issues of inadequacy of skills (19% versus 14%).	A higher proportion of men compared to women have reported challenges on time management due to the presence of many platform work (21% versus 11%)
	More men have reported challenges on time management arising from having a full-time job (37%) than on issues related to the job security and housework (29%).

While entitlements can be derived from non-platform work, social protection coverage remains a big challenge for women.

- In the PH, social protection is largely tied to formal employment.
- Women's labor force participation is low, which is 46.195% of the female population who are at least 15 years old in 2020.
- Those who work, around 50% are own account workers.
 - implies that fewer women have insurance and pension coverage and access to consumption smoothing mechanisms like memberships to cooperative
- From the online survey: Relative to their male counterparts, a smaller percentage of female respondents without non-platform work contribute to social security fund.

Among platform and non-platform workers, commonly cited reasons for non-subscription to security funds, pension funds or private health insurance include budget constraints, attitudes, and lack of information.

"Financial struggles due to unemployment. Less job opportunities." Male, Camarines Norte

"I don't have a stable job." Female, Maguindanao; Male, Davao del Sur

"For now, I don't have a stable income to prioritize this matter." Female, Oriental Davao

"I prefer to save on my own. Planning to subscribe. Happy and contented without it still." Male, Davao del Sur

"I'm not interested." Male, Davao Oriental

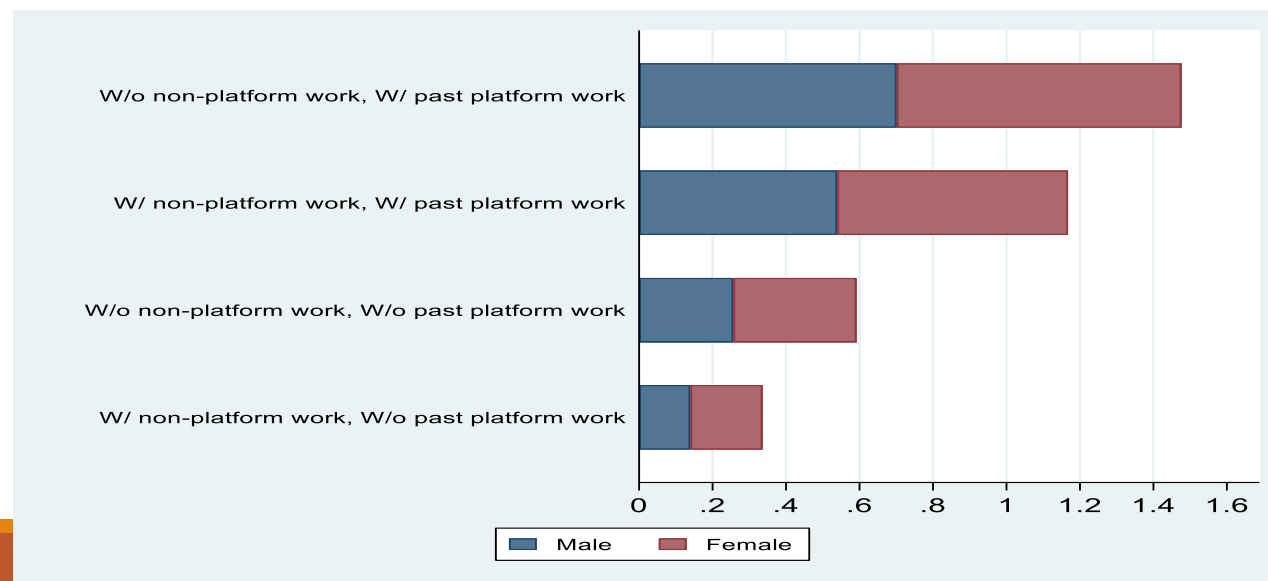
"I do not have any idea." Female, Tarlac

Majority of the respondents have current platform engagement that are similar to their past platform work.

Table 5: Movement of workers, by type of work

Current platform work	Past 12 months platform work									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
0 None	579	41	23	4	26	7	11	10	6	707
1 Clerical and Data entry	7	28	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	36
2 Creative and multimedia	4	0	17	0	2	0	0	1	0	24
3 Financial services	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	5
4 Internet Marketing	12	0	4	0	31	0	1	0	1	49
5 Software development	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
6 Tutorial services	3	1	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	15
7 Web design/development	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	0	9
8 Writing and translation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6
Total	606	72	44	6	61	12	23	19	12	855

Past experience on the platform is an important factor in the current platform involvement.

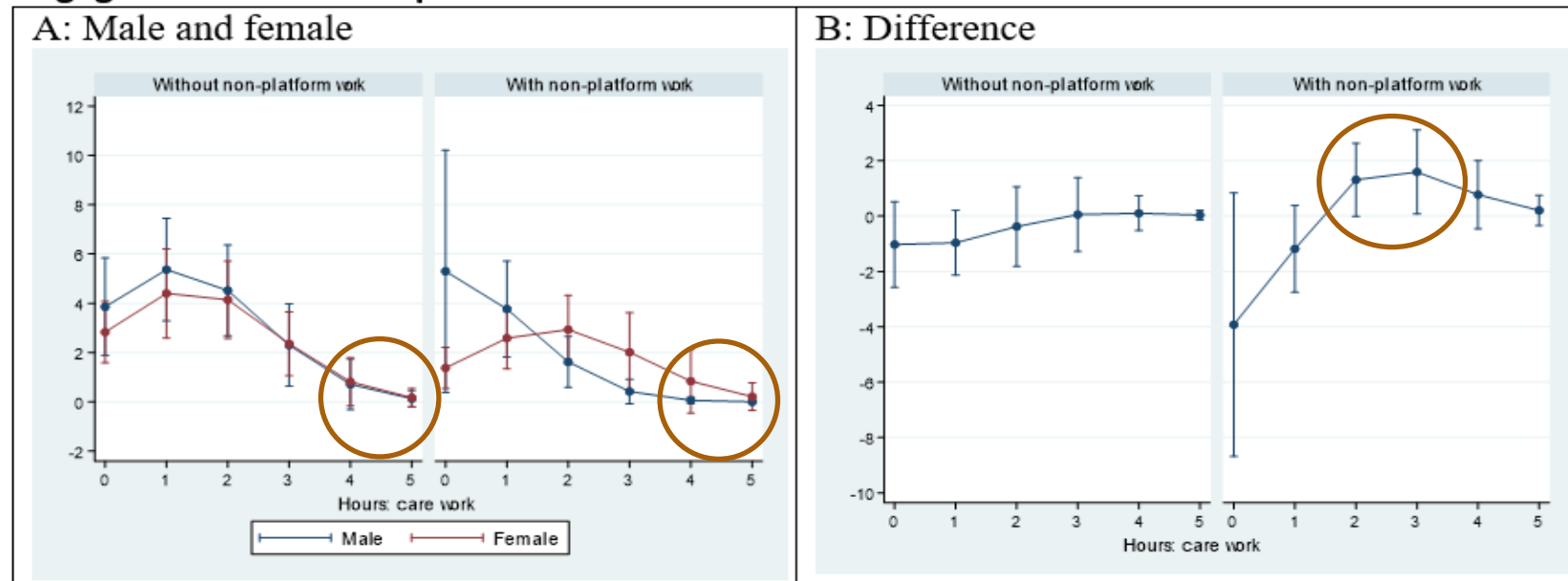


Female respondents who are engaged in platform work spend more time on care work than their male counterparts. test of means: around 2 hours more than men

The benefits of flexibility in platform work appear limited.

- The peak of platform work is done alongside minimal care work hours (panel A). Beyond 1-3 hours of care work, the hours spent in platform work decline and approach zero.
- Female respondents with non-platform work spend more hours on platform work than men given 2-3 hours of care work.

Figure 10: Predicted hours spent on the platform, conditional on care work hours and engagement in the non-platform work



Source: Authors' estimates using the May-December, 2020 PIDS-DICT Online Survey of Market and Non-Market work
Note: Benchmark characteristics: is 35-year old household head, with a college degree, does not belong to a low-income household, has no income from other online sources, and is engaged in a local platform for a macrotask, and has money and flexibility as motivations for engaging in platform work.

There is no gendered difference in the compensation per hour once personal and platform attributes are controlled for.

Table 7: Conditional mean compensation/hour in platform work

	Male	Female	Difference*
Benchmark characteristics	228	218	9
Not college graduate	164	157	7
No self-paid training courses	165	158	7
Negotiated the contract price	308	295	13
No non-platform work	359	344	15
International platform	423	405	18

Source: Authors' estimates using the May-December, 2020 PIDS-DICT Online Survey of Market and Non-Market work

Note: Benchmark characteristics: is 35-year old household head, with a college degree, does not belong to a low-income household, has no income from other online sources, engaged in non-platform work, and is engaged in a local platform for a macrotask. *p-values of the column entries exceed the 5% level of significance.

The compensation/hour received by the respondents is higher relative to the compensation prevailing in the country.

- Higher than the PH minimum wage in 2020 (US\$4.6/hour versus US\$ 4-9/day), based on benchmark attributes
- Higher than the basic pay of a professional at PhP753-830/day or around US\$15-16.6/day.
- On par with the rate of **international platforms** that are known for **outsourcing routine tasks**

Ways forward: There is a need for policies, programs or initiatives...

- **towards skills development. Otherwise, skills gap between gender is likely to remain, if not widen.**
Skills development and training systems that enable workers to develop the requisite skills in any work arrangement is crucial. Leverage digital platforms to efficiently bring together markets for skills and training.
- **towards social protection systems that adjust to the evolving nature of work. Otherwise, gender gaps in coverage is likely to remain, if not widen.**
Strategies that target both the promotion of employment and the protection of workers against uncertainties are essential.
- **to address care work. Otherwise, women's participation in market work remains limited despite new forms of work opportunities.**
- **to collect nationally-representative data of workers on the platform, analysis of benefits and challenges will remain as profiling and characterizations.**



Service through
policy research

THANK YOU!



[/PIDS.PH](#)



[@PIDS_PH](#)



www.pids.gov.ph

EMAIL: pids-research@mail.pids.gov.ph