



Ministry of Manpower

FDW and FDW Employer Study 2010

Report on Findings

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective and Scope of Study

1.1.1 To obtain a holistic understanding of the experiences of both FDWs and FDW employers in Singapore, MOM appointed a survey vendor to conduct a FDW and FDW Employer Study in 2010.

1.1.2 The scope of the study included:

- their experiences at various stages of the employment process;
- their motivations and concerns; and
- their awareness of employment rights and responsibilities.

1.2 Sampling Methodology

1.2.1 The FDW and FDW employer sampling frameworks were designed to ensure a good mix of demographic factors such as FDW nationality, age, years of work in Singapore and employer residential types. In total, valid responses were collected from 916 FDWs and 461 FDW employers.

1.3 Data Collection Methodologies

The FDW Interviews:

1.3.1 The FDW interviews were administered face-to-face with selected FDWs by the survey vendor appointed by MOM. To ensure FDWs' understanding of the questions, the FDW interview questionnaire was translated into the FDWs' native languages such as Bahasa Indonesia, Myanmar, Tagalog and Tamil, and FDWs were interviewed in these languages which they would presumably be most conversant in.

1.3.2 To elicit truthful responses, FDWs were assured that their responses will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregated results would be reported to MOM. To ensure the quality of responses collected, all interviewers were briefed about the questionnaire and interview process before the fieldwork was started. All completed questionnaires were checked by a supervisor for completeness and the logic of responses. Any discrepancies were clarified with the FDWs on the spot.

The FDW Employer Surveys:

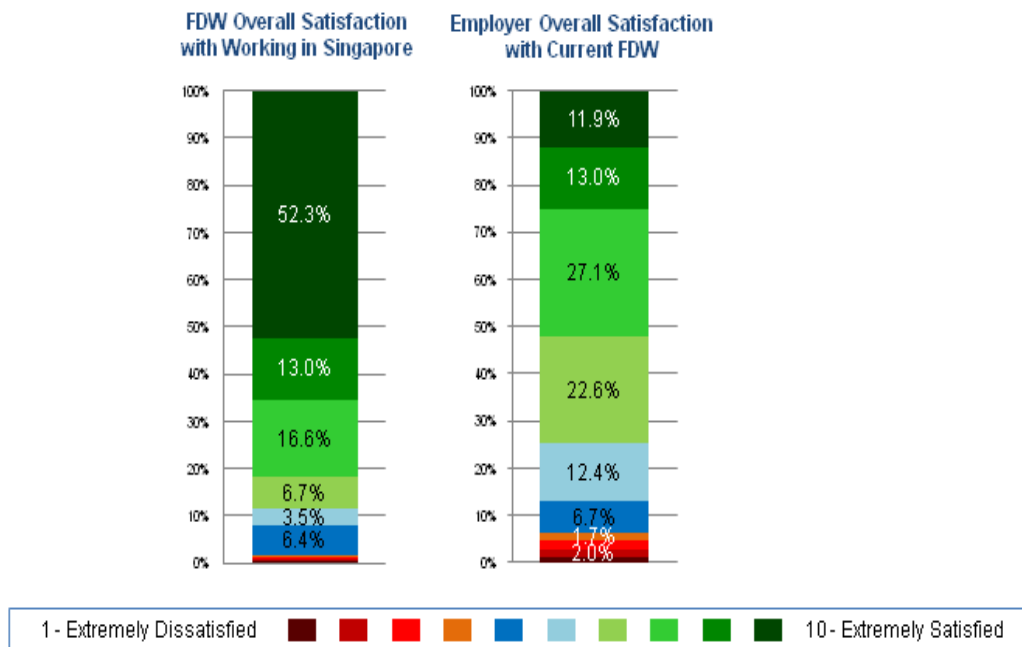
1.3.3 The FDW employer surveys were administered through self-completion web surveys via an online survey portal hosted by the survey vendor. Invitation letters, with the link to the online survey, were sent to selected employers of FDWs to invite them to participate in the survey.

1.3.4 To ensure that each employer only submitted one response, each employer was provided with a personalised access code to the online survey. Phone calls were made to follow up with some employers to encourage them to participate in the survey. Similar to the FDW interviews, to elicit truthful responses from employers, they were assured that their responses will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregated results would be reported to MOM.

2. Satisfaction Levels & Future Intentions

2.1 Satisfaction Levels of FDWs & Employers

Figure 2.1a

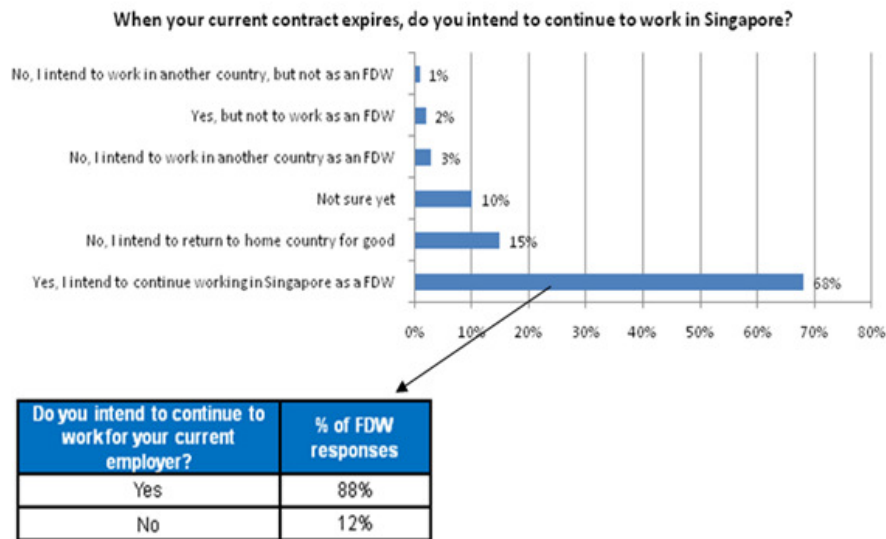


2.1.1 Generally, FDWs expressed high levels of satisfaction with working in Singapore. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being ‘extremely satisfied’ with working in Singapore, about half of the FDWs indicated that they were “extremely satisfied” (n=479), and only 8% rated their satisfaction level as “5” or below. The mean rating was 8.76. Of the 383 FDWs who had worked in other countries before, 85% reported a higher satisfaction level working in Singapore.

2.1.2 Employers are also generally satisfied (mean 7.36) with their current FDWs. Almost 3 in 4 employers rated their satisfaction levels as “7” and above (n=344); and only 13% rated their satisfaction levels as “5” or below. Employers who reported satisfaction levels of “5” and below explained that their FDWs lacked initiative and competency, were forgetful, or lacked honesty.

2.2 Future Intentions of FDWs and Employers

Figure 2.2a



2.2.1 Out of the 68% of the FDWs who indicated that they intend to continue working in Singapore as an FDW after their current contracts expire (n=624), almost 9 in 10 of them intend to continue working for their current employer (n=548).

Figure 2.2b



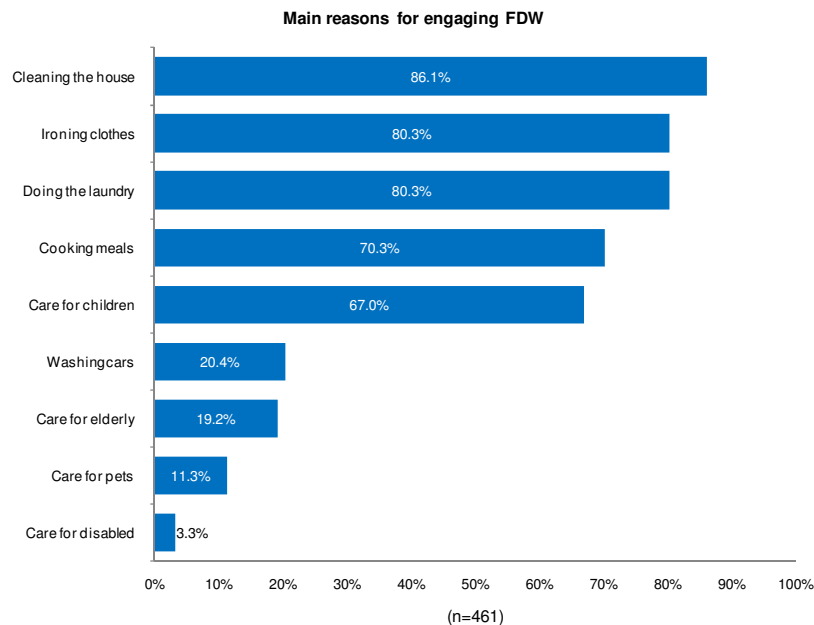
2.2.2 61% of employers intend to renew their current FDWs' employment contracts when they expire (n=282). However, only 8% of employers indicated that they did not intend to renew the contracts upon expiration and the rest were not sure. Of the 36 employers who did not intend to renew their current FDWs' employment contracts, almost half of them said it was because the FDWs' performance did not meet their expectations (n=19).

3. Pre-employment Experiences

3.1 Considerations of FDWs and Employers

Employers' Reasons for Engaging FDW and Considerations for Selecting Current FDW

Figure 3.1a (multiple options allowed)



3.1.1 When employers were asked on the main reasons for engaging an FDW, the most common reasons selected were cleaning the house, ironing clothes and doing the laundry (quoted by at least 80% of employers). These are followed by cooking meals and care for children (quoted by about 70% of employers).

Figure 3.1b

Top factor considered in selecting current FDW	% of employer responses
<i>Attitude of FDW</i>	<i>18.2%</i>
Skills / training (e.g., able to take care of children)	14.3%
Her ability to communicate with me and/or family members	13.7%
Experience of working as a FDW	13.0%
The country she comes from	8.0%
Age	7.2%
Others	25.6%

Most often mentioned types of skills
<i>Able to take care of children</i>
Able to cook
Able to do household chores
Able to take care of elderly

3.1.2 When employers were asked to rank in order of importance, the top five factors considered in selecting their current FDWs, 18% of them ranked ‘attitude of FDW’ as the top most factor (n=84). Almost 6 in 10 employers chose ‘attitude of FDW’ as one of the top five factors.

Factors Influencing FDWs' Choice of Country

Figure 3.1c

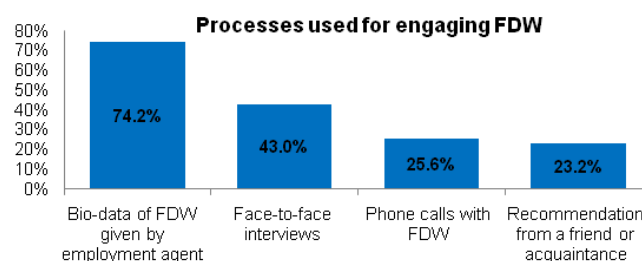
Top factor influencing FDW to work in Singapore	% of FDW responses
Higher pay (n=321)	35.0%
Good governance (safe & clean) (n=108)	11.8%
Better living conditions (n=85)	9.3%
Better prospects (e.g., able to achieve long term goals) (n=69)	7.5%
Nearer to home (n=58)	6.3%
My friends/relatives are here (n=55)	6.0%
FDWs are treated better by employers (n=48)	5.2%
Recommendation by friends/ family/ relatives (n=41)	4.5%
Similar culture (e.g., similar norms and acceptable behaviours) (n=37)	4.0%
Easier requirements for FDW to enter the country to work (n=28)	3.1%
Wants to learn English (n=19)	2.1%
N/A. FDW could not think of any / any other reasons (n=17)	1.9%
More affordable agency fees (n=8)	0.9%
Faster process (n=6)	0.7%
Nicer people (n=6)	0.7%
Others (n=10)	1.1%

3.1.3 When FDWs were asked for the two most important factors which made them decide to come to Singapore, higher pay was the most commonly cited top reason, quoted by 35% of the FDWs. Good governance which results in a safe and clean environment was the next most commonly quoted factor considered.

3.2 Recruitment Process and Experiences with Employment Agencies

Employers' Process of Employing FDWs

Figure 3.2a (multiple options allowed)



3.2.1 When asked about the processes used to decide which FDW to hire, most (74%) employers quoted the use of FDW bio-data given by employment agencies (n=342). The second most commonly used process was interviews, either in person or via video-conferencing, quoted by 43% of the employers (n=198).

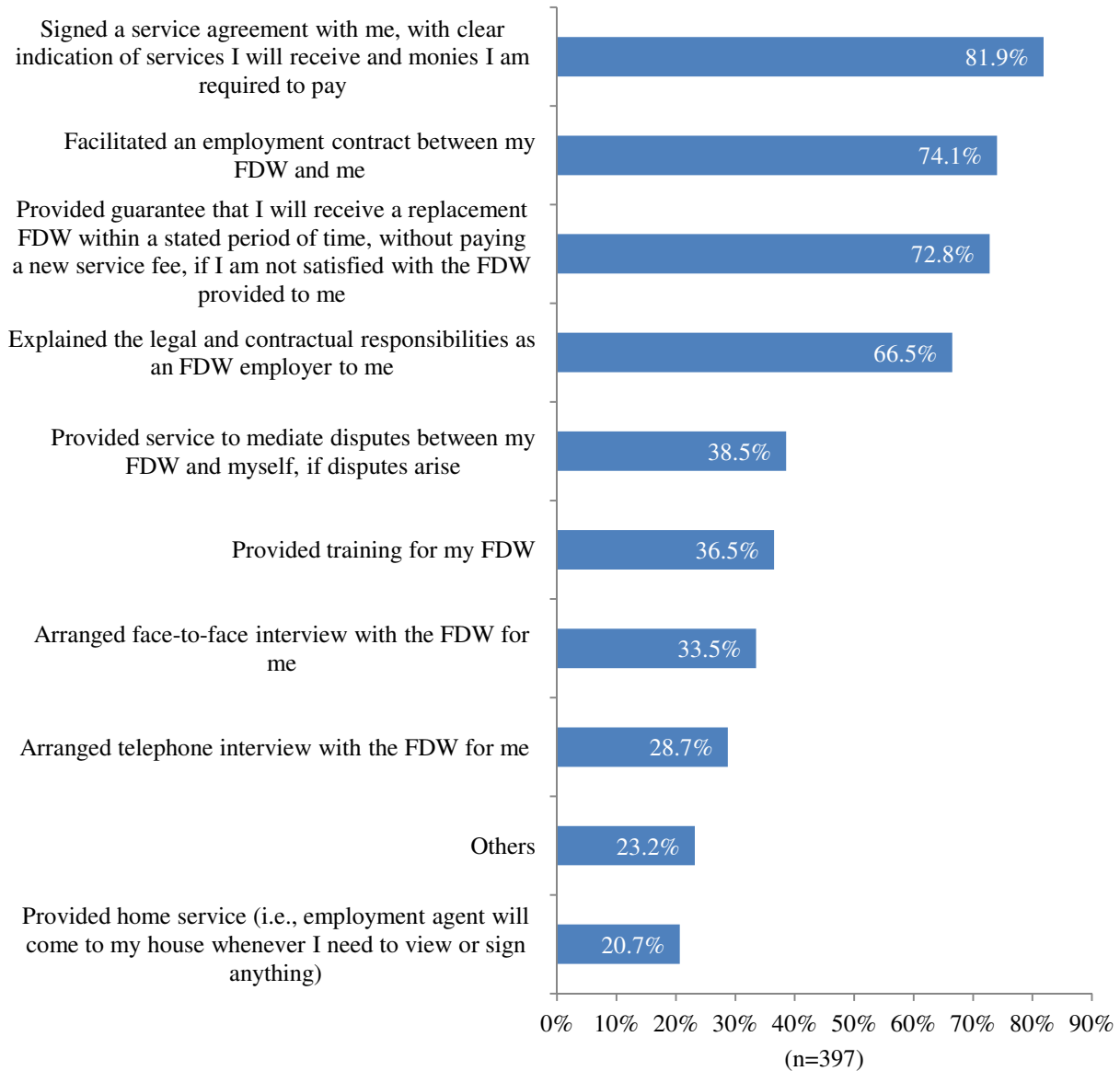
Figure 3.2b (multiple options allowed)

Top 8 factors important to employers when selecting employment agent	% of employers
Professionalism and good service of staff	62.7%
Experience of employment agent (e.g., agency has a large number of FDWs placed, agency has been in FDW-placement business for many years)	43.3%
Quality of potential candidates by employment agent	43.3%
Relative/friend's recommendation	39.0%
After-hire service promised by the employment agent in their service agreement	32.0%
Personal experience with the employment agent previously	30.2%
Convenient location	26.2%
Training programs offered by employment agent for FDW	22.9%

3.2.2 Majority (86%) of employers engaged Singapore employment agencies to source for their FDWs (n=397). When asked to select 5 important factors in selecting a Singapore employment agency, most (63%) employers selected professionalism and good service provided by the staff of the employment agency (n=249).

Figure 3.2c (multiple options allowed)

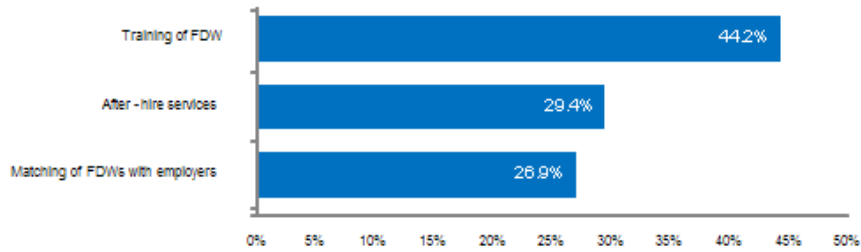
Besides matching your current FDW to you, what other services did your employment agent provide to you?



3.2.3 Apart from recruiting FDWs for employers, other more frequent services provided by employment agencies include signing service agreements with employers, facilitating employment contracts between FDWs and employers, guaranteeing FDWs replacement, and explaining legal and contractual responsibilities of employers.

Figure 3.2d (multiple options allowed)

Based on your latest experience with employment agent(s), what areas of service from employment agents do you think require improvement?
(Top 3 factors)



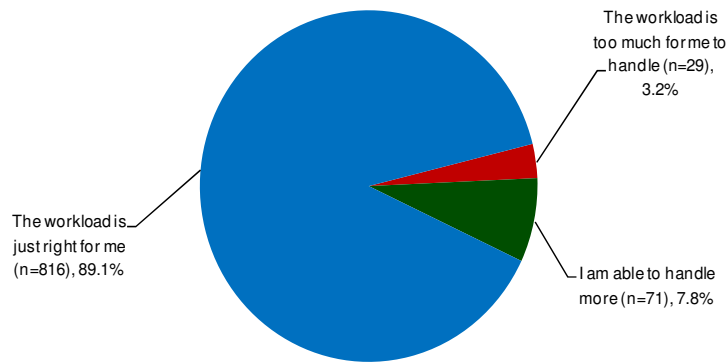
3.2.4 44% of employers indicated that employment agencies can improve their training for FDWs (n=176). More than half of the employers who indicated that after-hire services require improvement, suggested that the agencies provide periodic follow-up (n=62). Of the employers who indicated that explanation of legal responsibilities needs to be improved, about one in two of them (48%) suggested making the explanation clearer and more detailed.

4. FDWs’ Working Conditions and Experiences during Employment

4.1 Workload

Figure 4.1

Current Workload

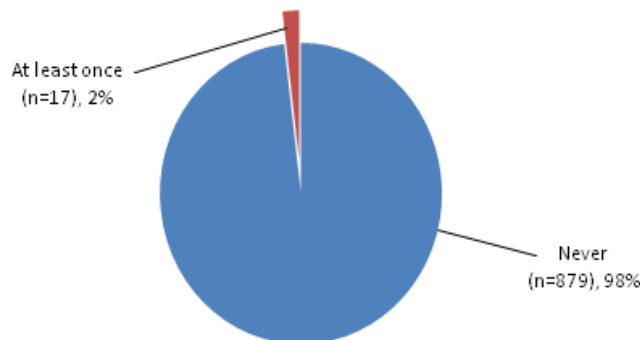


4.1.1 Most FDWs (97%, n=887) felt that they are able to cope with their current workload, with about 8% indicating that they are actually able to handle more (n=71).

4.2 Salary

Figure 4.2

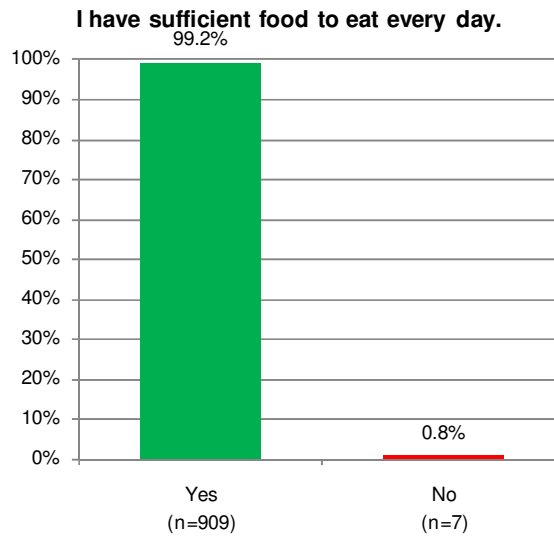
Experience of Late Payment of Salaries from Employers in the Last Six Months



4.2.1 98% of FDWs have never experienced late payment of salaries from their current employers in the last six months (n=879).

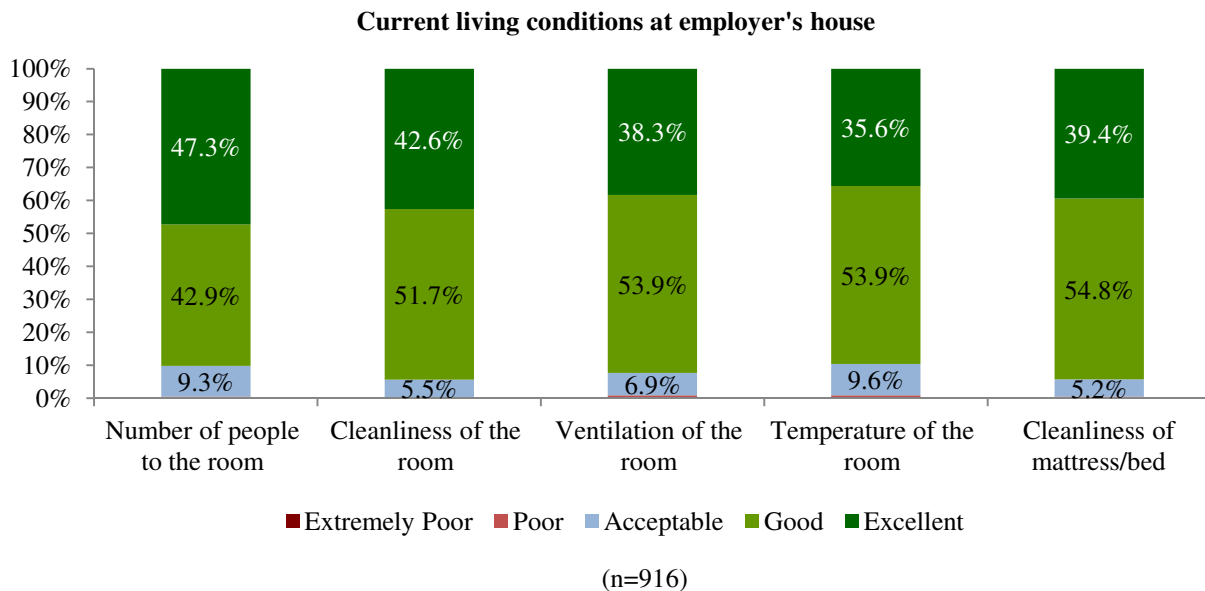
4.3 Food and Accommodation

Figure 4.3a



4.3.1 Only a minority of about 0.8% of FDWs indicated that they were not provided with enough food (n=7). Of the FDWs who indicated they do not have sufficient food, 3 said that they were too shy to ask for more food; 2 said that their employers do not allow them to take more food; and 2 said that there is not enough food left for them.

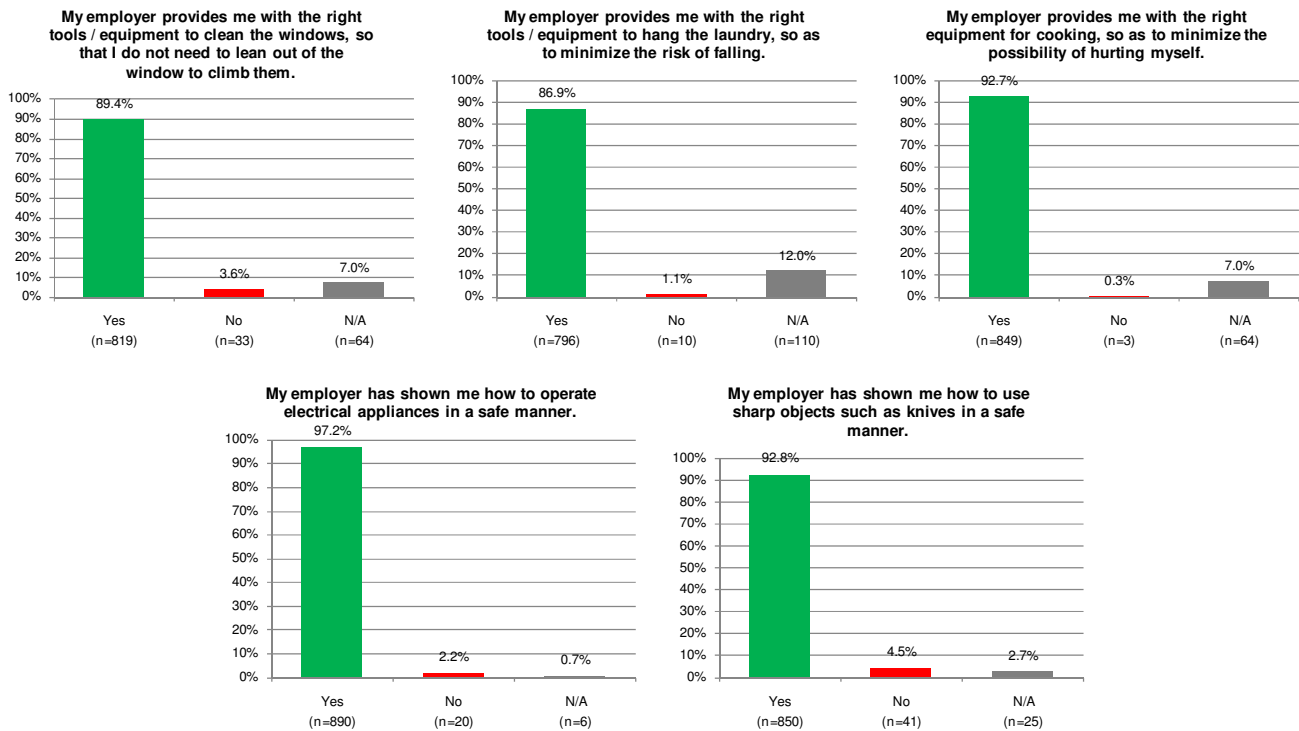
Figure 4.3b



4.3.2 Approximately 90% of FDWs indicated at least a “good” rating for the different aspects of the room that they are sleeping in, within the employers’ house, such as the number of people sharing the room with them, cleanliness, ventilation and temperature of the room.

4.4 Safety

Figure 4.4

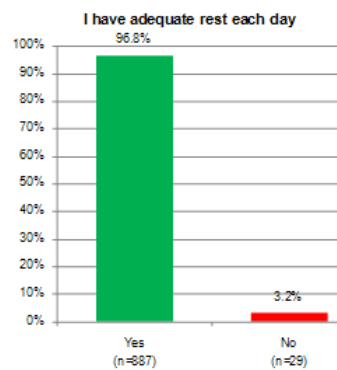


*FDWs who selected "N/A" are those who are not required to perform the related task.

4.4.1 Generally, FDWs have been provided with the appropriate tools to ensure their safety when carrying out the household tasks of cleaning windows, hanging the laundry and cooking. Most FDWs have also been taught by their employers to operate electrical appliances and use sharp objects in a safe manner.

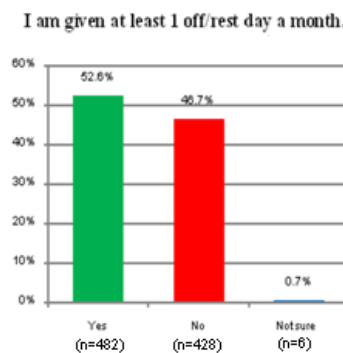
4.5 Rest and Rest Days

Figure 4.5a



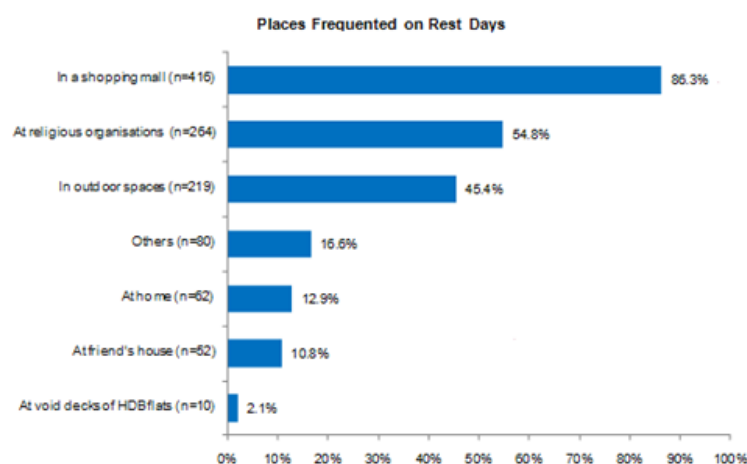
4.5.1 Almost 97% of FDWs indicated that they get enough rest each day (n=887).

Figure 4.5b



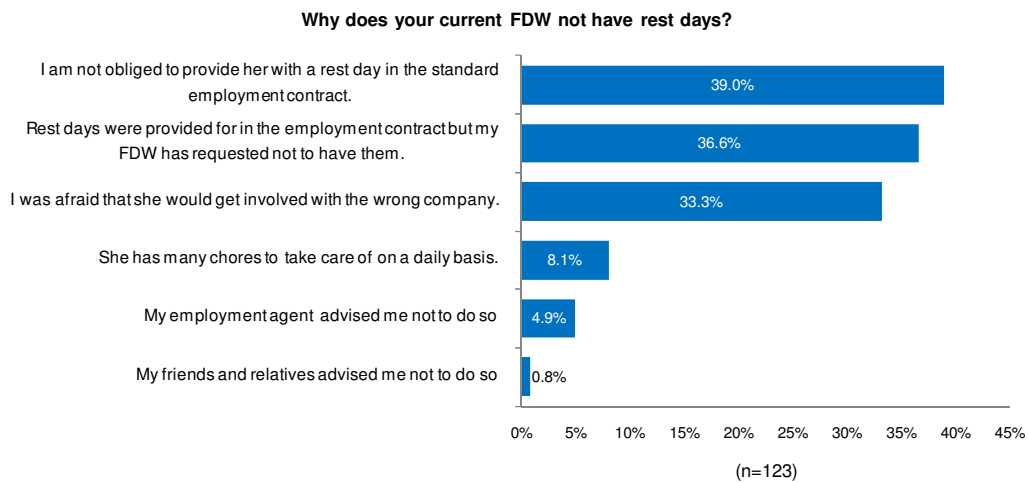
4.5.2 53% of FDWs have at least one rest day in a month (n=482). Approximately 56% of FDWs who have rest days are given 1 rest day per month (n=270). 17% of them are given 2 rest days (n=83), while 25% of them are given 4 rest days every month (n=120).

Figure 4.5c (multiple options allowed)



4.5.3 On their rest days, most FDWs frequent shopping malls (86%); religious organisations (55%) and public open air spaces (45%).

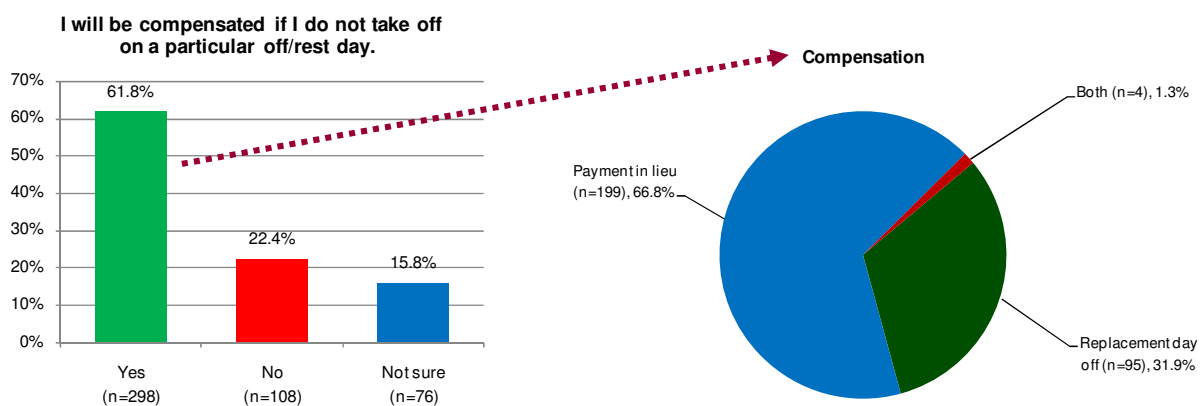
Figure 4.5d (multiple options allowed)



4.5.4 The top 3 reasons cited by employers for not giving FDWs rest days are as follows:

- There is no obligation to do so in the standard employment contract. Since the existing standard employment contract requires at least one rest day to be provided to FDWs, employers who selected this reason are likely to be referring to the flexibility they have in providing regular monetary compensation in lieu of giving rest days.
- FDWs themselves have requested not to have them even though rest days were provided in the employment contract.
- Employers fear that their FDWs would get involved with the wrong company.

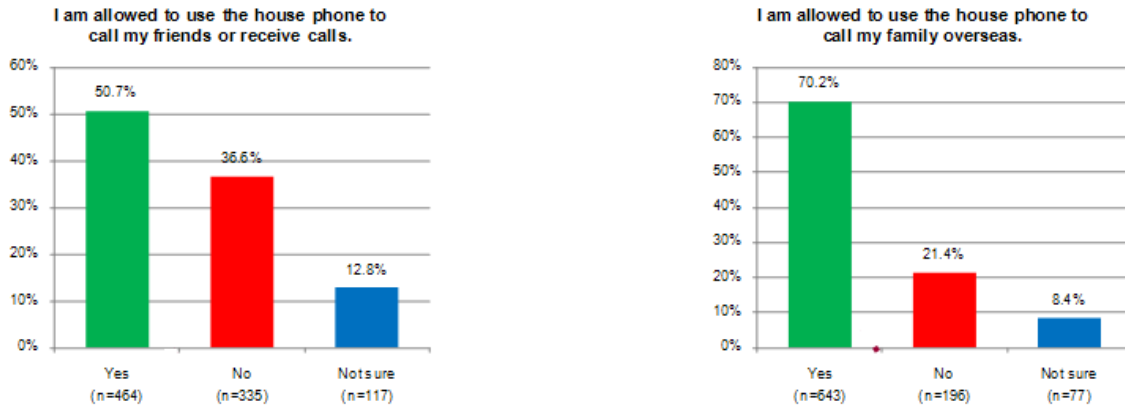
Figure 4.5e



4.5.5 62% of FDWs who have rest days will be compensated if they choose not to take it on a particular day (n=298). The compensation will either be in the form of cash payment and/or a replacement day off. Most (67%) were offered payment in lieu of their rest day.

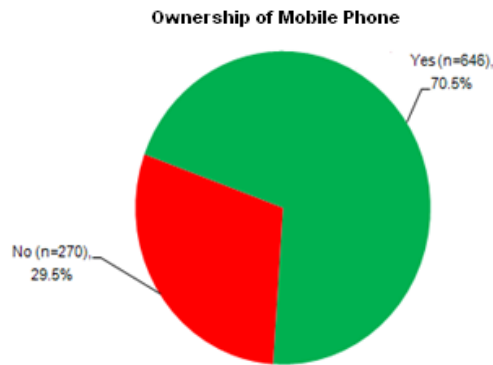
4.6 FDWs’ Access to Communication

Figure 4.6a



4.6.1 A higher percentage of FDWs are allowed to make overseas calls to their families (70%, n=643), as compared to making calls to their friends (51%, n=464), using their employers’ house phone.

Figure 4.6b



4.6.2 Approximately 71% of FDWs own mobile phones.

4.7 Settling-in Problems Experienced by FDWs

Figure 4.7

Top problem faced when FDW just started working in Singapore	% of FDW responses
<i>I missed my home/family (n=225)</i>	24.6%
None at all (n=201)	21.9%
I had difficulties communicating with Singaporeans (n=149)	16.3%
I was unable to cope with my work (n=97)	10.6%
I was stressed in a new environment (n=91)	9.9%
Others (n=153)	16.7%

4.7.1 One in four FDWs (25%) cited homesickness as the top problem experienced when they first came to Singapore. Other common problems cited by FDWs include inability to cope with their work and being stressed due to their new environment.

5 Awareness of Employment Rights, Responsibilities and Channels of Assistance

5.1 Awareness of Employment Rights & Responsibilities

FDWs' Awareness

5.1.1 Most FDWs are aware of their rights and their employers' responsibilities with regard to upkeep and maintenance such as the requirement for employers to pay for their medical fees (over 90%), and that they can only work in their employers' homes (almost 90%).

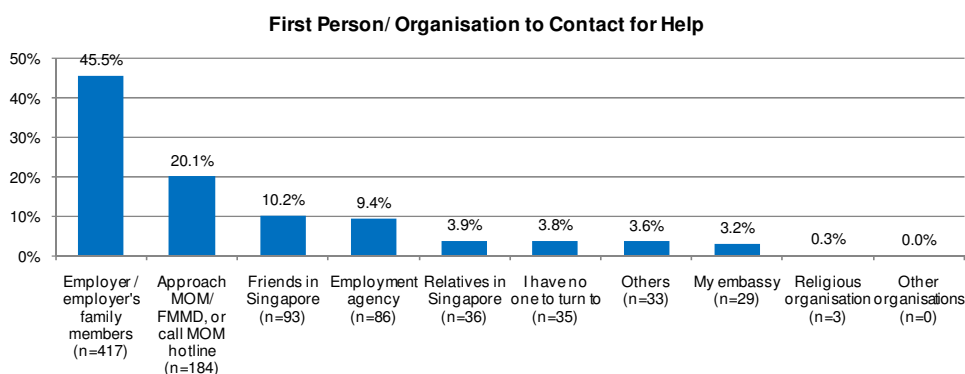
5.1.2 93% of FDWs believe that MOM will be able to render them help if they encounter problems with their employer or employment agency (n=855).

Employers' Awareness

5.1.3 Over 90% of employers demonstrated awareness of their employment obligations related to upkeep and maintenance of their FDWs such as paying for the FDW's meals and medical insurance; and only requiring their FDWs to perform household chores in their homes.

5.2 Channels of Assistance for FDWs

Figure 5.2



5.2.1 If FDWs encounter problems, 46% of them said they would approach their employers or their employers' family members for help first (n=417). About 20% would approach MOM first (n=184). Others prefer to ask for help from friends, relatives or employment agencies.