



# IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE WORKPLACE IN CHINA



The Asia Foundation



SynTao  
Sustainability Solutions

**IMPACT OF DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE ON THE  
WORKPLACE IN CHINA**

November 2017

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## Study funded by Lotus Circle of The Asia Foundation

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## About The Asia Foundation

Founded in 1954, The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote regional cooperation. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia’s continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC.

The Asia Foundation began programming in China in 1979 and established a resident country office in Beijing in 1994. The Beijing Representative Office was registered in China on June 30, 2017.

## About SynTao Co., Ltd.

SynTao Co., Ltd. is a leading Beijing-based consultancy promoting sustainability and responsibility in the Asian region. It focuses on consulting, education and investment in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). SynTao was founded in 2005 in Beijing. In recent years, it has established offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Shenzhen, Chongqing and Washington, D.C.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) and SynTao Co, Ltd. (SynTao) jointly launched a study in September 2016 to understand the impact of domestic violence (DV) on the workplace in China. As the first of its kind in China, the study has benefited from generous support from various organizations and individuals through the process of its design, implementation and report development.

We would like to extend our gratitude to individual donors in the Foundation’s Lotus Circle, a group of individual and private donors that provide financial support to the Asia Foundation’s Women’s Empowerment Program, and whose contributions supported this study; and to the Swedish Embassy in Beijing which co-financed the data collection process in Guangdong Province. Our gratitude also goes to SynTao Co., Ltd. for joining us in this groundbreaking research initiative. Various gender and DV experts from across the Foundation and other institutions contributed technical advice to the design of the study and survey tools, for which we are grateful. We also thank The Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR), the International Labour Organization, Beijing Hongyan Social Work Center, China Chain Store & Franchise Association, China Development Brief, and CIIC (Zhongzhi) Occupational Mental Health Center for coordinating assistance during implementation of the study’s questionnaire surveys. We are grateful to Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Center, Yunnan Lianxin Community Service and Care Center, Nanjing Tongren Social Work Organization, and Professor Li Hongtao of China Women University for their technical and institutional support on survivor interviews. Professor Chen Yuyu, Dr. Li Yu and Mr. Qiu Xincheng of the Peking University Institute of Economic Policy Research provided their valuable technical support on the questionnaire design, quantitative data analysis and the development of cost calculation models. Thanks also to Jiemian.com, RNW Media, China Development Brief and UN Women for their support on the dissemination and outreach for this study. We also would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Li Wenfen, PhD candidate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, for her time and important contribution to the development of the Chinese version of the report, and to Paula Uniacke, Junior Associate of

The Asia Foundation, for her contribution to editing the English version of the report.

Last but not the least, this study would not have been accomplished without the respondents to our questionnaire surveys, and particularly the eight survivors who participated in the interviews. Their bravery in speaking out about their own DV experiences has helped us develop a deeper understanding of DV and the mechanisms to combat DV in the Chinese context. This study has inspired us to explore more feasible actions to address DV and assist survivors, including solutions to be put in place in the workplace.



Ji Hongbo

Country Representative

The Asia Foundation Beijing Representative Office

## **ACRONYMS**

ACWF: All-China Women’s Federation

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DV Law: Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People’s Republic of China

DV: Domestic Violence

HR: Human Resources

IPV: Intimate Partner Violence

LGBTI: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex

NGO: Nongovernment organization

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## GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

### *“Victim” or “Survivor”*

The term “victim” (受害人) is most commonly used in public discourse, especially in the Chinese language, about gender-based violence, including domestic violence. There has been a contrary view that use of the term can disempower the subject individual, and more and more advocates and scholars prefer the term “survivor” (幸存者). (The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015)

The Oxford Dictionary defines “victim” as “a person harmed, injured or killed as a result of a crime, accident or other event or action.” “Survivor” is defined as “a person who survives, especially a person remaining alive after an event in which others have died.”

This study uses the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably. Domestic violence is a process of victimization beyond the power of the subject individual, but she or he can survive domestic violence and move on with her/his life.

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## Executive Summary

Domestic violence (DV) is not only a crime against basic human rights, it is also a global public health issue, resulting in huge losses to individuals, families, businesses, and society. Over the past few years, engaging employers in anti-DV efforts has become an important strategy for policy makers and advocates in combatting DV in developed countries. This is a strategy with high potential payoff for victims, the anti-DV cause, and employers. Economic independence plays a critical role in the empowerment of individuals subject to DV and a corporation's culture and image are increasingly important factors as it competes in the global marketplace.

In a few countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, laws and regulations focusing on workplace-based actions against DV have been enacted, and a relatively systematic action framework for employers has come into shape. However, in most countries – including China – employers have a low level of awareness about anti-DV strategies and a limited commitment to act. Moreover, both employers and the public have little understanding of how DV may continue to affect a victim at work, and impact the workplace and employers. China's newly adopted Anti-Domestic Violence Law (DV Law), which came into effect on March 1, 2016, briefly outlines employers' responsibilities regarding employees who face or perpetuate DV. However, it will take a long time, with more deliberation about employers' legal obligations and a search for possible solutions that employers can adopt, for the rules to be understood and systematically implemented by employers.

It is within this context that this study on the impact of DV on the workplace in China was conceived and designed. The study was intended to fulfill two purposes: (1) To establish a baseline of knowledge on the understandings, experiences, and effects of DV in the workplace among employees and employers; and (2) To inform and improve employer responses to DV, as required by the DV Law. To this end, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

- (1) How prevalent is DV among employees? How does DV affect the workplace and other stakeholders? How do employees expect employers to react to DV?

- (2) How do employers understand DV and their responsibilities to address DV? What barriers prevent employers from acting against DV?
- (3) What economic costs do employers incur due to DV?
- (4) What actions are needed to encourage and convince employers in China to engage in anti-DV efforts?

The study took a two-pronged approach to examine how DV impacts the workplace. From an employee perspective (including both self-identified survivors and their coworkers), the study assessed employee experiences of DV and DV's impact in the workplace, including on performance and productivity. The study also explored employer understanding of DV and the DV Law, employer capacity to respond to DV, and the costs incurred by employers as a result of DV. Data collection methods included surveys, in-depth interviews, and a literature review. The research team developed two separate surveys, targeting employees and human resource (HR) managers, as representatives of employers, respectively. In total, 799 questionnaire surveys were completed, with 706 employees and 93 employers participating. This included 488 employees and 60 employers who were recruited through an online platform that was advertised through news and social media to reach a diverse sample of respondents nationwide from a range of industries and job positions. Most of these respondents (80% of employees and 73% of employers) were women. Unless otherwise noted, findings are drawn from the general public sample surveyed online. In addition, the research team conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eight DV survivors and seven employers from various industries; and analyzed 73 pieces of relevant literature, including 45 pieces in English and 28 pieces in Chinese .

Key findings of the study include the following:

- (1) 13.3% of respondents have experienced DV in the past 12 months, and nearly half of these survivors have experienced DV in the workplace. In addition, 56.4% have witnessed DV suffered by acquaintances, and 65.8% of these witnesses have seen the victims continue to be abused by their partners in the workplace;

- (2) Self-identified victims of DV reported experiencing many physical and emotional effects, which have negative impacts on employee safety and productivity in the workplace, affecting survivors as well as their coworkers;
- (3) Employers pay extensive DV-related costs, due to reduced productivity, missed work hours or work days, and staff turnover that result from DV;
- (4) Employers have a limited understanding of the expectations of their employees or requirements under the DV Law to implement workplace policies that support survivors or discipline abusers;
- (5) While the majority of employees reported that their employers should intervene in instances of DV, and more than half of survivors surveyed did disclose their experiences of DV to coworkers and/or supervisors, however, general employee willingness to seek help from employers remains low. This is partly due to limited knowledge of the willingness or ability of their employers to intervene, the absence of resources for interventions, and the possible effects of intervention, in addition to concerns about privacy, discrimination, and losing face or being ridiculed;
- (6) Employers have concerns about engaging in anti-DV efforts due to the lack of clarity about their legal responsibilities, difficulty in measuring the benefit of their investment in DV interventions, and challenges to balancing employee privacy and protection needs with the demand for intervention.

It is important for employers to understand that the additional costs to their business operations are generated by DV, not the victims. Employers who might consider controlling the economic loss by restricting or even depriving victims of job opportunities would be in violation of laws and would be engaging in unethical business behavior. To be specific, such measures would violate international conventions and domestic laws and regulations concerning gender equity, anti-discrimination, and equal employment. More importantly, it would undermine victims' access to economic and other resources that are critical for their escape from violence. Both of these would

have negative consequences on business's public image and reputation, as well as loyalty of the employees. This study found that employers are positioned to empower survivors and discipline abusers, by effectively managing job and economic opportunities, co-worker networks, HR management, and employee welfare systems. Despite the requirement of longer-term investment to achieve positive impact, employer engagement in DV prevention and response is a strategy with high potential payoff for survivors and their families, employers themselves, and society.

The elimination of DV requires coherent efforts to transform the underlying cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality; improve laws, policies, and judicial practices; and establish a multi-stakeholder collaborative intervention mechanism. The workplace is a crucial avenue for addressing DV. This study points to several steps that can be taken by employers, policymakers, and advocates to facilitate the creation of comprehensive and practical workplace policies to address DV. These include the following:

1. Clarifying relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines regarding workplace safety and labor protections;
2. Increasing employer understanding of DV, its negative effects on the workplace and costs to business operations, and the benefits of addressing DV;
3. Raising employees' awareness of their employers' responsibilities, capacity, and willingness to act in cases of DV; and
4. Providing employers with a simple-to-understand and user-friendly anti-DV toolkit that is relevant to employers and balances the needs and concerns of both employers and employees.

The government plays a vital role in this process, and there are a number of additional actions it can undertake to better integrate employers as effective partners in anti-DV efforts. For instance, the government can allocate financial support to enterprises for DV awareness and employer capacity building, facilitate pilot programs, promote best practices on workplace DV interventions, and include employers in the government's multi-sectoral coordination network. Advocacy by UN organizations, All-China Women's

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Federation, All-China Federation of Trade Unions, industry associations, and civil society organizations is critical in encouraging policymakers to take these steps. In addition, high-quality data is essential to furthering understanding of the effects of DV on employers and of workplace-based interventions; future research should be conducted to verify the application of the cost factors identified by this study to nationwide representative and industry-specific samples.

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## Chapter 1. Research Background and Objectives

### 1.1 Current Status of Employers' Anti-Domestic Violence Efforts

Domestic violence (DV) can happen anywhere at any time, and it is a serious global concern in terms of human rights, public health, and development.<sup>1</sup> DV not only affects individuals' private lives, but also society as a whole, and its adverse impacts can be passed down from one generation to the next. Internationally, governments and social welfare organizations have undertaken studies on DV and promoted anti-DV efforts for more than 30 years, and almost all studies on the economic costs of DV have shown that it results in significant costs to individuals, families, employers and the public. Despite this awareness of economic costs, engaging employers is a relatively new approach to ending DV. However, it has been acknowledged as a critical strategy worldwide. At the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, it was concluded that combatting and eliminating DV should be treated as a national priority, and governments should call on the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions and other relevant actors to take appropriate actions, such as investing in programs to prevent DV and empower victims and survivors.<sup>2</sup>

As a corporation's culture and image have become increasingly important factors for it to compete in the global marketplace while economic independence is a significant element to the empowerment of populations

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to “Multi-sectoral Collaboration to Prevent and Combat DV Work Manual (trial)” Page 23. This manual is a product of “Multi-Sectoral Collaboration to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence” program. This program was supported by the UN “Eliminating Violence against Women Fund”, coordinated by ACWF and UN Women, and implemented by domestic organizations together with UN organizations since 2010. Relevant statements can be found in UN conference reports, research reports, and media reports.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to “Agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls” E/2013/27-E/CN.6/2013/11, available at [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57\\_Agreed\\_Conclusions\\_\(CSW\\_report\\_excerpt\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

vulnerable to DV, employers' investment in anti-DV efforts is a strategy with high potential payoff for both the anti-DV cause and employers themselves.

Some developed countries and regions (e.g., Australia, Canada, the United States, Hong Kong and Taiwan) have issued policies, laws, and regulations; and developed action guides regarding employers' policies and practices in dealing with DV. For instance, the Province of Manitoba in Canada passed a law in 2016 to offer DV victims paid leave to deal with consequences of DV.<sup>3</sup> In Hong Kong and Taiwan, similar attempts to enlist employers in combatting DV through mitigating risk factors of DV and/or supporting victims have been made as well. Supported by the Hong Kong SAR government, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service initiated the "Caring Company" program in 2002 to encourage employers to take care of the private life of their employees. Under this program, since 2006, Hong Kong Council of Social Service has been encouraging companies to adopt family-friendly measures as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in order to help employees balance their work and family life. Specific services of family-friendly measures include workshops and counseling services to address stress and other emotional problems; babysitting services; and financial support for families in crisis<sup>4</sup>, which could contribute to prevention of DV and support for victims. The Labor Department of Taiwan has provided assistance, including financial subsidies, to employers to encourage them to take measures to help employees who suffer DV.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to governments, some multinational companies have incorporated prevention and response to DV in their businesses' global codes of conduct. For instance, Bank of America considers DV a risk factor associated with workplace violence, and has made a commitment to providing relevant

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<sup>3</sup> Zosia Bielski, March 15, 2016. "Manitoba passes law to offer victims of domestic violence leave from work", The Globe and Mail. Available at: <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-approves-bill-to-offer-victims-of-domestic-violence-leave-from-work/article29255554/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&>

<sup>4</sup> CSR Pulse, New Tendency in Corporate Social Responsibility", August 31, 2006, Vol.1. Available at : <http://files.caringcompany.org.hk/doc/magazine06vol1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> "Manual for Applying to Department of Labor for Balancing Life & Work Assistance", available at <https://wlb.mol.gov.tw/page/Grants/GrantApply.aspx>

training and assistance to its employees, and prohibits its employees from using corporate resources to commit DV.<sup>6</sup>

In mainland China, governmental and institutional recognition of DV as a social problem with ramifications in the workplace (and therefore relevant to employers) has been uneven. In 1991, DV was raised for the first time as a social issue in mainland China by *Women of China* (Xin Zhong, 2008), a national magazine about women's rights issues supervised by All-China Women's Federation (ACWF). However, it was during the World Conference on Women in 1995 that DV began to draw more attention. Before the 1995 conference, although there were provisions concerning the protection of women's equal rights in their private lives and the prohibition of discrimination, abuse, abandonment or infringement of women in the Constitution, Marriage Law, Criminal Law and the Law on Protection of Rights and Interest of Women, the concept of "domestic violence" was not adopted in such laws and regulations. Instead, DV was treated as a private family matter. After the World Conference on Women in 1995, when the issue of DV started to gain public and political attention, ACWF and grassroots women's organizations in China began the two-decade-long process of lobbying for the passage of a national DV law, and introduced intervention measures with perspectives of women's rights and human rights into China. In 2000, the Anti-Domestic Violence Network of China (later renamed as Beijing Fanbao), the first non-governmental organization specializing in DV-related research, intervention, and advocacy in China was founded. In 2001, the amended Marriage Law stipulated the need to "prohibit domestic violence" and DV officially became a legal term in China (Rainbow Anti-Gender-Based Violence Service Center for LGBTI People, 2017). Since 2004, many provincial and municipal governments (e.g., Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hainan Province, Changchun Municipality) have issued local laws and regulations that clearly hold employers accountable for educating and punishing perpetrators of DV.<sup>7</sup> Despite some

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to Bank of America, 2017, "Code of Conduct: Our foundation for success", available at <http://phx.corporate-ir.net/External.File?item=UGFyZW50SUQ9MzY0NjEwfnENoaWxkSUQ9LTF8VHlwZT0z&t=1&cb=636217371983919963>

<sup>7</sup> Gender in China, November 27, 2015. "Anti-DV: what are the responsibilities of employers". Available at <http://www.jtsos.com/huodong/534.html>

progress, such provisions have not been enforced effectively, and the importance of engaging employers has often been overlooked in anti-DV efforts. For instance, in 2010, a number of UN agencies partnered with Chinese governmental and non-governmental organizations to launch a pilot program called “Multi-Sectoral Collaboration to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence.”<sup>8</sup> Despite this multi-sectoral approach, employers were not included as important players in the collaborative network.

In recent years, activism and thought leadership in China have contributed to an increasingly explicit connection being made between employers and anti-DV efforts. In December 2015, Yuan Feng, a prominent women’s rights advocate in China published an article on *China Women’s News* that reviewed data from various countries and highlighted the importance of employers’ participation in anti-DV efforts.<sup>9</sup> In March 2016, the Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People’s Republic of China (DV Law) was enacted. This landmark legislation for the first time clearly stipulates that “anti-domestic violence” is the shared responsibility of the state, society, and individual families. The law identifies employers as one of several anti-DV players; and to some extent it specifies employer responsibilities.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the substantial progress that has been achieved in addressing DV in mainland China with the passage of the first-ever DV Law, relevant stakeholders in China tend to have low levels of awareness of the importance of engaging employers to combat DV. This is particularly true of employers themselves, despite the fact that employer action to help address DV is a burgeoning new dimension of CSR measures. One of the reasons for this lack

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<sup>8</sup> Please refer to “Multi-sectoral Collaboration to Prevent and Combat DV Work Manual (trial)” Page 23. This manual is a product of “Multi-Sectoral Collaboration to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence” program. This program was supported by the UN “Eliminating Violence against Women Fund”, coordinated by ACWF and UN Women, and implemented by seven domestic organizations together with four UN organizations since 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Yuan Feng, December 9, 2015. “Anti-DV: participation of employers is very important”, “China Women News”. Available at [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_67c528700102w8pb.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_67c528700102w8pb.html)

<sup>10</sup> Article 11 of the Anti-DV law states that if discovers that any employee involving in DV, employers shall take actions to criticize and educated relevant employee, and help resolve the conflicts; article 13 states that the DV victims, their legal representatives, immediate family members may resort to the employers of the perpetrators to complain or seek help. Upon the receipt of the complaints, and request of the DV victims, relevant employers shall provide them with assistance, and deal with the issue. Employees and individuals who witness a DV act shall intervene in a timely manner.

of awareness of the relevance of DV for employers may be a poor understanding of the ways that DV can adversely impact businesses. It is thus obvious that many challenges need to be addressed to translate laws and regulations into conscious behaviors and institutional change. One of the key needs here is to conduct scientific research to better understand relevant topics, including what the pathways and measurable impacts of DV are on employees and the workplace. The findings of this grounded research should be widely shared to help employers better understand why they need to participate in anti-DV efforts and how to effectively do so. By partnering with relevant stakeholders, and employers in particular, to increase awareness and commitment to act, it will also be possible to design an anti-DV approach that meets local needs and context.

## 1.2 Definition of Domestic Violence

DV is a global issue. With diverse cultural and historical contexts, definitions of DV may differ substantially across countries, laws, and institutions.

Individuals associated with DV can be family members affiliated either by consanguinity, marriage, and other legal relations, or cohabitating (homosexual or heterosexual) intimate partners, lovers who do not necessarily reside in the same residence, and separated former spouses/partners (Yinlan Xia, 2014). Acts of DV include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, and financial abuse, as well as stalking, harassing, and making threats. The definitions of DV can differ across and within countries. For instance, in Australia, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (2012) of Queensland defines the conduct of DV as including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse or any other threatening, coercive, or controlling behavior which causes the victim to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of someone else (The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015). In New South Wales, social abuse, acts that affect an individual's social interactions, social relationships, or social image—is also included as a legally recognized form of DV (Legal Aid NSW, 2017). In addition, the frequency of violence is typically not considered relevant to the definition of DV. In the United States, for example, it is believed that one violent act may cause permanent damage.

Therefore, repetition of a violent act is not a necessary condition for defining DV (Lizhen Zheng, 2013).

In China, the DV Law defines DV as the inflicting of physical, psychological or other harm by one family member on another by beating, binding, restraining or imposing forcible limits on personal freedom, recurring verbal insults, threats and other means. It also states that violence between non-family members who “live together” shall be dealt with by reference to this law. However, the law doesn’t clarify whether “non-family members who live together” includes homosexual partners who live in the same residence, heterosexual or homosexual lovers who do not necessarily live in the same residence, or former-spouses/partners. The law also does not clearly state whether or not some common and important types of violence, such as sexual and financial abuses, are legally considered as DV. These questions need to be further defined and studied by judicial interpretations, law implementation guidelines and judicial practices in the future.

For many years, UN organizations,<sup>11</sup> local law experts, and grassroots anti-DV organizations have called for broadening the legal definition of DV (Anti-Domestic Violence Network / Beijing Fanbao, 2012; Xiuhua Jiang et al., 2014; Anti-Domestic Violence Legislative Advocacy Task Force, 2015; Mingxia Chen, 2017; Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Center, 2017). In fact, various polls before and after the enactment of the DV Law suggested that Chinese citizens understand DV as a broader term than the definition given by law. According to an online survey conducted by the Anti-Domestic Violence Legislative Advocacy Task Force (2015), no significant difference was found in terms of prevalence of DV between unmarried/dating partners and between spouses, or between heterosexual partners and between homosexual partners.

A broader definition of DV has been adopted in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, which are culturally similar to mainland China but have more developed DV intervention systems. Taiwan (Lizhen Zheng, 2013), Hong Kong (Labour and Welfare Bureau, 2009; Social Welfare Department, 2011),

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<sup>11</sup> Please refer to Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, General Comments or Recommendations Adopted by United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Vol11IV, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Lund 1998), P1321.

and Macau (Social Work Department, 2016) have modified their relevant laws and regulations several times to gradually broaden the definition of DV to include a wider range of relationships and types of violent behaviors. Expanded definitions of DV in these regions commonly cover intimate homosexual relationships, non-cohabitating intimate relationships, ex-spouses/partners/lovers, and sexual violence and financial control. Anti-DV efforts in mainland China—particularly those undertaken by UN organizations, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and domestic women’s organizations—also adopt a broader definition of DV than the DV Law does.<sup>12</sup> Advocates have called for the adoption of internationally accepted interpretation of DV in the upcoming implementation guidelines that local governments are expected to develop to guide the DV Law’s enforcement in their respective jurisdictions.

### **1.3 Prevalence Rates and Characteristics of Domestic Violence**

There is some data available from national and regional surveys that give insights into the prevalence and characteristics of DV in China. The primary source of national data on DV was generated by the Survey on the Status of Chinese Women, conducted by ACWF. According to the most recent survey results, 24.7% of ever-married female respondents reported that they have suffered at least one form of DV by their husbands throughout their marriage; 5.5% reported that they have been beaten by their husbands (Taskforce for the Third Survey on the Status of Chinese Women, 2011). It is worth noting that this nationally representative prevalence rate is restricted to DV committed by husbands against their wives. Equally important is that DV prevalence rates could vary depending on the time scope used to define the prevalence rate. The prevalence rate in a respondents’ lifetime versus prevalence rate in the past 12 months usually differ.

Although a few studies report that the percentage of men who have experienced some forms of DV is similar to that of women overall (e.g., Chunhua Ma, 2013a), most studies around the world have shown that women

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<sup>12</sup> This broader definition is used by UN agencies in their pilot programs in partnership with Chinese government agencies and civil society organizations on building multi-stakeholder DV prevention and intervention systems.

are the most frequent victims (Lie Huang, 2002). Most violence suffered by women is committed by intimate partners or family members, while violence suffered by men occurs primarily outside of intimate relationships and the family (Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO, 2013; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016). In Taiwan, women are the most frequent victims of all forms of DV (Lizhen Zheng, 2013), accounting for 90.4% of DV victims while men account for 9.3%. Meanwhile, men account for 90.9% of abusers, and women account for 8.4% (Cuiwen Huan & Shujun Lin, 2013). Statistics on DV cases in Hong Kong in 2014 also revealed that the number of female victims was four times higher than that of male victims, while the number of male abusers was four times higher than that of female abusers (Hong Kong Women's Commission, 2015).

Previous studies in China also show that the majority of perpetrators of DV and IPV are men, and the majority of victims are women. Women are much more frequently subjected to physical violence from their spouses than men are (Chunhua Ma, 2013a). According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Population Fund and Partnership for Prevention in a Chinese county in 2013, 39% of female respondents reported that they have suffered physical or sexual violence by their partners, while 52% of male respondents admitted that they have physically or sexually abused their female partners (Xiangxian Wang, Gang Fang, & Hongtao Li, 2013).

Existing analysis of the driving forces of DV (especially IPV) in conjunction with the significant gender differences exhibited in DV statistics demonstrate that DV is the abuse of power and exertion of control to perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality, which typically privileges men and subordinates women.<sup>13</sup> The power and control in DV affects all aspects of life of those involved - victims in particular - including their work and career. DV's effects on the workplace and employers are inevitable, due to the high prevalence rate, the scope and extent of the damage caused, and the fact that much of the working-age population is or has been in an intimate relationship. Technological developments have allowed the perpetrator to significantly extend his/her control both temporally and spatially (Peiling Wang, 2012;

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<sup>13</sup> Similar statements can be found in various UN and government reports, and academic works, e.g., UN's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Most literature reviewed herein also reports similar results conclusions.

Shiyang Zheng, 2015), including but not limited to restraint or forcible limits on the victim's personal freedom, and financial control. Such control has consequences on employers, as it usually prohibits or restrains the victim's social interactions, including at work, and it can also prohibit or force the victim to go to work or deprive the victim of his/her income (Lizhen Zheng, 2013; & Legal Aid NSW, 2017).

## 1.4 Impact of Domestic Violence on Employers

Domestic violence (DV) can affect employers directly and indirectly. DV affects the employer directly when it occurs in the workplace or its periphery. DV does not occur in the home only; it can continue beyond the private space. The workplace, as a public space, is directly affected by DV. The effects of DV on the victim and the abuser can also extend to their employers even if abuse happens outside the workplace.

The most common forms of DV that occur in the workplace include harassing the victim by telephone, SMS, or email. Other common forms include harassing or assaulting the victim in or near his/her workplace, restraining the victim from going to work, disrupting the victim's work by excuses or threats, spreading rumors against the victim among his/her coworkers, and harassing the victim's coworkers and clients (Swanberg & Macke, 2006). According to a 2014 large-scale study on DV in the workplace conducted by the Canadian Labor Congress in Canada, 53.5% of victims reported that DV took place in their workplace or its periphery, and the common forms of DV that continued in their workplace were (1) making harassing phone calls or sending harassing SMS (40.6%); (2) stalking or harassing at the periphery of their workplace (20.5%); (3) physical assault against the victim in their workplace (18.2%); (4) sending harassing emails to the victim at work (15.6%); and (5) harassing the victim's coworkers or employer (14.5%) (C. Nadine et al., 2015).

Indirect impact of DV on employers is associated with its negative effects on victims' mental and physical health (Randall, 1990; Hoel et al., 2001).. In a 2012 national survey by the CDC in the United States, 73.4% of female victims and 35.7% of male victims of IPV reported that their physical and mental health had been adversely affected, including feeling unsafe, being

concerned about their safety, and developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms; compared with respondents who have never experienced IPV, victims are more likely to have symptoms such as asthma, frequent headaches, chronic pain, sleeping difficulty, and physical impairment (Smith et al., 2017). According to the Global Burden of Diseases report in 2012, 42% of female victims of DV worldwide were injured due to physical or sexual abuse by their spouses/intimate partners. Furthermore, female victims are twice as likely to have experienced depression, or have had miscarriages (Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO, 2013).

The mental stress and suffering caused by DV negatively impacts victims' professional lives and careers as well. For example, they tend to have low job satisfaction and experience self-isolation (Cooper et al., 1996; Brady, 1999; Hoel et al., 2001). Job stability and income often continue to suffer for years after the termination of an abusive relationship (Crowne et al., 2011; Adams et al., 2013). Ultimately, these consequences will impact a victim's employer through problems like higher absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher turnover (Cooper et al., 1996; Hoel et al., 2001). In Australia, 30% of respondents in a national DV and workplace survey reported that they have personally experienced DV (Ludo et al., 2011); among female victims of DV, two-thirds were employed, and 25-50% reported that DV was one of the reasons for losing their jobs (Queensland Government, 2016). In Canada, among the employed who have experienced DV, 81.9% indicated that DV has had negative impacts on their job performance. This was mainly due to poor concentration because of feeling nervous and/or receiving harassing phone calls and emails (66%); fatigue caused by sleeping difficulty (62.1%); mental or physical health problems (such as anxiety, depression, and headaches) (62%); and/or physical injuries (16%). Further illuminating the effects of DV on employee performance, DV victims reported that, due to DV they have had to take a leave from their job (39.5%) and/or have been late to or missed work (38%). Victims of DV also perceived an impact on their coworkers: 37.1% felt that their coworkers had been affected. More specifically, victims felt that: their coworkers felt stressed or concerned about the situation (28.9%); their coworkers' work was affected due to an increased workload and changed schedule (11.1%); DV caused conflicts and tension between them and their coworkers (9.6%); and/or their coworkers were harmed or threatened by the abuser (3.4%) (C. Nadine, 2015).

DV also affects abusers' job performances. A study on abusers suggested that the probability of male abusers' job performance being substantially impacted by the IPV they committed was nearly four times greater among those in the extreme abuse cluster than those in the low-level tactics cluster (Mankowski et al., 2013). The severity of an abuser's abusive tendency is positively correlated with his/her absenteeism and decrease in productivity (Rothman & Corso, 2008). Abusers may be late for work, miss their work, or take a leave as a result of committing violence (Distaff Associates, 1991; Laing and Bobic, 2002; Duvvury et al., 2012).

Furthermore, a series of studies on the economic costs of DV have been carried out since the 1990s. Such studies in the U.S., Australia, UK, Nicaragua, Chile, Uganda, Morocco, Vietnam, and Bangladesh estimated the costs of DV – especially IPV – in relation to GDP in these countries, ranged from US\$29.5 million to US\$37 billion per year, and accounted for up to 6.5% of national GDP (Duvvury et al., 2013). Many of these costs are borne by employers. Each year, DV costs Australian employers at least US\$175 million (Queensland Government, 2016); in Canada, this cost amounts to US\$77.9 million, while in the U.S., in addition to the loss of US\$730 million per year as a result of reduced productivity, employers have to pay about US\$4.1 billion total to victims for extra healthcare services (Soroptimist International of the Americas, 2010). Although data from different countries differ significantly due to the use of different statistical analyses and calculation methods, the data is consistent in showing that DV has significant aggregate costs for employers. Furthermore, these figures are likely substantially lower than the actual costs of DV. There is a high percentage of unreported DV cases, which makes it difficult to determine and measure all of the short- and long-term impacts of DV on employees (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016; Bafana et al., 2014).

DV therefore has both direct and indirect impacts on an employer, mainly in the form of reduced productivity; poor coworker relations and lowered team spirit; increased health, security, and administrative costs; higher safety, security, and legal risks. As a result of these impacts, the employer's reputation and business interest are compromised.

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## 1.5 Research Objectives

The Asia Foundation, a nonprofit international development organization dedicated to gender equality and social development, and SynTao Co., Ltd., a Chinese consultancy specializing in corporate social responsibility, jointly initiated this study called “Impact of Domestic Violence on Workplace in China.” The purpose of this study is to fill in gaps in the local evidence base around the effects of DV to employers in China. It is anticipated that data and findings from this study will be used to support the engagement of employers in combatting DV; to gain more attention from the government, employers and the public regarding the connection between DV and the workplace, and employers; and to identify context-specific approaches for employer engagement that meet local needs.

Until now, there has been no national data on the social and economic costs of DV in China (Yuan Feng, 2015), or studies on the impact of DV on employers in China. There was only one survey on absenteeism caused by DV (Tong Shi, 2009), which did not examine the other effects of DV on employers, nor did it estimate the economics costs of DV. However, given China’s high employment rate of women<sup>14</sup> it is likely that DV has caused huge losses to Chinese employers. Given the size of the Chinese economy, it is also reasonable to infer that the total economic costs of DV in China are significant.

Through the enactment of the DV Law in 2016, employers in China have been identified as key players in anti-DV efforts. They are now expected to take on legal responsibilities including: disciplining employees who commit DV (Article 11) and providing assistance to victims and their families (Article 13). Although most employers so far lack awareness of anti-DV actions and do not yet have a strong commitment to act, as has been the case in other countries around the world, both the government and society increasingly require employers to play a defined role in anti-DV efforts.

Moreover, employers’ engagement in anti-DV efforts have multi-faceted benefits for the empowerment of victims and employers themselves. For

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<sup>14</sup> Please refer to the white paper on “Gender Equality and Women’s Development in China” issued by the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China in September of 2015: [www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/tt/Document/1449714/1449714.htm](http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/tt/Document/1449714/1449714.htm)

vulnerable populations, various studies suggest that jobs and the economic and social security provided by jobs are vital factors in efforts to prevent DV from happening, minimize harm from DV, and assist victims in escaping from abusive relationships (Marilyn, 2009; Lizhen Zheng, 2013; C. Nadine, 2015 & 2016; Efty, 2016). In fact, losing a job or merely the concern about losing a job can push a victim back to an abusive relationship (Smith et al., 2002). For employers themselves, in order to mitigate their own costs and risks, and to fulfill CSR commitments as required by modern market competition, there is an incentive to lessen the adverse impacts of DV on productivity in their workplace, and help improve the health and well-being of their employees and their families. Multiple studies have shown that more than 75% of respondents believed that safety and welfare assistance provided by employers can help reduce the negative effects of DV on employee job performance (Canadian Labour Congress et al., 2014; Ludo et al., 2011). Meanwhile, financial expenditure required by DV interventions is much lower than the economic cost of DV itself (Waters, 2004). Taking into account other benefits—such as an improvement in employee identification with their employers, increases in incentives, and a better corporate image—DV intervention appears to be an investment with a good payoff in the long term.

Over the past few years, many countries and regions<sup>15</sup> have extensively explored the engagement of employers in anti-DV efforts, modified laws and regulations concerning workplace safety and employee well-being, explicitly outlined employer responsibilities and encouraged employer participation in anti-DV efforts. In addition, governments, NGOs and employers have worked together to develop effective and feasible workplace strategies to address DV. China can learn from such experiences and practices elsewhere. However, in order to develop practical workplace solutions that can meet local needs, it is necessary to generate China-specific baseline evidence regarding the effects of DV in the workplace and the costs to employers. Such research also needs to take into account local culture and other important contextual factors, especially the pervasive forms of DV experienced and support required by victims and survivors (Shabnam, 2016). This study aims to contribute to the generation of such local evidence in China.

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Australia, Canada, the US, the UK, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

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## Chapter 2. Research Design and Implementation

### 2.1 Basic concepts

As stated, the definition of domestic violence (DV) by China’s DV Law is relatively narrow, and does not reflect or align with the diverse forms of DV that exist, the public perceptions, or the definition used by practitioners in the field. This study employs a broadly recognized definition – referring to that adopted by the United Nations and in the laws of many countries/regions<sup>16</sup>, which defines DV as any violent behavior between family members. Family members include not only members of marital, blood relations, and any other family relations as defined by law, but heterosexual and homosexual intimate partners (both cohabitating and non-cohabitating), separated spouses, and former spouses or partners. Violent behaviors include physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuses, physical constraints, and economic control, as well as any other behaviors such as threatening, coercion, and stalking that could result in harm to the victim, or cause him or her fear. This definition shall encompass the definition given by China’s DV Law.

It is necessary to note that DV includes the abuse of children, the elderly, intimate partners and other family members. This study focuses on DV in intimate relations because the target groups of this study – working-age populations – were more likely to be directly affected by intimate partner violence (IPV) than other forms of DV. In this report, the two terms – DV and IPV – will be used interchangeably.

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<sup>16</sup> Such as Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

## 2.2 Research questions, methodology and respondents

To understand the impact of DV in the Chinese workplace and feasible workplace-actions against DV, the main research questions in this study are the following:

- (1) How prevalent is DV among employees? How does DV affect the workplace and other stakeholders? How do employees expect employers to react to DV?
- (2) How do employers understand DV and their responsibilities to address DV? What barriers prevent employers from acting against DV?
- (3) What economic costs do employers incur due to DV?
- (4) What actions are needed to encourage and convince employers in China to engage in anti-DV efforts?

To answer these questions, this study combined quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaire surveys – the *Survey of Employees on Domestic Violence Issues* and the *Survey of HR Managers on Domestic Violence Issues*; in-depth, semi-structured interviews with DV survivors and employer representatives; and a literature review. Descriptive analysis of data collected through the questionnaire surveys was conducted using SPSS22 (IBM); and text analysis was done to interpret the in-depth, semi-structured interview transcripts. The literature review collected and analyzed 73 pieces of relevant literature – primarily academic research, including 45 pieces in English and 28 in Chinese . The first two questions were addressed mainly through first-hand data collected through surveys and interviews. To answer the third question, the study established a model for estimation of direct costs of DV incurred by employers based on a synthesis of data collected through this study and literature on economic cost-analysis of DV in other countries. Findings from the primary data collection and the literature review informed the response to the fourth research question and the range of recommendations for actions to push forward employers’ engagement in efforts to address DV.

Primary respondents for the surveys and interviews were currently employed individuals and human resource (HR) managers. The *Survey of Employees on Domestic Violence Issues* was open to all employed individuals. Respondents to this survey included three groups: (1) general category respondents from various industries, job positions and locations across the country who responded to the web-based questionnaire survey; (2) factory-based category respondents randomly sampled from three manufacturing factories based in Guangdong Province – one of China’s manufacturing hubs; and (3) informal employment category, represented by domestic workers conveniently sampled in Beijing. The *Survey of HR Managers on Domestic Violence Issues* targeted primarily HR managers. HR managers are considered representatives of employers, given their work scope and knowledge of employee wellness, policies, and likelihood to coordinate anti-DV actions in a workplace. Sampling strategies of respondents are described in greater detail below.

The general category sampling targeted employees from across industries and geographic regions in China, and the research team acknowledges this non-probability sampling and web-based survey methods limited the samples’ representativeness. Due to their heightened vulnerability to DV, factory workers and the informally employed were included as two special target groups in this research. These two target groups comprise a significant portion of the working population in Chinese cities, and are mainly composed of migrant workers, most of whom are women. Compared to other working populations, factory workers and the informally employed are subject to more intense workloads; lack resources, proper labor protection, stable jobs, and housing; and usually have weak connections with the communities they live in. These factors increase vulnerability to DV, and make it more difficult for DV victims to seek help. Specifically, domestic workers were chosen as a representation of workers in the informal employment sector. Domestic work is an expanding job sector in China. Most domestic workers are female, from rural areas or are laid-off workers (from factories) in the city, with relatively

lower levels of educational attainment. Insecurity in jobs and lack of legal protections have increased their vulnerability to DV.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to examining worker experiences and perceptions of DV, this study also evaluates employers' understanding, willingness, and current practices regarding employer interventions to address DV. This was done through surveying and interviewing HR managers. The choice of HR managers as representatives of employers was based on the research team's consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the management, CSR and HR departments of different companies and HR service providers, during the research design process. This consultation suggested that HR managers have more comprehensive knowledge of employee-related issues, institutional motivations and concerns, and mostly likely will be the ones coordinating employer-led anti-DV actions, if any.

## 2.3 Surveys

Two surveys were developed for this study: the *Survey of Employees on Domestic Violence Issues (Employee Survey)* and the *Survey of HR Managers on Domestic Violence Issues (HR Manager Survey)*. The *Employee Survey* includes five sections: (1) demographic information about the respondent; (2) self-reported experience with DV; (3) impact of DV on the respondent's work; (4) the respondent's witnessing of DV against another person; and (5) knowledge, attitude and willingness to seek help for DV. The *HR Manager Survey* included four sections: (1) the respondent's personal information and the respective employer's basic information (such as the enterprises' nature of ownership, sector, location and size of employees); (2) knowledge about DV and the DV Law; (3) the employer's experience in dealing with DV incidents involving employees; and (4) attitude towards DV prevention and

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<sup>17</sup> See Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice Mission to China, June 2014, A/HRC/26/39/Add.2. Access: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session26/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

response actions. The two surveys were mainly conducted online, complemented by off-line surveys targeting respondents in factory-based employment and informal employment. Employees and employers were not matched, so they are not necessarily from the same organizations.

Sampling and survey dissemination strategies of the two surveys are detailed below.

### **General Category (Employees and Employers):**

The online distribution of the *Employee Survey* and the *HR Manager Survey* was carried out in the fall of 2016, reaching a nationwide audience. The questionnaires were hosted on a web-based survey platform and distributed through channels of multiple organizations including online media outlets, industry associations, and NGOs working on gender equality, gender-based violence and development issues. It is highly possible that the channels of distribution impacted the demography of the final respondents.

A total of 488 valid completed surveys from employees and 60 surveys from HR managers were collected online.

Considering that web-based surveys can only catch frequent Internet users and are likely to net responses from people with a wider range of jobs and employment status, the research team also conducted off-line, in-person surveys targeting factory workers and domestic workers.

### **Factory-based Category (Employees and Employers):**

Under this component, the research team partnered with The Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) to reach factory workers and employers. Sampling was conducted in three manufacturing factories where CCR CSR conducts other programs—referred to here as Factories A, B, and C—in Guangdong Province. The number of employees in all three factories is between 1,000 and 20,000 persons. Factory A contributed worker samples only; Factory B contributed HR manager samples

only; Factory C contributed both worker and HR manager samples. The research team conducted stratified random sampling of workers in Factory A and C, based upon gender, age groups, positions, and length of service of all workers in each factory. Sampled workers were divided into groups of 10 persons per group, and provided with iPads to fill out the self-administered survey. Before workers started the survey, the research team introduced the research background and instructions on administering the survey. Two researchers were also present to provide workers with assistance as requested in each group. The sampling of HR managers in Factory B and C was not random; instead, all HR managers were encouraged to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis.

A total of 170 valid completed surveys from factory workers and 33 surveys from HR managers were collected.

### **Informal Employment Category (Domestic Workers):**

Under this component, the research team partnered with Beijing Hongyan Social Work Center (Hongyan), a NGO providing services to domestic workers. The survey among domestic workers was conducted over four consecutive weekends at a community center in Chaoyang District, Beijing, where Hongyan is based. Most respondents were domestic workers in Chaoyang District, and some were from other districts who were attending training activities at the community center during their spare time. The printed questionnaire was self-administered by respondents, while the research team was present to provide assistance as requested.

A total of 48 valid surveys were completed by domestic workers identified through convenience sampling.

Given the unique definition of “employer” to this group of respondents and the difficulty to reach their employing families, the study did not conduct the *HR Manager Survey* for this category. The surveys and in-depth interviews (detailed in the next section) demonstrate that domestic workers in general

consider their “employer” to be the family or the person who employs them, rather than the domestic worker agency that places the workers in a specific household, while “coworker” refers to other domestic workers they know, who are not necessarily from the same domestic worker agency or who work in the same household. “Career advancement” usually refers to obtaining a certain professional certificate or wage increase.

**Table 1: Summary of Survey Process**

Survey of Employees on Domestic Violence Issues	Survey of HR Managers on Domestic Violence Issues
<p><b>Survey targets:</b> General category respondents</p> <p><b>Web-based Survey Distribution channels:</b> Mobile app Jiemian, China Development Brief, RNW’s public WeChat account “LoveMatters”, Syntao public WeChat account, Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Center public WeChat account and personal WeChat accounts</p> <p><b>Distribution time:</b> Nov. 17 – Dec.19, 2016</p> <p><b>Valid responses collected:</b> 488 (female: 388; male: 98; transgender: 2)</p>	<p><b>Survey targets:</b> General category respondents</p> <p><b>Web-based Survey Distribution channels:</b> China Chain Store and Franchise Association, China Development Brief, RNW’s public WeChat account “LoveMatters”, Syntao public WeChat account, Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Center public WeChat account, “Feminist Voices” Weibo account and personal WeChat accounts</p> <p><b>Distribution time:</b> Nov. 17 – Dec. 19, 2016</p> <p><b>Valid responses collected:</b> 60 (Female: 44; Male: 16 )</p>

<p><b>Survey targets:</b> Factory-based category respondents</p> <p><b>iPad-based Survey Distribution channels:</b> Factories A and C in Guangdong Province, stratified random sampling, iPad-based self-administered survey</p> <p><b>Distribution time:</b> Nov. 17 – 20, 2016</p> <p><b>Valid responses collected:</b> 170 (female: 135; male: 35)</p>	<p><b>Survey targets:</b> Factory-based category respondents</p> <p><b>Web-based Survey Distribution channels:</b> Factories B and C in Guangdong Province, voluntary, self-administered online survey</p> <p><b>Distribution time:</b> Nov. 17 – 20, 2016</p> <p><b>Valid responses collected:</b> 33 (female 23; male 10)</p>
<p><b>Survey targets:</b> Informal employment category respondents (domestic workers)</p> <p><b>Off-line Distribution channels:</b> A community center in Chaoyang District, Beijing, convenience sampling, printed survey</p> <p><b>Distribution time:</b> Dec. 1 – 20, 2016</p> <p><b>Valid responses collected:</b> 48 (female: 48)</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>Total valid responses collected:</b> 706 (female: 571; male: 133; transgender: 2)</p>	<p><b>Total valid responses collected:</b> 93 (female 67; male 26)</p>

## 2.4 In-depth interviews

In addition to surveys, data was also collected via individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews with DV survivors and employer representatives. In total, 15 interviews were conducted: eight with DV survivors, and seven with employer representatives.

The purpose of these interviews was to supplement and expand upon the survey findings with deeper probing into the experiences, understandings, and expectations of survivors regarding DV, their careers, their workplace, and

their employers (current and former). These interviews enabled the development of illuminating case studies and allowed the research team to identify patterns across the respondents' individual experiences and reflections. This led to a fuller understanding of how DV affects a survivor's work and workplace.

Interviews with employer representatives were aimed at understanding how employers understand DV, the impact of DV in the workplace from an employer's perspective, and employers' experience with and willingness to prevent and respond to DV.

### **In-depth interviews with DV survivors:**

The research team conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with eight employed or formerly employed DV survivors in February 2017. Sampling for these interviews targeted DV survivors with employment experience. For safety and other ethical concerns, only survivors who had left an abusive relationship were invited to the interviews. The sampling sought to represent different genders, age groups, locations of residence, job sectors, and types of employers. All eight respondents were recommended and screened by professional DV service providers, and the interviews were carried out by specialized social workers or gender specialists who work directly with the respective survivors. The existing trust between them and the survivors facilitated a safer interview environment, and their professional expertise prepared them to provide follow-up counseling services to the interviewees if necessary.

Although the research team did not set any *a priori* restrictions on the gender of the respondents, the eight respondents selected were all female. The research team sought to include male or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) survivors of DV but failed to identify or recruit a respondent from other groups. (See Section 2.6 for a discussion of why this was likely the case.)

Seven interviews were conducted in-person, and one was conducted by telephone as requested by the interviewee. The eight interviewees came from five different provinces (or autonomous municipalities) of China (represented in Figure 1), and represented different age groups, occupations, and partner statuses (represented in Table 2, with additional information available in Table 5). See Table 3 for a brief description of the profession and history of abuse of each respondent.

**Figure 1: Regional Distribution of DV Survivor Respondents**



**Table 2: Summary of Background of Survivors Interviewed**

Age	40 or below	4 respondents
	41-50	2 respondents
	51 or Above	2 respondents
Household Registration	Rural	4 respondents
	Urban	4 respondents
Relationship with the Abuser	Divorced	6 respondents
	Separate	1 respondent
	Married	1 respondent
Type of Employer	Government or other public sectors	3 respondents
	Enterprise (state-owned or private)	3 respondents
	Migrant workers	2 respondents
Risk of being Abused	Yes	3 respondents <sup>18</sup>
	No	5 respondents

<sup>18</sup> Interviews with these three survivors were performed despite that risks for them to be abused again remained, because such risks were not immediate and the interviewees felt positive about speaking out their experiences. Rigid safety measures were undertaken to ensure the interviews lead to no increase in risks for these survivors.

**Table 3: Brief Description of the Eight Survivors Interviewed**

Survivor A	Survivor A is an engineer in a large state-owned enterprise. She was abused by her ex-husband for about 20 years.
Survivor B	Survivor B is a civil servant. Her husband started to abuse her not long after they got married.
Survivor C	Survivor C worked at a bank. After getting divorced due to domestic violence, her ex-husband continued to harass and threaten her.
Survivor D	Survivor D lives in a rural area. After being abused for 14 years by her husband, she escaped to other cities for work to avoid being abused.
Survivor E	Survivor E is an elementary teacher in rural area, and was nearly beaten to death by her husband.
Survivor F	Survivor F is a medical practitioner, and was abused by her husband for six years.
Survivor G	Survivor G is an employee of a state-owned enterprise and was abused for 29 years by her husband before divorcing him.
Survivor H	Survivor H is a domestic worker and was abused for 12 years by her husband before divorcing him.

**In-depth interviews with employer representatives:**

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven employer representatives were conducted in February 2017. Researchers targeted managers who have or have had long-term service in HR or other management positions, and sought to represent different industries, type of employers, and number of employees. The research team reached out to potential respondents through existing networks of The Asia Foundation, SynTao and other liaison organizations. All seven respondents selected had long-term experience in management positions. This allowed them to have relatively better knowledge of the experience of DV among employees and the employers' investment in DV prevention and response. The managers interviewed represented different

genders, positions, and different sizes and types of organizations<sup>19</sup> with different policies regarding DV (see Table 4).

The seven in-depth interviews included four in-person interviews, two telephone interviews, and one email interview.

**Table 4: Summary of In-depth Interviews with Employer Representatives**

Gender	Male	4 respondents
	Female	3 respondents
Position	CEO/Factory Manager	2 respondents
	CSR Manager	2 respondents
	HR Manager	1 respondent
	Administration Manager	1 respondent
	Internal Trainer	1 respondent
Ownership type of the organization	State-owned enterprise	1 respondent
	Private enterprise	2 respondents
	Foreign enterprise	2 respondents
	Enterprise owned by investors from Hong Kong	1 respondent
	Joint enterprise	1 respondent
Number of employees	100 or below	1 respondent
	101-300	1 respondent
	301-1000	1 respondent
	1000 or above	4 respondents
Prior experience assisting abused employees	Yes (informal methods)	5 respondents
	No	2 respondents
Prior experience punishing employees who committed DV	Yes (informal methods)	3 respondents
	No	4 respondents
Existing mechanism/measures against DV	Yes	1 respondent
	No	5 respondents
	I don't know	1 respondent
Internal department that should/is likely to lead actions against DV	HR	5 respondents
	Administration	1 respondent
	CSR	1 respondent

<sup>19</sup> The research team was not able to identify interviewees from the government sector.

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## 2.5 Ethical issues

Strict principles and operational guidelines on research ethics were followed in the collection, analysis, and use of data throughout this study. These principles and guidelines were developed by experts of The Asia Foundation, who took reference from internationally accepted ethical requirements for gender-based violence research and adapted them to the Chinese context. The principles and guidelines were reviewed and approved by a number of Chinese experts on gender/gender-based violence research, statisticians, and representatives from survivor service agencies.

**Voluntary and Anonymous Principle.** Survey data collection followed the principle of being voluntary and anonymous. Before the respondent started to answer questions on the online and iPad-based surveys, they were required to read the purpose of the study and the terms of voluntary participation and privacy protection. In all off-line, in-person surveys, there were members from the research team who read and explained the terms to the respondents.

**Do no harm.** Data collection also sought to do no harm and to provide additional support to DV survivors. As a way to avoid secondary harm to survivors—as the process of filling out the survey may remind them of the abuses they have suffered—and to help them obtain professional help if desired, a list of DV counseling hotlines (see Annex I) was provided at the end of the *Employee Survey* along with a note encouraging those in need or with concerns to seek advice from professional service providers or professional counselors. Additionally, the *Employee Survey* also included a self-testing questionnaire to detect crisis in intimate relationships (see Annex III). This questionnaire is not a professional DV evaluation tool but is used to raise awareness of signs of DV among all respondents, including those who did not report self-experienced DV in the survey.

The survey of factory workers was conducted during working hours, and the time spent on completing the survey was paid by their employers at their hourly wage rates.

**Follow stringent ethical and safety guidelines.** Data collection in in-depth survivor interviews followed stringent ethical guidelines. Interviewees were selected by the following process: (1) Specialized service organizations recommended a candidate to be interviewed; (2) A risk assessment was conducted by the interviewer of the candidate’s participation in the interview; (3) The candidate was contacted and informed of the background of the study and the purpose of the interview, and asked about his/her willingness to participate; (4) Interviewer assigned and the respective service organization worked with the interviewee to determine a safe time and venue for the interview. In particular, the risk assessment was to evaluate whether the interview would subject the interviewee to more psychological trauma or threats to their personal safety. It is worth noting that separation or divorce from the abuser does not necessarily exempt the interviewee from the threat of DV.

One interview was conducted over the phone by an experienced gender specialist, while all others were conducted by professional social workers or other professionals who were trained specifically for this interview, at the service providers’ offices or another safe venue.

All interviewers received training on ethical guidelines before conducting interviews to minimize any negative impact on the interviewees. All researchers who might have access to survivor interview case files signed a confidentiality agreement.

**Informed consent.** At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer explained the background of the research and the topics of the interview, reiterate the principles of voluntary participation and privacy protection, and clearly informed the interviewee that they had the right to suspend or terminate the interview at any time. After responding to all questions, the interviewee may have had regarding the topics, procedures, and privacy protection policies, the interviewer will ask again about his/her willingness to participate and then obtained written or verbal consent. A Consent Letter

specified that the interviewee had the right to notify the research team within seven days to withdraw the authorization to use the interview data. Contact information for the research team was also included in the Consent Letter.

After each interview, the interviewer provided the respondent with a list of the contact information for free counseling hotlines, along with a pre-paid phone card, and encouraged the respondent to call for counseling.

**Privacy and consent.** Data in this study is used under the condition of protecting participants' privacy and with participants' consent; it will never be used for commercial purposes. All respondents were informed of the time when this research was planned to be completed and that the research team would share the final report with them if they were interested in reading it.

## 2.6 Limitations and gaps

This study is an exploratory research project. There is no existing literature on how DV affects the workplace and employers in China, nor any national study on China's DV prevalence rate. Although such studies do exist in other countries, their research methods are not necessarily feasible in China. As a result, the research team faced many challenges when drawing on international experiences to develop research tools. For example, because it is not possible to obtain personnel management data (e.g. attendance and key performance indicator records of employees) from employers in China, the study can only estimate DV's impact on the workplace and employers by the subjective perceptions of employees/victims and HR managers.

In addition, lacking a research partner with a national network that could reach enterprises in different industries and limited by financial resources, the study was unable to randomly select a nationally representative sample of industries and regions. The sample size was also small. Therefore, the findings here do not reflect the situation of the country as a whole, which would require further investigation and verification.

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It was also a challenge to recruit male or LGBTI respondents in the in-depth interviews. The main reasons may be ascribed to the fact that male survivors of DV seldom seek help, while LGBTI survivors are especially concerned about their privacy and discrimination and therefore may refuse to self-identify. To fill in the gap in knowledge of LGBTI survivors, the research team was able to interview a pro bono lawyer who provided counseling services to LGBTI survivors of IPV.

Although assistance was provided during the off-line surveys, some industrial workers and informal sector workers still reported that they had difficulty understanding the questions, which might have undermined data reliability.

## Chapter 3. Employees: Domestic Violence Prevalence and Impacts on Employees

To gain a deeper understanding of employee experiences with DV, its effects on their work and on their workplace, and how they understand employer responsibilities around DV, this study surveyed 706 employees.

### 3.1 Respondents’ Demographic Profile and Employment Status

Table 5 below provides a more in-depth look at the demographic profile and employment status—including gender ratio, average age, educational attainment, and average income—of the three categories of employee respondents: the general category, the factory-based category, and the informal employment (domestic worker) category.

**Table 5: Employee Demographic Profile and Employment Status**

	<b>General Category % (N=488)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=48)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=170)</b>
Average age	32 years old; (range: 18-63)	44 years old; (range: 31-56)	22 years old; (range: 19-53)
Gender	Female: 79.5 Male: 20.1 Other: 4	Female: 100 Male: 0	Female: 79.4 Male: 20.6
Educational attainment	Junior high or below: 0.82 High school: 4.71 3-year college: University with bachelor’s degree: 44.5 Post-graduate:40.8	Junior high or below: 52.1 High school: 41.7	Junior high or below: 85.3 High school: 13.5
Hukou status	Urban: 85.7 Rural: 14.3	Urban: 29.2 Rural: 70.8	Urban: 7.1 Rural: 92.9

Own properties/ assets under their own names	48.6	37.5	15.3
Marital status	Married: 49.0 Unmarried single: 31.6 Unmarried, dating with a stable partner: 10.3 Unmarried, living with a stable partner: 5.3 Divorced: 3.5 Widowed: 0.4	Married: 77.1 Divorced: 12.5 Unmarried single: 6.3 Unmarried, dating with a stable partner: 2.1 Unmarried, living with a stable partner: 2.1	Married: 88.2 Unmarried single: 6.5 Unmarried, dating with a stable partner: 1.8 Divorced: 1.8 Unmarried, living with a stable partner: 1.2 Widow: 0.6
Children	No child: 62.3 One child: 31.8 Two children: 5.5 Three children or more: 0.4	One child: 52.1 Two children: 43.8 Three children or more: 4.2	Two children: 47.7 One child: 21.2 Three or more children: 20 No child: 11.2
Average annual household income	RMB 202,776 (USD 30,426) <sup>20</sup>	RMB 49,128 (USD 7,371)	RMB 48,586 (USD 7,252)
Average annual income of individuals	RMB 90,050 (USD 13,511)	RMB 26,635 (USD 3,993)	RMB 28,810 (USD 4,300)
Employment status	Full-time: 79.3 Part-time: 4.9 Unemployed: 3.3 Housewife/househusband: 2.5 Freelance: 6.2 Other: 3.9	Full-time: 97.9 Other: 2.1	Full-time: 90.6 Part-time: 4.7 Freelance: 4.1 Other: 0.6
Location of workplace	Covering 27 provinces/ autonomous municipalities, including 42.2% from Beijing	Beijing: 100	Guangdong: 100

<sup>20</sup> As of 25 August, 2017.

Industry	Distributed from high to low percentage: education; culture, sports, & entertainment; health, social security, and social well-being; information & computer software; finance; manufacturing; and other industries.	Others: 100	Manufacturing: 100
Level of job position	General staff: 57.2 Middle management: 28.4 Senior management & higher: 14.8	General staff: 97.9 Middle management: 2.1	General staff: 97.1 Middle management: 2.4 Senior management & higher: 0.6
Overtime	Occasionally: 35.2 Frequently: 20.0 Fixed working hours: 24.1 Flexible working hours: 20.7	Occasionally: 45.8 Fixed working hours: 35.4 Flexible working hours: 14.6 Frequently: 4.2	Frequently: 72.4 Occasionally: 19.4 Fixed working hours: 6.5 Flexible working hours: 1.8
Frequency of business travel required	Almost no travel: 48.7 Travel occasionally: 43.0 Travel frequently: 8.3	Almost no travel: 100	Almost no travel: 95.3 Travel occasionally: 4.1 Travel frequently: 0.6

The three sample categories exhibit some significant demographic differences. Due to sampling, targeting, and survey strategies, domestic worker respondents and factory worker respondents are concentrated in a specific industry or region, while the web-based survey participants are distributed in various industries and across the country. The general-category respondents are distinguished from the other two groups in the following way: most of these respondents are from urban areas and hold a university or college education (or higher). This category demonstrates the lowest marriage rate among the three subgroups, and many do not have a child. Moreover, their average annual household income and average annual individual income are both about three times higher than those of domestic worker respondents and of factory worker respondents. Additionally, factory worker respondents

demonstrate the highest rate of having a rural *Hukou* (household registration), highest frequency of working overtime, and lowest level of educational attainment and property ownership. In addition, though they represent the youngest age group, the majority of factory worker respondents are married and tend to have more children, compared to the other two categories.

Approximately 80% of both the general-category respondents and factory worker respondents are women, while 100% of domestic worker respondents are women given the absolute female-dominant nature of the domestic work sector.

Another common feature is the relatively low level of property ownership. The proportion of respondents who own property or real estate is quite low across all three sample categories. Even among the general-category respondents, who represent the highest level of educational attainment and income, less than 50% of respondents own property. The low level of property ownership could be associated with the fact that the majority of respondents are women. According to the third Survey on Chinese Women's Social Status (2011), the proportion of married and unmarried women who own property (under their own names) is significantly lower than married and unmarried men who own property.

### **3.2 Prevalence Rate of Domestic Violence in the Past 12 Months**

Table 6 below gives further details on survey respondents' recent self-reported experiences (in the past 12 months) with DV. The *lifetime DV prevalence rate* is the proportion of respondents who have suffered DV at any point during their lifetime, while the *12-month prevalence rate* is the proportion of respondents who have suffered DV during the past twelve months. This study measured the 12-month prevalence rate rather than lifetime prevalence of DV, considering that recent DV instances are more likely to be associated with the calculation of economic costs to employers. But it is important to acknowledge that the costs of DV to survivors and employees may last long after abuse occurs.

**Table 6: The Prevalence Rate of DV in the Past 12 Months Among Respondents**

	<b>General Category % (N=488)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=48)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=170)</b>
<i><b>In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following forms of abuses? (check all answers that apply)</b></i>			
Beating, binding	4.3	12.5	0.6
Frequent verbal insults	5.9	8.3	0.6
Long-term neglect	8.0	10.4	0.6
Threatening	3.3	2.1	0
Restraint or forcible limits on personal freedom	2.3	4.2	0.6
Forced sex or sexual insults against one's will	1.2	0	0
Financial control	2.5	2.1	0.6
Not being allowed to be with children	1.0	2.1	0
One or more forms of the abuse above	13.3 (65 persons)	20.8 (10 persons)	2.4 (4 persons)
<i><b>Have you ever witnessed any acquaintances experiencing the following forms of abuses by their intimate partners (spouse/cohabiting partner/date)? (check all answers that apply)</b></i>			
Beating, binding	29.7	29.2	1.2
Frequent verbal insults	31.1	31.3	2.9
Long-term neglect	30.7	10.4	2.4

Threatening	18	10.4	0
Restraint or forcible limits on personal freedom	14.3	14.6	2.4
Forced sex or sexual humiliation against one's will	17	4.2	1.8
Not being allowed to be with children	12.1	14.6	0.6
One or more forms of the abuse above	56.4 (275 persons)	56.3 (27 persons)	8.8 (15 persons)
<b><i>Who did this to you?</i></b>			
Husband/wife	56.9	40	25
Cohabiting partner, date	13.8	0	50
Ex-spouse/partner	9.2	0	0
Others	20	60	25

The 12-month prevalence rates among the three sample categories vary significantly. Domestic worker respondents reported the highest prevalence rate (20.8%), followed by the general-category respondents (13.3%), while factory worker respondents reported an exceptionally low prevalence rate (2.4%).

The 12-month prevalence rate among the general-category respondents was used in the calculation of economic costs of DV to employers (under Chapter 4), as this sample category covers a variety of industries, job sectors and geographic regions. However, this prevalence rate shall not be generalized to represent the prevalence of DV among the general population in China, given the limitations in the samples discussed above. Specifically, the demographics of this sample category differ from the population at large in terms of gender ratio, educational attainment, and income. When looking into the correlations between different indicators and the specific forms of DV, the research team found that (1) Female victims reported experiencing of all

forms of DV listed at higher rates than male victims, except for financial control; (2) Educational attainment and employment status are two important indicators inversely correlated with the experience of DV in the past 12 months; and (3) The number of children and individual income level are also correlated to some extent with experiencing certain forms of DV in the past 12 months.

Findings from the factory-based and informal employment categories of respondents were both excluded from the cost analysis due to significant bias and/or lack of clarity in the data, although they are still valuable for understanding DV in the contexts relevant to these two populations.

Analysis of abusers found that for the general category and the factory-based category, most abusers were husbands/wives, cohabitating partners, and ex-spouses/partners. In contrast, 60% of victims among domestic worker respondents reported their abusers to be individuals other than husbands/wives, cohabitating partners, and ex-spouses/partners. A contextual enquiry with the social work organization working with domestic workers suggested that some domestic workers consider abuses they experienced from the person or family employing them as domestic violence, too. Based on existing research of relations between domestic workers and their employers, it is reasonable to presume that some of the “other” abusers in this survey are the hiring persons or families. This is possible especially because China’s DV Law is applicable to non-family members who live together. Further research is needed to explore the parameters of DV experienced by this particular population.

### **3.3 Experiences of Domestic Violence in the Workplace**

Table 7 gives greater detail on self-reported survivors’ experiences with DV in or related to the workplace. Table 8 shows the proportion of respondents’ that witnessed DV suffered by their acquaintances that continue into the victims’ workplace.

**Table 7: Survivors' experiences with DV in or related to the workplace**

<b>Experience of DV in the workplace among survivors</b>	<b>General Category % (N=65)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=10)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=4)</b>
<b><i>Have you experienced the following forms of abuses by an intimate partner in your workplace? (check all answers that apply)</i></b>			
Beating, binding	13.8	20	0
Frequent verbal insults	20	30	0
Threatening	15.4	20	25
Stalking and harassing in my workplace & its periphery	7.7	20	0
Harassing telephone, message, wechat, or email	30.8	40	0
Happened in the workplace in some form(s)	46.2	60	50
<b><i>Has the perpetrator done the following to your coworkers (or clients)? (check all answers that apply)</i></b>			
Harass by telephone, message, wechat, or email	7.7	20	0
Make verbal threats	6.2	10	25
Assault physically	0	10	0
Spread rumors to slander my coworkers or clients	6.2	0	0
Trace or follow my coworkers or clients	1.5	0	0
Harass my coworkers or clients in some form(s)	21.5	10	25

**Table 8: Witness of Domestic Violence that Occurred in the Workplace**

<b>Witness of DV against others in the workplace among respondents who are not self-reported victims</b>	<b>General Category % (N=275)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=27)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=15)</b>
<i>Have you ever seen victims among your acquaintances who experienced the following performed by their intimate partners? (check all answers that apply)</i>			
Stalk and harass the victim in the workplace and its periphery	20	11.1	6.7
Beating or binding of the victim in the workplace	11.6	14.8	13.3
Verbally insult in the workplace	21.5	18.5	13.3
Make threats in the workplace	16.7	14.8	6.7
Frequently complain about the victim's work	30.5	11.1	6.7
Harass via telephone, message, wechat, or email	37.8	14.8	13.3
Harass the victim's coworkers or clients via telephone, message, wechat, or email	13.8	3.7	6.7
Make verbal threats to the victim's coworkers or clients	11.3	3.7	6.7
Physically assault the victim's coworkers or clients	8.7	11.1	0
Spread rumors to slander the victim's coworkers or clients	14.2	7.4	0
Witnessed at least one of the above	65.8	37	46.7

Despite the common perception of DV as a private matter, in reality, DV often continues into the workplace. Among survivors in the general sample category, 46.2% reported that the abuser continued to abuse them in various

forms in their workplace. This figure was even higher among domestic worker respondents (60%) and factory worker respondents (50%). Moreover, among general-category respondents who reported having witnessed DV, 65.8% indicate that such DV incidents also took place in the victims' workplace.

Analysis of survivors in the general category shows that DV enters into the workplace mainly via technology-based communication means (e.g., telephone, emails, social media) (30.8%), followed by physical presence of the perpetrator in the victim's workplace or its periphery (7.7%). In each case, the percentage of victims suffering physical or non-physical violence by an intimate partner in their workplace was not low. About 21.5% of self-identified perpetrators have committed at least one form of violence against the victims' co-workers or clients, including harassing, threatening, spreading rumors and stalking.

### 3.4 Impact of Domestic Violence on Employees' Job Performance

Table 9 examines the impact of DV on job performance and prospects for career advancement reported by survivors, as well as its effects on the survivors' coworkers.

**Table 9: Impacts of DV on Employees' Job Performance**

Perception of negative impacts of DV on job performance by all respondents	General Category % (N=488)	Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=48)	Factory-based Category % (N=170)
Very Large impact	82.2	68.8	63.5
Relatively large impact	13.1	14.6	10.6
Some impact	3.0	10.4	5.3

Small impact	1.0	2.1	4.1
No impact	0.6	4.2	16.5

Experience of negative impacts among survivors	General Category % (N=65)	Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=10)	Factory-based Category % (N=4)
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*After experiencing the above-mentioned abuse, do (did) you have the following symptoms? (check all answers that apply)*

Cannot focus	58.5	40	25
Lack of sleep, feel tired	69.2	40	75
Feel discomfort, such as palpitations and headaches	41.5	50	25
Have been diagnosed with psychiatric diseases (e.g., depression)	13.8	10	0
Have been diagnosed with internal or external injuries	12.3	40	0

*In the past 12 months, number of times arrived late and left early; number of days on unauthorized absence; and number of days on authorized leave*

Number of times arrived late and left early in past 12 months	On average, 5.45 (N=20 persons) times/person	On average, 3 times/person	On average, 2 times/person
Number of days on unauthorized absence in past 12 months	On average, 15.15 times/person (N=13 persons)	On average, 3 times/person	On average, 2 times/person
Number of days on authorized leave in past 12 months	On average, 10.75 times/person	On average, 3 times/person	On average, 3 times/person

	(N=16 persons)		
<b><i>Do you think DV may have any negative impacts on your promotion?</i></b>			
Yes	70.8 (46 persons)	70 (7 persons)	50 (2 persons)
Don't know	15.4	10 (1 person)	0

<b>Reasons given by survivors who consider their job promotion to be affected by DV</b>	<b>General Category % (N=46)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=7)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=2)</b>
<b><i>Why might DV affect your promotion?</i></b>			
Cannot focus on the duty	80.4	71.4	50
Result in bad records (e.g., arrive late, unauthorized absence, etc.)	32.6	28.6	50
Cannot travel or work overtime	28.3	0	0
Have to apply for a transfer	10.9	0	0
Have to change a job	23.9	57.1	0
Leave a negative impression on my coworkers and supervisors	34.8	42.9	0

<b>Among respondents who are not self-reported victims</b>	<b>General Category % (N=275)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=27)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=15)</b>
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**Did you witness anyone ... as a result of DV?**

Unable to go to work	29.8	37	26.7
Arrive late for work/leave early from work	24	18.5	26.7
Take an unauthorized leave (unauthorized absence)	17.8	14.8	13.3
Take a leave	35.3	18.5	40
Apply for a transfer	11.6	0	6.7
Resign	20.4	11.1	26.7
Be fired by the employer	6.2	3.7	0
Witnessed one or some above-mentioned situations	56	40.5	73.3

Among all respondents from the general category, the overwhelming majority (82.2%) consider DV to have large impacts on job performance, and an additional 13.1% think that the impacts are relatively large. Respondents were also clear that DV, even when it occurs in non-workplace settings, has direct impacts on the workplace and employee performance. Survivors reported experiencing negative impacts on their physical and mental health that ultimately undermined and compromised their job performance: 69.2% reported experiencing a lack of sleep and fatigue, 58.5% felt discomfort, 41.5% had headaches or palpitations, more than 10% had been diagnosed with psychiatric conditions, and more than 10% had internal or external injuries as a result of DV. Furthermore, to deal with the physical, mental, and emotional and other issues caused by DV, 44.6% of survivors had to miss working hours or work days in the past twelve months: 30.8% had to arrive late for work and/or leave early from work (on average, 5.45 times per person); 20% had to be absent from duty without the employer's authorization (on average 15.15 days per person); and 24.6% had taken authorized leave (on average 10.75 days per person).

General-category respondents who have witnessed DV also reported that DV usually had a noticeable impact on the workplace and employee performance. 56% of these respondents reported that, in cases where they witnessed DV, the DV victim's work performance was affected. Specifically, 35.3% report that the victim had to take a leave; 29.8% report that the victim could not go to work; 24% reported that the victim frequently had to arrive late to work and/or leave early; 20.4% reported that the victim resigned from his/her work; 17.8% reported that the victim had been on unauthorized absence from duty; 11.6% reported that the victim applied for a transfer; and 6.2% reported that the victim was fired.

Respondents report that these adverse impacts on job performance also had effects on DV victims' career/job advancement, with 70.8% of survivors reporting that DV had affected their promotion and advancement. The reasons included (ranking from the most commonly cited to the least): (1) difficulty to focus on work (80.4%); (2) negative impression on coworkers and supervisors (34.8%); (3) bad attendance records (32.6%) (e.g., arrive-late/leave-early, unauthorized absence, etc.); (4) inability to work overtime or travel (28.3%); (5) changing jobs (23.9%); and (6) requesting a transfer or relocation (10.9%).

Altogether, these results clearly demonstrate how DV can compromise survivors' work performance, reduce job stability, cause damage to a survivor's reputation and result in negative job reviews. Consequently, DV can undermine the survivors' career development.

The study was unable to learn from the employers' perspective and practice, whether DV affected coworkers/supervisors' impression of a victim or the victim's performance. However, it is important to be aware that such concerns by the victims were common, and could hinder victims' willingness to access help from employers and the effectiveness of workplace response.

### **3.5 Employees Seeking Help for Domestic Violence**

Table 10 depicts the survey findings related to employee experiences, expectations, and concerns in seeking help from their employers and other stakeholders when dealing with DV.

**Table 10: Employees Experiences, Expectations, and Concerns in Seeking Help for Domestic Violence**

<b>Among all survivors</b>	<b>General Category % (N=65)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=10)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=4)</b>
<b><i>Did you ever disclose your DV experience to your coworker(s) or supervisor? (check all answers that apply)</i></b>			
Disclosed to trustworthy coworker(s)	18.5	40	50
Disclosed to the supervisor	7.7	30	25
Disclosed to both coworker(s) & supervisor	26.2	20	0
Did not disclose	47.7	10	25
<b><i>What support do you expect to be provided by your employer? (check all answers that apply)</i></b>			
Permit a leave	24.6	30	75
Permit a transfer	10.8	10	0
Strengthen security measures in the workplace	20	20	0
Change the methods used to pay salary and wage	13.8	20	50
Provide psychological counseling and useful information	29.2	20	0
Help contact relevant authorities	18.5	30	0
Don't know what support the employer can provide	41.5	20	0
Perpetrators' employers should intervene	32.3	30	0

Among survivors who did NOT disclose	General Category % (N=31)	Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=1)	Factory-based Category % (N=1)
<i>What is the most important reason for you not to disclose your DV experience to your coworkers and supervisor?</i>			
Do not want to lose face or be ridiculed	19.4	0	0
Protect my privacy	74.2	100	0
For fear of losing my job or hurting my promotion prospect	0	0	0
Other	6.5	0	100

Among survivors who did disclose	General Category % (N=34)	Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=9)	Factory-based Category % (N=3)
<i>If you disclosed your DV experience, what were the reactions of your coworkers or supervisor? (check all answers that apply)</i>			
Verbally comforted me and provided some counselling	55.9	100	100
Gave me some useful information and advice	44.1	0	0

Reported to the policy / contacted agencies that may be able to help me	0	0	0
Prevented him/her from hurting me again	5.9	0	0
Allowing me to take a leave	20.6	0	0
Other	14.7	0	0
No support	20.6	0	0

<b>Of all respondents</b>	<b>General Category % (N=488)</b>	<b>Informal Employment (Domestic Worker) Category % (N=48)</b>	<b>Factory-based Category % (N=170)</b>
Employers should discipline their employees who commit DV acts	65.6	56.3	48.8
Employers should provide assistance to their employees who have suffered DV	91	81.3	81.2
If employers assist their employees suffering DV, their employees will further identify with their employers	92.4	70.8	80
Have been told that some employers assist their employees suffering DV	12.7	33.3	32.4
Are aware that the Anti-DV Law has been in effect since March 2016	70.1	50	32.4

<i>What would you do when suffering DV?</i>			
Call the police	74.8	45.8	50.6
Seek help from friends and relatives	54.3	25	35.9
Seek help from the community, local women's federation	26.6	20.8	17.6
Apply for a protection order	46.9	18.8	12.4
Seek help from the employer	9.8	12.5	6.5
Go to hospital and undergo a medical injury identification	50.6	8.3	3.5
Take no actions due to fear that the perpetrator would escalate their violence	2.3	10.4	0
Tolerate for the sake of children	6.8	25	15.9

Among self-reported survivors in the general category, 52.3% have disclosed their experience of DV to their coworkers or supervisors. Those who never disclosed it to coworkers or supervisors were concerned about their privacy (74.2%) and fear of losing face or being ridiculed (19.4%). The attitude of the general respondents – including survivors and those who are not – is ambiguous. The majority think that employers should provide assistance to victims among their employees (91%) or discipline employees who commit DV acts (65.5%). However, when asked about their preferred ways of recourse in instances of DV – if it happened, only 9.8% would choose to seek help from the employer.

Victims' attitude and attempts to seek help from employers or other stakeholders can be greatly affected by the effectiveness of help provided. Fengxian Wang (2001) argues that female victims' will and incentive for

escaping violence and seeking help can be weakened by the fact that little help can be offered by the communities. Patrizia (2008) finds that even victims who disclose their DV experience in some way, are often not listened to or given assistance, and sometimes are even humiliated or threatened. In this study, 79.4% of survivors in the general sample category who disclosed their own DV experience to coworkers and/or supervisor said that they received some form of support from coworkers/supervisors. Yet, the general concerns that prevent more survivors from seeking institutional help from employers suggests that doubts about effectiveness of employer interventions remain. This is confirmed by the findings that 41.5% of the general-category respondents said they had no idea what support their own employers could provide; and only 12.7% reported that they had heard of employers providing assistance to employees who experienced DV.

Despite concerns about seeking help from employers, respondents in general believe that employers' assistance to victims or disciplining abusers will ultimately benefit the employer, as 92.4% believe that it will help increase employees' loyalty to their employers. Given their own experience of DV, survivors among the general category respondents suggest that employers should provide psychological counseling and useful information to victims (29.2%); allow victims to take paid leave (24.6%); strengthen security measures in the workplace (20%); help victims contact authorities (18.5%); help victims secure their income (13.8%); or allow post transfer (10.8%). In addition, nearly one-third (32.3%) think the perpetrators' employers should intervene. These suggestions from the survivors should inform future actions to be undertaken by employers in response to DV.

### **3.6 Case Study: Pathways and Patterns of the Impact of DV on Survivors' Work Experience and Career**

Drawing on the in-depth interviews conducted with eight currently or formerly employed female DV survivors, four testimonials are presented to demonstrate the range of DV experiences, effects of DV on employee job performance and career advancement, effects of DV in the workplace, and employer/coworker responses to DV. The cases presented below also

demonstrate the common patterns of DV's impact on the survivors' personal and professional life, as well as barriers for seeking help.

### **Case One**

He had abused me for more than 10 years. At the beginning, I felt too humiliated to divorce him, and tried my best to tolerate him. But I wanted to go to Beijing for a job; then I would no longer have to stay with him. Before getting married, I had worked in Beijing for a few years. After we got married, my father and my husband didn't allow me to get a job. My husband wanted me to be locked in the house, looking after the children. Once, without letting him know, I went to the railway station, but my father told my husband that I was going to Beijing, so he went to the station and forced me back home. In rural communities, people particularly prefer sons over daughters. After I gave birth to a girl, I had several abortions. Finally, I had a son. I thought now I could have a better life. But my husband said, "Where can you go now? You are now sterilized, and nobody would want you!" Before my son turned one month old, we started to fight each other again. At that time, I even took sleeping pills to commit suicide.

Later on, I insisted on going out to work. As my husband couldn't make any money, he didn't really try to stop me. I changed jobs several times and knew more about the world outside. My mind had changed. I felt that I must divorce him, even if I had to leave with nothing. I went to village cadres several times. But they all told me that divorce was not a good idea, and asked me to tolerate him. They didn't want to give me the documents necessary for the divorce. I didn't turn to my employer for help, as I didn't want to become a pathetic woman. Sometimes, some people may laugh at you. After getting divorced, I wanted to completely cut off all the relations with him forever. Therefore, I quit my job immediately, and left my hometown for Shenzhen.

### **Case Two**

I am an engineer. I could have applied for a senior professional title, or have had a better job. However, all these chances have been ruined by domestic

violence. Because of domestic violence, I often got sick. I had several major surgeries. He didn't do any housework; even when the kid was sick, he just stayed at home, lying there and doing nothing, except asking me to come back and look after the sick kid. Therefore, I had to frequently take leave from work. He even often stopped me from going to work or travelling. Sometimes, he even searched my co-workers' houses for me. He even went to my supervisors' homes and asked them if I was there. To my supervisors, I was a troublemaker, because I often got sick and took leave. For instance, I failed to complete my assigned tasks, bringing a lot of trouble to them and putting them in an awkward position. My supervisors gave me little support. Once, I was beaten severely. The doctor was very kind and gave me a certification of diagnosis. To become a piece of valid evidence, it needed to be stamped by the hospital's General Office, which required a certificate letter from my employer. But my employer didn't want me to go to court for a divorce, and didn't give me the letter. Knowing what was going on, my supervisors were also against issuing the letter for me. Finally, the court didn't accept the certification of diagnosis without the hospital's stamp as evidence.

I got little support from my coworkers, too. Once, my husband badly bruised my face, and I had to take leave and stay at home again. My coworkers came, but they also tried to convince me to continue to tolerate him, rather than to divorce him. Finally, I managed to divorce him. However, he hasn't let go of me yet. He has followed, harassed, and threatened me in various ways. I have called the police several times. But the police don't want to intervene because he hasn't injured me physically, and he is such a difficult person and everyone is afraid of dealing with him. In our society, domestic violence is still considered shameful; if you experience domestic violence, it must be because you have some problem. Professionals (I turned to for help) would say things like "I would never tolerate it if it were ever to happen to me." It sounds like I am willing to bear the pain, or I have to stand this because I am not capable or not strong enough. Such words have hurt me, too.

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### Case Three

To him, there is no difference between a wife and the goods he buys: after marrying, the woman belongs to his family, regardless of whether she is alive or dead. He beat me so severely that I had to go to his parents for help. But his mother said, “My son has told me. He told me that you didn’t obey him. Except beating, what else can he do to discipline a woman like you?” She even proudly gave me a few examples. She said that when she was younger, after her husband beat her, she continued to make shoes for him even as she was bleeding. To her, her sons are all very capable, because they all have complete control over their wives by beating them.

When my husband went to my workplace, he always opened each door without knocking, and searched the entire office for me. My coworkers tried to ignore him, as he was such an unreasonable person there was no way to communicate with him. He complained about me, and even quarreled with my coworkers. I was very lucky – my coworkers and supervisor were all very supportive and tried to protect me. If I had to go to court or prepare some documents, my supervisor would let me go as long as my absence wouldn’t affect the work very much.

Since we divorced, he hasn’t shown up in front of me. But I am still very worried. I can’t help looking back when walking on the street. I have to hide myself if there is a vehicle that looks like his. I have sometimes been awakened by the nightmare that he is going to catch me. I have always been concerned that he may come back and catch me. Therefore, although my coworkers and supervisors were all very nice, I changed my job so that he will never find me. I have been told that he will soon get married again, but (I think) this marriage won’t last long because of the beating.

### Case Four

When I was a child, my father would sometimes beat my mother, even me and my grandmother. My hard-working mother always tolerated my father,

and taught me to tolerate that kind of abuse. When my ex-husband began to beat me, my family and relatives all told me that: *You are married; where the needle goes, the thread follows. It doesn't make any sense to fight over minor issues. You should tolerate him and soon everything will be OK. Otherwise, you will bring troubles on yourself.*

My ex-husband is a male chauvinist, and I had to follow him on everything. He didn't want me to work overtime; therefore, a quarrel would take place whenever I worked overtime. I had to leave work right on time. If I was late even for a few minutes, he would contact my supervisor. He strictly controlled my after-work activities including gatherings with coworkers, annual corporate parties, etc. Because of him, I missed several promotion opportunities because I would likely have to work overtime if I was promoted.

When we were divorcing, he came to my office several times to harass and humiliate me. Once, he came to my office with a few big guys. He put one of his legs on the desk, claimed that I had an affair with someone, and asked my coworkers not to speak with me. Then he cornered me and slapped me across my face. My coworkers called the police, but the police said this was a dispute between husband and wife—beyond their responsibility. My supervisor made it very clear they would call the police if my husband came again to harass me. My coworkers did their utmost to help me find a way to deal with him. Without their support and assistance, and if there were even a little bit more pressure from my work, I may not have been able to survive.

After getting divorced, we still have to meet to deal with some issues for our child. He still beats me as long as I don't act according to his will. It doesn't work to call the police, as slapping is not a big deal to the police. They can't do anything unless one party has obvious injuries. But even if he caused me minor injuries, the police would determine that we beat each other. Come on, he is about 180 cm (almost 5'11") tall—big size. If I didn't defend myself, I could have been killed. The judge told me in private that he was a person without shame, and advised me to give him custody of our child, so that I can

completely get rid of him. But I can't give my child to such a person; he may ruin the child's life. So, I am now very upset.

## Case Analysis

The above cases are the narratives of four DV survivors that were interviewed. The narratives were edited and reorganized for clarity and conciseness while keeping the original narration to the extent possible. All four survivors are women and come from two provinces. They differ greatly in age, educational attainment, occupation, industry, and their current relations with the abusers. And their experience of getting (or not getting) support from their employers vary. Despite such differences, the patterns of the DV they have suffered and its impact on their job performance and career are very similar. Five common themes that emerged are the following:

First, DV is an exhibition of control, which is highly gendered. The underlying unequal power dynamics between genders justifies men's control over women and requires women to be obedient. Even when nowadays women have become much more active outside the household, the traditional gender norms and cultural expectations for men to dominate have not changed, and lead to men's use of violence as a way to regain control typically in cases where women have great career potential. Such cultural expectations have been passed down from one generation to another, by both men and women. Tolerance of violence by family members stands as one of the biggest barriers for survivors' escape from violence, and for addressing the root causes of DV.

Second, physical violence is often associated with various forms of non-physical violence, and affects the survivor's physical and mental health, work ability, and social relations to various extents. Compared to physical injuries, some of which may heal relatively faster, some psychological and other non-visible damages may last for much longer, and continue after an abusive relationship has terminated. Such harm can affect the survivor's job performance and career development in the long term, directly and indirectly.

Third, interference with the survivors' work and career is a common attempt by abusers to maintain control. Such attempts can be manifested in various ways, ranging from prohibiting the survivor from going to work, limiting

work hours, interrupting work, to harassing coworkers/supervisors/clients. The abuser’s violent acts not only target the survivor but can be extended to co-workers, for the purpose of isolating the survivor from other social relations or humiliating the survivor. Such acts can lead to immediate interruption of the production and safety risks in the workplace as well as harm to workplace dynamics.

Fourth, social support—especially support from coworkers and employers—is vital to DV survivors. As shown in the testimonials above, the workplace is a space where DV often continues. Assistance and support from coworkers and employers are critical for protecting the survivor from immediate harm. The workplace – with sufficient assistance by coworkers and supervisors – can temporarily separate the survivor from the abuser and provide the space and opportunity for connecting the survivor with service providers. The employer can also facilitate job security, which can help the survivor maintain income and financial independence, which can be a critical factor in a survivor’s decision making around seeking help and leaving an abusive relationship. Having a professional life can likewise be important for the survivor’s economic and psychological recovery afterward. Testimonials from the eight survivors interviewed did not indicate any cases where the employer laid off the survivor because of DV, but survivors did report needing to give up a job or promotion opportunity to avoid further abuse. In future practice, employers’ actions to assist survivors may include offering more flexibility and assistance in their human resource policies in order to help survivors better secure their jobs.

Fifth, the authorities – especially law enforcement such as the police – bear the primary legal responsibilities of intervening in DV cases. Remarkable improvements have been achieved in the authorities’ knowledge and capacity to intervene in DV cases, thanks to decades of advocacy and capacity building by international and domestic advocate organizations. However, a common experience of survivors interviewed was that the perception of DV as a private matter continues to prevail, even among law enforcers, and hinders effective provision of assistance to survivors. Without strong law enforcement and judicial intervention, intervention by other stakeholders – including employers – could be hindered or even discouraged.

## Chapter 4. Employers: Perception of Domestic Violence and Its Economic Cost

In addition to examining the experiences that employees have with DV, its impact on their work, and support (or lack thereof) from their employers and coworkers, this study also sought to better understand how employers view DV and their responsibilities to engage in anti-DV efforts within the workplace. To do this, the research team surveyed 93 HR managers, targeting two groups: general-category respondents from across industries and locations, and factory-based respondents from three manufacturing factories in Guangdong Province.

### 4.1 Basic Information of Respondents and Their Employers

Table 11 details the basic demographic information of the HR manager respondents in both the general category and the factory-based category, as well as their employer organizations' characteristics such as location, industry, size, and turnover rates.

**Table 11: Demographic Information of HR Manager Respondents and Employer Characteristics**

	Online survey subsample % (N=60)	Factory-based subsample % (N=33)
Average age	32 years old (between 21-55)	34 years old (between 22-55)
Gender	Male: 26.7 Female: 73.3	Male: 30.3 Female: 69.7
Educational Attainment	Bachelor degree: 43.3 Above bachelor degree: 45	High school and below: 57 High school: 33.3
Workplace Location	Beijing: 26.7 Jiangsu & Shanghai: 16.7 each Covering 20 provinces and municipalities directly under the central government	Guangdong: 100

Type of Employer	<p>Private company: 35 Government or institutions affiliated with government: 20 State-owned enterprise: 16.7 Foreign invested enterprise: 13.3 Other: 13.3 A joint enterprise with foreign and Chinese investments: 1.7</p>	<p>Hong Kong, Macau, &amp; Taiwan invested enterprise: 66.7 Foreign invested enterprise: 18.2 Other: 9.1 Private company: 6.1</p>
Industry	<p>Education: 26.7 Other: 25 Information transmission, computer service, and software: 13.3 Wholesale &amp; retailing: 8.3 Manufacturing: 6.7 Household services and other services : 5 Transportation, warehousing, and postal service : 3.3 Mining: 1.7 Hotels and dining services: 1.7 Leasing and business services: 1.7 Scientific research, technological services, and geological exploration: 1.7 Water resources, environment, and Public facility management:1.7 Health, social security, and social welfare:1.7 Culture, sports, and entertainment:1.7</p>	<p>Manufacturing: 93.3 Other: 6.1</p>
Total number of employees	<p>Under 100: 28.3 101-300: 20 301-1000: 15 Above 1000: 36.7</p>	<p>Above 1000: 90.9</p>

<i>In the past 12 months, how was employee turnover?</i>		
Almost none	36.7	21.2
At a normal level	56.7	69.7
Quite remarkable	6.7	9.1
<i>Compared with the average wage rate in your industry, how is the employee's wage rate?</i>		
Above average	25	0
Average	46.7	84.8
Below average	28.3	15.2

The online survey subsample and the factory-based subsample exhibit similarities in age and gender, and dissimilarities in educational attainment: in the online survey subsample, most respondents (88.3%) have completed university or college education or a higher level of education, while in the factory-based subsample, most participants (90.3%) have completed high school education at most.

In terms of employer characteristics, the two subsamples differ in many ways due to the chosen sampling methods. Respondents in the factory-based subsample are mainly from foreign-invested (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau) factories in manufacturing located in Dongguan and Shaoguan, Guangdong. Consequently, they are highly confined in geographic location, industry, type of employer, and number of workers. In contrast, online respondents understandably represent a broader range of employers. Participants and the organizations they represent are from more than 20 provinces and municipalities administered by the central government (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, etc.). Most work in private companies, followed by those in government and institutions affiliated with the government, state-owned enterprises, and foreign invested companies. They also work in various industries, including education, information technology and computer

software, wholesale, and retail. Finally, for online respondents, the size of their employers varied significantly (in terms of number of workers).

With respect to employee turnover, the two subsamples are quite similar. Most respondents consider the employers they represent to experience either average or low rates of turnover.

## 4.2 Perception of Domestic Violence and Anti-Domestic Violence Law

Table 12 examines HR managers' awareness and understanding of both DV and the Anti-DV Law, particularly as the law relates to employer responsibilities.

**Table 12: HR Managers' Understanding of DV and the Anti-DV Law**

	General Category % (N=60)	Factory-based Category % (N=33)
Are aware that the Anti-DV Law has been in effect since March 2016	51.7	60.6
Understand that DV can be committed by non-family members	50	66.7
<i><b>In your own view, which of the following acts counts as DV?</b></i> <i>(check all answers that apply)</i>		
Beating, binding, hitting, kicking, throwing	98.3	97
Constant verbal insults	90	63.6
Long-term neglect	86.7	60.6
Threatening	93.3	78.8
Restricting personal freedom	93.3	75.8
Sexual violence: forced sex, sexual humiliation	96.7	84.8
Controlling source of income or assets	81.7	66.7

Withholding contact with the child	80	63.6
<i>According to the DV Law, which of the following is the responsibility of an employer?<sup>21</sup> (check all answers that apply)</i>		
Discipline and educate employees who have committed DV	53.3	45.5
Settle or resolve internal conflicts between employees	48.3	66.7
Accept complaints made by a DV victim or his/her relatives about an employee who has committed DV on the victim	53.3	57.6
Provide assistance to employees suffering DV	80	78.8
Intervene immediately as DV acts occur	45	75.8
None of the above	5.0	3.0

All respondents are HR managers who would most likely be involved with implementing any company policies regarding DV among employees, either by supporting those who suffer or those who commit DV. Their perceptions of DV and the DV Law can, to some extent, represent their employers' awareness and prioritization of DV, and their employer responsibilities to address DV.

Overall, in both sample categories, respondents tend to have a limited understanding of the DV Law. Only 50% of the general category and about 60% of the factory-based category were aware of the passage of the DV Law. Awareness of employers' various responsibilities as defined by the law is uneven. HR managers are most aware of employers' responsibility to assist victims - representing about 80% of both groups; while they showed much lower awareness of other responsibilities. However, it's worth acknowledging that the majority of HR managers understand that employers share certain responsibilities in addressing DV – only 5% in the general

<sup>21</sup> All the options listed here are responsibilities of employers stipulated by the DV Law.

category and 3% in the factory-based category thought employers bear no responsibility.

Interestingly, this study found that most HR managers considered sexual violence, forced sex and sexual humiliation to be forms of DV – representing 96.7% of respondents in the general category and 84.8% in the factory-based category, despite the fact that the DV Law is ambiguous about sexual abuse. This finding again reflects a gap in public perception about DV and the law. Similarly, the majority of respondents also considered “controlling (the victim’s) source of income or assets” and “withholding contact with children” to be forms of DV, which are not defined in the DV Law either.

### 4.3 Perceptions of Domestic Violence’s Impact on Employers

Table 13 depicts HR managers’ awareness of employee experiences with DV and their perceptions of the effect of DV on employers.

**Table 13: HR Managers’ Experiences with and Perceptions of DV in the Workplace**

	General Category % (N=60)	Factory-based Category % (N=33)
In the past 12 months...? (check all answers that apply)		
Were there any employees who suffered DV?	Yes: 10.0 Do not know: 65.0 No: 25.0	Yes: 3.0 Do not know: 75.8 No: 21.2
Were there any employees who sought help due to DV?	Yes: 3.3 Do not know: 43.3 No: 53.3	Yes: 0 Do not know: 57.6 No: 42.4
Were there any employees who committed DV against their spouses/partners?	Yes: 5.0 Do not know: 73.3 No: 21.67	Yes: 12.1 Do not know: 63.6 No: 24.2
Did any employees’ relatives complain to you about DV?	Yes: 5.0 Do not know: 46.7 No: 48.33	Yes: 0 Do not know: 69.7 No: 30.3
Were there any employees who were absent from duty due to DV (e.g.,	Yes: 5.0 Do not know: 61.7	Yes: 3.0 Do not know: 66.7

arrive-late/leave-early, unauthorized and authorized leave), or who applied for relocation/resignation?	No: 33.33	No: 30.3
<b><i>In your own view, DV is likely to cost an employer because...?</i></b> <i>(check all answers that apply)</i>		
It negatively affects employees' attendance and productivity	81.7	66.7
It affects the overall working environment	75	63.6
It interrupts normal operations because of the presence of perpetrator in the workplace	80	75.8
It leads to additional medical cost on employees who have suffered DV, and part of this cost must be borne by the employer	60	51.5
It leads to additional HR management cost because of the relocation or departure of employees having suffered DV	85	69.7
It causes damage to the employer's image	83.3	57.6

A high proportion of respondents—about half or even higher—do not know whether their employees have committed, suffered, or been affected by DV. Only 10% of the general-category respondents and 3.3% of the factory-based category claimed that they knew of employees who suffered DV, and even fewer had come across employees seeking help. In many ways, DV remains a taboo subject and employees who suffer or commit violence tend to keep it private. The fact that more than half of the HR managers surveyed did not know whether or not employees were involved in or affected by DV again reflects employees' concerns about disclosure and seeking institutional help from their employers.

An interesting finding is the potential association between HR managers' awareness of employees' experience of DV and attendance records. Among HR managers in the general category, 10% were aware of employees

suffering DV, and 5% of them were aware that employees' attendance records, their decision to change job positions, or to resign were affected by DV. Two inferences can then be made: (i) DV negatively affects survivors' attendance records and decisions about job changes; and (ii) HR managers are more likely to become aware of their employees' experience of DV when their attendance records are affected or when they request a transfer or resign. Future studies can be done to further explore this issue, which can encourage and inform early intervention by employers.

When it comes to the perception of costs of DV, HR managers in both the general and factory-based categories shared a common understanding of cost factors related to survivors' productivity, attendance, and turn over, while they assigned different priorities to various cost factors. The general category ascribed additional costs to employers to the following factors: employee relocation/departure (85%), damage to the employer's image/reputation (83.3%), and negative impact on employee attendance and productivity (81.7%). In contrast, HR managers in the factory-based category identified disruption of normal operations due to the presence of the perpetrator of DV in the workplace as the most important factor (75.8%), followed by relocation or departure of employees who suffer DV (69.7%), and negative impact on employee attendance and productivity (66.7%). While further contextual analysis is necessary, it seems plausible that the business model and workplace settings may affect employers' perception of costs, as well as how costs are actually generated. For instance, line production in a manufacturing factory may be more easily interrupted by the intrusion of an abuser compared to the office settings in other industries where work assignments are more independent. In contrast, corporate image/reputation tends to have minimal impact on manufacturing factories' competition for buyers, as long as they can meet the minimum compliance, while other companies that have more direct interaction with the consumers (e.g., in service and retail sectors) are likely to pay more attention to the company's public image and reputation.

Another interesting finding lies in the relatively low perception of medical costs as a significant cost factor, which is commonly acknowledged as a major burden for employers in other countries (e.g., Australia, Canada and the U.S.). This different perception could result from the different social security systems in China, where the employer' contribution to an employee's

medical insurance package is usually standardized and mandatory, and less likely affected by other conditions (e.g., health conditions caused by DV) of a given employee.

By comparing findings from the two sample categories, it is reasonable to conclude that, for employers in different sectors and/or different positions in the value chain: (1) DV can result in extra costs to the business; and (2) cost factors resulting from DV may vary for employers in different sectors depending on the nature of the business and the business's operation model. Future studies can be done to explore additional costs of DV to specific industries, taking into account industry-specific conditions, which can better inform policies and actions by employers in different sectors.

#### 4.4 Sense of Employer Responsibility and Willingness to Act

Table 14 details HR managers' opinions on employer responsibilities and on existing employer policies and willingness to act.

**Table 14: HR Manager Sense of Employer Responsibility and Willingness to Act**

	General Category (N=60)	%	Factory-based Category (N=33)	%
<i>In your own view, do you think employers should intervene in DV committed by their employees?</i>				
Yes	76.7		81.8	
No	13.3		18.2	
Doesn't matter	10		0	
<i>In your own view, do you think employers should assist their employees who have suffered DV?</i>				
Yes	70		66.7	
No	1.7		3.0	

Doesn't matter	28.3	30.3
<b><i>At present, is there any measure in your workplace to assist employees who have suffered violence or to discipline those who have committed violence?</i></b>		
There are measures to assist employees who have suffered DV only	1.7	9.1
There are measures to discipline employees who have committed DV only	0	0
Both are in place	1.7	3.0
None	48.3	3.0
Don't know	48.3	84.8
<b><i>Which of the following is likely to be undertaken in your workplace? (check all answers that apply)</i></b>		
Awareness raising activities/training on gender equity and the Anti-DV Law	88.3	90.9
Counseling on intimate relationships, marriage, and family relations	73.3	45.5
Deal with and discipline employees who have committed DV	33.3	24.2
Help employees who have suffered DV access professional services	68.3	66.7
Assist employees who have suffered DV by human resource management	70	63.6
Be willing to adopt an easy-to-use anti-DV package, if there are any	85	90.9
<b><i>In your own view, what is the reasonable cost for employers to pay to prevent DV?</i></b>		
Less than 0.5% of employees' salaries	48.3	57.6
0.5-0.8% of employees' salaries	26.7	12.1

0.8-1% of employees' salaries	10	6.1
Above 1% of employees' salaries	15	24.2

In both sample categories, the majority of HR managers reported that employers should discipline employees who commit DV and assist those who suffer, and among those in the factory-based category, even more think employers should discipline abusers (81.8%) than assist victims (66.7%). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that a good portion of HR managers do not care if employers intervene in DV affecting their employees or not – about 30% of both categories think it “doesn’t matter” if employers assist victims or not; and 10% in the general category think the same for employers’ disciplining abusers among employees. About 18% of those in the factory-based category reported that employers should not discipline abusers.

Existing experience dealing with DV is also minimal among the HR managers surveyed. The absolute majority—96.6% of the general category and 87.8% of the factory-based category—either reported that there are no anti-DV measures in their workplace or are simply unaware of any existing measures.

When asked what they consider reasonable measures to be undertaken in their workplace – given their knowledge of their respective employer organizations, around 90% of HR managers in both categories claimed that their employers would be willing to organize staff trainings on relevant topics and adopt easy-to-use toolkits to guide their actions. Other possible measures that most HR managers considered feasible include: assisting DV victims to access professional services, permitting the survivor a transfer or work relocation, or granting a leave. The least feasible solution in the view of HR managers is to discipline abusers among employees. The underlying reasons for this include the pervasive perception of DV as a private issue and the fact that the Anti-DV Law has not specified such obligations. Although most HR managers surveyed agree that employers should and are likely to take some DV-related measures, given their limited experience in anti-DV efforts, legal provisions and support from civil society are necessary for employers to truly implement such measures.

When asked what, in their opinion as HR managers, would be a reasonable range of cost for employers' actions to address DV, about half of respondents in both categories reported that the cost should be under 0.5% of the company's expenditure on wages. Other acceptable ranges of cost varied significantly between the two categories: for the general category, the second most acceptable cost range would be 0.5-0.8% of the company's wage expenditure (26.7%), while 24.2% of the factory-based respondents considered over 1% of wage expenditure to be acceptable(). Future advocacy for employers' investment in anti-DV efforts should take into account the costs of actions seen as acceptable among employers, which could vary from industry to industry, as well as longer-term non-economic payoff of anti-DV efforts.

#### **4.5 Calculating the Economic Cost of Domestic Violence to Employers**

In recent years, the social consequences of DV have drawn more and more attention from researchers and practitioners. In order to provide useful information for the formulation of policies and regulations, as well as the allocation of social welfare services, some UN organizations and a number of countries have partnered with researchers to examine the social costs of DV. The costs of DV can be classified in different ways, such as direct vs. indirect costs (Hugh, 2005); short-term vs. long-term costs; and economic vs. non-economic costs (the monetary value of which is difficult to determine). Internationally, the costs of DV are categorized into seven groups:<sup>22</sup> (1) Costs associated with pain, suffering, and death; (2) Health/medical costs; (3) Costs associated with lost productivity and human resource management/administration (e.g., replacing an employee); (4) Costs associated with an individual's consumption (e.g., replacing damaged assets or defaulting on loans); (5) Costs associated with children who witness or are affected by violence (e.g., child protection services); (6) Costs associated with government administration and social services (e.g., police or counseling); and (7) Costs of government benefit transfers. These seven types of cost are

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<sup>22</sup> Please refer to The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. 2009. *The Cost of Violence against Women and their Children*. Commonwealth of Australia [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/vawc\\_economic\\_report.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/vawc_economic_report.pdf)

mainly borne by eight types of parties, including the victim, the perpetrator, and the government. The employer is also one of these parties (Access Economics Pty Ltd, 2004).

The direct economic cost of DV to employers includes the increases in costs resulting from: (1) reduced productivity; (2) absence of employees from their duties; (3) human resource management/administration (e.g., processing application for a leave or relocation, arranging replacement or relocation, handling complaints and disputes, and recruiting and training new employees, etc.) (Access Economics Pty Ltd, 2004; Sylvia et al., 2014); and (4) the part of employees' extra medical cost that should be paid by employers (Hoel et al., 2001; Farmer et al., 2004; Duvvury et al., 2013). The "employees" referred herein include DV victims, perpetrators, and coworkers affected.

Unfortunately, because it is very difficult to access the data of victims and their coworkers who have been affected, most studies focus on victims only when estimating the DV cost to employers. Moreover, a lack of standardization or consensus on how to calculate DV costs means that different cost breakdowns and calculation methods employed often yield different results (Hugh, 2005). As a pilot study, the present research does not intend to provide a single concrete answer to the costs of DV to employers; instead, it attempts to help build a rough understanding of the various economic costs of DV to employers by calculating an estimate based on the survey results. Due to the limitations of the survey data, it is only possible to calculate the most direct economic cost of DV to employers (Ct). According to the online survey on employees, the cost of DV to employers in the past 12 months consists of: the cost generated by victim's productivity loss (C1); the cost generated by victims' absence from work (C2); and the cost generated by employee turnover (which necessitates HR management/administration) (C3).

$$Ct = C1 + C2 + C3$$

- *Cost generated by victims' productivity loss (C1)*

Assuming that the victim shows up to work, the loss of productivity mainly results from his or her emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion refers to

headaches, insomnia, and other symptoms, which result from excessive work and other sustained concerns at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Some studies attempt to investigate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and productivity, and estimate that emotional exhaustion causes a 22% loss of productivity (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). By applying this result, the increased cost due to reduced productivity caused by victims' emotional exhaustion is calculated as follows:

$$C1 = \% \text{ decrease in productivity due to emotional exhaustion caused by DV} \\ * \text{ total number of employees} * \text{ average annual wage per employee}$$

Where,

***% decrease in productivity due to emotional exhaustion caused by DV*** = DV prevalence rate in the past 12 months \* % of employees reporting emotional exhaustion due to DV \* ***% productivity decrease resulting from emotional exhaustion***

- DV prevalence rate in the past 12 months = 13.3%, calculated based on the online survey of employees (13.3% of respondents reported experiencing one or more forms of DV in the past 12 months)
- % of employees reporting emotional exhaustion due to DV = 89.2%, according to the online survey of employees (89.2% of respondents reported at least one of symptoms that can be considered as emotional exhaustion, including difficulty paying attention, lack of sleep/fatigue, being diagnosed with depression, etc.)
- ***% of productivity decrease resulting from emotional exhaustion*** = 22%, based on Wright & Cropanzano (1998).

Therefore,

$$\text{b} \text{ decrease in productivity due to emotional exhaustion caused by DV} = \\ 13.3\% * 89.2\% * 22\% = 2.61\%$$

Assuming an employer has 100 employees, and its annual wage per employee is RMB 120,000 (USD 18,006), the *cost generated by victims' productivity loss per year will be:*

$$C1 = 2.61\% * 100 * 12,000$$

$$C1 = \text{RMB } 313,200 \text{ (USD } 46,995)$$

▪ *Cost generated by victims' missed attendance (C2)*

In order to comply with relevant laws and regulations or to fulfill their social responsibilities, employers have to bear the human resource loss resulting from the missed attendance of employees due to DV (e.g., arriving late and/or leaving early, unauthorized and authorized absence, etc.). In other words, employers have to incur extra cost to make up the loss of work hours due to employee absence.

$$C2 = \% \text{ decrease in productivity due to absenteeism caused by DV} * \text{Number of employees} * \text{Annual wage per employee}$$

Where,

**% decrease in productivity due to missed attendance caused by DV** = DV prevalence rate \* (% of DV victims reporting arrive-late/left-early \* average number of days of arrive-late & leave-early per employee per year + % of victims reporting unauthorized absence from work \* average number of days on unauthorized absence per employee per year + % of DV victims taking leaves \* average number of days on authorized leaves per employee per year) \* 1 / Number of statutory work days per year \* total number of employees \* average annual wage per employee

Based on the online survey on employees:

- DV prevalence rate = 13.3%
- % of DV victims reporting arrive-late /left-early = 30.8%

- % of DV victims reporting unauthorized absence from work =20%
- % of DV victims taking leaves =24.6%
- Average number of days on unauthorized absence per employee per year = 15.15 days
- Average number of days on authorized leaves per employee per year = 10.75 days
- Average number of missed work days due to arrive-late/leave-early per year per employee = 5.45 times \* 0.5 days/time = 2.7 days (assuming that one arrive-late or leave-early is equivalent to the absence from duty for half a day)
- Number of statutory work days per year = 250 days (365 days - 104 weekend days - 11 public holidays)

Therefore,

**% decrease in productivity due to missed attendance caused by DV= 13.3%**  
**\* (30.8% \* 2.7 + 20% \* 15.15 + 24.6% \* 10.75) \* 1/250= 0.35%**

Assuming an employer has 100 employees, and its annual wage per employee is RMB 120,000 (USD 18,006), the **cost generated by victims' missed attendance per year will be:**

$$C2 = 0.35\% * 100 * 12,000$$

$$C2 = \text{RMB } 42,000 \text{ (USD } 6,302)$$

- *Cost generated by employee turnover and position change/relocation (C3)*

Employee turnover, especially the turnover of core employees, often results in extensive costs for employers, including: the administrative costs of staff departures, job vacancy costs, replacement costs, training costs, losses incurred in recruiting and training new employees, and losses incurred by integrating or teaming new and old employees. There have been many studies

attempting to estimate turnover costs, but most of them employ rough and conservative estimation methods. Synar (2010) reports that the turnover cost to the employer is approximately 25% of an employee's annual salary; and the total cost of employee turnover amounts to 30% of the annual salary, if taking into account the employer's contribution to other welfare entitlements in addition to wage.

Where an employer is able to maintain an employee through changing positions or relocation due to DV, this also results in additional costs (such as administrative costs, additional job training costs, etc.). This study estimates this cost to be 15% of the employee's annual salary.

Thus, the extra cost to employers resulting from employee turnover or relocation due to DV is calculated as follows:

$$\text{C3} = \% \text{ decrease in productivity due to turnover and position change/relocation caused by DV} * \text{Number of employees} * \text{Annual wage per employee}$$

Where,

$$\% \text{ decrease in productivity due to turnover and position change/relocation caused by DV} = \text{DV prevalence rate} * (\text{Turnover rate of DV victims} * \text{Staff turnover cost} + \% \text{ of victims who required position change or relocation} * \text{Cost of staff position change/relocation}) * \text{Number of employees} * \text{Annual wage per employee}$$

According to the survey on employees:

- DV prevalence rate = 13.3%
- % of victims who have departed = % of respondents reporting promotion affected by DV \* % of respondents reporting promotion affected by change of job = 70.8% \* 23.9%
- % of victims who required position change or relocation = % of respondents reporting promotion affected by DV \* % of respondents reporting promotion affected by relocation = 70.8% \* 10.9%

Therefore,

**% decrease in productivity due to turnover and position change/relocation caused by DV** =  $13.3\% * (70.8\% * 23.9\% * 30\% + 70.8\% * 10.9\% * 15\%) = 0.83\%$

Assuming an employer has 100 employees, and its annual wage per employee is RMB120,000 (USD 18,006), the **cost generated by employee turnover and position change/relocation due to DV per year will be:**

$$C3 = 0.83\% * 100 * 12,000$$

$$C3 = \text{RMB } 99,600 \text{ (USD } 14,945)$$

▪ **Total direct economic cost of DV to employers (C1 + C2 + C3)**

According to our calculations, the total cost of reduced productivity to employers due to DV amounts to 3.79% of the employer's annual wage expenditure, including: (1) 2.61%, for productivity loss per year resulting from victims' emotional exhaustion due to DV (C1); (2) 0.35%, for productivity loss per year resulting from victims' absence from duty due to DV (C2); and (3) 0.83%, for productivity loss per year resulting from departure or relocation due to DV (C3).

Assuming an employer has 100 employees, and the average annual salary is RMB 120,000 (USD 18,006) per employee, then **the direct economic cost of DV to Chinese employers is RMB 454,800 (USD 68,242) per year** (313,200 + 42,000 + 99,600).

The estimated costs to employers due to DV will skyrocket if you take into account any property damage in the workplace, early retirement of employees, investigation and litigation, damage to an employer's image and reputation (Helge, 2001), impact on coworkers, opportunity costs, and other long-term effects whose economic costs are difficult to measure. Although different estimation methods may result in very different results, all of the various calculations by previous studies attempting to assign an economic cost to DV demonstrate that such violence—which has not generally been a concern of

employers as an economic factor—poses significant, yet unaccounted costs to employers.

It is important to point out that DV, rather than its victims, caused losses to employers. Any attempt by an employer to reduce costs by restraining or even depriving DV victims of the opportunity to work will be in violation of international agreements and domestic laws and regulations concerning gender equity, anti-discrimination, and fair employment, as well as generally accepted corporate social responsibility standards. Moreover, such actions will likely deprive a DV victim of the resources necessary to escape violence, pushing them into a more helpless situation that could lead to tragic consequences. At the same time, such actions may undermine the identification of employees with their employers, and adversely affect an employer's image and reputation. DV is a social issue. Anyone can become a DV victim. Rather than reducing the impacts of DV on employers, restraining or depriving DV victims of work opportunities will reinforce the social culture that condones violence. In turn, the entrenched violent culture will further reinforce the negative impacts on employers. Anti-DV efforts will not generate immediate results. However, a holistic approach is the only win-win solution for employers, victims and their families, and society as a whole.

#### **4.6 Case Study: Employers' Concerns Regarding Anti-Domestic Violence Actions**

Of the seven in-depth interviews conducted, one is presented and analyzed here in a case study. The patterns of thinking and reflections of the HR manager in this interview represent those that are common across the seven interviews. As such it is treated as a typical case.

##### **Case study: HR Manager respondent**

She (the victim) used to be a sales team leader. She was very capable and her performance was very good. The boss had very high expectations for her, and placed her on the top of the talent development list. But she often had scars on her. She even had a miscarriage. Later, when we had a dinner together, she told me that all these were because of her husband's violence. Her husband was often violent towards her, asked her to stay home longer than she wanted,

and didn't allow her to have contact with male coworkers. As a result, she had to turn down many big clients, and she also tried to avoid having male coworkers in her team. Therefore, her team also suffered losses.

Later, the company adjusted the structure of the sales department, and shifted the hours of operation so that work went later into the day. She then applied for a position relocation from a sales to a support staff, for fear that more family conflicts would arise and burden her team members. Her performance appraisal rating also dropped significantly. In the office, she couldn't do what she wanted to do; at home, she didn't know what would happen to her. She often felt sick and had to take leaves of absence. She told me that she felt very desperate at that time.

Foreign-invested companies have a different corporate culture than Chinese firms. For instance, at an interview, HR cannot ask the applicant questions such as "Are you married?" or "Do you have a child?" Otherwise, it may be interpreted as discrimination. Even if an applicant mentions some of these private details, we will tell him or her that we haven't heard such things. Therefore, in the company, people in general seldom talk about their families. Employees don't want to bring their family issues to the company either, because they want to (1) keep their social distance; and (2) protect their privacy. This was especially the case with the woman we talk about. She had a team to lead, so she had to protect her reputation and image. Given these reasons, I think it is difficult for employers to do more regarding anti-DV efforts. You know, we were having a meal, then when we had a cup of coffee together, she began to tell me about her sufferings. It was a chat between friends, rather than a business talk with HR. At that time, as a friend, I asked her if she needed any support or counseling. I even mentioned "domestic violence." I told her she was suffering domestic violence, and she should make a quick decision. There was nothing else I could do.

### **Case analysis**

This is the narrative of an experienced HR manager. This case has shown that DV may cause enormous loss for employers, even if the violence does not take place in the workplace. This occurs in two key ways.

First, the victim's productivity and motivation are both affected by injuries, exhaustion, absences, and fear resulting from DV. As control over victims is an essential component of DV, and this control can take many forms, the perpetrator does not need to show up at the victim's workplace to wield control over the victim's work life. Beyond inflicting physical injuries and pain, the abuser can affect the victim's work arrangements through controlling the latter's actions and emotions, even from afar. This case clearly demonstrates the potency of such control wielded from a distance. Because the perpetrator was unhappy, the victim had to turn down big clients and refuse to have male coworkers join her team, and she eventually failed to continue to be the team leader and switched to a support staff position.

Second, as seen in this case, the victim's work arrangements directly affect the performance of his or her coworkers, including the stability and cohesion of their team. This further increases the cost of DV to employers. If the perpetrator were to show up in the workplace or its periphery, the DV cost on the employer—often through the loss of productivity to the entire workplace or team, not just to the victim—would be even higher and more immediate.

In this case study, the HR manager is from a large foreign-invested company that has a strong system for staff well-being and support, as well as an Employee Assistance Program that operates successfully. However, this HR manager still found it challenging to help the DV victim. There are two important challenges that emerge here. First, anti-violence *and* anti-discrimination principles form an important part of corporate culture. Anti-DV policies and actions are a necessary condition for the employer to fight against violence and assume its social responsibilities. However, it can be difficult for employers to balance apparent conflicts between respecting an individual's privacy preventing discrimination, and intervening in DV, which is widely considered an intensely personal issue. In the absence of supporting legal provisions and guidance, it is difficult for employers to balance these concerns. Second, most employees do not want to seek help from their employers for various reasons, making it difficult for employers to be aware of ongoing DV. Consequently, employers lack sufficient information from employees as well as guidelines regarding proactive interventions; it is therefore very challenging to develop a well-informed and tailored anti-DV working plan.

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## **Summary: Employers' concerns regarding anti-DV**

Although several employer representatives interviewed for this study commented that they have not encountered instances of DV among their employees, some findings were identified. First, DV may have numerous adverse effects on employers, even if the violence itself occurs in a place other than the workplace. These effects not only include a reduction in victims' productivity and performance, but also negatively affect work relations and the work environment, which result in extra safety risks and administrative costs and damage to an employers' image. These have far-reaching impacts on the employers' development.

Second, employers are willing to add anti-DV efforts into their existing staff activities and organize awareness-raising events, although they have concerns with respect to effectively establishing and scaling up such efforts in a way that does not conflict with other corporate, legal, and employee policies and expectations. Drawing from the in-depth interviews with HR managers, the primary concerns that emerged are outlined in the following edited excerpts from interviews with HR managers.

### **1. Legal issues and the eligibility of employers to intervene**

*In China, despite the fact that the Anti-DV Law has defined the employers' anti-DV responsibilities, thus far there are no laws or regulations specifying how employers should discipline perpetrators. Moreover, employers must submit their rules and bylaws to relevant government authorities for compliance purposes. Such corporate rules and bylaws must be consistent with relevant laws and regulations. It is thus difficult for employers to include rules concerning the disciplining/punishment of perpetrators in their rules and bylaws.*

*If an employee violates the laws, then the police will intervene. If the police don't intervene, then we can't intervene either. For issues like DV, we can't get involved if a complaint has not been lodged. We intervene to some extent only if a victim has made a request.*

*We are not a law-enforcing unit, or a welfare organization or a public organization. We don't have the power to investigate, judge, or impose*

*punishment. It is difficult for us to intervene directly. If a perpetrator is one of our employees and we discipline him or her, then a labor dispute is likely to be triggered, and we may even be involved in a litigation. If the perpetrator is not our employee, there is almost nothing we can do, except some education and mediation work.*

## **2. Access to information and the victim's willingness to seek help**

*Most employees don't come to us for help. If they don't tell us, we won't know who has suffered/committed the violence.*

*Victims don't seek help from their employers for various reasons. One reason is because they don't think their employers have a stake in the problem, especially when their perpetrators work for other employers. Another reason is because they consider DV as a private issue, and don't want to disclose to outsiders.*

## **3. Employers' capacity and resources**

*We can provide victims with very limited direct support. We are not professional counselors, and we are not good at counselling. What we can do is to provide information. For instance, the channel for seeking help, etc.*

*If the intervention timing or method is not appropriate, things may get even worse. But no one (including psychologists) can ensure that a method is appropriate. So, it is hard for us to directly intervene. But we can try to deal with it in a roundabout way after an assessment.*

*One or two training and promotion activities won't work. It should be done continuously over a long period, which means that we need sufficient external resources and support, e.g., qualified trainers.*

## **4. Benefit and cost of DV intervention**

*With respect to whether or not to intervene in DV, the top concern is the benefit and cost. The company would have to invest a lot to train a number of employees with DV intervention skills, and then retain them with attractive wage and welfare package. But such efforts—both training and promotion,*

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*and direct intervention—can't generate immediate results. This is the reason why so many employers don't want to get involved.*

## **5. The overall anti-DV environment and coordination**

*In my view, if we announce an anti-DV promotion activity or training program in the company's newsletter, probably when the time comes no one will show up, because no one wants the others to know such things. Therefore, to do such work, we must keep it confidential. But in China, it is hard to do so, and personal privacy can't be protected effectively.*

*DV is a pervasive and chronic issue. We are small players, and we can do so little. I don't know if we can make a difference.*

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## Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Main Findings

This study assessed employee experiences of DV and DV's impact in the workplace, including on performance and productivity, as well as the costs incurred by employers. It also explored employers' understanding, capacity and expectations with regard to DV prevention and response in the workplace. The main findings are summarized below. Unless specified otherwise, these conclusions are drawn from the web-based surveys of the general-category samples, which include employees and employers from different sectors and geographic regions.

#### *Prevalence of DV in the past twelve months*

This study estimated the prevalence rate of DV among its employee samples in the past 12 months. The assessment of more recent incidents allowed more accurate estimation of costs incurred by DV and to a certain extent, it facilitated reflection on perceptions, attitudes and expectations after the Anti-DV Law was adopted in China. The 12-month prevalence rate among the study's general-category sample was estimated at 13.3%. While limitations in the sample do not support rigid analysis of correlation between gender and the prevalence rate, it is well documented that women are more frequently victims of all forms of DV – including physical, emotional and psychological, sexual and financial abuses - except financial control. This 12-month prevalence rate is lower than the official prevalence rate at 24.7%, which measures a woman's experience of DV in her lifetime. In addition to victimization, the study also surveyed witnesses of DV, which found that 56.4% of the respondents who did not self-identify as victims, reported witnessing

DV suffered by acquaintances. This finding suggests that DV may not be as “invisible” as it is perceived.

DV usually spreads from the home to the workplace. Out of all self-reported victims, 46.2% reported experiencing abuse by their partners while at work, and 21.5% of their abusers has also harassed, threatened or even assaulted the victim’s co-workers. Witnesses of DV also confirmed that DV often continues into the victim’s workplace, with 65.8% of those who had witnessed DV against their acquaintance had seen the victims continue to be abused in the workplace by their intimate partners. The most common form of abuse witnessed was harassment and/or threats through phone calls, emails or social media while the victim was at work.

### ***DV’s impact of the victim’s job performance and career advancement***

The study uncovered DV’s impact on the victim’s physical and mental health, job performance and job retention, which constitute key cost factors of DV for employers. Out of all self-identified victims surveyed, all reported experience of physical and/or health symptoms as a result of DV, and 89.2% identified specific mental health symptoms that could result in lower productivity at work, ranging from fatigue and sleeping difficulty to depression. In the 12 months preceding data collection, 44.6% reported missed working hours and/or work days due to DV: 30.8% had arrived late or left early from work, for 5.45 times per person on average); 20% had been absent from duty without authorization, on average, for 15.15 days per person; and 24.6% had taken authorized leaves, for 10.75 days per person on average. Victims had to be absent from work, either out of interference by the abuser or for taking care of health, legal and/or other matters caused by DV. DV also led to changing or quitting jobs for 16.9% of the victims surveyed, and 7.7% had to ask for relocation or shifting posts from their employers. These experiences had profound impact on the victim’s career advancement, as

perceived by 70.8% of the victims, as they would likely increase absenteeism records, interrupt career continuity, and even cause the victim to give up professional training and/or promotion opportunities.

### ***Costs of DV to employers***

The above-mentioned impact of DV on the victims' job performance and career advancement were translated into costs to their employers due to decreased productivity. This study established three formulas to simulate cost calculation from an employer's perspective. The simulation accounts for the 12-month DV prevalence rate, multiplied with three main cost factors: (i) decrease in productivity due to mental health symptoms – demonstrated as emotional exhaustion – caused by DV; (ii) decrease in productivity due to absenteeism caused by DV; and (iii) human resource management costs resulting of staff turnover – specifically resignation and/or post changing/relocation of victims – caused by DV. Details about the simulation model can be found under Section 4.5. The total costs of DV to an employer add up to 3.79% of its annual wage expenditure.

### ***Employees' attitudes and concerns around workplace-based intervention***

The majority of employees surveyed – victims or not - believed that employers should provide assistance to victims or discipline perpetrators, representing 91% and 65.6% of all respondents, respectively. However, employees in general are reluctant to seek institutional help from their employers – less than 10% of all respondents said they would turn to their employers for help in instances of DV. The most commonly cited concerns involved limited knowledge about what help the employer can offer, and distrust in the employer's capacity to protect their privacy. An encouraging finding, however, was that among those victims who did disclose to their co-workers or supervisors, representing 52.3% of the victims surveyed, the

majority (70.4%) found the support they received to be positive, even though most support provided by co-workers/supervisors had been informal emotional support and the provision of information. Despite the above-mentioned common concerns, the majority of employees (92%) believed appropriate survivor assistance programs in the workplace would increase their loyalty to their employers and build good will around the organization.

### *Employers' attitudes and concerns around workplace-based intervention*

Findings from the survey of HR managers confirmed the observation that employers in general are neither aware of nor capable of responding to DV. Around half (52%) of HR managers surveyed knew about the adoption of the DV Law. Not surprisingly, only 10% were aware of victims among their staff members, and even fewer (5%) were aware of abusers among their staff. Despite the lack of awareness and experience, as high as 85% of HR managers surveyed suggested that their organizations would be willing to adopt solutions if provided with appropriate guidance. To capacitate employer response to DV, concerns of employers that would need to be resolved include: unclear laws and regulations around employer responsibilities, perceived difficulty in measuring payoff of investment in DV intervention, and challenges to employee privacy protection.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Understanding the impact of DV on employees and its costs to employers is a necessary and important process for employers to be fully incentivized to incorporate DV prevention and response as part of their business strategies. It is equally important to remind employers of the fact that such costs are caused by DV, not the victims, and supporting DV victims is a responsible business choice.

As reflected by major concerns of employers towards intervening in DV, the efforts to foster effective workplace responses to DV is not the sole responsibility of employers; instead, it requires cross-sectoral actions and collaboration.

### *Clarifying relevant laws and policies*

The DV Law includes several provisions which require employers to share the responsibilities of responding to DV incidents among employees – including perpetration and victimization. However, the law does not provide sufficient clarity on actions required and accountability. The lack of clarity provides room for inaction by employers, and poses challenges to employers attempting to take actions or seek technical support from respective government stakeholders. It is necessary for the legislative and policy-making bodies to develop specific implementation guidelines to clarify the responsibilities and actions required from employers, coordination mechanism between employers and relevant government agencies, as well as the minimum accountability of employer response, as part of the broader implementation guidelines for the DV Law.

Additionally, women’s federations, trade unions and business associations should leverage their influence over employers and incorporate recommended actions for employer response into their respective work plans to implement the DV Law and/or respond to compliance and or CSR demands for the protection of human rights and employee well-being. There are existing experiences in other countries that China can learn from. For example, many state governments in the U.S. have issued laws or policies allowing DV victims extra leave time and reduced work responsibility, for the purpose of protecting them from being fired within a certain period of time, and eliminating employment discrimination against DV victims (Swanberg et al., 2012). The State of New York has also released a template of institutional-

level policy against DV, which illustrates necessary policy reforms in an organization's human resource and internal management systems in order to support DV victims among employee (Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, New York State, n.d.). At the industry level, many trade unions in Australia have included victim support policies and service programs in the collective bargaining agenda with industry associations since 2010 (McFerran, 2011).

### *Increasing awareness and knowledge of employers*

The findings from this study reveal a low level of awareness of DV and limited understanding and experience of responding to DV among employers. Constant and consistent awareness-raising of employers will be an indispensable action for building the foundation for employer actions. Local governments should deploy part of the public finance budgets for implementing the DV Law to awareness raising for employers, which can be complemented by financial and/or in-kind resources from business associations and from employers themselves. Women's federations and civil society organizations can provide technical support during this process. Awareness raising should aim to increase employers' awareness of DV as a public issue, employers' ethical and legal responsibilities, the costs of DV and how their businesses could benefit from anti-DV interventions. Awareness raising can employ existing success cases of employer interventions in other countries to mobilize employers in China, such as Liz Claiborne's successful incorporation of intimate partner violence (IPV) intervention in both its internal policy reform and its business through cause-related marketing strategies. The American garment company developed company-wide personnel and management policies and support services tailored to IPV victims that are widely recognized as successful. It also identified IPV as an

issue concerning its target consumers and therefore supported anti-IPV campaigns through their respective commercial or community activities (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2004; O’Leary-Kelly, Lean, Reeves and Randel, 2008). Liz Claiborne measured the impact of its decade-long investment in addressing IPV since 1991, which found it a success based on social and business outcomes (O’Leary-Kelly, Lean, Reeves and Randel, 2008).

### *Providing guidance on employer actions*

The absence of existing experience of employer responses in the Chinese context would prevent employers from taking concrete actions in response to DV. A range of existing tools and best practices adopted in other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia could be referenced and adapted for use in China. The localization process should take into account local laws, resources and institutional cultures in China, which may vary from industry to industry, and from region to region. Among HR managers surveyed, 87 % suggested that their institutions would consider adopting a user-friendly toolkit to guide their actions at the institutional level. Ideally, such a toolkit would provide guidance on the design and adoption of different categories of actions. For instance, actions could include internal policy reforms that make it convenient for victims to apply for sick leave, leave of absence, relocation, and allow victims to have flexible work arrangements (work hours or location) in order to avoid being followed or harassed by their perpetrators. With regard to service programs, an employer could roll out regular staff training, provide victims with confidential counseling, legal services, or financial assistance. Potential actions could also include training supervisors on how to appropriately assist victims with emotional support and refer victims to professional help, reception and administrative support personnel on sensitivity and skills of coping with harassing phone calls and confidentiality of staff personal information, and security departments to impose better

workplace security practices. The localized toolkit has seriously consider the cost-effectiveness of actions, and clearly define the labor division between employers and professional DV service providers – both governmental and non-governmental, so as to foster sustainable employer commitment and investment.

Professional DV service providers can take the lead in developing such a toolkit, in close consultation with employers and other stakeholders concerned such as trade unions, business associations and women’s federations. Such cross-sector collaboration should continue to the implementation of actions in a given organization in order to allow reasonable and manageable technical and financial investment. For instance, employers can seek technical guidance from a professional service provider on tailoring its action plan for DV response, procure service programs provided by a third-party service provider to ensure confidentiality, and/or refer victims to a professional service provider experienced with DV case intervention.

Based on piloting experiences and results with the toolkit, the government and/or industry associations may consider establishing a framework that can be adopted by employers broadly. Such a framework should define several key strategies for employer response: increasing staff awareness of DV as an unacceptable act; transforming the corporate culture to have zero tolerance of DV and support victims; developing clear policies and procedures for responding to DV and DV victims; building employees’ capacity to identify and deal with DV; establishing the mechanism to enable internal and external cooperation in the efforts to address DV; and monitoring the process and effectiveness of anti-DV programs (Queensland Government, 2016b).

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### ***Raising awareness of employees and the public***

The study's findings also reveal that major factors that have prevented victims from disclosing their experience of DV and seeking help from employers and other stakeholders include concerns about privacy, distrust in the effectiveness of assistance, and the culture of shame on DV victims. Public education to remove stereotypes of and eliminate discriminations against victims, encourage victims to break the silence and bystanders to speak out and offer help, as well as to promote gender equality in general, is fundamental to all efforts to address DV, including those by employers. In this regard, businesses can have a unique role in influencing their consumers by promoting a culture of zero-tolerance to violence and promoting gender equality through their business behaviors.

### ***Producing stronger evidence on the costs of DV and effective intervention models***

Lastly, academic and advocacy groups should continue to strengthen the evidence on the costs of DV to businesses and other sectors such as public welfare, and to society as a whole. High-quality research and data are important vehicles for successful awareness raising, policy, and advocacy efforts. While this study is limited, the research methodologies and tools herein can be used to inspire and enable further research.

The development and documentation of local success cases is equally important. Government, civil society organizations, and industry associations can work together to support pilot actions by pioneering employers, whose practices can be developed into best practice cases. Pioneering employers can be strategically selected depending on their level of commitment and sector representation. Compared with private companies and small employers, public organizations and large employers are more likely to develop anti-DV policies and take action (ICRW, 2016). When possible, employer-driven

programs should be designed to align with the local government and/or the industry-wide strategies to address DV as a critical part of the safety net to protect and support victims and survivors.

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## **Annex 1: Not-for-profit Anti-Domestic Violence Organizations and Free Hotlines**

ACWF's protecting women's rights and interest hotline: 12338

### **Beijing**

Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Centre: 1770-124-2202 ; 159-0133-7457

Beijing Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center: 010-6833-3388

Qianqian Law Firm: 010-84833270/3276

Beijing Weiping Women's Rights & Interest Organization: 151-1790-5157

Rainbow Violence Terminator: 400-0119-964

Women's Voice Net: 010-6480-8179

Sino-Australia Domestic Violence Intervention Center: 010-8465-9225

### **Yunnan**

Mingxin Social Work Service: 180-6483-0617

Xishuangbanna Women and Children's Psychological Counselling and Legal Service Center: 0691-2136406

### **Guangdong**

Shenzhen Pengxing Anti-Domestic Violence Center: 0755-2595-0003 ; 189-2931-5210

Shenzhen Futian District Weide Legal Service Center: 400-343-580 ; 0755-8289-3456

Shenzhen Luohu District Anti-Domestic Violence Center : 0755-25113000

Guangzhou GB Child Care Center:18820095919

### **Shanxi**

Shanxi Theory for Women, Marriage and Family Research Institute: 029-87458899

Shanxi Jiayuanhui Social Service Center: 029-87420063

### **Gansu**

Gansu Yinxin Psychological Counselling Center: 0931-8261536

### **Changsha**

Changsha Kaifu District Xinchun Marriage and Family Service Center: 0731-82290866

Changsha Tongxin Marriage and Family Service Center: 18008473690

### **Jiangsu**

Suzhou Minor Protection and Assistance Center: 0512-6751610

## Annex 2: Chi-2 Tests Results

	Age group df=3	Age group df=1	Educational attainment df=2	Hukou Status df=1	Marital Status df=1	Number of children df=1	Whether or not own real property df=1	Contribution to household income df=3	Individual income df=2	Employment status df=1	Job position df=2	Whether or not travel df=2
In the past year, did you experience physical violence, e.g., beating, trussing?			15.375 0.000			4.448 0.035		8.185 0.042	16.091 0.000	5.231 0.022		7.876 0.019
In the past year, did you experience constant verbal insult?			14.005 0.001	5.621 0.018		4.835 0.028			12.372 0.002	4.519 0.034		
In the past year, did you experience long-term neglect?						3.985 0.046				7.016 0.008		
In the past year, did you experience a form of DV?			6.815 0.033		4.041 0.044		5.669 0.017			5.370 0.020		
Have you disclosed the DV experience to your coworkers / supervisor?							5.727 0.017					

If DV happens to you, will you stand it for the sake of the child?	8.072 0.045	6.901 0.009			10.977 0.001	20.116 0.000				4.319 0.038	10.015 0.007	
If DV happens to you, will you call the police?	15.001 0.002	21.780 0.000	9.292 0.010		13.397 0.000	12.030 0.001						
Should employers discipline perpetrators?	9.080 0.028	22.273 0.000			4.648 0.031				7.752 0.021			
Do you know that the Anti-DV Law has been enacted since March 2016?	16.862 0.001	22.093 0.000	6.303 0.043		8.337 0.004	14.165 0.000	9.515 0.002					
The magnitude of DV impacts		11.914 0.003										

Re: 1. df – degree of freedom,  $df=n-1$  (n – number of groups);

2. In each cell, the figure on the top is the Pearson Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ), and the one on the bottom is the p value: if  $P<0.05$ , then the null hypothesis (the two variables are not correlated) is rejected; otherwise, the alternative hypothesis (the two variables are correlated) is rejected.

3. The result is reported only if  $P<0.05$ , and the two variables are correlated. Thus, an empty cell implies that  $P\geq 0.05$ , and the two variables are not correlated.

### **Annex 3: Self-Testing Questionnaire - Intimate Relationship Crisis**

This survey employs the self-reporting method. This method has many advantages, which are not presented here, as well as some disadvantages. Self-reported answers may be biased because they are affected by the respondent's action style. For example, although the research team promised to strictly protect respondents' privacy, and did not ask respondents to put down their real names, respondents may still be concerned about protecting their privacy and/or avoiding embarrassment; therefore, they may provide fewer details, resulting in underreporting of their DV experience. Moreover, self-reported answers may be affected by respondents' mood. For example, if the respondent had a minor quarrel with his/her partner shortly before filling the questionnaire, his/her answers could be very negative, thus, overstate the DV experience. Consequently, it is hard to predict the direction of the bias. In light of this, at the end of the survey, we include a self-test: "Intimate Relationship Traffic Light – Taiwan: 12Q Self-Testing Questions," a self-testing questionnaire rating the risk level of DV widely used by many professional women's protection agencies, including governments agencies in Taiwan, to help respondents understand the DV risk that they are exposed to in their relationship.

Among 278 respondents who completed this self-test, 34.2% (about 95 people) have an intimate relationship that "flashes" a "red light" or a "yellow light." These self-testing questions are not well-designed for rigorous analysis of respondent experiences with IPV, and so responses are not treated as data in this study. However, the test is a useful tool for helping respondents self-identify possible indicators of IPV in their relationship, and to strongly encourage them to go to a professional counselling service provider if the test indicates warning signs of IPV (or a "red light" or a "yellow light"). A list of domestic violence professional service providers and their contact information is provided on the questionnaire to facilitate respondents seeking help.

#### **Intimate Relationship Traffic Light – Taiwan "12Q Self-Testing Questions"**

1. Everything is determined by my partner. He or she seldom discusses decisions with me.  
yes  no
2. I have to tell my partner about all my expenditures, friends, or whereabouts.  
yes  no
3. My partner thinks that I should put his/her needs the first, and meet all such needs to make him/her happy.  
yes  no
4. It is very difficult to communicate with my partner, and this makes me feel unstable or bored.  
yes  no
5. I feel that I can no longer stand some of my partner's acts or behaviors.  
yes  no
6. My partner said that I was ugly, incapable, useless, or unwanted.  
yes  no

7. We have quarreled about clothes, work, friendships, money, children, housekeeping, and parents.  
yes  no
8. We fight each other because my partner drinks or takes drugs.  
yes  no
9. When we have a fight, one of us threatens to destroy things, hurt himself/herself, hurt the other person, or the relatives of the other person.  
yes  no
10. One of us has beat, pushed, or hurt the other.  
yes  no
11. One of us has forced the other to have sex even if the latter is very unwilling to do so.  
yes  no
12. My partner controls me by means of money, children, or other things.  
yes  no

**Green** (0-1 points): At present, there is no problem in your relationship.

**Yellow** (2-5 points): You are in a somewhat tense relationship. Things will likely get worse if you don't deal with it. You should talk with friends, relatives, and professionals to address the problem.

**Red** (6-12 points): You are in a very tense relationship. A conflict may be triggered at any time. High DV risk. Go and ask for help and professional assistance, to address the signs of DV in your relationship.

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