



Phenomenological Look at Psychological Well-Being among Long-Serving Housekeeping Staff at the University of Cabuyao

Christine Mae De Vera Tuboro ^{1*}, Jorein Saludez Bandong ¹, Charmaine Abracosa Pino ¹, Edgardo Cedillo Salazar ², Trisha Marie Azul Tosoc ¹

¹ University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, Iloilo, Philippines

² Recoletos de Bacolod Graduate School, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Negros Occidental, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: **Christine Mae De Vera Tuboro**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 03

May - June 2025

Received: 07-04-2025

Accepted: 08-05-2025

Page No: 1305-1308

Abstract

This study explores the lived experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff at the University of Cabuyao, specifically those with at least 15 years of service and a minimum of 10 years of service before departure, examining their psychological well-being through a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The research aims to understand how long-term employment impacts psychological resilience, motivation, and workplace harmony among housekeeping staff. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), responses from five participants were analyzed, with data triangulation—including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis—enhancing credibility. Eight themes emerged from the findings: (1) Commitment to Work as a Source of Identity; (2) Navigating Job Insecurity with Resilience; (3) Resilience through Positive Mindset; (4) Fostering Workplace Harmony; (5) Empowerment through Family Support; (6) Positive Attitudes and Compassion; (7) Motivation through Feedback; and (8) Long-Term Dedication. Results indicate that a strong work ethic, positive relationships, family support, and a nurturing environment significantly contribute to psychological well-being. The study highlights the need for tailored institutional programs that support long-serving employees, ensuring sustained workplace engagement, resilience, and overall well-being.

Keywords: Data Triangulation, Housekeeping Staff, Long-serving, Psychological Well-being

1. Introduction

Psychological well-being is a vital aspect of overall health, particularly for working professionals who face daily physical and mental demands. Among these professionals are housekeeping staff in academic institutions, who play a crucial yet often overlooked role in maintaining clean, organized, and functional learning environments. At the University of Cabuyao, many of these individuals have served for decades with dedication, arriving early, working diligently, and taking pride in their responsibilities, enabling the smooth operation of campus facilities and supporting the academic mission.

In the context of workplace performance, psychological well-being has been shown to enhance employee commitment, productivity, and job satisfaction. Relevant studies, including Hazareno *et al.* (2022) ^[4] at the University of Cabuyao, have found high levels of psychological well-being among school custodians, citing contributing factors such as job security, social support, recognition, and personal growth. These findings align with national efforts to institutionalize mental health in the workplace, as seen in DOLE Department Order No. 208-20 and Republic Act No. 11036. Such policies mandate that organizations foster employee well-being through comprehensive mental health programs, recognizing the intrinsic link between staff satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff at the University of Cabuyao's Property Management and General Services Department (PMGSD), focusing on how workplace conditions influenced their psychological well-being.

Through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study sought to gain meaningful insights into their day-to-day realities and provide evidence-based recommendations to improve mental health programs and retention strategies for these essential workers.

2. Methods

A. Research Design

This study employed a Phenomenological Qualitative Research Design. According to Hoover (2021) [5], phenomenology clarifies individuals' unique experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to deeply understand the psychological well-being of long-serving housekeeping staff. Delve *et al.* (2023) [3] describe IPA as a qualitative approach that analyzes interview data to uncover themes and meanings, focusing on how individuals interpret their experiences.

B. Research Locale

This study was conducted at the University of Cabuyao, Katapatan Homes, Brgy. Banay-Banay, Cabuyao City, Laguna. The university has been in operation for twenty-one (21) years. It was an ideal location for the study because there was long-serving housekeeping staff in the Property Management and General Services Department (PMGSD) that managed the university's facilities and campus.

C. Population and Sampling

The researchers utilized homogeneous purposeful sampling to identify potential participants through the University's Human Resources Management Department and Property Management and General Services Department. According to Mweshi *et al.* (2020) [6], purposeful sampling is a strategic approach where researchers select participants based on their relevance to the study. According to Thomas (2022) [7], homogeneous sampling seeks to create a sample where all components share the same traits or properties.

D. Research Participants

This study involved five long-serving housekeeping staff members at the University of Cabuyao, all with at least fifteen years of employment. Eligible participants had to be employed for a minimum of ten years before any break from work. Employees with less than fifteen years of service or those with under ten years of prior employment before a temporary break were excluded.

E. Research Instrumentation

The study aimed to gather insights from long-serving housekeeping staff at the University of Cabuyao with fifteen or more years of service. Researchers used qualitative methods, including a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions for five actual participants and three pilot participants, based on Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-being Theory (1989).

Data were analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with verbatim transcripts thematically analyzed using inductive coding. This iterative process refined themes to deepen understanding of participants' experiences (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023) [3]. Member checking was also employed to enhance interpretation credibility.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

During the pilot interviews, researchers noted detailed responses and recorded conversations (with permission) to capture nuances. They also observed non-verbal communication for a comprehensive understanding of behaviors. Afterward, they analyzed the data to identify issues with the interview questions and format, refining their guides for the actual study.

The actual interview process began after refining data collection from the pilot. Informed consent was obtained from long-serving housekeeping staff, ensuring voluntary participation, and code names protected their identities. The validated semi-structured interview included open-ended questions to encourage sharing about psychological well-being. With permission, interviews were audio and video recorded for accuracy and narrative depth, while observational notes captured context and non-verbal cues.

After the interviews, researchers engaged in overt and active participant observation to gain insights into the daily experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff. Over a month, they closely observed and participated in work activities. Though not recorded, detailed field notes were taken. Researchers paired up to accommodate varying schedules and locations, ensuring thorough documentation of each participant's experiences immediately after each observation.

The study also included document analysis, assessing relevant university documents using John Scott's (1990) Quality Control Criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. After identifying themes, data triangulation was conducted across three sources to integrate supporting information.

G. Ethical Consideration

The researchers carefully considered ethical factors to ensure responsible execution of this study. Committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct, they adhered to Article X of the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) Code of Ethics, aiming to acquire authentic, relevant data while protecting participants from potential mental, physical, or other risks.

Researchers obtained informed consent from all participants, as required by the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring they understood the study's purpose, data use, risks, benefits, and their rights, including withdrawal. They prioritized participants' comfort, respecting instances where individuals chose not to share specific experiences. To protect privacy, participants were assigned code names, and data was securely stored, accessible only to the research team and analyst, and kept on a personal computer after the study.

Researchers prioritized participants' well-being by scheduling interviews at their convenience and allowing ample time for sharing experiences. They included breaks, provided refreshments, and created a comfortable environment for open dialogue. Additionally, they acknowledged potential biases in data analysis, striving to set aside personal perspectives to ensure their interpretations were grounded in existing literature and empirical evidence.

3. Results and Discussion

1. Results

This chapter analyzes the lived experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff and their psychological well-being through a phenomenological inquiry. Utilizing semi-

structured interviews as the primary method, supplemented by participant observation and document analysis, the study employed triangulation to gather rich data.

The findings reveal several superordinate themes and their sub-themes, reflecting the staff's psychological well-being. Key themes include:

Table 1: Emerging Themes

Emerging Superordinate Themes	Sub-ordinate themes
Commitment to Work as a Source of Identity, Stability, and Fulfillment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work as Second Home • Job Source of Identity • Fulfillment Through Service • Sense of Responsibility • Positive Work Ethics • Adaptability to Job Demands • Sustaining Family's Necessities
2. Navigating Job Insecurity and Interpersonal Challenges with Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of Work • Physical and Emotional Exhaustion • Managing Diverse Personalities • Difficult Relationships with Colleagues • Job Security Concerns
3. Resilience Through Positive Mindset, Family Motivation, and Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Mindset and Acceptance • Prioritizing Family Needs • Reliance on Faith and Prayer
4. Fostering Workplace Harmony Through Support, Respect, and Social Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and Collaboration in the Workplace • Companionship and Social Bonding
5. Empowerment Through Family and Peer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from Family and Friends • Pride in Supporting their Family • Desire to Support Family Needs
6. Positive Attitude of Resilience, Discipline, and Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Sense of Purpose • Strong Work Ethic • Building Camaraderie • Resilience and Professionalism • Respect in the Workplace
Motivation and Growth Through Constructive Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking for Improvement • Sense of Fulfillment from Acknowledgement
Long-Term Dedication Enabling Family and Personal Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Family Goals • Sacrifice and Dedication

4. Discussion

This study aimed to describe and explore the lived experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff at the University of Cabuyao, focusing on their psychological well-being. Eight key themes emerged from this phenomenological study:

1. Commitment to Work as a Source of Identity, Stability, and Fulfillment: Housekeeping staff develop strong emotional and psychological bonds with their workplaces, which enhance their dedication and determination. This commitment, rooted in a sense of identity, stability, and fulfillment, fosters long-term dedication to their roles. As a result, employees create a

deep attachment to the organization, which leads to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. Staff members are more likely to take ownership of their tasks and maintain focus on their responsibilities. Furthermore, this strong sense of commitment encourages continuous skill improvement and contributes to a positive work environment that benefits both employees and the organization.

- 2. Navigating Job Insecurity and Interpersonal Challenges with Resilience:** The challenges faced by long-serving housekeeping staff include job insecurity and complex interpersonal dynamics. Anxiety surrounding employment stability, particularly during management transitions, creates a sense of vulnerability that undermines emotional well-being. Staff must navigate relationships with diverse personalities, often leading to conflicts that diminish morale. Additionally, the physically demanding nature of their roles exacerbates fatigue and stress, highlighting their remarkable dedication in the face of adversity. This situation underscores the necessity for supportive measures that address job security and improve working conditions.
- 3. Resilience Through Positive Mindset, Family Motivation, and Faith:** Resilience serves as a crucial coping mechanism, especially when individuals encounter significant challenges. Findings from interviews, participant observations, and document analysis indicate that the housekeeping staff's resilience is bolstered by a positive mindset, family motivation, faith, adaptability, and a strong commitment to their roles. These factors enable staff to effectively navigate the demanding work environment, maintain a positive outlook, and ultimately thrive.
- 4. Fostering Workplace Harmony Through Support, Respect, and Social Bonds:** The formation of positive connections among housekeeping staff through support, respect, and social bonds contributes to a harmonious workplace environment that enhances job satisfaction and productivity. These relationships, cultivated through social interactions and collaboration, foster a strong sense of companionship and trust. Such camaraderie encourages staff to take ownership of their roles, engage actively with colleagues, and contribute collectively to the team's success.
- 5. Empowerment Through Family and Peer Support:** Family and peer support play a significant role in motivating and empowering staff. The findings reveal a strong correlation between social support and the motivation to persevere despite the physical demands of their job. The experiences of housekeeping staff illustrate the interconnectedness of their social connections, which foster positive relationships and personal growth while providing a sense of purpose.
- 6. Positive Attitudes of Resilience, Discipline, and Compassion:** The positive attitudes adopted by housekeeping staff significantly enhance their personal growth and overall well-being. These attitudes, characterized by a strong sense of purpose, work ethic, camaraderie, resilience, and professionalism, nurture a deep commitment to their roles and the organization. By recognizing their contributions as essential to the university's functioning, staff experience fulfillment that motivates them to engage actively in their work. This

dedication not only boosts job satisfaction but also encourages continuous self-improvement and the development of strong relationships that enhance collaboration and social connections within the workplace.

7. **Motivation and Growth Through Constructive Feedback:** Feedback from supervisors has a considerable impact on the daily routines of housekeeping staff, influencing their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. The findings indicate that positive reinforcement and constructive feedback from supervisors are viewed as recognition of hard work, which boosts morale and strengthens commitment. Such feedback fosters personal growth and improvement, enhancing staff members' sense of self, independence, and competence.
8. **Long-Term Dedication Enabling Family and Personal Goals:** Long-term dedication to their roles as housekeeping staff significantly supports the achievement of both family and personal goals. This commitment fosters a strong sense of responsibility and purpose, enhancing job satisfaction and emotional fulfillment. Staff members frequently express how the stability and income from their work enable them to support their children's education and fulfill family obligations. Their willingness to prioritize family needs over personal desires reflects a deep commitment that promotes individual growth and overall well-being. Observations revealed their resilience in facing challenges, further emphasizing their emotional investment in their roles.

In addition to the key themes identified, this study underscores significant research gaps regarding workplace psychological well-being, tenure, and the experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff. While existing literature explores workplace satisfaction and resilience, limited research has examined the long-term psychological effects of tenure in physically demanding roles within academic institutions. This study fills that gap by providing an in-depth understanding of how prolonged service impacts emotional well-being, workplace engagement, and career sustainability. The findings highlighted the need for further exploration into the daily realities and perceptions of psychological well-being among housekeeping employees, particularly in educational settings. By addressing these gaps, the study contributes to workplace psychology literature by offering insights into tailored mental health policies, employee support systems, and strategies for promoting resilience among long-serving staff. Additionally, the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and data triangulation strengthens qualitative research in this domain, providing perspectives often missing in quantitative approaches.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study focused on the psychological well-being of long-serving housekeeping staff at the University of Cabuyao. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researchers gained a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of this workforce. Key findings revealed that the housekeeping staff derived a profound sense of identity, stability, and fulfillment from their work, which motivates their long-term commitment to the institution.

Participants viewed their roles as an extension of their homes, fostering a strong sense of belonging and community. However, the study also identified several challenges impacting their psychological well-being, including concerns about job security, navigating diverse interpersonal dynamics, and the physically and emotionally exhausting nature of their work. Despite these challenges, the participants exhibited remarkable resilience, drawing upon their positive mindset, family motivation, and faith as sources of strength.

Moreover, this research contributes novel insights into the unique experiences of long-serving housekeeping staff, highlighting the importance of fostering workplace harmony through support, respect, and social bonds. Such an environment is crucial for ensuring staff feel valued and emotionally supported.

Specifically, the practical implications of this study suggest that organizations should develop comprehensive strategies to address the specific challenges faced by this vital workforce. By recognizing and nurturing the deep commitment and resilience that characterize their experiences, organizations can enhance the psychological well-being of housekeeping staff and foster a thriving work culture.

Lastly, the researchers acknowledged the potential for their own biases to influence data interpretation. They engaged in continuous self-reflection and maintained an open and empathetic approach during interactions with participants to mitigate this bias. By utilizing multiple data sources, the study captured the personal perspectives of housekeeping staff, creating a comfortable environment for participants to share their experiences.

7. Reference

1. Bhandari P. What is qualitative research? Methods & examples [Internet]. Scribbr. 2025. Available from: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/>
2. Boutwell BE. From Lau to Now: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Secondary Educators with Monolingual Driven Language Laws [Internet]. Scholars Crossing. 2023. Available from: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/4688>
3. Delve, Ho L, Limpacher A. What is interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)? [Internet]. 2023. Available from: <https://delvetool.com/blog/interpretive-phenomenological-analysis>
4. Hazareno D, Jumao-as JN, Lante KI, Valente JM. Psychological well-being and job security among school custodians in Cabuyao City. 2022. p. 69–70.
5. Hoover L. Qualitative research designs and research methods [Internet]. 2021. Available from: <https://www.gcu.edu/blog/doctoral-journey/5-qualitative-research-designs-and-researchmethod>
6. Mweshi GK, Sakyi K. Application of sampling methods for the research design. Arch Bus Res. 2020;8(11):180–93. Doi:10.14738/abr.811.9042
7. Thomas B. The role of purposive sampling technique as a tool for informal choices in social sciences in research methods. Res Methods. 2022 Jan;2(5). e-ISSN: 2582-8223.