

**The consequences of overseas employment
of parents on the educational success
of Filipino children**

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This paper examines the role of overseas employment on the educational success of Filipino children. It is particularly interesting to examine how the increasingly more common family structure characterized by a combination of solo and overseas parenting determines children's educational attainment and school engagement. What makes this investigation more salient is that at least 30% of Filipino children have at least one parent overseas and consequently many Filipino children grow up in one-parent households that are either headed by the mother because father is an overseas contract worker (OCW), or headed by the father because the mother is an OCW.

Numerous investigations have shown that children who grow up in one-parent families are more likely to have lower educational attainment than children who grow up in intact families. The primary mechanism hypothesized to account for this influence is the insecure economic position associated with living in single-parent families. Another possible reason this type of family structure affects children's educational outcomes is reduced parental involvement, brought about by the absence of one or both parents from the household. If the number of parents in the household is the key factor that determines children's educational success, then children who live with either the mother or father only (other parent is an OCW) should have similar educational success. If, on the other hand, the quality of parent-child interaction is the critical factor, then educational success could differ for children who grow up in different family structures resulting from the overseas employment of either the father or the mother.

Using Philippines data we examine the consequence of overseas employment of parents on the educational success of children 10-21 years old. The survey was conducted in four of the primary OCW sending areas in the Philippines: City of Manila, Davao City, Iloilo City and Pangasinan. Respondents in this study had to fit the following criteria. All children had to have two surviving parents. Children for whom one or both parents had been overseas for at least three consecutive years were interviewed, as were children for whom neither parent was overseas. Children who had one or both parents abroad, but whose parents had left more recently were not interviewed. The total sample is broken down as follows: 1086 children with neither parent abroad; 467 children whose mothers were abroad; 493 children whose fathers were overseas; and 61 children with both parents abroad.

With this data we ask the following research questions: Are there differences in the educational success of children who grow up in households in which one or both parents are OCWs? Are school-related parenting practices different in these types of households? What coping strategies do different families adopt? Overseas employment

of parents certainly has economic benefits for the family, but the consequences on children's development and well-being are less clear and this study seeks to contribute to this literature.