

# The Relationship between *Yaya* (nanny) and *Alaga* (the child in charge) in the Philippines

A Case of Upper and Middle Class Families in Metro Manila

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Place of fieldwork: Manila, Philippines

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- Research background

This research aims to discover the kind of relationships formed between the *yaya* (nanny), who is from a rural lower class family and the *alaga* (the child in charge) from a more affluent family in the Philippines. In addition, the study analyzes this relationship in terms of family and kinship in the Philippine contexts such as “relatedness” and “imagined kinship”, and focuses more on the *alaga*, upper, and middle class in the Philippines. It examines how the social gap and class division are reflected in the relationship between the *yaya* and *alaga*.

- Research purpose and aim

Many studies have been conducted on domestic workers, but most of them focus on Filipino immigrant workers outside the Philippines, and very few on workers inside the Philippines. However, Filipino immigrant domestic workers are in a very different situation than those inside the Philippines in terms of economic status and educational background. Hence, this research will provide new perceptions of the domestic worker studies, and by providing new perception of the affluent class view of the lower class, it will contribute a new aspect to the Filipino class debate which tends to focus on the perception of the lower class.

- Results and achievements by fieldwork

I conducted 29 interviews of *alagas*, 28 of *yayas*, and 1 of an *amo* (the employer of the *yaya*). I found that most *yaya* and *alaga* perceive themselves as part of the same family, and an imagined relationship is formed between them that of a “second mother.” However biological mothers cannot be replaced by *yayas* and biological parents have authority over the child while the child (*alaga*) has more authority over the *yaya*. The imagined kinship between *yaya* and *alaga* involves hierarchy; at the same, there is a hierarchy between the *yaya* and the other helps.

- Implications and impacts on future research

I set the parameters of my research for only the *yaya* and *alaga*. Thus the result and analysis narrowed to their perceptions, and lacked the perceptions of the parents/employers. Further, I forgot to evaluate the differences in social background between *alaga* in earlier times who had *yaya*, and *yayas* who are taking care of the children now. In addition, there was miscommunication between the interviewees, the NGO helping abused domestic workers, and the researcher’s high school. Therefore these interviews are the aim for the next period of fieldwork.



With the counterpart secretary at Ateneo de Manila University



With a friend and teachers of Christian Language Study Center (CLSC)



At yaya waiting space in Ateneo Grade School