



PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES AND COPING MECHANISMS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
domestic workers, residents, psychosocial, Pakistan, phenomenological, government support.	The study was done to explore psychosocial experience and coping mechanisms in resident domestic workers in Pakistan. Domestic workers faced numerous challenges in workplace and they had fear of different social stigmas and faced discrimination almost every day. The study was used to explore that the workers used different coping mechanisms to cope with these challenges. The aim of the study was to identify physical issues, psychological issues, coping mechanisms and what were the expectations and perceptions of the workers regarding the domestic work. The study was conducted on both male and female workers aged approximately 26 years and above and with at least 2 months of experience, we used purposive and snowball sampling conducting five in depth interviews. Phenomenological research design was employed. Thematic analysis approach revealed 5 main themes, including; physical, psychological, social issues, coping mechanisms and expectations and perceptions. The domestic workers reported they faced several psychological and social issues that damaged their overall wellbeing, this study highlights the need for government support, where the workers can register their complaints and government can provide them with financial support and free education for their children. And give awareness to people about domestic workers right.
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Introduction

A domestic worker is an individual who undertakes various domestic and personal care responsibilities within a private home, typically operating within informal or semi formal employment arrangements they play a crucial role in sporting household functioning and daily life activities. In contemporary societies, domestic workers play a significant role in supporting the labour market and contributing to the overall economy by easing the burden of household responsibilities for working families. It emphasises that domestic workers is an essential factor in maintaining the sustainability and effective functioning of economy systems (Lutz, 2007; Thobejane & Khoza, 2019). Available statistics suggest that approximately 1/3 of households worldwide depend on domestic workers for household related services (Albin, 2011; Thobejane & Khoza, 2019).

A domestic worker is defined as an individual who provides paid household services in private homes. There are three core components in this definition. We will discuss these three core components here. The first expect is that the job involves providing services within a private household. In cases of dependent employment, the definition indicates that the employer is a private household. For own-accounts or self-employed workers, the definition explains that they deliver services to a private households. The second definition is more inclusive than the first. The second aspects aspect is that the work include domestic duties. Hence, household tasks should be clearly differentiated from homework and other forms of work done at home. Housekeeping should further be separated from agriculture work, although the distinction is not always clear. It encompasses a wide range of activities such as cooking, food preparation, an dishwashing, as well as cleaning, laundry, and a general household maintenance. It also involves caring for children, the sick, or elderly members of household, along with responsibilities related to the organisation of our domestic work. (Tijdens & van Klaveren, 2011).

Importance and Hidness of Domestic Workers

In developed countries, women's participation in the labour force is generally higher, and they tend to be more career oriented compared to women in developing countries. Previous studies indicates that, historically in the **United states**, white woman relied on the services of black woman, who were often less privileged, to relieve themselves of unpaid domestic responsibilities (Shafeeq et al., 2022; Glenn, 1992; Duffy, 2007). Reproductive labour refers to household related activities such as cooking cleaning washing and childcare. (Shafeeq et al., 2022; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003). Despite their significant contribution to society and the economy, domestic workers, labours remains undervalued. Demand for domestic care services is high in developed countries and is expected to grow further in Asian regions. Demographic shifts indicate that Asia will become one of the oldest regions globally in the coming decades, with the elderly population projected to increase from **584,000,000 in 2019** to around **1.3 billion by 2050**. (Baruah, 2019; Shafeeq et al., 2022). Existing research primarily addresses international migrant domestic workers in developed countries, whereas the experience of local domestic workers in developing contacts remains under explored. In Pakistan, despite increasing demand for domestic labour, workers continue to face lack

of recognition, regulation and fair compensation. Women domestic workers in particular experience marginalisation, including irregular wage structures (Schedules of Wages, 2015; Shafeeq et al., 2022). This study seeks to fill this gap by qualitatively examining the left experiences and daily challenges of domestic workers in Pakistan.

In order to understand these challenges in detail it is important to examine the working conditions and experiences of domestic workers. domestic workers across the world generally belong to marginalised sections of society. social prejudice against their status is often reflected in workplace conditions, and the hidden nature of their work makes exploitation easier. Women form the majority of domestic workers and are therefore particularly vulnerable. the lack of organisation among workers, weak bargaining power, insufficient legal protection, and in adequate welfare measures such as the absence of weekly holidays, healthcare, and society and Social Security benefits are some of the major issues that need attention. it is widely recognised that in societies characterised by gender inequality and social stratification, certain groups remain in subordinate position. domestic Workers represent a clear example of this situation. most of these workers are women, girls, and sometimes children who face economy exploitation, poor working conditions, and gender based discrimination. Many are also exposed to physical, psychological and sexual violence.

However, one of the most serious concerns is that these harsh realities often remain invisible due to lack of regulation, low social status, and the fact that the work is performed inside private homes. this invisibility results in their condition being overlooked, ignored, or suppressed. Domestic work represents a significant and longstanding occupation, particularly for women, contributing substantially to household functioning and economic systems. domestic work is one of the oldest forms of employment, and for many women, it remains a primary source of livelihood. It is a global phenomenon and plays a crucial role in the functioning of many economies. Women domestic workers carry out a wide range of household services for individuals and families, including childcare, elderly care, cleaning, and general household maintenance. their responsibilities may also involve cooking, laundry, ironing, grocery shopping, and other daily household tasks. some domestic workers reside in the households where they are employed while others work part time often serving multiple employers. Domestic workers form an important and rapidly growing segment of the global labour force domestic workers across the world constitute a significant and expanding segment of the labour force, with women making up the majority of this workforce. According to the **International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2010a)**, there are an estimated **53,000,000** domestic workers globally of whom approximately **83%** are women and girls although the actual number may be closer **100 million**. These workers play a crucial role in supporting the economy by enabling others to participate in paid employment. their contributions to society can be highlighted in several ways.

1. Domestic workers support households by allowing other family members to improve their living standards.
2. In many Asian and Arab countries, they provide essential home-based care, which enables women in those households to remain economically active and productive.

3. They also help reduce household expenses, add services such as cleaning, cooking, or caregiving would otherwise be more costly if obtained from external providers.

Despite their important contributions, domestic workers often remain invisible, unprotected, and insufficiently recognised. For many unskilled and less educated workers, domestic work serves as our regular source of income, although it is frequently underpaid. Due to long standing social prejudices, they are often labelled as servants or maids, further contributing to their marginalisation and lack of value in Society. Moreover, they are rarely acknowledged as former workers, and this lack of recognition prevents them from assessing legal protections under regional, national and international labour laws. Given their vulnerability to unsafe, Discriminatory and exploitative working conditions, domestic workers require special attention. There is significant need for improvement in both their living and working conditions. It is therefore a collective responsibility to ensure that domestic workers receive proper recognition along with respect and dignity as a member of society (Ramesh, 2012; ILO, 2010a).

Domestic workers play an important role in contemporary society and it's important can't be overlooked. With ongoing changes in the labour market such as the expansion of the service sector, increased participation of women in paid employment and the effects of globalisation and the demand for domestic workers has grown considerably. Domestic workers not only support households but also contribute to the overall functioning of the economy by enabling other members of the family to participate in the workforce. In addition, domestic workers provide the employment opportunities for individuals who may have limited access to formal jobs due to lower level of education or different type of skills. However, it is important to note that not all domestic workers are unskilled and many of them are educated individuals who choose the domestic work, sometimes through migration, in order to support their families financially. Domestic workers can also be the meaningful occupation as workers often develop close and trusting relationships with the employers which may lead to a sense of application and personal satisfaction (Lutz, 2007; Albin & Mantouvalou, 2012).

In order to better understand this concept, it is important to define domestic work and its key elements. At the beginning of the global care crisis, driven by the growing ageing population and the increased participation of women in the labour force, the term domestic worker generally refers to a wide range of tasks related to caregiving and household management.

Significance/Rational of the Study

Research on domestic workers exists globally and within Pakistan but domestic workers are often ignored in research and less research work on this population. A gap is still clearly seen, very limited qualitative research has been seen in Pakistan, especially on live-in domestic workers, this population is often ignored and underrepresented in research. Previous studies sort of coping mechanisms together with. Lack of research that combines psychosocial experience and coping mechanisms in one study. Most of the study doesn't focus on domestic workers' education. On male and female domestic workers there is a lack of research that gives voice to particularly those who are living in employer's homes. Therefore, the aim of the study is to fill these gaps by providing a

comprehensive, deep detail and context – specific understanding about the domestic workers psychosocial experience and coping mechanisms especially who lives in Lahore, Pakistan and they are resident and explore why these population are engage and choose domestic work as Job and in which circumstances. This study gives recognition and voice to a marginalized group that's why it's important. Also aim to arise awareness about domestic workers difficult lives. And finding can be shared on different platforms to provide education, improve working conditions, promote fair treatment and encourage legal production. Recommendation helps to improve the wellbeing of domestic workers.

Review of Literature

There have been numerous researchers regarding psychological issues faced by domestic workers internationally however there is very few researches in Pakistan that discuss about psychosocial experiences and coping mechanisms.

Psychosocial Issues

Mahmood & Mushtaq (2023) carried out a study on female domestic workers in the Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions of Pakistan who experienced psychological issues. The study concluded that due to their occupational conditions they experienced significant psychological distress. To improve their mental well-being and social status the better protection of their rights, public awareness and policy intervention is needed. In understanding the work and mental health relationship that are complex, Mackenzie et al. (2013) investigated how the psychosocial work environment and other life domains like family, friends/ community and support services affect the mental health of workers who experienced bad work condition and balanced the problems related to work and families which have major impact on mental health. The study suggested that if strong policies made and have access to welfare and support them in different life domains it can help to improve mental health of workers. The authors concluded that looking at these interactions gives a full understanding of how people with low mental health manage their lives than studying work or work– family conflict alone.

Coping Mechanism

Live –in domestic workers sexual harassment coping strategies in Defence Housing Authority in the region of Lahore was conducted by Ansari et al. (2025). The results showed that workers stay silent and avoid the situations because of their job and religiously by prayer and viewing that harassment as test from God. They didn't asked help from NGOs because of lack of legal trust and peer support was used. Conclusion of this study was that these coping strategies reflect resilience, systematic inequality, invisibility of abuse, urgent need for legal protection, employer accountability and accessible support systems for domestic workers in Pakistan. Khai & Asaduzzaman (2025) conducted a qualitative study on daily challenges and coping strategies of Chin irregular migrant workers in Malaysia. The study was conducted to explore how everyday challenges affect health and well-being of Chin irregular migrant domestic workers. The findings showed mistreatment, they faced discrimination, financial problems, language barriers, have trouble in communication, fear of detention, and have lack of medical access. They use strategies

such as alcohol, see company of others for support, and being religious because they faced stress, feel insecurity due to undocumented, and worry about their family. According to Van Bortel et al. (2019) female migrant domestic workers in Singapore experiences multidimensional occupational and interconnected or social stressors and they were explored which coping mechanism domestic workers used. There were three interrelated domains in which mostly women from the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka described stress related to work and agency (including power imbalance with employers, heavy workload, job insecurity), pervasive financial needs (wages insufficient to support themselves and their families), and family and obligation (worries about family back home, inability to fulfill obligations). Coping strategies were used by women to manage stress “time for self” (hobbies, rest, relaxation), managing their thoughts (focusing on present, positivity), religion (prayer, faith), and social support (talking to friends, emotional support). The study concluded that population faces many stressors there must be labor rights, policies to improve FMDWs and to support them so they have better coping resources and reduce vulnerability. Bosmans et al. (2016) aimed to explore how the stigma associated with “dirty work” can managed by domestic workers and how they use coping strategies to cope with this stigma and self. The study concluded that to follow these strategies the domestic workers become aware of their self-respect which can helped them to how handle difficult situation and how they deal with employers. It showed that the workers deal and manage their daily life pressure and personal interaction within a specific environment where they work.

Challenges Faced Domestic Workers

Study was conducted on Live-in Girl Child Domestic Workers in Lahore who faced challenges and through the lens of Rabeeca Elliott’s Sociology of loss framework to check the lived experiences of young female live-in domestic workers and to understand the marginalization, gendered child labor, and social inequality in domestic work contexts by Rahat et al. (2023). The girls reported diverse loss with emotional, social, physical including deprivation of education, social, isolation employed illegally in private household. The study revealed that child girl domestic work was experienced not only as economic labor but profound experience of loss with enduring psychosocial impacts, underscoring the interactions of gender, socioeconomic inequality, and child labor.

COVID-19 Researches

Sumerlin et al. (2025) studied the experiences of female migrant domestic workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Hong Kong. The findings showed that the COVID-19 pandemic caused negative changes in employment conditions, including increased workloads, longer working hours, extra job duties, and limits on rest days. Participants also went through financial pressures, social isolation, long separation from family members, and increased mental stress. The study found that the pandemic worsened existing structural inequalities faced by migrant domestic workers and highlighted the need for policy reforms and stronger protections to improve their mental health and overall well-being, particularly during public health crises. During COVID-19 pandemic it affected everyone, domestic workers were one of them who faced real struggles according to this, Kumari et al. (2026) carried out a study in Karachi, Pakistan on Female Domestic Workers experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) during COVID-19 Lockdown. The study concluded

that these challenges related to financial, economy, violence increased intimate partner violence due to which strong policies for their rights and protection implemented and to support them socially and in emergency. A qualitative study was conducted on major Stressors and coping strategies of internal migrant workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic by Srivastava et al. (2021). The study aimed to explore the Indian internal migrant workers stressors and coping mechanism during COVID19 lockdown. Results showed three primary themes of stressors which includes i.e; financial problems, lack of support from their villagers and family and psychological issues. To manage these issue workers, use different strategies to overcome their problems. The study concluded that COVID-19 lockdown affected them severely so it was suggested a better policy from government for workers security and medical interventions must be implemented for this vulnerable population. Zia et al. (2024) examined everyday challenges faced by women domestic workers related to social and economic who earn their living as domestic helpers in Karachi. Thematic analysis showed interconnected patterns: chronic financial instability that forced women to tolerate exploitation; lack of contracts and legal rights that increased their vulnerability; physically demanding and unsafe labor conditions; strong social stigma that reduced their dignity; and heightened precarity during the pandemic that led to sudden job losses and wage reductions. The study concluded that multidimensional socio-economic challenges faced by women domestic workers in Karachi which required legal protection, social security, and urgently require fair wages.

Domestic Workers in Pakistan

The qualitative study conducted in Sindh, Pakistan on Informal laborers to examine their coping strategies and social networks examined by Dharejo et al. (2025). A large number of workers in Pakistan work informally have no legal rights and protection. The findings showed that they face difficult conditions related to their health, safety, protection, have lack of access, working long hours, low wages, had no right to gain education. Despite some legal frameworks there was weak legal protection. Due to gender and socioeconomic status, they faced discrimination. Activities that were illegal challenge the social and economic order. The study concluded that policies and laws exist but there was no legal practice on it and this group worked in poor conditions. Rahat et al. (2023) examined the live in domestic workers in the gated communities of Lahore, investigating lived experience of male domestic workers and how the urban communities pattern contributed the inequality and exclusion in social activities. Worker face multiple form of marginalization revealed by the findings, it includes restricted mobility with in the communities, limited access to public spaces, recreational facilities, education and health care services even though living with in the same residential environment, the studied concluded that the planning of the governance of gated communities often ignored the need of the domestic workers therefore the policy makers and urban planners should create more inclusive approach to ensure equally access to resources, services and public space for all individual living with in urban communities.

Socio-Cultural Factors

The study examined how socio-cultural factors influencing well-being of working women in an unorganized sector in Kashmir authored by Nazir et al. (2025). Data was analyzed through

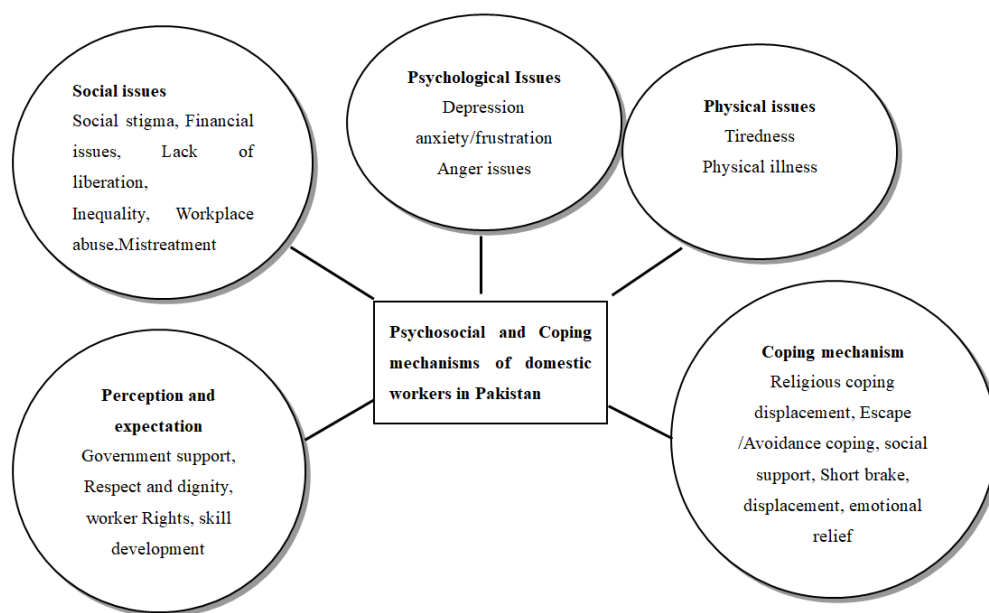
thematic analysis which showed low-self acceptance, feel stress, relationship problems, and not satisfy from their life also they have strength to helping others. The major themes involved that participants feel psychological and emotional distress, discrimination, poor working conditions, economic vulnerability, social stigma, and feel insecure in working place. Conclusion of this study was that all these problems had major impact on domestic workers well-being. Researcher asked for legal rights and protections, also have fair policies and better working conditions to improve their lives and to support them in every aspect.

Methodology

Research Design

The research is based on qualitative phenomenological approach to study psychosocial experiences and coping mechanisms of domestic workers in Pakistan. To explore in-depth lived experiences of participants and this approach was considered appropriate.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Sampling Strategy

The purposive and snowball sampling was used for conducting five in-depth interviews.

Study Duration

The research duration was four and a half months in which domestic workers or workers were approached for conducting interviews from them and data were collected and analysed.

Participants/ Sample

The sample consisted of five participants which includes three female domestic workers and two male workers.

Table 1: The Demographic Form of the Study Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Education	Work Experience	City
1	30	Female	Married	Middle Pass	6 years	Lahore
2	26	Male	Un-married	Middle Pass	8 years	Islamabad
3	40	Female	Married	Illiterate	4 years	Lahore
4	27	Male	Un-married	FSc	4 years	Rawalpindi
5	38	Female	Married	Illiterate	5 years	Lahore

Inclusive Criteria

- Both Male and female domestic workers were included.
- Workers were included in the study anywhere from Pakistan.
- Aged 26 years and above.
- Minimum 2 months experience.
- Living in their employer's household as a resident domestic worker.
- Workers were Urdu speakers.
- They were physically and mentally stable and used coping mechanisms actively.

Exclusive Criteria

- Irregular employment and without continuous work.
- Below the age of 20 years.
- Restricted on one gender.
- Non-resident.
- Participants have severe disorder.

Measure/Tools

Data was collected by using semi- structured interviews which consisted open-ended questions to obtain detailed insight.

Procedure

This research topic was approved by supervisor, “Psychosocial experiences and coping mechanisms of domestic workers in Pakistan”. It was conducted over a period of four and a half months. During this period, this research approached both female domestic workers and male workers to study the different psychosocial experiences faces by these workers and how they cope with these issues. The research used purposive and snowball sampling techniques. By conducting semi structured interviews from 5 domestic workers in which both male and female were involved, out of which 3 participants were female domestic workers and 2 participants were male workers. The aim of the study was explained to participants and informed consent was taken from them to conduct interviews also the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in a written form for better data collection. The time of the interviews was decided and information was taken through online phone calls. Some interviews were collected within one and a half hour and some in two hours to collect in-depth information from participants. They were informed that their information that they provided will be confidential and it will not be breached and nobody would have access and your identification will also be secure. After conducting interviews, themes were extracted by using thematic analysis and interpretation was written according to the themes.

Results

Themes & Subthemes Table

The qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews resulted in the identification of the different major themes and the sub-themes or description. Table 2 presents the themes and sub-themes description that emerged from the thematic analysis of the domestic workers in the Pakistan experiences.

Table 2 Major Themes and Sub-Themes of Thematic Analysis

Themes	Sub- themes	Description
Physical Issues	Tiredness (P1, P4, P5)	Drained and physical exhaustion. Different work at same time. Different household chores at same time.
	Physical Illness (P1, P2, P4, P5)	Physical ailment due to poverty. Choose domestic worker as a cause kidney problem. Injury due to lack of security. Fatigue or headache due to daily routine task.
Psychological Issues	Depression (P1, P2, P3)	Emotional distress due to living away from family. Depressed because of work and child caregiving duties. Feeling loneliness and staying at work all the time causes the depression.
	Anger/ Frustration Issues (P1, P2, P4)	Irritated and taking out frustration on others. Repeatedly called or disturbed at night.

	Condescending manner and pass hurtful remarks lead to that issue.
Anxiety Issues (P4, P5)	Excessive supervision at workplace. Concerns about family and the socio-economic challenges.
Social stigma (P1, P2, P3, P5)	Negative comments, taunt by pointing out their occupation. People make fun, not taking their worries seriously when they share. Family questioning their choice about work. Fear of shame.
Financial issue (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5)	No saving due to low wages and high inflation. Financial pressure, illiteracy, no alternative employment option. Difficulty in meeting their basic needs to live. Breadwinner, responsibility of family.
Lack of liberation (P1, P2, P3, P4)	We cannot do anything on our will. We don't get time for ourselves and families. Excessive supervision.
Social Issues	We don't have honor as other women in their occupation have.
Inequality (P1, P3, P4, P5)	People treated unfairly due to poverty. Employers differentiate with them because of privilege and the rich background. Young girls facing physical abuse at domestic level.
Workplace abuse (P1, P2, P5)	Disrespectful treatment, threat, physical punishment at work place. Conflicts worsened physical aggression or abuse.
Workplace mistreatment (P1, P2, P5)	Employer's behavior depends upon their mood. Excessive monitoring and restrictions at work. Excessive workload.
Religious coping (P1, P3, P5)	Seeking help from Allah through by practice religious devotions. Patience, trust in Allah's will.

Coping Mechanisms	Escape and avoidance coping (P1, P2, P3, P4)	Quiet, apologizing, by agreed the employers, change location or avoiding. If harassment is experienced then she preferred to quit job. Resigned because of falsely accused of theft, suspected his of stealing or frequently monitored. Crying, quiet, helplessness and patience as a way of releasing emotional tension.
	Emotional relief (P1, P3, P4, P5)	By giving response to comment which hurt her, avoiding or crying to overcome the emotions. Cognitive restructuring, emotional focus and by staying busy to overcome the emotions.
	Social support (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5)	Family members, friends, relatives, trusted individual or employers. Encouragement from others, spending time with friends, discuss with supportive people. Physically unwell (medication or refreshment).
	Short break (P1, P4)	Overburdened due to continuous work (rest for short time and return to work). Emotionally distressed (go for outing with children).
	Displacement (P1, P2, P5)	Redirect their anger and frustration on family members, in-laws and employers or manager at the workplace.
	Respect and dignity (P1, P3, P5)	Workers also deserve respect and dignity. Fair treatment from workplace. Workers also have emotions; they are also human like other individual so they don't view as inferior because of their jobs.
	Skill development (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5)	Female workers provide the home-based skills like stitching, embroidery and handicrafts. Male domestic workers provide the vocational, communication, sales and language skills.

Perceptions and Expectation Regarding the Domestic Workers	Government support (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5)	The need for a worker association or a union where they register their complaints. Seek the protection against the unfair treatment at workplace Basic opportunities (monthly grocery, education to their children).
	Workers right (P1, P2, P3, P5)	Fair wages, salary increments, medical insurance and leave, healthcare services, job security. Concept of lower staff eliminated Protection of discrimination and young girls at workplace. Educational opportunities

Qualitative Findings and Verbatim

Theme 1: Physical Issues

Physical issues emerge as a significant theme among the domestic workers. Participant reported that variety of health-related problems affect their daily life functioning and also their ability to work. The finding in the physical issues of the domestic workers in Pakistan suggested that demanding the work responsibilities from domestic workers and different financial difficulties that affect their health may contribute to the deterioration of physical health.

Physical issues in this study refer to the health and body related problems face by domestic workers due to the amount of workload. These physical issues include; **Tiredness** (Drained and physical exhaustion, Different work at the same time, Different household chores at the same time) (Mahmood & Mushtaq, 2023) and **Physical Illness** (Physical ailment due to poverty, choose domestic work cause kidney problems, Injury due to lack of security, Fatigue or Headache due to daily routine tasks) (Ho et al., 2021). These issues were assessed by taking interviews and ask questions about their experiences related to these issues through semi-structured interviews.

Subthemes. The following analysis revealed the physical issue of domestic worker;

Tiredness. Tiredness is the most common physical issue that is experienced by the most of the domestic workers in Pakistan, as a result of the daily work responsibilities which have assigned to them. Society demands the continuous work in their working hours or in their duty time. Analysis of the interviews of the several participants described that the they are experiencing the tiredness due to the demand of daily household chores. One of the participants reported that the continuous involvement in different household chores contributed to feelings of physical exhaustion and fatigue. Another participant reported that she feels exhausted and tired after ironing clothes at her workplace again and again and taking care of their own children's and managing the different household tasks at the same time. Participant described that being constantly engaged in one task after another are living them physically drained and with little time limit for rest. These findings

negates that the continuous performance off different domestic duties at the same time and stayed at their long working hours may lead to the physical tiredness and reduce their well-being.

“Sir goes in the morning I iron his and his children uniform then I iron his daughter suit so she can go to university then I iron his mother in law suit and at last I give breakfast to my children’s then send them to school after doing this I clean the garage where the car is parked after doing all this I get tired and I ask my husband for help”.

(p=5; tiredness)

“I would be working on one task they would come and tell me to leave this task and do the 2nd one and when I started to do the 2nd task, they would tell me to leave it and do the 1st task. I have to continuously switch between the tasks I get sick of it and get tired but I have to as it is my compulsion to work here”. (p=4; tiredness)

“I get fed up of work and I get tired.” (p=1; tiredness)

Physical Illness. Physical illness was identified as a significant challenge among the domestic workers in Pakistan. Participants reported that the various health problems created the significant difficulties in their daily life functioning and also the ability to do a work. these physical health challenges negatively affected the overall physical health and the standard of living of the domestic workers. Analysis of the interviews indicated that the domestic workers faced the significant physical ailment. Participant reported that experiencing the various health related problems, including headaches, leg pain, arm pain, chest pain, Physical weakness, and fatigue. One participant described that she is feeling irritated, tired, upset and suffering from frequent headaches and pain in the legs by staying the long hours. Another participant reported that he is suffering from kidney disease which forced him to leave his stitching work and take up the cooking instead because of his health ailment. Participants also highlighted that the social economy challenges, poverty and lack of resources limited access to the healthcare contributed to worsening their health conditions. Furthermore, one participant reported that he had a hand injury resulting from work-related Accident while carrying the parcel and riding a bicycle. These findings suggest that the physical illnesses and ailments negatively affect the daily lives and their well-being or the work performances of the domestic workers in Pakistan.

“I get tired of working and get headache I get sick of work. All day wakeup same work same faces daily, no outing nor I can visit my relatives” (p=1; physical illness)

“I used to work as a tailor but couldn’t sit for too long as I had kidney issues this is why I started working as a domestic cook. (p=4; physical illness)

“The poor girl doesn’t even have money to buy medicine for pain, sometimes arm hurts, sometimes chest aches” (p=5; physical illness)

“While delivering a parcel, my Bike slipped and I got into an accident which resulted in my arm being dislocated, the parcel I was carrying didn’t brake but i got serious injury”

(p=2; physical illness)

Theme 2: Psychological Issues

Psychological issues refer to the emotional and mental health challenges experienced by the domestic workers in the Pakistan. These issues include experiencing depression, anxiety, frustration, anger and fear, Low motivation to do work, emotional distress and the frequent mood fluctuations. different participants described that they may feel mentally exhausted, lacking interest in their work, any experiences difficulty carrying out their daily responsibility to do work. These different psychological issues in the domestic workers negatively affect their performance to do their duties and different household chores.

Psychological issues in this study involve the psychological stressors they experienced in workplace which lead mental health problems that affect their mood, thinking and behaviours. These stressors includes; **Depression** (Emotional distress due to living away from family, Depressed because work and child caregiving duties, Feeling loneliness and staying at work all the time causes the depression) (Ferreira et al., 2020), **Frustration / Anger issues** (Irritated and taking out frustration on others, repeatedly call or disturbed at night, condescending manner and pass hurtful remarks lead to that issue) and **Anxiety issue** (Excessive supervision at workplace, concerns about family and the socio-economic challenges) (Mahmood & Mushtaq, 2023).

Subthemes. The extracted subthemes of psychological issue are explained below;

Depression. Analysis of the interviews indicated that depression was and is a significant psychological stressor and challenge among the domestic workers in Pakistan. participants reported that they experience feeling of sadness, hopelessness, loneliness and emotional exhaustion due to the demanding work conditions and the personal responsibilities. One participant reported that she is feeling depressed because of the morning the nature of nanny work. The participant explained that the child often remains awake throughout the night, while work responsibilities continued during the day. Continuous caregiving duties, mental exhaustion, and exposure to stressful interaction contributed to the depressive situations or feelings. Another participant described that she is experiencing depression due to the difficult daily routine and overwhelming work responsibilities. The participant expressed a lack of interest in continuing the work and hope for the better employment opportunities in the future. Similarly, one participant reported the feeling of loneliness because he spent most of the day at work. After returning home the participant had no one to share the thoughts and emotions which lead him to overthinking and depressive feelings.

Another participant described emotional distress related to living away from family. In order to secure employment as a domestic worker in the city she had to leave a 4 years old child in the village. Separation from the child and family contributed significantly to the feeling of sadness and depression. These findings suggest that the demanding work conditions and the social isolation or the caregiving responsibility, and the family separation were important factors contributing to depression among domestic workers.

"I was pregnant and worked for nine months daily and a day before operation I did my Work in the morning then went to get operated. I rested for 25 days then went to work with my newborn. I used to work and take care of the baby at the same time. I used to work all day and at night my baby did not sleep. So, I got depressed. I used to take medicine for depression."

(p=1; depression)

"I don't even have time to sit and talk with anyone and when I go home alone then sleep while overthinking. I sleep stressed. Sometimes thinking keeps me awake till 4 or 5 am in the morning, you can say a kind of I have depression and I can't even share my worries with someone because in response when they share their worries, I get more disturbed and feel more Depressed." (p=2; depression)

"I had a 4-year-old child. I left him at the village with my mother. My child used to cry. It was very difficult to leave for me to live alone without my child." (p=3; depression)

Frustration / Anger issues. Frustration or an anger issue is also a psychological stressor that refers to the negative emotional reactions experienced by the domestic workers when they face the stressful working conditions or the excessive demands and unfair treatment, or the pressure from employers on domestic workers. Participants reported feeling irritated, angry, frustrated when they were constantly instructed, criticized, or expected to perform multiple tasks without appreciation of the work which they are doing by putting all their efforts and time in it. These emotional experiences negatively affected the mental health of the domestic workers and their overall well-being and the work experiences. Analysis of the interviews indicated that the internal frustration and anger were common emotional experiences among domestic workers. One participant reported becoming easily irritated and taking out frustration on others. The participant explained that emotional distress sometimes affects her interactions with people around them. The participant reported experiencing anger and frustration due to poor working and living conditions. The participant further stated that being repeatedly called or disturbed at night led to anger and emotional stress. Additionally, he described the employer's behavior as rude, which further contributed to feelings of frustration and workplace dissatisfaction. The participant reported experiencing anger and frustration due to negative interactions with co-workers. He explained that colleagues sometimes behave in a condescending manner and pass hurtful remarks, which leads to emotional distress. In response, he also becomes angry and reacts defensively, which further escalates conflict in the workplace.

"I get angry because of over work burden then I take my anger out on my employer and go back to my quarters" (p=1; anger issues)

"I had a room at corner of a road. At night the employer used to knock on the door and call out my name and checking again and again I used to get angry as they would continuously come at the door and disturb my sleep. They used to misbehave which made me angry". (p=4; anger issues)

"The employers think of themselves as king. I don't know why do they behave like that. Sometimes we get angry and say a few words in our defense". (p=2; anger issue)

Anxiety Issue. Anxiety is a common psychological issue among domestic workers in Pakistan. It may negatively affect their mental health, emotional well-being, and work performance. Prolonged anxiety can also contribute to physical health problems and difficulties in managing daily responsibilities.

Participants reported that workplace stress, poverty, and constant supervision negatively affected their emotional well-being and their families. The participant expressed concerns about the negative impact of poverty and work-related stress on their children. They reported that their children experience feelings of the inferiority when comparing themselves with the people who have rich or the more privileged backgrounds. Participants believed that these circumstances negatively affected their children's emotional well-being and the future development. These findings suggest that the workplace pressure, excessive supervision, Socio-economic challenges and the concerns about their families contributed to the internal frustration and anger among the domestic workers in Pakistan. Another participant described feeling frustrated because employers constantly monitored their activities, restricted their movement and repeatedly checked on their daily work or every work he is performing or doing. Continuous surveillance and lack of trust contributed to feelings of anger and psychological distress.

"Where I used to work before they would continuously come and check on me also at night time they would check on me and tell me to not do anything as there is camera keeping an eye on you. Because of continuous surveillance I felt scared." (p=4; anxiety issues)

"I am worried about different socio-economic challenges and family concerns, like my children comparing themselves with those privileged people. I fear that this could negatively affect their future development." (p=5; anxiety issues)

Themes 3: Social Issues

Social issue refers as the difficulties and challenges the domestic workers are facing from society. These social issues include, **Social Stigma** (Negative comments, Taunt by pointing out their occupation, People make fun, not talking their worries seriously when they share, Family questioning their choice about work, Fear of shame) (Zia et al., 2024). **Financial Issue** (No saving due to low wages and high inflation, financial pressure, Illiteracy, no alternative employment option, Difficulty in meeting their basic needs to live, Breadwinner, Responsibility of family) (Habte, 2019). **Lack of liberation** (We can't do anything on our will, we don't get time for ourselves and families, Excessive supervision). **Workplace Abuse** (Young girls faces physical abuse at domestic level, Disrespectful treatment, Threat, Physical punishment at workplace, Conflicts worsened physical aggression or abuse, Employers behaviour depend) (Ho et al., 2021). **Inequality** (We don't have honor as other women in their occupation have, People treated unfairly due to poverty, Employers differentiate with them because of privilege and the rich background) (Butt & Khan, 2019). **Workplace mistreatment** (Employer's behaviour depend upon their mood, Excessive monitoring and restrictions at work, Excessive workload) (Sharma & Chandhok, 2025).

Different domestic workers reported that experiencing a variety of social issues that affected their personal well-being and life satisfaction. These social issues included the social inequality, unfair

treatment, disrespectful behaviour from employers and managers or the individuals, financial difficulties, verbal abuse, workplace abuse, torture of freedom and autonomy, and the social stigma associated with the domestic work in Pakistan. Domestic workers reported that these challenges are often resulted in the feelings of frustration and anger, exclusion, and emotional distress. The findings suggest that these social issues constitute a important source of hardship for the domestic workers and also negatively impact the workers works and professional lives.

Subthemes. The following subthemes are explained below;

Social Stigma. Social stigma refers to the negative attitude and behaviour, judgments, and stereotypes faced by the different domestic workers in Pakistan because of their occupation or work and socioeconomic background. Domestic workers reported that hesitating to share their problems or difficult situations with the family members, peers, or others due to the fear of being judged, criticized, or teased. Some domestic workers stated that people often made fun of domestic workers, gave them taunts, and looked down upon them because of the work they are performed. As a result, workers often remained silent about their difficulties and experienced feelings of shame, anxiety or fear, and marginalised. These findings suggest that social stigma is a major challenge that negatively affects the psychological well-being and social networks of domestic workers in Pakistan.

Majority of the workers shared their views about social stigma associated with them. Worker reported that people often made negative comments and taunted her about the occupation, particularly by pointing out her that they work in domestic settings and perform different tasks such as cleaning washrooms. Another worker stated that when he tried to share his personal problems or situation with others, people answered by making the fun of his or not taking their worries seriously. As a result, he often feels hesitated to discuss their difficulties openly in social settings next time. Furthermore, domestic worker expressed that individuals from their households or communities sometimes questioned their life choices for work, such as leaving their villages for domestic work. Another domestic worker also noted that due to fear of shame and lack of respect and dignity, workers generally avoid openly discussing their financial issues or personal problems in public. These findings suggest that social stigma led to silence, shame or fear, embarrassment and reduced willingness to seek the social support among domestic workers in Pakistan.

“Nobody in my family does work like this so they all taunt me on why did I leave the village to go live in the city while leaving my children there to do domestic work but I had to I had no other option I have to support my children and many people in my family don’t even know that I do this work”(p=3; social stigma)

“We cannot share our sadness with others. If we tell people about our problems, they often laugh at us. Everyone wants to protect their own reputation. When we share our pain, some people say they are needy and always complaining this is what they do every day.” (P =5; social stigma)

“We do not share our difficulties with others because we are afraid that people will laugh at us and make fun of us excuse of this, we keep our problems as workers to ourselves”.

(P = 2; social stigma)

"People taunt me that you work at other people's house and clean their toilets. Why don't you build your own home?" (p=1; social stigma)

Lack of Liberation. Lack of liberation refers to the lack of personal choice and autonomy in making the decisions. Despite the domestic workers in Pakistan, restricted freedom emerged as an important issue. Different Participants reported that employers or managers often imposed restrictions on their movements when they want to do anything or want some free time or a short break and daily activities, limiting their ability to make choices according to their own will. In most cases, employers prioritized their work demands over the personal needs and against the well-being of domestic workers.

Analysis of the interviews of domestic workers indicated that the several participants experienced a lack of autonomy and freedom in their daily lives. Worker reported that feeling constantly monitored and restricted by the employer. The participant explained that whenever she wished to go somewhere or make the personal choices, she was unable to do that so because of this strict workplace rules and continuous surveillance. She stated that she had very little time for herself or her family and was **unable to engage in** personal or religious practicing, such as reciting the Quran. The participant further reported that employers often reminded the workers that cameras were installed and that their activities were being monitored at all times and warned him not try to do anything. As a result, they felt unable to express their concerns openly and reported the feelings of dissatisfaction from work or life, helplessness, and a desire to leave the job.

"We can't do anything according to our will and neither can we go out according to our will." (p=3; lack of liberation)

"The place where we work is where we stay all the time. We cannot do any other work outside of it. We do not get any time for ourselves, and we do not even have time for our families." (P = 2; lack of liberation)

"They don't allow me to go out they don't let me do anything I want, they say there are cameras in the house so if u do something we will know" (p=4; lack of liberation)

"If we have any issues we can't say it in front of our employers. We don't have any free time even for freely practicing our religion and cooking something of our choice. We can't take leave with our own choice and we can't freely say that we I'm not feeling well and I'm leaving" (p=1; lack of liberation)

Inequality. Inequality refers as the unequal resources, opportunities and basic rights faced by domestic workers in Pakistan because they are belonging to that population in society which seems as low who confronted discrimination at every stage of life. The inequality is present in all participants who working in household or even in offices working as a cleaner or other chores.

Inequalities refer to the unequal treatment and discrimination faced by domestic workers in Pakistan in the society due to their socioeconomic status background and poverty. Participants

reported that they were not given the same respect and recognition as individuals in higher-status or their professions such as doctors, teachers, nurses, and managers. They expressed that people often treat them unfairly because of their low income and social backgrounds. Some participants also reported being denied basic dignity and respect in social settings, including being told to sit on the floor or being treated in a disrespectful manner or by differentiated. These findings highlight the presence of inequality in society and class-based discrimination experienced by domestic workers in their daily lives or at workplace where they work

“We work but we don’t have the honor as any other working woman who has a job in hospital and university” (p=3; inequality)

“People treat us badly because we do not have money. If we had money, people would treat us better, because of money people do not care about poor people”

(p=5; inequality)

“The workers are often treated unfairly and don’t give proper food to eat and they ask them to go eat at the government places where they give free food” (p=4; inequality)

“They tell my children that they are dirty and cannot sit on the sofas. They tell my children that you are different from us. The only difference is that we work like a housewife, if we work at a good position there would be no difference.” (p=1; inequality)

Financial Issue. Financial issues were reported as a major challenge among most of the domestic workers in Pakistan. Domestic workers described that difficulties in meeting their basic needs to live a life such as food, housing, education, and even they can’t able to pay the rent of a quarter. Domestic workers discussed that being unable to save money because of low wages and the inflation level is very high, which made it difficult for workers to manage unexpected problems or emergencies. Many domestic workers expressed a very strong desire to provide better education to their children and want a stable future for them so that they would not face similar financial hardships like their parents are facing now. The worker also reported he was the sole breadwinners of their families and carried the responsibility of supporting their parents and siblings. Due to limited income or low wages, they continued working under difficult conditions to sustain their households. Another worker reported that low wages and fixed incomes that were insufficient to meet the basic household needs such as food, gas, and other expenses due to rising inflation. She stated that they faced financial pressure and had no alternative employment options, which forced them to continue domestic work. Some domestic worker also described difficult personal circumstances, including family responsibilities and health issues, which further compelled him to work. These findings suggest that financial constraints and lack of opportunities strongly influence their decision to remain in domestic work. These findings suggest that financial issues significantly affect the living conditions and decision-making of domestic workers in Pakistan, often forcing them to remain in unstable or low-paid employment because they are forced by the circumstances and have many responsibilities which they have to fulfil at any way.

"It was just that my husband had joints issue so he couldn't work so I had to do something my children are very young they don't even have proper place to live and I am not educated hence I am doing this work I had no other option" (p=3; financial issue)

"We are so helpless that Eid is coming, but we do not even have gas to cook food. We do not know what to make and we do not even have meat." (P=5; financial issues)

"The condition of my family finances was not that good I have 7 siblings my younger siblings were studying so to support them I am doing this job, to support my father who was the only one working I had to this and hence I had to leave my studies." (p=4; financial issues)

"We face many financial problems. Our salary is fixed, but our expenses are high. If we lose money or when something gets damaged, our salary is not enough to cover the extra costs. Our income is not enough to meet our needs. Even if we take a loan, it becomes very difficult to pay it back." (P=2; financial issue)

"I don't have any vehicle so, that I can go out no rickshaw, no place to live. I don't have enough savings to buy my own house. That's why I live at other people's house and work there. People don't have enough money that they can give good education to their kids that is why the children remain uneducated. The salary is not enough; we can either get children education or meet household expenses." (p=1; financial issue)

Workplace Abuse. Workplace abuse refers to the mistreatment and harsh behaviour experienced by domestic workers in Pakistan at their work environment. They reported that they are facing various forms of abuse, including verbal abuse, physical torture, and other forms of threats. They further highlighted that workplace abuse is particularly common among young domestic workers and child domestic labourers, who may be more vulnerable to harsh treatment and exploitation. These findings suggest that workplace abuse remains a serious challenge that affecting the safety, respect and dignity, and overall well-being of domestic workers in Pakistan.

Domestic workers narrated witnessing and experiencing various forms of workplace abuse, including the physical violence, verbal mistreatment, and harsh behaviour from employers, managers, and supervisors. The worker described a case in which a young domestic worker was physically beaten by an employer, resulting in serious injury. Other reported that worker was frequently subjected to disrespectful treatment, threats, and physical punishment at work. He also described that conflicts between workers and supervisors that worsened into physical aggression or abuse. These findings suggest that workplace abuse remains a serious issue for domestic workers, particularly for young and susceptible workers, and negatively affects their safety, respect and dignity, and overall well-being of them.

"I am treated badly at work. My manager misbehaves with me, threatens to fire me and blames me unfairly. Even when a colleague hits me my manager says it is all my fault and that I deserved it because of my mistakes." (P= 2; work place abuse)

“Once there was an aunty who hit her teenage house helper and broke her arm.” (p=1; workplace abuse)

“When I used to work, there was a 10-year-old maid who also used to work there. When she used to make any mistake, they would put hot tongs or knife on her. And she used to hit her and throw water on her face whenever she was sleeping”. (p=3; workplace abuse)

“The employer used to misbehave with the workers and also hit them. When the employer used to misbehave and hit the workers then it escalated to a fist fight. This should not happen.” (p= 4; workplace abuse)

Workplace Mistreatment. Workplace mistreatment refers to the unfair treatment, disrespectful, and inappropriate behaviour faced by domestic workers in their work environment. The employers' mood fluctuations and frustration often influenced how they were treated at work, resulting in inconsistent and sometimes harsh behaviour. They also experiencing anger, pressure, and lack of understanding from employers or managers at workplace. In some cases, they were not allowed to leave work in emergencies and were not provided with basic facilities or support. These issues suggest that workplace mistreatment affects the well-being and working conditions of domestic workers.

The domestic worker in interview stated that employers' behaviour often depended on their mood; when employers were in a good mood, they behaved politely, but when they were angry or stressed and frustrated, they displayed harsh and disrespectful behaviour towards the domestic workers. She also said that being closely monitored or restricted in their activities or work, and not being allowed sufficient rest during work hours. Other worker described that being assigned excessive workloads on him and being expected to continue working despite physical exhaustion. He also highlighted that a lack of job security, medical insurance, and workplace support where they work. These findings suggest that inconsistent treatment, excessive workload, and lack of basic employment benefits contribute to workplace stress and dissatisfaction among domestic workers in Pakistan.

“We face mistreatment at work. There is no job security or medical support. We are given too much work and if any staff member is absent their work is also added to us. If we take more than one day off, they hire someone else to replace us.”

(P= 2; work place mistreatment)

“If our employers are in a good mood, they treat us well and if not, they scold us. It doesn't matter if we are in a good mood and treat them good, if they are in a bad mood they will treat us bad. They take out their frustration on us.”

(p=1,5; work place mistreatment)

Theme 4: Coping Mechanisms

Coping Mechanism in this study refer as the strategies used by domestic workers to cope with their daily hassles related to their work, difficulties they face, the problems they have mentioned and to manage their life with this issue by using coping. The coping mechanism includes, **Religious Coping** (Seeking help from Allah through by practice religious devotion, Patience, Trust in Allah's will) (Sohail, 2025). **Escape and Avoidance Coping** (Quit, Apologizing, by agreed the employers, changed location or avoided, if harassment is experienced then she preferred to quit job, resigned because of falsely accused of theft Suspected his of stealing or frequently monitored). **Emotional Relief** (Crying Quit, Helplessness and patience as a way of releasing emotional tension, by giving response to comment which hurt her, Avoiding or crying to overcome the emotions, Cognitive restructuring, Emotional focus and by staying busy to overcome the emotions). **Social Support** (Family members, Friends, Relatives, Trusted individuals or employers, Encouragement from others, Spending time with friends, Discuss with supportive people) (Habte, 2019) **Short Breaks** (Medication and refreshment, Rest for short time and return to work, Go for outing with children) (Bortel et al., 2019) **Displacement** (Redirect their anger and frustration on family members, in-laws and employers or manager at the workplace).

Domestic workers use the various coping strategies to manage the challenges they face in difficult situations. Participant reported that experiencing the physical, psychological and social problems that required them to adopt the different coping mechanisms. The findings revealed that the domestic workers in Pakistan used a wide range of coping strategies including religious coping, avoidance coping, emotional relief, seeking the social support and taking the short breaks from the stressful situations. Some participants also reported that displacing their anger and frustration onto the other people as a way of managing the emotional distress. These coping mechanisms help the domestic workers to cope with the workplace stress and the challenges that are associated with their daily lives.

Subthemes. The following are the subthemes used by domestic workers are explained below;

Religious Coping

Religious coping refers to the use of the different faith-based practices by the domestic workers to manage with the different stressful or the difficult situations. Participant's reported seeking help from Allah almighty through prayers (Salah), recitation of Holy Quran, and the supplication (Dua). Domestic workers also described that they practice patience and maintaining trust in Allah's will, believing that He would help them to overcome their challenges and improve their circumstances. Several participants described using Religious and personal coping strategies to deal with the difficulties. Participants reported that thanking Allah almighty, offering Prayer, making Dua. Reciting the Holy Quran, and the relying on patience and faith that the Allah would provide a way to out of their problems which domestic workers had to face. Participants believed that Allah could improve their circumstances and help them to overcome these challenges. In addition, some participants coped by spending most of the time alone, engaging in self-reflection and self-talk, reassuring themselves and seeking the support from others during the stressful situations.

“For difficulties and pressure, I talk to Allah and worship him”.

($p=1,3,5$; religious coping)

Displacement. Displacement is the common coping strategy used by the domestic workers in Pakistan. It is often observed that when the domestic workers experience the harsh treatment, aggression or the intense pressure from their employers or at the place where they work. Because of this they are frequently unable to express their anger or frustration directly towards their employers due to the fear of losing their jobs or facing the further treatment instead of placing anger directly on them, they may redirect their frustration and anger towards the family members such as their own children, in-laws or her husband. This Displacement occurs when they experience the negative emotions generated by the workplace such as the worker stated that when employer or manager became frustrated or angry, he redirected his anger towards them. These findings suggest that the displacement functions as a harmful coping strategy that help the workers to temporarily release their emotional distress on them but that behavior may negatively affect the domestic workers interpersonal relationships and the family well-being.

“To take out my frustration from work I scream at my husband and in-laws.”

($p=5$; displacement)

“When I get angry or frustrated at my employers, I take it out on me children. Then I go back to work again”. ($p=1$; displacement)

“When I feel stress and frustration, I take out my anger on my employer or my manager”.

($P= 2$; displacement)

Short Breaks. Taking shorts breaks refers to a coping strategy used by the rare domestic workers when they feel overwhelmed, overburdened, and feel stressed by doing continuous work or stay at duty for long working hours. Participants reported that the temporarily stepping away from their work helped the domestic workers to stay calm, relaxed and regain the motivation or restore their energy to do their work. These short breaks enabled the domestic workers to return to their work back with improved mood and the focus or the ability to manage the work-related demands.

Few participants reported that they coped with the physical or the emotional exhaustion by taking short breaks while doing the work. They described that when they were feeling tired due to the overburden of the work and the continuous long working hours, which led them to rest for a short time before returning to their work. Participant reported that when she felt physically unwell, she takes medication or refreshments. Other mentioned that when they feel emotionally distressed or feel low, she takes it out by going on outings or spending time outdoors. One participant shared that when they feel tired, he sits down calmly for a while, drink water and rest briefly before continuing him work. These findings suggest that taking the short breaks helps them to reduce the stress, regain energy and improve their emotional well-being.

“When I get over worked, I get rest. I take medicine and tea and then rest for half an hour. I spend time with my children at a park to freshen up my mind. I go for outings to relax”.

(p=1; short break)

“When I get tired from work, I get aside for 2 or 5 minutes to calm down take a small walk and drink some water. After that I start to work again.” (P=4; short break)

Emotional Relief. Emotional relief refers to the expression of the feelings and the emotions to reduce the stress and emotionally burdenize. Participants reported that expressing their emotions in stressful situations helped them to manage them more effectively.

Participants reported that using the various emotional strategies to cope with stress and difficult situations. She described crying, remaining quiet and accepting her helplessness as ways of releasing her emotional tensions and practicing the patience. A participants stated that they responded to the comments which hurt them with anger, sometimes by avoiding them or crying as a mean of expressing their emotions to herself. Emotional support from the family members, employers and others was also significant and identified as a source of the comfort. Additionally, another participant says that achieving emotional relief by replacing the negative thoughts with positive ones and keeping themselves busy with the daily life activities helps them with emotional relief. Some participants described crying after experiencing humiliation, criticism, or family-related stress, which helped them release their emotional burden. Other reported that remaining silent during conflicts and expressing her emotions later through crying. These findings suggest that crying, emotional expression, and patience served as important strategies for relieving emotional distress and managing challenging circumstances.

“After facing false accusations, I cry in front of Allah and ask why me? I come to work and face humiliation by my employer” (p=3; emotional relief).

“I was stressed and I didn't know what to do. At that time, I tried to keep myself busy. I had many negative thoughts but I changed them into positive thoughts and I used talk with any person.” (P=4; emotional relief)

“When I get fed up from work, I ask my husband to buy a house but my husband refuses and says I have to live in this house in every condition. Then I cry and if someone humiliate me, I laugh it off. (p=1; emotional relief)

“When they insult me and tell me to do it again, I stay silent and do the work again. Then I cry later”. (p=5; emotional relief)

Escape and Avoidance Coping. Escape and Avoidance coping refers to the tendency to avoid, withdraw from, or leaving the stressful situations when the domestic workers feel overwhelmed, threatened, dissatisfied or unable to bear the difficult working conditions. Participants reported that they avoid the work-related stressors or choose to leave or quit their jobs as a way of coping with workplace challenges. These findings suggest that escape and Avoidance coping was used as

a strategy by the domestic workers to protect themselves from the threats, dissatisfaction from the workplace and the psychological pressure.

Participants reported that using the escape and avoidance strategies to cope with stressful, uncomfortable, or threatening work situations at workplace. Participant stated that they choose to leave their job when they experienced harassment, mistreatment, or excessive pressure from employers. One participant reported that if any form of harassment occurred, she preferred to distance herself from the situation and decided to quit the job. Other domestic workers described coping by remaining quiet, apologizing, agreeing with their employers, changing their work location, or avoiding the situations that could lead to conflict. Another reported that leaving the job when the workload became overwhelming or leave the work after making mistakes due to fear of criticism. One participant shared that she resigned after being falsely accused of theft, despite later being proven innocent. Another participant reported leaving a job because the employers continuously suspected her of stealing and frequently monitored her, causing fear and discomfort. In contrast, some participants coped with difficult situations by complying with employers' demands and carrying out tasks as instructed to avoid further conflicts at workplace. These findings suggest that escape and avoidance coping strategy used by domestic workers is commonly used to protect themselves from workplace stress, accusations, mistreatment, and emotional distress.

"Once my employer lost her clothes than she accused me of stealing her clothes, I asked her to check cctv footage. After she found her clothes, she called me and said sorry, but I told her, you accused me once you will do it again. I didn't go back to that workplace.

I used to take off if there was work overload or if I broke something by mistake". (P=3; Escape and Avoidance coping)

"Where I used to work before they would continuously come and check on me also at night time they would check on me and tell me to not do anything as there is camera keeping an eye on me. Because of continuous surveillance I felt scared. They used to continuously harass me. After that I worked there for 3 days and then left work and then I started to work at a different place."

(P=; escape and avoidance coping)

"When someone misbehaves with me, I don't confront them and stop talking to them. I choose silence." (p=2; escape and Avoidance coping)

"When employer humiliate or insult me, I get upset I take a stand for myself and leave that place. And if I feel threatened at some workplace, I leave that place and never go back." (P=1; escape and avoidance coping)

Social Support. Social support refers to the emotional, practical, and financial assistance received from the family members, friends, employers, or other significant individuals and the trustworthy people with whom they share their problems during difficult situations. This is also the coping strategy used by the domestic workers in Pakistan. Participants reported seeking support from their family members and employers when facing personal, financial, or work-related issues or problems

helped them to out from that situation. This support helped them manage stress, cope with difficulties, and improve their emotional well-being.

Participants reported that receiving the support from family members, friends, relatives, and employers during difficult situations and time. Some participants shared their problems with trusted individuals at their workplace and stated that discussing their concerns helped them feel relaxed and light hearted. Other domestic worker reported that receiving emotional support, guidance, and encouragement from their brothers, sisters, relatives, and family members when facing challenges. Participant mentioned that spending time with friends, talking about their problems, and going out with them to reduce the stress and improve their mood. Several participants explained that discussing their difficulties with supportive people helped them feel light-hearted, less tense, and better able to cope in stressful situations. These findings suggest that social support played an important role in helping the domestic workers to manage the stress and maintain their emotional well-being.

"I used to share my problems with my mother then my mother died and now I share my problems with my employer I see her as my own daughter and she helps me solve my problems."

(p=3; social support)

"When I was stressed, my family was very worried they helped me and supported me. One of my cousins who is also my friend helped me and didn't make me feel lonely. My family's support helped me get back on my feet." (p=4; social support)

"If I have any problem I share it with my employer. I feel relaxed. I also share my problems with my husband and he also gives me good advices." (p=1; social support)

"When I feel stressed or pressure from my work, I spend my time with my friends or work to distract myself which makes me feel better." (p= 2; social support)

"I trust my siblings and share my worries with them on a call. Even the people who are not blood related help me". (P=5; social support)

Theme 5: Perceptions and Expectation Regarding the Domestic Workers

Perceptions and Expectations in this study involves the treatment, support and recognition they want from their employers, society and also the government who didn't provide the rights and didn't ask for anything from the domestic workers in Pakistan. These perception and expectations involves, **Respect and dignity** (Workers also deserve respect and dignity, fair treatment from workplace, workers also have emotion, they are also humans like other individuals so they don't view as inferior because of their jobs), **Workers Rights** (Fair wages, salary increments, medical insurance and leave, healthcare services, job security, concept of lower staff eliminated, protection of discrimination and young girls at workplace, educational opportunities) (Ferreira et al., 2020), **Skill development** (Female workers provide the home based skills like stitching, embroidery and handicraft, Male domestic workers provide the vocational, communication, sales and language skills), **Government Support** (The need for a worker association or a union where they register their

complaints, seek the protection against the unfair treatment at workplace, basic opportunities like monthly grocery and education to their children)

Participant reported that having previous expectations regarding the treatment, support and recognition they receive from their employers, society and also the government who didn't provide the rights and didn't ask for anything from the domestic workers in Pakistan. The domestic workers expressed a desire that they would be treated with the respect and dignity, regardless of their social economy challenges or the occupation. many participants believe that the domestic workers should be recognized as a valuable member of society and should be granted with the same basic rights as any other individual like the managers and their employers where they work at the domestic level or lower level. They expressed their desire for opportunities to develop their skills and also to improve their living conditions and standards. Furthermore, the domestic workers also expected the emotional, social and practical support from their employers and the community where they live. a major expectation highlighted by the domestic workers in Pakistan was the need for greater government support. they believed that the government should play an active role in improving our lives by protecting our rights, providing the financial in social quote by creating the employment and skill development opportunities and by helping them to meet their basic needs. these findings suggest that the domestic workers seek the recognition, want to be treated equally in society, social support and also the institutional assistance to enhance their well-being and the quality of their lives.

Subthemes. The following data analysis revealed the perception & expectation of domestic worker;

Respect and Dignity. Several Participants emphasized the importance of being treated with respect and dignity in society. They believe that being a domestic worker and belonging to a lower social economy background should not diminish their worth as the individual. Domestic workers express that they are all like other people, they also deserve the respect and dignity, recognition in society and the fair treatment from the people for whom they work. This stated that the domestic workers also have emotions, self-respect, dignity and should not be viewed as inferior because of their occupation and social economy standards. These findings suggest that the domestic workers strongly value the respect and equal treatment and wish to be recognized as human being with the same rights, feelings and the dignity as the other people have in the society.

Participant emphasized the importance of being treated with respect, kindness and fairness in both workplace and society. She reported that domestic workers should be approached in a respectful manner and should not be humiliated or addressed disrespectfully because of their financial status. She stated that domestic workers have feelings and emotions, therefore they deserve love, care, and the recognition from their employers and society. Another participant highlighted that the employers, colleagues, and other individuals should treat the domestic workers with the courtesy and ask about their well-being, provide basic needs such as offering food, water and the same working environment. She expressed a desire to be treated like the valued members of the households rather than treated as the inferior individual. She further reported that the woman domestic workers should not be required to perform the inappropriate tasks that all outside of their

responsibilities. These findings suggest that the respect and dignity, fair treatment and the good behavior are the fundamental expectations among all the domestic workers and are essential for the domestic workers psychological well-being and quality of the life and Pakistan.

“People who come to work should be treated with love and respect. Allah said kindness is big thing if there is no kindness in human there is no humanity”. (P=1; respect)

“Poor people don't have any respect. We also have a heart we also deserve respect. They should be treated nicely. They should be helped as they are poor. They should call their names with respect.” (P=5, respect)

“The workers should be treated with respect and dignity. They should be offered food and water. Give salaries according to work they do.

Female workers should not be asked to serve the males in the house.” (p=3; respect and dignity)

Skill Development. Domestic workers highlighted the importance of skill development opportunities to improve their economic conditions and the future prospects. They expressed the need for training programs that would help the workers to acquire new skills and increase their employment opportunities other than the domestic tasks. Female domestic workers particularly emphasized the importance of learning skills such as stitching, embroidery, handicrafts, and other home-based skills that could enable them to earn an income while working home. Similarly, male domestic workers suggest that they should be provided with vocational, communication, sales, and language skills training to enhance their abilities and access better employment opportunities. They believed that such initiatives would help the domestic workers to move beyond the low-skilled tasks, such as cleaning and washing utensils, and to improve their overall quality of life and living condition. These findings suggest that skill development is an important pathway toward the economic empowerment, and social mobility among domestic workers In Pakistan.

Female worker emphasized the need for skill development opportunities to improve the occupations and economic conditions of domestic workers. She reported that workers should be provided with the vocational training that enables us to earn an income through the alternative methods. Female participants particularly highlighted the importance of learning skills such as stitching, embroidery, and other home-based occupations that would allow the female workers to work from home and become financially independent. Participant also expressed concern for individuals with limited education and suggested that special opportunities should be created for those who are unable to read or write. Furthermore, participant also recommended training in sales, communication, navigation, and language skills to enhance the employment opportunities. They believed that the such skills would help the workers to perform tasks more effectively, including customer interaction, sales-related duties, and delivery services that require the use of live-location and the navigation systems. Several participants stated that language and communication training would improve the confidence level and the ability to interact with others in professional settings. These findings suggest that skill development is viewed as an important means of increasing self-efficacy, improving the employment prospects, and enhancing the overall quality of life of domestic workers.

“The government should help the worker learn skills. Teach cooking, sewing, embroidery. So, that they can work from home.” (p=1; skill development)

“The government should help the worker learn skills. Teach cooking, sewing, embroidery. So, that they can work from home.” (p=1,5; skill development)

“We should be taught communication skills, navigation and sales management.” (p=2; skill development)

“The males should be taught tailoring, electrician skills and cooking skill. The females who are not educated they should be provided with education. They should be taught languages and communication skills. So, they can speak for them self.” (p=4; skill development)

“The government should give education. So, we know about our rights. Also, they should give awareness about, from where we can get help.” (p= 3; skill development)

Government Support. Government support refers to the assistance, workers protection, occupational and educational opportunities provided by the government to improve the living conditions or standards of domestic workers in Pakistan. Domestic workers emphasized that the government should be listen to their concerns what they face, recognize their needs, and take the measures to support their well-being. They also expressed the need for financial assistance, employment opportunities, and the social welfare programs to help them cope with economic hardships. Furthermore, they expect the government to protect their rights, promote the skill development, and implement the policies that would enhance their living standards. These findings suggest that the domestic workers view government support as an essential factor in improving their socioeconomic challenges and overall well-being.

It is noteworthy that, all participants emphasized the importance of government support for the domestic workers in Pakistan. They shared various suggestions regarding the type of support they expect from the government. Most participants highlighted the need for a worker's association or union where domestic workers could register their complaints and seek the protection against unfair treatment which they face. They also expressed the need for educational opportunities, financial assistance, and support in meeting their basic needs. Participant emphasized that the government should pay the greater attention to the poor families and create opportunities for their sustainable livelihoods. One participant specifically requested that the authorities support small-scale income-generating activities, such as street vending, as these serve as an important source of income for many households when they have only that option. Overall, participants believed that greater government support is essential for improving the rights, well-being, standards, and quality of life of domestic workers in Pakistan.

“In my opinion the government should make an institution for women for learning skill and education and also give the education of the Holy Quran. They should provide sewing machines. So, they can earn money with dignity. There should be an institution where domestic workers can file a complaint. And people should know that they cannot mistreat the workers as they also have rights.” (p=1; government support)

“There should be a group or union where all domestic workers can file a complaint.” (p=4; government support)

“The government should provide gas and pay our electricity bills. The government should give rewards of our labour and give our children education. Rations should be provided. The government should allow my husband to set up a stall so that he can run a small business and earn food for the children.” (p=5; government support)

“There should be an association where we can go with our complaints and financial needs.”
(p=2; government support)

“I want that our voices should be heard, where we can take our complaints. Our daughters should be kept safe, wherever they work the government should take care of their security.”
(p=3; government support)

Workers Right. Workers' rights refer to the fair wages, salary increments, benefits, protection, healthcare, and equal treatment that domestic workers deserve in return for their work and contributions in which they are putting efforts. Participants emphasized the importance of the wages, medical insurance, safe working environments, and the equal treatment. They believe that the domestic workers should be payed according to their efforts. Participants also highlighted the need for respect, job security, and access to healthcare and welfare services. These findings suggest that the domestic workers seek recognition of their rights and fair treatment in the workplace.

The majority of domestic workers emphasized the importance of workers' rights and highlighted the various forms of support which could be of any type or of government that should be available to domestic workers. Participants expressed the need for workers unions or support care centers where complaints could be registered and assistance could be accessed. They emphasized the importance of the fair wages, salary increments, and the promotion opportunities, medical insurance and leave, healthcare services, job security, and protection from discrimination in society. Participant also highlighted the need for financial assistance, educational opportunities, and skill development programs for both workers and their children or for the betterment of their children's. Participants stressed that domestic workers should be treated equally without any discrimination, regardless of their job status or standards, and the concept of the “lower staff” should be eliminated. Overall, all the domestic workers believed that the domestic workers deserve equal rights, respect and dignity, protection for women and young girls, and the access to resources that can improve their quality of life and their living standards and future opportunities.

“Workplace environment should be safe no one should have bad intentions towards the workers. There should not be any violence. They should be treated as their own daughters. Also give small rewards to the workers.” (P= 1; worker rights)

“In this inflation it is our right that we are provided with good jobs and a house. Old women should not be over worked. Decent salaries should be given. There should be free education and jobs for their children. The inflation should reduce and rations should be provided.”

(p=3; worker rights)

“Workers have right that they work according to the timetable and are not over worked. Our employers need to take care of our medical facilities as we also do so much work for them. Workers should be paid in accordance to the government fixed minimum wage. Workers have a right to education in today's society”. (p=4; worker rights)

“If we are working at a place for a long time the employer should give us the priority and also increase the salary and give promotions. A new comer should not be the first priority.

Security and medical facilities should be provided where we work.

The concept of lower-class staff should be eliminated and everyone should do their own work”

(P=2; worker rights)

Discussion

The aim of the study was to explore psychosocial experiences and coping mechanisms of domestic workers in Pakistan. Out of which three were female resident domestic workers and two were male resident workers from Lahore and Islamabad. To identify the daily challenges, they face related to their work or daily life problems. In this study five major themes were discussed which involved; Physical issues, Psychological Issues, Social Issues, Coping Mechanism, Perception and expectations.

Findings from the study revealed that tiredness is the most common **Physical issue** in domestic workers, feeling tired and being physically exhausted from the amount of workload, doing different works at the same time. Previous study has reported tiredness as a main theme stress in which they discussed pressure from employers can cause psychological and physical fatigue which can lead to extreme exhaustion (Muhammad & Mushtaq, 2023).

This similarity indicates that workload and pressure from employers cause physical fatigue. Another important finding, physical illness which involves a participant experiencing physical ailments like injury, headache due to working condition or workload. Similar studies have reported the same physical illnesses related to health diseases (respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases) due to workload. Both studies show that due to the amount of work, participants face physical ache (Ho et al., 2021). Both studies indicate that working condition or work burden remain a cause of physical ache.

Psychological Issue is another major theme discussed in the study which involves the challenges affecting the emotional and mental health of domestic workers. The findings of psychological issue in the study includes depression, in which participants reported suffering due to being away from family, feeling depressed because of work or child responsibilities and doing work all the time. Earlier research suggests that domestic worker faced severe mental suffering due to work condition, discrimination or they faced psychological distress due to feeling overburdened, lack of social recognition which ends up being the cause of depressive symptoms (Ferreira et al., 2020). This shows

that both of these studies explain same problems of domestic worker which affect their mental health. The other discussed findings in the study were Frustration/ Anger Issues and Anxiety disorder. The participants expressed their aggression on others and reported being repeatedly disturbed by employers even at night which can cause anger. More findings show Anxiety issues in most of the participants due to worrying about family and extreme supervision in workplace. According to previous study which suggested that employers control the workers and force them to do work which causes the participants to feel aggression due to this they can't do work properly. In the same study they also explain anxiety issues in domestic workers, they show high palpitations, apprehension, and they feel like they are going to die. As compared to non-domestic workers they also show anxiety symptoms like irritability, restlessness, sweetening, choking and trembling (Mahmood & Mushtaq, 2023). This similarity in anger issues indicates that in both studies the domestic workers are mostly disturbed because of employers which results in anger issues. This contrast highlights that anxiety issues in domestic workers are different across different domestic workers. But some issues shows are same such as irritability and feeling of being controlled.

In **Social issue** which refers to the problems and challenges faced by domestic worker from society. Findings of this study involves social stigma in which domestic workers confronted negative comments, like hearing taunt by others. They feel shamed and don't talk about their worries to others in fear of family questioning about their choice of work. Earlier study shows that domestic workers in Pakistan are considered as low in status that's why they face discrimination in the base of their class, gender, ethnicity which affect the employer behavior, causes exploitation, effects in power dynamic and affect the workers social mobility (Zia et al., 2024).

These consistent findings highlights that social stigma is the main issue domestic worker face from others because of their low background. Financial issue in this study involves the low wages and financial difficulties related to difficulty in basic needs, want to get better education and having no employment opportunities. Previous study identified that a major push factor for workers is to migrate for work due to financial instability and poverty. The authors also explained that despite working long hours they still face financial challenges (Habte, 2019). This alignment suggests that despite working daily, economic insecurity is still a major issue of domestic workers. Lack of liberation, a worker reported that they have no choices and have no time for themselves. The strict supervision causes them to feel unable to express their worries. Another finding of this study is workplace abuse which refer to the harsh behavior, experienced by domestic workers, facing physical assault and disrespectful treatment, threat and were physically punished in workplace are examples of workplace abuse. Similar study reported similar findings in lack of liberation which emphasized severe sense of powerlessness and lack of freedom in domestic workers due to working in private homes as its impossible for labor inspectors to enforce laws. These similarities demonstrate the lack of liberation, no freedom for domestic workers in workplace is a major challenge for them. In workplace abuse some previous study suggested domestic workers faces physical, verbal, sexual abuse which affect their mental health (Ho et al., 2021). Both studies show that abuse is still the main issue faced by domestic workers in workplace. The main issue faced by most of the domestic worker in this study was inequality, reported that they didn't get the same respect and honor as other profession women gets and were treated unfairly and the discrimination against them

because of their background. Previous research shows that inequality revealed as severe labor exploitation where uneducated women push into the informal sector being underpaid and overworked and compared them with formal workforce (Butt & Khan, 2019). This suggests that inequality directly impact the well-being of workers and comparing them with others is still normal for society. Workplace mistreatment workers reported inappropriate behavior that the employers have towards them. Employers have their own mood, keep an eye on them and overburden them to give work on time even if they have physical issue or some other problems. Previous research shows that domestic workers have lack of legal protection they were highly targeted abusive and have poor work environment. They experience low wages, employer worker power dynamic and daily harassment. This earlier study also reported that under oppressive condition across multiple households these workers face verbal and emotional abuse and didn't say because of the fear of job loss (Sharma & Chandhok, 2025). This alignment suggests that poor workplace environment and being treated unfairly is a common in every household where domestic worker do daily household chores and still face maltreatment.

These were the challenges and difficulties faced domestic workers.

To cope with these issues domestic workers used different strategies to manage these problems. **Coping mechanism** refers to the techniques used by workers which involves religious coping in which participants reported that when they feel low because of these problems, they seek help from Allah through pray and patience and trusting on Allah's plan. Previous study are consistent with these findings that when lower class working women were physically and emotionally exhausted, they used religious coping like faith, praying and saying that it's not only the practice of their religion it's the emotional support system for them (Sohail, 2025). These consistent findings highlight that religious practice are used by workers to cope with the problems. Another coping strategy used by domestic workers was Escape and avoidance coping which involves keeping away from the things which cause harm they change the place of work or sometimes participant just agree with employers. The other coping mechanisms used by these workers was emotional relief in which participants cope themselves through crying, patience, giving answers which hurt them and staying busy to overcome the situation. These two findings are based on the results of this study. Another significant finding of this is social support in which participants reported that they received support from others when they encountered some issues, they took help from trustworthy people whom they believe in and spending time with friends, discussing problems with supportive people by which they feel a sense of support and cope with their issues. Previous study has similar findings that for overcoming loneliness they seek informal social support like talking to their colleagues and seeking support from family which serves as a strong emotional support against isolation (Habte, 2019). These similarities indicate that social support is the main coping mechanisms which uses all domestic workers to cope their daily life challenges by sharing to others. Participants reported that sometimes when they feel tired, they pause from work and give sometime to themselves and family, these findings involve short breaks. According to previous study short break was not mentioned as it is in research but it was reported as rest days in which they focused on weekly rest days explaining that strict overwork can lead to poor mental health which serve as major occupational stressor. Regular structured period and breaks serve as a vital

coping mechanism which allow the worker to necessary escape from duties (Bortel et al., 2019). Both studies show similarities distance from work for some time is necessary for ongoing work of domestic worker. Last finding of this study in coping mechanisms is displacement which involves expressing aggression towards their own child instead of their employer because of fear of losing their job, this mostly occur when the domestic workers experience mistreatment from workplace and intense pressure from employers. This finding of this study is also based on the results of the study.

The significant findings of the study were **Perception and expectation** regarding the domestic workers in which demands of workers from employers and government were discussed that involves respect and dignity in which workers reported that they also deserve respect and fair treatment from employers in workplace they have also feelings as other humans and not to look down upon the because of their job. Previous study indicated that not only laws can give the respect of workers. In real life they don't get respect and are still considered as low class. This alignment suggests that despite laws the lack of respect is still a major issue in society. The other finding of the study are workers' rights which includes fair treatment in salary, medications, providing healthcare services, security in workplace, eliminating the lower staff concept. Also included young girl protection and wanting an educational right for the better future of their children. Previous study showed that they made laws for domestic workers related to social security, gave money when they worked overtime, holidays, and protection against discrimination and harassment (Ferreira et al., 2020). Such similarities reinforce the notion that implements of these laws beneficial for domestic workers. The last two findings of this study which is based on the results of this study were skill development and government Support. In skill development, participants reported the need for improved conditions and making opportunities which were helpful for them. In government support, participants reported support from government such as organizations for registering compliant which will protect them and provide equal opportunities of education. These findings were based on the results of this study. The importance of this discussion is to understand the main themes and sub themes of this research and to compare it with previous studies to better understand the insight of the study. Previous researches were conducted on different domestic workers and they matched with the issues and problems faced by the domestic workers that we interviewed. There findings discussed previous literature and studies, some of our findings were based on their study results because these are the new findings of this study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study revealed that domestic workers face numerous economic, psychological, physical, and social challenges that negatively affect their overall performance for work and not only they also influence their daily lives and overall health. Participants reported experiencing financial difficulty, different physical health problems, feeling emotionally overwhelmed, anxiety, depression, frustration, and restricted freedom.

The findings further indicated that domestic workers primarily relied on their own personal strengths, resilience, and self-coping mechanisms to manage with these difficulties. The study highlights the need for greater attention to the rights and welfare of domestic workers. Government

institutions like different union, policymakers, and relevant organizations should develop and work for the protection, rights and support systems to improve the working conditions of domestic workers in Pakistan. Furthermore, the establishment of worker associations and legal protections may help ensure their rights, safety, dignity and respect, and access to social and economic opportunities.

Limitations of the Study

The present study has several limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted within a limited sample of domestic workers in Pakistan, which may restrict the transferability of the findings. Second, the study employed a qualitative research design; therefore, the findings represent the experiences and perceptions of the participants and cannot be generalized to all domestic workers globally. Third, the data was collected from participants who were full time resident workers, in many regions of Pakistan.

Furthermore, the study included only domestic workers aged 26 years and above. As a result, the experiences of child domestic workers and younger workers, who constitute a significant proportion of the domestic workforce, were not explored. Finally, some workers were hesitant to share personal experiences due to privacy concerns and fear of negative consequences from society or employers, which may have limited the depth of the information which was collected.

Recommendation of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed for the domestic workers and future researchers and academic institutions. It is recommended that the government should provide strong support systems for domestic workers, including access to free education for their children and the financial assistance when the inflation rate is high so that it may help the workers and their families to reduce their economic burden and improve their well-being. NGOs and unions should be established or strengthened to ensure confidentiality of workers' data and to protect them from any harm.

Different Awareness campaigns and seminars should be conducted to highlight workers' importance in society and to reduce social stigma. Legal protection and workers' rights should also be ensured. In addition, specialized psychological support should be provided through counseling and intervention programs to help them to manage psychological issues, economic challenges, and daily life difficulties. Social support systems should also be strengthened to improve their daily life functioning.

For future research, it is suggested that comparative studies be conducted between men and women regarding coping strategies, using a mixed-method approach with a large and diverse sample for better generalizability. Universities and research institutions should provide adequate guidance, supervision, and research facilities to students conducting research. Supervisors should offer continuous support and mentorship throughout the research process.

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