

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHILD MINDING CENTER MAY HELP BALANCE LIFE FOR WORKING MOTHERS WITH 0-5 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 72% of the 25 informants chose to be working mothers because of financial needs; only 28% reasoned its for personal growth.
- ✓ Care from kinsfolk is still the most preferred and trusted way of the working mothers in terms of childcare.
- ✓ Full parenting support from the workplace is not visible as claimed by all of the informants.
- ✓ Most of the informants are not aware of the breastfeeding or lactation stations at the workplace.
- ✓ Informants recommended a sustained policy on flexible working hours and the possibility for additional maternity leave credits.
- ✓ Establishing a Child Minding Center (CMC) within the workplace is most needed by the informants. Putting up a CMC at the workplace is seen by these working mothers as a significant step in improving their productivity.



INTRODUCTION

The 21st century ushered an increasing household financial need that causes both parents to work. However, women or mothers even if they are working still assume the responsibility of household chores and child rearing that make them juggle their time between work and family. As stated by Ilac (2012) the growing number of women in the workplace can be due to the increasing need to supplement family income and the desire for empowerment and financial independence.

Hence, with an aim to identify and explore the struggles of working mothers in balancing their daily lives between family and career, as well as to initially determine the practical

support mechanisms needed in the workplace, the study titled, "Balancing Life: The Struggles of Working Mothers with 0-5 Year Old Children" was conducted at Benguet State University (BSU) under the BSU-Institute of Social Research and Development (BSU-ISRD).

In the case of BSU, support to working mothers are being provided such as leave credits as stipulated in R.A. No. 7322 and the lactation room under R.A. No. 10028. This research study aimed to determine if the provisions in these laws are enough to support the university's working mothers. Recommendations were elicited from these working mothers as to how the university can further support them to help ease their burden in being a working mother, and lead to a better workplace and increased work productivity.



DATA AND SOURCE

The informants of the study are employees of BSU La Trinidad Campus, 10 of them hold a Job Order (JO) status and 15 occupy permanent positions both from the non-teaching and teaching sectors. Most of the informants are married (86%) with at least one 0-5 year old child.

As of August 2018 from the records of Human Resource

Development Office (HRDO), La Trinidad campus has a total of 1,035 employees, 441 are men and 581 are women inclusive of the permanent and non-permanent employees in the university. Currently, women dominate the university's workforce at 56.14%. As to the percentage of female employees with 0 - 5 years old, it was not established yet.



FINDINGS

RELATIVES ARE ENGAGED IN CHILD CARE

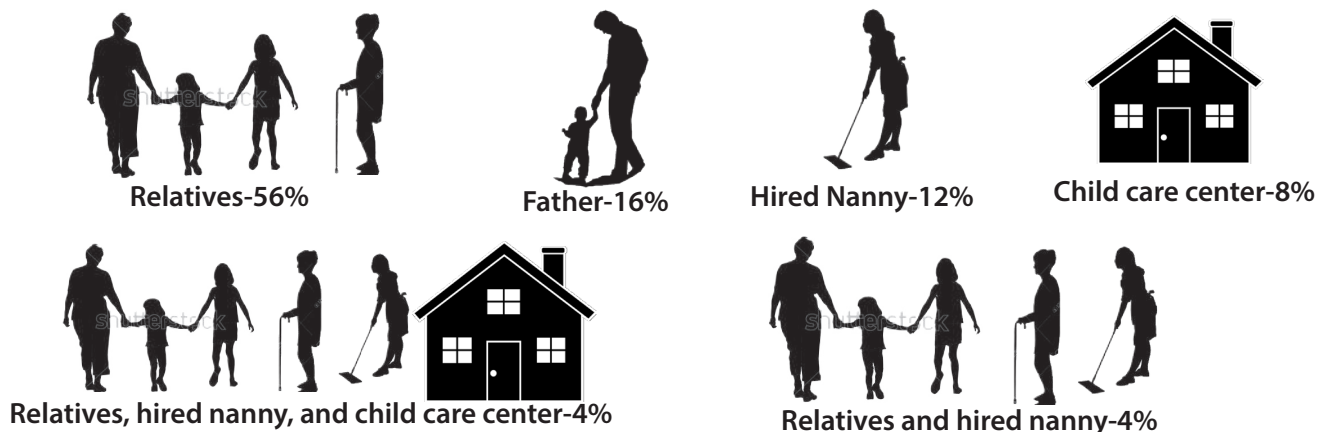
Mothers or grandmothers are the common helpers. Majority (56%) of the informants seek the help of their relatives to take care of their children. The most compelling reasons were due to lesser financial burden, and security and safety of the child.

As explained by the informants, their relatives are more than happy to take care of their children and do not ask for payment or salary. Hence, the child's mother makes sure

to share in the house expenses of their relative or treat them outside. Such arrangements make it less expensive for the mother compared to paying for hired nannies or child care center.

The only time hired nannies or child care centers are sought is if there is no relative available to look after the child. In such cases, most mothers bring their children to their workplace.

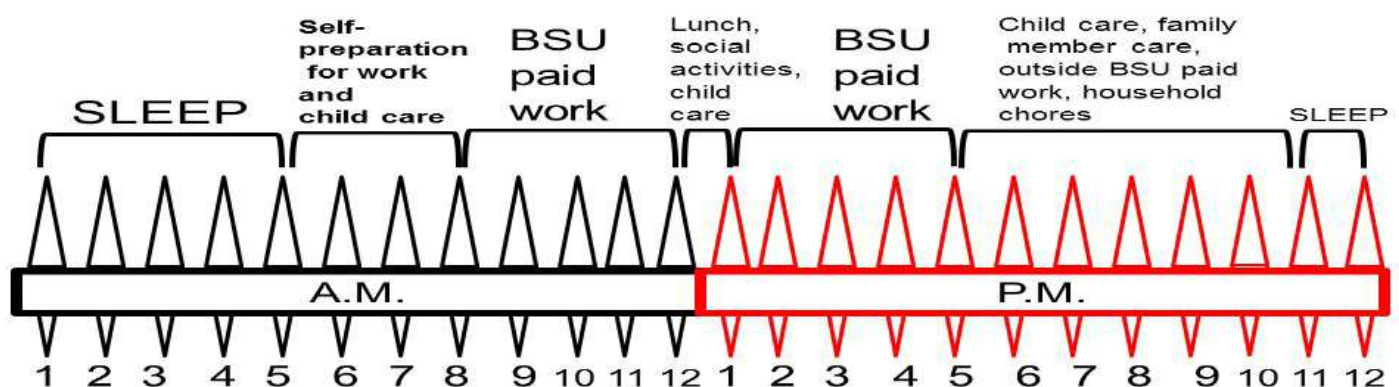
Frequency distribution of respondents, by who takes care of child at work



SELF-NEEDS/GROWTH IS SACRIFICED

Studies and time for family are the two most common sacrifices made by these working mothers as most of their time is consumed by their employment. Based on the time analysis of the 25 informants, in their 24-hour day, 8 hours and 16 minutes is the time spent for paid work and sleep time is only for 6 hours and 54 minutes. The remaining 9 hours and 3 minutes is spent simultaneously in doing household chores, care for children, care for other members of the family, paid activities related to work outside BSU, self-preparation for work, and social related activities.

The time distribution of these working mothers indicates that while they spend more time at work, lesser time is spent in other activities particularly child care. Informants would even claim that 24 hours in a day is not enough to do all of these activities. Hence, fitting in graduate studies becomes difficult. This makes the working mothers unable to grow with full potential in their career, which is not beneficial both to the informants and to the university.



FULL SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY IS NOT FELT

As of now, the informants observed that they do not yet see full parenting support from the University. Currently, the university offers maternity and special privilege leave for each permanent employee in a year; the lactation and/or breastfeeding room; and flexible working hours which was recently included after this study was conducted.

However, though there is a special privilege leave, qualified employees could not freely utilize this. The reasons is either they are having second thoughts in asking for permission to take a leave or there are a lot of work to do. As for the

lactation and/or breastfeeding room, most of the informants are not aware of its existence as well as the institutionalized one hour allotted break (30 minutes in the morning and another 30 minute break in the afternoon).

Informants feel that these support services are merely in compliance with the mandate of the Philippine law especially that proper information dissemination was not fully conducted in the university.



CALL TO ACTION: DISCUSSION

INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE 3

ESTABLISH CHILD MINDING CENTER. At present, a common practice of working mothers is to bring their child with them at work since no relative is available to look after them. This leads to divided attention of the mother between work and child care. Hence putting up a child minding center (CMC) is requested.

The principle of the CMC system is to leave the child to a child minder who could be a mother or a trained person for the task. Childminders are defined by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED, 2010) as “a person who is registered to look after one or more children to whom they are not related on domestic premises for reward.”

The system proposed by the informants is for student mothers and students with courses related to child care of the university to be employed as part time with the guidance of one or two full time professional childminder.

For it to be sustainable, informants are willing to pay minimal fee or at least lower than the payment of child care center outside. The current rate for child care center is between PhP 3,000 to PhP 4,000 per month with a ratio of 1 attendant is to 4 to 6 children. In the case of I-Grab where their monthly rate is PhP 3,800 and includes two snacks and lunch, the owner claims that this rate is enough to sustain the operation of the center as long as there are enough or regular customers, that is a minimum of 10 enrollees a month. In addition, attendants receive a minimum wage salary of 320 per day and, for other owners they provide meals.

According to the current Gender and Development (GAD) director, they were eyeing one classroom at the College of Agriculture (CA) or in the eventually vacated R&E building to put up the CMC.

DECREASED OR MORE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS FOR LACTATING MOTHERS. Another recommendation by the informants is to decrease the working hours wherein employees will work only 4 times a week of regular working hours (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) or it could be flexible working hours of 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. – by those unaware of the flexible time provided by the university.

In connection to this, House Bill No. 6152 was approved by the House and was transmitted to the Senate last year. This bill is about the compressed work week (CWW) whereas quoted directly from it “Employees shall be permitted to complete their working hours on a compressed work week scheme whereby the normal work week is reduced to less than six days but the total number of normal work hours per week shall remain at 48 hours.”

EXPLORE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL MATERNITY LEAVE CREDITS. Currently, BSU follows the CSC Res. No. 040740 where normal or caesarean labor will be granted 60 days maternity leave. Informants recommend considering additional leave credits from the original maternity leave credits.

To address this, Senate Bill 1305 or the “Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2017” was passed and is waiting for approval. Under this bill, legally married mothers will be granted 120 days maternity leave with pay and an option to extend it for another 30 days without pay while single mothers will be given 150 days maternity leave with pay. Internal policies within the university may address some kind of flexibility for the meantime while the law is being passed.

ENHANCE LACTATION AND/OR BREASTFEEDING AREA AND POLICIES. In compliance to R.A. No. 7322 the university provided a lactation and/or breastfeeding room, located on the 2nd floor of the new administration building and created an institutional policy where a total of one hour of lactation and/or breastfeeding period divided into 30 minute break each in the morning and in the afternoon. This kind of support from the university is good however, it needs to be maintained and enhanced. Since, mostly personnels from the administration building are the ones aware and is using the area.

Widespread information dissemination should be done to inform university employees about the lactation room. One thing to consider also is including the lactation and/or breastfeeding room to the CMC. Instead of the mother going home to breastfeed, they can leave and breastfeed their child at the center. This will result in mothers being able to meet the break time allotted for breastfeeding.

CHILD CARE CENTERS	No. OR AVERAGE OF CLIENTS	SERVICES / RATES
Playyard Child Care Center	Walk-in: 3 to 15 per day (it depends on the low and peak days)	Child Care Services: Play, Color and Count Monthly, Whole Day: >3 to 10 years old: PhP 3,000.00 >0 to 2 years old and 11 months: PhP 3,300.00 Monthly, Half Day: >3 to 10 years old: PhP 2,500.00 >0 to 2 years old and 11 months: PhP 3,000.00 * Snacks as requested with separate payment (PhP 30.00 to PhP 50.00 per day)
I-Grab	Walk-in: 1 to 3	Child Care Services: Regimented Activities >1 Hour: PhP 45.00 >1 day: PhP 220.00 > Monthly: PhP 2,750 or PhP 3,850.00 >2 Snacks and Lunch: PhP 50.00 Afterclass Homework Assistance: PhP 1,100 per month >Weekend care is upon request * Fetch and walk the child to school or home is available without charge



CALL TO ACTION: SUMMARY

- ✓ Consider establishing a Child Minding Center (CMC) within the university. The CMC may help increase work productivity and may lessen absenteeism.
- ✓ Consider employing student mothers and students with courses related to child care as priority part-time workers with the guidance of one or two professional childminders depending on the number of enrollees.
- ✓ Consider reviewing the current location and enhancing the operation of the existing breastfeeding stations of the university. The station's existence and locations should be properly and fully disseminated. This is to make sure that employees will not exceed the allotted one hour lactation break policy (30 minutes break each in the morning and afternoon).
- ✓ Sustain the policy of flexible working hours especially for breastfeeding mothers.
- ✓ Support House Bill No. 6152 known as "Compressed Work Week" and Senate Bill 1305 or the "Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2017".



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ABOUT THE MATERIAL

Informing Policy and Practice is published quarterly by the Institute of Social Research and Development of the Benguet State University. It synthesizes findings from research and development activities, or presents results of quick survey and opinion poll on social, economic and policy issues and concerns affecting the Cordillera region. It also distills key messages and provides recommendations for the information and consideration of decision- and policy-makers.

This issue discusses the concern on work balance among working mothers particularly those with 0-5 years old children. This is in consonance with the Gender and Development advocacy of the university.

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