

WHAT HAPPEN WHEN WOMEN CHANGE JOB DUE TO CHILD CARING

Reena Tadee* (reena.tadee@univie.ac.at)

Kanyapat Suttikasem** (kanyapat.sut@mahidol.edu)

INTRODUCTION

The study explores the messages on an online discussion board (Pantip.com) and Facebook pages in Thailand regarding having children and how it changes women's working behavior. We argue that work change affects women psychologically, financially, as well as women's relationship with their husbands and their career advancement. These effects contribute to women's vulnerability.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study which acquires the data from a research project "How Families with Children Adapt Their Working Behavior: A Qualitative Study from Online Data" including

- literature review
- 322 messages from posts on Pantip.com during 2015-2017 and 246 messages from 8 Facebook public posts on popular parenting pages in Thailand during 2017-2018
- in-depth interviews with 23 women who are mothers, conducted during May-August 2018

"My husband acts as if he was a god. He scolds at me, disrespects me. And I have to accept this kind of treatment because I rely on him financially. I have to put up with it"

(Full time mother from Pantip.com)

"It's a small company, there are not much competition in the company. And I personally do not want to compete with anyone because my focus has shifted [from career to children]. So if my colleagues are doing better in their career ladder then let them be, I'm just not ready and not so motivated"

(A working mother, in-depth interview)

RESULTS

EFFECTS ON NON-WORKING MOTHERS

- Emotional vulnerability VS happiness and pride in self-childrearing
- Worsened relationship with sprouts
- Lack of financial independency and stable income
- Difficulty re-entering the job market in the long run

EFFECTS ON WORKING MOTHERS

- Exhaustion from work and guilt from not spending much time with children VS happiness and encouragement derived from children
- Feeling of exploitation from sprouts due to un-balanced participation in household chores and childcare
- Feeling less motivated with career advancement

CONCLUSION

The results show that work change affects women psychologically and financially. Changing work behavior also affect women's relationship with their husbands as well as career advancement. These effects contribute to women's vulnerability. To mitigate such conflicts and negative effects, this study proposes policy recommendations which include more flexible work hours for women with children, more quality day care centers especially in urban areas, as well as incentives from the government for both private and public sectors to re-hire women who left work due to child care etc.

*Researcher at Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University and PhD student at Department of Geography and Regional Research, University of Vienna

** Researcher at Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University