

Gender Differences in Children's Non-Leisure Activities: A Decomposition Analysis

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Abstract

The prevalence of son preference indicates that girls will have less leisure time compared to boys. This study aims to examine gender differences in weekly hours in schooling, housework, and working among children in Indonesia using Tobit Model and decomposition model of Bauer & Sinning (2005), to test whether son preference explains the differences. The dataset was drawn from the fourth wave of Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS) in 2007. The results show significant gender differences in housework and working for children aged 5–14 years and insignificant gender gap in schooling for both age groups. These results confirm the existence of gender differences among younger children compared to older children in their time allocation.

Keywords: decomposition; economically active children; gender differences; Tobit model; work hours

JEL classifications: O15; D13; J13

1. Introduction

Children are frequently found to be involved in a variety of activities, in which the time allocation is decided by their parents (Ali & Arabsheibani 2016). Some of these activities are directed at human capital accumulation, to produce marketable outputs or provide services for family members. The most common form of services for family members provided by children is helping with household chores (Evans 2010; Burrone & Giannelli 2016). In addition, there is a large gender gap in the hours of housework, where girls perform more household tasks than boys. Due to the reason that doing housework contributes little to human capital build-up of boys, parents are more likely to have their sons either engaged in education or other training activities, as they are expected to generate income for the family in future. Consequently, girls spend most of

their time on doing household chores as opposed to boys (Agesa & Agesa 2019; Raskind et al. 2020).

According to Lin & Adserà (2012), parents in Indian society believe that girls should be able to do household chores well in order to be socially fit once they enter adulthood. In addition, helping with daily housework is a way for parents to request their daughters to contribute to the family before leaving their biological family once they are married. In the context of labor, boys are found to have higher earnings than girls even after controlling for differences in many aspects such as work experience, working hours, and human capital investments in schooling (Behrman, Pollak & Taubman 1986; Saaritsa & Kaihovaara 2016; Rapoport & Thibout 2018). Generally, households continue childbearing until they reach the desired number of sons and reduce the resources available to disadvantaged children, more particularly girls. Furthermore, opportunities for women in the labor market are limited and remain restricted than those for men in most countries.

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