

DECRYPTING THE EDUCATION-JOB MATCH OF WOMEN ECONOMIC MIGRANTS FROM LEYTE AND SAMAR

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ABSTRACT

It is imperative to look into the education-job match of women economic migrants as this may indicate the degree of their social protection as reflected in their income-generating capacity abroad, and their consequent ability to financially assist the family left behind in times of uncertainties. Do the women economic migrants' foreign jobs match their educational preparation in the Philippines? How close are their pre-migration jobs to their current and/or first foreign jobs? Do their pre-migration jobs match their educational qualifications?

In November and December 2011, twenty-one women economic migrants from Leyte and Samar were interviewed using the information technology superhighway, i.e., skype, chat, FB, viber, YM, Twitter, SMS. These are women who migrated as a result of a family decision aimed at protecting the family at home from future risks/failures. Results showed that while in the Philippines, women's jobs were generally related to their educational preparation. However, migration resulted with women getting jobs that were unrelated to their Philippine jobs. After some time, women economic migrants assimilated in the host country labor market, and searched for other jobs. These new/nth jobs are more related to their first foreign jobs, but the match goes as low as 43 percent only between the new/nth foreign jobs and the women economic migrants' educational preparation in the Philippines.

Keywords: migration and education, migrant women's jobs

INTRODUCTION

MIGRATION STUDIES BASED ON THE NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMIC THEORY assume that individuals make migration decisions from the point of

view of being able to maximize utility and incomes (Lewis 1952, Todaro 1969, and Borjas 1989 as cited in Haas 2008). The potential migrant “searches” for the place of destination that is expected to maximize his well-being given the constraints of his financial resources and the legal environment of both competing host countries and the country of origin (Borjas 2011: 461). At the same time, host countries make known in the migration market their offers of wages, benefits and other increments/premiums for migrants. The resulting size, flow and nature of international migration, thus, reflects the interplay of this global supply and demand for labor (Sjaastad 1962, Todaro 1969 as cited in J Rank n.d.).

For the Philippines which is a top out-migration country, net emigration rate in 2013 registered -1.25, which means that there is an excess of persons leaving the country at the rate of 1.25 migrants per 1000 population. In the years 2000 and 2010, the net emigration were -1.02 and -1.31, respectively (CIA Factbook 2011). In May 2010, the registered number of overseas workers was around 1.5 million. This was 1.1 million higher than the figures in the 1990 Census of Population and Housing, which registered only 417,000 overseas workers (PSA 2014).

Are the educated economic migrants able to locate themselves in markets where their jobs match their educational preparation? Specifically, do the women-graduates of tertiary courses find employment in foreign jobs that require the skills for which they were prepared for in the Philippines? How close were their pre-migration jobs to their current and/or first foreign jobs? Do their pre-migration jobs match their educational qualifications? How do the women economic migrants adapt to and assimilate in the host country?

This seminal paper looks into a microcosm of the bigger education-job match and education-migration connectedness questions, as viewed primarily from the supply perspective. Twenty-one (21) purposively chosen women economic migrants who came from family residents of Leyte and Samar were interviewed. They are family members of volunteer senior Economics students who served as interviewers. The respondents were selected on the basis of having finished at least a Bachelor’s degree in the Philippines, regardless of their age, collegiate course, host country, the number of years worked abroad for pay, and their municipality of origin. Data gathering was done in November and December 2011 with reference to the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the interview. The women economic migrants were interviewed at any time of their convenience using android-based phablets/tablets using the information technology superhighway. That is, through the skype, chat, FB, viber, YM, Twitter, and SMS. Both interviewers and interviewees found the data gathering technique to be novel and exciting.

The choice of Leyte and Samar as research locale is motivated not only

by the researcher's familiarity with the daily unfolding of the lives of the natives, but by the statistics which indicate that the two provinces are net out-migration areas in the country.

The descriptive analysis that is made in this paper is limited to the individual cases of education-job match. Hence, in order to draw more conclusive findings, future work on larger databases is necessary. There is no discourse made on the social development processes and the labor market demand within which migration exists and is perpetuated, nor is there an attempt to advance a theoretical framework that will comprehensively explain the whole education-job match phenomenon. There will be no discussion on the effect of the migration of an educated workforce on the wages/incomes of the native population in the host country, nor on the educational attainment of the women economic migrants as compared to their counterparts in Leyte and Samar.

EDUCATION-MIGRATION CONNECTEDNESS

Drawing from the neoclassicists, the potential woman economic migrant who is a utility maximizer weighs the economic returns from migration, given her educational qualifications. It is the differential net monetary returns to her skills in both the home and host countries which serves as the main driver of her migration decision (Dustmann and Glitz 2011). Nevertheless, the neoclassicists also recognize that an array of factors may influence the decision to migrate. Examples are: the political conditions, immigration policies, presence of social networks, migration costs, perceived risks, segmentation of labor markets, and a lot more of push and pull factors, as well as the intervening variables as illustrated by Lee (1966) and Ravenstein (1889). Among the latter set of variables, an individual's education is recognized to either significantly facilitate or retard migration (J Rank, n.d.).

This connectedness of education and migration is highlighted by literature which shows that the economic success of a migrant is to a large extent determined by her educational background (Dustmann and Glitz 2011). Higher education translates to higher wages, and higher wages translate to higher incomes and remittances made by the woman economic migrant. This becomes an incentive for the woman economic migrant to further acquire skills and more education after arrival in the host country, as a pay-off for her migration decision, to cover the direct costs of migration, and to prepare for a foreign job mobility. This acquisition of a higher education and human capital formation becomes part of the woman economic migrants' assimilation efforts into the foreign labor market.

In the 1980s, the theorization of migration started to reconsider the neoclassical view of the individual decision maker as a utility maximizer with

regards to two other elements: (a) that migration decisions are not the sole decision of the migrant but are joint decisions of family/household members to which the economic migrant belongs; and (b) that the decision to migrate is not only done for wage and income maximization but for family income diversification and risk aversion as well (King 2012). This came to be the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM). The women economic migrants in the study were found to exhibit this phenomenon.

Migration as a social protection strategy

There are two views about migration as a social protection strategy. First, when a negative income shock befalls the economic migrants' family, the migrants are most likely to increase remittances to their families left behind in the home country (Nyarko and Gyimah-Brempong 2010). Second, having a successful economic migrant in the family further encourages the family to decide about sending more of its members abroad so that should any risks/uncertainties happen in the future, the family can readily bounce back and rebuild better because there will be more who will send in their remittances.

Education, thus, becomes a crucial consideration before migration. The choice of courses for family members who will later migrate for employment will most likely be made in response to a particular foreign job in mind, and an expected threshold level of earnings abroad. NELM hypothesizes that in many instances, these are foreign jobs where other family members/relatives are employed and in destinations where families/friends have located in the past.

Migration is a choice

Given the scenario above, migration becomes a choice - not by the individual economic migrant but by the conscious, rational and well-thought of joint family decision. Migration should not be a matter of necessity, as emphasized by H.E. Benigno Aquino III as Point No. 10 in his 16-point social contract with the Filipino people (Galias 2013).

The potential economic migrant prepares himself with the corresponding skills and competencies while in the Philippines. Even those with higher educational attainment retool themselves in order to increase the chances of getting the better and higher-paying jobs in their target host countries. On many occasions the information about the foreign labor market's skill requirements is provided by social networks and by family members who are already working abroad. Once in the host country, the economic migrant invests into further skills training. How much she invests will largely be a matter of choice with the end in view of maximizing incomes, minimizing risks, and to avert uncertainties and future market shocks/failures.

Migration is not a desperate move against poverty

The NELM is more applicable to developing countries than to the advanced economies (University of Colorado n.d.) because of its social protection stance, among others. The neoclassical migration theory “has no place for money remittances flowing to origin countries” (Taylor 1999 as cited by de Haas 2010:4).

Nonetheless, migration is not the last resort that is reserved for poverty-stricken households. It is costly to migrate and a household which is below the poverty incidence threshold may not be able to afford. Aside from the direct costs for transportation and pre-departure expenses, the potential economic migrant needs to be educated and must invest on equipping himself with certain skills/competences that the host country requires. He has to aspire for the best human capital that he can muster in order to be able to earn more, hence, remit more to her family left behind.

Remittances play an important role for both the poor and the rich households, in both bad and good times. It serves as a buffer for the family who experiences economic shocks, hence, tides over the family to its pre-shock state of well-being. In good times, the remittances are used for a variety of purposes such as the purchase of production inputs, for business investments, and for consumption of goods that may not be affordable had there been no migrant worker in the family. Lifestyles, tastes/preferences, and consumer market baskets change in favor of superior goods because of windfall moneys from remittances. Likewise, risks that are associated with the absence of insurance facilities and similar financial structures are mitigated because of the remittances.

WHO ARE THE WOMEN ECONOMIC MIGRANTS?

The women economic migrants in this study are educated, employed, have the capacity to shoulder the high cost of migration, and are willing to further enhance their human capital while working abroad.

Migration of the Educated

The women economic migrants in this study are relatively young with 48 percent of them belonging to the 30-39 years old age range (Table 1). Added to this number are 33 percent more who are below 30 years old. They are mostly single, at 62 percent (Table 2).

Table 1. Age Distribution of the Women Economic Migrants

<i>Age Range (yrs)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<30	7	33

30-39	10	48
40-49	3	14
50-59	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2. Civil Status of the Women Economic Migrants

<i>Civil Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single	13	62
Single with child	1	5
Married	5	24
Separated	2	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

The field of study of the women economic migrants are in Management and Accountancy (33%), followed by the Medical and related courses (29%). The other fields are Education (14%), Social Sciences (9%), Engineering (9%), and Computer Science (5%) in descending order (Table 3).

It was noted in the study that the women economic migrants' choice of their degree courses in college was generally a family decision and was made with future economic migration in mind. It is the presence of another family member in the same field of study who has become successfully employed abroad, or the presence of cumulative migrants from the same community of origin, or the most popular academic discipline that job placement/migration agencies advertise which all contributed significantly to the choice of courses/degrees. Moreover, in at least half of the time, the family member who financially supports a child's tertiary

Table 3. Highest Educational Attainment of the Women Economic Migrants

<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Medical and Related Courses: <i>BS Physical Therapy, BS Nursing, Caregiving, Midwifery, BS Biology</i>	6	29
Education: <i>BSE, MAT (English), BSE (PEHM)</i>	3	14
Social Sciences: <i>AB Sociology, BS Criminology</i>	2	9

Management & Accountancy: <i>BS Tourism, Restaurant and Hotel Management, BS Business Management, BS Commerce, BS Accountancy</i>	7	33
Engineering: <i>BS Industrial Engineering</i>	2	9
Computer Science: Associate in Computer Science	1	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

education and who expects higher returns from migration, is the major decision maker in the choice of degrees/courses to take.

One argument about education and migration is that the young and rural folks who are able to complete a non-rural-specific human capital and who possess more human capital are those who are less risk-averse and, therefore, have greater probability of migrating to the more urban centers (Barnum and Sabot 1976 as cited in Stark 1991: 9). It was observed in the study that those who finished management courses were more optimistic that they can easily get a foreign job because of the perceived availability of work in hotels/restaurants/shops in the urban and industrialized countries. Thus, these courses are preferred over the traditional courses like teacher education.

Migration of the Employed

All of the women economic migrants, except one, had jobs in the Philippines before migration. Ten percent have been working for more than 10 years already, while another 10% have been working for just less than a year. A large proportion (67%) had from 1 to 5 years of work in the Philippines before migration, and the remaining 14% had from 6 to 10 years (Table 4). The average duration of pre-migration work is 4.88 years. In terms of the number of pre-migration employment, 23% had two while 77% had only one. The women economic migrants claim that more years of work experience in the Philippines gave them more confidence and resolve in their search for foreign jobs. Women get feelings of indifference when they are not able to migrate immediately. It means lost income opportunity, but at the same time it was welcomed as it added years to their work experience.

Table 4. Duration of Pre-Migration Employment

<i>No. of PHL Jobs Before Migration</i>	<i>No. of Years Worked Before Migration</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<1	1-5	6-10	>10	

	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	2	10	10	48	3	14	1	5	16	77
2			4	19			1	5	5	23
<i>Total</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>100</i>

There were women economic migrants who admitted of buying their time away (“waiting time”) in the urban centers of Metro Manila or Cebu City from the time they graduated until they were able to leave for foreign countries. Those who found jobs gained pre-migration work experience. At the same time, they may or may not enroll in crash courses like caregiving, a language course, or a certificate in culinary arts. These uses of “waiting time” were intended to enhance the human capital of the would-be economic migrant. Oftentimes, these decisions are family decisions, with the family still willing to financially support the activities during a child’s “waiting time.”

Pre-migration jobs were related to the women economic migrants’ educational background in 62 percent of the time (Table 5). The other 38 percent of pre-migration jobs were taken by individuals whose skills/competencies for which they were prepared for did not match the requirements of the job. The BS Physical Therapy graduate works as a clerk in a non-health government office, the AB Sociology graduate works in the school’s food service, and the MA in Teaching graduate works in the personnel office of a non-government organization.

The education pre-migration job mismatch was not necessarily due to the structural failures in the local economy. The study showed three cases (14%) wherein the resulting mismatch was intentional on the part of the potential migrant. The graduate of a caregiving course or a BS in Tourism degree needed an experience as salesladies in order to increase their chances of their employment abroad in a shop/store where a relative has been working for some time. The same goes for the BS Criminology graduate who needed a work experience in a factory as a prerequisite for a foreign job applied for.

Table 5. Pre-Migration Jobs of Women Economic Migrants

<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Work in the PHL Before Migration</i>	<i>Education in line with PHL Job Before Migration?</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
BS Education	Elem school teacher	/	
BS Education (PEHM)	Teacher	/	
AB Sociology	School food service		/

BS Tourism, Restaurant and Hotel Management	Saleslady		/
	Room attendant, <i>barista</i>	/	
MA in Teaching (English)	HRD personnel (in NGO)	/	
BS Criminology	Factory worker		/
BS Biology	Clerk	/	
BS Industrial Engineering	Product dev (section head)	/	
	Dept. supervisor (sewing lines)	/	
Associate in Computer Science	Nursing assistant		/
BS Commerce	Office work	/	
BS Accountancy	Accountant / Teller	/	
	Cashier	/	
	Accounting clerk (government)	/	
BS Business Management	Data encoder		/
BS Nursing	Volunteer nurse	/	
BS Midwifery	Private midwife	/	
	RHU-midwife	/	
BS Physical Therapy	Clerk		/
Caregiving Course	Saleslady		/
<i>Total</i> (% where N=21)		13 (62%)	8 (38%)

In three out of four women economic migrants from Leyte and Samar in the study, the pre-migration job was in Metro Manila and Cebu. This shows that an internal rural-urban migration practically took place before the international economic migration happens. This exhibits what Todaro (1969) posits in his model that migration is a two-stage phenomenon. Accordingly, the unskilled rural worker migrates to the urban traditional sector, stays there for some time, until he finally migrates to the urban modern sector where he gets a more permanent job. This parallels the woman economic migrant who may not as yet possess the requirements of a foreign job, goes to Metro Manila or Cebu City in order to enhance her skills/competencies during the “waiting time” until she is finally able to leave the country. She may also opt to take a temporary job to earn experience related to an expected foreign job.

Migration of those with Capacity

The “waiting time” is costly particularly for one who comes from the

province (of Leyte or Samar) and has to find a place and fend for himself in the urban traditional sector. The cost goes higher as there are other pre-migration expenses incurred such as, but not limited to fees, airfare, show money, medical expenses, new wardrobe, a send-off party, and the transportation and communication expenses. The send-off party is a big and momentous family affair, in as much as migration is a joint family decision. It can be lavish. It becomes even a community affair, especially in cases when the country of destination and the woman economic migrant's employer are the same as those of the other members of the community who have migrated in the past. The latter serves as the social network which takes care of the woman economic migrant's needs upon arrival in the host countries, such as a wardrobe, the lodging/boarding space, the tips and information, and most of all the company and the "home-away-from-home" support.

The average out-of-money expenses may be as low as US\$2,120 to as high as US\$6,730 or an average estimated amount of US\$4,425. At an exchange rate of PhP44.10 to US\$1, this is around PhP93,492 to PhP296,793, respectively, and an average of PhP195,142.50. This is quite a sum of money that either an individual potential migrant on her own, or a poverty-stricken household which is sending a child abroad may not be able to afford.

Table 7. Estimated Direct Pre-Migration Costs (in US\$ at PhP44.10 = US\$1)

<i>Items / Expenses</i>	<i>Estimated Out-of-Pocket Cost (US\$) (Min-Max)</i>
Papers and documentary requirements	60 – 400
Fees for clearances	124 – 300
Trips to follow-up papers	180 – 290
Agency fee	160 – 2,800
New wardrobe	50 – 1,000
International airfare	880 – 1,200
Send off (<i>despedida</i>) party	240 – 110
Show money	500
Medical and other incidental expenses	110 – 240
<i>Total (US\$)</i>	<i>2,120.00 – 6,730.00</i>
	<i>(PhP) 93,492.00 – 296,793.00</i>

At this point, it is clear that the family is willing to spend for a family member's migration. This willingness is reflective of the joint family assessment as to who is that family member who has the greatest probability of success to be accepted

to and be promoted in a foreign job. The long-term household goal is to be able to secure the family from negative shocks and uncertainties in the future through economic migration.

Stark (1991) discusses the investment portfolio theory which postulates that given the family’s desire to maintain a certain level of well-being and to cushion it from risks, the family diversifies its portfolio by distributing its labor (i.e., family members) to various geographical locations with different labor market structures (Stark, 1991 as cited by Nyewie 2010). That is, through migration. This arrangement helps dissipate the family risks. Moreover, the resulting gains from migration are pooled to secure the family. Remittances absorb economic shocks, the linkage with social networks abroad becomes a steady source of information for more family migrations in the future, and the possible marriage with foreigners will provide long-term connections/benefits for the whole family left behind.

PRE-MIGRATION JOBS AND FIRST FOREIGN JOBS

Upon arrival in the host country, the women economic migrants do not necessarily get into jobs that are related to their pre-migration jobs. Those who do, comprise only 38 percent (Table 8). Since they go through recruitment agencies, they are generally aware of what they are getting into. In fact, most of them have prepared for the requirements of the first foreign job, regardless of its being in the same line as their pre-migration job or not, or of being related to their educational preparation or not. The primordial concern of the women economic migrants at this stage of the migration process is being able to finally leave the Philippines and consequently, to work in a foreign land.

Table 8. Pre-Migration Jobs vs. First Foreign Jobs

<i>Work in the PHL Before Migration</i>	<i>First Work Abroad After Migration</i>	<i>PHL Job Related to First Foreign Job?</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Elem school teacher	Elem school teacher	/	
Teacher	Live-in caregiver		/
School food service	Folding towels; catcher of folded linens		/
Saleslady	Banquet server		/
Room attendant, <i>barista</i>	Housekeeping steward		/
HRD personnel (in NGO)	Language teacher		/
Factory worker	Domestic helper		/

Clerk	Admin Clerk	/	
Product dev (section head)	Planning section, Engineering Dept		/
Dept. supervisor (sewing lines)	Production Coordinator (factory)		/
Nursing assistant	Nursing assistant	/	
Office work	Care provider		/
Accountant / Teller	Accounting clerk	/	
Cashier	Office staff		/
Accounting clerk (government)	Accounting staff	/	
Data encoder	Caregiver		/
Volunteer nurse	Staff nurse	/	
Private midwife	Home support health care for elderly		/
RHU-midwife	Midwife	/	
Clerk	Resort staff		/
Saleslady	Sales supervisor	/	
<i>Total</i>		8	13
<i>(% of N = 21)</i>		<i>(38%)</i>	<i>(62%)</i>

The role of kin/friendship/social networks are very important at this stage. They reduce migration risks, hence, the probability of success of the women economic migrants is heightened. With more success stories, so is circular migration encouraged and perpetuated. This phenomenon is captured in the theory of cumulative causation which describes how migration is sustained and how it creates further migration (Massey 1990 as cited in Thieme 2006).

The networks allow the new economic migrants to feel their way into their first foreign jobs. When a data encoder in the Philippines becomes a caregiver abroad, or a factory worker becomes a domestic helper, or a school food service staff starts to fold towels and linens in a hotel, it is always the social networks which give strength to the women economic migrants to go on and carry on.

ASSIMILATION IN THE HOST COUNTRY'S LABOR MARKET

After arrival in the host country, the women economic migrants adapt and assimilate in the host countries' labor market. Hatton and Leigh (2007) argues that immigrants assimilate as communities and not as individuals. That is, the migrant's ability to adapt and assimilate is not solely based on her personal

characteristics but more so due to the legacy of past migrants coming from the same origin. Thus, she most likely prefers to locate in areas where a community of Filipinos are found, specifically where there are more Eastern Visayans and kababayans in the host country.

How did the women economic migrants assimilate? They learned the language of the host country such as in the case of the teacher in Thailand and the office clerk working in Malaysia. Proficiency in the language of the host country shapes the migrants’ labor market integration (Nee, Sanders 2001 and Chiswick, Miller 2007 as cited in Leontiyeva 2014). Moreover, the excellent oral communication skills in English of the women economic migrants further facilitated assimilation as this made them more interactive with superiors and peers at work.

A second factor that enhanced assimilation was the employment in part time jobs. This happened to nine (or 43%) of the women economic migrants (Table 9). In more than half of the cases, the part-time job was not related to the primary (first foreign) job. The women economic migrants were working after office hours or on weekends or on their day-off as private tutors, nursing care provider, housekeeper, waitress, and bookkeepers. These are jobs which do not need additional training. It is observed that all the part time jobs are typical women’s work, being maternal and nurturing in nature -- hence, extensions of homework. These are housekeeping, caring, and teaching.

Table 9. Primary and Part-time Jobs of Women Economic Migrants (N=9)

<i>Primary Job</i>	<i>Part-time Job</i>	<i>Primary Job Related to Part-time Job?</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Elem school teacher	Private tutor	/	
Gov’t school teacher	Company language teacher; private tutor	/	
Resident care aid	Nursing care service provider	/	
Caregiver	Waitress		/
Nursing assistant	Housekeeper		/
Staff nurse	Caregiver	/	
Office staff	Bookkeeper		/
Domestic helper	Private tutor		/
Resort staff	Private tutor		/
<i>Total</i> <i>(% of N = 9)</i>		4 <i>(43%)</i>	5 <i>(57%)</i>

Being in the labor market for more hours a day provided the migrants with a greater exposure to the socio-cultural and economic processes/structures of the host country. Similarly, it helped the non-immigrant community accept and accommodate the women economic immigrants.

The longest part-time work was that of the nursing assistant who did housekeeping for others. She works for 18 hours per week or an average of 2.5 hours per day, or for 3 hours a day for 6 days a week (Table 10). On the other hand, the shortest part-time work was that of the government school teacher who only had overtime work of 2 hours per week. There are nuances in the labor market structures of host countries which may or may not allow a migrant worker to work overtime and/or have part-time jobs.

A third factor is the acquisition of skills which the labor market in the host country need. The women economic migrants reported to have enrolled in crash courses on-site or online, and/or (if lucky) to have been sent by employers to various capacity building activities. This encouraged the migrants to stay in the host country.

Table 10. Full-time and Part-time Work of Women Economic Migrants (N=9)

<i>Primary Job</i> <i>Full-time = 40 hours/ week</i>	<i>Part-time Job</i>	<i>Hours Worked per Week</i>		<i>Overtime Work (hours/ week)</i>
		<i>Pri- mary</i>	<i>Part- time</i>	
Elem school teacher	Private tutor	40	6	6
Gov't school teacher	Company language teacher; private tutor	35	6	2
Resident care aid	Nursing care service provider	38	12	10
Caregiver	Waitress	40	6	6
Nursing assistant	Housekeeper	72	18	50
Staff nurse	Caregiver	30	15	5
Office staff	Bookkeeper	48	4	12
Domestic helper	Private tutor	72	6	38
Resort staff	Private tutor	40	8	8
<i>Total</i> <i>(% of N = 9)</i>		4 (43%)	5 (57%)	

Fourth, the women economic migrants joined socio-civic groups, the church choir, and/or the employees' associations. This enhanced their sense of

belongingness. The social networks are oftentimes headed by women who acted as “every one’s mothers away from home.”

Fifth, job mobility and access to various occupational strata likewise hastened the assimilation. Ten (48%) women economic migrants changed jobs (Table 11). Forty percent went to unrelated jobs such as the sales supervisor who became a chef. Sixty percent went to jobs related to the first foreign job. Frictional unemployment took from 0.50 to 6 months, or an average of 2.25 months.

For reasons that range from the woman economic migrant’s personal circumstances to the inefficiencies of market structures, she is always on the look-out for the next best job. The job search (which is usually done discreetly) can even start right after arrival in the host country while on the first job. This is true especially for those who believe that their first jobs are not the best options for returns of investments/costs incurred in the course of migration. For some women, the search is short because friends and relatives who are making good somewhere else provide them information, facilitate the processing of documents, and recommend the migrants to their employers. Still for others, a change in employment is due to promotion or re-assignment as decided by the employer.

Table 11. First Foreign Jobs vs Current Job Abroad

<i>First Work Abroad After Migration</i>	<i>Current Job Abroad different from First Foreign Job</i>	<i>Related First and Current Job Abroad?</i>		
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>NA*</i>
Elementary school teacher				/
Folding towels; catcher of folded linens				/
Banquet server				/
Language teacher	Government school teacher	/		
Care provider	Resident care aid	/		
Housekeeping steward	Food handler culinary operations		/	
Staff nurse				/
Planning section; Engr department	Inventory executive		/	
Live-in caregiver				/
Home support health care for elderly				/

Production coordinator	Production manager	/		
Nursing assistant	Nursing assistant	/		
Admin clerk	Clerk (travel agency)	/		
Sales supervisor	Assistant chef		/	
Midwife	Staff nurse		/	
Accounting clerk				/
Caregiver				/
Office staff; clerk				/
Domestic helper	Domestic helper	/		
Accounting staff				/
Resort supervisor				/
<i>Grand Total</i> (% of N = 21)		6 (29%)	4 (19%)	11 (52)
<i>Total women economic migrants who changed jobs</i> (% of N = 10)		6 (60%)	4 (40%)	

*Has not changed jobs since first foreign job

These ten women economic migrants shifted jobs in favor of desired work terms, obviously better than their first foreign jobs. Two are only less than a year on their third foreign job, four have spent 4 to 6 years in their second foreign job, and four have been more than six years in their second foreign job (Table 12).

Sixth, geographical mobility opened an option to migrants who cannot conveniently assimilate in the first host country, or to migrants who are pulled to further destinations because of higher paying jobs and/or better socio-cultural environment. For 33 percent of the women economic migrants, the current host country is different from their first host country (Table 13).

Table 12. Job Mobility of Women Economic Migrants

<i>No. of Foreign Jobs ever Had</i>	<i>No. of Years in Current Job</i>								<i>Total</i>	
	<1		1-3		4-6		>6		F	%
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	1	5	3	14	3	14	4	19	11	52
2					4	19	4	19	8	38
3	2	9							2	9
<i>Total</i>	3	14	3	14	7	33	8	38	21	100

For 67 percent, there was no geographical mobility. They stayed in the same host country since first migration. The number of years in the original host country indicates the migrant's degree of adaptation (Hatton and Leigh 2007). It may also reflect the absence of alternative work opportunities.

Distance seemed not to come in the way for the geographical mobility of the women economic migrants. Women finds ways in order to defray moving-out expenses: few savings from a previous job, assistance from the new employer, help from the family back home, help from friends/relatives in either or both the past and current host countries.

Table 13. First Foreign Jobs vs Current Job Abroad

<i>First Work Abroad after Migration</i>	<i>First Host Country (First Job)</i>	<i>Current Host Country (Current Job)</i>	<i>First and Current Host Country the Same</i>	
			Yes	No
Elem school teacher	Kuwait	Kuwait	/	
Folding towels; catcher of folded linens	Hawaii, USA	Hawaii, USA	/	
Banquet server	Singapore	Singapore	/	
Language teacher	Thailand	Thailand	/	
Care provider	Hong Kong	Canada		/
Housekeeping steward	USA	USA	/	
Staff nurse	USA	USA	/	
Planning section, Engineering dept.	China	UAE		/
Line-in caregiver	Canada	Canada	/	
home support/health care for elderly	Canada	Canada	/	
Production coordinator (factory)	Panama	Nicaragua		/
Nursing assistant	Denmark	Spain		/
Admin clerk	Malaysia	Malaysia	/	
Sales supervisor	Kuwait	Cyprus		/
Midwife	Cyprus	England		/
Accounting clerk	UAE	UAE	/	
Caregiver	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	/	
Office staff	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	/	
Domestic helper	Bahrain	UAE		/

<i>First Work Abroad after Migration</i>	<i>First Host Country (First Job)</i>	<i>Current Host Country (Current Job)</i>	<i>First and Current Host Country the Same</i>	
Accounting staff	Cyprus	Cyprus	/	
Resort staff	Thailand	Thailand	/	
		<i>Total</i> <i>(% of N = 21)</i>	14 (67%)	7 (33%)

DOES EDUCATION MATCH CURRENT FOREIGN JOBS?

Data shows that the education-job match of the women economic migrants goes as low as 43 percent only (Table 14). The mismatch does not seem to bother the woman for as long as the pay is higher than what she can get with a Philippine job, and as long as she can regularly remit to her family.

There are four decision points that the woman economic migrant hurdles (Figure 1). First, will she get a Philippine job which will maximally utilize her academic preparation? Only 62 percent get a match. Second, once employed in the Philippines, it is most likely that her work experience is an entry

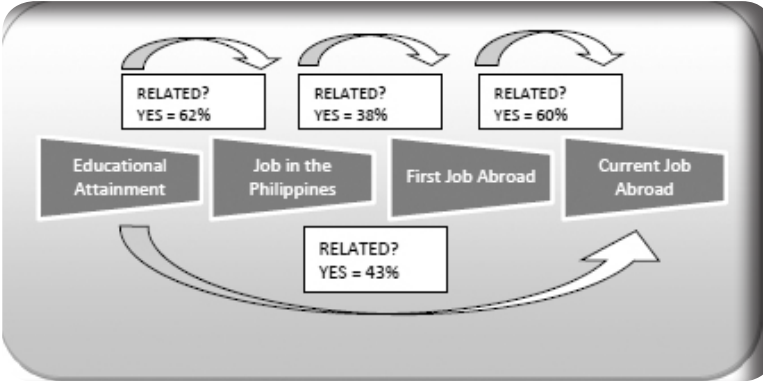
Table 14. The Migrant Workers' Education-Job Match

<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Current Work Abroad</i>	<i>Current Job in line with Education?</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
BS Education	Elementary school teacher	/	
AB Sociology	Folding towels; catcher of folded linens		/
BS Tourism, Restaurant and Hotel Management	Banquet server	/	
MA in Teaching (English)	Government school teacher	/	
BS Commerce	Resident care aide		/
BS Tourism, Restaurant and Hotel Management	Food handler (culinary operations)	/	
BS Nursing	Staff nurse	/	
BS Industrial Engineering	Inventory executive (Sales)		/
BSE (PEHM)	Live-in caregiver		/
BS Midwifery	Home support health care for elderly		/
BS Industrial Engineering	Production manager	/	

<i>Highest Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Current Work Abroad</i>	<i>Current Job in line with Education?</i>	
Associate in Computer Science	Nursing assistant (home care)		/
BS Biology	Travel agent		/
Caregiving course	Sales clerk		/
BS Midwifery	Staff nurse		/
BS Accountancy	Accounting clerk	/	
BS Business Management	Caregiver		/
BS Accountancy	Office staff; clerk	/	
BS Criminology	Domestic helper		/
BS Accountancy	Accounting staff	/	
BS Physical Therapy	Resort supervisor		/
<i>Total</i> <i>(% of N = 21)</i>		9 (43%)	12 (57%)

credential to a foreign job applied for. Will she take a foreign job that is related to her last Philippine job? The match goes lower to only 38 percent. At this point, the match is not very important for as long as she is able to leave and migrate.

Figure 1. The Women Economic Migrants' Education-Job Match: Eastern Visayan Experience, 2011



Abroad, she makes the third decision. While undergoing assimilation initiatives, she goes job searching. She is ready to accept the consequences of job quits and frictional unemployment, but with the expectation that the wage differential in the new foreign job is significant. The women economic migrants prepare for this eventuality. For those who changed jobs (N=10), the first and current

foreign job match is 60 percent. Did she think about the fourth match: the Philippine education – current foreign job match? This consideration seems unimportant. The match is low at only 43 percent. The human capital formation that happens in-between foreign jobs emerges as the more relevant “education” in the education- current foreign job match.

NARROWING THE EDUCATION-JOB MISMATCH AMONG WOMEN ECONOMIC MIGRANTS

One major motivation in the choice of specialization for a college degree is the probability of getting a foreign job. This motivation is true not only for the woman economic migrant but similarly for her family/household who makes the joint decision for her education and migration. An understanding of the international labor market influences the choices of college degrees to pursue. However, the time lapsed to finish a degree course coupled with the length of time for the migration process to complete, may find the woman economic migrant looking at a different international labor market scenario when her time to leave for the host country materializes.

Once in the host country, she takes capacity building measures/initiatives that will allow her to approximate the skills required of the best possible foreign job that she can get. At this stage, she may have gotten far from the skills she acquired from her Philippine education.

The job-matching theories describe how having an education-job match is beneficial to both the employer and the workers (Wefhorst 2002 as cited in Boudarbat and Chernoff 2009). For the employers, a good match means higher labor productivity and increased returns to the firm that are translated to better work terms for the workers. For the latter, a good match will mean greater work satisfaction and motivation to become more productive. Consequently, higher incomes will translate to improved social protection for the women economic migrants and their families. It is imperative, therefore, to be able to narrow the education-job mismatch that results from migration. That is, to align acquired and required competences in the foreign job so as to avoid worse employment conditions (Sicherman 1991 as cited in Iammarino and Marinelli 2014).

Since new women economic migrants are less likely able to use their pre-migration education/skills in their first foreign jobs compared to those with longer migration history, then the role of social networks becomes crucial. The networks are sources of information, hastens migrant integration and assimilation, and strengthens socialization and social protection.

Continuing human capital development in order to align own competences with and respond to the diversified economic and market structures in the host country is another step towards closing the education-job

gap. Retooling and further skills training at the host country may be costly but that is the way to go, particularly in cases when there is the lack of recognition of pre-migration education and work experience by foreign employers.

Another measure is to monitor for gender inequalities and discrimination in the labor market of host countries as this may possibly cause the education-job mismatch. Studies have shown that migrant women from the peripheries are most vulnerable in industrialized economies (Morokvasic 1984 as cited in Leontiyeva 2014). Updated sex-disaggregated migration statistics will have to be maintained and used in decision-making by policymakers and program developers.

The women economic migrants in the study are all aware that despite the joint family decision and careful understanding of the targeted international labor market vis-à-vis the college course to be completed, the diploma is not an assurance of success in the host country. Nevertheless, they are willing to enhance their post-migration experience, their assimilation/integration, and their competences in order to catch-up with and match the host country's job requirements and the corresponding economic structures.

More than these, it is crucial to review Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) between countries and use these to address education-job mismatch. National governments may not come to the negotiating table without the professional organizations whose role is important in setting clear rules for licensing, skills assessments, and the transfer of skills and experiences across borders. The mutual recognition of the qualifications and competences of the economic migrants is expected to assist in facilitating labor mobility, in particular, and improve the human capital base of an economy, in general. This makes the analysis of MRAs and other forms of multilateral and bilateral agreements (with their associated problems and concerns) as one research area to pursue, towards helping Filipino professional economic migrants get the best labor value of their time in host countries.

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