

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



Research & Innovation

Exploring Gendered Impacts of Parental Migration on Youth in Southeast Asia

The Department of Applied Social Sciences conducted one of the first longitudinal studies examining how parental migration shapes the transitions of Thai youth into adulthood, with a specific focus on gendered experiences. Using two waves of survey data from over 870 households between 2008-2010 and 2019, the study assessed the long-term effects of parental migration on young adults' labour participation, marriage, and childbearing.

The findings revealed that maternal or biparental migration had stronger effects on young people's labour activities and age at marriage compared with paternal migration, and these impacts were more pronounced among males. The results also showed that the impacts on youth's transitional outcomes depended on whether parents migrated internally or internationally. By uncovering these nuanced and context-dependent outcomes, the study contributes valuable empirical evidence to advance understanding of gender-specific influences of parental migration in Southeast Asia, with broader implications for promoting gender equality in the region.

Examining Migration through the Lens of Gender and Education

The Department of Applied Social Sciences has conducted a study to examine how parental and sibling migration affect the educational outcomes of left-behind children in rural China, where large-scale rural-urban migration has reshaped family structures. While previous studies focused mainly on parents, this project assessed the overlooked role of sibling migration and the channels through which migration impacts children's development.

Using data from the China Family Panel Studies with the coverage of more than 2,300 children aged 10-15 from rural China, the study applied a conceptual framework and structural equation models to trace how migration influences educational expectations and cognitive performance. The findings showed that sibling migration exerts a more negative effect than parental migration, with particularly adverse outcomes for girls.

Remittances did not fully offset the harm caused by the absence of siblings since they might not contribute to educational investments in left-behind children, and the children might also need to alter their time allocation on housework and study. In sum, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how different forms of migration shape children's educational trajectories and underscores the importance of integrating gender perspectives into policy interventions aimed at supporting rural left-behind children.





Teaching & Learning

Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Practices through Diversity Education

Hosted by the Department of Applied Social Sciences, the subject “Understanding Diversity” equips students with the knowledge and skills to address inequality and foster inclusive societies. Focusing on diversity, discrimination, and intersectionality, the course examines gender roles, socio-economic oppression, and barriers related to race, ethnicity, age, ability, and religion. Students then explore the experiences of women, diverse sexualities, and transgender individuals, gaining insight into the social construction of gender and systemic inequities.

Throughout the course, interactive lectures, case discussions, and project presentations encourage critical thinking and active participation, allowing students to analyse anti-discriminatory practices and policy responses in real-world contexts, through which students can develop a nuanced understanding of societal challenges and are empowered to challenge stereotypes and discriminatory norms.

The course nurtures students’ capacity to promote gender equality and implement inclusive practices within their communities and workplaces. By fostering awareness of diverse identities and social barriers, it cultivates students’ ability to advocate for equitable opportunities and contribute to cohesive societies that value and respect all individuals. In doing so, students not only enhance their academic knowledge but also gain practical skills to create meaningful social impact.

Fostering Inclusive Communication through Gender-Sensitive Analysis

Hosted by the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies, the subject “Communication in Multicultural and Multilingual Context” equips students with the skills and perspectives to analyse the complex factors shaping corporate communication in multilingual and multicultural environments. A distinctive feature of the course is its focus on gender as a critical influence on communication styles, strategies, and outcomes, particularly where cultural norms and gender expectations intersect.

Through a combination of theoretical study and real-world case analysis, students learn to identify and address gender-based inequalities and biases in workplace communication. They explore how gender roles and stereotypes can shape leadership dynamics, branding approaches, and public relations strategies, which often influence organisational culture and performance.

The subject encourages students to develop and propose inclusive communication practices that promote equity, challenge stereotypes, and empower underrepresented genders in corporate contexts. By integrating gender as a central analytical lens, the learning experience not only enriches academic understanding but also prepares graduates to become advocates for equitable communication. This ensures they are ready to design and implement strategies that foster inclusivity and fairness, strengthening professional practices in diverse global workplaces.

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

External Engagement

Breaking Barriers for Women in Leadership

PolyU continues to foster inclusive leadership and workplace diversity by convening dialogues and symposia that bring together academics, practitioners, and industry experts to address the challenges faced by women in leadership. The Department of Management and Marketing (MM) launched two major initiatives to highlight the urgent need to build supportive ecosystems for women across academia, corporations, and entrepreneurial ventures.

As committee members of the Women’s Development Support Committee under the International Association for Chinese Management Research, professors from MM hosted an online dialogue entitled “Women Leadership, Practical Insights and Research Overview”. The session provided a platform for female executives, scholars, and participants to share their experiences and strategies for navigating workplace bias, balancing family with career, and breaking through career bottlenecks. Through interactive Q&A and small-group discussions, the dialogue encouraged reflective conversations on the unique strengths women bring to leadership and how these can be cultivated for broader impact. **Around 50 researchers and practitioners** benefitted directly, gaining actionable insights to advance their careers and contribute to more inclusive workplaces.

Building on this momentum, the symposium titled “Building Bridges: Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Entrepreneurial and Corporate Landscape” gathered academics and industry leaders for deeper dialogue on workplace diversity. A featured talk,



Symposium titled “Building Bridges: Fostering Diversity and Inclusion in the Entrepreneurial and Corporate Landscape”

“Queen Bees, Allies, or Martyrs: Women in C-Suites, Venture Capital, and Startups”, introduced the 4-Me framework, a lens for understanding the unique pressures women face as they rise in leadership. From isolation in male-dominated networks to the paradox of navigating conflicting expectations, the framework highlighted systemic barriers that shape women’s career trajectories. Drawing on studies from

Singapore, China, and the venture capital industry, the speaker also revealed both the opportunities and limitations of women supporting one another in competitive environments. **Over 100 managers, human resources practitioners, and postgraduate students** attended the symposium, gaining valuable perspectives to strengthen their professional practices and promote diversity in their organisations.



Governance & Operations

Empowering Women through Inclusive Campus Design and Policies

Amidst the increasing presence of female students, staff, and visitors on campus, the Campus Development Office has been enhancing facilities to create an inclusive and supportive environment tailored to their needs. Additional female washrooms have been introduced in key buildings, and dedicated lactation rooms provide discreet, comfortable, and fully equipped spaces for breastfeeding and pumping during breaks.

Night-time lighting in frequently used outdoor areas, such as University Square, has also been upgraded to improve safety and security, allowing all users –

particularly women – to feel confident moving around the campus after dark. These improvements exemplify PolyU’s commitment to fostering a campus culture that empowers women to thrive.

Importantly, the University also promotes equal opportunities across all areas, including gender equality, as outlined in its Statement on Human Resource Policies, General Code of Ethics, and Statement on Equal Opportunities. A Policy on Sexual Harassment ensures fair representation of both genders among advisers or conciliators handling allegations related to harassment or ethical violations, reinforcing PolyU’s dedication to an equitable and safe environment for everyone.