

A Profile of Cutflower Growers and Women Participation in the Cutflowers Industry of Three (3) Davao Provinces

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to: a) describe the profile of the growers of cutflowers in the provinces of Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, and Davao Province, b) determine gender labor distribution in the activities and, c) identify the problems of the growers in the three provinces. Findings revealed that ail of the growers were beyond the age of 30. Majority were female, college graduates, government employees, had 5 to 8 household members, had an annual income of P 100,000.00 or less primarily obtained from employment and farming, and have been cutflower growers in their own land for more than ten years. The growing of cutflowers is essentially a woman's activity in the growing of chrysanthemum, anthurium, roses and orchids. However, the husbands in Davao Oriental participate more actively than the husbands in the two other provinces. Their children were not actively involved in their parents' activities in the growing of cutflowers. The growers have identified a number of problems in the growing of cutflowers, namely: lack of proper diagnosis and control of plant pests and diseases, constrained access to new technologies and planting materials, increasing cost of input, inadequate information on the postproduction technologies for the packaging and transport of flowers, and the influx of imported flowers during peak periods.

Keywords: Cutflower growers, Davao provinces, gender labor distribution, plant pests, new technologies, packaging, imported flowers.

Introduction

Cutflowers refer to blooms that are cut from their stems and used as corsages, wreaths, and special flower arrangements for different occasions weddings, birthdays, and other festivities. Cutflowers, described as "fresh flowers", are also used as additives in perfume processing and for other purposes.

Cutflowers are cultivated in large quantities in the Davao Region. Davao produces a wide array of cutflower, foliage and ornamental plants. The cool and high

elevation areas of Maragusan (in Davao Province), Baguio District (in Davao City) and Kapatagan (in Davao del Sur) allow the growing of roses, chrysanthemum, orchids, anthurium and other semi-temperate flowering plants. These are also cultivated in Davao Oriental.

In the past, the growing of cutflowers and ornamental plants was a mere hobby for some of the region's residents. In recent years, however, the industry became a profitable business enterprise as evidenced by the expanding areas of production, increasing number of producers, farmers shifting to the crop, and new cooperatives oriented towards ornamental crop production. These, together with a favorable economic climate, spurred the growth of the industry in both the domestic and international markets (Platon, 2000). Cutflowers, potted plants and ornamentals are among the top export products due to the increased demand in the world market. Data from the Department of Trade and Industry show that the top cutflower exports for Region XI are chrysanthemum, anthurium, ferns and roses.

Behind all these, however, is the human resource of entrepreneurial growers, skilled manpower and stakeholders committed to the growth of the industry. This sector includes women. In recent years, women have made significant inroads in several fields. It would be of interest to find out what roles do they play in the cutflower industry, specifically in the labor distribution for each cutflower the success of the industry lies on, among others, the growers. This sector needs to be given due attention if the industry has to continue to contribute to the efforts to spur the growth of the industry. The growers of Davao City have been the subject of some studies and have the advantage of access to the attention and support of concerned government agencies. While the growers of the three Davao provinces, Davao Oriental, Davao Province and Davao del Sur, have received some support, not much is known about their profile, their problems, and the gender labor distribution in the growing of cutflowers.

The primary objectives of this study were: to describe the profile of the growers of cutflowers in the three provinces of Davao Oriental, Davao Province and Davao del Sur, to determine gender labor distribution in the activities involved in the growing of cutflowers, and to identify the problems of the growers in the three provinces.

Methodology

The respondents of this study were the active (read: those who are still engaged in the growing of cutflowers) growers in the three provinces as identified by the Department of Agriculture and/or the cutflower cooperatives in the study areas.

Data for the study were gathered from August to September of 2002 through an interview schedule.

Data gathered were analyzed through a frequency count, means and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Profile

All of the growers were beyond the age of 30. Majority (84%) were female, married, college graduates and Visayans. The male growers, all of whom were college graduates, were only found in Davao Oriental. Most were government employees, had households with 5 to 8 members, had an annual income of 100,00 or less primarily obtained from employment and farming. Usually, two other household members contribute to their families' gross cash income. The growing of cutflowers was considered as another source of income by only 16% of the respondents. Most have been engaged in the growing of cutflowers for more than ten years in their own land. They usually obtain/secure their planting stocks or materials from full-time traders whom they pay in cash upon delivery. Majority (53%) sold their produce, with the grower setting the price.

Gender Labor Distribution

In Davao Oriental the husband performed all of the activities involved in the production of chrysanthemum. The wife participated in only four activities - watering, harvesting, packing, and marketing. In the case Davao Province, they hired help (a male) did all the activities in its production, with the wife performing only two tasks—harvesting and marketing. The same was true in Davao del Sur, except for the fact that the wife [participated in disbudding and in packing.

For the production of roses, only the growers from Davao Oriental and Davao del Sur affirmed that they engage in its production. The wife performed most of the activities such as pot preparation, planting of cuttings, fertilization, crop protection, weeding, pruning, watering, and harvesting, the daughter assisted in the planting of cuttings and in watering. The female hired help assisted the wife in all the activities. In Davao del Sur, the wife took charge of most activities, with the husband assisting in only one activity — watering the roses.

In the production of anthurium in Davao Oriental, the husband, along with his wife, performed all the activities involved. The couple participated in pot preparation, planting, fertilization, spraying/crop protection, weeding/cleaning, watering, repotting, chopping of coconut husks, sorting and packing. The daughter helped out in pot preparation, planting and watering while the son chops the coconut husks which were used as their planting media. The hired help (both males and females) also helped in the activities except in sorting and packing. On the other hand, the wife did all the activities in anthurium production in Davao Province; the husband only helps out by watering the anthurium and chopping the coconut husks. Their children did not help in any way. The wife was assisted in all activities by the hired help (both males and females). In Davao del Sur, the wife engaged in all the activities; the hired help (a male) assisted in pot preparation, weeding, and repotting.

As in the production of chrysanthemum, the husband in Davao Oriental usually assists the Wife in all the activities in the production of orchids. They work side by side in tissue culture, acclimatization, plant preparation, preparation of planting area, planting, fertilization, crop protection, cleaning/weeding, watering, harvesting, sorting and packing. The female hired help assist, except in harvesting, sorting and packing. Tissue culture, acclimatization, harvesting, sorting and packing were the activities in which the male hired help does not assist in. For Davao Province, the wife was involved in all the activities along with the male and female hired help. The husband assists, except in tissue culture, acclimatization, cleaning, watering, sorting and packing. Only the son helped out, and this was in watering and harvesting the orchids. In Davao del Sur, the wife singlehandedly performed all the activities in the production of orchids.

These results show that the growing of cutflowers in all the provinces is, essentially, a woman's activity in almost all the activities involved in the production of chrysanthemum, anthurium, roses, and orchids, the wives participate. It is worth noting that in Davao Oriental, the husbands participate in a majority of the activities involved in the production of all the cutflowers. This is not the case in Davao Province where their participation is only in the production of anthurium and orchids and in Davao del Sur, in watering the roses. The children are not actively involved in their parents' activities, save for a handful in Davao Oriental and Davao Province. The wives are usually assisted by the hired help which is usually a male.

Problems associated with the production of cutflowers

In the three provinces, cooperatives consisting of cutflower growers were formed during the late 1990s. Davao del Sur even had four or five cooperatives at a time. They elected their officers and were listed by the local offices of the Department of Agriculture as some of the cooperatives that they assisted. They were active for a time, and even participated in regional events primarily organized for cut-flower growers. However, the cooperatives gradually ceased to exist, with most members opting to stop producing cut-flowers. As a result, only a few members are still engaged in its production. They met a lot of problems.

The growers said that the lack of proper diagnosis and control of plant pests and diseases is one of their pressing problems. They are often not aware because they lack technical knowledge in cutflower pest and disease management. They feel that there is a need for both public and private agencies to conduct training and information dissemination activities on this topic. According to most of them, they are rarely, if at all, visited by government technicians. The recurrence of pest and disease problems have led to a reduction in plant stocks and profit margins for the growers.

There, too, is a problem on constrained access to credit sources. The growers

of chrysanthemum and roses need immediate financial assistance during the initial stages of production, i.e., during the purchase of planting materials and farm inputs. In the case of orchid and anthurium growers, financial assistance is necessary during the expansion stage because it requires the use of expensive structures such as greenhouses, pots and driftwood stands. They cite the restrictive requirements imposed by several financial institutions as the major constraint in acquiring financial support. These include the need for collateral to secure credit, short grace periods (6 to 8 months) for loans, and high interest rates (from 18 to 24%).

Another problem is limited access to new technologies and planting materials. Rose and chrysanthemum growers have been cultivating the same planting stocks since the 1960s. Only the orchid and anthurium growers are cultivating new planting stocks. Major clients, such as hotels, prefer chrysanthemums sourced from other Southeast Asian countries. Flower shops have been asking for newer varieties and colors that they could not supply. This could be traced to restrictions on the importation of planting materials by the government,

The increasing cost of inputs has also affected the growers. The production of cutflowers depends on fertilizers and expensive chemicals to maximize its production. The growers seem to have been conditioned by private firms that only chemicals and inorganic fertilizers can be used for the prevention and control of diseases.

There is a dearth of information on the postproduction technologies for the packaging and transport of flowers. This has resulted to claims of short vase-life of local cutflowers which would mean that there would be a high number of rejects due to the poor quality of the flowers delivered.

The influx of imported flowers, sold at lower prices, during peak periods such as Valentine's Day and All Saints' Day also adversely affected the growers. Local growers have to sell their flowers at a lower price to compete with the imported ones.

Recommendations

1. Intensify research and development programs on proper pest and disease diagnosis and control.
2. Implement an intensive information dissemination activity on proper Cultural management and post-harvest handling technologies/practices.
3. Provide credit schemes for cutflower growers, with focus on packages with low interest rates and reasonable repayment periods
4. Implement policy reforms in tariff rates, import permit approval, and handling of goods by government agencies concerned
- 5.

Table 1. Some socio-demographic characteristics of the cutflower growers

Characteristics	Davao Oriental	Davao Province	Davao del Sur	Total	Percentage
1. Age					
30-34	1			1	3.2
35-39					
40-44	1	2		3	9.7
45-49	5	2		7	22.6
50-54	3	2	2	7	22.6
55-59	2	2		4	12.9
60-64	3	3	3	9	29
2. Civil Status					
Single	1	1		2	6.5
Married	14	9	5	28	90.3
Widowed		1		1	3.2
3. Educational Attainment					
High school graduate		1	1	2	6.5
Vocational graduate	1			1	3.2
Some college		1	2	3	9.7
College graduate	13	6	2	21	67.7
MA/MS	1	3		4	12.9
4. Dialects spoken					
Visayan	2	8	4	14	45
Tagalog	1	1		2	6.5
Ilocano		2		2	6.5
Mandaya	3			3	9.7

Kalagan	2			2	6.5
Ilongo			1	1	3.2
Bicolano	1			1	3.2
Leyteño	2			2	6.5
Boholano	4			4	12.9
5. Ethnic Tribe					
Visayan	2	8	2	12	38.7
Ilocano		1	1	2	6.5
Pangasinan		2		2	6.5
Mandaya	3		1	4	12.9
Boholano	4			4	12.9
Mandaya	3			3	9.7
Kalagan	2			2	6.5
Ilongo			1	1	3.2
Bicolano	1			1	3.2
Leyteño	2			2	6.5
Boholano	4			4	12.9
B. Occupation					
Businessman/woman	2	5	1	8	25.8
Plant grower		1		1	3.2
Employee (private firm)		2		2	6.5
Government employee	8	3	2	13	41.9
Day care worker			1	1	3.2
Housewife	2		1	3	9.7
Farmer	3			3	9.7
7. Other income sources					
Growing cutflowers	5	4	3	12	38.7
Employment	1	4		5	16.1
Selling copra	1			1	3.2
Business	1			1	3.2
Farming	2	1	1	4	12.9
Livelihood project	2		1	3	9.7
Trucking		1		1	3.2
None	3			3	9.7
Drugstore/internet café		1		1	3.2

Table 2. Mode of Payment of Produce

Mode	Davao Oriental	Davao Province	Davao del Sur	Total
Cash	10	11	5	26
In kind	1			1
Salary deduction	4			4
Total	15	11	5	31

Table 3. Number of years as ornamental plants-growers

Number of years	Davao Oriental	Davao Province	Davao del Sur	Total
Less than a year	1			1
1 to 3 years	3	1		4
4 to 6 years	4	2	2	8
7 to 9 years	1	3		4
10 years & above	6	5	3	14
Total	15	11	5	31

Table 4. Tenurial Status of Growers

Tenurial Status	Davao Oriental	Davao Province	Davao del Sur	Total
Owner	14	10	2	26
Part-owner	1		3	4
Caretaker		1		1
Total	15	11	5	31

Table 5. Gender Labor Distribution in Chrysanthemum Production (Davao Oriental)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Plowing/harrowing	1					
Plot preparation	1					
Polybag/potting	1					
Fertilization	1					
Crop protection	1					
Disbudding	1					
Watering	1	1				
Harvesting	1	1				
Packing	1	1				

Table 6. Gender labor distribution in chrysanthemum production (Davao Province)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Plowing/harrowing					1	
Plot preparation					1	
Polybag/potting					1	
Fertilization					1	
Crop protection					1	
Disbudding		1			1	
Watering					1	
Harvesting					1	
Packing		1			1	
Marketing						

Table 7. Gender labor distribution in chrysanthemum production (Davao del Sur)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Plowing/harrowing		1				
Plot preparation						
Polybag/potting						
Fertilization		1				
Crop protection						
Disbudding						
Watering		1			1	
Harvesting		1			1	
Packing						
Marketing						

Table 8 Gender Labor Distribution in the Production of Roses (Davao Oriental)

			Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Root stock prep						
Budding						
Pot preparation	2	1				1
Planting of cuttings / budded plants		2		1		1
Fertilization		1				1
Crop protection	1	1				1
Weeding	1	1				1
Pruning		1				1
Watering		2		1		1
Harvesting		1				
Packing						
Marketing						

Table 9. Gender Labor Distribution in the Production of Roses (Davao del Sur)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Root stock prep		1				
Budding		1				
Pot preparation		1				
Planting of cuttings/budded plants						
Fertilization		2				
Crop protection		1				
Weeding		1				
Pruning		1				
Watering	1	1				
Harvesting						
Packing						
Marketing						

Table 10. Gender Labor Distribution in Anthurium Production (Davao Oriental)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Pot preparation	3	7		1	1	1
Planting	3	7		1	1	1
Fertilization	3	3			2	3
Spraying/crop protection	4	3			2	2
Weeding/cleaning	3	3			3	2
Watering	3	5		1	3	2
Repotting	3	6			3	2
Chopping of coconut husks	2	1	1		5	3
Sorting	2	4				
Packing	3	2				

Table 11. Gender Labor Distribution in Anthurium Production (Davao Province)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Pot preparation		3			5	5
Planting		3			5	3
Fertilization		2			5	2
Spraying/crop protection		1			5	2
Weeding/cleaning		2			3	2
Watering	1	4			3	3
Repotting		3			4	3
Chopping of coconut husks	1	2			5	3
Sorting		2			4	3
Packing		2			4	3

Table 12. Gender Labor Distribution in Anthurium Production (Davao del Sur)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Pot preparation		1			1	
Planting		2				
Fertilization		2				
Spraying/crop protection		1				
Weeding/cleaning		2			1	
Watering		2			1	
Repotting		1			1	
Chopping of coconut husks		1				
Sorting		1				
Packing		1				

Table 13. Gender labor distribution in orchids production (Davao Oriental)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Tissue culture	1	2				1
Acclimatization	1					
Plant preparation	2	9			1	1
Preparation of area	3	6			3	1
Planting	3	8			2	2
Fertilization	3	8			3	3
Crop protection	3	5			2	2
Cleaning/weeding	3	3			4	4
Watering	1	6			6	4
Harvesting	1	2				
Sorting		1				
Packing	1	1				

Table 14 Gender Labor Distribution in Orchids Production (Davao Province)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Tissue culture		1			2	1
Acclimatization		1			4	2
Plant preparation	1	3			2	1
Preparation of area	1	3			5	2
Planting	2	5			5	2
Fertilization	1	2			5	2
Crop protection	1	1			3	2
Cleaning/weeding		2			5	2
Watering		4	1		4	2
Harvesting	1	5	1		3	2
Sorting		2			3	2
Packing		3			4	2
Total						

Table 15. Gender Labor Distribution in Orchids Production (Davao Sur)

Activity	Husband	Wife	Children		Others	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Tissue culture		2				
Acclimatization		1				
Plant preparation		3				
Preparation of area		1				
Planting		3				
Fertilization		3				
Crop protection		2				
Cleaning/weeding		2				
Watering		2				
Harvesting		3				
Sorting		1				
Packing		1				

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