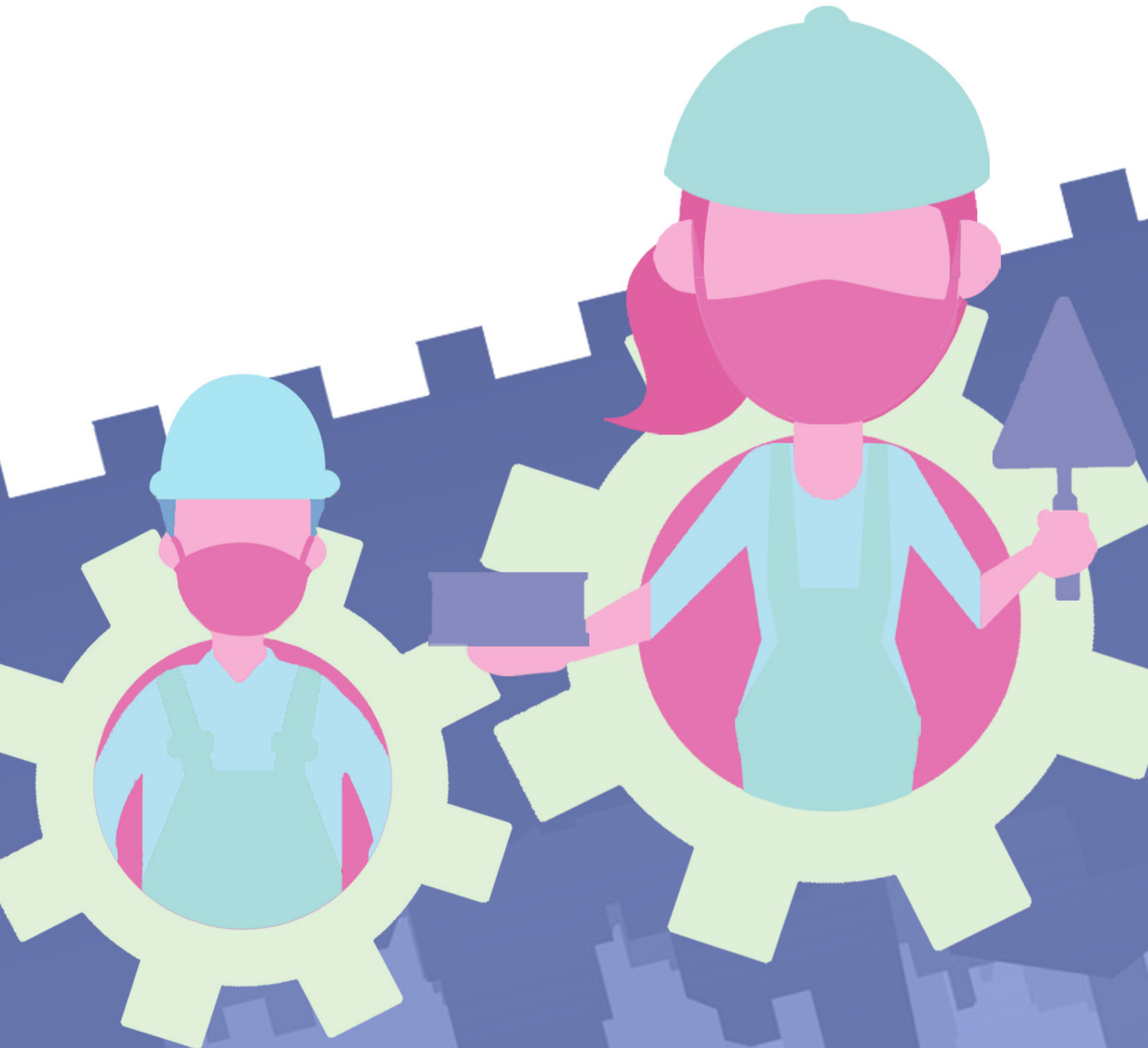


# OSH practices during the Philippine Enhanced Community Quarantine Operations

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**Introduction**

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is an oft-neglected labor framework that has visibly become central in efforts to counter the negative impacts of pandemics to the working class and the labor sector. The implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) by the Philippine government has not only resulted in labor displacement of countless informal sector workers (e.g. drivers of public transport vehicles, domestic workers, and vendors) but has also exacerbated inadequate labor conditions in the formal sector.

In order to protect workers from contracting COVID-19, companies continuing their operations during the pandemic must necessarily improve OSH standards in the workplace. These companies include “essential” services as defined by the Philippine Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) such as government offices, hospitals, factories, food delivery services, restaurants, supermarkets. As essential as these industries may be, proper implementation and modification of these standards remain lacking.

The objectives of this study are to (1) describe the changes and circumstances faced by workers affected by the pandemic with regard to OSH and (2) determine appropriate policies to address OSH deficits during and after the pandemic.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the methodology; Section 3 presents the responses to the survey and estimation results; and Section 4 concludes the paper.

**Methodology**

Data is gathered through a survey covering 600 workers across the Philippines between 15 May 2020 and 3 June 2020. Respondents were asked about their perception of their occupational safety and health in their workplaces. The online questionnaire used in the survey contains three parts: (1) demographic profile, (2) self-rating of OSH situation, and (3) perceived gaps in OSH standards in the workplace.

The survey covered 600 workers across all regions in the country. Ten (10) focus group discussions were also conducted by the research team to supplement the survey results with qualitative findings and to further explain the direction of the responses.

Using the data gathered from the survey, summaries of the responses were computed and statistical tests were conducted to scientifically interpret the responses and possible relationships between groups. Several ordered logit models are estimated to analyze the survey responses with the demographic variables serving as independent variables. In general, a logit model takes the following form:

$$\text{logit}(\pi_i) = \ln\left(\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}\right) = \mathbf{x}'\boldsymbol{\beta} + \epsilon_i$$

where  $\boldsymbol{\beta}$  is a vector of parameters that needs to be estimated and  $\epsilon_i$  is the error term. In the equation above,  $\pi_i$  is the probability of occurrence of an event. The term  $\frac{\pi_i}{1 - \pi_i}$  is the odds ratio of the event occurring. If the odds ratio is less than 1, then the probability that an event occurs is less than 50 percent. The probability  $\pi_i$  can be obtained by algebraic manipulation as

$$\pi_i = \frac{e^{\mathbf{x}'\boldsymbol{\beta}}}{1 + e^{\mathbf{x}'\boldsymbol{\beta}}}$$

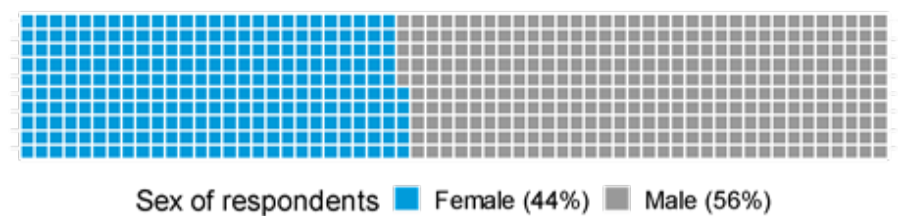
An ordered logit model is used when choices have hierarchy or sequential order. In the second part of the questionnaire used in the survey, the respondents were asked to rate the statements about OSH using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree. These choices are ordered, hence, an ordered logit model is appropriate.

**Survey Responses and Estimation Results**

**A. Demographic Distribution**

Of the 600 workers surveyed, the ratio of male to female respondents is 56:44 as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Respondents by sex



Source: Based on survey responses

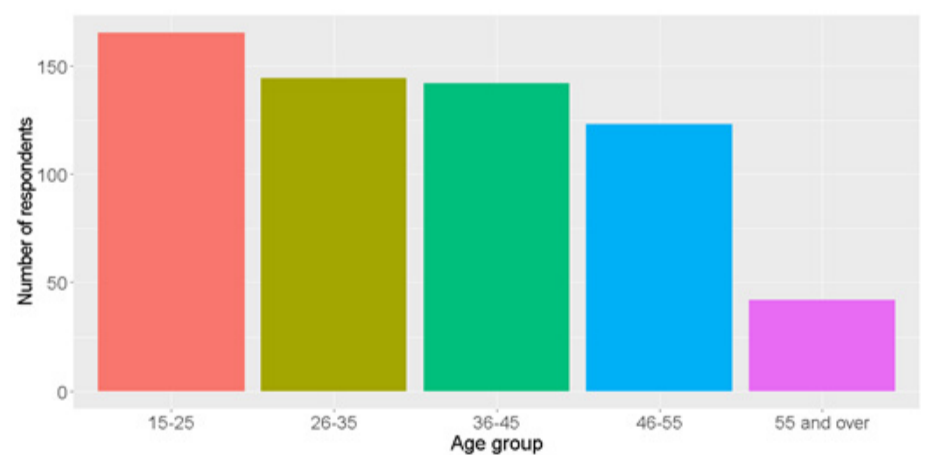
The geographic distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1. The regions with the biggest share in the respondents are: National Capital Region (NCR), Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (CALABARZON), Central Luzon (Region 3), Central Visayas (Region 7), and Davao Region (Region 11).

Region	Responses	Share (%)
Region 1	5	1
Region 2	5	1
Region 3	75	12
CALABARZON	95	16
MIMAROPA	9	2
Region 5	22	4
Region 6	25	4
Region 7	66	11
Region 8	7	1
Region 9	13	2
Region 10	19	3
Region 11	55	9
Region 12	15	2
CARAGA	5	1
BARMM	1	0
CAR	4	1
NCR	179	30

Source: Based on survey responses

Figure 2 presents the distribution of respondents by age bracket. The biggest group of respondents belong to age brackets 15-25 and 26-35. These two groups constitute 51 percent of the respondents. The age bracket 15-25 is commonly referred to as the youth sector, although trade unions extend the coverage of the youth sector to at most 35 years of age.

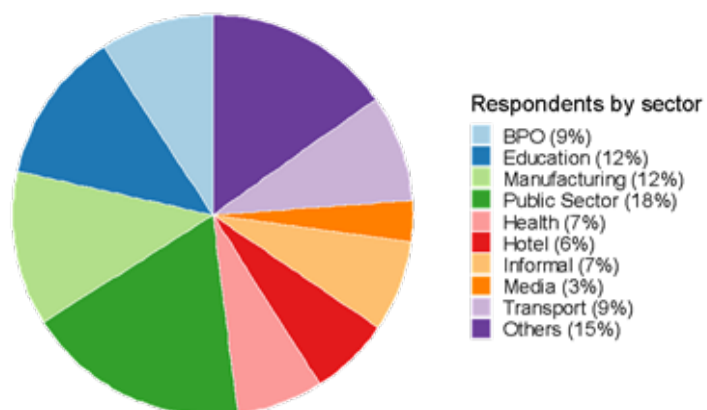
Figure 2. Respondents by age bracket



Source: Based on survey responses

Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents by economic sector. Workers from the public sector (i.e. national government agencies, local government units, government-owned and controlled corporations, and state colleges and universities) account for 18 percent of the respondents while the rest of the respondents are employed in the private sector. Informal sector workers account for 7 percent of the respondents while transport workers account for 9 percent.

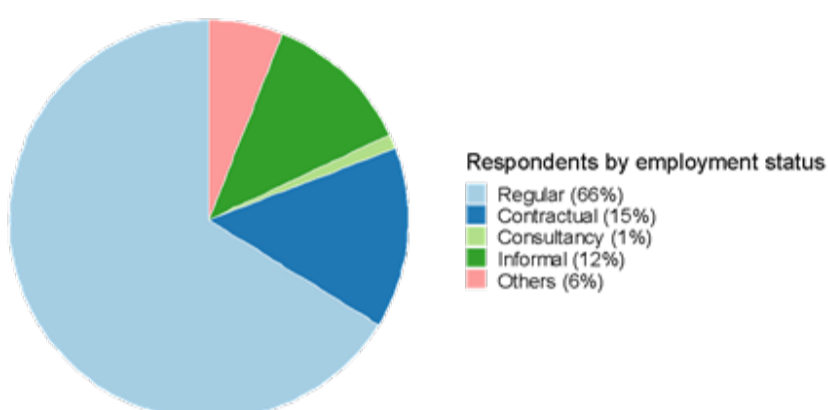
Figure 3. Respondents by sector



Source: Based on survey responses

Respondents are also classified according to their employment status. As described in Figure 4, regular workers constitute 66 percent of the respondents; contractual workers, 15 percent; and informal sector workers 12 percent. Workers under consultancy arrangement are only 1 percent of the respondents while 6 percent are workers in other work arrangements.

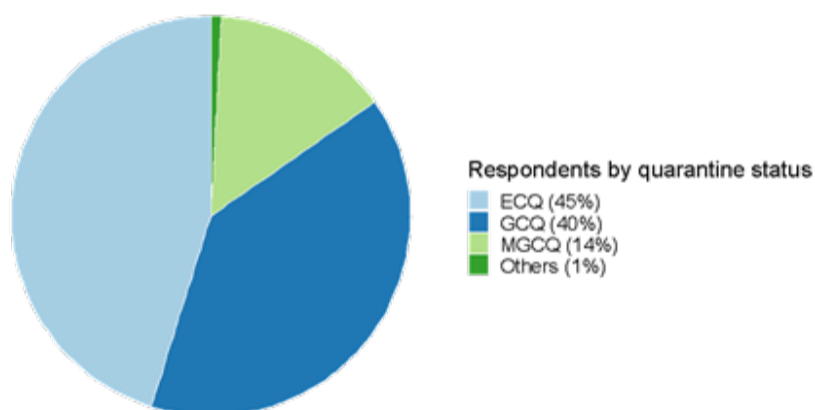
Figure 4. Respondents by employment status



Source: Based on survey responses

The respondents were also asked about the quarantine status in their areas of residence. The results are presented in Figure 5, wherein 45 percent of respondents were under the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), 40 percent were under general community quarantine (GCQ) and 14 percent were under modified GCQ (MGCQ) when they answered the questionnaire.

Figure 5. Respondents by quarantine status

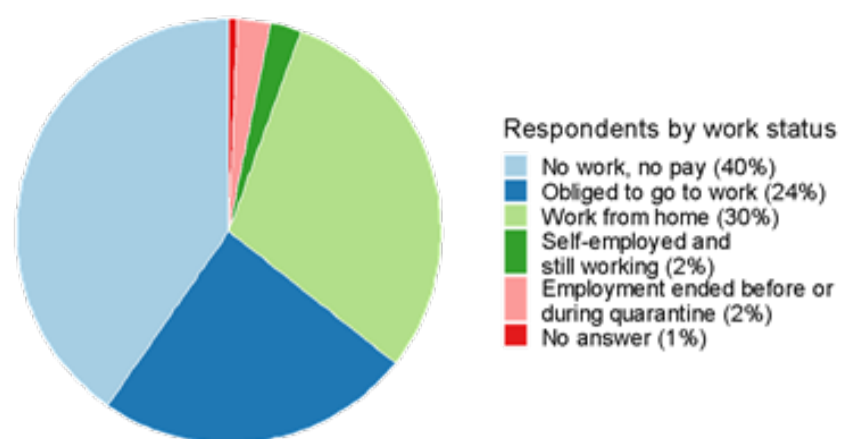


Source: Based on survey responses

The distribution of respondents in terms of work status is presented in Figure 6. 40 percent of the respondents are under no-work-no-pay arrangements, 24 percent of the respondents are those who are still required to work, while 30 percent of the respondents are under work-from-home (WFH) arrangement.

Table 2 presents work arrangements by economic sector. No-work-no-pay arrangements are most common in manufacturing and hotels. Predictably, informal sector public transport workers are also under no-work-no-pay arrangements. Due to the nature of the health crisis, responses of health sector workers confirmed that they are required to go to work. A significant percentage of workers in the public sector and media are also obliged to work. In manufacturing, 1 in 5 workers is required to work. Meanwhile, the work-from-home arrangement is common in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), education sector, public sector, and media.

Figure 6. Respondents by work arrangement



Source: Based on survey responses

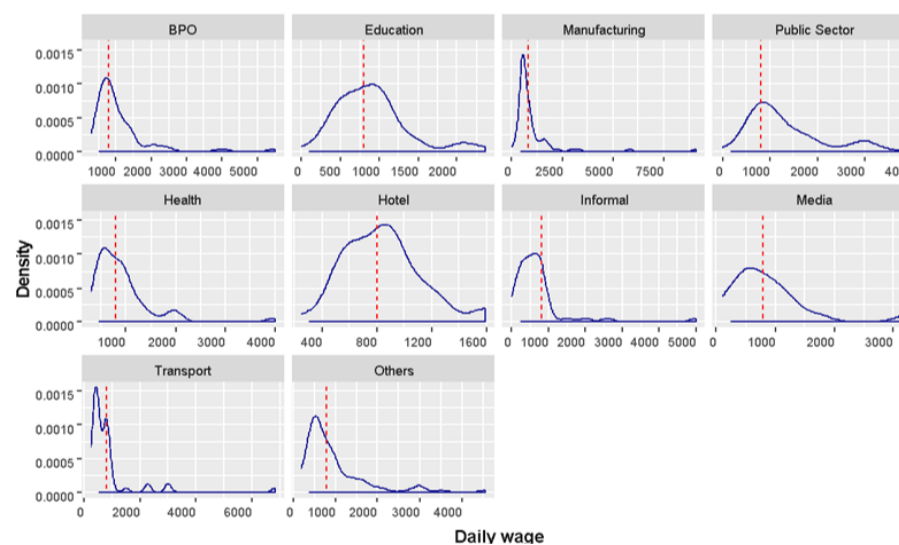
Table 2. Work arrangement in economic sectors (percent)

Sector	No work, no pay	Obligated to go to work	Work from home	Self-employed and still working	Employment ended before or during quarantine	No answer
BPO	38.2	5.5	52.7	1.8	1.8	0.0
Education	27.0	6.8	60.8	0.0	5.4	0.0
Manufacturing	70.7	20.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	1.3
Public Sector	7.4	43.5	48.1	0.0	0.9	0.0
Health	26.2	66.7	4.8	2.4	0.0	0.0
Hotel	79.5	5.1	0.0	2.6	5.1	7.7
Informal	63.6	9.1	11.4	11.4	4.5	0.0
Media	0.0	50.0	45.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Transport	73.1	9.6	9.6	3.8	3.8	0.0
Others	35.2	27.5	34.1	1.1	2.2	0.0

Source: Based on survey responses

Figure 7 presents the wages of the respondents by economic sector. The density plots represent the distribution of responses for each of the values in the x-axis. The x-axes of density plots in Figure 7 are daily wages declared by the respondents while the y-axes are probabilities for every unity in the x-axis. The broken vertical lines indicate the median daily wage reported by the respondents, i.e. the median wage is the value below which 50 percent of the responses fall. Density plots in Figure 7 are mostly skewed to the left, which infers that wages tend to be low in all sectors. Despite this, most of the sectors have outliers, i.e. a small number of respondents report daily wages above what typical workers earn.

Figure 7. Density plots of daily wage of respondents



Source: Based on survey responses

**B. Statements Concerning OSH**

The second part of the questionnaire asks respondents to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements describing the state of OSH that they experience or observe in their workplaces. These are the six statements presented to the respondents:

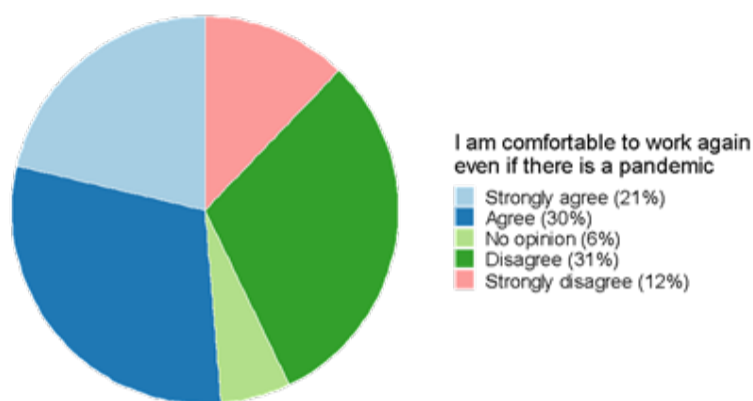
- Statement 1: I am comfortable to work again even if there is a pandemic.
- Statement 2: It will not be difficult to travel or commute as we go to work
- Statement 3: Our company has guidelines for safety and health as we go back to work.
- Statement 4: I am afraid to lose my job or livelihood so I will work even if there is a pandemic.
- Statement 5: Going to work is not a problem to me as long as we have clear policies on how to avoid getting infected or spreading the virus. There is a possibility that we can get sick with COVID-19 at work



The responses to each of these statements are discussed below.

*Statement 1: I am comfortable to work again even if there is a pandemic.* Figure 8 presents the responses to on Statement 1. Slightly more than half of the respondents or 51 percent expressed agreement to Statement 1 while less than half or 43 percent of the respondents expressed their disagreement. Significantly, 20 percent of the respondents who are comfortable in working again even in time of pandemic work in the public sector, and 28 percent of them are from the National Capital (NCR) although for NCR, the number of those who expressed agreement (48 percent) with the statement is only slightly higher than the number of those who disagreed (45 percent). Meanwhile, expressing disagreement are respondents from Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), education, food manufacturing, Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOC-Cs) and media, which have more respondents in this study.

Figure 8. Responses to Statement 1



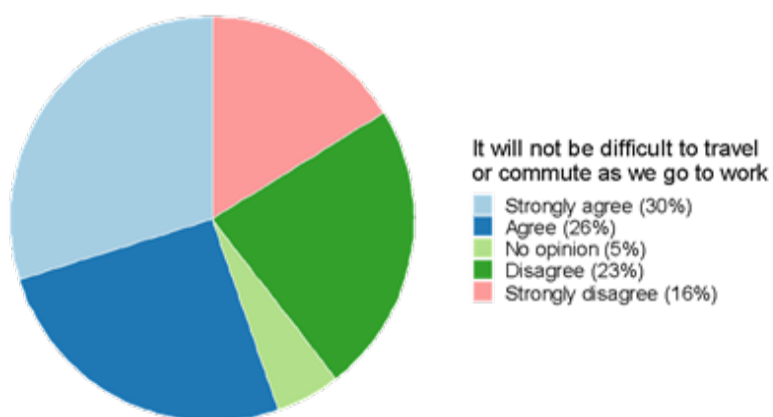
Source: Based on survey responses

It is also observed that as earnings of respondents increase, the odds that they feel less comfortable to work again under the pandemic also increases. Regular workers also tend to reject the statement. Meanwhile, among older respondents, more tended to accept the statement, indicating that they were more comfortable working again despite the ongoing pandemic.

Based on the focus group discussions (FGDs), some workers who own means of transportation are more comfortable going back to work. Additional allowance, shuttle service, and clear health protocols at work also reinforce workers' feeling of security as they return to work. Meanwhile, among the factors that cause discomfort among workers are the non-testing of employees returning to work and the risks faced by those who commute to and from work.

*Statement 2: It will not be difficult to travel or commute as we go to work*

Figure 9. Responses to statement 2



Source: Based on survey responses

For statement 2, more than half of the respondents think that commuting to and from work will not be difficult. Except for respondents from Region 3, most respondents across all regions are generally comfortable commuting to and from work. Respondents working in BPOs, education, health, media as well as workers in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) tend to think that commuting and traveling to work will be more difficult because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

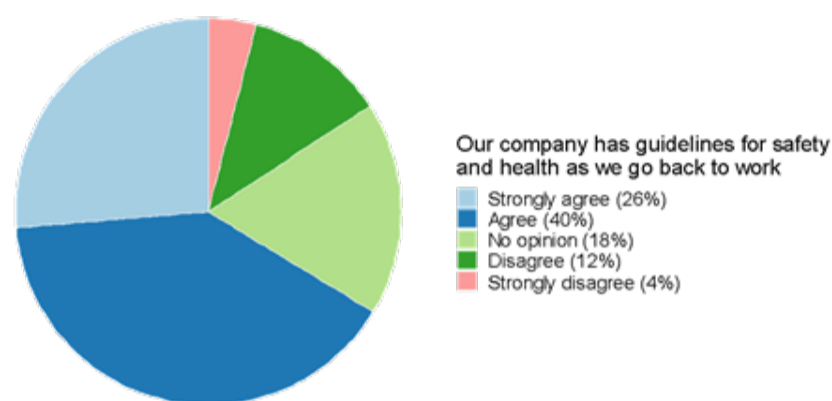
Older respondents tend to accept Statement 2 ("It will not be difficult to travel or commute as we go to work"). Aside from older respondents, workers under no-work-no-pay arrangements likewise agree that commuting to and from work will not be difficult. Based on FGDs, some com-

panies and local government units (LGUs) have provided shuttle service for their workers. Some workers drive their own vehicles to and from work.

*Statement 3: Our company has guidelines for safety and health as we go back to work*

As presented in Figure 10, a majority of the respondents (66 percent) believe that their companies have existing guidelines for safety and health. This is true for the majority of respondents in all the sectors covered by the survey. Be it merely a perception or fact, the presence of guidelines on safety and health likely explain why more of the respondents (40 percent) are comfortable to work in time of the pandemic.

Figure 10. Responses to statement 3



Source: Based on survey responses

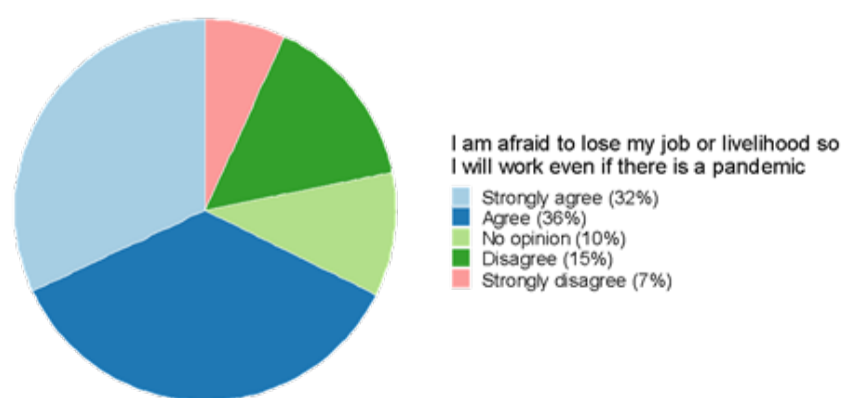
Public sector workers tend to accept Statement 3 which implies that guidelines for safety and health at work already exist in government agencies, local government units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs). However, based on the focus group discussions (FGDs), some Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officials have had to formulated their own health and safety protocols based on guidelines issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease (or IATF for short) in the absence of common guidelines from their respective LGUs.

According to FGD participants, some workers who engage infield work remain wary of exposure to the virus even when the company has adopted health guidelines including the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) because there is no assurance that clients in the field are not infected or exposed to infection. Some are worried because of misinformation and the belief that COVID-19 is airborne. It is therefore important that companies continuously inform workers about the guidelines by posting their health protocols in visible areas in the workplace.

*Statement 4: I am afraid to lose my job or livelihood so I will work even if there is a pandemic*

Based on responses presented in Figure 11, respondents value their jobs and livelihood highly despite the threat on health caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the respondents (68 percent) expressed their fear of losing their job and source of income.

Figure 11. Responses to statement 4



Source: Based on survey responses

Workers in large enterprises, older respondents, and workers under no-work-no-pay arrangement are forced to go to work in fear of losing their livelihood. Meanwhile, workers in ECQ areas tend to disagree with this statement.

Based on FGDs, it is important to note that some workers who are sick may still force themselves to work especially when they are under no-work-no-pay arrangement.

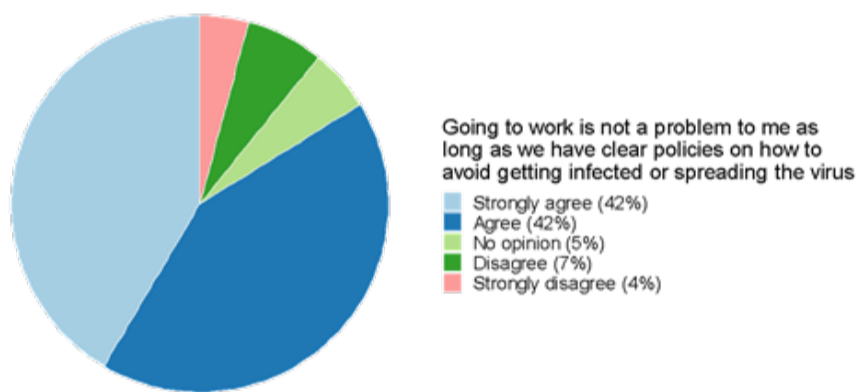
Meanwhile, transport workers suffered from reduced earnings because of a sharp decrease in the number of passengers for every trip. With reduced income, there is a likelihood that transport workers break regulations especially when they do not receive adequate financial support to compensate for their losses in income.

Hotels fall into the tourism sector which is severely hit by the crisis. Reports that big hotels will retrench thousands of workers because of the pandemic worry workers in the hotel industry.

Respondents are also wary about rumors on retrenchment in some hospitals, which are the most essential establishments in the pandemic. Participants of the FGDs think that the spreading of such rumors, if not threats, is a way of sending an adverse signal to unions that are preparing to enter into negotiations for renewal or new Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). This is because unions are expected to be more persistent and assertive in pursuing benefits, especially increases in hazard pay and higher salary for health workers in light of their working conditions during the pandemic.

*Statement 5: Going to work is not a problem to me as long as we have clear policies on how to avoid getting infected or spreading the virus*  
An overwhelming majority of the respondents think that as long as there are policies to avoid the spread of the virus, then continuing to work will not be a problem. As shown in Figure 12, 84 percent of the respondents agree with Statement 5 while only 11 percent disagree. This result shows that for most respondents, clear policies on avoiding the spread of COVID-19 are an imperative to return to work.

Figure 12. Responses to statement 5



Source: Based on survey responses

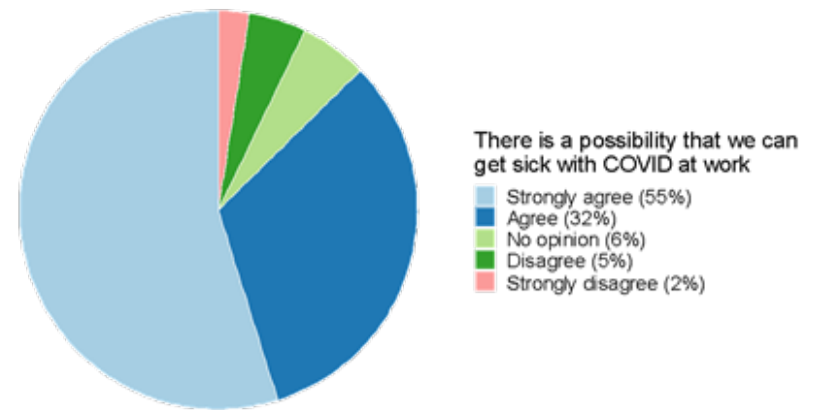
Workers in large enterprises and older workers accept Statement 5, agreeing that going to work is not a problem so long as there are clear policies for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission. According to the FGDs, there are instances when the guidelines are issued late, while conflicting guidelines issued by several layers of the government recklessly cause confusion.

*Statement 6: There is a possibility that we can get sick with COVID-19 at work*

Respondents are fully aware of the possibility that they can contract COVID-19 disease at work as shown in Figure 13. Workers in large enterprises agree that it is possible to acquire COVID-19 disease at work. Based on the FGDs, the fear of contracting COVID-19 is more pronounced among health and care workers. Health workers are also worried that shuttle services of hospitals can become hotspots of COVID-19 transmission.

Sangguniang Kabataan officials are likewise concerned about contracting the illness especially because it remains untenable to completely cease face-to-face communication with their constituents, some of whom do not have adequate access to personal hygiene. Media workers are also aware of the risks they face at work. In particular, field workers in the media industry are among the most exposed to the risk of acquiring COVID-19.

Figure 13. Responses to statement 6



Source: Based on survey responses

### C. Willingness to work in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

Agreement and disagreement with Statement 1 (“I am comfortable to work again even if there is a pandemic.”) indicate willingness and reluctance of respondents to work in time of the health crisis.

Table 3 presents the share of responses in Statement 1 given that they agreed to the other statements. It is important to note that while 87 percent of the respondents are aware of the risk of acquiring COVID-19 at work (Figure 13), based on responses on Statement 1, workers seem to have no choice but to go to work so they can continue to earn. In fact, even among those who are aware of these risks, slightly more than half (53.6 percent) still feel comfortable working again even with the pandemic (Table 3). Meanwhile,

Table 3. Responses on statement 1 given that the respondents expressed agreement with a given statement

Response	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6
Agree	75.6%	59.5%	62.3%	56.1%	53.6%
Disagree	20.2%	34.9%	32.5%	38.2%	41.4%

Source: Based on survey responses

An ordered logit model is estimated to identify the relationship between the willingness of respondents to work again and their responses to the other questions. In this model, apart from demographic variables, the responses of respondents on statements 2-6 are used as explanatory variables (agreeq2, agreeq3, agreeq4, agreeq5, agreeq6). The responses to these statements are expressed as binary variables that take a value of 1 when a respondent expressed agreement (agree or strongly agree), and 0 when otherwise.

Table 4. Determinants of willingness to work

VARIABLES	q1	odds ratio
Reg	0.034 (0.183)	1.034 (0.189)
ln_wage	0.125 (0.126)	1.134 (0.143)
Size	0.172 (0.165)	1.188 (0.196)
Public	0.092 (0.224)	1.097 (0.245)
age	-0.035*** (0.008)	0.965*** (0.00742)
male	-0.134 (0.160)	0.874 (0.140)
regular	0.456** (0.182)	1.577** (0.287)
nowork	0.019 (0.176)	1.019 (0.180)
ecq	0.035 (0.173)	1.036 (0.179)
agreeq2	-1.872*** (0.193)	0.154*** (0.0297)
agreeq3	-0.042 (0.182)	0.959 (0.174)
agreeq4	-0.574*** (0.187)	0.563*** (0.106)
agreeq5	-0.723*** (0.241)	0.485*** (0.117)
agreeq6	0.237 (0.243)	1.268 (0.308)
/cut1	-3.738*** (0.869)	0.0238*** (0.0207)
/cut2	-1.935** (0.861)	0.144** (0.124)
/cut3	-1.583* (0.860)	0.205* (0.177)
/cut4	0.658 (0.855)	1.930 (1.651)
Observations	596	596

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Source: Author's calculation



Based on the estimates presented in Table 4, factors that significantly determine willingness to work are the respondent’s views about commuting not being difficult (agree2), the fear of losing work (agree4), and the importance of clear policies to prevent infection and spread of COVID-19 (agree5).

Respondents who affirm all these variables are inclined to comfortably go back to work. Effectively, these workers take the risk of acquiring the disease because they highly value their job. Based on the FGDs, many workers are already required to go to work. This is true especially for many public and private sector workers whose jobs are essential as appraised by the IATF.

For many workers, it is investable that they return to work. Appropriate policies must therefore be implemented to minimize occupational safety and health risks that they face.

**D. OSH Measures Adopted by Workers and Employers During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The final part of the survey covers specific measures that workers and employers are adopting in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents were asked five questions and they chose items in a list that apply to them and their workplace.

The first question focuses on the adjustments that respondents chose to adopt as they returned to work.

Table 5 enumerates the preventive and safety measures respondents take as they return to work. Most of the respondents (69 percent) will take self-prepared food to work. To travel to and from work, almost 60 percent of the respondents will try to persuade their employers to provide transportation for them. Meanwhile, 45 percent will increase their budget for transportation, because they assume that fares would be higher due to limited public transportation. Additionally, 45 percent are willing to lessen time for sleep and rest to wake up earlier, expecting longer travel time to and from work.

Based on discussions in the FGDs, some workers are already prepared to bring their own disinfectants to sanitize equipment shared by multiple workers. Likewise, workers who are under work-from-home arrangements are required to set up internet connections to be able to work from home. Such accommodations incur additional costs for workers, which may in turn decrease their disposable income.

Table 5. Adjustments that respondents will take as they continue to work during the pandemic

Responses	All	Without transport and informal sector
I'll wake up earlier for a longer commute	45.3%	46.0%
I'll limit my carpool passengers / co-riders	39.2%	36.9%
I'll buy my own bike/motorcycle/car	27.7%	28.4%
We'll lobby to the company our own company transportation service	59.7%	62.5%
I'll add more budget for transportation expenses	45.3%	46.6%
I'll cook my own lunch/snacks for work	68.8%	68.8%
I'll still buy and eat food from the canteen	11.5%	11.9%
No adjustments needed	8.8%	8.3%

Source: Based on survey responses

The second question refers to workplace conditions observed by respondents that could increase the likelihood of spread of the virus.

Table 6 presents workplace conditions that respondents think will worsen the spread of COVID-19 in their workplaces. Most respondents identify challenges in commuting and traveling to and from work. Respondents’ prior knowledge of the poor quality of public transportation in the country is reflected in the results.

More than 40 percent of the respondents think COVID-19 can easily spread because of longer travel time to and from work as well as the congestion in public transportation, which can make physical distancing difficult. Almost 40 percent of respondents also believe that the risk of spreading the virus increases when workplace facilities do not allow for physical distancing or ample ventilation. Narratives from the FGDs also suggest that in some workplaces, workers eat together in groups which can accelerate transmission of the disease.

Table 6. Specific workplace conditions that might spread COVID-19 according to respondents

Responses	All	Without transport and informal sector
No physical distancing	39.8%	39.1%
No windows/ventilation for air to circulate	29.0%	29.4%
Hand-washing station is not easily accessible	28.8%	29.4%
Long commute time and difficult to do physical distancing when commuting	41.5%	42.1%
The toilet is not regularly disinfected	35.3%	33.5%
None of the above	27.8%	27.8%

Source: Based on survey responses

The last three questions in the final part of the survey are based on the health and safety guidelines released jointly by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

For these questions, the respondents identify (1) OSH measures that they consider to be obligations of their employers; (2) measures that the companies must adopt; and (3) items and measures have yet to be adopted or implemented by their employers notwithstanding their capacities.

Table 7 presents measures that respondents believe are the employers’ obligations to ensure health and safety at work. Apart from the extension of hospitalization subsidies to immediate family members of workers and provision of living quarters for workers, the other measures identified by more than 50 percent of the respondents as employers’ obligations are: provision of PPEs, alcohol and disinfectants; signing agreements for health subsidies and hazard pay, among others; and, dialogue with unions to define and adopt necessary adjustments in the workplace.

Table 7. Employers’ obligations to prevent spread of virus in the workplace according to respondents

Responses	All	Without transport and informal sector
Talk to us or to our union leaders for necessary adjustments in the workplace	70.7%	71.6%
Shoulder hospitalization cost if we get sick	64.5%	66.1%
Provide hospitalization subsidy for immediate family members if they get sick	48.8%	50.2%
Allow us to file sick leave (with pay) if we decide not to work because of high risk exposure to COVID	69.2%	71.6%
Sign agreements on health subsidies and hazard pay, among other recommendations for occupational safety and health by DOLE	71.0%	72.2%
Provide transportation service for all its workers	61.7%	63.1%
Provide us a living quarters when working so we avoid commuting and exposing our families to COVID	41.2%	40.1%
Provide free clinic services for COVID testing and quarantine if we are under monitoring/investigation for COVID	67.0%	68.5%
Give us own provisions for PPEs, alcohol, and disinfectants	76.7%	78.4%
Regularly disinfect the office/workplace	66.5%	71.4%
Provide us Hazard pay while we are working during the pandemic	56.8%	63.9%
Create a policy for reporting of health status of all workers in aid of contact tracing	52.3%	56.7%
None of the above	4.5%	3.4%

Source: Based on survey responses

Table 8 presents the measures already adopted by employers according to the respondents.

Table 8. Workplace measures already adopted by employers according to respondents

Responses	All	Without transport and informal sector
Talk to us or to our union leaders for necessary adjustments in the workplace	51.2%	52.8%
Shoulder hospitalization cost if we get sick	18.0%	18.3%
Provide hospitalization subsidy for immediate family members if they get sick	10.2%	8.7%
Allow us to file sick leave (with pay) if we decide not to work because of high risk exposure to COVID	28.8%	30.0%
Sign agreements on health subsidies and hazard pay, among other recommendations for occupational safety and health by DOLE	14.7%	14.1%
Provide transportation service for all its workers	29.5%	30.8%
Provide us a living quarters when working so we avoid commuting and exposing our families to COVID	17.5%	16.9%
Provide free clinic services for COVID testing and quarantine if we are under monitoring/investigation for COVID	14.3%	13.7%
Give us own provisions for PPEs, alcohol, and disinfectants	40.3%	41.9%
Regularly disinfect the office/workplace	43.3%	44.0%
Provide us Hazard pay while we are working during the pandemic	25.0%	26.8%
Create a policy for reporting of health status of all workers in aid of contact tracing	25.2%	25.4%
None of the above	20.5%	18.5%

Source: Based on survey responses

Table 9 presents the measures respondents expressed their employers are capable to adopt given that they are not yet adopted.

Table 9. Measures that employers are capable of adopting but are not yet adopted according to respondents

Responses	All	Without transport and informal sector
Talk to us or to our union leaders for necessary adjustments in the workplace	40.6%	44.1%
Shoulder hospitalization cost if we get sick	54.5%	55.3%
Provide hospitalization subsidy for immediate family members if they get sick	50.1%	51.3%
Allow us to file sick leave (with pay) if we decide not to work because of high risk exposure to COVID	54.3%	55.2%
Sign agreements on health subsidies and hazard pay, among other recommendations for occupational safety and health by DOLE	49.4%	50.3%
Provide transportation service for all its workers	47.5%	50.4%
Provide us a living quarters when working so we avoid commuting and exposing our families to COVID	38.6%	39.6%
Provide free clinic services for COVID testing and quarantine if we are under monitoring/investigation for COVID	47.7%	50.1%
Give us own provisions for PPEs, alcohol, and disinfectants	45.5%	49.5%
Regularly disinfect the office/workplace	55.9%	57.1%
Provide us Hazard pay while we are working during the pandemic	63.3%	68.0%
Create a policy for reporting of health status of all workers in aid of contact tracing	47.2%	48.4%
None of the above	14.7%	12.4%

Source: Based on survey responses

Except for provision of living quarters, at least 40 percent of the respondents think that their employers have the capacity to provide the accommodation for workers as shown in Table 9.

**Worker-Employer Dialogues**

Dialogues with unions are taking place according to half of respondents . Whether such dialogues are translated into action are yet to be determined.

For enterprises where workers are organized into unions, dialogues between management and unions should be a common practice according to the respondents. For non-unionized enterprises however, dialogues between workers and management may not be undertaken especially when there is no social dialogue mechanism in place prior to the pandemic.

**Disinfection and Personal Protective Equipment**

According to more than 40 percent of the respondents, their employers have already provided PPEs and disinfectants in addition to regularly disinfecting their workplaces. Less than 30 percent of the responses identified other measures presented to the respondents.

Respondents in FGDs stated, however, that there are still companies that do not regularly disinfect their workplace even when disinfection and provision of PPEs are the most basic measures that employers should be implementing by default to protect workers during the pandemic. Results show that these measures are still not observed by more than half of the respondents.

**Hazard Pay**

Results of the FGDs suggest that some companies provided hazard pay to workers during the ECQ. When the areas where these companies are situated became classified under GCQ, the practice of providing hazard pay was also stopped. Unionized workers pointed out that the guidelines on health and safety issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) did not make hazard pay mandatory, thus, many companies may still not adopt this measure . Hence, providing hazard pay is more commonly used by management to entice workers to return to work but remains temporary subject to management prerogative.

On safety protocols, some participants in the FGDs observe that there are lapses in the observance of health and safety protocols. For instance, the workers in one of the private companies say that while health protocols are strictly enforced for regular workers, the same is not observed among non-regular workers. The FGD participants expressed concern about this because this could help spread the disease further.

It is worth highlighting however that hazard pay received is identified by most of the respondents who do not receive it yet . More than 60 percent of the respondents who are not yet receiving hazard pay believe that their employers are capable of providing this benefit to compensate for the risks they face at work because of COVID-19.

**Workers’ Home and Family Life**

In the FGDs, the workers suggest that management should also pay for hospitalization expenses of family members who will have acquired COVID-19 from contact with the workers. In common practice , only regular employees are covered by health benefits from companies. However, because it is possible for workers who get infected at work to expose their family members to the virus, the respondents believe that the company must at least extend the coverage of its health program to the immediate family members of workers. Workers participating in the FGDs also point out the exclusion of non-regular workers from benefits received by regular members. Some companies, however, also cover their regular and non-regular workers under health programs.

The FGDs also point out that work-from-home arrangements blur the divide between work and personal life. This makes it difficult for workers forced to operate under these arrangements to achieve work-life balance. This set-up can also lead to greater expectations in output than the pre-COVID 19 workload assigned to employees, albeit without commensurate increases in compensation. Some participants who are working from home expressed that they feel overworked because of additional tasks assigned to them.

**Public Sector Employees**

In the case of the public sector, although government agencies, local government units (LGUs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) may have the capacity to adopt or implement the measures presented in Table 7, existing regulations may hinder them. Based on the FGD for the public sector unions, the employees observe that management is likely to comply with existing regulatory frameworks when it comes to matters concerning the workplace. Hence, benefits or measures related to COVID-19 prevention that may need adjustment are required to have a legal basis before government offices adopt COVID-19 prevention measures, lest the management face legal sanctions. This restriction can create problems and constraints on the operation of government offices. For instance, some agencies implemented work-from-home arrangements. However, not all workers have reliable access to the internet. Although the management can provide communication allowance to its employees, this still needs to be aligned with existing allocations and guidelines for government spending .

Similar issues arise when it comes to provision of transportation for public sector employees. Some government agencies have not provided shuttle services for their employees, especially for those who reside outside the city, region or province where the government office is located. Unions complain about the lack of shuttle services for rank-and-file employees given that such services are provided for management personnel. While some government offices provide transportation allowance, the amount provided may not be enough because public transportation remains severely limited.

Sangguniang Kabataan officials also point out the need to integrate mental health in the existing health and safety measures. Private sector workers can have COVID-19-induced mental health issues. Appropriate programs to address COVID-19-induced mental health issues must be in place in both public and private sector.

**Conclusion**

This paper discussed the results of a survey conducted among 600 workers across different sectors and regions. The survey was complemented by focus group discussions to provide a deeper insight into how respondents answered the survey questionnaire. Summaries of the responses are presented and econometric models were estimated to find patterns and generate insights into how workers view occupational health and safety practices under the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey finds that most workers still feel comfortable going back to



work despite the pandemic. Fears of losing their jobs fuel their willingness to go back to work notwithstanding the risk of exposure to the virus and infections and hazards at work. Awareness of the hazards and risk of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace do not reduce the willingness of workers to go back to work. However, workers have adequate knowledge of preventive and safety measures, and therefore highly value clear guidelines and policies to prevent exposure and spread of COVID-19 at work. According to the respondents, these guidelines and measures are imperative to stay safe at work.

This paper also explored the adjustments made by workers under the pandemic as well as the measures to ensure OSH at work is observed. These measures are either implemented, or have not been implemented yet despite the capacity of companies to adopt such measures as observed by their employees. To ensure the safety of workers, the government must ensure that the guidelines on OSH under COVID-19 are strictly observed by companies.

#### **Reference**

DTI and DOLE. (2020). Interim guidelines on workplace prevention and control of COVID-19.

IATF. (2020) Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines.

## Appendix

VARIABLES	(1) q1	(2) odds ratio q2	(3)	(4) odds ratio q3	(5)	(6) odds ratio q4	(7)	(8) odds ratio q5	(9)	(10) odds ratio q6	(11)	(12) odds ratio q1	(13)	(14) odds ratio
reg	0.044 (0.178)	1.045 (0.186)	-0.131 (0.179)	0.877 (0.157)	0.141 (0.182)	1.151 (0.209)	-0.134 (0.179)	0.875 (0.157)	-0.072 (0.183)	0.931 (0.170)	0.006 (0.194)	1.006 (0.195)	0.034 (0.183)	1.034 (0.189)
ln_wage	0.235* (0.126)	1.265* (0.160)	-0.071 (0.122)	0.931 (0.114)	0.203 (0.126)	1.225 (0.154)	0.138 (0.125)	1.148 (0.144)	0.090 (0.128)	1.094 (0.141)	-0.173 (0.133)	0.841 (0.112)	0.125 (0.126)	1.134 (0.143)
size	0.127 (0.160)	1.135 (0.182)	0.049 (0.161)	1.050 (0.169)	-0.209 (0.163)	0.811 (0.132)	-0.304* (0.162)	0.738* (0.120)	-0.360** (0.167)	0.697** (0.117)	-0.381** (0.174)	0.683** (0.119)	0.172 (0.165)	1.188 (0.196)
public	-0.037 (0.217)	0.963 (0.210)	-0.216 (0.225)	0.806 (0.181)	-0.476** (0.217)	0.621** (0.135)	0.028 (0.216)	1.028 (0.222)	-0.124 (0.224)	0.884 (0.198)	-0.007 (0.234)	0.993 (0.232)	0.092 (0.224)	1.097 (0.245)
age	-0.057*** (0.007)	0.945*** (0.00691)	-0.055*** (0.007)	0.947*** (0.00684)	-0.008 (0.007)	0.992 (0.00685)	-0.025*** (0.007)	0.975*** (0.00693)	-0.012* (0.007)	0.988* (0.00705)	-0.011 (0.007)	0.989 (0.00736)	-0.035*** (0.008)	0.965*** (0.00742)
male	-0.255 (0.156)	0.775 (0.121)	-0.219 (0.156)	0.804 (0.126)	-0.195 (0.156)	0.823 (0.128)	-0.186 (0.155)	0.830 (0.129)	-0.005 (0.160)	0.995 (0.159)	0.014 (0.167)	1.014 (0.169)	-0.134 (0.160)	0.874 (0.140)
regular	0.338* (0.179)	1.403* (0.251)	-0.095 (0.177)	0.909 (0.161)	-0.235 (0.179)	0.791 (0.141)	0.197 (0.178)	1.218 (0.217)	0.128 (0.185)	1.137 (0.210)	0.146 (0.190)	1.157 (0.219)	0.456** (0.182)	1.577** (0.287)
nowork	-0.123 (0.171)	0.885 (0.151)	-0.320* (0.171)	0.726* (0.124)	0.081 (0.173)	1.084 (0.188)	-0.534*** (0.173)	0.586*** (0.101)	-0.232 (0.178)	0.793 (0.141)	-0.280 (0.185)	0.756 (0.140)	0.019 (0.176)	1.019 (0.180)
ecq	0.160 (0.169)	1.173 (0.198)	0.192 (0.170)	1.211 (0.206)	-0.043 (0.172)	0.958 (0.165)	0.321* (0.169)	1.379* (0.233)	0.225 (0.174)	1.252 (0.218)	-0.124 (0.183)	0.884 (0.161)	0.035 (0.173)	1.036 (0.179)
agreeq2													-1.872*** (0.193)	0.154*** (0.0297)
agreeq3													-0.042 (0.182)	0.959 (0.174)
agreeq4													-0.574*** (0.187)	0.563*** (0.106)
agreeq5													-0.723*** (0.241)	0.485*** (0.117)
agreeq6													0.237 (0.243)	1.268 (0.308)
/cut1	-1.770** (0.830)	0.170** (0.141)	-3.730*** (0.827)	0.0240*** (0.0199)	-0.390 (0.830)	0.677 (0.562)	-0.986 (0.835)	0.373 (0.311)	-0.326 (0.854)	0.722 (0.617)	-1.583* (0.886)	0.205* (0.182)	-3.738*** (0.869)	0.0238** (0.0207)
/cut2	-0.273 (0.827)	0.761 (0.629)	-2.540*** (0.821)	0.0789*** (0.0648)	1.359 (0.832)	3.891 (3.238)	0.598 (0.835)	1.818 (1.517)	1.700** (0.858)	5.474** (4.696)	0.185 (0.884)	1.204 (1.064)	-1.935** (0.861)	0.144** (0.124)
/cut3	-0.008 (0.827)	0.992 (0.821)	-2.296*** (0.820)	0.101*** (0.0826)	2.377*** (0.837)	10.78*** (9.026)	1.156 (0.837)	3.178 (2.659)	2.172** (0.861)	8.775** (7.551)	0.830 (0.889)	2.294 (2.040)	-1.583* (0.860)	0.205* (0.177)
/cut4	1.839** (0.833)	6.291** (5.240)	-0.911 (0.817)	0.402 (0.329)	3.881*** (0.856)	48.48*** (41.51)	2.585*** (0.847)	13.26*** (11.23)	3.190*** (0.874)	24.29*** (21.24)	1.914** (0.912)	6.781** (6.182)	0.658 (0.855)	1.930 (1.651)
Observations	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

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