

**WORK RELATED CONDITIONS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF DOMESTIC
WORKERS: THE CASE OF SUMAPI MEMBERS IN ILOILO CITY**



A Thesis

**Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies
Central Philippine University
Jaro, Iloilo City**

**In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK**

**KAREEN JAY I. DIESTO
April 2012**

WORK RELATED CONDITIONS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS: THE CASE OF SUMAPI MEMBERS IN ILOILO CITY

by

KAREEN JAY I. DIESTO

ABSTRACT

This study on domestic workers sought to describe the work related conditions and coping strategies of SUMAPI members in Iloilo City. Among the variables considered are the socio demographic characteristics and profile of their respective parents; reasons of engaging in domestic works; socio-economic characteristics of employers; working conditions, type of domestic works performed, compensation, time allocation, treatment, privileges and benefits; and the problems they encountered and their coping strategies.

The research was focused mainly on the in-school domestic workers of SUMAPI organization in Iloilo City. Respondents were chosen from four (4) national high schools in Iloilo City, namely: Jaro National High School, Lapaz National High School, Mandurriao National High School and Iloilo City National High School.

Apart from administered questionnaire, additional data were gathered by the researcher thru Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with officers of the organization and in depth-interview with key informants including former staff of Visayan Forum, Kasambahay Advisers and former social work field workers. Analysis of the data was

both qualitative and quantitative. Actual stories and narratives were used as basis for the case studies.

Major Findings

Majority of domestic workers were females in between 18-28 years old. Most of them were the eldest child in the family of 7-9, coming from different municipalities in the province of Iloilo, as well as in other provinces in Western Visayas and other regions. All of them were single and in-school. While they came from a large family, only five of their parents went beyond high school with a single college graduate. Consequently, both the parents of the respondents were into a low paying job as workers and peasants with a greater majority of mothers being plain housewives.

Schooling was the main reason for the majority of the respondents in engaging in domestic work. The other top reasons the greater majority identified were associated to the personal needs, e.g. lack of money to buy personal things and the needs of the family.

Majority of domestic workers employers and their spouse were ages 50 and below, college graduates, and were professionals. The socio economic condition of the employers was stable as majority were homeowners in subdivision, some in exclusive setting. Most of the employers are male and professionals, while others were in the business and public services. Similarly, their spouses were in professional practices. Some were pensioners while others worked in government and engaged in business.

In terms of employer-employee relationship, majority of domestic workers perceived their employers to be strict but approachable, some lenient while only a few

were not approachable. Conflicts most often came from the wives of their employers, some from children and other household members.

In general, domestic workers were well treated by their employers. However, most of them were engaged in multiple tasks with 4-6 types of domestic work performed everyday. Most woke up early in the morning and slept late at night, and performing domestic works for more than eight hours even after their night classes. Despite these, some domestic workers were not paid a monthly compensation. Instead, they were given monthly allowance of P500 – 1,000 and the opportunity for schooling. Only one enjoyed SSS privilege and another one with PhilHealth. Same percentages enjoyed 13th month pay with four and three respondents having vacation leave and sick leave, respectively.

The most common problems encountered by domestic workers were lack of other benefits like SSS, Philhealth. Despite their problems, many were not conversant about it fearful that they might stop schooling. These children have dreams and aspirations in life to finish schooling and to help their poor families.

The two major coping strategies of domestic workers when confronted with problems were internal and with support from friends. Majority tried to cope up with their problems by themselves through various ways and means. Some just cried while others prayed, either slept, thought or studied when troubles came.

Conclusion

Domestic workers were vital to modern households, but their inputs were largely unrecognized and undervalued. While the demands of their work have been big, the compensation benefits and privileges they enjoyed were minimal. Most of them encountered problems at work, but they were afraid to tell because of fears that they

might lose their work, they would stop from schooling, and they could not send money to their families. With this, they endured the difficult working conditions and did not mind problems because the most important to them was the opportunity to go to school and the chance to help their families. Domestic workers were very determined to succeed in life because they have dreams and aspirations.

Throughout the years of work experience, they have developed coping strategies in facing various problems both personal, familial and work-related. Foremost, was the internal capability to cope with the harsh realities in life. Likewise, they have developed their support system thru friends, classmate and fellow SUMAPI members.