

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

MEDIATED MOTHERING: A CASE STUDY OF THE UTILIZATION OF MEDIA AND
FAMILY COMMUNICATION AMONG OFW MOTHERS
IN TAIWAN HIGHER GROUND COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Master of Arts in Christian Communication

By

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ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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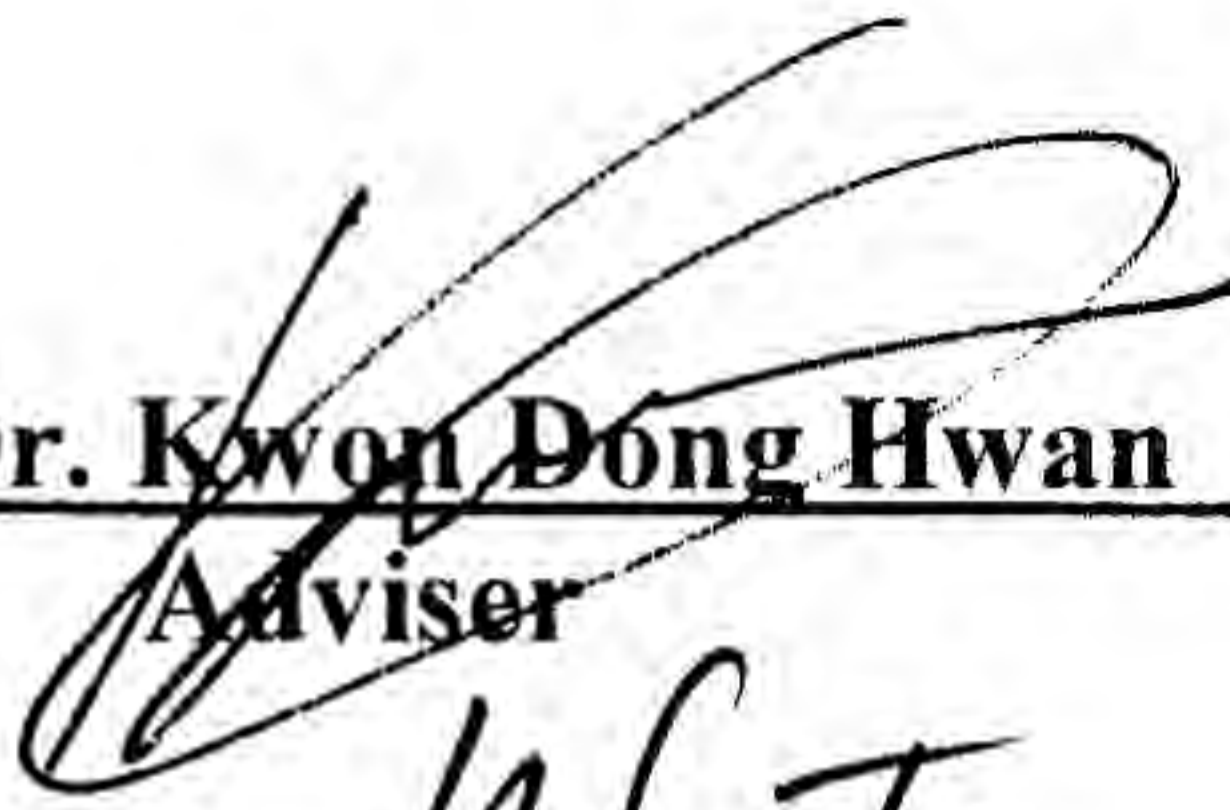
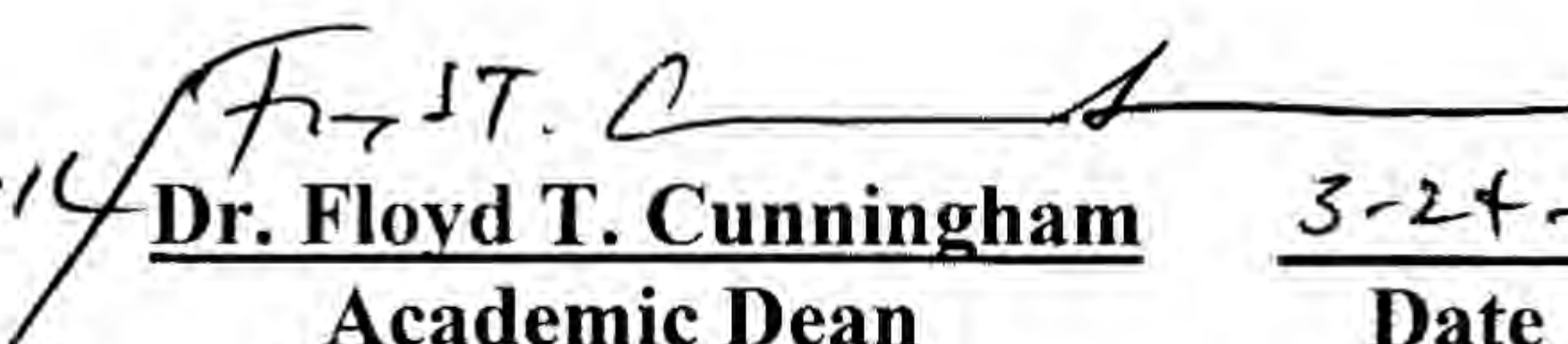

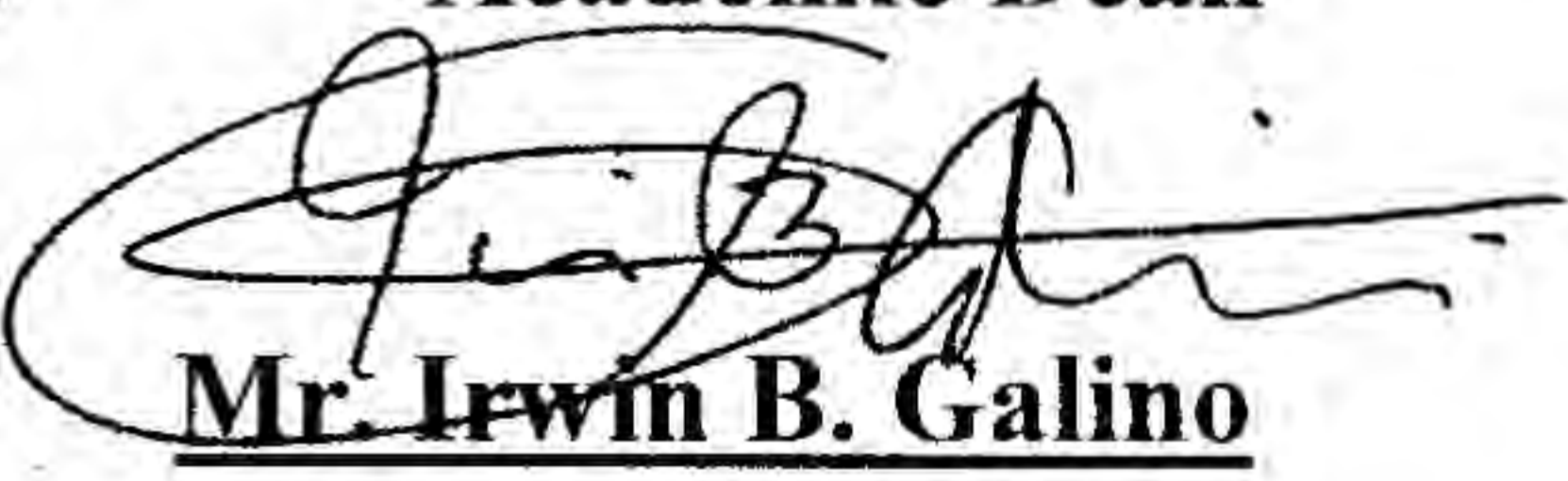

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AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION

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DEDICATION

To all the Overseas Filipino Workers and OFW Mothers

You are the heroes of your children and this nation.

To my Aunt Merly Sy

For the inspiration that being an OFW is a heroic act of courage and strength.

Your memory will continue to live.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study had been a long journey for me. It involved both challenges and joys for the entire year, and throughout the process of my thesis writing I would like to thank and acknowledge the following contributors who had made the case study possible:

I thank all the OFW mothers and sisters in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church for the warm accommodation and generous response they have given me in conducting the research and interviews throughout the eight days of my visit. I also thank Ms. Rowena Jane Gomez for coordinating all the twelve OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church.

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I thank the Lord who had led me here in the seminary. To God be the Glory.

ABSTRACT

Family is the basic structure of a single unit of community. In an ideal model of a family setting, mothers play an important role of providing guidance and nurture in raising their children. Mothers' basic roles are to teach their children in their home works, and to take care of them in times of sickness.

However, with the rise of overseas employment, motherhood roles had been altered. Its consequences and effects had become a mediated mothering. This study on the usage of media among the OFW mothers sought to find how the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church communicate with their children left in the Philippines through the various media and telecommunications such as mobile phones, Skype, Facebook and other social networks. Guided by Joseph B. Walther's Hyperpersonal Computer Mediated Communication (2011), this OFW mother case study administered qualitative methods, such as interviews, participant and field observation, and open-ended questionnaire. The OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church represented the cases of mediated mothering, in which they perform their roles and duties through the utilization of mobile phones and Skype as the main channel of their communication with their children. Through the geographical separation and long-distance relationship of the OFW mothers with their children, homesickness, problems in discipline, and emotional anxieties were the common experiences of the OFW mothers. In this given condition, the role of the religious community, Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church had been significant in ministering to the spiritual and emotional needs of the OFW mothers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The basic unit of a family as a whole is considered as a universal institution designed to procreate, build and establish a single unit of a community. Each individual unit of the family plays a symbiotic relationship to the community which is bound to affect the other members. Sociologist Randolph David noted that members of the family, however, are also members of other human groups, thus relations between the family members and the social environment are unavoidably reciprocal (2001, 114). Functions and structures of the family are not intrinsic to the family; rather they must be seen as a production of the sociological system, and consequently, the family undergoes transformation in form and function in response to changes in the surrounding society.

The rise of migration or overseas employment produced effects such as single parenthood, marital separation and other family problems. The emergence of transnational mothers has been drastically in-demand to support the household's resources. Thus, children are left under the care of relatives mostly by grandparents, aunts or uncles, brother or sisters (Panopio and Raymundo 2004, 252).

The Philippines has ranked as one of the export capitals of human labor abroad. Overseas Filipino Workers, as they are called, are Filipino citizens who have either temporarily or permanently immigrated to work outside the country. As Epifanio San Juan puts it concisely, "The Philippines has become the world's leading supplier of what is euphemistically called 'human capital'—the hands to do menial jobs for minimal

compensation, sometimes unpaid, and producing enormous surplus value for transnational corporations” (2008, 89-90). Indeed, due to the progressive increase of the OFW phenomena, the Philippines has been ranked as the “third largest exporter of labor in the world, second to India and Mexico” (San Juan 2009, 100; Tolentino 2010, 186).

In 1974, under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos, Presidential Decree 442 known as the “warm body export” or the Labor Export Policy (LEP) was promulgated to promote the overseas employment of Filipinos and to secure for them the best possible terms and conditions of employment (Abella 1978, 24). This Presidential decree has alleviated the economic crisis of the society and saved at least 80 percent of the Filipinos from unemployment and foreign-debt problems (San Juan 2009, 102). However, the situation for the OFWs persisted until the transition of the succeeding presidential administrations and were even hailed as “mga bagong bayani” (the new heroes) of the country (San Juan 2008, 65).

One such particular manifestation is the “feminization of labor migration”. These are women seeking better economic opportunities abroad, thus producing a Filipina diaspora of OFW women. The report of the Commission on Filipino Overseas stated that since 1992 Filipino women migrant workers on new contracts have almost consistently outnumbered male workers by a factor of three. Women OFWs constitute around 50 percent of the total with the majority of them in domestic work (Nicolas 2011, 7).

According to the Survey on Overseas Filipinos conducted by National Statistics Office, in 2011, an estimated of 2.2 million Overseas Filipinos were being deployed (National Statistics Office 2012). Comparing the data of 2010, it was shown that there was an increase of 5.6 percent (2.0 million OFWs) in 2011 (Philippine Commission on Women

2012). These OFWs were described as those “whose departure occurred within the last five years and who are working or had worked abroad during the past six months from April to September (Philippine Commission on Women 2012; National Statistics Office 2012). In terms of gender segregation or classification, of the whole 2.2 million OFWs population, male OFWs accounted for 1.13 million or 52.2 percent of the total OFWs in 2011; there was an increase of 5.4 percent from the estimated 1.07 million male OFWs in 2010 (Philippine Commission on Women 2012; National Statistics Office 2012). On the other hand, female OFWs were estimated at 1.03 million or 47.8 percent of the total OFWs; there was an increase of 5.8 percent in the 2010 census data (Philippine Commission on Women; National Statistics Office 2012). The survey results signified that although male are still dominant in the overseas work, women are now actively participating as OFWs, constituting more than half of all OFWs, and the increase is 5.8 percent women as compared to 5.4 percent men in the labor field is significant.

The shift and trend of women overseas Filipino workers or the Filipina diaspora impacted alterations and changes to a normal or traditional composite family structure. The obligatory nature of women being the homemaker, housewife and mother within the household has been substituted by the rearing of children by foster guardians, usually by grandparents, siblings and other relatives. Parrenas termed this process as “gender paradox: the reorganization of households into transnational structure” (2006, 92).

Furthermore, studies on migration showed that when mothers migrate and men were the ones left behind, fathers do not necessarily take on the care-giving roles of the migrant mothers. On the whole, even if migration has expanded women’s roles, it has not resulted in fundamental gender roles changes in the family. Instead, these were passed on to

other female family members, usually the female kin, which took care of the left-behind children, and in some cases older children replaced the role of their mothers (Parrenas 2003, 85, 112-113; Parrenas 2006, 96-97; Parrenas 2010, 1829; Nicolas 2011, 9).

A significant issue lies on the prevailing need of the OFW mothers to communicate with their children in the Philippines, and the response of the church to the distressed OFW mothers. Communication research has noted that as the number of migrant workers increased, the demand in media utilization has also risen. The media has become a surrogate means in communicating with their children in checking on their condition (Paragas 2006, 133, 221, 262). On the other hand, it is questionable that media serving as the channel of communication between the OFW mothers and their children replaces the physical presence of the OFW mothers. How can mothers bridge the distance and maintain their relationship to their children. These prevailing social concerns need to be addressed specifically within the religious community. In the study of the religious response towards the OFWs and their families, Olga Fernandez concluded, “The mobilization of churches to rally for the support of the OFWs and their families is a pastoral care matter, as well as spiritual care and nurture” (2012, 143).

The researcher recognizes that OFW cases have been studied and documented by various media agencies. As a student of communication, the researcher is mainly concerned about the extent of the utilization of media technology in the lives of the OFWs and their children, and how we can address this situation in Christian communication, church ministries, OFW organizations, and other related groups.

Theoretical Framework

The study primarily considers the application of media and telecommunication system, i.e., e-mail, internet, Skype and other modes of communication as functional in support of the needs of OFW mothers, and focuses on the mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church who are separated from their children. In formulating the theoretical framework of the study, the researcher adapts recent studies and different uses of the computer-mediated communication (CMC) models or the Hyperpersonal Interaction Theory of Joseph Walther.

Hyperpersonal Interaction theory proposes that CMC may enhance and facilitate relationships online similar to offline interactions or interpersonal communication (Walther 2011, 460). This theory incorporates the basic model: receiver-sender-channel-feedback model. Its typology is concerned with the effects of communication process relative to the reception of both parties such as: 1). the response of the receiver; 2). the reliability of the message by the sender; 3). the utilization of the channel; 4). and the effects of the feedback.

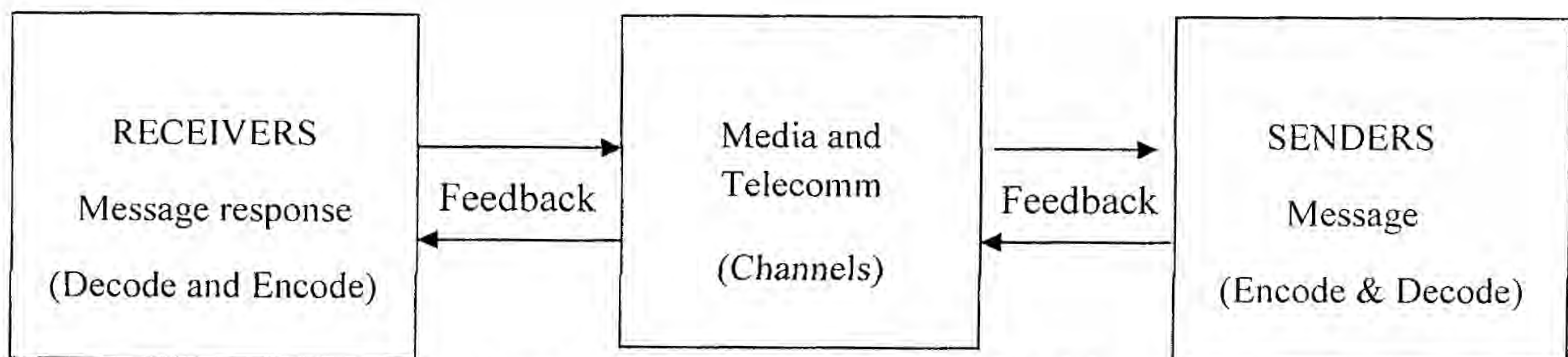


Figure 1. Hyperpersonal CMC Model

Walther postulates a hyperpersonal model wherein the receivers of the message (i.e., OFW children and family who may be left in the home country), fill in the blanks with regards to missing information due to the absence of the physical with other cues,

i.e., non-verbal, bodily gestures that face-to-face encounters provide (2011, 460). In other words, if the exchange of communication process is limited to the sphere of voice messages such as telephones or mobile phones, text messages, chat/Instant messaging, it would be necessary for the source to be precise and clear with the message; otherwise it will be hard for the receiver to decipher the real intentions and meaning of the message.

Second, the channel (i.e. media and telecommunications) as the dimension or network of the both the source and the receiver in the hyperpersonal model depicts how users or participants utilize the channel or the medium for their personal consumption and desirability. Walther noted that in many CMC discourses, users may take some time to create desirable messages without interfering with conversational flow, very much unlike the effects of face-to-face response latencies; it further suggests that CMC users have the ability to edit, delete and rewrite messages to make them reflect intended effects before sending them (2011, 461).

Third, the senders act as the source of the message or the information. It is important to note that senders are involved in a selective form of communication. Through a spatial or distant communication, it can blur the communication line or the exchange process between the receiver and the source if the sender constructs or relays a wrong or exaggerated signal. Accurate and genuine self-disclosure is an important element here. It plays a significant role by which individuals through disclosure build relationships and breeds intimacy (Walther 2011, 461).

Lastly, all the components of this model-receiver, source and channel affect the feedback system of the communicator. Within the Hyperpersonal Interaction model, when a receiver gets a selectively self-presented message and idealizes its source, that

individual may respond in a way that reciprocates and reinforces the partially modified object based on the impression of the transmitted message (Walther 2011, 463). As such, feedback may intensify—this is the measurement on how the communication-relationship of the receiver and sender would be effectively established.

According to the Hyperpersonal Theory, receivers are the reference point which collect and gather messages from the senders. It justifies that the receivers such as the OFW children who are left in the Philippines, are the objects in which priority is given in the communication flow because they are the signifier as to how clear the messages will be decoded; this will reflect on the relationship between the OFW children and their mothers. Moreover, the efficiency of the channels are a crucial point in this model as these functions as gateway for an effective feedback; if the lines are blurred by various factors such as noise, spatial distance and geographical parameters, communication lines are expected to be impeded. Thus, efficient tools and channels to be used that would be appropriate for each communicator are necessary.

However, it needs to be noted that Joseph Walther's Hyperpersonal Interaction CMC Theory designed in 1996 is limited only to the textual form of communication which applies to e-mails and SMS medium. The scope of other cues in communication such as visual or the face to face interactions and the audio or the voice messages developed in the new media and technology (i.e., Skype, Facebook and video calls) have not been specified in Hyperpersonal Interaction CMC Theory. Therefore, arguments in the accuracy, authenticity, clarity and reliability must be further studied in the context of mediated and virtual communication.

Further discussions and other related theories have been raised as to how CMC can fill in the space or gap of a long-distance communication and satisfy the needs of both communicators (receivers and senders). Media theorists supporting interpersonal communication pose critical perspectives relating CMC theory: first, it states that it lacks to support the socio-emotional or the affective part as non-verbal cues are absent within the communication; second, it adheres that new media can serve to be an instant channel to connect long-distance communicators but it has not substituted for interpersonal communication; and third, different media can filter out or transmit different cues which may incur a wrong signal in feedback (Culnan and Markus 1987, 423). Furthermore, researchers have noted that effects of the messages for both senders and receivers may imply an impersonal tone, and lacking emotional expression approach (Hiltz, Johnson and Turoff 1986, 228).

Thus, the researcher will further study if the interventions of the electronic media which is confined within the parameters of virtual community is able to substitute the interpersonal or the physical communication between the OFW mothers working abroad and their children left in the Philippines.

Conceptual Framework

Adapting the Hyperpersonal Interaction Theory of Walther, the researcher designed a communication model that correlates according to the present situation of the OFW mothers and their children. In this framework, the researcher recognizes that there is a bi-directional flow of communication between OFW mothers and their children. Both OFW mothers and their children can be in the position of being the senders and receivers; both senders and receivers have messages to communicate. However, according to

Shannon and Weaver's theory, given the condition of noise in the communication flow such as geographical and physical separation, emotional conditions and other factors between the OFW mothers and their children, the messages through the means of CMC and other technological medium can blur the communication lines; mis-interpretation and misinformation can occur if both the senders and receivers convey a wrong signal or communicate unclear messages (Severin and Tankard 1971, 31-32). Thus the critical point is how both the OFW mothers and their children as the senders and receivers reciprocate the messages accurately. Respectively, the position of the OFW mothers and children as senders and receivers are not proprietary and could be switched at any given time; both the OFW mothers and their children can act as the sender and receiver simultaneously.

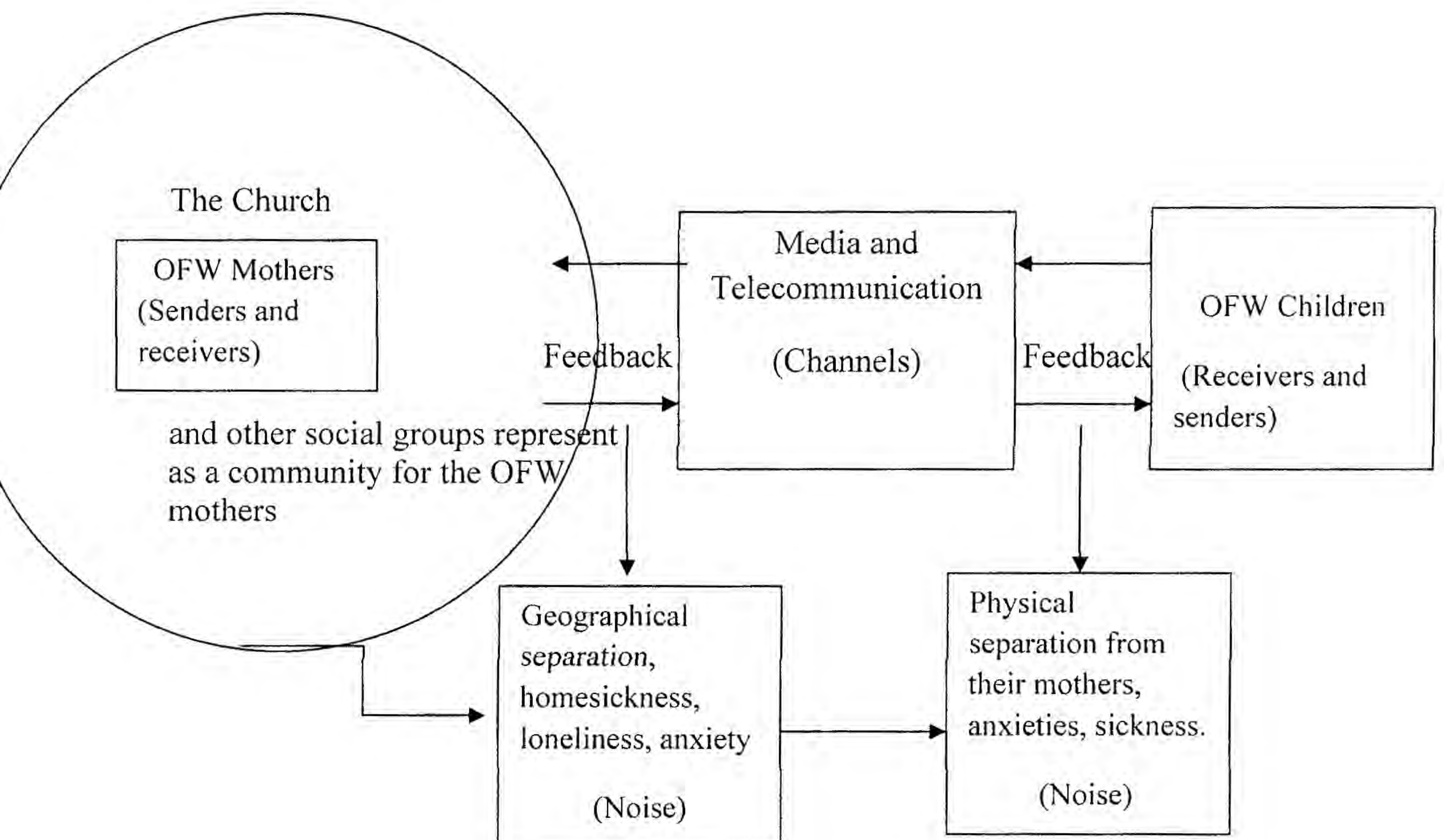


Figure 2. Bi-directional Flow of Communication

In this situation, the position of the church and other social groups is significant in this communication model. The church and other social groups primarily form a social community within its locale which mainly supports the perceived needs of their OFW members, i.e, emotional and spiritual. Thus, as figure 2 illustrated, the church functions as a whole unit that builds together, serves as care group, and addresses the needs of each OFW mothers belonging inside their community.

Statement of the Problem

This research identifies how the utilization of the media is able to mediate the communication between the OFW mothers and their children within the context of Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church. This main problem is supported by the following sub-problems:

Sub-problems

1. What is the demographic profile of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church?
 - a. Name, Age, Civil status, Address in the Philippines
 - b. Nature of present work or occupation in Taiwan
 - c. Number of years working in Taiwan
 - d. Number of children in the Philippines
 - e. Ages and grade level of children in the Philippines
2. What is the significance of the religious community, specifically Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church in the life of the OFW mothers?
3. How do the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church utilize media to communicate to their children?

4. To what extent does the media usage mediate the relationship of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church with their children in the Philippines?
5. What are the possible limitations of communication between the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church and their children?

Significance of the Study

The researcher recognizes the immediate need for study of the OFW mothers and their families left behind. Currently, there are various government agencies, non-profit organizations and church ministries that address and support the concerns of the OFWs. Based on the government's and other agencies' reports and sociological studies, the issues of OFWs were mostly dealt with sensitive cases, and the researcher acknowledges the subject with utmost care. On the other hand, in communication studies, surveys have accounted the importance of the technology and media communication for the OFW mothers and their children left behind. Media communications have been significantly useful channels to connect the OFW families together. More so, through the usage of media, OFW mothers are able to perform their motherhood roles and duties, thus maintaining the bond and intimacy with their children in a long-distance relationship.

The results of this study will be significant as a resource for further development of the church ministries specifically on women's ministry and Christian communication ministry. Upon the presentation of this study, the researcher adheres for Christian communicators to integrate the importance of media communication technology in the church ministries for the OFWs. For the church leaders, religious workers, OFW researchers, and non-profit organizations this study recommends to create and promote

projects, services and other strategies such as OFW ministry programs, family building seminars and conferences for OFW mothers advocating effective parental (maternal) management, i.e., guidance, discipline, nurturing that would serve to connect the space between OFW mothers and their children. Furthermore, the researcher aims to give significant importance upon the situation of the OFWs and their children.

Assumptions

In conducting the study, the researcher assumes that:

1. Media and telecommunications serve as channels to connect the relationship of the OFW mothers and children in the Philippines.
2. OFW mother participants have worked abroad to support the left behind families financially.
3. OFW mothers utilize media and telecommunication services to communicate with their children in the Philippines.
4. Participants in the study are all regular members and affiliated which actively participates in the host church.

Definition of Terms

Children of OFW – they are either sons or daughters in the Philippines who belong in a family where their mothers or both parents are presently working abroad.

Diaspora – any race or group who voluntarily relocates or crosses territorial boundaries whether internationally or regionally in search for a better condition of life (i.e., work opportunity, shelter for their family and other economic reasons). However, in some cases due to social exclusion, internal cohesion and other geopolitical factors, these groups are

never assimilated into the host society; but they develop in time a diasporic consciousness that carries out a collective sharing of space with others (San Juan 2009, 103).

Filipino Diaspora Phenomenon – a collection of experiences arising from the doubled relationship or dual loyalty that Filipino migrants, exiles and refugees have to places they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with back home or their origin (David 2001, 69).

OFW – Overseas Filipino Workers, they are Filipino workers who have temporarily immigrated abroad for employment purposes that is bounded by a specific term and contract.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The researcher selected the respondents from Higher Ground Community Church primarily because of its nature of the church which is constituted of purely OFWs, and the researcher finds the study to be feasible as she has direct communication with the head pastor of the church.

The study will be conducted in Higher Ground Community Church. The results of the study will not be directly applicable to other ministries with OFW mothers, but serves as a reference for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter will discuss and synthesize literature and studies. These are divided into three parts relevant to the study: First, the study will discuss the OFW mothers and family relationship as the foundational ground to the whole study. Relevant to this will be on the issues of the gender roles of the mothers as they perform their assigned tasks according to their specified roles even through the spatial separation from their family. Second, it will focus on how OFW mothers and their families and children cope with geographical separation. Significant to this will be the question on how effective is the media communication technology in bringing to connect and sustain the mother's relationship with their children. And the third section will discuss the importance of the role of the support group organization for the OFW abroad. This topic will be significant to the research for further assessment and development among the church ministries and other organizational institutions.

The Migrant-Mother and the OFW Diaspora Context

Family system functions to be a universal in structure. The basic unit of the family, on the other hand, is not resistant to transformations and changes. Researchers on the OFW family studies acknowledged this transformation in the family structure to be a phenomenal change in the postmodern time (Medina 2001, 38-39, 144-150; Chant and McIlwaine 1995, 5, 16-18). In the study on the family system in Asia, British sociologists Chant and McIlwaine argue that the universality of the family structure is often difficult to encapsulate in general terms (1995, 5). They have stressed the point that because of several

external factors outside the family system, the universal structure of the family has also been affected. One of the common reasons which have been evident in the Philippines was the economic arrangements of the household structure. The major implication in this condition has been that traditional families have transformed into transnational families wherein either or both fathers and mothers are driven to work overseas for the main reason of supporting their children (or in other cases the extended families are also included). In this situation, the orientation of the family has altered into having “dual-wage family members, single-parent families and the reversal roles of fathers and mothers” (Parrenas 2003, 105; Medina 2001, 13).

One such particular manifestation was the “feminization of labor migration” or the women seeking better economic opportunities abroad, thus becoming a Filipina diaspora or Overseas Filipino Workers (Nicolas 2011, 7). According to the report of The Commission on Filipino Overseas, since 1992 Filipino women migrant workers on new overseas contracts have almost consistently outnumbered male workers by a factor of three. Women OFWs constitute around 50 percent of the total with the majority of them in domestic work.

Asis posits, in relation with labor migration changes in the family as an institution may be more pronounced with female migration, and in the developing world, this is viewed as part and parcel of the family strategies for survival or mobility (2003, 105). In the situation of the Filipino family, they believe that migration would give them higher chances of opportunities to meet the demands and needs of their financial resources. But, the critical point in this case is the response to the effect on the welfare of the family as this has been an inevitable occurrence and a long-term demise within the context of social construction of the family. One of the effects was the gender-roles restructuring within the

family system, and this has been particularly notable when the wives or the mothers are physically absent or separated from the children. According to the family studies conducted by Barbara Risman, she emphasized that this condition could destabilize norms to the point of engendering structural changes in the family (1999, 127).

However, mothers continue to perform their roles and obligations of motherhood despite the situation in which they are geographically separated from the family. Mothers are still expected to manage the household responsibilities and take care of the children's needs while working overseas. Parrenas referred this as the process of the "phenomenon of transnational mothering" (2006, 93). In this situation, she stated that despite the mother's absence, their role still remains as the primary position in the family household. Mothers are still responsible to perform their duties and obligations even within a long-distance relationship for the very reason that there will be no one who could be relied on to fulfill their position. To put this in a precise definition, transnational mothering is the organizational reconstitution and rearrangement of motherhood to accommodate the temporal and spatial separations forced by migration. Transnational mothering radically rearranges mother-child interactions and requires a concomitant radical reshaping of the meanings and definitions of appropriate mothering to encompass breadwinning that may require long-term physical separations (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997, 548, 557, 562).

Commonly in the Philippines, with the mother's physical absence, the Filipino fathers rarely assume the maternal role and responsibilities left by the mothers. Typically, the female extended kin or relatives initiate to act as the guardian of the children. The maintenance of transnational families generally is reflected on the reliance of the female kins such as grandparents, aunts, and other relatives to care for the children whom they

have left behind in the Philippines (De La Graza 2010, 19; Parrenas 2006, 96; Parrenas 2003, 112-113). In a survey of the schoolchildren, Parrenas reported that only 20 of 94 children of migrant mothers expect their fathers to make sure they are ready for school, whereas 34 children rely on either a grandparent or aunt (Parrenas 2006, 96).

Analyzing a statistical study, Scalabrini Migration Center (2004) reported that in mother-migrant families, care giving has fallen more on other female family members than on fathers; the estimated data was 43.2 percent female members versus 40 percent fathers. The role of other female family members was also evident in families where both parents worked abroad; the only areas where fathers were more prominent than the female relatives were the disciplining of children, helping with school work, attending school meetings and training the children good manners (Scalabrini 2004). However, in this situation, it is important to consider and reiterate that with the mother's migration, the family most especially the children, would bear the probability of its negative effects or consequences that could be detrimental to the household structure.

In this situation, given the existing condition of the OFW families, Asis noted, migration poses the risk of endangering the institution of the family, because separation may lead to higher rates of infidelity, strained kin relations and wayward children (1995, 345). Studies and surveys have noted that children are more affected in the absence of the mothers than the fathers, this is because the provision of care is still depended on the mothers; this signifies that there is still the reinforcement of the conventional division of labor in the family (De la Graza 2010, 18; Parrenas 2003, 97, 121). In most cases, the children question the motives behind the mother's decision to choose labor migration as a strategy of family survival; children perceive that their mothers can only work as

supplementary breadwinners or 'breadwinners by default' (Parrenas 2006, 131, 60, 63).

Citing this condition, Parrenas reported the case of Theresa Bascara, an eighteen-year-old daughter of a Hongkong domestic worker in which she testifies the condition of having a broken family (2006, 59-60):

You cannot say it is a family if your mother and father are not there with you. It's like it's not a whole family if your father and mother are not here, if they are far. A family, I can say, is only whole if your father is the one working and your mother is only staying at home. It is OK if your mother is working too, but somewhere close to you, not somewhere far away.

In a more detailed report, studies on OFWs families and children were conducted to predict and further assess the effects on the socialization of the children. Battistella and Conaco conducted a study on the elementary school children with 709 samples of ages 10-12 years old in the areas of Metro Manila, Bulacan, Quezon and Rizal. According to their study, Battistella and Conaco found that the single most important finding in the survey is that the absence of the mother has the most disruptive effect in the lives of the children. The extent of disruption is manifested in terms of school achievement and social adjustment, and this situation is due mostly on the degree of the involvement of the extended family in complementing what is lacking with parental absence (Battistella and Conaco 1998, 237-238).

Contradicting these findings, Scalabrini Migration Center initiated a thorough research, "The 2003 Children and Families Study" in which this study was composed of 1,443 children with the same age group of 10-12 years old, with both non-migrant and migrant parents which were randomly selected from different parts of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. As to the effects of the migrant parents, the study concluded that the children of migrants are doing well or are even better off than the children of non-migrants in terms of

school performance and economic status indicators (Scalabrini Migration Center 2004, Asis 2007, 195). Data of the OFW children indicated a clear contrast to non-migrant children (Scalabrini Migration Center 2004):

First, in terms of the economic status, transnational families are more likely to have a good disposition. It was found that OFW families could own homes than non-migrant families. Ownership of mobile phones was also notable where 94 percent of migrant families have mobile phones as contrasted to 60 percent among non-migrant families. Children of migrants have also become part of the proliferation of cell phones; it was reported that 35 percent of OFW children had their own mobile phones as compared to only 12 percent among non-OFW.

Second, regarding the educational achievement of the OFW children, it was found that 40.9 percent of OFW children were enrolled in private schools compared with 14.9 percent among non-OFW children, as in this case there was a higher percentage of children of migrants belonging to the middle and upper sections than children of non-migrants (30.4 percent versus 25.2 percent). Academic indicators were also reported that although the children of OFWs had higher general weighted average in school as compared to non-migrant children, the difference is not so significant (83.7 percent OFW children versus 82.3 percent non-migrant children). However it is important to discuss that the children of mother-migrant families did not do as well in school as those who had fathers working abroad.

Third, concerning the emotional health of the children, the current study also revealed that the anxiety and loneliness scale scores of the children of migrant mothers are higher, however the differences were found to be slight or very minimal.

Based from the empirical studies and statistical indicators, we can clearly note that there had been benefits to which the OFW mother's families acquire, but also consequential effects on the emotional and behavioral condition of the children had been inevitable. Although the results which were conducted by two different studies showed differences, assumptions and conclusions are still needed to be further studied as there are various situations and other variables which may also affect the children both in the cases of OFW parents and non-migrant parents. Thus, Battistella and Conaco are careful to note that this situation cannot be generalized in all the OFW or the migrant parents-children category (1998, 237). Further studies also have noted that there has not much empirical support for the view that the children of migrant workers are more likely to engage in delinquent cases as compared non-migrant children (Asis 2003, 107).

Mothering Through a Long-Distance Communication

The Important Role of Media among OFW Mothers

Mothering from a distance transcends beyond the geographical borders, it is unbounded by time and space. Mothers do not abandon their children on migration; instead they even over-compensate their duties and roles as being intensive mothering (Parrenas 2005, 319, 323; Parrenas 2006, 103). Communication and family studies on both local and foreign literatures agree that various forms of media and technology or the online world is now regarded as part and parcel of the everyday modern life in which transnational families can be integrated (Miller and Madianou 2012, 11; Miller and Madianou 2011, 10; Parrenas 2005, 319). However, in considering about how mothering could be confined within long-distance communication or the mediation of new media and technologies, unanimous questions in the communication researches have also been taken into account, "How do

new media such as the mobile phones and computer-mediated communication connect the separation of trans-national families most particularly those mothers and children?" The prevailing concern is can the utilization of the new media support the intimacy of a long-distance relationship? (Aguila 2009, 86; Madianou and Miller 2011, 3; Paragas 2006, 41).

Migration certainly affects the position of the family. Sociological literature in the aspect of migratory process within the bounds of the family viewed that the gender-roles will always remain a constant variable in the disposition of male and female perspectives. One such factor is what Mahler and Passey explained as the gendered differentiation pertaining to the tasks orientation (2001, 442). They recognized that gender, race and class have a strong influence on people's ability to move and that these factors affect the perceptions on transmigration. One concrete example is the prevalent and existing conditions of mothers in which case one has to work overseas in order to support the family in financial terms. Upon this circumstance, Parrenas noted that the social elements coming from the external state have affected the quality of an ideal family structure, thus creating social, class and gender imbalances and inequalities. Thus, Parrenas is advocating for further research on how to have gender roles, class and geography changed or motivated the contours and gradations of communication of the transnational migrant families (2005, 319).

Recent case studies have been consistent with Parrenas' framework of intensive mothering. In one case study, Aguila reported two contrasting trans-migrant family situations (2009, 91):

Frequency of e-mail messages is necessary for information for the OFW nurse-mother and her husband. Conscious of her role and responsibilities as a mother, she updates on the health and happiness of the kids; she often gave her husband explicit instructions about their medication and doctor's

visits. Although he was technically a single parent, the husband denied taking over the care of the kids. In fact, his wife hired a female relative to act as guardian. The frequency and content of the wife's e-mails proved that she still carried on her parental responsibilities despite the distance.

Citing another case involving the OFW husband's situation as the sole care taker of the children and other household matters, Aguila mentioned that, the husband's involvement as a parent was not as intense as his wife's. In fact as the head of the family, he solely decides upon the availability and convenience. Information, events and majority of household matters were mostly being taken care of by the wife/mother (Aguila 2009, 91).

However, contradicting the antithetical literature on the trans-migrant mothers, communication researchers have argued that computer mediated communication and other forms of media could be a channel or medium to enhance and integrate the means of intensive mothering for her family and children; they believe that technology has alleviated the geographical separation of the trans-national families. The advancement of new media and technologies has been viewed to sustain and support the relationships of the transnational families. Massey defined this theory as power-geometries (1994, 149). In this theory, Massey explained that even through spatial separation and geographical distance, accessibility to communication is possible. As such, he maintained the proposition that the conditions of modernity have produced time-compression wherein access to and power over flows and interconnections between people are enabled.

Supporting the theory of power geometry, Pertierra claimed the importance of communication in crucial circumstances. He identified that variations of medium resources of media communication i.e. mobile phones, internet, e-mails and other technologies has strengthened the connection to physical spaces creating new geographies of mobility, making possible for imaginary or virtual spaces to be enacted and constructed within

physical space (2005, 25-26). Viewing this from the perspective of the OFW mothers' condition, he noted that they could enjoy the status of absent-presence parent in their family.

But the issue on the gender roles re-surfaces. The concern lies on the important role that mothers fulfill in the family. It must be considered that mothers are mainly responsible to take care of the children and manage the household matters. Focusing on the matter about motherhood, families and the children, Madianou noted the 'accentuated maternal ambivalence' (2012, 23; 2011, 13). She asserted that media communication and technology are pivotal in the negotiation and reconciliation of migrant women and their families by allowing them to maintain their roles and identities even through geographical separation. In this case, media is the supporting resource for fulfilling intensive mothering at a distance, thus enabling mothers to continue their roles and duties in their children's upbringing. Thus, studies on media and transmigration assume the position that the utilization of such new media has been conducive to transnational mothers and children.

Further research on the cases of OFW mothers and the long-distance relationship with their families is proposed as Aguila had maintained that there is no other alternative for the transnational families but to depend on the usage of media communication and technology. Furthermore, she stressed the point that the modern technologies are sufficient media in establishing the relationships and connecting the families together through a mediated space.

Local Studies on the Usage of Media among OFW Mothers

Supporting this research further with empirical findings, local and foreign studies that conducted surveys have concluded that migrant mothers were able to sustain their mother-children relationships even across the distance through mediated communication.

In a 2012 study conducted by TNS Digital Life, the findings of the survey reported that there were 81 percent of urban families which communicated with their relatives abroad through Internet on their personal computers; while 77 percent of the respondents claimed that mobile phones or sending SMS and MMS messages have been conveniently utilized; only 24 percent of the respondents were still using landline phones to connect with their OFW families (ABS-CBN News 2012).

In another survey, Families and Technology 2011 reported the significance of the media technology for both the OFW and their families. The recent poll revealed that Filipino families have an average of 10 gadgets, which is the highest in the region that allowed them to communicate with their families abroad. It also reported that during the holiday season, 46 percent of the respondents stated they would spend between 15 – 30 minutes a day to communicate with their loved ones, while another 23 percent said they would spend for at least one hour . As to its impact on the families, the survey revealed that 89 percent of Filipinos believed that technology had a good impact on family relationships, in fact 28 percent were saying that it had a very positive impact on their communication (Ho 2011). One of the main reasons that ranked highly in both surveys were social networks, particularly Facebook have been commonly (65%) utilized as channel for updating and sharing photos of their families and friends, that which can rarely be done when talking over the phone (Ho 2011; ABS-CBN News 2012).

Conducting further media research and survey oriented towards the usage of telecommunications, Paragas in his dissertation presented such findings (2006 133, 135-143): 1) Most OFWs own two mobile phones during their tenure abroad as this connects them with their families in the Philippines; while only 24 percent of the respondents had their own landline phones; 2) 52 percent of the respondents who owned a mobile phone said their unit had a camera; while 46 percent said they owned a digital video camera; another 5 percent had access to a mobile phone camera and a video camera simultaneously – cameras have been found to be an important tool which facilitates the images or pictures and keeps the family updated ; 3) Gender and parental status did not have an impact upon inter-personal media ownership, contradicting two general principles that men are more wired than women and that parent-respondents would be more contactable than those without children because of their desire to exercise their parental duties across distances; both male and females OFWs use mobile phones extensively; 4) In terms of media preference for contacting the family in the Philippines, mobile phones ranked most highly as the primary media for communication, texting or sending SMS rated second; communication through landline phones still ranked higher as compared to online chats or e-mails, internet was used less as a mass medium in interpersonal communication; it is often used only for the purposes of corresponding messages, chatting, work, leisure and other activities online; while letters and other traditional media were rated the lowest among the choices.

Further case studies were also reported. Paragas discussed his interviews of actual situations of the respondents cited by various government agencies. In his research interviews he noted that the use of media technologies has mitigated the social cost of

migration, explaining that its effect is upon the OFW mothers and their families has helped reduce homesickness with their family. In a positive way, this has helped the industry as it lessens the complaints concerning OFWs coming home unless they are maltreated. These technologies benefit OFWs, and help reduce the incidence of repatriation (Paragas 2006, 143-144, 246).

In conclusion to the study, Paragas noted that the new media has enabled Overseas Filipino Workers to have constant contact with their family members; it resulted in allowing them to exercise their familial duties and participate in their families' lives, giving them a sense of belongingness with their families, and to some extent, OFWs believed that media helped alleviate their homesickness and made their stay abroad easier (2006, 250).

Foreign Studies on the Usage of Media on OFW Mothers

In foreign studies, findings have been consistent with prior surveys and researches. Lin and Sun administered both quantitative and qualitative studies, focusing with 68 domestic helpers, 88 percent of which constitutes Filipinos based in Singapore. In the quantitative survey of media usage, Lin and Sun found the following data (Lin and Sun 2010, 187): 1) Approximately almost half of respondents or 41 percent had at least two mobile numbers, and four percent had three numbers; 2) As to the usage of mobile phones, the findings reported that 52.9 percent use the phone exclusively for communicating in the home country; only 26.5 percent equally selected it for personal and work-related purposes. In terms of selection of media preference, there was no significant difference between the usage of mobile phone voice calls with 29.4 percent and sending messages through texts or SMS with 30.9 percent; with at least an average of 5-15 minutes calls for their families while the shortest calls approximately 0-5 minutes were for their employers.

Further qualitative studies stated that using mobile phones allowed them to connect with family, easily, eased their worries and reduced the feeling of homesickness; others contacted their families to inform about remittances and other financial needs (Lin and Sun 2010, 189).

Overall the availability of mobile phones are conducive to improve the OFWs working conditions and living status, as well as to provide a communication channel in maintaining close ties with their families overseas (Lin and Sun 2010, 191).

Consistent with the study of Lin and Sun, a Singapore based research focusing on the usage of mobile phones and internet among Overseas Filipino Workers household domestic employees was conducted by Malik and Kadir. Employing 11 Filipino mother participants in the survey, the researchers conducted both quantitative and qualitative studies that would thoroughly examine on how migrant mothers used mobile phones and internet to communicate with their overseas family and how they fulfill their roles as transnational mothers. Based from the quantitative survey gathered, Malik and Kadir found the following data (Malik and Kadir 2011, 6): 1) The top three media that were utilized by the respondents were SMS or text messaging, call using mobile phones and social networking sites, specifically Facebook. Very few of the respondents use public or home landline phones to call their children; 2) In terms of the duration and frequency of calling their children, there was a wide range among the respondents who call from three times per day to once or twice a month; nine out of 11 Filipino respondents who called their children for less than 30 minutes per day; 3) Almost half of the respondents also utilized the chat function to communicate with their children, these media were through Yahoo Messenger, Skype, and Facebook chat; half of the respondents also said that video chat/conference was

the most efficient media because it allowed them to talk and see their children simultaneously on a real time basis.

Assessing the qualitative data based from the interviews of the respondents, Malik and Kadir reported that through the access of mobile phones and other media technology, mothers have been updated and involved in their children's activities and routines. Meanwhile, social networks such as Facebook and other instant messages systems enabled them to interact instantaneously and in real time; Facebook, on the other hand allowed mothers to check on their children's friends, social activities, and other updates on status and photos or images which could not be achieved through mobile phones. Thus, new media and technology have enhanced the abilities for the mother to fulfill their traditional mothering roles when taking up the breadwinning duties in a foreign country (2011, 10-11).

Overall, despite some technological challenges and communication barriers due to geographical distance, physical separation and long-distance relationship, most studies and researches on Overseas Filipino Workers' lives and family viewed that communication and technology facilitates the creation and maintenance of intimacy between transnational mothers and their children (Malik and Kadir 2011, 10; Pertierra 2005, 42-43).

However, despite the consistencies of the studies and statistical data, it must not be disregarded that the process of migration for the mother and the family ultimately makes a great impact to the lives of the children and family relationships. According to Parrenas, based from her interviews and researches she noted that not one of the interviewees claimed that their family achieves intimacy from such efforts. Instead, they recognize the limits in such forms of communication (2003, 125). Furthermore, Parrenas stressed on that, despite rapid advancements in technology – from instant messages to e-mail

correspondence, transnational intimacy does not provide 'full' intimacy to the family such as the emotional security of physical presence and the familiarity allowed by physical proximity are still denied in transnational family members; mothers cannot completely deny the intimacy that they lose in migration (2005, 333; 2003, 125). On this note, in order to give solid conclusions, it may be probable that further analysis on communication, migration and its impact on family must be applied.

Churches and Other Religious Organization Networks for OFWs

In a similar manner, the condition of the OFWs abroad has been a constant challenge for them to respond to. Although considered as migrants, guests and workers in a foreign country, the phenomenon of OFWs has a significant impact on their host country. Wherever they are sent, OFWs have a great commission to fulfill for the kingdom of God.

The Church as a Social Mediation for OFWs Abroad

The process of migration is emotionally distressing for Filipina domestic workers (Magat 2007, 610). Characterized as having no permanent residence, "temporary workers, guests in a foreign country, expatriates" (Magat 2007, 612; Dimapilis-Baldoz 2004, 37), earning a living in a host country could be a constant struggle and sacrifice for the Overseas Filipino Workers and their families. One significant aspect that researchers study is the importance on community, social group or organizational networks for the Filipina migrants while abroad. Paragas emphasized that institutions such as the church, other religious groups, government and the non-government organizations play an important role in the socialization of Overseas Filipino Workers (2006, 183-184). He stressed on the point that through organizations, OFWs can create a sense of community in the host countries by engaging in Philippine traditions and addressing their share problems as expatriates; and

this has been one of the centers for them to be able to access support groups which act as surrogate extended families for the OFWs and other migrants. Likewise, analyzing from the perspective of the religious groups and other social institutions, De Guzman referred to the proposition of “structural difference” (2008, 143) in which he identified the importance of the role of the church ministries to respond to the needs of the migrants. De Guzman further emphasized the church acting as an imagined community where it embodies an existing surrogate family and a place of community for every migrant.

According to a statistical analysis from Missiological Study of OFW in 2009, Wan and Tira noted there are nearly 8 million Overseas Filipino Workers population, of these demographics it has been found that 80 percent are Roman Catholics, 15 percent are Protestant, and a conservative estimate of 7 percent are evangelical Christians. This data construes that wherever there are Filipinos there are also Roman Catholic or Protestant congregations (Wan and Tira 2009, 8). Analyzing from this data, it can be presumed that Filipinos are traditionally and culturally religious. Indeed, Filipinos’ sacrilege or devotion to God and to their fellow people or community is regarded as the Filipinos’ unique traits and valued as a main Filipino tradition, and their religious practices are continuously observed even in their host country (Magat 2007, 605-606).

The Significance of the OFWs Affiliation to an Organization

Supporting a comprehensive study and quantitative data of Overseas Filipino Workers currently located within their host country, Paragas found the following analysis (2006, 168, 170, 173, 180): 1) Nearly one third or 31 percent of the respondents were members of some organization; however, it was observed that a significantly larger share of the respondents belong to a professional status (39 percent) and higher income (42

percent). On the other hand, it was said that the host regions had a more significant influence on formal organization among OFWs; 2) The largest group comprising of 38 percent out of the 100 respondents who were members of at least one organization said they joined for social reasons, 28 percent of membership were to learn about projects for OFWs, 18 percent to seek legal assistance, 15 percent to network among colleagues, 14 percent to seek spiritual growth, 9 percent to find job openings for themselves and their relatives seeking to work abroad, and 8 percent were concerning financial matters; 3) In terms of gender, more women than men joined organizations for spiritual growth (22 percent:6 percent), for information (30 percent:25 percent), and social gatherings (42 percent:36 percent); 4) Across age and parental status groupings, a larger section of younger and without children than older respondents joined socio-civic activities (22 percent:9 percent) and professional groups (35 percent:19 percent); on the other hand, a larger percentage of older and with-children respondents said they joined organizations to socialize, and engage in religious activities.

Noting from the statistical, the mission of the church and other social organization has significant impact for the migrants' welfare while abroad. The church institutions and other religious organizations can greatly impact the mobilization of Overseas Filipino Workers to be an agent of the Gospel. The disposition of the OFWs have been viewed to be a means of 'theologizing process'; OFW women can have the great opportunity to bring a new image of the women becoming as 'new evangelizers' or 'missionaries' (Magat 2007, 605, 618-619; Lopez 2004, 202-203).

In one interview, Magat translated Father Nonong's words as he described his mission and that of the Filipinos' duty (2007, 623):

The Filipina in church has a new job: she has become a missionary who is a witness to her faith in Italy. Every time they act according to their values, they remember that they are Filipino and they remember the Philippines and their family. Every time they go to church, every time they help fellow Filipinos, they are helping Filipinos at home.

The circumstantial experience of the underdeveloped Philippine economy that led the Filipinos to search for work abroad could be seen as an opportunity for the OFWs to be a link between their host society and the church.

Foreign Studies on the Significance of the Church among OFWs

In foreign studies, similarly related cases of the Overseas Filipino Workers situated in Hong Kong were also researched. Administering a qualitative-ethnographic methodology, Nakonz and Shik employed an intense sample consisting of 20 Filipino participants which were exclusively female Filipino domestic workers aging from middle twenties to late forties who have stayed abroad within the scope of less than one year up to those who stayed for over two decades of migration. The researchers also considered the variable of five different religious groups which the samples were currently affiliated, these consisted of (Nakonz and Shik 2009, 27): The Catholic Church (Legion of Mary); one cluster of the Pentecostal Filipino Jesus Is Lord church; The Filipino Ministries of International Christian Assembly, the Evangelical Community Church, and one small Baptist group.

In this study, Nakonz and Shik found that the frequent conditions and the common problems described were (2009, 28): First, loneliness and homesickness, as foreign domestic workers, they are far from their families, husband, and children; they usually see them only once every two years. Second, the heavy working conditions were mostly identified to be a burden to them; these typically include long and exhausting working

hours, difficult relationships with the employers' household and other forms of abusive situations. Third source were worries about the families they left behind; most often these concerned the financial, i.e., medical and educational expenses or relatives in abusive situations, and other reasons were about their lazy husbands in the Philippines.

The church and the other organizations remain a status symbolizing an institution where most Overseas Filipino Workers could be freed and relieved of their current problems and worries; a strong impact of the church is to provide a strong support system and upholds each member intact in their emotional and spiritual life. For these Overseas Filipino workers, Nakonz and Shik observed that rather than purely spiritual dimension, coping their problems through religious activities is also considered as an essential aspect for the social lives of the OFWs (2009, 32). Common form of social networks are through church masses, prayer groups, ministries, legions, clusters and chapters and other units of religious community.

Nakonz and Shik cited that in their observation of the churches sampled in their case studies, it is very important for them to utilize unique and creative styles and techniques in their worship services which are through the outputs of (2009, 33-34): 1) "Distraction Strategy" or a temporary distraction from the problems can be a relief for these OFWs. In the services of International Christian Assembly, JIL and Evangelical Community Church, all encourage members to sing and dance, and use Tagalog and English pop songs. Their services are highly interactive and usually led by very charismatic persons; crying and trance are such common phenomena; 2) Sharing of problems with others has been mentioned to be often utilized as a coping strategy in both religious and non-religious groups. In the five samples of the churches, sharing has been a regular part of

their activity; 3) A very common form is collective prayer. This is believed to have a stronger impact than individual prayer because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Evangelical Community Church, they use a system where individual participants write down prayer requests on a piece of paper, then the group is divided into smaller groups comprising of five women who pray together. 4) Another network considered vitally important is supporting the members who are in financial distress. Churches mobilize funds to support their members, sometimes they serve as an agency for referrals to good employers, and most of the shelters for migrants who had their contract terminated are also provided by church groups.

In these situations of the two Filipina domestic workers, it can be suggested that Filipina migrants have this strong sense of courage, hope and resilience in facing any challenging circumstances they may be situated into. This is identified as the capability to survive through religious institutions; it is which one makes use of the social resources that the church provides for different coping purposes (Nakoncz and Shik 2009, 29).

Synthesis

Recapitulating the literature and studies, the researcher had learned that the family is the basic unit and the fundamental institution of the society, and family will remain as constant institution even through transformations in family and relational settings such as the transnational family.

On another perspective, in both local and foreign studies, it has been noted that mobile phone calls, sending text messages or SMS were the common forms of media that OFW mothers utilize. Through these media, mothers and their children could personally communicate with each, mothers could guide them in their homework, mothers are able to

monitor on their children's schedules and exercise discipline and parental authority if necessary. However, on the contrary, while new media and technology mediates the relationships of the mothers with their children and family, this does not bring full intimacy to enjoy their relationship together as a solid family.

Various studies and surveys conducted in the church groups and organizations among Overseas Filipino Workers currently situated abroad reported that the most frequent problems that transnational mothers experience while being geographically separated with their families are loneliness, homesickness and worry over their families left behind. Therefore, as a conclusion in this literature, it is suggested that a strong support group network, church affiliations, and memberships in organizations can be a coping strategy for both the OFW mothers and their family left behind in the Philippines.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Method of the Study

The method of the research was designed as a case study. The researcher conducted a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data was tabulated for the demographic profile of the OFW mothers which identified the age, number of children, age and grade level of the children, nature of present work, and the number of years working in Taiwan. The qualitative data were gathered through the open-ended questionnaire form guided by the previous studies of Ms. Evelyn Palarca and Ms. Olga Fernandez. The interviews conducted with the OFW mothers were directly quoted and summarized by the researcher.

Sources of Data

The researcher coordinated with Pastor Crisilio Marzo and Pastor Tessa Cheng Marzo, head Pastors of Higher Ground Community Church in Kaoshiung, Taiwan. Through the Pastors' permission, the researcher was able to interview twelve (12) OFW mothers who are members of the Higher Ground Community Church with children from grade school until college, and who are currently under existing contract with an overseas employer. Higher Ground Community Church is a small-sized church in Kaoshiung, Taiwan with approximately 30-40 OFW members in which approximately 50 percent comprises of OFW mothers. The head Pastors of Higher Ground Community Church as secondary sources were also interviewed for supportive data and analysis.

Research Gathering Procedure

Upon the permission of the head Pastor of the host church Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church in Kaoshiung, Taiwan, the researcher applied for a Chinese Visa that was approved within three weeks. Upon the granting of the Visa, the researcher scheduled for a field research in Higher Ground Community Church, Kaoshiung Taiwan on August 23, 2013.

The researcher spent eight days, from August 23-30, 2014 in the actual field research in Higher Ground Community Church, Kaoshiung, Taiwan. In accordance to the respondents' availability and time, the researcher visited their respective dormitories to conduct the interview and to administer participant and direct observation.

The researcher designed the interview as focused group discussion with a group of three to four OFW mothers in the span of one to two hours per day. Voice recording through the MP3 device was not applied in the interviews as the researcher considered that the respondents would be hesitant in interacting with the researcher. Instead, the researcher took detailed notes and made drafts in the open-ended questionnaire forms which will be deposited in APNTS library for record purposes. The researcher was also able to do a direct observation of the respondents' present environment and geographical location in Kaoshiung, Taiwan.

The itinerary for the case study has been detailed according to the specific timetable:

Table 1. Timetable

Date	Time	Activity	Participants	Setting
August 23-24	10:40 P.M- 12:30 A.M.	Manila Departure/Arrival in Kaoshiung, Taiwan	Researcher	
August 24	9:00A.M- 12:00 Noon	Church visit/Field Observation	Pastora Tessa and Higher Ground Church members	Higher Ground Community Chruch
August 25	9:00A.M.- 12:00 Noon	Sunday Worship Service		Higher Ground Community Chruch
August 26		Monday Rest day for OFWs in Church Activities No interviews		
August 27	8:30A.M- 12:00 Noon	Interview/Observation	OFW Mothers	Green House Dormitory
August 28	8:30A.M- 12:00 Noon	Interview/Observation	OFW Mothers	Ladies Dorm
August 29	8:30A.M- 12:00 Noon	Interview/Observation	OFW Mothers	Yellow House Dormitory
August 30		Departure		

Data Gathering Instruments

This study utilized two data-gathering instruments. First, the researcher adapted the open-ended questionnaire from a previous study conducted by Ms. Evelyn Palarca and Ms. Olga Fernandez but only a portion is incorporated for this thesis. The open-ended questionnaire was administered to find out the qualitative responses of the twelve OFW mothers in Higher Ground Community Church (See Appendix A). All responses from the interview were guided and recorded according to the interview guide form. Second,

secondary sources such as direct and participant observation were also conducted to give supporting basis to the analysis of the case study (see Appendix B).

Treatment of Data

All information for the quantitative data such as the demographic profile of the respondents was tabulated utilizing average and percentage analysis. The researcher did not find it necessary for the study to use an extensive statistical treatment since there has been a small sample size. In describing and evaluating the qualitative data, all interviews and observations were compiled and included in the Appendix A and B. The analysis and interpretation of the study were encoded as a Word file.

Research Locale

Nantze District is one of main localities in Kaoshiung Taiwan which is 342.6 kilometers from Taipei City, the capital of Taiwan. As of 2013, the district has a total population of 177,579 in demographics.

Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church is located at 380 Lane Dexian Road, Nantze District, Kaoshiung, where it has an estimated of 30-40 OFW congregation both single and married. Since 1999, Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church has been ministering to the OFWs. The core mission of the church is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ among Filipino and other Asian OFWs currently based in Taiwan, and to incorporate them in the church for fellowship, training, and spiritual growth in order that they may be effective witnesses of Christ in the ministry. Currently, Taiwan Higher Ground Community is ministering in the outreach to the Ladies dorm, Yellow house and Greeh house dormitories and factories where the OFWs are situated.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The actual data from the case study conducted by the researcher is here presented, analyzed and interpreted providing the profile and response of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church. Through the coordination of the head Pastor Crisilio Marzo and Pastor Tessa Cheng Marzo of Taiwan Higher Ground Taiwan Church, the researcher was able to conduct an interview among twelve (12) OFW mothers from Higher Ground Community Church. The respondents presented their cases in relevance to the statement of the problem that answered the main questions, how do they utilize the media to communicate with their children, to what extent does the media usage mediate the relationship between their children, what are the possible limitations of media, and what is the significance of the religious community (Higher Ground Community Church) in the life of the OFW mothers.

1. Profile of the Twelve OFW Mothers¹

The following data entails the presentation and analysis of the demographics of the twelve (12) OFW mother respondents. These include basic profile, the nature and tenure of work at present, number of children, and the age and grade level of the children left in the Philippines.

Higher Ground Community Church has a total of twelve OFW mothers. Upon the OFW mothers' introduction, the researcher learned that each of the OFW mothers had come from a different background and from various provinces in the Philippines. Some are

¹The names of the OFW mother respondents and their children are all pseudonyms.

based in the north Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, and others have come from the extreme south, Cotabato City, and each one of them have their own experiences to share.

These OFW mothers are young adult women aged from 26 – 40 years old. A third of the OFW mothers are single mothers, who mostly said that they need to work abroad in order to provide and sustain the needs of their little children and to earn a higher income in order to give them the best quality education. On the other hand, there are more OFW mothers are currently married. Generally, the married mothers perceive that they need to sacrifice being away from their children in order to help their husbands who are earning meager salaries in the Philippines.

Survival is the means to live and work abroad for these twelve OFW mothers in Taiwan. The twelve OFW mothers are currently employed as Production Operator, Quality Inspector, Machine Operator, or Factory Worker. All of these are factory-related works. Half of the twelve OFW mothers are already within 5 -7 years contract or second term, four have worked for their first term within their 1 - 3 year contract, and two have been working for 11 – 12 years or third term.

Ten of the OFW mothers have only one child; only two of the respondents have two children. The OFW children are segmented according to their ages: two (2) of the OFW children are in the toddler stage from 2.5 – 3 years old, three (3) are in pre-school ages 4 – 5 years old, six (6) are in elementary level from ages 6 – 10 years old, and three (3) are teenaged children from 15 – 19 years old.

Perceiving that each of the OFW children has their respective needs in which the guidance of their mothers are essentially important, the researcher asked each of the twelve OFW mothers how they deal with these stages of their children's lives considering their

long distance relationship. All of the twelve OFW mothers unanimously insisted that: “Para naman ito sa kanila. Nagtrabaho kami para mabigyan ng maayos at maging stable ang buhay ng ang aming mga anak. *(These are all for them. We are working for our children to have a stable life.)*”

Table 2. Profile of the twelve OFW mothers

OFW Mothers	Age	Civil Status	Address in Phils.	Nature of Work in Taiwan	No. of yrs working	No. of Children	Ages of Children	Grade level of children
Mercyditas Abadsantos	27	Married	Naga City, Bicol	Factory Worker	2	1	6 y.o.	Grade 1
Vina Diaz	40	Single Mother	Paniqui, Tarlac	Quality Control	12	1	10 y.o.	Grade 5
Mae Quizon	35	Married	Rodriguez, Montalban	Machine Operator	7	1	16 y.o.	1 st year college
Aileen Dela Cruz	30	Single mother	Florida, Pampanga	Machine Operator	7	1	5 y.o.	Kinder 2
Anna Javier	33	Married	Cotabato City	Quality Inspector	5	1	4 y.o.	Junior Elem.
Precy Ramos	33	Married	Mauban, Quezon Province	Machine Operator	6	1	8 y.o.	Grade 3
Ira Santos	36	Single mother	Baccor, Cavite	Machine Operator	11	2	19 and 15 y.o.	1 st year College
Deri Cruz	26	Married	Calamba, Laguna	Production Operator	2	2	7 and 6 y.o.	Grade 1 & 2
Rosanna Aquino	30	Married	Lemery, Batangas	Production Operator	6	1	10 y.o.	Grade 4

Elaine San Agustin	28	Single mother	Nueva Ecija	Production Operator	3	1	3 y.o.	N/A
Lina Castaneda	39	Married	Daet, Camarines Norte	Production Operator	1.5	1	2.5 y.o.	N/A
Susarah Torres	38	Married	Pangasinan	Machine Operator	5	1	5 y.o.	Kinder

2. What is the significance of the religious community, specifically Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church in the life of the OFW mothers?

According to the study of Emmanuel De Guzman, one of the significant roles of the church and religious community is to be the center institution which ministers to the needs of the migrants; the church as a religious community embodies the so-called existing surrogate family for every migrant (2008, 143).

Jonas Nakonz and Angela Wai Yan Shik also acknowledged that homesickness, loneliness and worries about the family and children are the common problems experienced by the OFW mothers abroad, and the church functions to serve as a support system in strengthening the OFW mothers within their community (2009, 28, 32).

During the nine days field research in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church, the researcher conducted interviews with the OFW mothers and the Pastors, and observed and participated in the church's activities. The church had at least thirty to forty OFW congregation, almost 50 percent or 12-15 members consist of OFW mothers. The church holds its Worship Services every Sunday, conducts Bible Study Groups, Prayer Meetings, Fellowships, and Worship Team practices during the weekdays. In these activities, the researcher has seen the devotion and commitment of the OFW mothers in their worship to the Lord and their service to the church. During the one week visitation of the researcher in

Taiwan Higher Ground Community church, the researcher observed that most of the OFW mother members are involved in the music and dance ministry. The day the researcher arrived in Taiwan Higher Ground Community church, the OFW mothers are in the church with Pastor Tessa Marzo, rehearsing for the dance and worship songs. During weekday mornings, immediately after their work in the factory at night, they go to the church as their center of Bible study, prayer meetings, fellowships, and for bonding time with their friends and core groups.

In our discussions, the twelve OFW mothers claimed that they had been attending the church since they worked in Taiwan and said that the church is a community where they can find belongingness with the same group of OFWs who also shared the same background and situation, thus homesickness, worry and other emotional tensions are relieved. On the other hand, only half of the respondents are actively committed and involved in the Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church's ministries such as dance and worship team, Bible study group, prayer meetings and other fellowships.

Figure 3. Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church Ministries.



Left to right. HGCC music team and dance ministry (Photos courtesy of HGCC)

Vina Diaz, who is her 12th year in Taiwan, has been an active member in the music ministry team of Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church since 2006. Vina mentioned that the church is the center of their friendship, recreation and retreat, and a place to worship God and serve fellow members. Vina shared:

Masaya kami dito sa church. Dati may time pa na pagka-galing namin sa trabaho sa umaga, diretso kami sa church, doon kami magluluto, kakain, sama-sama kami doon. Minsan sa church na rin kami natutulog. Iba talaga ang support ng church para sa akin emotionally. Ang church ang second family and spiritual family ko lalo na sa mga oras na sobrang burdened na ako magtrabaho para sa pamilya ko sa Pilipinas. (*We are happy here in the church. Before, after our work in the morning we go straight to the church. We cook and eat there together. Sometimes, we also sleep in the church. The church's support for me emotionally is really different. They are my second family and spiritual family especially during the times when I feel so burdened to work for my family in the Philippines.*)

Vina further shared how Pastor Tessa Marzo never fails to give her advice on how to have wisdom in dealing with financial problems with her family in the Philippines. Vina disclosed how as a single mother, and with her extended family (brothers and sister), she is carrying the burden of the family's financial obligations and responsibilities.

Ang hirap kasi lahat ng expenses ng mga kapatid ko hinihingi sa akin... Yung pang tuition mga pamangakin ko, anak ng kuya ko at yung mga pang-gatas ng mga anak ng youngest sister namin. Lahat yun naka-asa sa akin. Ang problema ako naman ngayon ang walang naipon. Hindi ko nga alam, next year last year ko na dito, pag-uwi ko wala akong savings. (*It's so hard because both of my siblings ask and depend on me in terms of their financial needs. There are instances when my brother's children would need tuition fee, and my youngest sister would ask for her babies need for milk. They depend on me for all of those expenses. I really don't know what to do because next year will be my last year here. I really don't have savings when I go back home.*) Thankfully, Pastora has been constantly advising us in our financial savings. She never fails to remind us to save for ourselves and our children first before helping our extended family members.

In other situations, the church has been the foreground of soul-winning and discipleship for non-Christians and new believers. One of the OFW mothers, Anna Javier testified how she used to be from a Catholic group, but since last December 2012 when a

friend invited her to a mini-concert event held by Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church, she felt the sense of encouragement and warm friendship among the group of brothers and sisters in the church. Following from that event, Anna had come to know about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and salvation through the five-week program of Purpose Driven Life in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church. Sharing her spiritual life, Anna explained:

Iba talaga dito sa Christian group. Hindi ko ma-explain ang tunay na sense of joy and peace that I am experiencing. Leading lang talaga ng Panginoon sa akin dito by His grace. Now I am active in Bible study and theological study groups. *(It's really different to be in a Christian group. I cannot explain the real sense of joy and peace that I am experiencing now. By God's grace, he led me here. Now I am active in Bible study and theological study groups.)*

Ten or approximately 83 percent of the OFW mothers whom the researcher had talked to had stated a common response in particular to the role of the church as religious community in which according to them, the church serves as their spiritual family wherein it strengthens them in times of emotional weakness and homesickness through prayers, retreats and fellowship support groups. As Mae Quizon shared:

Hanggang ngayon, masasabi ko na hinahanap ko talaga yung spiritual group ko where I can belong in my social, emotional and spiritual life. Malaki ang factor ng church sa emotional and spiritual needs ko kasi hindi sa lahat ng oras at panahon kaya kong maging malakas emotionally and spiritually. Kapag nasa church ako, tuwing may Bible study, prayer meeting and fellowships, doon namin nailalabas o nai-shahsare ang mga pagod, lungkot at homesickness namin. *(Until now, I can say that I am in search where I need to belong in my social, emotional and spiritual life. The church is a great factor in supporting my emotional and spiritual needs because not all the times, I can be emotionally and spiritually strong. Whenever I am in the church during Bible study, prayer meeting and fellowships, that is where we can openly share and pour out our emotional burdens, loneliness and homesickness.)*

Within the structure of the church serving as an emotional and spiritual support, the noise or the barriers (i.e., emotional distresses, loneliness, worries and homesickness)

between the OFW mothers and their children as discussed in the conceptual framework of the communication model (see Chapter 1) have been addressed by the Pastors of the church by strengthening each OFW mother member through the ministries of pastoral counseling and support group which includes Bible studies, prayer meetings and fellowships.

Figure 4. Taiwan Higher Ground Church Ministries



Left to Right: Bible Study Group, Sunday lunch fellowship (Photo Courtesy of HGCC).

During the week of the researcher's visitation and study in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church, Pastors Cris and Tessa Marzo granted permission for an interview discussing on the core vision-mission of the church. They oriented the researcher about the background of the church, what it has accomplished and continuously doing at present, and what are the church's future plans are for the OFWs in Taiwan.

Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church was planted in 1999. Pastors Cris and Tessa Marzo established the church more than twenty years ago with the vision-mission of ministering specifically to the OFWs in Kaoshiung, Taiwan. Recognizing the needs of each OFW mothers in the church, Pastor Tessa said that most of the women are very fervent in their spiritual life, active in the church's ministry, and zealous in worshipping the Lord, however the concern of the OFW children left in the Philippines and the family's financial

needs are constant variables and cannot be discredited; these issues still need to be addressed. Pastora Tessa stated:

We cannot simply set aside the situations back in their home provinces. Although we nurture the OFW mothers spiritually, yet, most of them are encountering emotional separation with their children. We cannot deny that their children are closer to their lolas (grandmothers) because they are the ones raising the children since the time of their birth.

To this statement, Pastor Cris the head pastor of the Higher Ground Community Church reiterated:

The OFW mothers would give up or sacrifice anything for the sake of money. For them, their mindset is that they need to work abroad because they needed to support and provide for their children's education and to be able to give them all the material things such as iPad, Tablet, cellphone, laptop and other things. This is the real condition.

In addressing the OFW mothers' needs, Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church ministers to them through individual counseling, regular activities Bible study, fellowships, prayer meetings, and other special events like Purpose Driven life trainings, theological lessons, concerts and retreats. Pastor Cris mentioned, "We address the OFW mothers' cases through counseling. We allot a certain time to listen to them individually. Another is our women's fellowship group and prayer meetings headed by Pastora Tessa wherein they can openly share and pour out their problems to the whole group. Through these social and spiritual activities, each one of them can release their family problems and homesickness, and they can also minister and support one another."

However, the pressing need for the OFW children left in the Philippines to be connected with their mothers remain unanswered. The researcher specified this point and asked Pastor Cris and Tessa Marzo what family ministries and other measures had the

church undertaken to minister to the OFW children and to make an effort to connect the OFW mothers and their children. Pastor Cris mentioned:

We still lack the capacity and manpower resource to conduct visitations and minister to the OFW children left in the provinces. In the near future, if it will be financially capable we will be planting churches which would also minister to the OFW children. I am aware of the needs of the children too, and it is a part of my vision and goal to direct and support lay-pastors to administer visitations and outreach programs to the OFW children in the provinces.

3. How do the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church utilize media to communicate to their children?

Media and telecommunications are essential tools in connecting OFW mothers and their children. The innovation of new media and modern communication through the means of Facebook, Skype, mobile phones and other social network media have enabled OFW mothers an immediate and instantaneous access in communicating with their children.

All of the twelve OFW mothers responded that voice calls or SMS through mobile phones are often used as it is the most convenient media to utilize. More than half of the OFW mothers said that they are communicating with their children on a daily basis for at least 10-15 minutes. Upon direct observation, the researcher noted that each of the twelve OFW mother possess at least one to two mobile phones or two line networks (sim cards), and one laptop computer in each of their dormitory rooms. One of the OFW mothers shared to the researcher, “No matter how tired we are from work, calling our children is very important in order for us to know our children’s condition. Everyday, either in the morning coming from our work or before we go to our work at night, we call them for at least 10-15 minutes.”

Along with the utilization of mobile phones, the provision of new media services such as the Facebook, Skype, video calls and other social media enable the OFW mothers

to see and interact with their children face to face. Seven of the OFW mothers responded that they connect with their children through Skype and Facebook on a weekly basis. On the other hand, five OFW mothers mentioned that they have no internet access in their house in the Philippines so they need to arrange a specific schedule during holidays or whenever their children would go to the town proper to rent a computer in an internet café. Exemplary cases of this situation are: Mercyditas Abadsantos, Vina Diaz, Precy Ramos, Rosanna Aquino, and Lina Castenda.

A common response of the five OFW mothers:

Nakakausap at nakikita naman ang mga anak namin sa Skype at Facebook pero kailangan pa naming i-set yung schedule kung kailan sila makakapunta sa bayan. Ang hirap wala kasing network or internet connection sa probinsya namin. (We are able to talk and see our children through Skype and Facebook, but we still need to set a specific schedule whenever they would go to the town proper. It's hard because there is no network or internet connection in our province.)

Given their locations in provincial areas where some of the OFW mothers have mentioned that they are living in the rural barrios, poor accessibility to the internet is the most common problem encountered.

On the whole, the concept of computer mediated communication among the OFW mothers is acceptable. The twelve OFW mothers claimed that each of their children belong in different ages, and at every stage there are particular needs which are relevant according to the child's age group, thus they said that the facility of internet services such as Skype, Facebook, video call and other social media are beneficial for them.

For the OFW mothers who have toddler-aged (2-4 years old) children like Elaine and Lina, Skype and Facebook enable them to interact and see their children playing and update them about the children's developmental growth and progress. Elaine shared her story about her three year old daughter Aiza:

Natutuwa ako kapag nakikita ko si Aiza sa Skype. Active na active siya. Everytime na nakakausap ko siya, pinapakita nya sa akin yung mga drawings nya. Mahilig siya mag-draw. Kaya lagi ko siya pinapadalhan ng mga coloring books and coloring sets. Ngayon, masasabi ko na malaki ang tulong ng media kung i-cocompare mo noon sa traditional media katulad ng mails. Ngayon, mas instant ang connection namin sa mga anak naming. Media is conducive. *(I am happy everytime I see Aiza on Skype. She is very active. Everytime I talk to her, she shows to me all her drawings. So I always send her coloring books and coloring sets. I think, modern media today is of great help as compared with the traditional media like sending mails. We can connect instantly with our children. Media is conducive.)*

On another day of interview, the researcher met Lina, a mother with a two and a half year old daughter. For Lina, the mobile phone is the main source in connecting with her daughter, as they do not have the internet connection in their province. Being a mother, talking with her daughter through mobile phone could in some ways give her happiness.

Lisa shared:

Wala kaming internet connection sa bahay namin kaya tuwing holidays o kapag pumupunta ang mama ko at mga pinsan ko sa bayan, dun kami nakakapag-usap sa Skype. Nakakatuwa kasi nagre-respond na si Louisa. Kumakanta, nagdadaldal ng kung ano-ano, at kapag tinatawag niya akong mama...kapag naririnig ko siya masaya talaga ako *(We don't have network or internet connection in our house in the province. It is only when my mother and cousins go to the town, I would be able to see and talk to my daughter on Skype. I feel so happy because I can already hear Louisa respond. She sings, uttering any sounds that she can pronounce, and calling me Mama. Everytime I hear her I feel very happy.)*

For some OFW mothers like Aileen Dela Cruz, Anna Javier, Deri Cruz, and Susarah Torres who have children attending pre-school and elementary level, talking and seeing them through Skype and Facebook, is very important. For them, they set a regular schedule such as weekends, rest days or holidays seeing their children on the Skype, because it is the only means that they can supervise their children. During the interview, all of the mothers responded: "Our children are in the stage where they are in the school-aged years. They are still in the formative years. Daily monitoring their activities and homework in school are crucial for us, and it is only through Skype that we are be able to do that."

In one instance, Anna, a thirty-three year old mother shared her story of her son John who is now four years old, studying in Junior elementary:

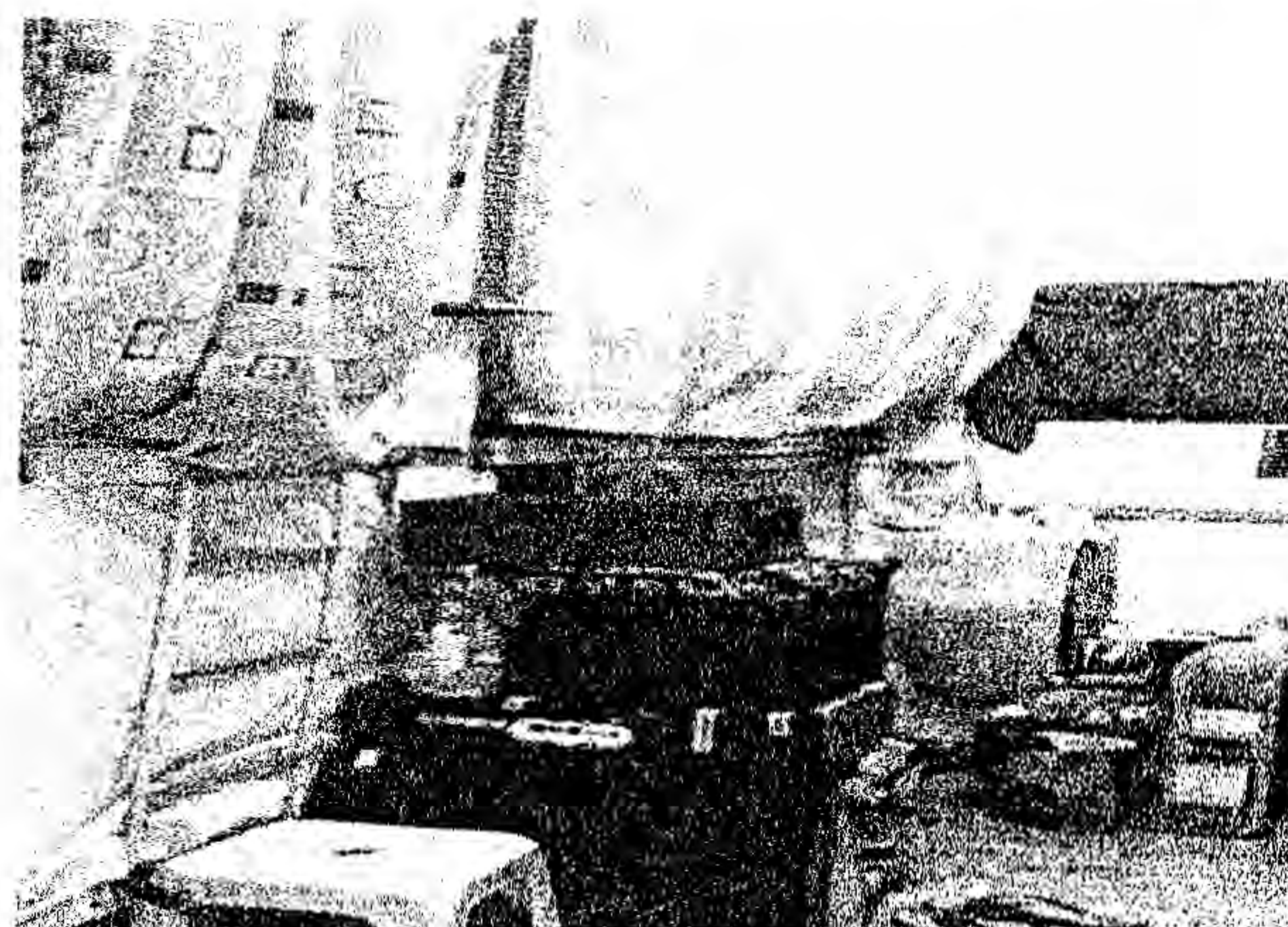
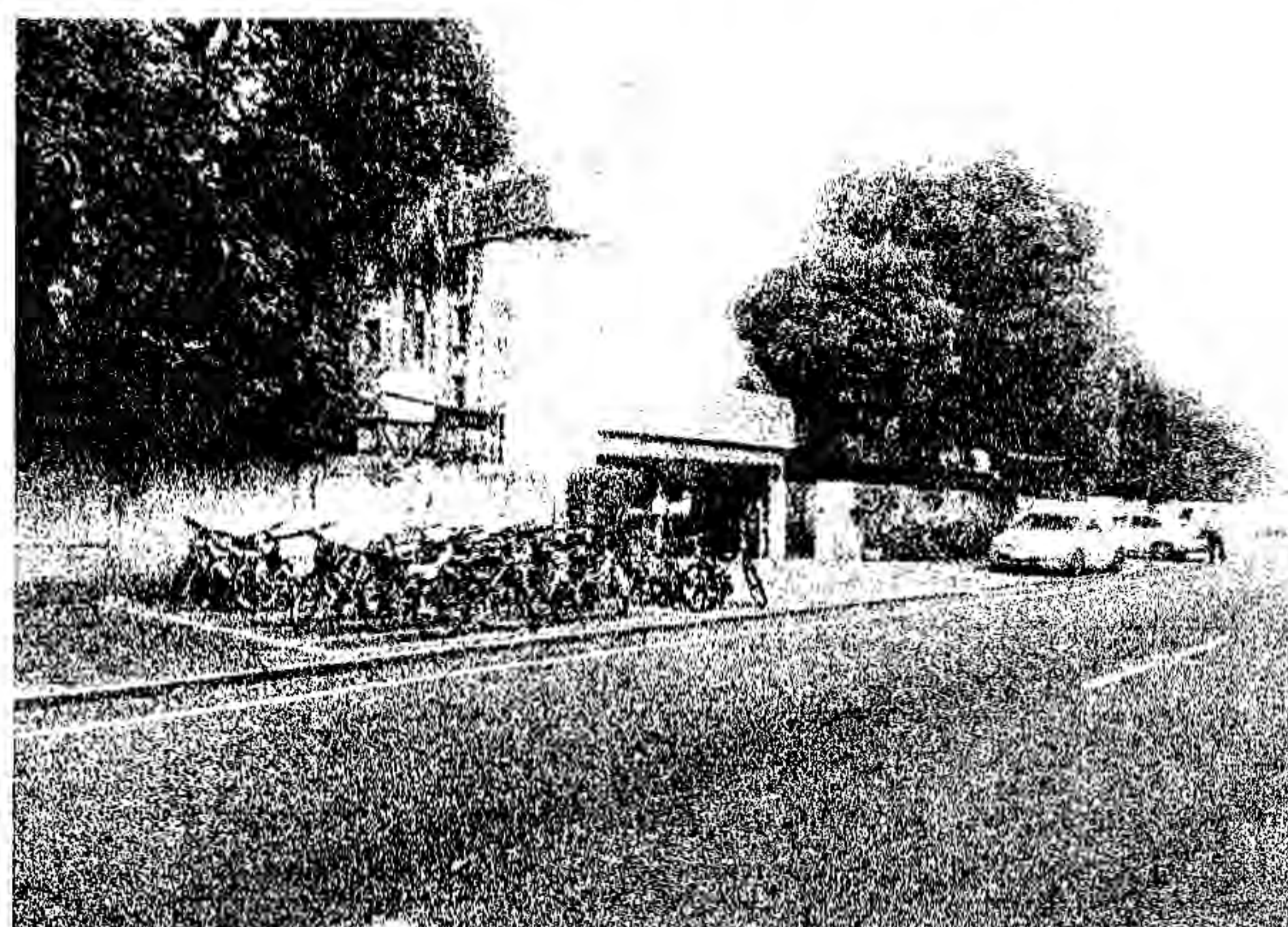
After my first term contract in Taiwan, I tried to stay in the Philippines as a working mother so that I could raise my son, John. But seeing him growing up (*lumalaki na kasi siya*), I think my main priority now is to provide and be able to save up for his education as well as his other needs. It's difficult not to be present with John, but as an OFW, we do not have a choice as to what the media offers. (*Wala naman ibang paraan*) There are no other means, only mobile phones, Facebook and Skype are the ways we can see and talk with our children. The most important thing for me now is that media is able to connect our long distanced mother-son relationship. Talking with him through Skype, I am able to see and monitor John's activities in every way I could. At least, this helps ease my feeling of missing him, and in some ways I can also patch some things which I know I should do like when I am with him.

Although long distance communication through Skype and mobile phones brings convenience and instantaneous access for the twelve OFW mothers, still they mentioned that communicating with their children through media is not easy and could be limited such as in the exchange of the verbal tone or how they talk with their children through the phone and Skype. In most cases, the OFW mothers are not able to talk in a normal voice tone because some of their roommates are already sleeping, thus typing through text forms was the only method which they can respond with their children.

On the first day of the field research, Deri Cruz accommodated the researcher to visit her dormitory. As illustrated in Figure 3, each bed was partitioned by curtains in order to keep the silence and privacy of each OFW occupants. Deri showed her small-spaced bed where her laptop and cell phones are all placed. During that hour, the researcher observed first-hand Deri's communication with her family. As they exchanged communication through Skype, Deri explained to the researcher:

Madalas ganito kami nag-uusap, tumatawag sila sa Skype or video call tapos may headset ako sa cellphone ko or laptop para nakakausap ko sila. Pero kapag may mga natutulog na ng mga roommates ko, hindi na ako pwedeng magsalita kaya tina-type ko na lang yung messages ko. (*Usually, this is how we communicate, they would call through Skype or video call, and I would put on the headset to be able to talk with them. But when my roommates are sleeping, I cannot talk anymore so I type my messages.*)

Figure 5. Dormitories in Kaoshiung, Taiwan.



Clockwise, from top left: Building of red house or the ladies dormitory, the hallway of the greenhouse dormitory, bedroom in the green house dormitory, double deck beds are covered with curtains, bedroom in the yellow house dormitory, the double deck beds are covered with curtains

From the testimonies of the OFW mother respondents, it can be presumed that media and telecommunications serve as the primary channel in bringing instantaneous and convenient access of communication for the OFW mothers and their children. In a more precise analysis of the data gathered, the researcher notes that the response of the

OFW mothers were in congruence with the local and foreign studies conducted by Paragas (2006), Lin and Sun (2010), Malik and Kadir (2011) which supports that SMS or text messaging and voice call through mobile phones were the most utilized as the main source of communication, while Skype, Facebook and other social networking sites were used occasionally.

Possible limitations of the media and telecommunication can be parallel with certain variables such as time constraints for the OFW to communicate with their children, inaccessibility to internet connection, and other reasons. Considering some of these factors, further study and analysis to the media and telecommunication utilization among the OFW mothers is recommended.

4. To what extent does the media usage mediate the relationship of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church with their children in the Philippines?

Media utilization is part and parcel of the everyday life for the OFW mothers in communicating with their children left in the Philippines; the facility of media technology and telecommunications integrate transnational families through a long-distance relationship (Parrenas 2005, 319).

This is notable in the cases of the OFW mothers working in Taiwan. Although media and telecommunications enable to bridge the geographical separation and the long-distanced relationship between the OFW mothers and their children, it could not be discounted that respondents still claim that interpersonal communication and the physical presence with their children is the preferred mode of communication. All of the twelve OFW mothers expressed, "In some ways media is conducive for us because we have no

other choice and means to communicate with our children even though it still lacks the actual and physical presence that we long with our children.”

All of the twelve OFW mothers responded that Skype and Facebook are the ideal types of social media as these media enable them to see and talk with their children face-to-face. However, the respondents stated that mobile phones are more instantaneous for them in communicating with their children.

All of the OFW mothers discussed that the advantage of social media such as Skype, Facebook and video calls is that it is capable to extend their roles and duties of being a mother to their children. Deri Cruz mentioned that as a mother, whenever she has free time, she can utilize Skype and video calls to teach her two children in their homeworks and school projects, and she further mentioned that she can also play with her sons on Skype.

Deri narrated:

May advantage naman ang Skype and video calls. At least, nakikita ko yung dalawang boys ko. Kahit sabihin natin na malayo ako, bilang isang ina, hands-on pa rin naman ako...hindi naman totally na napapabayaang ko sila. Through Skype, nasupervise ko pa rin sila sa mga assignments nila, kapag may exam na-tutor ko pa rin naman eh. At natutuwa din ako kasi kapag naglalaro yung mga anak ko ng pok cards and paper airplanes, nakikipaglaro din ako sa kanila. (*Skype and video calls have its advantages. Through these media, at least I could see my two sons. Although, given the situation that I am geographically far from them, I can still be a hands-on mother. I supervise them in their assignments, and when they have exams, I tutor them through Skype. And also, it makes me happy because when my sons are playing pok and paper airplanes, I also play with them.*)

On the other hand, most of them admitted that being separated from their children could possibly inflict a negative effect on their mother-children relationship. Among the challenges and side effects of geographical separation in the OFW children are specifically on disciplining their attitude and behavior, proper training during their developmental ages, the nurturing of the children's health condition, and the children's emotional relationship

with their OFW mothers. All of them responded, “Siyempre, iba pa rin talaga yung long-distance relationship, hindi naman personally nagui-guide yung anak naming habang lumalaki sila. (*It is still different being in a long distance relationship with our children. We cannot personally guide our children during their growing up years.*)

In the process of our conversation, the researcher had the privilege to learn the personal stories and encounters which have been disclosed by most of the OFW mothers. A significant case was of disciplining the children. More than half of the OFW mothers had stated that disciplining through Skype and mobile phones is the most difficult encounter with their children. They related that given the situation of their physical absence being a mother, disciplining and guiding their children in school work cannot be fully maintained through the means of media (i.e. Skype and video calls). Often, whenever they would talk with their children, they would not pay attention or listen, instead their children would prefer to play or do some activities that would deviate them away from their mothers.

Two of the substantial cases were of Mercyditas Abadsantos and Vina Diaz. Mercyditas, mother of a six-year old son Daniel came to Taiwan last May 29, 2011 working as a factory worker in Orient SemiConductor Electronics (OSE). At present, Mercyditas’ husband, Rudy Abadsantos is the one who substituted in fulfilling her role and duties as a mother taking care of their son. During weekends, her husband and son, Daniel stay with his lola (*grandmother*), so that the lola can also supplement the needs of her son, Daniel. Being a mother, Mercyditas admitted that the kind of non-normative family setting, wherein she is away from her son is difficult for her as she cannot fully attend to her roles and duties. Moreover, as a mother to a six-year old son, Mercyditas acknowledged that she is missing the physical presence of guiding and disciplining Daniel; she can only remind

her husband to take care of Daniel's needs. To this Mercyditas shared her problems and concerns of raising and disciplining only through the facility and utilization of media:

Grade One si Daniel ngayon sa school in school, ang pinakamahirap na part is hindi ko siya ma-guid sa mga assignments niya sa school. Actually medyo behind siya sa mga subjects niya. Nag-aadjust talaga siya sa mga learning lessons niya kasi hindi siya maturuan ng husband and mama ko. Isang factor pa advanced yung age ni Daniel para sa Grade One. *(Daniel is Grade One now in school. The most difficult part for me being far from Daniel is I cannot be there to guide him with his assignments in school. Actually now, he is behind on some of his subjects. He is having some adjustments learning the lessons of the teachers because my husband and my mother cannot teach him in his lessons. Also, another factor I think Daniel's age is quite advanced to be already in Grade one.)*

Then Mercyditas began to feel quite disappointed as she continued to narrate how she is having difficulties in disciplining Daniel,

Concerning discipline, mas takot sa akin si Daniel kaysa sa papa niya lalo na kapag pinapagalitan ko siya. Kapag napapagalitan ko na siya sa Skype, tinatangal niya yung headset at nagtatampo na sa akin. Pero wala naman ibang paraan para makausap ko sila. At least kahit papaano may contact ako sa kanila. *(Daniel is more afraid of me especially at times when I would scold him. He is more afraid of me than his father. When I try to discipline him through Skype, he unplugs the headset and gets disappointed with me. It is really hard to communicate with my son now that I am not present with him. But there are no other means to talk and see my son, at least I can connect with them.)*

Given this situation that Mercyditas is an absentee mother to her six year old son, Daniel, she was reluctant to acknowledge that communication through the means of social media and telecommunications can fully connect the gap of their long distance relationship as mother and son. She reasoned that mobile phones and social media (Skype) is only limited to 5-10 minutes per conversation, it is also limited in asking if how her is son doing in school, reminding to drink vitamins, and checking on other important needs (i.e., allowance, school supplies, tuition fees, and other things); being an OFW mother

Mercyditas has been sacrificing the roles and duties of motherhood which is to give guidance in education and discipline her son Daniel.

In another setting, the researcher had met Vina Diaz, a forty year old single mother with one son. She is currently working as Quality Control Inspector in Orient SemiConductor Electronics (OSE) since 2001. As we were having our conversation over a lunch setting in the guest lounge of their dormitory, Vina Diaz shared a similar case in disciplining her ten-year old son, Alex. Her situation is more complex as she bears the responsibility of being a single mother. As much as she can, she tries to talk to her son, Alex every rest day during weekends and holidays. As an OFW mother, Venus mentioned that seeing and talking with her son through Skype and mobile phone does not give them the full capacity in solidifying their long-distance relationship as mother-son. While we were talking, Vina seemed to show cheerful and resilient countenance, but it could not be disregarded a hint of pain in her voice as she shared of her hardships in being an absentee mother especially concerning discipline of her son. Vina said that she is capable to discipline her son through Skype and mobile phones, but she finds their situation difficult as she could not be physically present to raise and teach her son while growing up. She felt it is really a difficult challenge to communicate with her son in an intimate manner. There were occasions when her son, Alex would not want to talk to her, or at times he would be playing while they were talking on Skype. Vina confesses:

Kung hindi pa ako nagagalit sa kanya hindi pa niya ako kakausapin. Minsan naman habang nag-skyskype naglalaro siya. Kapag pinagsasabihan ko naman, lagi siyang sumasagot 'Opo, Mama' pero hindi naman niya gagawin or hindi ko alam kung naiintindihan niya. Hindi ko talaga alam kung ano ang nasa isip niya. (If I would not get angry with him, he would not talk to me. Sometimes, when we were talking on the Skype, he would be playing games. And everytime that I give talk to him, he would just answer 'Yes, Mama' he would not follow or I don't know if he understands. I really don't know what is in his mind.)

Other OFW mothers who participated in the focused group discussion related to similar complications of disciplining their children through the sole facility of media.

Rosanna Aquino, a mother of 10-year old daughter Meryl shared how she cannot give proper training and discipline concerning Meryl's attitude and behavior:

Ang pinakamahirap ay yung hindi ko nakikita yung ugali niya habang lumalaki. Minsan kapag pinagsasabihan ko sumasagot lang na 'Oo, Mama' pero hindi ako sigurado kung talagang naiintindihan niya ako. Sa tingin ko naman nakikinig naman siya kaya lang kapag pinagsasabihan ko mabilis siyang magtampo at magulat o ma-shock. Pagdating naman sa mga social activities o kaya mga friends niya sa school, hindi ko masyadong nalalaman kasi hindi naman siya nag-oopen o nagkukuwento sa akin. *(The most difficult for me is, I could not see my daughter's attitude while she is growing up now. Sometimes, when I try to discipline her, she will just answer 'Yes, mama' but I am not sure if she really understands me. I think my daughter listens to me, but when I scold her, she easily feels shocked. When it comes to her social activities or group of friends in school, I don't know much about it as she does not open up much to me.)*

The greatest sacrifice for the OFW mothers is the emotional dis-attachment of the children with them due to geographical separation or the long-distance relationship which is only channeled through the media and telecommunications.

Other situational conditions encountered by the OFW mothers concerns the health of their children. Elaine San Agustin, a mother of a three-year old daughter, Ella shared to the researcher of her most difficult experience in Taiwan when Ella was twice confined in the hospital due to Dengue Fever. The first incident that Ella was confined, Elaine was a new employee in Taiwan so it was very hard for her whom to seek help. She narrated:

First time na na-confine si Ella ay last May 2012, tapos naulit na naman yun noong July 2012. Yung Ate ko ang tumawag sa akin sabi na nagka-dengue. Sobrang hindi ako makaisip kung ano ang gagawin ko noon. Blank talaga yung isip ko, hindi ako maka-concentrate sa trabaho. Tapos lalo na bago palang ako dito sa Taiwan, mahirap kasi hindi ko alam kung kanino ako lalapit o magtatanong ng tulong. *(The first time Ella was confined was last May 2012, it happened again for the second time last July 2012. My older sister was the one who called me telling that Ella had Dengue. At that time, I cannot think well of I need to do. My mind went blank, and I*

cannot concentrate and focus on my work. It is very hard especially I was a new worker here in Taiwan. It's hard... I did not know any friends whom to ask for help.)

In other cases, the OFW mothers were experiencing homesickness whenever they would see their children's and family's photos posted on Facebook. Three of the OFW mothers said that they feel the loneliness and homesickness because they cannot be with their children on special occasions such as their birthdays, school programs, Christmas celebrations and family gatherings.

During the researcher's interview with the twelve OFW mothers, more than half of the OFW mothers mentioned that the usage of social media and telecommunications (mobile phones and video calls) does not bring the full capacity in connecting their relationship because it cannot enable them to be physically present with their children most especially during times of their sickness. Only three of the OFW mothers had answered that the media and telecommunications can bring the full capacity in connecting their long distance relationship with their children because at least they are enabled to instantly and conveniently communicate with them despite the geographical separation.

In each of the OFW mothers' cases, the most common significant issues being raised were particularly on the subject of difficulty in raising their children only through social media and mobile phones as the main channel of communication. Added to that, they also mentioned emotional pain of separation, homesickness and loneliness whenever their children would get sick or encounter problems at school, they could not go back home immediately to be physically present in taking care of their children, and to personally attend to their children's needs. For the twelve OFW mothers, these are the most essential aspects which they have been sacrificing in considering their children having a stable and secured life.

In this given situation, despite the long distance relationship and geographical separation, the OFW mothers were still capable to perform their roles and responsibilities to their children through the usage of media. Thus, the researcher confirms Madianou's theory accentuated maternal ambivalence (2012, 23; 2011, 13) to be valid and relevant. Despite some difficulties encountered with the utilization of the media, it still enabled the OFW mothers to fulfill their motherhood duties to their children through the mediated communication.

However, in some situations, the capacity of social media (i.e., Facebook, Skype, other websites) and telecommunications in providing a closer relationship between the OFW mothers and their children are considered to be limited in particular conditions wherein the major roles of motherhood is most often being substituted by grandmothers, husbands, and other relatives as the children's guardians. The exemplary cases were testified by the twelve OFW mothers, in which each of them personally acknowledged that as long as their mothers are supervising their children, they felt no worries, trusting that their children will be well taken care of. This kind of family arrangement has been a real situation for each of the twelve OFW mothers, by working abroad they are fulfilling their duties as a provider for their children's primary needs such as education, medical expenses, and other financial needs.

5. What are the possible limitations of communication between the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church and their children?

The advent of media and telecommunications has empowered the immediate and instantaneous connection of a long distance communication between OFW mothers and their children. Furthermore, the innovation of modern media and telecommunication (i.e.

Skype, Facebook, Video Calls, and mobile phones) had been presumed to infringe the barriers of spatial distance, thus bridging the geographical separation of the OFW mothers and their children.

Conducting an actual case study, the researcher sought to investigate the response of the OFW mothers if the modern media and telecommunications have strengthened their relationship with their children, or are there barriers and limitations in a long-distance communication through the means of telecommunications and other forms of media.

All of the twelve OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Church expressed that although media and telecommunications have strategically functioned for the purpose of enabling a closer range of contact and permitting the maximum capacity of interpersonal communication, still it limits to bring an intimate face-to-face communication where physical presence and non-verbal languages (i.e. touch, hold, embrace) are achieved. The twelve OFW mothers were quite sentimental in expressing their longing to be present with their children:

Kahit nakikita namin ang mga anak namin sa Skype, Facebook or video calls, iba pa rin yung nakakasama namin sila para personally na naga-guide naming ang studies nila, na-tratrain habang lumalaki at hands-on na naalagaan namin sila kapag may sakit. (Even if we are able to see our children through Skype, Facebook or video calls, it is still different to be with them physically so that we could personally guide them in their studies, to train them while growing up, and to be hands on in taking care of them when they are sick.)

Space and time delimits the concept of interconnection between OFW mothers and their children. However, according to the theory of power-geometries, through the mediation of media and telecommunication, it has enabled access to communication, and sustained relationships among transnational families separated by geographical distance (Massey 1994, 149).

In conducting the field study, the researcher included this question into the scope of analysis of the statement of the problem. Administering a focused-group discussion among the twelve OFW mothers, each one of them identified a specific limitation of the media and telecommunication in their long distance communication with their children.

Six of the OFW mothers said that they lack quality time in communicating because of their working schedule. Working as an OFW in a foreign country requires time pressure. “Kelangan talaga ng adjustment and sacrifice lalo na hindi mo kasama yung mga anak at pamilya mo. (*It requires adjustment and sacrifice especially when you are not with your children and family.*)” One of the difficult situations encountered by the OFW mothers is their working shift in the factory. All of the OFW mothers are employed in a 12-hour night shift, and most of the time they are required to work overtime. For most of the OFW mothers who have children going to school in the morning, conflict in time is the usual problem they experience.

Other mothers like Mae Quizon, Deri Cruz, Ira Santos and Anna Javier have also expressed similar sentiments on how hard for them to set a particular time to communicate with their children. As much as they are trying to call them every morning after their work, at times they can feel the over fatigue and exhaustion from work, and the children will be already in school. Thus, only during weekends, rest days or days off from work, and holidays are they able to allot quality time in communicating with their children.

In other cases, the development of the technology of media and telecommunications has inadequacies which hinder some OFW mothers to fully utilize its function. Half of the OFW mothers expressed their complaints on the poor mobile network and weak access to the internet connection in their dormitories. The researcher was able to visit each of the

OFW mothers' dormitories, and witnessed that in each dormitory room, there are double decked beddings only separated by curtains for each single occupant. As the OFW mothers had described the condition in their respective spaces showing their small beds,

Ito yung mga kama namin...Sobrang magulo, makalat...Halo-Halo na yung mga gamit namin. (*This is our bed. It is very disorganized and scattered. All of our things are messy.*)” Showing their laptop, “Bawat isa sa amin may tig-isang laptop. Necessity sa amin yung laptop. Gamit namin yung laptop para mag Skype and Facebook. Kaya lang may oras na mahina ang signal dito sa dorm kaya napuputol din yung conversation namin. (*Each one of us own a single unit of laptop, this is a necessity for us. We mainly use our laptop to access Skype and Facebook. But there are certain hours when the signal or internet connection is very weak so our conversation gets disconnected.*)”

Aside from experiencing poor signal and weak internet connection in Taiwan, another possible limitation in the long distance and mediated communication is the location of the OFW children in the rural provinces. Five of the OFW mothers like Mercyditas AbadSantos, Vina Diaz, Precy Ramos, Rosanna Aquino, and Lina Castaneda, mentioned that they needed to arrange a specific schedule whenever their children would go to the internet cafe in the town proper, for them to be able to communicate through Skype.

One particular situation, Lina shared that the incapability and the lack of knowledge of her mother in using the internet application like Skype and Facebook is another factor in limiting their communication. She confided to the researcher that at times, whenever she would communicate with her daughter and mother through Skype, she would ask her cousins for help in assisting her mother in accessing the internet whenever possible:

Hindi kasi marunong ang mama ko mag-internet eh. Alam mo naman pag medyo matanda na, nahihirapan na siyang gumamit ng mga modern technology ngayon. Kaya kapag mag-uusap kami ng mama ko at ng daughter ko sa Skype, minsan nakikiusap na lang ako sa mga pinsan ko na i-assist nila si mama sa Skype. Pero siyempre meron din naman ibang ginagawa ang mga pinsan ko kaya hindi ako masyadong nakikisuyo sa kanila. (*My mother does not know how to use the internet. You know, she is quite old and at her age she is having a hard time learning the modern technology. So sometimes, whenever I would talk to my mother and*

daughter through Skype, I ask my cousins to assist my mother in using the Skype. But of course, my cousins also have other chores to do, so I don't ask much for favor from them).

In the context of proxemic detachment and geographical separation, media and telecommunications are assumed to serve as the surrogate party that connects and establishes the relationship between the OFW and their children. Although, accessibility to the media and telecommunication has been massively generated, in which every OFW mother owns at least a single unit of mobile phones and laptop, however it is inevitable that limitations of the media and telecommunications as a functional tool can possibly occur.

One of the complaints expressed is its consumption cost. Three of the OFW mothers whom the researchers had talked to stated that the call cost in international calls and text messaging are quite expensive. Thus, some of them are allocating a certain amount of budget in their salary in order to be able to spend at least 10-15 minutes of call time.

Susarah, a mother of a five-year old daughter Angel who is now at kindergarten school said that the expensive call cost constrains her in communicating with her daughter. She mentioned, "Prepaid cards here in Taiwan cost approximately 300-350 New Taiwan Dollar for 24 hours. That is why I need to limit the calls for at least 10-15 minutes per day. I need to budget the call time until the next pay day."

On the other hand, Mercyditas shared the same condition. In her case, she can only spend calls during her pay days and special occasions because of the expensive call rate. She said that her minimum salary could not afford to call her son everyday. As she stated, "Minsan, tumatawag ako kapag pay day ko and special occasion like birthday ni Daniel, kasi kelangan ko rin magtipid dahil hindi naman ganun kalaki yung kinikita ko dito. (I

usually call every pay day and special occasions like Daniel's birthday, because my salary here is only in a minimum rate, that's why I really need to save.)

Presumably, media and telecommunications are channels which mediate the relationship that is separated by spatial or geographical distance between OFW mothers and their children; media and telecommunications is assumed to establish and connect the barrier of a long distance relationship.

However, the OFW mother implied that media and telecommunications do not necessarily connect the geographical gap, and bridge their long-distanced relationship as it cannot replicate or substitute the experiences of physical presence being with their children.

Synthesis

The twelve OFW mothers represent cases of financial needs and relational needs with their children. Each of the OFW mothers came from different backgrounds. Most of them are based from the rural areas in the Philippines wherein family ties are highly valued and financial resources are needed. Four of the OFW mothers are single mothers and eight are married mothers. All of the OFW mothers are working as factory workers in Kaoshiung, Taiwan in order to financially support their children and to be able to give them a good quality education.

The impact of media and telecommunication brings a positive but limited effect between the relationship of the OFW mothers working in Taiwan and with their children left in the Philippines. Through the utilization of mobile phones, Skype, Facebook and video calls the OFW mothers are able to talk and see their children; media enables connection and instantaneous communication for the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church.

On the other hand, although the OFW mothers can instantly connect and communicate with their children, still the social media and telecommunication are not sufficient media to bridge the emotional separation and homesickness of the OFW mothers with their children because it cannot enable them to be physically present with their children most especially when they get sick.

All of the OFW mothers' difficulties in a long distance communication with their children concern: mother-children relationships in which most mothers are experiencing challenges in disciplining their children, concerns with health matters particularly with their children will get sick, and homesickness.

Concerning the possible limitations of communication with their children, all of the OFW mothers felt that the lack of interpersonal or face to face communication, the inavailability of time, the poor network connection of mobile phones and the internet, and the expensive call costs are the communication barriers affecting their long-distance relationship.

The religious community or the church as their spiritual family is an essential unit for the OFW mothers working in Taiwan. Higher Ground Community Church is a center for the OFW mothers where they can gather together and receive spiritual and emotional support and nourishment which relieves them of homesickness and relationship problems with their children.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The researcher conducted a case study among twelve OFW mothers working in Taiwan to determine how do the usage of media connect their relationship with their children in the Philippines through a long distance communication. The data were evaluated and interpreted in the following summary, conclusions and recommendation.

Summary

Twelve OFW mothers working in Taiwan participated in the interview and answered the open-ended questionnaire conducted by the researcher. The following summary included the basic profile, nature of work in Taiwan, number of years working in Taiwan, number of children, and the ages and grade level of the children. The respondents also answered the statement of the problems in relevance to the case study.

1. Demographic Profile

The twelve OFW mothers are young adult women ages from 26 – 40 years old. Most of the OFW mothers are married, while only a third of the OFW mothers are single mothers. Two of the OFW mothers have two children, while almost all of them have only one child. The OFW mothers' children age range from 2.5 until 19 years old. Two of the OFW mothers have toddler children which ages from 2.5 – 3 years old, three OFW mothers have pre-school children ages 5 – 6 years old, at Kindergarten level, five OFW mothers have children at elementary level from ages 6 – 10 years old, two OFW mothers have teenaged children from 15 – 19 years old.

The twelve OFW mothers are employed as Machine Operator, Production Operator, Quality Inspector, and Factory Worker. These are all factory related jobs. Four out of

twelve OFW mothers are working in their first term (1 - 3 years contract), six OFW mothers in second term (5-7 years), and two are already in their third term (11-12 years).

2. What is the significance of the religious community, specifically Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church in the life of the OFW mothers?

The religious community or the church as their spiritual family is an essential unit for the OFW mothers working in Taiwan. As the host church in Taiwan, Pastor Cris Marzo and Pastora Tessa Marzo support the OFW mothers through one-to-one counseling, Bible study groups, lunch fellowships, camp retreats and seminars, and other ministries. For the OFW mothers, their relationship with the Pastors and involvement in the church ministries bring emotional relief to them and strengthen them spiritually. All of the OFW mothers claim that the church group as a community and the support of the Pastors are great help for them to relieve them of homesickness, worries and problems with their children. However, less than half of the OFW mothers mentioned that they are involved in the ministry in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church.

3. How are the OFW mothers able to communicate with their children?

In communicating with their children, most of the OFW mothers are communicating with their children on a daily basis for at least 10-15 minutes duration on the mobile phones. More than half of the OFW mothers are able to talk and see their children through Skype, Facebook and video calls; while less than half of the OFW mothers only mentioned that they have no internet connection in their house; they said that setting a particular schedule is needed whenever their children would go to the town proper to rent a computer in the internet shop.

4. To what extent does the media usage mediate the relationship of the OFW mothers working in Taiwan with their children in the Philippines?

The development of media and telecommunications are able to bring instantaneous communication for the OFW mothers in connecting with their children. Despite the geographical separation and long-distance relationship of the OFW mothers with their children, media and telecommunications have enabled the OFW mothers to fulfill their motherhood roles through mediated communication or known as accentuated maternal ambivalence. (Madianou 2012, 23; 2011, 13).

All of the OFW mothers responded that Skype and Facebook are the ideal types of media as these enable them talk and see their children face-to-face. Some of them mentioned that through Skype, they can teach their children on schoolworks, help them with the projects, and even play with them, while others are able to monitor their children's condition and development, and exercise parental authority if necessary.

On the other hand, the full capacity of the media and telecommunications to produce intimate interpersonal communication and relationship, and bridge the gap of geographical separation have limited effects concerning the issues on discipline, attending to their children's health, and homesickness. The researcher found that seven out of twelve OFW mothers stated that they are experiencing challenges in disciplining their children through Skype and mobile phones especially when the children would not want to talk to them or pay attention; five OFW mothers said it is difficult to be geographically separated especially whenever their children are sick or confined in the hospital, and three of the mothers also answered homesickness whenever their children celebrate birthdays, school programs and other special occasions in the family.

Overall the findings showed that nine out of twelve mothers mentioned that the usage of social media does not bring them the full capacity in connecting their relationship because it cannot enable them to be physically present with their children most especially in times of sickness. Only three of the OFW mothers said that media can bring the full capacity in connecting their long distance relationship with their children because they can instantly and conveniently communicate with them even through geographical separation.

5. What are the possible limitations of communication between the OFW mothers and their children in the Philippines?

The data concludes that half of the OFW mothers said that they lack quality time in communicating with their children because of their working schedule at night, and they also stated that the poor mobile network and access to the internet connection can be a barrier to the quality of communication. Also, almost half of the OFW mothers mentioned that scheduling the time in communicating through Skype is necessary for them whenever their children will be renting a computer in the internet shop. Only a few of them have complaints concerning the expensive amount of call cost. Overall, all of the twelve OFW mothers said that lack of interpersonal or face to face communication is one of the possible limitations of media in connecting their relationship with their children.

Conclusion

The Higher Ground Community Church has twelve OFW mothers belonging to the young adult women range from 26 – 40 years old. Most of them are married mothers who have pre-school and grade school children left in the care of the grandmothers.

Studies and literatures on the context of transnational mothering support the ideology that OFW mothers still maintain their motherhood roles despite the geographical

distance with their children (Madianou 2012, 23; 2011, 13; Massey 1994, 149; Aguila 2009, 91). Aguila stressed on the point that mothers' roles cannot be substituted by the fathers or any relative (2009, 91). On this position, Madinaou theorized the accentuated maternal ambivalence where she asserted that media and telecommunications are pivotal tools in reconciling the OFW mothers with their children by allowing them to perform their roles through mediated communication (2012, 23; 2011, 13).

In the data and analysis of this case study, the researcher found these studies and literatures relevant in the cases of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church. All of the OFW mothers claimed that they are able to talk and see their children through mobile phones and Skype. Through the utilization of mobile phones, Skype, Facebook and video calls, most of the OFW mothers are able to teach and guide their children in their homework, play with them through Skype, and check on their health conditions.

However, media and telecommunications still pose limitations in connecting the OFW mothers and their children. Among the identified situations are the problems of most of the OFW mothers in disciplining the children, not being physically present to take care of their children in times of sickness or when confined in the hospital, and homesickness whenever their children celebrate birthdays, school programs and other special occasions in the family.

Added to these challenges are the inavailability of quality time in communicating with their children, the poor network connection of mobile phones and the internet, and the expensive call cost are the common barriers to their frequency communication. Overall, although media produce positive effects in the bringing convenient and instantaneous

communication, still most of the OFW mothers claimed that media as a communication channel may not necessarily bring the full capacity in enabling an intimate relationship and interpersonal face-to-face communication with their children.

Relating these findings with Joseph Walther's Hyperpersonal Interaction CMC theoretical framework, the researcher found that CMC theory supports the basic communication model of media and telecommunications which allows the senders and receivers to have a convenient and instant communication even through spatial distance. However, the Hyperpersonal Interaction CMC theory is confined only to the scope of the analog cues (SMS texts and voice calls); other communication cues such as the face-to-face interaction and MMS which have been developed in the digital media are not yet covered in Walther's theory. Thus, the accuracy and authenticity of the messages and feedback between the senders and receivers need to be further developed and strengthened in a computer mediated communication.

The religious community or the church was found to be significant for the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church. While being geographically separated from their children, the church serves as a community center for the OFW mothers in uplifting and strengthening their emotional and spiritual needs. In addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of the OFW mothers in Taiwan, the Pastors of Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church are giving them counseling, conducting Bible studies and prayer meeting, and hosting camp retreats, seminars and fellowships which helps them overcome their homesickness and worries for their children, and this also nurtures them spiritually.

Recommendation

In response to the needs of the OFW mothers and the children, the researcher is proposing to Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church, Non-Government institutions, and academic institutions the following recommendations.

1. Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church

The study revealed that Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church was able to serve and minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of the OFW mothers. Through Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church, the OFW mothers had come to know the Lord in deep and intimate way, it gave the OFW mothers opportunities to participate in Bible study groups, prayer meetings, fellowships, and ministries, and it also addressed their emotional concerns (i.e., homesickness, loneliness, family problems and other relational issues).

On the other hand, Taiwan Higher Ground Church needs to strengthen their outreach ministry for the children left in the Philippines. The researcher finds it highly important that Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church be able to bridge and connect the OFW mothers and their children. The relationships of the OFW mothers and their children are crucially important in one family unit. Children need their mothers for proper disciplining and training, nurturing and guidance. The church may establish family ministries such as mother-children day camps, retreats and other family seminars that will build and connect family relationships.

In the dissertation of Fernandez she cited, "Regular visitation and prayers for the OFW children are needed because they have added stressors that other families don't encounter. Even the OFW children must be given ample opportunity to voice their

concerns. They must feel that the church is there to assist their mothers in raising them” (2012, 153).

Through this study, the researcher recommends that Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church extends an OFW Family Ministry Center for the children left in the Philippines in partnership with other OFW ministries such as Work to Witness (W2), The Kairos course, Higher Purpose for Your Overseas Job (HP) which are helping OFW mothers who are currently working abroad.

2. Non-Government institutions and Government agencies.

The data and findings presented in this study revealed that there are several OFW mothers who are encountering family struggles which concerns nurturing and disciplining of their children who are left in the Philippines. In order to provide for the basic necessities and education of the children, the OFW mothers had deployed to work overseas, thus sacrificing their motherhood roles and duties. For this reason, the researcher therefore acknowledges that the basic family structure had been altered in various ways.

Through this case study, the researcher is proposing to non-government institution to further develop a case study and empower implementation acting on economic development and livelihood projects that would promote financial growth and stability for the OFW mothers and their family. Further, it is the through this study that the researcher is adhering for both the Non-government institutions and government agencies like the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency (OWWA) and Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) to support and strengthen the advocacy for the stabilization of the family structure, wherein the mothers would be able to give adequate nurture and guidance for their children.

3. Academic institutions.

The researcher acknowledges that various doctoral dissertations and professional researches focused on the OFW mothers' cases had contributed helpful insights to the literature of this study. This present study is particular in researching on the function of media and telecommunication as a primary source of communication which serves as a connection between the OFW mothers with their children. Based on the findings and data analysis, it revealed that the effects of media and telecommunication are conditional to a limited number of minutes of conversations with their children. The study presents that there are several issues concerning on motherhood roles that needed to be addressed, specifically on the nurturing, guiding, and disciplining of the OFW mothers to their children.

However, as it was mentioned in the delimitation of the study, the results of the case study are only specific to Higher Ground Community Church OFW mothers, thus limitations on analysis and other perspectives may arise. Therefore, the researcher is recommending further studies and follow-up cases on the subject be administered.

APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

In behalf of the department of Master of Arts in Christian Communication in Asia Pacific Nazarene Seminary Theology, the researcher would like to ask for your permission for an interview which will be focused on the subject "Media Usage Among OFW Mothers Working in Taiwan and Their Children in the Philippines". The goal of this study is to be able to minister to the needs of OFW through the integration of media and the church. Thank you for your response and cooperation.

1. Demographic information:

- a. Name and age
- b. What is the nature of present work or occupation in Taiwan?
- c. How long are you working in Taiwan?
- d. How many children do you have in the Philippines?
- e. What are the ages and grade level of children in the Philippines?

2. What are the types of media that you use to communicate with your families?

- Mobile phones
- Skype
- Online services
- Social networking sites
- Others

3. Does the media usage bring or not bring the full capacity for connecting the relationship between the OFW mothers In Taiwan Highter Ground Community Church and their children? Why or why not?

- 3.1 Does media bring the full capacity for connecting the relationship between the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church and their children? Why?

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION GUIDE

The observations of the case study were guided according to the following:

1. The social orientation of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church.
 - 1.1 Demographic profile of the respondents
 - 1.2 Age, civil status, number of years working as OFW in Taiwan, number of children in the Philippines, ages and grade level of children in the Philippines.
 - 1.3 Personal history/background
2. Media and telecommunication orientation of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church.
 - 2.1 The extent of utilization of media and telecommunication of the OFW mothers in Taiwan.
 - 2.2 The application and availability of the facility of media and telecommunication for the OFW mothers in Taiwan.
 - 2.3 The possible limitations of media and telecommunications for the OFW mothers in Taiwan.
3. Religious orientation of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church
 - 3.1 Number of years as a member in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church
 - 3.2 Ministries and activities of the OFW mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church

APPENDIX C

Field Research with the OFW Mothers in Taiwan Higher Ground Community Church

Photo A. Lunch Fellowship with the OFW members in HGCC



Photo B. After lunch with the OFW in HGCC.



(Photos taken by Edlyn Santiago)

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