

# Untold Story: Unraveling the Abuses as Faced by the Overseas Filipino Workers

**Justine Marie Suelan<sup>1</sup>, Albert P. Balongoy, PhD<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Social Work Student, Social Work Program, Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Marbel Incorporated

<sup>2</sup> Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges-Marbel Incorporated

## Abstract

This qualitative research study aimed to explore the abuses as faced by the Overseas Filipino Worker while working abroad and the lessons learned from them. The study utilized a narrative approach and used a validated interview guide consisting of five research questions. Five participants who met predetermined criteria were selected for the study. The research was conducted in the area of South Cotabato, Philippines. The study revealed that Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) plays a crucial role in the Philippines' economy, having the desire to provide a better future for their families. However, their journey is often filled with various forms of abuse. These abuses have profound impacts on their mental health, leading to feelings of insanity, depression, and even suicide ideation. Despite the challenges that they've experienced, OFWs utilized coping strategies such as faith, mind diversion, access to medical support, and family support to overcome all of these difficulties. Through their experiences, they gain life lessons in resilience, appreciation for life, spiritual connection, trust awareness, family inclusivity, and health prioritization. These lessons shape their character, strengthen their determination, and deepen their familial bonds, ultimately enriching their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Ultimately, this study underscores the necessity of comprehensive measures to protect their well-being and dignity.

**Keywords:** Abuse, Abroad, Mental Health, Overseas Filipino Workers, Resilience

## 1. Introduction

Abuse is a deviant act, mistreatment or harmful actions towards an individual or group. It can be in a form of physical, emotional, verbal or sexual mistreatment. Abuse can happen to anyone, but one of the groups who likely to suffer from this is the Overseas Filipino Workers. The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in Region 12 recorded at least 1,743 cases of abuses or maltreatment among Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) from the region last 2019. At least 622 cases involved OFWs from South Cotabato and those cases were based on the complaints received by their office from January to December 2019. One of the most common complaints cited was maltreatment among OFWs. With the growing numbers of abuses among OFWs, the officials of OWWA XII urged those who were planning to work abroad to be extra careful.

The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who worked abroad during the period of April to September 2021 was estimated to 1.83 million (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). A report coming

from the World Economic Forum states that 53% of Filipino aged 15-30 years old wants to work abroad as long as they are paid with high salaries without knowing the possible risk that might happen to them. As early as January 2018, the government had suspended OFW deployment to Kuwait following the deaths of seven Filipino household services workers due to suspected abuse. The agencies that was tasked to address OFWs concerns were set up but the government personnel is not enough to monitor the massive numbers of OFWs who works abroad to provide timely assistance to those in need.

The chairman of the House committee on overseas workers affairs cited the need for government to take more pro-active direction to ensure the justice is swiftly served to the perpetrators. They also encouraged the public to report all the incidents of possible abuse or exploitation among OFWs.

The reason of the researcher in conducting a study on the lives of OFWs who suffered from abuse or maltreatment is to know why they choose to work abroad, the type of abuse that they encounter, the impact of abuse to them, what are the coping strategies used to overcome the struggles that they had and the life lesson they learned throughout their journey. The qualitative data for this study were gathered through individual story and interview. In the end, better understanding of these experiences can be used to inform and educate the individuals on how was the journey of these hailed modern day heroes.

Furthermore, the researcher should be able to understand and realize the journey of Overseas Filipino Workers that could help her as a future Social Worker on what are the actual methods used as well as to apply all the knowledge gained that could help her in the near future. As a researcher, she wants to be an inspiration to the OFWs, future OFWs and people with an OFW family and this study could also be way to empower the rights of every OFWs who are sacrificing their life to help their family.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to unravel the abuses as experienced by the Overseas Filipino Workers abroad.

Moreover, it sought to answer the following statements:

1. What are the primary reasons that they work abroad?
2. What type of abuse did they experience?
3. What are the impacts of this abuse to them?
4. What are the coping strategies used to overcome the abuse that was experienced?
5. What are the life lessons did they gained throughout their journey?

### **Theoretical Lens**

OFWs are accepting the challenges of life and offering sacrifices to improved their living condition. Not knowing what kind of destiny awaits them while working in the other country.

The Psychosocial Theory by Erikson (1950), highlights the interplay between individual psychological development and the social environment. In the context of the OFWs who suffers from abuse, it can disrupt their progression through these stages, specifically in the areas of trust, identity and autonomy. The abuses that they experienced may destroy the trust in others including their family, loved ones, friends and other people. Moreover, the trauma of abuse can affect their sense of identity that may lead to question about their self-worth and purpose. Lastly, it will also challenge their sense of autonomy, in a sense that, they may feel powerless because of the mistreatment that they experienced. The application of this theory will help the researcher as practicing the methods of Social Work profession. This theory

also relates to the field of social work as it provides a framework for understanding the stages of human development and the challenges individuals may face during at each stage. Moreover, this theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction, relationships and the role of the society in shaping a person's identity. It also highlights the significance of cultural and societal influences on development, which aligns to the social work professions' commitment to social justice.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study can help the families of OFWs understand their struggles and provide better support to their loved ones. It will also guide future OFWs on what to expect when working outside the country and how to stay safe. This study can assist policymakers and government officials in improving laws and protections for OFWs. It also benefits social workers by helping them improve programs and advocate for the rights of OFWs. Social work students can build empathy and deeper understanding of OFWs issues, preparing them to support and advocate the rights and welfare of OFWs. The study aims the general public raise awareness about the maltreatment of OFWs and encourages support for their welfare. It will enhance the researcher's knowledge, writing skills, and understanding of OFWs experiences and it will serve as guide and inspiration for future researchers in studying and supporting the rights and welfare of OFWs.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Abuse refers to harmful and cruel treatment of a person that causes total dysfunction to an individual. Coping strategies are ways of individuals in managing difficult situation to alleviate stress. Mental health involves person's emotional and psychological well-being that affects how they handle stress. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are Filipino Workers who leave their homes to work abroad in order to support families and provide a better life.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **A. Reasons Why OFWs Work Abroad**

Many Filipinos bids farewell to their families and endure homesickness to explore more career opportunities in countries with strong economies, such as Canada, United States, Australia, and Middle East. Overseas Filipino Workers has no choice but to risk it all to improve their families living condition. Other nationalities from developing nations like Mongolia or Indonesia also seek better opportunities abroad due to similar reasons. The economic disparities, limited career opportunities and lack of job prospects can motivate individuals to migrate to other countries offering better prospects.

One of the reasons why most educated and highly skilled Filipinos prefer to work abroad is because of the unstable economic and political situation in the Philippines. The Philippines is such a rich nation, from natural resources to human resources, but unfortunately it is not well handled by the Philippine government and officers. Without knowing the effect of "brain drain" that the country is facing at this time. Millions of Filipinos are working outside of the country to contractual jobs and thousand are leaving yearly just to look for better and stable opportunities in other advanced country.

Majority of Filipinos who has the desire to migrate in other country are looking for an average wage of only P30, 000 or less a month, according to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

PIDS Supervising Research Specialist Aubrey D. Tabuga said that about 40 percent of the study respondents state that they are willing to receive less than P20, 000 to work as an OFW. When ask about the monthly wage that they seek overseas work, Tabuga said the respondents expect to receive a compensation from as low as P3,000 to around P 28,000. The key motivation for wanting to work abroad is economic in nature. Seven out of ten aspirants state that they need to improve their living condition as the main reason for working outside the country. These economic reasons are based on the underlying dissatisfaction of the workers with their current salaries. Majority of the respondents also expressed discontent with their incomes. Furthermore, 43 percent of migration aspirants do not feel satisfied with their living condition, and only around 30 percent on the non-aspirants expressed the same dissatisfaction.

### **B. Types of Abuses OFWs Experienced**

A report from the Philippine's Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs detailed the horrific treatment of Filipino domestic worker working in Saudi Arabia. The report noted physical abuse and rape of overseas worker was rampant in Saudi Arabia. 70 percent of Filipino women working as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia endure both physical and psychological abuse. Despite of this, workers still continued to enter the country as domestic servants. On January 2019, Saudi authorities executed a Filipino woman for killing her employer after allegedly attempted to rape her. After the incident, both countries barred Filipino workers from employment in Saudi Arabia.

Nearly 5,000 cases of maltreatment of OFWs were recorded in 2020, the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices presented figures which showed that in the Middle East alone, 4,302 cases of abuse were recorded last year. In Asia, there were 593 cases of maltreatment, while 86 incidents were reported in Europe and Americas. The POLO data also included the number of contract violators committed against OFWs, which totaled to 23,714, majority of which reported in Middle East countries.

The Commission on Human Right's state that there is an increasing number of distressed OFWs seeking help in the shelters and are waiting for repatriation in the oil-rich country. Several embassies in Kuwait, including the Philippine, receive over 10,000 complaints from Filipino domestic helpers in 2009 as per the data presented by the Human Rights Watch. These complaints are physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Moreover, non-payment of wages, excessively long working hours without rest, and many more abuses likely remains unreported. This year there have been 6,000 complaints from OFWs in 2017 regarding physical abuse, sexual harassment and even rape in Kuwait. Based on the data from Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), 196 OFWs have died in Kuwait since 2016, with almost 80% caused by physical abuse.

On January 2020, the Philippine government suspends the deployment of OFWs to Kuwait following the death of Filipina worker. The deployment ban was lifted in February 2020. The bilateral relation of Philippines and Kuwait has been ruined after Kuwaiti employers accidentally killed Demafelis in 2018 and Lago in 2019. On June 04, 2020, it has been reported that four OFWs in Kuwait accused their employer of abusing them. As for the statement of the victims, they suffer first from verbal abuse from their employer. Eventually, it got worse when the heartless employer started to physically abuse the four male workers. The four Pinoy workers were forced to flee and temporarily reside at their friend's home

to avoid the cruelty of their employer. The Philippine Officials on Kuwait started to discuss on how to help the Filipino workers. The embassy is also planning to repatriate the Filipinos after suffering from verbal and physical abuse for almost a year.

### **C. Impacts of Abuse to OFWs**

Verbal abuse is the means of controlling and maintaining power over another person. It involves yelling, put-downs, name-calling and belittling behavior. But there is more to verbal abuse than people realize. Other forms of verbal abuse includes blaming, criticism, judging and insulting. It can impact every element of life, like performance to relationship to success at work. Just like other form of abuse or bullying, verbal abuse have both short and long term effect, including anxiety, changes in mood, chronic stress depression and PTSD.

An individual who suffers from sexual abuse will generally experience high level of distress after the incident. The trauma it brings to the victims can lead to fear, anger, guilt, anxiety and sadness. The stigma associated with sexual abuse may cause embarrassment or shame for some people. In addition, the survivors of sexual assault have an increased likelihood of developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They might also feel that they are always in danger or always need be on guard that would lead to distrust other people. Other effects of sexual abuse can take toll on behavioral, physical and sexual health form months or even years after the event took place.

Abuse is common occurrence worldwide. Abuse is not only happening between married couples but also the interaction with strangers, co-workers and even with acquaintances. While the sign of physical abuse is typically visible and obvious, but the emotional effect of it to someone is largely out of sight. Physical abuse is the most overt form of abuse. It uses force to humiliate, control or coerce a victim to act in a particular way. It intentionally caused by injuries, some of the common form of physical abuse are choking, slapping and throwing objects. For women, physical abuse is a threat that comes with a different set of challenges. Receiving constant violence and the stress of expecting harm has been linked to chronic health difficulties like headaches. People who experienced abuse may suffer from PTSD, eating disorder, among other symptoms. Physical abuse may disrupt sleep patterns and has been linked to insomnia.

### **D. Coping Strategies Used by OFWs**

OFWs are less likely to seek help for their psychological distress whether formal, from professional services such as mental health specialists or in informal ways, from informal social networks of a family or friends. In most cases, OFWs seek professional ways only if the mental health problems are severe. This poses a hindrance for early intervention or preventive care because Filipinos are apt to seek professional help only when the problem shows severe symptoms. In coping with all of these issues and challenges, OFWs utilized several coping strategies. The most prominent coping strategies used a cognitive reframing in which they perceive their stressor as a challenge instead of a threat to them. Religious coping like praying for guidance and strength, going to church and attending church related activities is one of their used coping strategy. Distracting or keeping oneself busy like doing something else such as hobbies to take their mind off from the stress or traumatic experience is also considered as a coping mechanism. Others create a diversion through working hard or engaging in community activities



and use avoidance coping. While trauma is a terrible thing for someone to go through, that doesn't mean that you have to live with it for the rest of your life.

### **E. Life Lesson Gained by OFWs**

Working abroad is the biggest adventure OFWs may encounter. Working would make them appreciate each day. It's a great lesson to let go of any expectation and embracing challenges in the most moment while working in the other country. It will also make them realize how tough they are for being strong while working abroad. Coping with challenges flights and several days of suffering from homesickness. All of these experiences will help build resilience to someone. Working outside of the country means entering new world, the culture, norms and beliefs are not the same with the country they live in. Adapting to new environment to get used to changes and learning to deal with the unexpected obstacles.

The pandemic put a halt in everything. Lockdown policies and unemployment arise. During the pandemic a lot of OFWs returned home. They got fired and their contracts were not renewed. But with the skills training program of TESDA and OWWA came out to help those Filipino to still have income despite of the sad news. In the end, during COVID – 19 pandemic it taught hard lesson to overseas Filipino workers and their family to practice financial habits such as investing or saving money, setting up goals for OFWs eventual return home and living by one's means that could help them to overcome challenging situations like COVID -19 pandemic.

## **3. Method**

### **Research Design**

The researcher used Qualitative Narrative Analysis for this study. This approach focuses on studying and analyzing the stories that participants tell about their lives and experiences. The goal of narrative research design is to understand the meaning of attach experiences of the participants and how their stories relate to social phenomena. This method emphasizes the perspective of OFWs, especially their actual experiences of being abuse or maltreated. This approach has helped the researcher to further understand the live experiences of OFWs, where it included the reason why they choose to work abroad, the abuse that they experienced, the effects of these abuse to them, the coping strategies used and the life lesson they gained. According to Riessman (2008), narrative analysis can help the researchers to identify the themes and patterns through their stories. With this, it was helpful to the researcher to easily identify the themes and patterns through presented stories of the participants.

### **Role of the Researcher**

This study allowed the researcher, a social work student to enhance her skills and suffice knowledge. The role of the researcher is to document the study for the research (documenter) and enables them to understand (enabler) the reason why OFWs choose to work abroad, the type of abuse that they experience, the effects of these abuse to them, the coping strategies used to overcome the maltreatment and the life lesson they learned. Furthermore, the researcher's participation in seeking to reach the study participant's ideas, feelings and experiences is required, as this is a difficult undertaking that entails asking individuals to talk about a topic that are extremely sensitive or personal to them. Another primary role of the researcher was to protect and safeguard participants' data such as information and answers. Before the study can start, measures for protecting participants must be properly explained to them and

approved by an expert research ethical review board. Lastly, it is a must role of the researcher to seek advice from experienced and reliable qualitative researcher before embarking on and publishing the study.

### **Research Participants**

The participants were selected according to predetermined criteria with the use of purposive sampling strategy. It is a type of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment and experiences when selecting members of the population to participate in the study. This study involved seven to ten (7 – 10) participants living in the different municipalities of South Cotabato. There were five prerequisites for inclusion in this study. The participant in this study should have worked abroad multiple times and have more than five years of work experience. Must experience abuse while working abroad such as physical, verbal, sexual and other forms of abuse. They should successfully overcome the issue for them to freely share the experiences that they had. Moreover, they should be willing to share their experiences related to abuse that they experienced.

### **Research Locale**

This study was conducted within South Cotabato, specifically in areas of Koronadal, Lake Sebu and Banga. South Cotabato is a province where different origins converge and live in harmony despite of diversity in terms of traditions, customs and dialects. In 2020 census, the population of South Cotabato was 975,476 making it as one of the country's populous province. Koronadal City is also known as Marbel and the capital of South Cotabato. The total population of Koronadal City according to 2020 census was 195,398. Lake Sebu is a landlocked municipality in the coastal province of South Cotabato with a total population of 81,221 according to 2020 census. Banga is situated at the north-west of the province of South Cotabato. The town was derived its name from a palm tree known as "Buanga" which predominantly grew in the area. According to the 2020 census, the total population of municipality of Banga was 89,164.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher used semi-structured interview guide in this study. A semi-structured interview has been referred to as "conversation with a purpose". The interviewer used an interviewer guide, list of open-ended questions and topics that needs to be answered during the conversation or interview. The flexible nature of semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to gently guide or motivate interviewee if they looking for more information. This method gave the researcher the freedom to explore deeper or to encourage the interviewee to provide more extensive insights or to follow a new line of inquiry introduced by what the interviewee is saying (Burgess, 1984).

Moreover, audio recorders were used to record the answers of the chosen participants and camera was used for documentation purposes. Ballpens were used to write down the needed information.

### **Data Collection**

The data and information were gathered through the use of semi-structured interview. These interviews, to be specific, were consist of five questions to identify the abuses experienced by the OFWs. First, the researcher prepared a letter such as Permission letter for the instructor, informed consent for the participants and respondents agreement form. Second, the researcher asked permission from her

instructor to conduct an interview to her selected participants and to ask an approval on it. Third, when the letter was approved by the instructor, the researcher printed it and hold a photocopy served as her reference. Fourth, the researcher gave a letter informed consent where it informed the participant that the researcher will conduct an interview and information about the reason why they choose to work abroad, the abuse that they experienced, the effects of these abuse to them, the coping strategies used to overcome the abuse that was experienced and the life lesson learned throughout their journey. It was followed by participants consent form, which comprised the agreement between the participants and the researcher for conducting of the interview. After that, the researcher started to conduct an interview with her participants, the research questions were asked to the participant together with its probing question to help the researcher pin point or catch the important or necessary answer to the questions. Also, the researcher recorded the interview and took pictures that served as her guide. Lastly, the researcher then analyzed the data that has been gathered.

## 4. Results

### A. Primary reasons that they work abroad

Table 1: Presents the primary reasons why did they choose work abroad

Formulated Meaning	Clustered Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong desire to enhance the family's financial well-being and create a more promising future for the children.</li> <li>The ambition to improve the family's living condition.</li> <li>The desire to provide a better life for the child.</li> <li>Deep sense of responsibility and commitment to provide and support the family's needs.</li> <li>Determined to provide for the needs of children and secure a better future for them.</li> <li>The intentional pursuit of seeking employment opportunities abroad to provide support and assistance to the family.</li> </ul>	<b>1.1 Family's Well-being</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intention of earning money for capital investment.</li> <li>The individual opted to work overseas for better wages but indicates that sacrifices are needed.</li> <li>Fueled by the desire to build capital resources and to help parents.</li> <li>Driven by better financial compensation offered in the other country.</li> <li>Encouraged by high earning potential overseas.</li> </ul>	<b>1.2 Augmenting Finances</b>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspiration to become an OFW and views it as goal to be achieved.</li> <li>• Goal to work abroad as influenced by a family member.</li> </ul>	<b>1.3 Career Opportunity</b>
---	-------------------------------

\*Ang first ko nga ano sito...maahon ko sa hirap ang akon pamilya kag mahatag ang ano mo sa kabataan ang kinahanglan. For the future nila(Jonna: P1|86-88)

(My first like...uhm... is to lift my family out of poverty and to provide the needs of the children. For their future....)

\* So ang gusto ko gid tani sato ya nga maka....haon ako sa kapigaduhon. Amu gid na kay ang reason sang bawat isa nga ga OFW ginataya ang kabuhi tungod sa pamilya mo. Amu gid na ya...ti akon ya amo man na ang gina isip ko. Wala ko ya ga isip sang negative ah. Ang gina isip ko ya ang fa—positive. Kag tungod man tani sa ambisyon ko man eh nga kumbaga mag..mag mayo man ang pangabuhì sa akon nga pamilya. (Jackie: P3| 817-828)

(So, what I really want is to be able to lift myself out of poverty. And the reason why every OFW sacrifices their life is because of their family. And that's what I'm thinking about. I don't think about anything negative. What I'm thinking about is the positive. And because of my ambition, I want to make sure that my family has a good life.)

\*Ah..nag ubra ko tungod sa akon nga bata kay ano abi ko single parent. Tapos kailangan ko gid mag....ano kailangan ko mag..ughmmmm...Kailangan ko mag abroad para sakon nga—pag eskwela sang akon nga bata...amu nang dahilan.” (Irene: P4| 8-13)

(Ah, I worked abroad because of my child, since I'm a single parent. Then I need to...ughmm...I need to go abroad so that my child can...get an education. That's the reason.)

\*Kay para sa akon pamilya lalo na...sa akon nga mga bata... Apat daad kabilog bata ko ti sa pagkaon pa lang nila kulang pa tapos para man sa pamilya ko sa mama kag papa ko nga masuportaran ko man sila..biskan amu na lang ang mabalik ko sa ila....sa ila bala nga gin sakripisyo man sa akon tung sa una. (Ina: P5| 138-142)

(Because for my family, especially my children...I have four children and even just for their food it's not enough, and also for my family, my mother and father, that I can support them too...even if that's the only thing I can give back to them...for their sacrifice for me before.)

\*Para sa mga bata ko. Kay that time, kasag-- sang nag apply ko, kasagsagan sang COVID. Ang standard sang mga ano...sang mga ano.....like sales lady sa mga mall, especially parehas sa amon undergraduate, grabi ila standard pag abot sa..... tawag sini sa requirements tapos ang income pa gid. (Jane: P6| 60-72)

(For my children. At that time, when I applied, it was during the peak of COVID. The standard for those...those...like sales ladies in malls, especially for those with our undergraduate degree, was really high. They had strict requirements standards and also the income.)

\*Amu na lang na nga nagdecide na lang gid ko nga mag ...ubra sa abroad kay para ma sustain man kag mahatag ko man ang kinahanglanon sang mga kabataan ko kay nakita ko abi nga hindi gid siya sapat ang

sweldo ko sa.....pag provide ko sa kinahanglanon sang mga kabataan ko, sa adlaw adlaw namon nga kinahanglanon...amu nga...amu gid to ma'am nagdecide na lang gid ko nga mag abroad kay abi ko nang makabulig sa pamilya ko kag sa pag eskwela sang mga kabataan ko. (Ikee: P7| 17-27)

(That's why I decided to work abroad because I wanted to sustain and provide for my children's needs. I saw that my salary was not enough to meet their daily needs...so I decided to work abroad because I wanted to help my family and my children's education)

\*Kag para lang man maka-ano tani sang... maka earn bala, maka-ipon tani sang pangpuhunan... amu tani tung akon. (Jona: P1| 88-90)

(And so, I just want to...be able to earn, be able to save for capital resources...that's what I want.)

\*Ang reason sina ga... diri abi... diri makakwarta ka man pero gamay lang ang kita abi diri... didto sa.. uhh.. unlike sang ibang bansa daw dako ang imo nga ano didto... ti amu lang na galing eh ang sakripisyo mo lang.. dako man kita pero sacrifice ka gid... amu lang na. (Jona: P1| 96-100)

(The reason is that here, it seems...here, you can earn money but the income is small...over there, though, it's different. Unlike in other countries, the salary is higher there...that's all I'm saying. It's just that the sacrifice is greater...you earn more but you sacrifice more...that's all)

\*Ang nag reason nga nag abroad ko syempre maka..earn ko sang capital, makabulig ko sa mga ginikanan ko. Amu na siya ang...ang gusto ko nga dream of ko. Syempre—graduate na ko, amu ano diba pag nag graduate ta kailangan ta mag work mga amu na. (Jessa: P2| 1255-1259)

(The reason why I went abroad, of course, is to earn for capital, to help my parents. That's what I wanted, that's my dream. Of course, since I've graduated, we all need to work, like that.)

\*Kay pag sa abroad ambi dako ambi ang sweldo hindi pareha diri sa ano.. ano sa Pinas. (Irene: P4| 17-18)

(Because when in abroad, the salary is much higher, unlike here in the Philippines.)

\*Kung diri sa Pilipinas gamay lang man abi ang sweldo... Amuna nga nag abroad ko kay kahit ano...kahit papaano medyo dako ang sweldo bala ga haw....Nang makabulig ko sa pamilya kag mga bata ko kung ano ang gusto nila mahatag ko kag medyo hindi pa abi okay ang sahod sang mister ko sato nga time...kanang kulang ba...kulang gid siya ti apat nga daad na sila ang gaeskwela sato amu to eh nga nag abroad ko...nga nag ubra ko sa iban nga nga bansa. (Ina: P5| 143-150)

(If here in the Philippines, the salary is small...that's why I went abroad because even though...even a little bit, the salary is higher there...so I can help my family and my children, whatever they want I can provide for them, and my husband's salary at that time was not enough...it was really lacking...since there are four of them studying...that's why I went abroad...I worked in another country.)

\*Oo dream—oo na dream k—di kumbaga gusto ko siling ko gusto ko man ma experience nga maging OFW ah, ano gid nang OFW na kay ang nanay ko abi nauna na na siya sakon. (Jessa: P2| 1261-1263)

(Yes, it's a dream...yes, it's a dream...it's like I would like to be like my mother, who was already an OFW before me.)

## B. The type of abuse did they experienced

Table 2: Presents the type of abuses that they experienced.

Formulated Meaning	Clustered Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The behavior of throwing objects when angry that can cause nervousness.</li> <li>Extreme insults where it can diminish one's self-worth.</li> <li>Continuous verbal aggression accompanied by humiliation.</li> </ul>	<b>2.1 Emotional Abuse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The act of yelling induces feelings of anxiety.</li> <li>Pattern of abusive behavior through derogatory language.</li> <li>Intense shouting, indicative of heightened anger.</li> </ul>	<b>2.2 Verbal Abuse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restricted access to food.</li> <li>Insufficiency in time and food.</li> </ul>	<b>2.3 Deprivation of Basic Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The manner of hitting which resulted in the individual's fall.</li> <li>Aggressive assault of slapping and pulling of hair.</li> <li>Experienced the act of physical aggression.</li> <li>The aggressive act of slapping.</li> <li>Propelling an object to one's direction.</li> <li>Feeling of frustration that leads</li> </ul>	<b>2.4 Physical Abuse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manipulative behaviour attempting someone to engage in intimate acts.</li> <li>Disturbing incident of exposure and inappropriate behavior.</li> <li>Sudden and unwelcome intrusion into one's privacy.</li> </ul>	<b>2.5 Sexual Abuse</b>

\*Wala man.. amu lang na mahilig lang siya manghaboy, kung ano lang ang sa kamot niya tapos manghakig na siya, ihaboy niya ti siyempre ikaw.. nakil.. kulbaan ka ang nerbyos mo maano gid.. matubuan ka gid nerbyos to sa ila kung magdugay ka. Kay mahilig siya manghaboy sang gamit. Di niya man ka iguon pero ang kakulba mo lang bala haw..... maano gid ba.. maataki ka gid sa nerbyos kung may nerbyos ka gid didto. (Jona: P1| 210-217)

(There's nothing...it's just that she is fond of throwing things, whatever it is on her hand and when she's angry, and then she'll throw things, of course, you'll be nervous...you'll be anxious if you stay there for a long time. Even if she'll not purposely hit you but your anxiety will just grow...you'll be anxious, you'll have anxiety there.)

\*Grabi sila mag insulto ga didto ko lang na ano pag-insulto nga hindi ko mabatian sa ano mabatian mo sa ila. Tanan gid nga insulto nang down ka gid sa sarili mo once nga insultuhon ka gid nila. (Jona: P1| 551-555)

(They are very good at insulting. It's just that the insult you don't experience, you'll hear it from them. All their insults, like you'll look down to yourself once they insult you.)

\*Tapos abi mo maglakat kami sa.....sa nanay sang amo ko nga lalaki tapos may malimtan ko nga gamit sang bata k--sang alaga ko, nan didto singgitan niya ka sina, pahuy-an niya ka sina. Sa damo damo sing tao. Tapos kung ano ginahambal niya simo. Mahambal siya waay ka ubra, amu ni amu na. (Jane: P6| 220-225)

(Then we would go to...to my male employer's mother place, and I had some personal belongings of the child...that I forgot to bring, and there she would scold you, humiliate you. In many people. Then whatever she would say to you. She would scold you, she would say, you don't do your work, like that.)

\*Gina singgitan ako.... pinaka ano ko abi ang singgit bahala nga ..... hambalan mo lang ko hindi mo lang ko pagsinggitan kay ang nerbyos ko sina.... kay natubu-an na ko nerbyos sa ila mo...Five days pa lang ko ya naano na ko.. nanerbyos na ko. Kay ang singgit bala permi nang makibot ka lang gulpi ga singgit. (Jona: P1| 224-228)

(She yells at me...I'm really scared of her scolding...you can just tell me but do not shout on me because my anxiety... for just five days when I'm already with them...I'm already anxious because her scolding, you'll get startled when she suddenly yells.)

\*Biskan wala man ko may gihimo nga mali bala.... Makibot ka na lang na ma ulhot na siya tapos sige siya wala bala... Magsigiyaw yaw hambalon niya ko sina "you slow, you stupid. (Ina: P5| 56-58)

(Even though I didn't do anything wrong...She suddenly just get angry and start yelling at me. She'll say, 'You're slow, you're stupid)

\*Pero wala abi..daw hindi..daw hindi sila kabalo nga maghambal sang kalmado lang. Nang ginasinggitan niya gid ka bala daw parehas bala sinang...nanay nga ginaakigan bala ang bata haw. Ti ikaw nga nakabalo sa mga nang...urubrahon sa balay..nang bal-an mo bala ang ginahimo mo bala ma'am haw. Daw nasakitan ka man sa mga ginapangyaw yaw nila...na amuna tamad tamad daw ko kuno. Tapos nasayang lang daw ang nang ang ginabayad nila sakon. (Ikee: P7| 99-110)

(But it seems they don't know how to talk calmly. When she scolds you, it's like she's saying...like a mother who's scolding her child. Like you know what to do at home, like the work.... It seems you got hurt by their insults...and they're saying I'm lazy, that's what they're saying. Then they just wasted the money they spent on you.)

\*Wala sila gapakaon, kay kung halimbawa makaon na sila ya sa gawas sila maglakat sila na dal-on sang bata ya...ti ako ya ang ref nila may ara na cctv. Porke't subay lang gani na makita ya yawyawan niya ka sina. Ti alangan anhon ko ang subay, diba?. Di ta man maiwasan ang subay ya maano makadto makadto tana na kung diin. Makita niya lang na ang subay ahh perti yawyaw niya sina mahambal na siya no eat no eat naman. "Work work, no eat" amu lang na iya. Ubra ka lang na ubra wala kaon. (Jona: P1| 229-232)

(They won't let you eat, like if they will eat, they will eat poutside and take the child with them. That's why me... their ref, has CCTV. Whenever,like if they saw an ant, they will scold you. We can't avoid that, right?. We cannot avoid, if the ant will go there, it will probably go there. Whenever she saw a pest, she will then scolds you and says 'Work, work, no eat' is what they say. Just work and don't eat.)

\*Ang na experience ko didto kaya ko.. ano yang abuse gid ko sa time, sa gutom tapos ang trabaho ko di ko kaya. Nasunog naning half sang ano ko sang...nang kumbaga sugat sugat na didto wala sila ya pakialam sa imo. (Jessa: P2| 116-120)

(The experience I had there, like I was abused of time, hunger and my job, which I couldn't handle. It was like my hand was half-burned, like I had wounds there, but they didn't care about you.)

\*Ginhampak niya gid ko sa likod nadagma ko sa sa semento sa floor sang cr. Ang problema lang sato wala man siya dapat kabalo kung wala man ko—ang selos gani sang iban nga katulong. (Jessa: P2| 428-430)

(She hit me hard on the back, and I fell on the cement floor of the cr. The problem is that she didn't know that I didn't have – the jealousy of another helper was the cause.)

\*Siling ko ara ko sa cr kay naga..naga uli ko sang buli ni mama..Hambal ko sina sa iya.. Ti gin dugay dugay gin ano niya lang ko gin gulpi niya lang ko gintampa kag gin sabunutan. Ti lalaki siya ti gin hambal ko sa iya...hambal ko sa iya siling ko hindi ma na makatarungan nga ihh...gulpihon mo ko ya tampaon. (Jackie: P3| 149-153)

(I was in the cr because I was...I was washing my mother's buttock. I told him...Then, he suddenly hits me, and slaps me. He was a man, and I told him...I told him that it wasn't right to treat me like that...you suddenly hit me.)

\*Utod sang akon nga madam, nagkadto dira ti karon naga..girinual kay ti amu gani na kaagi sang...kaagi ka maltrato—kaagi man nga that time may bisita gin...gin tampa niya lang gyapon ko kag gin galbot gyapon ang buhok ko. (Jessa: P2| 610-613)

(My madam's brother went there recently, then there's a commotion and because of the maltreatment that was experienced—there was a time when there were visitors, he then slapped me and also pulled my hair.)

\*Kay tungod ano..sigi ambi kami away..tungod sa ano ba...sa trabaho gud, sa trabaho to siya. Tapos gin sakit niya ko, gin...gi tampa niya ko tapos gi—amu ning may stretch ang akon nga tsura nga agi sang iya nga kuko. (Irene: P4| 91-96)

(Because of what...we keep fighting...because of like...because of work, it's about work. Then she hurt me, she slapped me and I have a scratch on my face from her nails.)

\*Pagka--aga syempre nag ubra amo ko nga lalaki, galimpyo bala ko ga gulpi niya takon ginhabuyan ti nakibot ko eh nga...galimpyo lang man ko akon gin habuyan niya takon, mayad bala ga kay sa abaga ko naigo kung sa ulo pa to ambot lang gid. (Ina: P5| 118-122)



(It's morning, of course, my male employer went out to work, I was cleaning whe she throw something on me, and then it's kind of relief that I was hit on the shoulder part, if I was struck on the head, I don't know what to do.)

\*Tapos amu sato nga time nang gin habyan niya ko sang baso mayad gani nga daw hindi siya daw glass gid bala nga baso ma'am haw. Tapos naigo ko sa likod, amu didto na nagstart nga dow gainit na ang ulo sang akon nga amo sa akon biskan may mga oras man nga nami man gyapon ang akon nga pag ubra didto pero may..daw kalaba—kalabanan lang gid sa mga oras nga to ma'am nagtuloy tuloy na gid nga gapanghakig siya sa akon. (Ikee: P7| 89-96)

(After that she throws the cup towards me, it was a relief that it wasn't glass, ma'am. Then I got hit on the back, and that where it started that she easily got angry at me. Although there were times when I was able to work there, but most of the time, ma'am, she kept on scolding me.)

\*Ginapaagyan ka nila. Mauba na sila paypayan ka nila ka kwarta nga kumbaga maconvinced ka. Ti kung magbusong ka ya didto? Paano ka? (Jackie: P3| 916-918)

(They're going to test you. They'll get naked and will use the money to convince you to stay, like they are trying to persuade you. What if you'll get pregrant? How would you handle it?)

\*Tapos kalain pa gid kay naga uba tung lalaki ikaw bala nga babae ma-imagine mo to nga..hala ga masturbate siya ya ya. (Jackie: P3| 945-947)

(And it's even worse because the man is naked and you as a woman, you can imagine how...he is already masturbating.)

## C. The impacts of this abuse to them

Table 3: Presents the impact of this abuse to OFWs.

Formulated Meaning	Clustered Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspiration to remain free from mental instability.</li> <li>Diagnosed with panic attack as a result of extreme fatigue.</li> <li>Disliked past experiences that may contribute to trigger.</li> <li>Denying to acknowledge the impact of past experiences.</li> <li>Feeling of discomfort and nervousness.</li> <li>Abstaining oneself to eat.</li> </ul>	3.1 Verge of Insanity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclination to stay in an enclosed space, accompanied by hallucinations of hearing voices.</li> <li>Episodes of hearing imaginary voices.</li> </ul>	3.2 Depression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeling of despair and desire to end one's life.</li> <li>Sense of hopelessness with suicidal thoughts.</li> </ul>	3.3 Suicide Ideation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absolute exhaustion that results to medical treatment.</li> </ul>	3.4 Health Decline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being hospitalized and received medical diagnosis.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-imposed seclusion and withdrawal from social interaction.</li> <li>Social withdrawal and distancing from others.</li> </ul>	3.5 Isolation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stressed and distressed due to endless verbal aggression.</li> <li>Feeling of being drained as caused by stressful situations.</li> </ul>	3.6 Emotional Distress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The thought of being useless.</li> <li>Perception of being unimportant.</li> </ul>	3.7 Loss of Purpose

\*Nang number 1 sa isip ko sito ga, hindi ko gid gusto nga mabuang tungod lang—ang gina ano ko may mga kabataan ako, nag desisyon gid ko ya mapuli... kay gina ano ko naman siya nga mag change employer ako hindi siya. (Jona: P1| 295-298)

(The number 1 thing on my mind is, I really don't want to go crazy because—what I'm...., I have children, I really decided to go home...because I'm thinking of changing employers, but he don't want to.)

\*Pero daw...pag...naga dugay nga naga dugay gaggwa ang side effects sang imo nga kakapoy didto—asta nga na diagnose ko sang..31 years old ko, 32? Na diagnose na ko subong nga..sang nadiagnose ko sang....panic disorder. (Jessa: P2| 732-735)

(But then, as time goes by, the side effects started to show. It's like...I was diagnosed at 31 years old, or was it 32? I was diagnosed with a panic disorder.)

\*Iba gali nga may ara ka gina ano no...nang....ang menta illness mo...affected na ang mental illness mo pero...ang reason out sang mental illness...hindi ma na siya—kasi ang imo nga practice sang pagka early age mo...sukton ka pa mag ano ka na...kumbaga hindi ko gusto abi..daw natrauma ko..traumatize na ko sang mga na experience ko. Kaya daw hindi ko ma-accept pag once nga gina akigan na ko, once nga gina away ko ga trigger ko. (Jessa: P2| 840-846)

(It's really different if you have... like.. your mental illness...because...your mental illness is affected, but...the reason for your mental illness is not—because your practice from an early age is...like...I mean, I don't like it...it seems like I was traumatized...traumatized by my past experiences. That's why I can't accept it when I'm getting scolded, when someone argues with me, it triggers me.)

\*Ughmmm... Didto sakon kay ano....hindi ko gid siya ma ano..hindi ko gid siya ma...batun nga..amhun niya ko sito, kay hambal ko pagdiri ko sa Pinas wala ko to siya naagyan eh. Tapos pag-abot didto sa abroad amu na tung nadangpan ko. So dow kalain gid sa part nga ano...mag atubang ko permenti sa salamin pagmakita ko ning ano...hmmmm...madumduman ko gid ang gin himo niya sakon. (Irene: P4| 133-139)

(Ughmmm... In my uhmm...I cannot like... I cannot accept it...that she would do that to me, because when I was here in the Philippines, I did not experience such thing. Then when I arrived abroad, that's

what I went through. So it's really bad in that part...I'll just look at myself in the mirror when I see this...hmmmm...I really remember what she did to me.)

\*Gis-a dow...nang makita ko bala ang amo ko labi na pa gid tung nang lalaki daw ma trauma takon magpalapit sa iya tapos kung gis-a dow wala—dow ginasugo niya bala ko ma'am haw..dow hindi na ko kabati kay tungod nang...mabatian ko iya nang tingog bala kay ang tingog abi satong amo ko nga lalaki nang dow dagko bala nga tawo haw pero gamay man to siya ma'am nang. ang tingog niya bala daw nang karadlok bala haw tapos dow nagtatak bala sa..sa utok ko ang tingog niya ba dow nang..mangurog ka bala sa kahadlok kay basi nang..nang yawawan ka naman. (Ikee: P7| 183-192)

(Sometimes...when I see my employer, especially the man, I feel like I am traumatized. Whenever he got close to me, and if he'll asked for something, and when I hear his voice, cause his voice seems like a big person but he's not. His voice is so loud that it scares me, and I'm afraid because...I'm afraid he will yell at me again)

\*Tapos may times man nga nang...hindi ko bala malikawan ma'am haw nga nang hindi na lang ko magkaon bala haw tungod satong..kay ka—sabay ko abi magkaon tung kasambahay bala ma'am haw, ti nang..hindi mo na ma..punggan gid sakon nga maakig sa iya kay tungod dahil bala sa iya naakig man ang amo ko sa akon. Amu na kung kis-a wala na lang ko gakaon..gakaon ma'am, wala ko gakaon, tapos ginahulat ko lang na siya ma'am nga mag sulod sa kwarto tung kasambahay bag-o ko sina magkaon. (Ikee: P7| 214-222)

(Then there were times when...I couldn't avoid, ma'am, because I would think, 'I won't eat anymore, ma'am.' Because I eat together with the other helper. I could not resist to get angry at her. She's the reason why my employer get angry at me. So sometimes I wouldn't eat at all, ma'am. I wouldn't eat, Then I would just wait for her to leave and enter the room, ma'am, and then I would go back to eating.)

\*Dira mo na ma feel ang ano ang tawag bala nga depress. Damo damo ka lang mabatian nagakulong ako, naga higda ako ma feel ko nga gasinggit ang bata ko mamang. (Jona: P1| 520-524)

(That's when you feel what they call depression. I hear so many things, I lock myself up, I lied down, I feel like my child is crying, mom.)

\*Oughhmm amu tung naano ko didto kay mahambal ko kung amu lang man ni mas nami na lang magpakamatay kay siympre tanan nga.... mga hambal bala nga nang insulto mabatian mo sa ila. (Jona: P1| 552-555)

(Ughhmm, that's when I told myself that if I'm just going to be insulted all the time, I might as well just kill myself. Because all of the insulting words, you can hear it from them.)

\*Nga -i-careka nila, ginpahospital man ko—na..na.. ang dextrose didto, na os... naospital gid ko kay sa sobra ko ka kapoy. Nang daw na... kumbaga daw lack na ko sang energy mag trabaho ba. One.... hindi ka siling nga diri sa Philippines, 3 days bag-o ka pagwaon paayuhon ka pa. (Jessa: P2| 10-124)

(Like they take care of you, I was hospitalized—I was given a drip, I was really hospitalized because I was so tired. It's like...I lacked the energy to work. One.... unlike here in the Philippines, and three days before you get discharged, they let you recover.)

\*Didto ko na ano...na fertis ko nga ara sato sa hospital kay na ano ko na TIA nang daw na mini stroke tungod bala sa ano sa over fatigue, stress. (Jane: P6| 103-105)

(From there...I was hospitalized because I had a TIA, a mini stroke, due to over fatigue and stress.)

\*Tapos amu to, ay wala pa gali. Nagsak--after sina nga gin tampa niya ko nga kusog kusog naglakat ako sa lockroom, sa babaw sa akon nga room, sa 4th floor. Pagkwan ko didto nag ah....naglockroom ako. 3 days wala ko nagtrabaho. (Jackie: P3| 173-176)

(After that, oh not yet. After he hit me very hard, I went to the locker room, upstairs on my room which was on the 4th floor. When I got there, I locked myself in. I didn't work for 3 days.)

\*Siguro ano ga... mahambal ko nga na stress gid ko... Ikaw bala ga ubra ka mayawyaw siya gis-a kanang gusto mo mag focus bala sa ubra mo di mo mahimo himo kay hala...sige tana siya yawyaw... (Ina: P5| 182-185)

(I think that's it...I would say that I'm really stressed. When I was working, she's keeps scolding me, and sometimes you can't focus on your work because she's always there, constantly scolding.)

\*Kanang manog tulog ko bala ga gis-a sa kakapoy kag dugangan sang yawyaw niya makahibi na lang ko kay....nang stress bala ga haw pero ginahambal ko na lang na sa sarili ko na kaya ko ni ah...kayanon ko ni para sa mga bata ko kag pamilya ko. (Ina: P5| 185-189 )

(Sometimes when I'm about to sleep because of the exhaustion and the constant noise from her yelling. I just suddenly cry because... of stressed but I always tell myself that I can do it, I can do it for my children and mt family.)

\*So ang epekto gid abi sa akon ma'am dako gid siya nga epekto ma'am kay amu gani tung hambal ko gina nga nang nagahibi bala ko kung gab-i ma'am haw. Hmppppp..kay tungod.. amu to nga time abi nang may problema tung bata ko, tapos dugang pa gid nga nahakigan ko sang amo ko. Tapos ang—grabi gid ang epekto kay daw...feeling mo nang..wala ka bala pulos ma'am haw. Tapos ginahibi ko na lang gid na ma'am. (Ikee: P7| 177-183)

(So the effect on me, ma'am, is a big effect, ma'am, because that's why I said I cry at night, ma'am. Hmppppp..because that's the time when my child had a problem, and on top of that, my employer got angry on me. Then the—the effect is really bad because you feel like...you feel useless, ma'am. Then I just cry about it, ma'am.)

## D. The coping strategies used to overcome the abused that was experienced

Table 4: Presents the coping strategies used to overcome the abused that was experienced.

Formulated Meaning	Clustered Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profound and unwavering trust in God.</li> <li>• Praying for fast recovery.</li> <li>• God as a support system</li> <li>• Deep and strong connection with God</li> </ul>	4.1 Anchoring Faith in God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making oneself busy.</li> <li>• Finding ways to distract oneself.</li> <li>• Engaging in movie-watching.</li> </ul>	4.2 Mind Diversion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having medication to help oneself.</li> <li>• Having an expert help.</li> <li>• Having sessions from an expert.</li> <li>• Following the advice of the professional.</li> </ul>	4.3 Medical Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having someone to help cope with the issue.</li> <li>• Spending time with love ones.</li> <li>• Having Quality Time with Family.</li> <li>• Family members as an inspiration to move forward.</li> </ul>	4.4 Family Support System
---	---------------------------

\*Grabi ang hugot ang pagtuo ko sa Ginoo. Lord, hambal ko di ko gusto magbuang mapuli ako nga buang. (Jona: P1| 514-515)

(The faith I have in God is very strong. Lord, I don't want to get crazy, I'll go home crazy.)

\*Traumatized ka within —nga amu na natraumatized ka pero ang gina ano ko lang gina pray ko lang gid sa ginoo nga dali ko makarecover. (Jackie: P2| 577-59)

(I'm traumatized within—because I'm already traumatized, but what I'm doing is just praying to God that I can recover quickly.)

\*Dako gid ang nabulig ni God sakon kay...wala ko nag expect nga...ano nga nakahalin ko didto, tapos daw ano gid siya..daw wala man ko nag expect nga oh lantawa subong ari na ko diri sa Pinas. Daw ang akon nga pagtakas daw ano gid siya siguro.....ahmm tawag gud sini.. ahm..like ah miracle nga wala ko nag..nag dahom nga ma amu sini. (Irene: P4| 273-278)

(God really help me a lot, because I didn't expect...like I would be able to leave, and then I think...I didn't expect that, oh look, I'm already here in the Philippines. It seems that my escape was really...ahmm, I call this...ahm...like a miracle that I didn't...I didn't even dream of this.)

\*Ma pray ka lang kay wala sang imposible once nga mag pray ka kay God. (Jane: P6| 340-341)

(Just pray because there is no such thing as impossible once you pray to God.)

\*Pagpuli ko diri dugay pa to naggwa tas ang ano wala ko gapaymunong basta kung ano makita ko ga scattered manglimpyo—pero subong nabudlayan na ko kay may bata ko. Pero gina...apply ko gid kay amu na ang akon nga..ginaka busyhan nang makatrabaho ko para madula to sa isip ko. (Jessa: P2| 891-895)

(When I got home, it had been a long, then Whenever I see scattered things, I can't behave, I will clean it. But now it's hard because I have a child. But I really apply it to myself because that's what keeps me busy so I can forget)

\*Supposed to be kung gis-a paryas sina after ko nag abot diri nangita gid ko trabaho ko gid dayon. Malingaw ko malakat ko every day sa palengke. (Jackie: P3| 568-569)

(Supposed to be, like right after I arrived here, I looked for a job. I got entertain whenever I go to the market everyday.)

\*Ano nang....ginalingaw ko sarili ko.... Kanang kung mag ubra ko... hindi ko man maisip...parehas sinang kung mag lantaw ko pelikula.”(Ina: P5| 165-167)

(Uhhh... I entertain myself... like when I work, I don't think of it. Like when I watch movies.)

\*Kailangan mo gid sang med—medication. Kailangan mo sang bulong, ang iban abi gamali sila kay once nga hindi man abi mag..hindi mo na kumbaga hindi mo nasaw-an ang bulong islan naman na sang...imo nga psychiatrist ang bulong mo. (Jessa: P2| 903-906)

(You need med – medication. You need a prescription, because once you like if you're not used to the medication...your psychiatrist will change it.)

\*Sure...Kay naga weirdo na ko ba hindi ko na bal-an nga-a gapalpitte ko, hindi ko bal-an nga ga gurd ko sadto pero big help gid once nga nagpa-psychiatrist ka. (Jessa: P2| 931-933)



(Sure...That time I'm getting weird, I don't know why I'm having palpitations, I don't why I'm having gurd, but it's a big help once you see a psychiatrist.)

\*Gin ano ko nila nga nag amu ko sina, amu to daw nagkasession ko sang tatlo ka beses sa psychology gina pa ano ko nila. Gin i-storya man ko sa...sang... Tatlo to ka doctor nga lain lain nga ano..ahh Egyptian, Indian kag.... American nga ano nga doctor. (Jane: P6| 290-296)

(They told me the reason, that's why I had three sessions with a psychologist. They made me talk to...three different doctors...an Egyptian, an Indian, and an American doctor.)

\*May time nga amu na tapos permi ko lang gina ano tung permi ginahambal sang ano sang....sang.....ano nga sang sang psychiatrist bala haw. Hambal niya sa akon di ta maiwasan nga mag flashback sa utak mo ang nagakatabo di. Especially kay na hospital ka ang gina ano niya lang sakon kung hakig ka ipagwas mo lang syagit ka or ano tapos kung...ano isipon mo lang nga may mga bata ka. Nan amu nanng permi niya ginahambal sakon. Tapos gina isip ko lang na may rason kung ngaa nakalatabo simo. (Jane: P6| 329-338)

(There was a time it was like that, but I could only think about what the psychiatrist told to me. He said that I couldn't avoid having flashbacks in my mind about what happened. Especially when I was in the hospital, he would tell me to calm down or think about my children. Then I would just think about the reason why it happened to me.)

\*Naka move-on na ko. Okay na ko subong..uhm...di man siling nga...Kailangan ko gid sang mga ano gid kay ara man ang support sang palibot sa akon. (Jessa: P3| 1466-1470)

(I've already moved on. I'm okay now...uhm...it's not like...I really need those things because I have the support of my surroundings)

\*Gina spend ko na lang ang time ko para sa ano ko..sa bata ko. Tapos kag gina spend ko man ang time ko sa family ko para at least hindi ko siya madumduman. (Irene: P4| 252-254)

(I'm just spending my time for my child...and I'm also spending time for my family, so at least I won't remember it.)

\*Mga amu bala na, dayon gis-a gina ano ko ang time ko sa mga bata ko... Tawag sina... Kanang ga bond...gabonding bonding kami.. gis-a galigo kami swimming pool.. Nang mga amu na bala nga...ang gina himo ko. (Ina: P5| 167-170)

(Those times, I spend my time with my children...What do you call that...Like bonding...we bond a lot...sometimes we go swimming in the pool...Something like that...that's what I do.)

\*Tung una ma'am hmm..mahambal ko gid nga adlaw adlaw ko gid siya maisip ma'am haw pero tungod kay...nakita ko ang kabataan ko nga dow gahatag bala sila sakon sang comfort. Daw sila ang...naging inspirasyon ko ngaa nang....gin lam—gin lagpasan ko to nga mga kabudlay bala nga—tapos hindi ko na siya kayo maisip. Tapos daw gina focus ko na lang gid sa kabataan ko ma'am haw...nang sa adlaw adlaw bala di ba sa adlaw adlaw nga gina himo nang.. asikasuhon sila tapos istorya istoryahon ang mga—ang tung agot ko nang mag abot na siya gina istorya istorya ko ti nang..malingaw bala ko ma'am haw kag nang hindi nang...dahil lang sato dow na amat amat nga nadula sa akon nga isip kay gina isip ko nga mas okay nga nagpuli ko na lang gali ko kay nang....mas kinahanglan ko sang kabataan ko. (Ikee: P7| 260-273)

(At first, ma'am, hmm...I really couldn't help but think about it every day, ma'am, but because...I saw my children who gives me comfort. They are...my inspiration to over – overcome those hardships – and to not remember it. Then I just focused on my children, ma'am, every day, like in everyday I would just take care of them. Then I would chit chat with – my youngest, when he got home, he would talk to me, I

get entertain, ma'am. Because of that it slowly disappeared to my mind, which is okay. Because I was thinking that it is better that I went home because my children needed me more.)

## E. The life lesson they gained throughout their journey

Table 5: Presents the life lesson they gained throughout their journey.

Formulated Meaning	Cluster Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being strong to face challenges.</li> <li>• Having courage to overcome obstacles.</li> </ul>	<b>5.1 Resilience</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realizing to enjoy one's life.</li> <li>• Learning to appreciate life.</li> </ul>	<b>5.2 Life Appreciation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining strong connection with God.</li> <li>• Having God as an ultimate source of help and support.</li> <li>• Importance of having God in one's life.</li> </ul>	<b>5.3 Spiritual Connection</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being aware of whom to trust.</li> <li>• Not giving trust too easily.</li> </ul>	<b>5.4 Trust Awareness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of dedicating time for family.</li> <li>• Making time for family.</li> </ul>	<b>5.5 Family Quality Time</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of prioritizing one's physical well-being.</li> <li>• Taking care of one's health.</li> </ul>	<b>5.6 Health Priority</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the perspective of family members when making decisions.</li> <li>• Valuing family opinions in making decisions.</li> </ul>	<b>5.7 Family Inclusivity in Decision – making</b>

\*Ang natun-an ko lang didto ga.. amu nang dapat gid nga mag strong kita kay ako na feel ko nagapanghii...nagapanghina gid ako pag-abot didto (Jona: P1| 613-615)

(What I learned there is that...I should have been stronger because I felt so helpless...I felt so weak when I got there.)

\*Amu na siya. Di—kumbaga sa isa ka sitwasyon, di kamo magdali dali. I-enjoy mo anay ang self mo unlike me daw hindi ko pa gani na enjoy ang akon nga pagkadalaga. (Jessa: P2| 1067-1069)

(That's it. It's like, in one situation, you don't rush things. Enjoy your own self, unlike me, I didn't even get to enjoy my youth.)

\*Strikta gid ko....mga ano gid ko pero....ma lesson learned ga mature ka na, mga 30 years old ka na..ma..gaabot ka sa line of 3 nga ano pag ma..may mabatyagan ka na mga physical symptoms sa lawas mo marealize mo gid nga.. ay dapat amu gali ni like..dapat amu ni nang makadios ka gid. Sa adlaw adlaw niyo hindi niyo pagkalimtan ang ginoo biskin wala kamo gasimba. Hindi man perfect. Nang kung wala ka ga simba, pero si god ara siya sa imo—hindi mo bal-an ano ang hiwaga nga himuon sa imo ni Lord. (Jessa: P2| 1418-1427)

(I am strict...about many things, but...a lesson learned is that when you get mature, you're already 30 years old, and you realize that you're already in the line of 3...when you have physical symptoms in your body, you realize that...you should have been like...you should have been God-loving. Every day, you should not forget God, even if you don't go to church. It's not perfect. Like if you don't go to church, but God is with you—you can't understand the mystery that God does to you.)

\*Ang natun-an ko gid eh ah.....during that time nga...nga number 1 gid nga...kung ara ka sa problema wala sang iban gid nga makabulig sa imo Diyos lang gid ang dalangpan mo. Amu gid na ang dalangpan, ang Diyos. Dira ko gid natun-an nga ang Diyos gali...wala sang imposibli sa Diyos. Amu gid na. Kay ang...ang kumbaga kung ara ka sa—sa ginatawag nga problema, dira moo gid ma learn nga ang Diyos, dira—dira ko gid natun-an gid nga ang Diyos wala gid nagaka—nagaka—tulog sa pagbulig sa isa ka tao. (Jackie: P3| 866-876)

("What I learned is that...during that time, number one...if you're in a problem, no one else can help you except God. That's it, God is your only hope. I learned that God can...nothing is impossible for God. That's it. Because...it's like, when you're in...in the so-called problem, that's when, that's when you learn that God is always awake, helping one person.)

\*Tapos ano pa siguro.... Kanang magsalig ka gid sa Ginoo. Kay tung kapoy bala ko ga... Nang ara ko sa kwarto syempre wala man ko istoryahon didto... Gina istorya ko na si Lord, gapangyo ko bulig sa iya nga madula ang kakapoy ko nang mga amu na bala haw... Gisa-abi di naman ko makatawag sa pamilya ko kay kapoy man pero basta gatawag man ko sa ila pero di gid nang adlaw adlaw gid... Mga sa chat lang guro...gis-a abi makatawag lang ko sa pamilya ko sa Pilipinas madula dula na nang kakapoy ko ti di ko man na sila permi matawagan amu na nga kay Lord ko gaistorya. (Ina: P3| 202-213)

(I think ... to trust in God. Because I'm so tired... when I'm in my room, of course, ... I talk to God ask for his help to bear my heavy burdens. Sometimes, I can't call my family because I'm so tired, sometimes I call them but not everyday... Just through chat, sometimes, when I call my family in the Philippines, it gradually fades my tiredness, but I cannot call them everyday, so I talk to God.)

\*Ang natun-an ko kay di mag ano...hindi mag tawag sini..hindi mag salig sa...hindi mag salig sa kaupod . Kay kaupod ko ambi eh tung dahilan sato eh nga nag amo kami sito. So amu siguro nang natun-an ko gid sa akon nga pag abroad. (Irene: P4| 192-197)

(What I learned is that don't ... don't what do you call that...don't trust others. Because my co-worker is the reason why I was maltreated. So maybe that's what I learned from my experience abroad)

\*Okay man relasyon nila kay hindi ko bal-an nga okay kay siguro nang dugay na siya didto kag close sila. So ang na learn ko lang gid ma'am nga...nang hindi lang gid ko mag trust sa mga tao nga kay tungod nang bag-o ko lang bala sila nakilala tapos okay sila sakon, nang okay na dayon sa pagdaloy sang panahon kag oras okay na dayon ang pagtrato nila sa imo gali hindi man gali. (Ikee: P7| 308-312 )

(I guess their relationship is fine, I don't know why it's okay, maybe they've been together for a long time and they're close. So, what I learned is that...don't trust people just because I met them and they seem okay, then they're okay after some time of how they treat you, is not always the same.)

\*Siguro ano ga... Nangnatun-an ko nga may kung may oras ka lang man ihatag sa pamilya mo...Kay tung ara ko sa abroad, siyempre nahidlaw ko sa mga bata ko, sa akon bana kag syempre sa pamilya ko...Kanang homesick bala ga haw....ma homesick ka gid ditto... Kanag maisip mo bala nga gaano kaya sila didto, gakaon ba sila sakto... Amu na nga subong ga gabawi gid ko sa ila kung may kwarta kami ya maligo tamon sa swimming pool kanang bonding bala ga haw. (Ina: P5| 193-202)

(I think... What I learned is that if you have time, give it to your family...Because when I was in abroad, of course, I missed my children, my husband, and my family...I was homesick...You'll get homesick there.... It makes you think how they are doing there, if they are eating well...That's why now I'm trying to make time, if we have money, we can go swimming and have bonding.)

\*Sa akon abi nga na experienced especially sa... Ano ko nga na mini stroke ko na hana mo bala nga health is wealth gid. Then nga maanhan ka nga may ara pa gid nga mag ipon gid, para hindi ka.... para hindi basta basta malayo sa pamilya mo lalo na pag hindi ka kabalo mag ano ba.... Nang hindi willing ang utak kag lawas mo mag adjust. (Jane: P6| 345-352)

(From what I've experienced especially...I experienced mini stroke, I can say that health is wealth. Then, to have a savings, so you won't be far from your family, especially when you don't how to.... when your mind and body are not willing to adjust.)

\*Ang natun-an ko ma'am nga....siguro tung sa narealize ko bala ma'am haw nga dapat hindi ko mag desisyon nga nang wala na ko nakapamati sa desis—desisyon pud sang nang bana ko kag sa akon nga ano nga kabataan. Daw narealize ko ma'am daw natun-an ko nga dapat pamatian ko man gali ang kabataan ko nga dapat nang hindi ko magdesisyon sang kung ano ang gusto bala nila ma'am haw. (Ikee: P7|292-297)

(What I learned, ma'am, is...maybe.. it's when I realized, ma'am, that I shouldn't make decisions without listening to the decisions of my husband and my children too. I realized, ma'am, that I should listen to my children too, that I shouldn't decide what they want, ma'am.)

## **5. Conclusions**

This study represents the relentless attempts and struggle put into by the researcher. It required him several months and weeks, days and nights and even to the extent of mental breakdown and financial troubles. He has remained committed all through till the end, therefore he used this research as stimulant to continue with this struggle to enable him finish at the top. Support from others toward the researcher in these trials plus their own ability to make more of mental health finances as well as time disciplines added value. It was such an eye-opener experience towards resilience in conducting that particular research-never give in when pursuing academic pursuits.

This study will, therefore, show and shed light on the abuse against OFWs and how much more multifaceted it is in its effect on the welfare of the workers. The variety of feelings of the participants reflects a series of emotions including feeling worthless, fear of getting further harmed, difficulty with their mental health condition, and even social exclusion. Despite these, however, the OFWs were also able to exhibit resilience and resourcefulness in their coping mechanism, with the ability to sustain strength and find new ways of coping.

Second, their case reminds every individual of the devastating importance of support and resiliency building in the face of adversity. In other words, OFWs face unique challenges but in acknowledging these and in providing the necessary resources so that they could cope up with the difficulties that life brings, we would already be on the way towards creating a more compassionate and fairer society-cognizant of every human's value and worth over circumstances.

There should also be wide-range measures that will guarantee the general well-being and dignity of OFWs, including legal frames for protection of migrants, mental health support, health services, and social networks. This way, the effects of abuse in the long term are diminished for both the OFWs themselves and for their families.

After all, this study shows how strong and resilient OFWs are, and how deeply devoted they are to their family, and how they manage to overcome even the toughest of challenges. Their stories speak of the human spirit's strength and the will to persevere in difficult situations.

## **6. Acknowledgement**

The researcher would like to extend her deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for providing strength, wisdom and perseverance needed to complete this study. With his guidance and blessing, this study was completed successfully.

The researcher would also like to express her heartfelt gratitude to her adviser, Sir Albert P. Balongoy, PhD., who provided invaluable assistance and guidance throughout the research process. His valuable suggestions and continuous encouragement were instrumental in the successful completion of the study. The adviser's expertise and insights significantly improved the quality of this study and its final acceptance and approval.

Aside from her adviser, the researcher would like to thank the rest of their thesis committee: Rose E. Usero, PhDEM; Aynodin S. Marohom, RSW, PgD-CP; and Welma E. Dumas, RSW, for their support, feedbacks, exciting questions, constructive criticism and motivational advice.

The researcher expresses her appreciation to her supportive relatives, friends, classmates, and Social Work instructors, for their steadfast prayers, assistance and love, which served as her strength during the difficult phases of this research study.

The researcher immensely grateful to her bestfriends, Jayrene Faith P. Baldove, Issa Nicole E. Castro, Jacqueline T. Bagaforo and Jolina V. Flores, who have been a constant source of support and encouragement throughout this academic endeavour.

The researcher would also like to express her heartfelt gratitude to her participants for their invaluable contribution to this study. Their willingness to share their time, experiences and insights has been essential to the success of this research study.

This journey would not have been possible without the support of her family who taught her how to be patient and gave her motivational advises to complete this study. The researcher extends her deepest gratitude to her guardian, Mrs. Luz S. Babas, for her financial and emotional support throughout the research process. Her constant encouragement becomes the researcher's source of motivation and inspiration throughout the research study.

## **References**

1. A. Angala, "Why Filipinos prefer to work abroad", LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-filipinos-prefer-work-abroad-arnold-angala>
2. P. Darrah, "What I learned from working abroad", GoAbroad.com, May 2024. <https://www.goabroad.com/articles/jobs-abroad/what-i-learned-from-working-abroad>
3. S. Gordon, "What is verbal abuse?", Verywell Mind, Nov. 2022. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-recognize-verbal-abuse-bullying-4154087>



4. A. Martínez, C. Calsado, J. Y. F. Lau, J. Brown, “‘I don’t know where to seek for help, so I just kept my silence’: A qualitative study on psychological help-seeking among Filipino domestic workers in the United Kingdom”, *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health*, Dec. 2022, 2 (1), 100125.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100125>
5. J. M. Opiniano, “Migration and COVID-19 pandemic: Hard lessons two years on for OFWs, their homeland”, *Philstar.com*, Mar. 2022. <https://www.philstar.com/news-commentary/2022/03/24/2169590/migration-and-covid-19-pandemic-hard-lessons-two-years-ofws-their-homeland>
6. C. U. Ordinario, “Common OFW dream: Earn an average of P30,000 a month”, *BusinessMirror*, Apr. 2018. <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2018/04/17/common-ofw-dream-earn-an-average-of-p30000-a-month>
7. K. D. Peña, “Kuwait, where OFW abuse is routine, targets Filipino visas as PH gov’t flip flops on deployment ban”, *INQUIRER.net*, Jun. 2023. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1778311/kuwait-where-ofw-abuse-is-routine-targets-filipino-visas-as-ph-govt-flip-flops-on-deployment-ban>
8. E. Plumptre, “Mental health effects of different types of abuse”, *Verywell Mind*, Oct. 2021.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-does-abuse-affect-mental-health-5203897>
9. C. M. Ramos, “Nearly 5,000 cases of abused OFWs recorded in 2020”, *INQUIRER.net*, Mar. 2021.  
<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/194235/fwd-nearly-5k-cases-of-ofw-maltreatment-recorded-in-2020-polo-data-shows>
10. J. R. Santiago, “4 OFWs file complaint vs employer over alleged physical & verbal abuse”, *PhilNews*, Jun. 2020. <https://philnews.ph/2020/06/04/4-ofws-file-complaint-vs-employer-over-alleged-physical-verbal-abuse/>
11. E. Suni, “How lack of sleep impacts cognitive performance and focus”, *Sleep Foundation*, Jul. 2023.  
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-deprivation/lack-of-sleep-and-cognitive-impairment>
12. K. Thelwell, “Exploitation of Filipino overseas domestic workers”, *The Borgen Project*, Nov. 2019.  
<https://borgenproject.org/exploitation-of-filipino-overseas-domestic-workers/>
13. M. Tull, “Understanding PTSD after sexual assault”, *Verywell Mind*, Jul. 2023.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/symptoms-of-ptsd-after-a-rape-2797203> Jack C.M.,  
“Electromagnetic Effects on the Different Kinds of Water”, *Journal of Electromagnetic Effects*, 1992, 2 (4), 47–76.