

A JOB FOR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW? A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Wendy Suzzette A. Buray

Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Philippine Normal University

104 Taft Ave, Ermita, Manila, 1000 Metro Manila

Carlos Miguel C. Ferrer

Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Philippine Normal University

104 Taft Ave, Ermita, Manila, 1000 Metro Manila

Dr. Teresita T. Rungduin

Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Philippine Normal University

104 Taft Ave, Ermita, Manila, 1000 Metro Manila

Abstract— This study explores the experiences of temporary construction workers in the Philippines, focusing on job instability, psychosocial challenges, and coping strategies. Using a phenomenological design and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the findings reveal that workers normalize employment instability, viewing it as a survival necessity despite its toll. Major psychosocial challenges include persistent anxiety, financial insecurity, and hazardous conditions. Nonetheless, workers demonstrate resilience through adaptability, resourcefulness, and reliance on informal support networks. The study highlights systemic vulnerabilities such as unfair wage deductions and limited social protection, underscoring the urgent need for stronger labor policies, worker protections, and mental health support. Insights contribute to improving labor rights, policy interventions, and holistic support systems for temporary construction workers in the Philippines.

Keywords— *job instability; coping strategies; psychosocial challenges; temporary construction workers*

I. INTRODUCTION

Temporary employment in the construction industry is a common labor arrangement in the Philippines, where many workers engage in short-term contracts without long-term job security or benefits (Ofreneo, 2019). The country's construction sector plays a vital role in economic growth, particularly in urban development, yet a significant portion of its workforce remains in precarious employment conditions (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Temporary construction workers often face employment instability, characterized by irregular job opportunities, fluctuating wages, and limited access to social protection programs (Probst et. al., 2014). These conditions not only impact their financial security but also contribute to psychosocial challenges, affecting their overall well-being. Employment precarity in the Philippine construction industry is shaped by labor policies and protective laws. The Labor Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 442) governs employment regulations, outlining provisions for labor rights, working conditions, and termination procedures (DOLE, 2021).

Additionally, the Security of Tenure Act (Republic Act No. 11058) aims to protect workers from contractualization and unjust termination, promoting job stability and fair treatment. However, gaps in policy implementation and enforcement leave many temporary construction workers vulnerable to employment instability. By incorporating discussions on these legal frameworks, this study contextualizes the challenges faced by workers within the broader labor policy landscape.

The research on temporary construction workers' employment instability, psychosocial challenges, and coping strategies aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It addresses SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth by exploring ways to improve job security and working conditions for temporary workers. Additionally, it relates to SDG 1: No Poverty, as it sheds light on how employment instability impacts workers' financial security ("17 goals," n.d.). While existing research has explored the challenges of contractual labor in the Philippines, there is limited literature specifically focusing on the lived experiences of temporary construction workers. Understanding how these workers perceive their employment instability, the challenges they encounter, and the coping mechanisms they develop will provide valuable insights for labor policies, workplace interventions, and mental health support programs. By employing a phenomenological approach, this study seeks to highlight the personal narratives of temporary construction workers, offering a deeper understanding of their struggles and resilience within the Philippine labor context.

In the Philippines, temporary workers fall under the category of contingent employment, which encompasses job arrangements without long-term contracts. This includes part-time, temporary, and project-based work, often lacking the stability and benefits of permanent positions (Supangco, 2008). In the construction industry, temporary workers are particularly vulnerable to hazardous working conditions, as they frequently take on high-risk tasks without the same level of training, protective measures, or job security afforded to permanent

employees (Dong et al., 2015). This exposure to unsafe environments places them at greater risk of workplace accidents and occupational health issues. Construction workers are also frequently hired on a per-project basis, meaning employment duration depends on project availability rather than long-term contracts (Nguyễn et al., 2016). This lack of stability leads to financial uncertainty, making it difficult for workers to plan for their future or provide for their families (Cabegin, 2023). The informal nature of their work also means that many do not have access to benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, or government-mandated protections like Social Security System (SSS) coverage (Department of Labor and Employment, 1993). As a result, many construction workers experience heightened stress, anxiety, and economic vulnerability.

Similarly, in India, temporary construction workers experience precarious employment conditions. Many workers are hired on a per-project basis, with employment duration dependent on project availability rather than long-term contracts (Nguyễn et al., 2016). Financial instability is a major issue, making it difficult for workers to plan for their future or provide for their families (Cruz & Serrano, 2018). Moreover, many lack access to essential benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, or government-mandated protections like the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) in India (Sankaran, 2016). In Indonesia, research has highlighted similar issues, where temporary workers face uncertainty due to weak labor protections and the prevalence of informal employment arrangements (Surtiari et al., 2024). This further exacerbates stress and economic vulnerability among workers.

Studies have explored the psychological consequences of temporary employment. According to De Witte (2005), temporary workers often experience higher levels of job insecurity, which leads to elevated stress, anxiety, and burnout. The feeling of insecurity stems from their perceived lack of control over their work situation, contributing to negative mental health outcomes. In the context of construction workers, this is particularly evident, as Poussette et al. (2008) found that temporary workers in physically demanding jobs reported lower job satisfaction and higher rates of depression compared to permanent employees. In the United States, a systematic review identified several risk factors affecting the mental health of construction workers, including low social support from supervisors and coworkers, lack of organizational justice, financial instability, and maladaptive coping strategies (Frontiers in Public Health, 2023). A comparative perspective further supports these findings. Studies in Mexico indicate that temporary workers report significant mental health strain due to job uncertainty and lack of social security (Ornek et al., 2022). In Indonesia, similar trends have been observed, where temporary workers exhibit heightened stress and emotional distress due to unstable income and limited workplace protections (Llosa, 2018). These international insights reinforce the argument that job insecurity, particularly in temporary construction work, is a critical factor influencing mental health.

Despite these challenges, temporary construction workers develop various coping strategies to manage job-related uncertainties. Many rely on informal support networks, such as family members or community ties, to provide financial and emotional assistance during periods of unemployment (Cabegin, 2023). Temporary workers, according to Gebremariam (2024),

often develop adaptive coping mechanisms such as forming strong peer networks, seeking additional job opportunities, or engaging in physical activities to manage work-related stress. Some workers also adopt psychological coping mechanisms, such as developing resilience and a mindset of adaptability, to navigate the uncertainties of temporary employment (Cruz & Serrano, 2018). Similar strategies are found internationally. In India, temporary workers often depend on community-based savings programs and microfinance initiatives to mitigate financial instability (Jayasheela et al., 2008). In Indonesia, workers frequently engage in multiple part-time jobs to sustain their livelihoods and develop psychological resilience to cope with employment uncertainty (Raharjo, 2020). These studies suggest that coping strategies vary depending on socioeconomic conditions but commonly involve social support, financial planning, and psychological adaptation. In the other countries such as USA, Mexico and etc., workers adopt coping strategies such as delegating complex tasks, seeking medical attention, and engaging in problem-focused coping methods. However, some workers resort to maladaptive behaviors, such as increased consumption of caffeinated beverages or substance use, which may provide temporary relief but can lead to additional health complications (Fordjour et al., 2019).

II. METHODS

The phenomenological research design was used to gain deeper insight on temporary construction workers' lived experiences. The participants will participate in a Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore the lived experiences of temporary construction workers, particularly in relation to the instability of their employment. Participants were selected based on their direct experience as temporary construction workers, ensuring that the study captured relevant and meaningful insights.

Table 1: Participants' demographics

Pseudonym	Ages	Sex at Birth	Designation
Participant 1	54	Male	Painter
Participant 2	64	Male	Painter
Participant 3	52	Male	Mason
Participant 4	25	Male	Painter
Participant 5	50	Male	Painter
Participant 6	48	Male	Welder
Participant 7	26	Male	Cement Mixer
Participant 8	31	Male	Cement Mixer
Participant 9	31	Male	Roofing
Participant 10	21	Male	Welder, Painter, and Tile Setter

A semi-structured interview served as the primary research instrument for this study. This included open-ended questions designed to explore the lived experiences of temporary construction workers sample questions like “*Maaari mo bang ilarawan ang iyong karanasan bilang isang pansamantalang trabahador sa konstruksiyon?*” and “*Paano nakakaapekto ang pagiging pansamantala ng iyong trabaho sa iyong pangkaisipan at pang emosyonal na kalusugan?*”. Which capture how they respond to their job instability and how it affects their lives.

The researchers obtained research ethics clearance, then recruited participants who met the inclusion criteria. The final sample were 10 participants and was selected based on their direct experience as temporary construction workers, ensuring the researcher will capture relevant and meaningful insights. Before participation, informed consent was obtained, ensuring that individuals understood the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation. Participants were given an overview of the focus group discussion (FGD) format, including expectations and guidelines. The discussions were moderated by a facilitator who ensured a neutral and supportive environment that encouraged open dialogue. Each session consisted of 5 participants and lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The study was conducted in a quiet, accessible, and safe location to minimize distractions. The discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and detailed field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and group dynamics. After the FGDs, the recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Any identifiable information was anonymized to protect participants' privacy. The data collected from these discussions were analyzed to uncover common themes and patterns related to the experiences of temporary construction workers.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), was employed to systematically examine the qualitative data from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Following Smith et al.'s six-step framework for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): (1) reading and re-reading transcripts, (2) initial noting, (3) developing emergent themes, (4) searching for connections across emergent themes, (5) moving to the next case, and (6) looking for patterns across cases. By following Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) guidelines, the analysis upheld methodological rigor while allowing for a rich, nuanced exploration of the research topic.

The researchers secured ethics clearance prior to data collection and ensured that all participants gave informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms and securing all transcripts and recordings. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Sensitivity was observed during focus group discussions, with a distress protocol in place should participants experience discomfort.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of the lived experiences of temporary construction workers' on their job instability of their employment. The analysis yielded several superordinate themes, each representing significant aspects of the workers' experiences of job instability, how it affects their psychosocial well-being, and how they cope with those challenges.

Perceptions and Experiences of Job Instability

Theme 1: Normalization of Precarity

This theme was evident in the responses of 6 out of 10 participants, indicating that they have internalized job instability as part of life. Even when it brings hardship, it is seen as expected – a norm rather than a problem to be solved.

“Hindi permanente na trabaho at walang kasiguraduhan kung magkakaroon ka ba ng trabaho ngayong linggo o wala kasi nakadepende sa kailangan...”

(Participant 4, Male, 25)

“Hindi ko nakikita bilang balakid kasi swerte nga kami na nakapasok pa kami kahit wala kami pinagaralan pero swertihan lang dahil mahirap makahanap ng mismong trabaho...”

(Participant 2, Male, 64)

Theme 2: Ever-Present Anxiety and Uncertainty

Despite normalization, participants consistently express unease about what lies ahead, particularly regarding job continuity and income. Participants highlight the importance of saving money in preparation for periods of unemployment, particularly during times of urgent need. However, some are unable to set aside savings due to the constant demands of family expenses.

“laging may pangamba din kasi iisip ka nanaman kung kelan ulit tatawag para magkaroon ng trabaho”

(Participant 3, Male, 52)

“Nangangamba na sana may trabaho kami pagtapos ng isa na project kasi nakaasa din samin pamilya namin na makapagbigay ng pambili ng pagkain”

(Participant 5, Male, 50)

“Wala lang doble sipag para may maipon, para pagkawalang trabaho”

(Participant 6, Male, 48)

Theme 3: Labor as Survival, Not Aspiration

Participants did not view their work as a means of personal fulfillment or career growth. For them, the focus was on survival, providing for their families, and enduring the job conditions as a necessity.

“sa araw araw di na namin naiisip kung madisgrasya man kami.. bahala na si lord saamin lalo na't bahala na si boss samin hahahhahah.”

(Participant 5, Male, 50)

Theme 4: Submission to Hierarchical Work Culture

There is a passivity and deference toward the work culture. Workers follow orders without questioning them, accepting their roles rather than negotiating them. Participants often express gratitude for fair treatment from their supervisors. They also demonstrate adaptability by adjusting to the varying difficulty of tasks based on their physical capacity.

“Kumbaga kung saan ka po ilagay may mahihirap po may mas madali may mga kaya ng katawan mo merong mahirap naman na hindi kaya ng katawan mo kaso pipilitin mo gawin”

“Kung ano inuutos, maglilinis jan, walis walis”

Theme 5: Embodied Risk and Resilience

The job is physically demanding and often unsafe, yet workers downplay these dangers and show resilience in the face of adversity, continuing to work despite physical and emotional tolls.

“Kailangan lagi na mag-ingat lalo na kapag nasa trabaho... Kailangan mag-ingat ka dyan ... Ako minsan nadisgrasya na ko dito e tumama yung bakal habang binababa ko yung hagdan sumipa yung paa ko kaya na outbalance ako kaya nasugatan ako pero binibigyan naman ako ng mga gamot.. anti-tetano.. di naman kami pinapabayaan.”

(Participant 1, Male, 54)

Psychosocial and Social Challenges

Theme 1: Psychological Insecurity Due to Job Instability

The temporary nature of construction work leads to persistent stress, anxiety, and emotional distress. Participants express worry about when the next job will come, how they'll feed their families, and how long they'll remain employed.

“Nakakaapekto sya kasi lagi ka magiisip sa walang kasiguraduhan... mahirap matulog sa gabi na may iniisip... madalas din malungkot lalo na kapag patapos na yung trabaho...”

(Participant 1, Male, 54)

“Nakakapanghinayang sir kasi malay mo last week na namin, sa katulad ko napakahirap, pamilyado sa taong pamilyado, mag iisip nanaman paano diba para mag hanap ng trabaho, sipag na lang talaga”

(Participant 8, Male, 31)

Theme 2: Emotional Strain and Sacrifice in Family Dynamics

Being away from family, often in stay-in arrangements, and having limited financial capacity leads to strain in family relationships. Workers feel guilt, sadness, or pressure due to unmet expectations at home. This distance affects emotional bonds, especially with spouses and children.

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“Hindi gaano nakakasama yung pamilya kasi kailangan kumayod kaya di ko na nga rin halos nakakausap misis ko eh..sa tawag nalang ayon..kasi malayo pa kung uuwi ako eh wala din naman ako pamasaha para makapag-balikan na biyahe”

(Participant 4, Male, 25)

“Sila na nangungulit kahit masakit ang katawan sa trabaho.. kung “kelan ulit ang sahod?”... syempre minsan hindi maiwasan yung away kapag wala talagang trabaho...”

(Participant 2, Male 64)

Theme 3: Negotiating Social Identity and Community Belonging

Despite precarious employment, workers find meaning and dignity in how they're perceived by their communities. They are often called upon for help, referred by peers, or admired for their resilience. It shows a sense of social inclusion, even amidst economic marginalization.

“Opo mas nakakatulong nga po may mga times na pag walang trabaho tas may nag hanap jan na tao na baka may kilala ka daw na ganiyan may narerefer sila “eto magaling yan marunong yan””

(Participant 10, Male, 21)

“Maganda yung epekto namin sa komunidad namin kasi may natatawag sila kapag may kailangang gawin tapos syempre nakakatulong kami tapos kumikita pa kami...”

(Participant 2, Male, 64)

Theme 4: Structural Vulnerability and Exploitation

Temporary workers face systemic issues like wage deductions for tools lost (even if they weren't responsible) and a lack of job security or benefits. These practices reflect a deeper structural inequality in how temporary labor is treated, where workers are financially punished and lack protection.

“Halos lahat naman samin nakakaalam ng problema ng isa't isa unless gagawa ka ng di maganda... ikaw lang may alam non... di mo papaalam sa iba yon... lalo na kapag may nawawalan ng gamit... kahit na hindi naman kami yung nagnakaw. Halimbawa, nasalisihan kami ng kung sino dyan o may pumasok na iba tapos kinuha yung gamit namin... mga ganon... pagdating ng umaga wala na... maghahati-hati kami non tapos ika-kaltas sa sahod namin... di naman papayag yung engineer gamit nya na nawala.. okay lang yon? hindi...”
(Participant 3, Male 53)

Theme 5: Resilience Through Purpose and Grit

Despite the challenges, workers show remarkable psychological endurance. Many adopt a “sipag at tiyaga” mindset, willingly sacrificing comfort for the sake of their families. They rely on perseverance, faith, and the hope of being called back for work to keep going.

“Struggle, maraming struggle, gaya ng sabi ko kanina depende kung saan ka ilagay kasi may mga mahirap na pipilitin mo talagang gawin yung disgrasya kasi hindi mo maiiwasan eh”
(Participant 10, Male 21)

“Pipilitin sir kahit mahirap, parang kailangan eh”
(Participant 9, Male, 31)

Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems

Theme 1: Resilient Mindset and Psychological Endurance

Workers adopt a mental attitude of perseverance (“laban lang”) to navigate uncertainties. They view hardship as a constant and rely on inner resolve, reframing their circumstances with acceptance of limitations due to lack of formal education or alternative opportunities.

“Basta malakas pa at kaya ng katawan... lalaban lang lagi at lakas ng loob kasi kapag nagkakasakit ka minsan kailangan talaga humito aya kailangan lagi mong is-sure na malakas ang katawan mo”
(Participant 2, Male, 64)

“Laban lang lagi sa takbo ng buhay...diba?”
(Participant 1, Male, 54)

Theme 2: Strengthening the Body for Survival

Physical endurance and bodily health are seen not only as work requirements but as active coping strategies. Workers emphasize the need to maintain strength, stay healthy, and practice caution to preserve employability.

“Mas lumalakas yung katawan syempre mas nagkakaroon ng trabaho kaya kaya imbes na mapanghinaan ka ng loob dapat mas lakasan mo pa para maging malakas din katawan mo. Tulad niyan, mas nakakapanghina ng katawan kapag walang trabaho kasi hinahanap-hanap mo na rin na may gagawin ka... kaya para magpatuloy ka sa buhay kailangan parehas malakas yung loob at katawan mo.”

(Participant 3, Male, 52)

“Doble ingat na lang”

(Participant 3, Male, 52)

Theme 3: Social and Familial Support Systems

Family, coworkers, friends, and even supervisors are crucial sources of emotional and material support. Social networks provide financial help, job leads, companionship, and encouragement, creating a sense of shared survival.

“Yung mga pagpapaalala nila, kasi ayan nagpapatibay sa pamilya ko ng loob ko na sasabihin sakín kaya mo yan, kaya natin to pagsubok lang; salita lang pero napakaswerte mo na may mga tao palang ganun satin na nagtitiwala pala satin.”
(Participant 8, Male, 31)

“Pinaparamdam ng mga kasama ko sa trabaho na para kaming isang pamilya.. kung sino ang may kulang ayan dadagdagan yan o di kaya papautangin... kapag may di kaya gawin yung isa, tutulungan...tapos syempre sabay din kami nagsisi-kain kaso yon nga syempre depende sa performance niyo kung sila pa makakasama mo sa susunod na project...”
(Participant 5, Male, 50)

Theme 4: Community-Based Assistance and Kinship

Coping is enabled through tangible support like food, loans, shared resources, and community referrals. Practical assistance, often given without formal structure, emerges from solidarity among workers and their networks.

“Yung kumpare ko lagi ako kinakamusta kung “okay ka lang ba pare?” o di kaya kapag nagsasabi ako na pare dalawang linggo na ko walang trabaho tapos sasabihin niya “hala wala ka pang gawa?” sasabihin pa niya “sige pasok ka muna dito sa kakilala ko” o di kaya “sige umextra ka sakín may trabaho ako ngayon eh” yung mga ganoon nakakatulong din.”
(Participant 4, Male, 25)

“Pagkain ayann... tsaka nakakahiram ka ng pera basta kapag wala rin naman sila sinasabi rin nila tsaka okay lang yon.”
(Participant 1, Male, 54)

Theme 5: Faith as a Source of Strength and Surrender

Faith and spirituality are used as emotional anchors. Workers seek solace in prayer and divine intervention, framing their circumstances within a belief in providence and divine timing.

*"Pamilya, Panginoon natin syempre sa kaniya tayo lalapit."
(Participant 8, Male, 31)*

The internalization of job instability as a natural and expected condition of work aligns with Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) proposition that job insecurity is not merely an objective condition but a subjective experience shaped by context and personal meaning-making. For these workers, the acceptance of precarious employment is a cognitive adaptation to systemic instability. Despite recognizing the lack of job security, participants framed their roles as "opportunities" or "blessings", suggesting a form of psychological adjustment to chronic uncertainty which is similar to Greenstein (2020) idea of the "precarariat," a group of workers who, because they have no other options, accept unstable labor as the norm. (Cabegin, 2023) discovered that both contract and informal workers in Metro Manila, the Philippines, similarly accepted job insecurity as a natural part of life, frequently justifying it with statements of gratitude for just "having work." This normalization serves as a cognitive adaptation that aids workers in coping with the ongoing unpredictability of their working conditions.

Despite normalization, the responses of the participants highlights the emotional weight of job insecurity. Participants described a constant fear of unemployment and emotional burden tied to inconsistent income. This resonates with Cheng and Chan's (2008) meta-analysis which found that job insecurity is consistently associated with elevated levels of psychological stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, Probs et al. (2014) highlighted that chronic stress reactions are triggered by the expectation of losing one's job, even in the absence of actual termination. This anticipatory worry becomes a recurring aspect of workers' mental states in the construction industry, since employment is contract-based and seasonal. Similar consequences were noted locally by Bilal et al. (2022) among Filipino contract-based nurses, who claimed that temporary work led to continuous stress and unstable finances.

Participants also view their jobs as a means of survival rather than a career path. In line with the Job Insecurity Theory, this reflects narrowing work goals under insecure conditions, where workers prioritize short-term income over long-term growth or satisfaction. This shift from aspiration to necessity explains how economic precarity restructures motivation, reducing work to its most basic function which is survival. Job uncertainty frequently limits employees' career prospects and discourages long-term planning or personal desire (Sora et al., 2023) In the article on informal labor in the Philippines, Bernabe et al. (2014) saw a similar attitude, with workers prioritizing daily survival over career advancement. This demonstrates how workers' objectives are reframed by economic fragility, which causes them to prioritize meeting their basic requirements right away. The submission to hierarchical structures and reduced agency illustrates how temporary workers tend to adopt a passive stance in the workplace, often refraining from voicing concerns or negotiating conditions. This can be understood as a

coping mechanism within the power asymmetries of contractual labor. According to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), when workers perceive low control over their job situation, they may withdraw, accept authority, and disengage from proactive behaviors to reduce psychological conflict. The study's participants exhibited task oriented thinking and deference to authority, reflecting this dynamic. Khaw et al. (2022) found that there is frequently a glaring power disparity between employees and managers in settings where employment is erratic, such as in contract or temporary positions. Employees have less control over their working circumstances, compensation, and job security as a result of these power imbalances.

They are in a more precarious position because there are few, if any, official protections or assurances of long-term employment, and their continuing employment frequently rests at the employer's discretion. Because of this vulnerability, workers may fear that raising complaints, requesting improvements, or defending their rights may result in retaliation, such as being dropped from future projects or being replaced by someone more cooperative. Workers are discouraged from speaking up about unfair treatment, unsafe circumstances, or mental distress because they are afraid of being easily replaced, especially in a labor-intensive setting like construction, where many others are prepared to take the job. In the Philippine setting, Casiño et al. (2025) emphasizes that cultural values such as *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal connections) and *utang na loob* (debt of appreciation) have a substantial impact on workers' behavior in hierarchical work contexts. These ideals promote harmony, loyalty, and reverence, while preventing confrontation or dissent, even when workers are exploited or treated unfairly. For example, *pakikisama* emphasizes the need of avoiding disagreement in order to maintain positive relationships with bosses and coworkers, whereas *utang na loob* encourages a sense of obligation to employers who have provided job chances, regardless of the circumstances. As a result, temporary workers may prefer to bear adversity in silence, perceiving obedience and appreciation as moral responsibilities rather than marks of inactivity. Beyond personal coping and cultural adaptation, the experiences of temporary construction workers are also shaped by broader systemic conditions that normalize labor precarity. In the Philippine context, longstanding gaps in labor policy enforcement and the persistence of contractual employment practices, such as the controversial "endo" system, have made it difficult for workers to secure stable, long-term positions. Despite existing legal frameworks intended to protect worker rights, many participants shared that they rarely experienced direct enforcement or support from regulatory institutions. This systemic neglect fosters a sense of resignation and reinforces the belief that unstable employment is simply the norm. Over time, some workers develop a passive acceptance of poor conditions, not out of indifference but due to repeated experiences that suggest speaking out or resisting has little effect. This repeated exposure to uncontrollable job loss or mistreatment can erode a worker's motivation to challenge

unfair practices. Yet, this passivity does not mean complete helplessness. Many participants described quiet strategies for navigating their unstable environment, such as maintaining good reputations to increase the chances of being rehired, forming informal networks to share job leads, or selectively choosing contractors known to treat workers more fairly. These actions reflect subtle, everyday forms of resistance and resourcefulness. Additionally, hope emerged as a recurring theme in workers' narratives. Despite their harsh realities, many spoke of long-term dreams such as starting a small business, sending their children to school, or eventually transitioning to more stable livelihoods. This forward-looking mindset provided emotional strength and a sense of direction, helping them endure difficult conditions with the belief that their sacrifices might eventually lead to a better future. These aspirations, grounded in both personal drive and familial responsibility, highlight how hope itself becomes a vital coping mechanism in the face of chronic job insecurity.

The participants also explain how they tolerate unsafe working conditions and physical exhaustion while remaining resilient. This act of resilience suggests that coping under job insecurity is both psychological and behavioral involving day to day efforts to stabilize their lives in unstable contexts. To support this, Chirumbolo et al. (2022) discovered that workers in unstable employment conditions frequently downplay or normalize occupational dangers in order to cope with the continual fear of job loss. Instead of raising concerns about safety or emotional strain, many workers focus on short-term methods that help them preserve economic stability, such as working through illness, avoiding complaints, or taking on numerous jobs. This type of coping indicates a survival mindset, in which the need to provide for oneself or one's family takes precedence over long-term concerns such as physical well-being or job rights. Building on this, Rice et al. (2016) emphasizes that resilience, or the ability to constructively adjust to adversity, is an important psychological resource for workers facing long-term job insecurity. In physically demanding and unstable industries such as construction, resilience enables workers to maintain motivation and functionality despite weariness, uncertainty, and a lack of security. This does not imply that workers are immune to these challenges; rather, they learn mental toughness, discipline, and practical coping skills to continue working despite the hard surroundings. Without such resilience, the psychological weight of unstable employment could be unbearable. Baltazar et al. (2024) found comparable patterns of resilience and resourcefulness among contractual jeepney drivers. These workers, like temporary construction laborers, frequently experience long hours, physical strain, and inconsistent pay. However, rather than giving up, they rely on informal support networks, such as family, community relationships, and shared experiences with other drivers, to get through difficult times. Their resilience is both personal and communal, driven by collective strategies and cultural beliefs. This demonstrates how Filipino workers cope with precarity not only through individual endurance, but also via social survival and mutual aid.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed the complex and often difficult realities faced by temporary construction workers. Through the lens of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), participants' lived experiences underscored the uncertainties and hardships brought about by job instability, economic insecurity, and limited access to social protection. These conditions contributed to significant psychosocial challenges, including stress, anxiety, and a sense of marginalization. Nevertheless, workers demonstrated resilience through personal coping mechanisms such as reliance on faith, familial support, and peer solidarity. Their narratives reflected not only the struggle for survival in a precarious labor environment but also their strength in navigating these challenges. The study brings to light the urgent need for recognizing and addressing the vulnerabilities of this often-overlooked labor sector. Moreover, it is recommended that policymakers develop labor protection frameworks that specifically cater to the needs of temporary construction workers, including provisions for fair compensation, health benefits, and job continuity. Employers are also encouraged to foster supportive work environments by promoting mental health awareness and inclusive practices. Non-governmental organizations and community groups can play a crucial role in providing legal, emotional, and livelihood support through outreach initiatives. Furthermore, future research should consider examining the long-term psychosocial impacts of temporary employment and explore comparative studies between temporary and permanent workers. Collectively, these efforts may contribute to a more equitable and humane labor landscape for all construction workers.

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