

# HIGHLIGHTS

## ON OCCUPATIONAL WAGES, 2009

- Attesting to the value of knowledge and skills, the median monthly gross wages in June 2009 was the highest for managers (\$6,300), followed by professionals (\$4,375) and associate professionals & technicians (\$2,940). Clerical workers (\$1,918) and sales & service workers (\$1,786) were paid less. Reflective of the wage premium paid for skills and craftsmanship among the blue-collar workers, production craftsmen (\$2,150) and plant & machine operators (\$1,809) were paid more than the cleaners, labourers & related workers (\$1,000).
- Wages tend to increase with age as workers gain experience and become more productive over the years. This is reinforced by the seniority-based wage system in some companies. In 2009, the pace of wage increase with age was more pronounced among the managerial and professional groups reflecting the knowledge-intensive nature of their work. The wages of non-PMET groups rose more gradually, reaching their peaks in their late thirties and forties. On the other hand, wages of the group of cleaners, labourers & related workers started to decline from their thirties onwards. Advancing age works against workers in manual occupations, given the physical nature of the job.
- Reflecting the poorer economic conditions in 2009, the median gross wages of workers aged 35 – 39 in all the occupational groups declined from a year ago, except for the group of cleaners, labourers & related workers which saw an increase in monthly wages from \$1,270 to \$1,307, lifted by wage gains in occupations such as store hands and manufacturing & related labourers. Nonetheless, reflecting the downward pressures on wages of the unskilled due to globalisation and technological changes, wages of the group of cleaners, labourers & related workers in 2009 were still lower than in 2000.
- Higher value-added industries tend to pay better. Specifically, professional services and information & communications were among the top three highest-paying industries for many occupational groups in June 2009. On the other hand, hotels & restaurants was consistently among the lower-paying industries.
- Females typically earned less than males, similar to the experience in other countries. The gender differential was substantially smaller in white-collar than blue-collar occupations. The gender wage gap also increased with age, given the tendency for women to disrupt their careers to take care of their family. In fact, within the younger age group of 25-29, females earned more than males in many white-collar occupations.