

REPOA Brief



Gender equality and women's empowerment: The unintended consequence of women's access to the labour market

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Women tends to spend more time on unpaid productive activities, while men do the same on paid productive activities because of differentiated gender roles.

Women's burden on paid productive activities decreases for those with partners, while increasing on unpaid productive activities. To the contrary, men's burden on paid productive activities increases, while decreasing on unpaid productive activities

The use of modern domestic appliances is a necessity rather than luxury as men who are already overburdened by paid productive activities cannot help the overburdened women on unpaid productive activities.

Introduction

Gender inequality is one of the main challenges facing the world because of discriminatory social structures and norms. Gender disparity is often socially constructed, crystallised as natural, and favours men in all domains of human life. For example, more men than women perform paid productive activities, while more women than men perform unpaid productive activities than men.

According to the International Classification Activities for Time - Use Statistics 2016, examples of paid productive activities, also adopted in Systems of National Accounts (SNA) include employment in corporations, government and private institutions, and the production of goods for their final use. Also, the unpaid productive activities (extended definition in SNA) comprised unpaid domestic and caregiving services for household members. Examples of unpaid domestic services are preparing meals, cleaning, repairing, washing, shopping, and the like, and unpaid caregiving services includes childcare and instruction, care for dependent adults, and accompanying children and dependent adults.

The analysis indicated that more men occupy most top leadership positions, own more assets, are more educated, employed in the formal sector, and make key decisions than women. However, most women perform a critical role in social development through extended productive activities. This contribution is also very important to society, but it is not well recognised or valued.

There have been concerted efforts to address this imbalance at the international, regional, national, and local levels. Despite the achievements such as the increasing net girls' enrolment in basic education, many women are still facing challenges such as inability to allocate their time fairly. The main reason for such challenges is the intrahousehold decision-making dynamics influenced by gender roles.

Various time-use surveys reveal participation differences between men and women in performing activities, and some of these attempted to precisely identify their burden. In Tanzania, a time use module was included for the first time in the Integrated Labour Force Survey (ILFS), and Household Budget Survey (HBS) in 2006 and 2017, respectively. However, subsequent time use analyses have excluded a workload limit. Therefore, this policy brief compares the relative workloads of women and men based on a workload limit of 10:30 hours a day according to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)¹ to inform the gender related policies.

¹ WEAI is the survey-based index crafted to directly measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in all domains, including agriculture.

Methodology

Secondary data collected by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Tanzania were analysed to compare the workload of men and women. The data were collected from 11,474 household members aged 5 years and above, but the usable sample was 9,875 household members. The data were analysed using simple descriptive means based on frequency, crosstabulation, and the independent-samples T-test. A simple majority of respondents (56%) were women. A larger proportion of respondents lived in rural areas. Two-thirds of respondents (64%) had primary education, while very few (4%) had post-secondary education. Two-thirds (67%) were aged below 36 years, while youth constituted close to half of the sample (45%). Two-fifths (40%) were married, and another two-fifths (42%) never married.

Findings

A crosstabulation analysis revealed that, first, for combined paid and unpaid productive activities, more women (58%) than men (42%) exceeded the workload limit in a day. Of these, women with partners were more likely to exceed this limit than their male counterparts (see Table 1). Similarly, women without partners were more likely to exceed than their male counterparts (see Table 2). Women with partners were more likely to exceed than those without partners, while this was the opposite of the men with and without partners (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1. Comparison between men and women with partners in spending time on paid and unpaid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	50	50
Exceeded	41	59

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Table 2. Comparison between men and women without partners in spending time on paid and unpaid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	45	55
Exceeded	44	56

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Second, for paid productive activities only, the analysis showed that more men (77%) than women (23%) exceeded the workload limit. Further, as Table 3 shows, most men with partners exceeded their workload limit compared to their female counterparts, while two-thirds of men without partners exceeded theirs, and one-third of their female counterparts did exceed (see Table 4). Women with partners who exceeded their workload limit were two times less than those without partners (see again Tables 3 and 4). In contrast, more men with partners exceeded their workload limit than those without partners (see once again Table 3 and 4).

Table 3. Comparison between men and women with partners in spending time on paid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	42	56
Exceeded	84	16

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Table 4. Comparison between men and women without partners in spending time on paid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	44	56
Exceeded	64	36

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Finally, for unpaid productive activities only, fewer men (21%) than women (79%) exceeded the workload limit. In addition, as Table 5 shows, most women with partners exceeded their workload limits, while one in ten men with partners exceeded it. Likewise, two-thirds of women without partners exceeded their workload limit, while one-third of their male counterparts exceeded it (see Table 6). Again, as Tables 5 and 6 depict, more women with partners exceeded their workload limit than those without partners. On the contrary, men with partners who exceeded their workload limit were four times less than those without partners (see again Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Comparison between men and women with partners in spending time on unpaid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	49	51
Exceeded	10	90

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Table 6. Comparison between men and women without partners in spending time on unpaid productive activities

Workload limit	Gender	
	Male	Female
Not exceeded	45	55
Exceeded	38	62

Source: ILFS data, 2021

As Tables 7 and 8 depict, whether living with a partner or not, men's mean time spent on performing paid productive activities was higher than women's mean time. From a different perspective, the mean time differences between men and women with partners spent on paid productive activities and unpaid productive activities were large, while those without partners were medium. The mean time differences spent on paid productive activities and unpaid productive activities combined by men and women regardless of their marital status were small. All mean time differences were statistically significant.

Table 7. A series of independent-sample T-test results of respondents with partners

Activities	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df.	T	P	es
SNA	Men	2194959	425.71	264.245	4305288.371	932.321	.001	.875
	Women	2446832	213.23	221.935				
Extended SNA	Men	2194959	72.24	140.756	4465475.259	-	.001	-
	Women	2446832	337.44	192.407		1706.348		1.560
SNA & Extended SNA	Men	2194959	497.95	220.086	4325303.854	-276.714	.001	-.260
	Women	2446832	550.67	186.615				

Note. N = Sample, SD = Standard Deviation, Df. = Degree of freedom, T = T-Test coefficient, P = confidence level, and es = effect size.

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Table 8. A series of independent-sample T-test results of respondents without partners

Activities	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df.	T	P	es
SNA	Men	2546273	212	254.489	4937975.264	351.989	.001	.303
	Women	3114305	141.84	211.026				
Extended SNA	Men	2546273	120.84	156.925	5561789.928	-	.001	-.563
	Women	3114305	212.68	168.039		670.971		
SNA & Extended SNA	Men	2546273	332.84	244.635	5371356.498	-	.001	-.090
	Women	3114305	212.68	168.039		106.340		

Activities	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df.	T	P	es
	Women	3114305	354.52	237.266				

Note. N = Sample, SD = Standard Deviation, Df. = Degree of freedom, T = T-Test coefficient, P = confidence level, and es = effect size.

Source: ILFS data, 2021

Conclusions and recommendations

Gender roles influence the amount of time women spend on unpaid productive activities and men on paid productive activities. Women who are already overburdened increase their workload when joining the labour market for two reasons. First, constructed gender roles prevent many men from assuming housework and caregiving responsibilities. Second, some men who might be ready to help women are already overburdened with the paid productive activities.

It is therefore recommended that: first, households should increase the use of modern domestic appliances to give more time to women to conduct paid productive activities. In connection with that, the government should make such appliances affordable through, for example, reducing tax, and ensuring electricity is readily available, reliable and affordable to the majority of households. Second, gender equality awareness campaigns should increase, using traditional and contemporary communication channels and social media. Finally, the government and other stakeholders should improve the environment of child day-care services and facilities in the country to allow mothers to participate more effectively in paid activities in the labour market.

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