



Embracing Transformation: A Phenomenological Study On The Adaptations Of Utility Workers

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Abstract—Introduction: Amidst the global crisis, utility workers played a pivotal role in upholding hygiene standards within educational institutions, contributing to a safe learning environment. Utility worker's dedication and hard work helped in reducing the spread of diseases and viral transmissions and ensuring the well-being of the school community during a difficult time. These duty-bound employees sacrifice their own comfort, safety, family welfare, and social inclusion to provide essential services despite the language barrier and their adjustments to new workplaces and jobs. Methodology: The study, employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, explored the experiences of ten utility workers during the global health crisis. Particularly, it aimed to answer the central question; “What adjustments did the utility workers encounter when they started to work in PSD during the pandemic?” and the specific question; “How did the utility workers handle these adaptations?” Results: From their responses, gathered through a semi-structured interview, the researchers discovered four prominent factors: Control Segment, Adaptable Environment, Relevant Engagement, and Empowerment (CARE) - which are the core elements of the transformational experience that affected their adaptations at Philippine School Doha. Discussions: The revelations shed light on the intricate hurdles encountered by the utility workers in that institution, offering pertinent lessons for future global events. This underscores the importance of fostering integration and ensuring the welfare of sanitation workers within educational institutions.

Index Terms—Adaptability, Control, Empowerment, Relevance, Utility

I. INTRODUCTION

Utility workers were needed and critical during the pandemic because they ensured the hygiene and cleanliness in educational institutions. Their persevering efforts ensured that all kinds of surfaces, classrooms and common areas were constantly disinfected, lowering risk of viral transmission among students, parents, faculty, and other stakeholders. Their efforts contributed to the creation of a safe and clean learning environment, allowing parents, instructors, and children to be at ease. Utility worker's dedication and hard work really helped in reducing the spread of diseases and viral transmissions, and ensuring the well-being of the school community during a difficult time.

The world was in the grip of a pandemic, with millions of frontline health care workers providing critical services related to the care of Covid-19 patients. Janitors' work, in particular, suffers from physical and social taints and is largely unacknowledged among these frontline workers as stated by Sharma et al. (2021).

Despite the occupational stigma embedded in their day-to-day work and the high risk of personal contamination and social exclusion, janitors work tirelessly to provide services and adapt to the changes in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. These duty-bound employees sacrifice their own comfort, safety, family welfare, and social inclusion in order to provide essential services. Furthermore, language barriers can be a significant challenge for school cleaners who do not speak the language of the school they work in. Accordingly, Ahmed et al. (2018), stressed that this can make it difficult for them to communicate effectively with their colleagues and supervisors leading to misunderstandings and mistakes.

This study aimed to interview utility workers with the central question: “What adjustments did the utility workers encounter when they started to work in PSD during the pandemic?”. Following the specific question: “How did the utility workers handle these adaptations?” These questions were designed to focus on the main inquiry and elicit more specific responses. The responses were processed and evaluated to derive the recurring themes that will be found in the simulacrum.

This study benefited the following groups of people: the utility workers, so they may learn effective ways to adjust to their environment; the students may learn the rigors of the adaptation of school cleaners amidst the global health crisis; the school administrators and teachers may be able to help the school cleaners adjust using the findings of the study; the human resource managers could use the results of the study to lessen the impact of the sudden change in their working environment; and the future researchers may use this study as a reference in relation to the emerging theories of transformation and adaptation to a workplace. They may also use this study to test the validity of their related study.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized qualitative research, categorically, a phenomenological research design that aims to understand the lived experiences of the participants. Qualitative research aims to have an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. Obrien et al. (2014) stated that this is categorized by describing, interpreting, and developing ideas regarding the experiences and social interactions of people. As further stated by Morrow et al. (2015), a phenomenological research approach is applied in this study as it is designed to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions. Research indicated that phenomenology is concerned with revealing the essence or essential structure of any phenomenon under investigation.

Research Locus and Sample

This research was conducted in Mesaimmer, State of Qatar. Qatar is an independent emirate on the west coast of the Persian Gulf. The capital is the eastern coastal city of Doha (Al-Dawhah), once a center for pearling and home to most of the country's inhabitants. A total of ten utility workers were selected as the participants of this study. The researchers utilized a purposeful sampling strategy to select the participants. Campbell (2020) emphasized that purposeful sampling is used due to its compatibility with the sample relative to the goals and objectives of the research, enhancing the study's rigor and the reliability of the data and findings. The participants for this research were chosen by following the criteria set: (1) utility workers for two or more years ; (2) currently working in a school in Qatar ; (3) under a subcontracting agency ; (4) have undergone training (5) open to all nationalities. The generated criteria were carefully observed such as their genuine views and perspectives that would express their adaptations to PSD.

Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

After the construction of the interview questions, the data collection process started which was based on the central question and specific questions. Then, it was submitted to the selected teachers who had relevant professional backgrounds for validation. Next, to invite the participants, researchers handed over the consent forms to be a part of the study. The participant's schedule on break hours was the basis for the interview's time and date. The interviews took place face to face with the help of a person who could speak his/her native language such as in Nepali and Sinhala.

The robotfoto and interview guide were used to interview the participants. Orientation was also given to the participants to provide them with a run-through regarding the interview process. As for the recordings of the interviews which the participants consented to, the researchers made use of the audio recording feature on their phones. The researchers asked for permission to record the meeting for transcribing purposes. The recordings were necessary for the transcription of the shared experiences of

the participants. Along with the transcription of the oral responses, the interpretation, and analysis of data were utilized thoroughly as part of the qualitative research process. In the transcription, the confidentiality of the participants was observed; therefore, their names were not manifested, instead, they were referred to as P1, P2, and P3.

Data Analysis

The results of this study came from the participants' perceptions and experiences. The research flow was examined using the data analysis procedures listed below, which were derived from the respondents' answers obtained during the planned interview: (1) Transcribing emic data; (2) Transcribing emic to etic; (3) Cool to Warm Analysis; (4) Using the dendrogram tool to find and analyze themes; and (5) incorporating these topics into the research simulator. Through this methodical process, the study obtained a comprehensive and profound grasp of the subject by thematizing and analyzing the experiences of the PSD utility workers. First, the set of data was interpreted using direct transcriptions, which was followed by data cleaning at the first stage of data analysis. The following step in the data treatment generated a dendrogram by clustering and reflecting the cool-to-warm analysis results. From there, the themes and sub-themes were extracted. The research simulacrum demonstrates the interconnections between the various components and embodies the conceptual framework of the study. The themes and sub-themes are then further supported by the second level of data analysis through the application of relevant studies and literature.

III. RESULTS

This study identified the adaptations of utility workers during the pandemic. With the great impact of COVID-19 on all the workers in Qatar, the utility workers in school were also greatly impacted from their school timing down to their sanitation routine. This phenomenological study exhibited the prime factors of the adaptations of utility workers to answer the questions: What adjustments did the utility workers encounter when they started to work in PSD during the pandemic? And, How did the utility workers handle these adaptations? The adaptations of utility workers led to the four core elements of transformational experiences: Control Segment, Adaptable Environment, Relevant Engagement, and Empowerment. These major themes could be abbreviated to an acronym of "CARE" with its underlying sub-themes: for Control Segment- Engineering and Administrative; for Adaptable Environment- Complications and Interactions; for Relevant Engagement- Importance and Functionality; and for Empowerment- Liberal Thoughts and Sacrifice of the utility workers.



Figure 1. Transformational Experiences vis-a-vis Workplace Adaptations

The figure above displays the core elements of transformational experiences about the workplace adaptations of the utility workers at PSD. The four circles constitute the four major themes that are interconnected and

contribute to the adaptations of PSD's utility workers such as; Control Segment, Adaptable Environment, Relevant Engagement, and Empowerment (CARE).

Control Segment

Control, both in terms of administrative and engineering aspects, deeply influences the experience of utility workers in several ways. In terms of administrative control and engineering control, this significantly impacts the experience of utility workers using following the policies and guidelines, and the proper utilization of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety protocols respectively. They influence productivity, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. By optimizing both aspects of control, schools can create an environment where utility workers feel supported and motivated to perform their duties to the best of their abilities.

Administrative control

Utility workers are trusted to uphold the standards of cleanliness, and they have been provided with the means to do these tasks. Administrative control has allowed them breaks and rest times in between their work hours issued by the school allowing them to work efficiently and productively.

"Given a new schedule is important for me, and I like the schedule given to me because it has different timings." (P8)

"I am fine with the schedule and I do not have any problem with it." (P6)

"The schedule is nice because we have a breaktime where we can rest after cleaning." (P7)

Engineering control

Utility workers are also required to follow their schedules, allowing them to carry out their work in an efficient and timely manner, with time allotted for breaks and rest, along with having the proper equipment required to do their daily tasks. This administration-related work is a big help in the everyday lives of these utility workers, as it helps them know how much they should work and what equipment required available that they would be able to use, as stated:

"I underwent training when I arrived here, and the company gave me a uniform for safety which was very comfortable to wear." (P4)

"I do not have any problem with the new sanitation policy, I just need to wear a mask and observe cleanliness." (P6)

"The schedule is nice since I have time for breaks after cleaning." (P7)

"We have the trolleys to bring the different equipment, like spray bottles and towels." (P5)

Adaptable Environment

Utility workers during the pandemic were required to be flexible or adaptable due to increased hygiene protocols, the need for frequent sanitation, and ensuring a safe environment. It involved additional tasks like disinfecting surfaces, handling potentially contaminated materials, and following strict guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus. The workload and responsibility have likely lessened, due to the community not being present in school. After the pandemic, students came back and new sets of utility workers arrived and language barrier was present since most utility workers were not well versed in English resulting in complications.

Complications

Utility workers often have difficulty with speaking with the students, teachers and staff as they have diverse ethnicity and cultural backgrounds, however with time and their exposure to the school environment they grow accustomed to the English language, as stated:

"Of course, everyone here is speaking English. I am not that good in English so I have trouble speaking in English." (P5)

"As a janitor, I found it difficult to speak English because I am not good at it". (P9)

"Every now and then, I have a problem with the people speaking in English because I can not communicate with English very well." (P8)

Interactions

New difficulties set in as the pandemic gradually vanished making the utility workers have more interactions than the usual people do. The utility workers experienced a positive ambience as regards their working relations within the campus. They compared their experiences during and after the pandemic with how they felt about their new working environment and the people they interacted with, as stated:

“Cleaning was not a problem before Covid-19. It is better now to see students happy and back to normal while I enjoy cleaning.”(P3)

“Students here are very nice, especially when they greet us “hello” and “good morning,” so are the teachers and sometimes they give us food to eat.”(P4)

“During the pandemic when there were no students, it was easier to clean. But, after the pandemic, it was quite hard to clean because there are many students present in their classrooms.” (P9)

Relevant Engagement

At the height of the pandemic, utility workers fulfilled key critical roles in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Language is essential in expressing their thoughts and feelings; thus, the language strategies used by utility workers are very significant as they communicate with the people around them. In maintaining a clean, conducive, and safe environment, utility workers need to fulfill their function in sustaining such, as stated:

“I learned English so I can understand others here in PSD. Like in greeting and holding a conversation.(P1)”

“I used to work in sales, that's why I'm good at English.(P9)”

Importance

Utility workers are entrusted with the new environment to be more flexible with the new schedule after the pandemic. This adaptable skill among the utility workers prove how they give significance and value to their work. It is recognizable that these workers found meaning as they venture from one environment or setting to another. As stated by two utility workers:

“I used to clean in the primary department and now I clean in the high school department.” (P5)

“I used to work at the hotel where people speak English but in this school, people speak different languages.”(P9)

Amid the pandemic, utility workers are confronting previously unheard-of difficulties, but they can be addressed by utilizing their relationships with colleagues, adjusting to the changing workplace, and fostering better communication. As stated by two utility workers:

“It is part of my job to clean, so it is fine with me to have different tasks that we prepare on the job.”(P4)

“It is very comfortable, we do not have any problems, and as cleaners we have lots of breaks.”(P5)

Functionality

The functionality of utility workers in a workplace is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, they ensure that hygiene and health standards are met, reducing the risk of spreading diseases among students, teachers, and staff. Next, utility workers also contribute to safety by addressing potential hazards. Their works support organizational efficiency, allowing for smoother operations. Lastly, their presence sets a positive example, instilling important values in students. Overall, utility workers play an indispensable role in creating healthy, conducive, and productive educational environments, as stated:

“Well, now I just clean and fix some stuffs. I have to monitor how many people get in and out, ensuring they are wearing masks and keeping their distance. I have to disinfect everything more often such as tables, chairs, and even doorknobs! It's a lot of work to do, but I have to keep everyone safe.”(P1)

“I have no problems in cleaning during the Covid-19 pandemic, now it is better because we like seeing students here every day which makes us happy. Going to school on time and getting busy even though I am busy, I still enjoy cleaning but I would prefer to clean without the students and teachers around.”(P3)

"Cleaning the canteen, as well as taking out the trash." (P4)

Empowerment

Empowerment characterizes the utility workers' liberality of thoughts and sacrifice in the discharge of their duties and areas of responsibilities. Utility workers have sacrificed a lot of their time to undergo training and extra hours of workloads because they are not only in a new environment but also encountering many new people. Working a 12-hour shift to ensure our safety and free from all kinds of possible diseases becomes the standard routine of utility workers. With the ability to speak freely of their minds with their colleagues who are of the same nationality as them, with the PSD staff, and the student makes their job more interesting which falls under the category of:

Liberal thoughts

Liberal thoughts give utility workers the right to state suggestions and be open to new policy changes. This encourages a better environment because it gives perspective on what challenges and difficulties the utility workers face daily and how they should adjust to the new workplace and sustain a clean and safe environment, as stated:

"What I want is a new schedule for a difference." (P9)

"No, nothing is wrong about not being able to talk, make loud noises, or use our phones while working, so it is fair for the students who are studying" (P3)

Sacrifice

Sacrifice entails the willingness of the utility worker to allot their valuable time, energy and effort despite the demands of the job, such as working overtime while being away from their family. In addition, aside from not feeling well, some utility workers prefer to report to their duties, here is what the participants had said:

"I will do extra work to replace those who are sick and cannot report to their duties." (P5)

"If a co-worker is sick, it will affect our workload, but we would all pitch in to cover. The other janitors are willing to sacrifice for other cleaners because it becomes part of our practice." (P7)

"Even though I'm not feeling well, I still come to school to report to my duty." (P6)

IV. DISCUSSION

Discovering the adaptations of utility workers in a post-COVID era and how the factors of their work contribute to the adaptations, the utility workers undoubtedly realized the value of CARE which is a transformational element in fulfilling their tasks. They were able to project their honest responses and unveiled the four core elements of transformation, i.e., Control Segment, Adaptable Environment, Relevant Engagement, and Empowerment.

CONTROL SEGMENT

The control segment is where the application of personal protective equipment or PPE, exercise caution, and follow safety procedures and requirements. In addition, the policies and guidelines that the subcontractors supply to the main contractors.

Engineering Control

Cleaning protocols were changed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with unknown occupational health impacts. There is evidence that COVID-19 transmission risks from contaminated surfaces are low and that exposure to cleaning products can increase risks of work-related asthma as stated by Wilson et al. (2023). Thus, being at a disadvantage concerning exposure to accidents PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work and it reduces the risk of accidents and injuries as well as the spread of nosocomial infections injuries.

Furthermore, Latif, F. Taswin et al. (2023) stated that according to research, manual workers who use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as respiratory protection get a score of 50%, wearing eye protection gets a score of 20%, in the form of head protectors, hand protectors, and safety vests get a score of 100%. Waste cleaning workers are very at risk of exposure to dust and vehicle emissions, these conditions can cause ecosystem and climate disruption and impact workers' health. visual acuity, fever with one or more symptoms, sore throat or pain when swallowing, runny nose, dry cough, or phlegm. Street sweepers must be very careful when working because there are many potential dangers. They must use personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize this risk. Personal protective equipment is a tool used by a person in his work that is intended to protect himself from certain sources of danger both from work and the environment. Another concern is safety protocols. During the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic, providing safe in-person schooling has been a dynamic process balancing evolving community disease burden, scientific information, and local regulatory requirements with the mandate for education. The risk for infections that may occur within schools is related to the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infections within the local community. Thus, persistent suppression of viral circulation in the community through effective public health measures including vaccination is critical to in-person schooling. Evidence suggests that the likelihood of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 within schools can be minimized if mitigation strategies are rationally combined as stated by Lordan, et al.(2021).

Lastly, in the words of Esposito, et al. (2021) school complies with recommendations for prevention measures and that school facilities can be optimized to significantly reduce the spread of infection. Notably, the infrastructure of schools should be adapted, staff-to-pupil ratios should be addressed, and appropriate education on infectious disease prevention should be provided to ensure safe conditions. In this regard, the universal use of face masks in addition to hand hygiene and safe distancing in schools.

Administrative Control

A utility worker's schedule is typically flexible to accommodate unforeseen daily maintenance, tenants' shifting demands, checklist-based inspection deadlines, and outside events. A worker's daily routine must include proper scheduling, and this is especially true for our utility personnel. They need plenty of time to complete their tasks, but those deadlines cannot be erratic. According to Cheng, et al. (2017), there is evidence that suggests the prevalence of injuries, illnesses, and burnout among those working with nonstandard shift schedules, greater than those of conventional day shift workers. Knowing this, the timings of these workers must not be irregular for their health and safety to be ensured.

Furthermore, the mental and physical health of workers depends not only on what they do at work but also on when they work and for how long they work. The variety of work schedules used by organizations is probably greater now than it has ever been. This variety provides employers and employees with the necessary flexibility to meet diverse requirements. Unfortunately, some work schedules can seriously compromise the health and productivity of employees. Problems are most likely to arise when work schedules are unsympathetic to the body clock, do not allow sufficient time for physiological and psychological recovery, and do not take account of employees' preferences as stated by Totterdell (2005).

ADAPTABLE ENVIRONMENT

The system and the physical aspect are discussed in the Adaptable environment; the system is abstract and the environment is tangible.

Complications

Having miscommunication in someone's workplace is a serious matter. It is a major complication due to the language barrier as they say communication is key, and without proper communication in a workplace, there will be misunderstandings, and communication style was found to have significant effects on expatriate's working performance. Therefore, from the results of the two hypotheses tested, there are meaningful relationships between language barriers and communication style toward expatriates working performance articulated by Ramlan, et. al. (2018).

Furthermore, Cooperation in the workplace is based on communication. Communication in the workplace fosters development in addition to creating and maintaining connections. However effective delivery of information might be hampered by communication hurdles. Lastly, Madera, Yusof, et. al. (2020),

argued that behind each success there is a good relationship and cooperation between all members of the company. To ensure the work goes smoothly, communication is the vital key to achieving it. Without proper communication between the members of the company, the agreement while working cannot be accomplished.

Interactions

After the pandemic, some interactions arose such as filling in for their coworkers when it is needed or the increased workload construct emerged from extensive, task-specific research on the capacities and limitations of the human information processing system; it reflects the perceived margin between task demands and an individual's motivated coping capacity. Furthermore, research findings support the idea that workload is a significant stressor associated with a variety of deleterious psychological reactions, including burnout, in several different samples of workers. A theoretical model is put forth in the present study in which workload is seen as contributing to distress and depression. Increasingly, organizations are experiencing changes as a result of extensive downsizing, restructuring, and merging. As a result of fiscal restraint. Greenglass, et. al.(2003).

Finally, to do all tasks allocated on time and maintain a balance between work and home life, employees must be able to maximize their time and take on more responsibility. To ensure that employee breaks are not interrupted, the organization should have the flexibility to reassess the deadline for completing and collecting employee work. To minimize weariness at work and complete tasks accurately and completely, employees should take a break at the end of the week or month. To ensure that all of their work is completed, employees should be able to prioritize and manage each of their tasks.

RELEVANT ENGAGEMENT

Based on their workload and if they encounter difficulties, interactions at work and with others around them are reflected in relevant engagement.

Importance

The interconnection between linguistic skills, multimodal literacy, and business know-how is crucial for anyone who aims to be successful in today's world of work at an international level. Multimodality in language teaching increasingly draws on multiple channels of communication and not simply text on a page. Multimodal awareness and competence are also paramount in intercultural and interpersonal communication, which has become increasingly common in today's global workplace.

Through the description of the activities implemented in the English for Professional Purposes (EPP) course entitled English for the World of Work. The ability to use English practically and effectively in the workplace includes, as has already been mentioned, multiple skill types: English language skills, strategic skills, and multicultural awareness as emphasized by Hartle, et al. (2022). Findings included the impact of communication on staff satisfaction levels, the need to provide timely and relevant information and communication via a range of mediums, and the need to ensure there was an opportunity to participate in meaningful feedback. Daniel (2020), also stated that In a diverse workforce, poor communication tactics can have a detrimental impact on worker performance. One of the main recommendations is for managers to use a variety of efficient communication techniques to maintain the business and enhance worker performance in a varied workforce. Top-level managers in the telecom industry can foster employment possibilities, offer social comforts and welfare, and assist in the economic growth of local communities, among other positive social change implications.

Furthermore, language communication is of paramount importance in dealing with the tasks assigned to the utility workers to render good service.

Functionality

Cleaning services are a transversal activity that guarantees the proper functioning and conditions of safety, hygiene, and health across all economic sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for clean, sanitary spaces, particularly in health services and other areas with a large number of people. The workers in these services were often placed on the frontline without any specific training or information as stated by Dias, et al. (2022). Janitors are at high risk of COVID-19 infection, as they are among the frontline workers for the prevention and control of COVID-19. Poor occupational safety practices could contribute to the loss of lives of janitors and the general public Daba, et al. (2022). The janitors and housekeeping staff had adequate knowledge of COVID-19, and their attitude was mainly positive with satisfactory practice. The percentage having sufficient knowledge, a good outlook, and acceptable practice, however, may have been greater. More programs that target frontline workers and the general public are desperately needed as the COVID-19 threat to the world grows.

EMPOWERMENT

It is discussed here the rights that the utility workers have, and how freely they can speak their mind. This characterizes their liberality of thoughts and sacrifice.

Liberal thoughts

In a workplace, everyone must have an equal opportunity to be recognized for the value of their labor, and individuals performing various roles within an organization are respected for their contributions. This is also the same for the utility workers of Philippine School Doha as they are the foot soldiers in upholding a clean and safe environment for the students, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. According to Mokoena (2018), management is missing a valuable opportunity to uplift the organization from bottom up with the cleaning unit, these are valuable individuals with influence and they are loyal to the organization. They are more resilient to change than other employees. Their longevity in the company and their experience with prior transition procedures account for their resilience. They have witnessed the expansion of the organization and have stuck around to help out while others have moved on. Particular attention has to be paid to populations who are underrepresented in the labor market and who are not familiar with the terminology or safety regulations about the psychological and physical components of cleaning. This can be achieved in part through the language and job training programs included in this intervention, as well as in part by actively involving, inviting, and including this group in staff meetings at their places of employment. This combination of inclusive measures would help new immigrant cleaners to clarify their roles in the organization of workplaces and raise their status in the social hierarchy and social recognition as a group of employees rather than being perceived as “foreigners” and “service workers” who are mainly being controlled for the quality of their work, as stated by Hviid, et al. (2013).

Sacrifice

According to Potgieter, Ferreira, et al. (2019), Person–job sacrifice positively predicted affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Perceptions of friendship opportunity accounted for the variance in affective commitment. High levels of work-life adjustment career concerns accounted for higher levels of affective and normative commitment. Practical/managerial implications: Addressing the underlying psychological needs espoused by employees’ perceptions of person-job sacrifice, friendship opportunity, and work-life adjustment concerns are important to consider in human resource talent management practices.

Furthermore, Depending on the income and substitution effects, an individual's choice to work longer hours or spend more leisure time will increase as their income grows. Through making marginal adjustments, the well-informed worker reaches an ideal position from which there is no way to increase their usefulness. There might not be a single ideal ratio between employment and leisure time. Workers are more than just logical decision-makers who continuously optimize their options under immutable limitations. Over the past 10 years, many organizations have tried to become more employee/family/personal life-friendly. These efforts have typically involved the creation of policies supportive of work-family balance. Unfortunately, the presence of work-family or work-life policies does not guarantee that they will be utilized or that they will be effective. This may be a result of organizational

cultures or management practices that support long working hours and may discourage employees from taking advantage of these policies in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Thus, while helpful to some people, new policies may have little benefit for the bulk of the working population. This may be the result of deeply held and long-standing assumptions built into the culture of many organizations that may cause resistance to these changes as stated by Jones, et al. (2017).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study implies that although utility workers are capable of being efficient and adaptable workers, they are still vulnerable to drastic changes in environment and culture, especially if they are working in an establishment with a different culture and environment. As an important worker in many industries, it is important to equip them with tools of good quality to ensure that they can perform in superb manners.

This study has created a basis for future research. The adaptability of the lived-in experiences of utility workers revealed the four main components that affect the adaptations of utility workers in the workplace. Control, Adaptability, Relevance, and Empowerment are the core elements of transformational experience that affected their adjustment here in PSD. Control impacts the experience of utility workers following the guidelines and policies, and executing health and safety protocols. Adaptability impacts their work routine, especially post-pandemic by increasing their hygiene protocols. Relevant language strategies, such as the basic English usage and the translation from Nepali, Hindi, Urdu, and Sinhala into English were used by utility workers as they were vital to communicate with the people around them. Empowerment impacts the liberality of thoughts of utility workers and their sacrifices in their work.

This study aims to provide a broad overview of the adaptations of utility workers. This study is recommended for future utility workers and companies who employ utility workers. A guide for them to understand and prepare for what being a utility worker is like. A way for utility workers to learn more about being a utility worker. To the companies of the utility workers, so that they may know more about their employees and what they have to say. Examining the broader social and economic impact of the utility worker profession on communities, including job creation, economic mobility, and social cohesion, the research could explore the role of utility workers in supporting the functioning of essential institutions and infrastructure. Analyzing the experiences of utility workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including their role in maintaining clean and safe school facilities, exposure to health risks, and access to personal protective equipment, the research could inform pandemic preparedness strategies and workplace safety protocols for janitorial staff.

Some janitors may face language barriers, particularly if they are immigrants or non-native speakers of the predominant language in the region. This can complicate communication especially when no one from them can speak English as a lingua franca.

Upon thorough analysis and interpretation of the data contained, the researchers posited the following limitations: the availability period of the cleaners during the interview sessions, the language and vocabulary insufficiency of the participants, and the limited responses originating from them. Moreover, this study can be replicated in the pursuit of investigating other workers' transformational experiences and adaptations in the workplace.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers wish to express their gratitude and appreciation to all those who supported and guided them throughout the study especially to the following:

Dr. Alexander S. Acosta, the PSD principal, for letting the researchers experience crafting a research paper;

Dr. Noemi F. Formaran, the Senior High Vice Principal for supporting and allowing the researchers to conduct their studies in the Grade 11 level;

Dr. Lorina S. Villanueva, the QAAD Vice President for approving this study that was made by the researchers and for authorizing research in PSD;

Dr. Dave B. Buragay, the researchers' Research adviser, for guiding and giving recommendations and advice throughout the study;

Dr. Julie Ann Real, the researchers' Research teacher, for teaching and guiding the researchers throughout the study;

Ms. Monette P. Cayatoc, the researcher's class advisers for giving us the utmost support needed by the researchers; and

Above all, our Almighty God, for giving the researchers the strength all throughout the study.

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Appendix A (Interview Questions)

Embracing Transformation: A Phenomenological Study on the Adaptations of Utility Workers

Central Question:

What adjustments did the utility workers encounter when they started to work in PSD during the pandemic?

Specific Question:

How did the utility workers handle these adaptations?

Developmental Questions:

1.1 How well do you adapt to new situations?

1.1.1. How do you plan your new work routine?

1.1.2. What are some roles and responsibilities you did not have before?

1.1.3. What are your new responsibilities during this post-pandemic?

1.1.4. How is cleaning in school different from your job before?

1.1.5 How did you cope with the change in people?

1.2 What are the actions you took to align yourself with the new change in policy/environment?

1.2.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?

1.2.2. Does the school allow a training period?

1.2.3. How often do you strain your body in a tiring job like cleaning?

1.2.4. How comfortable are you with your new working routine?

1.2.5. What is the equipment used in your job?

1.3 How is your working experience in PSD?

1.3.1. How is your relationship with other cleaners in the school?

1.3.2. How is your relationship with students and teachers?

1.3.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-workers were sick? How would you react?

1.3.4. Are alienations common in your work since you are working in a Philippine school?

1.3.5. How do your work hours affect your performance at work?

1.4 What is the PSD community like? (teachers, staff, students, administrators)

1.4.1. What are your difficulties in communicating with the PSD employees?

1.4.2. Since PSD is a Philippine school, what are the instances where you experience conflicts or misunderstandings due to language barriers?

1.4.3. How long did it take before you become comfortable talking with teachers, staff, and students?

1.4.4 How often do you ask for help from the PSD community?

1.4.5 How often do you experience these language barriers when communicating with the PSD community?

1.5 How can workplace adjustment affect your job performance?

1.5.1. How did you react to the new schedule of the school?

1.5.2. How did the change of schedule affect your work tasks?

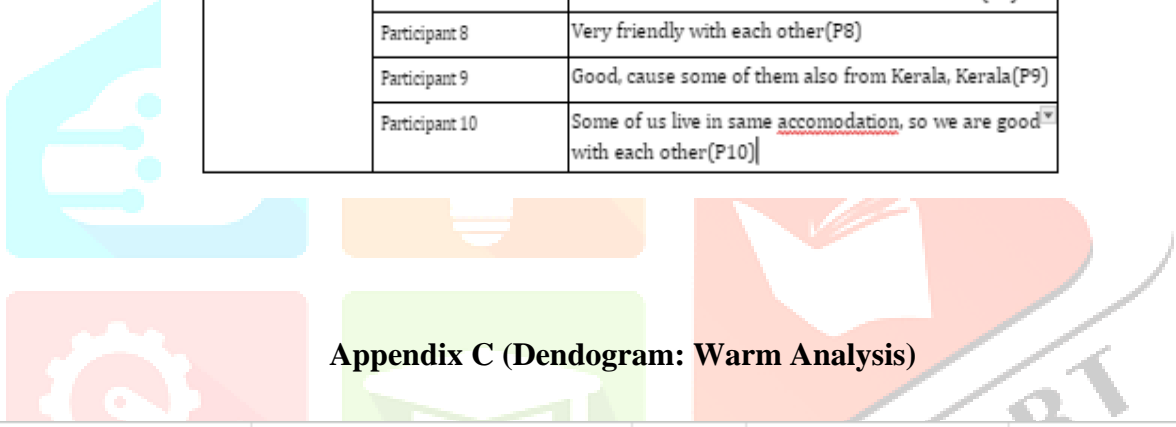
1.5.3. How often were you preoccupied with your job? Do you still have time for yourself?

1.5.4. Would you change anything about your work in PSD? If so, how?

1.5.5. How did you adjust to the new sanitation policy?

Appendix B (Cool Analysis of Data)

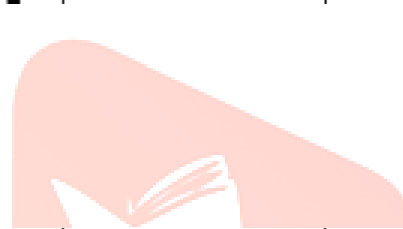
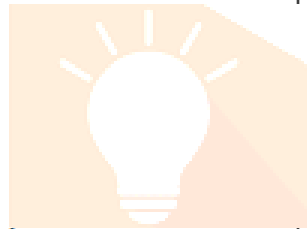
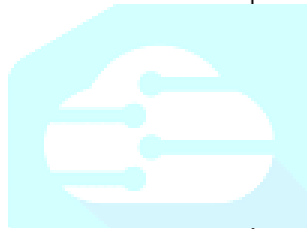
Questions	Participant No.	Etic
1.1 How is your working experience in PSD		
1.3.1.What is your relationship with the other cleaners in school	Participant 1	Yeah, too many (P1)
	Participant 2	It is ok, we are friends and brothers.(P2)
	Participant 3	Yah <u>people better</u> here. They are very good, somebody together. In the same accommodation somebody in stays in stay accommodation other friends stay at the other accommodation.(P3)
	Participant 4	Good all of us live together in uhh accommodation <u>yess</u> , uhh very good friends(P4)
	Participant 5	It is very good, we help each other(P5)
	Participant 6	We are good(P6)
	Participant 7	Ah other janitors yes yes friends, we friends. You know sometimes in accommodation we are one there(P7)
	Participant 8	Very friendly with each other(P8)
	Participant 9	Good, cause some of them also from Kerala, Kerala(P9)
	Participant 10	Some of us live in same <u>acomodation</u> , so we are good with each other(P10)



Appendix C (Dendogram: Warm Analysis)

Questions	Etic	Thought Unit	Themes
1.3. How can workplace adjustment affect your job performance?	Schedule I think very important when new for me , but here is okay I like the schedule now, different timing.(P8)	Engineering control	Control Segment
1.3. How can workplace adjustment affect your job performance?	Before I working also cleaner bute quipment here is better so also better work for me and easier; less tired sometimes you know but also school very big.(P10)	Engineering control	
1.3.1. How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	It's good, I think better than before because before we worked until late but now only until 6:30. (P1)	Engineering control	
1.3.1.How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	It's very good before we work for twelve hours, now we only work for ten.(P2)	Engineering control	
1.3.1.How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	It was okay, we don't do as much cleaning compared to before. Still I don't have any problem with working and cleaning. I like the schedule now and don't want Covid to come again.(P3)	Engineering control	
1.3.1. How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	It's good, I have time to rest and I only do a little cleaning around the school.(P4)	Engineering control	
1.3.1. How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	Even if im on duty for long hours it's okay.(P5)	Engineering control	
1.3.1. How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	Very good very good i don't have any problem with schedule.(P6)	Engineering control	
1.3.1. How did you react to the new time schedule of the school?	I'm okay with the schedule, the work is like eight to nine hours.(P7)	Engineering control	

1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	Schedule(P1)	Engineering control	Control Segment
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	Nothing has changed.(P2)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I have no plan, we just follow the schedule set by our boss.(P3)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I follow the schedule and I clean there*points to grade 7* to there points to grade8 rooms*(P4)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I do the schedule from my managen.(P5)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I do not have plan.(P6)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I use schedule.(P7)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	No plan.(P8)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	No I don't plan.(P9)	Engineering control	
1.4.1. How do you plan your new work routine?	I follow the schedule given by our boss.(P10)	Engineering control	
1.4.5. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	Having to do same thing for me gets boring but it's my job. Having rotations might be nice.(P2)	Engineering control	
1.5.3. How often do you strain your body in a tiring job like cleaning?	No, not too much work so I don't feel tired, sometimes just sitting alone, if you are working I'm with friends so not feeling tired at all. (P3)	Engineering control	



1.3. How can workplace adjustment affect your job performance?	Of course everyone here is speaking English, I'm not that good so have trouble talking and speaking, can't communicate very well so not good especially here it's my job.(P5)	Complications	Adaptable Environment
1.4. How well do you adapt to new situations?	Very hard sometimes, because I don't speak that much English so trust is very low.(P9)	Complications	
1.5.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	Maybe learning more english would improve my job here in PSD so that I can talk to more people.(P5)	Complications	
1.5.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	Maybe if I understand more English, So I could communicate better with the people here.(P10)	Complications	
1.1. How is your working experience in PSD?	Good, just I'm not good in English, so sometimes I don't understand.(P6)	Complications	
1.2.1. What are your difficulties in communicating with the PSD employees?	Sometimes I don't understand, sometimes I do when they hand gestures and signals.(P4)	Complications	
1.2.1. What are your difficulties in communicating with the PSD employees?	PSD employees sometimes speak too fast and I don't understand.(P5)	Complications	
1.2.1. What are your difficulties in communicating with the PSD employees?	I stayed very long in Sri Lanka so I'm not used to speaking English.(P6)	Complications	

1.4.2. What are some roles and responsibilities you did not have before?	Only difference is that now I clean the gym when there's events because before there was covid so no students coming to school.(P9)	Interactions	Adaptable Environment
1.4.2. What are some roles and responsibilities you did not have before?	I used to clean only in classrooms, but now also clean gym sometimes.(P10)	Interactions	
1.4.3. What are your new responsibilities during this post-pandemic?	Ah,i have new responsibilities? Well, now i just clean and fixin' stuff. i gotta keep eye on how many people comin' in and out, makin' sure they wearin' masks and keepin' distance. Also, me gotta disinfect everythin' more often, tables, chairs, even doorknobs! It's a lot more work, but me gotta keep everyone safe, you know?(P1)	Interactions	
1.4.3. What are your new responsibilities during this post-pandemic?	Now I clean much more, because more student.(P2)	Interactions	
1.4.3. What are your new responsibilities during this post-pandemic?	Yah but, cleaning is no problem, but before covid now better, we like uh student everyday here so, we're so happy, going on time also, going uh busy, every time uh busy with the students enjoy cleaning. No students, yah no students, no teachers, alone.(P3)	Interactions	
1.4.3. What are your new responsibilities during this post-pandemic?	More things to clean now? Pandemic no student so easy to clean, but after pandemic more student, so very hard, when student in classroom i cant clean.(P9)	Interactions	
1.4.5. How did you cope with the change in people?	i think for me i cope by having patience learning new people yah.(P9)	Interactions	

1.2.3. How long did it take before you become comfortable talking with teachers, staff, and students ?	Everyone here is nice and speaks English. I understand little English so all is good, very short.(P2)	Importance	Relevant Engagement
1.2.3. How long did it take before you become comfortable talking with teachers, staff, and students ?	All of the students and teachers here speak English. I can understand English so no problem.(P3)	Importance	
1.2.3. How long did it take before you become comfortable talking with teachers, staff, and students ?	More time, because I learned more English before so I can understand ehh talking.(P5)	Importance	
1.2.5. How often do you experience these language barriers communicating with the PSD community?	No, before my job was a salesman so I have experience.(P1)	Importance	
1.2.5. How often do you experience these language barriers communicating with the PSD community?	Not really that much , the students and teachers here speak English, and I can understand English.(P3)	Importance	
1.4. How well do you adapt to new situations?	Good, because you know every few months new job already.(P2)	Importance	
1.4. How well do you adapt to new situations?	Sometimes hard, sometimes good depending on the environment I'm in.(P3)	Importance	
1.4. How well do you adapt to new situations?	Part of my job so it's okay, because everyday is always changing need to be prepared what comes on the job.(P4)	Importance	

1.4. How well do you adapt to new situations?	Nice, all good , my job as cleaner is always changing so very alright, used to it.(P6)	Functionality	Relevant Engagement
1.4.4. How is cleaning in school different from your job before?	In an Indian restaurant before I was a server, now I'm with new people and new food and new culture but everything here is good and nice.(P2)	Functionality	
1.4.4. How is cleaning in school different from your job before?	Before I was a taxi driver in Kerala, India. But now I'm here in PSD because I got opportunity.(P5)	Functionality	
1.4.4. How is cleaning in school different from your job before?	Cleaner as well just from a mall back in Nepal, now I'm here PSD small rooms and short hallway very nice.(P8)	Functionality	
1.4.4. How is cleaning in school different from your job before?	Been here in Qatar for a very long time already.(P10)	Functionality	
1.5. What are the actions you took in order to align yourself with the new change in policy/environment?	I start to eat more, so not getting more tired on the job and also sleeping more at home, so I don't sleep here and get tired.(P8)	Functionality	
1.5. What are the actions you took in order to align yourself with the new change in policy/environment?	Memorizing the places here in school, so I could do a better job.(P10)	Functionality	
1.5.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	No, I'm satisfied with everything, the school gives us everything we need So I'm good and happy here.(P3)	Functionality	

1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	Sometime I can help, do double work, is my friends so no problem. No, leaving the replacement, if they are sick? Leaving the replacement, the other guy. Yah new janitor will come, but he don't knows the, how to help classroom cleaning, so he'll help(P3)	Liberal Thoughts	Empowerment
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	Other times other guy help with the cleaning, I also when they're sick do the cleaning same same(P4)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	I will do extra work to fill in for the sick. (P5)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	Sometimes I ask for help from other janitor(P6)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	If a co-worker were sick, it would affect our workload, but we'd all pitch in to cover I: ah other janitors yes yes friends, we friends. You know sometimes in accommodation we are one there(P7)	Sacrifice	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	Yes, because their work will be on us all so more work for us(P8)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	yah, cause one of them, me, sharing room so yeah(P9)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.1.3. Would you be affected if one of your co-worker were sick? How would you react?	Stressed, because there will be more work for us(P10)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.5.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	Better equipments would be good, so we cleaners would be less tired and cleaning will be easier.(P6)	Liberal Thoughts	Empowerment
1.5.1. What are the things you think can improve your experience working in PSD?	Maybe give us cleaners more salary.(P9)	Liberal Thoughts	
1.5.3. How often do you strain your body in a tiring job like cleaning?	Yeah no it's ok, only a little tired. (P1)	Sacrifice	

Appendix D (Simulacrum)

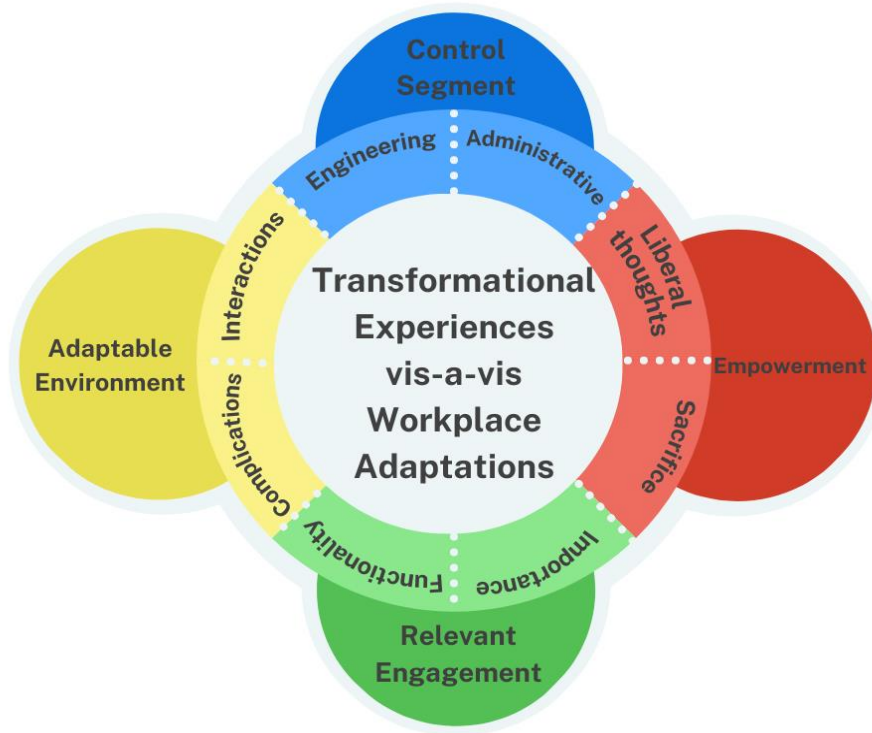


Figure 1. Transformational Experiences vis-a-vis Workplace Adaptations

Appendix E (Interview Protocol)

The method employed in this study was phenomenology. Its purpose was to recall the adjustment of school cleaners. It was the task of the researcher to focus the line of interview questions directly on research-related matters being studied. Interviews will consist of three parts, namely: a) research preparation; b) interview proper; c) transcription and follow-ups.

A. Research Preparation

The researchers introduced themselves and explained the possible interview activities. He explains the nature of the research project. The researcher's contact number and e-mail address will be given and may be used for further communication if the need arises.

Personal appointments for participants will be scheduled should permission from them be granted.

The researcher should equip himself with gadgets needed for the interview such as interview questions, a notebook for note-taking and a recorder. He makes sure that the equipment is in good condition.

B. Interview Proper

- a. The ambiance in a noise-reduced room is essential to set the mood before the interview proper (in the Zoom application).
- b. Casual chatting is made for rapport and a conversational atmosphere for the interview. The *robotfoto* will be filled out and informed consent will be given to the interviewee to be signed.
- c. Name, date, time, and place are indicated. Starts the interview with general open-ended questions.
- d. Listens attentively to the sharing. Raises clarificatory and elaborating questions for probing if it is necessary. Remember that it is a conversation.
- e. Lets the interviewee feel at home by allowing him/her to talk more; elicits as much information as he can, concentrates on the focus/target questions until probing is achieved.
- f. Try to think ahead of the questions so that conversations will not be interrupted.
- g. Asks the interviewee if there is additional information that he/she would like to share.

- h. Asks for other available forms of communication that would enhance the strength of the information being shared.

C. Transcription and Follow-up

- Extracts the recording from the digital recorder to the computer, plays and listens to the conversations. Creates a special folder for the files indicating the date, month, and year of the interviews.
- Transcribes what was said in the conversation. Does not edit the wording of the conversations.
- Prints copies of the transcription and keeps them in a plastic folder.
- Clarificatory questions about the transcript of the interview with the interviewees may be done this time.
- Keeps the archive for reference purposes.

Appendix F (Plagiarism Report)

Plagiarism Scan Report

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Data Collection and Ethical Consideration After the construction of the interview questions, the data collection process started which was based on the central question and specific questions. Then, it was submitted to the selected teachers who had relevant professional backgrounds for validation. Next, to invite the participants, researchers handed over the consent forms to be a part of the study. The participant's schedule on break hours was the basis for the interview's time and date. The interviews took place face to face with the help of a person who could speak his/her native language such as in Nepali and Sinhala. The robotfoto and interview guide were used to interview the participants. Orientation was also given to the participants to provide them with a run-through regarding the interview process. As for the recordings of the interviews which the participants consented to, the researchers made use of the audio recording feature on their phones. The researchers asked for permission to record the meeting for

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Embracing Transformation: A Phenomenological Study on the Adaptations of Utility Workers Dave B. Buragay, PhD, Sophia Joy Martinez, Andrei Jacob Cebedo, Allen Bradley Nuguid, Isabel Bernal, Dean Angelo Armamento, Mohammad Abdul Jalil Lucindo Philippine School Doha, Qatar dave.buragay@psdqatar.com, martinez.sophia@psdqatar.com, cebedo.andrei@psdqatar.com, nuguid.allen@psdqatar.com, bernal.isabelle@psdqatar.com, armamento.dean@psdqatar.com ABSTRACT Amidst the global crisis, utility workers played a pivotal role in upholding hygiene standards within educational institutions, contributing to a safe learning environment. Utility worker's dedication and hard work helped in reducing the spread of diseases and viral transmissions and ensuring the well-being of the school community during a difficult time. These duty-bound employees sacrifice their own comfort, safety, family welfare, and social inclusion to provide essential services despite the language barrier and their adjustments to new workplaces and jobs. The study, employing a qualitative phenomenological research

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



Sophia Joy M. Martinez is currently a Senior High School student under the academic track of General Academic Strand (GAS) at Philippine School Doha. She lived in the Philippines until arriving in Qatar in 2015 where she studied at PISQ until 2020 wherein she transferred to PSD. Since Grade 7, she has been a consistent awardee who also participates in various extracurricular activities. She became the top 2 of her class in S.Y 2022-2023 during the first semester. She joined the Scrabble tournament during the school's intramurals and won the spot of champion. As a form of recreation, she is fond of playing badminton, drawing, listening to music, watching movies and reading books. Her other hobbies include sleeping, painting and solving nonogram puzzles. She lives by the quote "Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time."



Allen Bradley M. Nuguid, born on february 14,2006 and is now 18 years old and is a senior high school student under the academic track of general academic strand(GAS) at Philippine School Doha. He enjoys playing volleyball, Working out, Listening to music, Watching movies/ Series. He believes in the motto "Semper Fortis" or in the modern language "Always Strong" or "Always Courageous"



Isabelle C. Bernal was born on February 11, 2006. Isabelle is a Senior High School student under the General Academic Strand (GAS) at Philippine School Doha. She was the president of her class during the school year 2022-2023. She has been studying in Philippine School Doha for 5 years now and has made lots of new friends over the years. She won first place in swimming in the senior high school intramurals. She enjoys most sports, especially swimming and Muay Thai. Isabelle has been competing in swimming since she was 9 years old and has won multiple awards. She also loves to paint, crochet and is very crafty. She would compete in art competitions back in year 6-7. She believes in the quote “You only live once” so she tries to live life to the fullest.



Dean Angelo B. Armamento was born on April 3, 2006 Doha, Qatar. he is a Senior High School Student under the General Academic Strand (GAS) at Philippine School Doha. Doha, Qatar. He was recently awarded a certificate of appreciation in Volleyball varsity. He enjoys doing activities such as playing football, volleyball and Badminton and he believes that “In achieving big goals, You must start by accomplishing small goals. ”



Andrei Jacob A. Cebedo is a Senior High School student under the academic strand of General Academic Strand (GAS) at Philippine School Doha. He is from Manila, Philippines. He was born on May 14, 2006 in Cebu City, Cebu. He is currently a grade 12 student of Philippine School Doha, in the section Tantalum under the advisory of Ma’am Monaliza Cayatoc, in the top 16 of his class. He enjoys spending his free time reading and playing games. He believes that no matter what happens, you have to move forward in life because life will not wait for you.



Mohammad Lucindo H. Abdul Jalil He was born on October 15 2005 is a Senior High School student under the academic strand of General Academic Strand (GAS) at Philippine School Doha.. He lives in Manila city, Philippines. He was born on October 15 2005. Now he is currently a senior in year 12 in the section of Tantalum under the advisory of Ms. Monaliza P. Cayatoc. He plays bowling as a sport and as a hobby He was recently awarded as gold medalist in the 23rd GCC bowling tournament in Dubai. He quotes that in “Every failure, success would come even better.”

