FAMILY AND WORK

INSIGHT SERIES
INSIGHT SERIES

© Ministry of Social and Family Development, Republic of Singapore

Reproductions of extracts for this publication are allowed, together with the acknowledgement of Ministry of Social and Family Development, for non-commercial use. Request for extensive reproduction should be made to:

Director
Strategic Planning, Research and Development Division
Ministry of Social and Family Development
512 Thomson Road
MSF Building, #07-00
Fax: (65) 6354 4535
Email: MSF_Research@msf.gov.sg
CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................................. 1
DEFINITIONS ........................................................................................................................................... 3
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ...................................................................................................................... 4
FAMILY AND WORK.............................................................................................................................. 5

Are there more dual income families in Singapore? ............................................................................. 5
Increasing proportion of dual income families ....................................................................................... 5

Does parenthood affect economic activity? .......................................................................................... 6
Relationship between parenthood and economic activity different for men and women ............. 6

Are there differences in attitudes towards gender roles within the family? .............................. 8
Traditional gender roles prevail among married workers ................................................................. 8
Women were more likely to cite family-related responsibilities as main reason for not working ................................................................. 10

Are employers more supportive of work-life balance? .................................................................. 12
More establishments offering flexible work arrangements and non-statutory leave benefits .......... 12
LIST OF FIGURES

Chart 1: Married Couples in Resident Households Living With At Least 1 Child Aged Below 21 years by Working Status of Couple, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015

Chart 2: Percentage Who Were Economically Active Among Resident Married Females Aged 20-64 Years in Resident Households by Presence of Child Living in the Same Household and Age Group, 2015

Chart 3: Percentage Who Were Economically Active Among Resident Married Males Aged 20-64 Years in Resident Households by Presence of Child Living in the Same Household and Age Group, 2015

Chart 4: Percentage Who Were Economically Active Among Resident Married Parents Aged 20-64 Years in Resident Households With At Least 1 Child Living in the Same Household, by Sex and Age Group of Parent, 2015

Chart 5: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: care giving”, by Sex, 2013

Chart 6: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: spend time doing household chores”, by Sex, 2013

Chart 7: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: contribute financially to maintain the household”, by Sex, 2013

Chart 8: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over by Main Reason for Not Working, June 2015
Chart 9: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over who cited Family-Related Responsibilities as Main Reason for Not Working, by Sex, June 2015

Chart 10: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over who cited Family-Related Responsibilities as Main Reason for Not Working, by Age and Sex, June 2015


Chart 12: Percentage of Establishments that Provided Types of Non-Statutory Family-Friendly Paid Leave, 2008 – 2016

Chart 13: Percentage of Employee Respondents Who Agreed with the Statement “I would be attracted to work for a company which supports me in managing my work and family commitments”, by Sex, 2014

Chart 14: Percentage of Employee Respondents Who Agreed with the Statement “I would consider leaving a company if there is a lack of flexible work arrangements”, by Sex, 2014
DEFINITIONS

Resident Household
A resident household refers to a household headed by a Singapore citizen or permanent resident.

Economically Active
Economically active includes those who are working (i.e. employed), as well as those who are unemployed but actively looking for a job and are available for work.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Number of dual income families is increasing

The number and proportion of dual income families among married couples with at least one child below 21 years old living in the same household have increased between 2000 and 2015.

Relationship between parenthood and economic activity differs between men and women

In 2015, while married women living with their children were less likely to be economically active than those without children living in the same household, the corresponding difference for married men was relatively small. For married women, the difference in proportion who were economically active between those living with their children and those without was more pronounced among younger women and narrowed as the age of the women increased. Among married parents, mothers were less likely to be economically active than fathers.

Gender roles and division of labour continue to exist and shape how families manage family and work responsibilities

Gender roles affect how families manage family and work responsibilities.

a. The traditional notion of wife as homemaker and husband as the breadwinner appears to hold among married working couples as married working women contributed more to care-giving and household chores while married working men contributed more to the household finances.

b. Women were also more likely to cite family-related responsibilities as the main reason for not working.

Workplaces increasingly pro-family over the years

The workplace has become more pro-family over the years, with more establishments offering various work-life initiatives such as flexible work arrangements and non-statutory family-friendly paid leave. The desire for work-life balance was also found to be strong among both male and female employees.
Are there more dual income families in Singapore?

Increasing proportion of dual income families

1 In 2015, the majority of married couples living with at least 1 child aged below 21 years old had at least one spouse in the workforce. This was also the case in 2000, 2005 and 2010. In 2000, 45.9% of these families were dual income couples. This proportion increased by 19.7 percentage points to 65.6% in 2015 (Chart 1).

2 In instances where only one spouse worked, the working spouse was more likely to be the husband than the wife. While the proportion of families in which only the father worked decreased from 47.3% to 29.2% from 2000 to 2015, the proportion of families in which only the mother worked remained stable over the same period, ranging from 3.4% to 4.1% (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Married Couples in Resident Households Living with at least 1 Child Aged Below 21 years by Working Status of Couple, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015

Source: Department of Statistics
Does parenthood affect economic activity?

Relationship between parenthood and economic activity different for men and women

3 While married women living with their children were less likely to be economically active than those married without children in the same household, the corresponding difference for married men was small. In 2015, the proportion of married women who lived with their children and were economically active (67.7%) was 7 percentage points lower than those without children living in the same household (74.7%) (Chart 2). In contrast, while a larger proportion of married males who lived with their children were economically active (94.3%) as compared to their counterparts without children in the same household (92.9%), the difference was only 1.4 percentage points (Chart 3).

4 While a smaller proportion of married women living with their children were economically active as compared to those without children in the same household, the trend was more pronounced among the younger women than older ones. The gap was most pronounced among the 20-24 year olds and gradually narrowed as the women’s age increased (Chart 2). As for married men, the only instances of those living with children being less likely to be economically active than those without children were among the 20-24 year olds (10.5 percentage points) and 35-39 (0.7 percentage points) (Chart 3).

Chart 2: Percentage Who Were Economically Active Among Resident Married Females Aged 20-64 Years in Resident Households by Presence of Child Living in the Same Household and Age Group, 2015

Source: Department of Statistics
Among married parents living with their children, mothers were less likely to be economically active than fathers. In 2015, the proportion of economically active fathers was 94.3% while that of mothers was 26.6 percentage points lower at 67.7% (Chart 4). This difference between fathers and mothers was consistent across all the age groups.
Are there differences in attitudes towards gender roles within the family?

Traditional gender roles prevail among married workers

The traditional roles of wife as homemaker and husband as breadwinner appear to hold among married working couples. Married working women indicated they contributed more to caregiving and household chores while married working men indicated they contributed more to the household finances. Compared to married working men, the proportion of married working women who were equally or primarily responsible for caregiving was 43 percentage points higher (Chart 5). Similarly, the proportion of married working women who were equally or primarily responsible for household chores was 38 percentage points higher (Chart 6). Conversely, the proportion of married working men who were the equal or primary breadwinner was 20 percentage points higher than married working women (Chart 7).

**Chart 5: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: care giving”, by Sex, 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Married working women</th>
<th>Married working men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equally or primarily responsible (“Me” and “Equally” combined)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey on Social Attitudes of Singaporeans, 2013, MSF*

1 Working individuals refer to those who are working part time, full time and are self-employed.
Chart 6: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: spend time doing household chores”, by Sex, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Married working women</th>
<th>Married working men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equally or primarily responsible (&quot;Me&quot; and &quot;Equally&quot; combined)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey on Social Attitudes of Singaporeans, 2013, MSF

Chart 7: Distribution of Married Working Respondents’ Response to the Statement “Between your spouse and yourself, who does more of the following: contribute financially to maintain the household”, by Sex, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Married working women</th>
<th>Married working men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equally or primarily responsible (&quot;Me&quot; and &quot;Equally&quot; combined)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey on Social Attitudes of Singaporeans, 2013, MSF
Women were more likely to cite family-related responsibilities as main reason for not working

7 Among all residents who were economically inactive, 27.6% cited family-related responsibilities (housework/childcare/care-giving to families or relatives) as their main reason for not actively looking for a job (Chart 8).

Chart 8: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over by Main Reason for Not Working, June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education / Training-Related</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Health / Disabled / Too Old</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housework</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiving to Families/Relatives</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a Break</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have sufficient Financial Support/Means</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family-Related Responsibilities 27.6%

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

8 Women were more likely than men to remain outside the labour force for family-related responsibilities. Among those who cited housework, childcare and caregiving to families or relatives as the main reason for not working, women formed the majority with 99.5%, 97.4% and 84.3% respectively (Chart 9). Women aged 30 to 39 years old formed the largest proportion of those who cited childcare as the main reason for not working (38.9%), while females aged 60 years old and above formed the largest proportion of those who cited housework (38.2%) or caregiving responsibilities (29.8%) as the main reason for not working (Chart 10).
Chart 9: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over who cited Family-Related Responsibilities as Main Reason for Not Working, by Sex, June 2015

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Chart 10: Residents Outside the Labour Force Aged 15 years and Over who cited Family-Related Responsibilities as Main Reason for Not Working, by Age and Sex, June 2015

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM
Are employers more supportive of work-life balance?

More establishments offering flexible work arrangements and non-statutory leave benefits

9 Consistent with calls to improve work-life balance, employers are increasingly embracing work-life balance initiatives. There was a significant increase in the proportion of establishments offering at least one formal flexible work arrangements from 38.1% in 2011 to 47.0% in 2016 mainly through offering part-time, flexitime and staggered hours arrangements (Chart 11).

10 In addition, more establishments are offering ad-hoc flexible work arrangements. In 2016, 76.9% of establishments provided at least one ad-hoc flexible work arrangement (i.e. unplanned time-off or ad-hoc tele-working) to their employees, up from 65.4% in 2011 (Chart 11).

Chart 11: Percentage of Establishments Offering Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA), 2011–2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one formal FWA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one ad-hoc FWA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flextime/Staggered Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-Working</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Conditions of Employment, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, Ministry of Manpower

---

2 Data pertain to permanent employees and employees on term contract of at least one year. Figures refer to the number of public sector and private establishments with at least 25 employees that offered the respective work-life arrangements as a proportion of all establishments. For years in which the Conditions of Employment Survey is not conducted (i.e. 2011, 2013, 2015), data on FWA are obtained from a supplementary survey by Ministry of Manpower.
In 2016, the majority of establishments provided compassionate leave (92.0%) and marriage leave (73.9%), even though these were not stipulated by law. There has also been an increase in the proportion of establishments providing other non-statutory leave schemes. The proportion providing parental care/sick leave increased by 13.6 percentage points, from 5.9% in 2008 to 19.5% in 2016. The proportion providing child sick leave likewise increased, with an 8.4 percentage point increase from 8.3% in 2008 to 16.7% in 2016 (Chart 12).

Chart 12: Percentage of Establishments that Provided Types of Non-Statutory Family-Friendly Paid Leave, 2008 - 2016

13 The desire for work-life balance appears to be strong among both male and female employees. A Straits Times and Employer Alliance Survey in 2014 of employees showed that a large proportion of male (87%) and female (84%) respondents indicated that they were attracted to companies supportive of employees juggling work and family (Chart 13) and about half of male and female employees would consider leaving a company that lacked flexible work arrangements% (Chart 14).

15 Data pertain to permanent employees and employees on term contract of at least one year. Figures refer to the number of public sector and private establishments with at least 25 employees that offered the respective non-statutory family-friendly paid leave as a proportion of all establishments. Data for 2011, 2013 and 2015 are not available.
Chart 13: Percentage of Employee Respondents Who Agreed with the Statement “I would be attracted to work for a company which supports me in managing my work and family commitments”, by Sex, 2014

Source: The Straits Times and Employer Alliance Survey, 2014

Chart 14: Percentage of Employee Respondents Who Agreed with the Statement “I would consider leaving a company if there is a lack of flexible work arrangements”, by Sex, 2014

Source: The Straits Times and Employer Alliance Survey, 2014

---

4 This refers to respondents who indicated either “Strongly agree” or “Agree” to the statement. The other options were “Neutral”, “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”.

5 This refers to respondents who indicated either “Strongly agree” or “Agree” to the statement. The other options were “Neutral”, “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree”.