

In Pain and in Wail: A phenomenology of the abuses of the Filipino Domestic Workers, Qatar

Imee C. Acosta^{1,2} and Alexander S. Acosta, Ph.D.^{1,3,4,5}

¹ Philippine Christian University ² Virginia Commonwealth University-Qatar, ³ Technological University of the Philippines, ⁴ Lyceum Philippine University, ⁵ Philippine School Doha

Abstract

Abuse is a common problem among domestic workers. Many are trapped in highly exploitative situations with limited, strenuous escape options and negligible support from the host country and labor sending country. With the participation of a select group of Filipino domestic workers who are housed in OWWA shelter Doha, Qatar, this phenomenological inquiry afforded to categorically classify three forms of abuses namely: corruptive, confrontative, and coercive that generate a ripple of consequences known as effectual damage and affectual damage respectively. The lebenswelt of the underprivileged domestic workers is a primordial source to raise awareness about the abuses and their effects and to encourage collective action such as implementing change as regards to labor policies and procedures, policy formulations, and human resource capacity building programs as means to reviving the human dignity and wellbeing of women in the informal employment.

Keywords: Corruptive Abuse, Confrontative Abuse, Coercive Abuse, Effectual Damage, Affectual Damage

Introduction

Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, constitute a large portion of today's migrant worker population (Chammartin, 2005, Essim & Smith, 2004). The migration of women domestic workers is driven by diverse and intersecting factors such as poverty, unemployment and under-employment (Piper, 2013). Since the 1970s, those who perform domestic work have been in high demand in the Middle East (Manseau, 2006). Primarily, women migrants in the Arab region come from low-income countries such as: The Philippines, Ethiopia, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. According to Esim and Smith (2004) as cited by Rowe (2010) as much as 81% of all women migrant workers from Sri Lanka and 39 % from the Philippines to Arab countries are attracted by the large 'domestic work' market. Halabi (2013), in her article mentioned that migrant domestic workers are relying on employment agencies and brokers; entered into contractual bondage with employers of whom they have never met before leaving themselves vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Thus, even before the worker steps foot in her host country, the systems of manipulation and exploitation had already taken place.

In most cases, abuses against foreign domestic workers happen inside the private homes of abusive employers, concealed from the external world, and hidden from public scrutiny. The revelations of abuses in the study committed by employers are classified into three forms namely: corruptive, confrontative, and coercive. These forms of abuses produce consequential damages known as effectual and affectual damage that are immediate and lasting where greater possibility of humiliation, moral degradation, emotional, and psychological imbalance. Corollary to these observations, this research endeavor amplifies that abuse on women; mostly domestic helpers need immediate call for government action and protection. The extent to which is to

revisit the government policies on hiring domestic helpers ensuring they are really subject to a humane protection from the abuse of their employees. Such observation will liberate abused women from the bondage of “hell on earth” so to speak.

Several researches reveal an alarming prevalence of abuses against domestic workers in the Arab region (Esim & Smith 2004, Al-Najjar, 2004, Godfrey, M. et.al. 2004, HRW 2004e, 2006b, 2007, 2008a, 2011). But classification on abuses inflicted to women is underexplored. This research attempts to discuss that domestic work exploitation can be categorically classified according to its degree, effect, and affect. Such classifications are fertile sources for protecting the lives of these domestic helpers from their foreign employers in that the rule of law shall be in full force regardless of race, color, and religious creed.

The main purpose of this paper is to share the lived experiences of the underprivileged Filipino domestic workers in Doha, Qatar. Shared accounts generated in this study can be a powerful tool and useful means for the Government of Qatar to impose strict implementation of the memorandum that exists between the government of labor-sending-countries and the government of labor-receiving-countries. This paper anticipates the immediate endorsement and enactment of the drafted law that defines the rights and protection of foreign domestic workers in Doha. In addition, this research study also hopes to awaken the Government of labor sending countries to provide extensive services and support to domestic workers who are victims of these abuses.

Method

Design

Qualitative in orientation, this study made use of phenomenological design. This design according to Lester (1999) illuminates the specific, to identify phenomenal through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. For Giorgi as cited by Groenewald (2004) the operative word in phenomenological research is ‘describe’. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts.

Study Locus and Sample

Ten select underprivileged female OFWs housed at OWWA Shelter in Doha, Qatar were randomly chosen as respondents of this research study. The respondents of this study were all married women with children, the age group ranges from 28-50 years old. Majority of them had not completed High School education. The highest educational attainment obtained is 1st Year College and the lowest education level is Elementary graduate. Six of them came from urban areas while the other few came from rural areas. Majority of the respondents were first-timers as migrant domestic worker except one who was a second timer.

Instrumentation

Data needed in this research study were gathered using a 2-part instrument. The first part was

based on the *robotfoto*, a Dutch term means facial composite, (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) given to the respondents before the actual interview. The demographic file such as: gender, age, education, number of years working as domestic helper, were sought from the respondents. The second part was the semi-structured interview. This kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided (Harrell & Bradley 2009).

Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The main source of data in this research was the responses of the respondents’ interview since they provide access to perceptions and opinions that are effective for gaining insight of problems that are not immediately perceptible but that nonetheless cause concern in certain areas (Laforest, 2009). Prior to the interview of the respondents, written permission was sent to the respondents asking for their consent followed by a friendly visit to the OWWA Office where the domestic runaways were housed. The appointment of time and place for the interview was arranged.

Mode of Analysis

A 90-minute interview for each respondent was personally conducted and transcribed from “*emic*” to “*etic*” transcription to surface the essence of the phenomenon under study through a 3-part analysis. First, transcribed data were read through to get a feel of what is being said. Then, the translated meaning units were structurally analyzed (see Figure 1) via a *dendogram* (Drout and Smith, 2013) which is a branching diagram that represents the relationships of similarity among a group of entities. Data were juxtaposed, compared, and grouped into similar themes as expressed by the participants. This is particularly useful to identify relationships between different themes and factors (Lester, 1999). Lastly, a comprehensive understanding was surfaced guided by the researcher’s vigilance and bracketing through a member- checking procedure to provide the essence of the phenomenon.

Figure 1

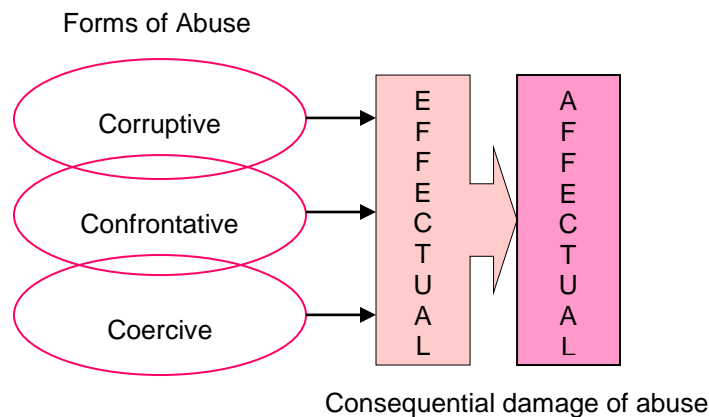


Figure 1 Consequential Damage of Abuse of the Underprivileged Domestic Workers in Qatar

Findings

This phenomenological study uncovers three forms of abuse namely: corruptive, confrontative, and coercive respectively from the revelations of a select group of underprivileged Filipino domestic workers in Doha, Qatar. Their responses have led to respond to the central question: “What consequential damages brought about by the abuse of the underprivileged Filipino domestic workers?” On one hand, these abuses interweave a ripple of effect known as effectual damage which means the direct effect felt by the victim while on the other hand scars of painful experiences piled up and flashed back in the subliminal stage of human sub-consciousness known as affectual damage or indirect effect. These damages are embedded in the lived experiences of these underprivileged Filipino domestic workers which become a stigma that defy the fair and just treatment of a human being.

Corruptive Abuse

The low perceptions of domestic workers make them vulnerable to exploitation. Majority of them who were deployed abroad experienced different forms of abuse. The act of desolating, demeaning, demoralizing, and disgracing are referred to as corruptive abuse which are non-physical in nature such as isolation and verbal abuse that corrupt a person’s emotions and psychological well-being. Confirmatory statement related to this was revealed by the testimony of one of the underprivileged domestic workers.

“I was not supposed to run away, I can handle all the hard work. If only the old woman was not jealous; she was always picking on me, finding fault, and always angry. Every time she accused me of doing something wrong, I was forced to say “sorry” though it was not my fault. She also humiliated me in front of her friends by saying filthy and degrading language. This happened all the time; yet I still have patience to deal with her. But it came to a point that I cannot take it anymore, because for every wrong move or fault that I make, my employer will deduct my salary.”

Furthermore, this reality is strengthened by the verbalization of these respondents.

“My employer confiscated my cellphone. I am not allowed to use it. I was only allowed to call to my family once in the first month and after that I have no way to contact them.”

“I was confined inside the house and not allowed to go out; going near the gate is a big offense.”

The preceding accounts describe that social isolation is a form of forced confinement where the workers are prohibited from communicating with their family and mingling with other workers. They are also physically locked up in the households and denied from the opportunity to explore the surroundings. As revealed, verbal abuse is a form of derogatory language used by the employers to demean and demoralize the victims that brings harmful effect to them. Undoubtedly, these corruptive behaviors have both direct and indirect damages that have a

negative and profound impact. The following are examples of the direct effectual damage felt by the victim such loneliness, dissociation, shame, and fearfulness which unthinkingly leave a mark of lasting affectual damage that involuntarily flashes back in the minds of the victims. One of the respondents voiced out her feelings.

“I felt that I was abused. I was treated as if I am not human. I feel so low because I am only a housemaid.”

Confrontative Abuse

Domestic work is considered privy; contained within the four walls of the household and anything can happen inside without the outside world knowing. Due to this nature, domestic workers are prone to confrontative abuses that are physical in nature such as beatings, slapping, and excessive workload. Being confronted with challenging situations, the victims feel a sense of powerlessness as they go through the hardship of physical pain and endure the bad situation. These forms of abusive behaviors of the employers are made known through this revelation:

“I could no longer stand the constant daily nagging and physical abuses of my female employer. At first instance, she hit my stomach with her elbow because I was not able to follow her instructions. It was painful and the incident made me nervous. On another occasion, I made a mistake in accomplishing the task that she told me to do and I was again hurt. My employer took an object and hit my breast many times. I did not fight back, I just cried and cried. Another incident of hitting happened when I made another mistake in doing the errand I was told to do, she got very angry and took a hard cardboard and hit my face many times, yet she was not contented, she took a knife and aimed at me. She has been abusing me many times, so I asked myself, how long should I endure all of these? I need to run away.”

This testimony is further supported by one of the respondents who also recounted her misery.

“My work starts at 4:30a.m. until 12 midnight and I sleep at 1:30a.m. But my employers and their children sleep very late, when they need something, though I am already retiring, they will wake me up to do an errand or attend to a child. My work is continuous, from morning till evening. I have no time to rest.”

Undoubtedly, these forms of mistreatment can cause direct effectual damage such as concussions, wounds, cuts, broken bones, and other physical malaises. These short-term effects of confrontative abuse are obvious and can be treated by a healthcare provider and they could be identified as effectual damage leave scars and bruises. Despite the torment, these women still accepted their fate wholeheartedly and place their plight in the hands of God. Their faith and belief have somehow relieved them from the misery.

“Sometimes, I would think that the Lord will not give these trials if I cannot endure. At first, I cried heavily, but now, I have learned to accept what happened.”

These foregoing verbalizations are signs of helplessness. The victims are placed in situations where they cannot defend themselves. As a result, the hurts and sorrows are kept and borne alone. Unknowingly, majority are unmindful that this form of abuse has posits far-reaching or indirect affectual damage to one's health condition such as chronic pain disorders, hypertension, and other physical illnesses. From the verbalization below, one of the respondents has already started to feel the agonizing affectual damage brought by confrontative abuse.

“My entire body is aching severely. I cannot sleep well at night anymore due to pain; I have a hard time sleeping.”

Coercive Abuse

Majority of the domestic workers deployed abroad are female. These women are lured to work abroad by the prospects of lucrative pay, false perceptions given by the recruitment agencies, and hope to improve living conditions. Unfortunately, finding an employer who provides appropriate working conditions and proper pay is a matter of good fortune. While other domestic helpers enjoy good fortune, others suffer from a range of abuses; one of them is sexual assault or rape, classified in this study as coercive. This testimony reinforced the sad plights as confessed by this underprivileged domestic worker.

“On the night of August 31, 2012, my Madam was not at home. Her husband went home drunk. I was just staying in my room but my male employer forced to open the door. It was locked and I did not open it. But he kicked and kicked till the door broke and opened. He wanted to rape me, of course, I have to fight back. I ran out of the room, though, I was already naked I still went up to the second floor and went into the bathroom. From there, I jumped out of the window, when I landed I broke my legs and back.”

Indeed, this study classifies sexual assault or rape as coercive abuse. The perpetrator applies the use of brute force to engage the victim into an act against her will. There are a lot of reported cases among domestic workers being victimized by coercive abuse, these women became susceptible to sexual assault and to being raped from their male employers due to the isolation or forced confinement imposed to them by their employers. On the other hand, the consequential damage of coercive abuse can be both effectual or direct and affectual or indirect and long-lasting.

The effectual damage brought about the sexual exploitation includes shock, anger, physical trauma, muscular tensions, and disbelief. However, the affectual damage brought about by coercive abuse could last a lifetime leaving the victims with so many mental and emotional scars brought about by painful past. Women who experienced sexual assault will experience severe anxiety, depression, and psychological trauma. One of the victims shared her feelings.

“I tried to forget but every time it is talked about, I'll remember, I really cannot understand, why it has to come this way.”

Discussion

Abused on women domestic workers may it be direct or indirect can never be underestimated. The extent to which is the damaging impact not only physical but also emotional and psychological. As defined in the ILO Convention no. 18 (Migrant Forum Asia, 2012), a domestic worker is any person who engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. An employer of the domestic worker may be a member of the household for which the work is performed or a recruitment agency or enterprise that employs them and makes them available to households.

Domestic work is one of the most important sources of employment for Philippine women both in the country and abroad (Sayres, 2007; Valenzuela, 2004). Most of the overseas domestic workers, range from the average of 25-34 years old, are high school or college graduates with a broad range of work experience (Pacis, 2008; Sayres, 2007). Unemployment and household poverty, which have significantly affected countries of origin since the beginning of the 1980s, pressured these women to find jobs abroad (Chammartin, 2005). These women leave their home country with anticipation of a higher income and to enhance the status of their families despite the uncertainties of what lies ahead. Every year, millions of young women from South Asia flock to the six nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) in search of a better life (Hilleary 2012).

Migration holds both risk and promise, and migrant women have experienced both success and abuse (HRW Report, 2007). However, many of these women workers are victims of exploitation by their employers and they are vulnerable to corruptive, confrontative, and coercive forms of abuse that may shatter their dreams for their family, ruin their health, and degrade their well-being. Abuse is an ongoing occurrence that has become a major concern of some private organizations, concerned individuals, and the governments from sending-countries and the host receiving-countries.

To some extent, exploitation of workers is a result of the legal structures of the receiving Arab states which has been crafted to ensure the temporary nature of domestic work contracts and of the lack of protection of these workers under the law (Manseau, 2006).

Corruptive Abuse

In one of the articles published in Psychology Today, it stated that anything that intentionally hurts the feelings of another person is a form of abuse (Stosny, 2008). It is further strengthened by Dr. Toomey (2000) that the inner voice of an emotionally abused woman is not only a voice of pain, suffering and anger; it is also the voice of an alienated woman who blames herself for how she is being treated. Hence, women domestic helpers are not an exception to this form of abuse; many of them are trapped into this kind of exploitation, degrading their total wellbeing. When a person is verbally abused and isolated from the social circle, his/her feelings are being hurt which could just be as damaging as inflicting physical pains and to a further extent the ache could be worse.

Verbal abuse is insidious and endemic; the scars can last for years. These psychological scars leave people unsure of themselves, unable to recognize their true value, their talents, sometimes unable to adapt to life's many challenges (Evans 1999) and damage the person's mental well-being (Humphries & Thiara, 2003 as cited by Crawford, et. al. 2009). On one hand, isolation will result to traumatizing effect. The victim will find it almost awkward to develop normal relationships with people, and will be almost unaware of the reality of life outside the house where he/she was confined for so long (Stephen, 2008).

Moreover, there are many cases of domestic workers being confined or isolated in the households of their employers and verbally assaulted. This study classifies forced isolation and verbal assaults as corruptive form of abuse because of the degree of damage inflicted to the victims that corrupts their total wellbeing. The effects of these abuses are psychologically harmful. According to Harvard University psychiatrists; scolding, swearing, yelling, blaming, insulting, threatening, ridiculing, demeaning, and criticizing can be as harmful as physical abuse and sexual abuse (Cromie, 2007). Individuals who lack social connections or report frequent feelings of loneliness tend to suffer higher rates of morbidity and mortality (Brummett et al. 2001; Seeman 2000; Uchino, Cacioppo, and Kiecolt-Glaser 1996 as cited by Cornwell and Waite 2009).

As published in Human Rights Watch, Volume 18, No. 7 (2006b), women employed as domestic workers around the world face an appalling array of abuses and employers who abuse their domestic workers often enjoy impunity. Many factors militate against domestic workers reporting abuse, including restrictions on their movements and lack of awareness about their rights. The risk of abuse may be heightened when domestic workers are confined to the household.

Undoubtedly, abuse is a form of criminal offense perpetrated by the employers against domestic workers (HRW Report, 2008a). Kathy O'Gorman (2006) commented that most often, abused people are the ones who are limited in power and resources, usually women. Moreover, inflicting desolation, demeaning, demoralizing, and disgracing non-physical acts are forms of corruptive abuse. Examples of this abusive behavior are social isolation and verbal abuse. Almost without exception, domestic workers experience social isolation where employers employ confiscation of passports, denying day-off and vacation leave, elimination of cell phone and prohibition to socialize with friends and other workers (Pacis, 2008). According to an article in Human Rights Watch, Volume 16, No. 5 (2004e), most of them also lived in around-the clock confinement, at the decision of their private employers and shun from the outside world, thus; these workers have lost their sense to belong. Hill (2006) as cited by Biordi & Nicholson (2010), "belonging" is a multidimensional social construct of relatedness to persons, places, or things and is fundamental to personality and social wellbeing. If belonging is connectedness, then social isolation is the distancing of an individual psychologically and physically, or both, from his or her network of desired or needed relationships with other persons (Cornwell and Waite, 2009). Certainly, these underprivileged OFWs have experienced social disconnectedness that poses effectual and affectual damages that have a negative impact on their health and social wellbeing. The effectual damages brought about by social isolation are loneliness and dissociation. Gammon (2012) shared that loneliness can send a person down a path toward bad health; it raises levels of the circulating stress hormone cortisol and blood pressure. Other studies have found that those with a

poor social network are at increased risk of dementia and the genes they need to fight off serious viral infections seem to be less active in the lonely (Webber 2011). Therefore, the affectual damage brought about by social isolation involves chronic health problems.

Bonnie and Wallace (2003) as cited by Mouton, Radabough, et. al. (2010) defined verbal abuse as the infliction of mental anguish through yelling, threatening, humiliating, infantilizing, or provoking intentional fear. Furthermore, Pacis (2008) stated that verbal abuses include: harsh insults, belittlement, finding faults, filthy language, obscene words, raised voices, and screaming. This treatment reinforces employers' domination and control over domestic workers, making them less likely to resist or seek redress for abusive employment conditions (HRW Report 2009). The underlying premise of verbal abuse is control, which is a means of holding power over another (Grady, 2003; O'Gorman, 2006). Continual verbal abuse can be just as destructive as physical abuse, with victims saying that because of its hidden nature it can actually be worse (Sonas Housing Association, 2012) Corruptive abuse can be linked to emotions as it affects the person's feelings. Mouton, Radabough, et. al. (2010) further mentioned that exposure to this form of abuse is a stressful event that has a negative impact on women's psychological well-being.

Indeed, the effectual damage brought about by corruptive abuse include: low self-esteem, (Mouton et. al. 2010), inability to set appropriate boundaries, loss of concentration (LCCEWA, 2013), anxiety(WRS, 2009), hyper-vigilance or panic attacks (Stosny 2008), sleep disturbances (O'Gorman 2006), feeling undesirable, frequent crying, and avoidance of eye contact (Tracy, 2012). Furthermore, the affectual damage brought by verbal abuse is devastating and severe since it holds long-term health consequences such as high blood pressure and asthma (Sonas Housing Association, 2012), depression(Cromie 2007), emotional instability, suicidal thoughts (Tracy, 2012),physical pain without cause (O'Gorman 2006), and memory gap disorder (Holly 2012).

Workers routinely experience humiliation and xenophobic behavior (Nyamnjoh (2006) cited by Crush (2009) defines xenophobia as the intense dislike, hatred or fear of others. At times abuse can reach the level of basic violations of human rights (Manseau 2006). However, there is a great challenge for a successful prosecution of employers inflicting corruptive abuse due to the difficulty of gathering evidence (HRW, 2008a) and due to the lack of tangible evidence it can be harder for women to name it or to show its impact (Sonas Housing Association, 2012).

Confrontative Abuse

Human Rights Watch (Volume 18, No. 7, July 2006b) mentioned that physical violence against domestic workers ranges from slaps to severe beatings using implements such as shoes, belts, sticks or household implements; knocking heads against walls; and burning skin with irons, among other forms of violence. Moreover, another report HRW (2008a) stated that many women have said that physical violence worsened if they demanded their salaries, asked to return to their home countries, or tried to assert other rights. While some employers physically abused their workers as a form of punishment for mistakes, others as a means of discipline, regardless of behavior (HRW 2006b& 2011). Physical abuse also includes deprivation of sleep (Tracy, 2012) and physical exhaustion or overwork. (Murty 2009, Pacis 2008)

The case of physical abuse of underprivileged OFWs is not an isolated case. It happened in almost all countries employing domestic workers. A group of journalism students from Northwestern University in Qatar reported that the number of abused domestic workers in Qatar is growing according to a 2011 report by Amnesty International. The Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking reports a similar trend, saying there was a 4 % increase from 2009 to 2011 in the number of complaints filed by maids (Bouguerra, et. al. 2012). Undeniably, physical violence or abuse becomes an ongoing concern as it always follows effectual and affectual consequential damages that can be direct, chronic, severe, devastating, far-reaching, and long-lasting. As stated by Rachel Mullen, chairperson of Sonas Housing, in one of her articles, the person experiencing physical abuse can name what is happening as there are bruises and scars to prove it (SHA, 2012). Many migrant domestic workers bore either fresh wounds or scars from physical abuse. In several cases, the physical abuse was so severe that migrant women required hospitalization or worse even died from their injuries (HRW, July 2008a).

The effectual damage of physical abuse include physical injuries such as bruises, broken bones, (Tracy, 2012) abrasions, burns, (Murty 2009) wounds, missing tooth, multiple scars, (HRW 2008), a cast, shorn hair (HRW, 2007). In one of the articles published in Healthy Place website (2012); the short-term effects of physical abuse are typically obvious and treatable by an emergency room physician or other healthcare provider. However, abusive employers often prohibited domestic workers from receiving medical attention after beatings (HRW, 2008).

The effects brought about by physical violence should not be disregarded. Consequently, if these injuries are not treated, they could lead to a more serious and drastic consequence. Some women told Human Rights Watch that they experienced enduring health consequences of injuries they had sustained, such as headaches, back pain, or loss of range of movement in their arms (HRW, 2007). Employers may inflict physical abuse so severe that it leads to a domestic worker's hospitalization, permanent scarring, paralysis, (HRW, 2006) disfiguration of face, impaired memory, defective posture, vision loss (Murty 2009) deformity, fractures, suicide, and death (HRW, 2011).

The foregoing consequences are affecting the victims' physical and mental health. According to World Health Organization, research consistently finds that the more severe the abuse, the greater its impact on women's physical and mental health. In addition, the negative health consequences can persist long after abuse has stopped (WHO, 2012). Other physical illnesses, such as diabetes may be worsened due to physical abuse as the victim may have been denied of access to care. Murder and suicide are also frequently associated with physical abuse (Tracy, 2012). Depression is the primary psychological response to physical abuse. Women who could not sustain or cope with the physical violence will resort to suicidality and self-harm which could eventually lead to the most tragic affectual consequences such as insanity and death (Dillon, et. al. 2013).

In some cases, the only way that a domestic worker was able to leave their abusive employer was that when their health deteriorated to such an extent they required hospitalization. Other domestic workers escaped and ran to the embassy or consulate, in other cases to the police. Some

sought assistance from other migrants, labor agents, whereas others were forced to return to their abusive employers (HRW, 2008a).

Coercive Abuse

According to Murty (2009), domestic maid violence is an assault and coercive behavior, which mainly includes physical, psychological and at times sexual, by employer or household members of employer against a person hired as a domestic help. Human Rights Watch (2008a) reported that racism and discrimination against non-Muslims also factored into some employers' treatment of migrants as less than human. Sexual assault or violence is one of the most reported cases of women migrant workers around the globe. A report submitted to the 42nd session of the CEDAW Committee (2008) mentioned that many of these cases were reported to local embassies, the press, and the police; however, most victims were too intimidated to sue their employers, although they had the right to do so.

Women's Health (2011) defines sexual assault or abuse as any type of sexual activity that a person does not agree to (www.women'shealth.gov). Consequently, sexual abuse is coercive; it applies the use of force to carry out the malicious act of which the victim does not agree or forced to do. These form of abuse range from inappropriate touching, hugging, kissing, and to the farthest extent rape (Manseau, 2006). It should be noted here that domestic workers are not only vulnerable to sexual abuse by their sponsors but also by the sponsor's sons or other men visiting the house or other foreign workers, especially if the worker's bedroom is situated outside the house (Al-Najjar 2004). The true dimensions of sexual violence against women and girl domestic workers may never be known; under-reporting is likely to be significant due to workers' isolation and the deep social stigma attached to sexual assault (HRW, 2006). Several testimonies of coercive abuse among underprivileged female OFWs, usually; the victims are helpless and denied of justice.

On one hand, coercive abuse such as sexual violence can include a diverse range of consequences such as effectual damage and affectual damage. Boyd (2011) mentioned that during the attack (sexual assault) itself, it is common to experience reactions such as an intense fear of death and dissociation. These are natural physical responses considered as effectual damage or short-term effect. Due to the victim's resistance, these physical injuries are immediately visible: bites, bruises, concussions, and wounds (LCCEWA, 2013); abrasions, lacerations, punctures, burns, as well as fractures and broken bones or teeth (WHO 2012).

According to an unnamed victim of rape in Eastel (1994) cited by Boyd (2011), rape is not just physical violence, it is also mental violence. It is not easily forgotten. Moreover, the affectual damage of coercive abuse can be acute, chronic, and long-lasting. It impacts the victim's physical health, mental health, and social wellbeing. Women who are victims of coercive abuse suffer from affectual physical damages; chronic diseases such as diabetes and arthritis (Boyd, 2011; cited in Golding, 1994; Stein & Barrett-Connor, 2000) unwanted pregnancies, death, including femicide and AIDS related death (WHO 2012). The affectual mental damages include: depression, flashbacks, suicidal thoughts (RAINN, 2009); stress, anxiety disorder, poor self-esteem (WHO, 2012); nightmares and sleep disorders, (PTSD) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Boyd 2011 cited in Calhoun & Resnick, 1993, cite in Astbury, 2006). Furthermore, the affectual

damage brought to a victim's social wellbeing includes: avoid social situations with men, difficulties with trust, communication, intimacy, sexual relations and enjoyment of social activities (Boyd, 2011).

Victims of corruptive, confrontative, and coercive abuse who survived from the adversity suffer different consequential damages that are effectual and affectual. However, these negative effects produce a ripple of consequences that impacts the victim's physical health, mental health, and social wellbeing. Those who escaped and survived ran to seek shelter and protection to their national embassies; as confirmed by Kanaan (2011) maids cluster for help in their embassies because they find people there speaking the same language, with the same customs and are comfortable talking to them. Nevertheless, the Philippine embassy in Qatar has afforded temporary shelter to house the runaways or those who escaped from their abusive employers. However, due to a significant number of runaways and the long wait to have their cases solved; the shelter becomes difficult and over-populated. It also lacks good facilities, provision to healthcare, and legal helpline (Kanaan, 2011; HRW Report 2010).

As a whole, domestic work is still undervalued and their sad plights are left unnoticed. However, from a report in ILO Conference, 99th Session, (2010); the situation of domestic workers has been a concern of the ILO for decades. As early as 1965 the International Labor Conference adopted a resolution on the conditions of employment of domestic workers, which recognized the "urgent need" to establish minimum living standards "compatible with the self-respect and human dignity which are essential to social justice" for domestic workers in both developed and developing countries.

Conclusion

For decades, the ongoing global concern of the different abuses experienced by the underprivileged female OFWs in the hands of their employers exemplifies the failure of law enforcers to protect migrant domestic workers from workplace maltreatment, to prosecute abusers, and to end violence against women migrant workers. This study has meaningfully identified three forms of abuse namely: corruptive, confrontative, and coercive that bring about a wave of consequential damages ranging from immediate known as effectual damage that are directly visible and long-lasting known as affectual damage that leave scars of painful past experiences.

There are numerous studies and researches conducted to expose the workplace abuses and violations committed by employers against female domestic workers and recommendations to address these issues to improve their situations have been made. While such recommendations are specific to reforms in domestic work, other underlying issues such as the consequential damages brought about the abuse of underprivileged OFWs has to be taken into consideration.

Considered as industrial partners, employees, regardless of the nature of job they are assigned to, are prime movers that balance between the scale of productivity and progress in the business or even in the household; thus, they deserve to be treated fairly and humanely.

Finally, findings of this study reveal forms of abuse but do not specify the person or nationality responsible for committing such crimes. Henceforth, determining frequency of abuse committed by certain nationalities and taking into accounts data that show prevailing countries that have recorded most numbers of abused employees especially women are fertile areas for succeeding research endeavor.

Recommendations

Those who survived the abuses have suffered tremendously in the hands of their abusive employers, it is necessary to provide collective support and extensive services to successfully restore the degraded wellbeing and reintegrate them back to their families, the social community, and the global economy.

- **Provision of a clean and decent shelter that temporarily house the runaway domestic workers.**

Although some national embassies provide temporary shelters; but it is inadequate, it lacks facilities and becomes very crowded since majority of the runaways stayed for months while waiting for their cases to be resolved and paperwork to be completed.

- **Provision of psychological healthcare in the shelters.**

These abuse women are totally degraded and damaged. To afford counselors and clinical psychologist are important to restore human dignity by delivering social counseling, stress debriefing, and training on capacity building.

- **Provision of legal helpline.**

To ensure prompt action of reported abuse, fast resolution of cases, active prosecution of abusive employers, and immediate repatriation through provision of airfare.

- **Strengthen the memorandum that exists between the host country and labor sending country.**

Although, there is a memorandum that exists between the Filipino government and the state of Qatar that defines all the rights and privileges of these workers, including proper treatment. However, it is neither being followed nor being implemented; otherwise, abuse of domestic workers and women violence would have been avoided. Strict implementation of the memorandum will help improve the conditions of the domestic workers and abusive behaviors will be controlled.

- **Afford comprehensive labor protection for foreign domestic workers.**

In response to the social call for action, the Qatar government is also taking steps to establish official rights for the domestic workers by drafting a law that ensures more protection for them. As the new generation of leaders step forward, may this law be one of the top priorities for immediate enactment to help resolve the underlying issues.

- **Regulate and monitor recruitment agencies that deploy domestic workers abroad.**

To impose strict guidelines for labor agencies to develop schemes that ascertain domestic workers' are well protected and fairly treated by employers, such as regulation of recruitment fees, contracts, provision of trainings and orientation.

- **Raise awareness and advocacy**

To encourage external organizations and private individuals to support the broad campaign to end abuse of domestic workers through continued research about the prevailing conditions and needs of domestic workers and to enhance citizens' understanding to the true nature of domestic work, their contributions to the social economy, and the growth of the sector.

References

Al-Najjar, Sabika (2004) 'Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Bahrain', in Gender and Migration in Arab States: The Case of Domestic Workers, ed. By S. Esim and M. Smith (Beirut: ILO, Regional Office for Arab States, June 2004)

Bahrain Center for Human Rights, 'The Situation of Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Bahrain', Report submitted to the 42nd session of the CEDAW Committee, October 2008

Biordi, Diana L. and Nicholson, Nicolas R., 'Social Isolation', Jones and Bartlett Publishers, LLC

Bonnie RJ, Wallace RB (2003), 'Elder Mistreatment, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation in an Aging America', National Research Council, Committee on National Statistics and Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2003

Bouguerra, A., Polacco, A., Al-Darwish S. (2012) 'Maid Abuse in Qatar: A Growing Problem' Doha Stories – NUQ Journalism Students Report, <http://www.dohastories.org> (April 24, 2012)

Boyd, Cameron (2011), 'The Impacts of Sexual Assault on Women', Australian Center for the Study of Sexual Assault, (April 2011) <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/sheets/rs2/rs2.pdf>

Cornwell, Erin York and Waite, Linda J. (2009), 'Social Disconnectedness, Perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults', National Institute of Health, J Health Social Behavior Author Manuscript; available in PMC 2009 October 5

Crawford, Emma, et. al. (2009) 'Women's Understanding of the Effects of Domestic Abuse: The Impact on Their Identity, Sense of Self and Resilience', A Grounded Theory Approach, Journal of International Women's Studies Vol. 11 #2 November 2009

Cromie, William J. (2007) 'Verbal beatings hurt as much as sexual abuse', Harvard Gazette, April 26, 2007

Crush, J. & Ramachandran, S. (2009) 'Xenophobia, International Migration and Human Development,' United Nations Development Program

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2000) Handbook of Qualitative Research, <http://web.media.mit.edu>

Dillon, G. et al (2013) 'Mental and Physical Health and Intimate Partner Violence against Women: A Review of the Literature', Hindawi Publishing Corporation, International Journal of Family Medicine, Volume 2013

Drout, Michael and Smith Leah (2013) 'How to Read a Dendrogram,' National Endowment for the Humanities, lexomics.wheatoncollege.edu

Esim, Simel and Smith, Monica (2004), 'Gender and Migration in Arab States: The Case of Domestic Workers, International Labor Organization, June 2004

Evans, Patricia (1999), 'Verbal Abuse and its Devastating Impact', www.verbalabuse.com

Finlay, Linda (2009) "Debating Phenomenological Research Methods", Phenomenology & Practice, Volume 3 (2009), No. 1

Godfrey, M., Ruhs, M., Shah, N. and Smith, M. (2004) 'Migrant Domestic Workers in Kuwait: Findings Based on a Field Survey and Additional Research', in Gender and Migration in Arab States: The Case of Domestic Workers, ed. By S. Esim and M. Smith (Beirut: ILO, Regional Office for Arab States, June 2004)

Gammon, Katherine (2012), 'Why Loneliness Can Be Deadly', LiveScience Contributor, www.livescience.com, (02 March 2012)

Grady, Jay (2013). 'Verbal Abuse', Gods Word to Women, <http://godswordtowomen.org>

Groenewald, T. (2004) 'A phenomenological research design illustrated International Journal of Qualitative Methods', 3(1). Article 4

Halabi, Romina, 'Contract Enslavement of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates', Topical Research Digest: Human Rights and Contemporary Slavery, <http://www.du.edu/korbel/hrhw/researchdigest/slavery/fmd.pdf>, June 20, 2013

Harrell, Margaret C. and Bradley, Melissa A. (2009) 'Data Collection Methods Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups', www.rand.org

Hilleary, C. (2012), 'Maid to Order: Domestic Workers in the GCC', Voice of America, <http://www.voanews.com>, (December 18, 2012)

Holly, Kellie (2012), 'Effects of Verbal Abuse on Children, Women and Men', Health Place America's Mental health Channel, www.healthyplace.com (August 8, 2012)

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'Domestic Plight: How Jordanian Law, Officials, Employers, and Recruiters Fail Abused Migrant Domestic Workers' (September 2011)

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'Walls at Every Turn: Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers through Kuwait's Sponsorship System', October 2010, 1-56432-693-4

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'As If I Am Not Human: Abuses against Asian Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia' (July 2008a)

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'Exported and Exposed' Abuses against Sri Lankan Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates', Vol. 19, No. 16, Nov 2007

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'Swept Under the Rug' Abuses of the Domestic Workers Around the World', Vol. 18, No. 7 (b), July 2006

Human Rights Watch (HRW): 'Bad Dreams: Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia', July 2004 Vol. 16, No. 5(E)

International Labor Organization Conference, 99th Session, Report IV, 'Decent work for domestic workers' (2010)

Kanaan, Zeena (2011), 'Domestic Workers' Rights- In Qatar', Medill Articles, October 12, 2011 Retrieved: June 9, 2013 from <http://zeenakanaan.wordpress.com/tag/maid-abuse/>

Keltchtermans, G. & Ballet, K. (200). 'The micropolitics of teacher induction a narrative bibliographical study on teacher socialization.' *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18 (1), 105-120.

Laforest, Julie (2009), 'Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews with Key Informants', Institut national de santé publique du Québec, www.inspq.qc.ca, Retrieved June 23, 2013

Lester, S (1999) 'An introduction to phenomenological research,' Taunton UK, Stan Lester Developments, www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf, June 26, 2013

London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse (LCCEWA), 'Impact of Abuse', (2013) <http://www.lccewa.ca>

Manseau, G S (2006), "Contractual Solutions for Migrant Labourers: The Case of Domestic Workers in the Middle East", *Human Rights Law Commentary Journal*, University of Nottingham school of Law, Volume 2, 2006

Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Policy Brief No. 1, 'Standardized Contract for Migrant domestic workers', www.mfasia.org

- Moreno-FontesChammartin, G. (2005), 'Migration Information Source: Domestic Workers: Little Protection for the Underpaid', International Labor Organization (April 2005)
- Mouton, Charles P., Rodabough, Rebecca J., Rovi, Susan L. D, Brzyski, Robert G., Katerndahl, David A. (2010) 'Psychosocial Effects of Physical and Verbal Abuse in Postmenopausal Women', *Annals of Family Medicine*, www.annfammed.org, Vol. 8, No. 3, May/June 2010
- Murty, O. P. (2009). Maid abuse. *Journal of forensic and legal medicine*, 16(5), 290-296.
- O'Gorman, Kathy (2006), "You're Not Crazy", Yahoo! Contributor Network, May 31, 2006
- Pacis, R. (2008), 'Discrimination of Migrant Domestic Workers in Policy and Practice: Findings from Asia and the Pacific', *Visayan Forum*, Philippines ICGMD, Sofitel Manila, 2008
- Piper, Nicola (2013), 'Migrant Domestic Workers to Sustainable Development', UN Women (United nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)
- Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), Effects of Sexual Assault (2009)
<http://www.rainn.org/get-information/effects-of-sexual-assault>
- Rowe, Amy Newcomb (2010), 'Women Domestic Workers in the Middle East: Status and Sponsorship', School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, September 15, 2010
- Sayres, Nicole J. (2007) 'An Analysis of the Situation of Filipino Domestic Workers,' International Labor Organization (ILO)
- Sonass Housing Association (SHA), 'Women targeted by verbal abuse suffer severe health impacts', www.sonashousing.ie, (March 7, 2012)
- Stephen, Ian Dr. (2008), 'The traumatizing effect of isolation', *The Independent*, Tuesday 29 April 2008, <http://www.independent.co.uk>
- Stosny, Steven (2008) 'Effects of Emotional Abuse', *Psychology Today Magazine*, Published on August 26, 2008
- Toomey, Michele Dr. (2000), 'Women as Victims of Verbal Abuse', *Liberation Psychology*, <http://www.mtoomey.com/womenasvictims.html> (2000)
- Tracy, Natasha (2012), 'Effects of Emotional Abuse on Adults', *Health Place America's Mental health Channel*, www.healthyplace.com (July 28, 2012)
- Tracy, Natasha (2012), 'What is Physical Abuse?' *Health Place America's Mental health Channel*, www.healthyplace.com (July 26, 2012)

US Department of Health and Human Services, 'Sexual assault and abuse' (May 2011)
<http://www.womenshealth.gov>. (A federal government website managed by the Office on

Women's Health in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.)

Valenzuela, Richard G. (2004), 'Kasambahay (domestic worker) Program: Working Together Towards a Magna Carta for Filipino Domestic Workers,' IFWEA (International Federation of Workers' Education Association), 2004

Webber, Christine (2011) 'Beat loneliness - to avoid a stroke: Why isolation is as bad for you as smoking', Health Article, www.dailymail.co.uk, August 1, 2011

Women's Resource Service (WRS), 'The Nature and Effects of Emotional Abuse', 2009
http://www.wrs.org.au/flex/the_nature_and_effects_of_emotional_abuse/57/1

World Health Organization (2012), 'Understanding and addressing violence against women',
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77431/1/WHO_RHR_12.43_eng.pdf, Retrieved June 20, 2013