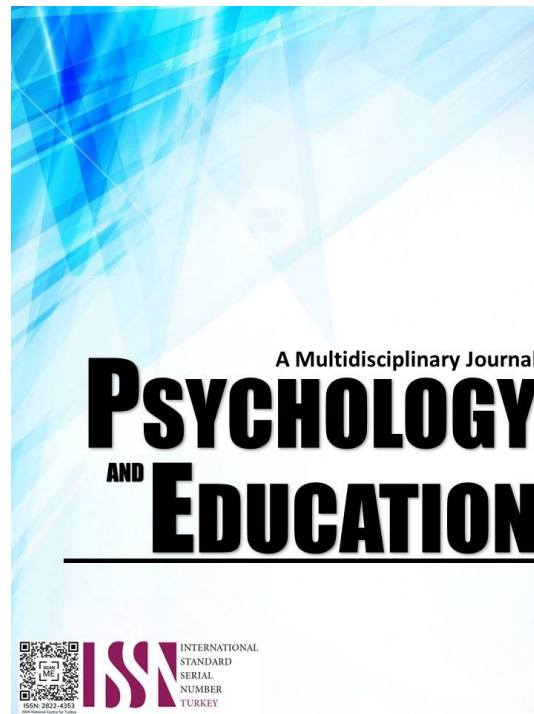


# **LABANDERO: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MALE DRY CLEANERS AMIDST GENDERED OCCUPATIONAL ROLES**



**PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL**

2023

Volume: 7

Pages: 247-252

Document ID: 2023PEMJ544

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7657701

Manuscript Accepted: 2023-16-2

## Labandero: A Qualitative Study on the Lived Experiences of Male Dry Cleaners Amidst Gendered Occupational Roles

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### Abstract

The gendered occupational role can have an impact on both employees and organizations they work for. This study aims to explore different sides and factors that are related to experience, challenges, and coping mechanisms of male dry cleaners amidst gendered occupational roles. The methodology used were: Heideggeran Phenomenology, Semi-structured Interview Guide, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by van Kaam and modified by Moustakas. This study had 15 participants. Based on the data collected, the following themes were identified in this study; namely, (1) The Steadfast, (2) and The Challenged. Likewise, the following sub themes were identified from the data-gathering and are based on their perspectives. Masculinity of a male laundry employee can really affect the perspective of an individual, the more the male look masculine the more that the people can easily conclude that his physique is not suitable on the jobs like laundry, because people always expect that men should work on a heavy work like truck, construction sites, etc.

**Keywords:** *quality of life, challenges, lived experiences, female tricycle drivers*

### Introduction

The gendered occupational role can have an impact on both employees and organizations they work for. The masculinity and femininity of a woman and a man cannot be separated from their gender even though it can be organized, divided, and create some event of any situations that can also result in advantages and disadvantages for men and women in the work that they have (Chalmers, 2014). According to the American Sociological Association (2017), stated that a person's gender can make them qualified for the specific position. For instance, males do the duty of firefighters while females carry out the duties

Gender and Economy (2015), men stepping into female-typed roles experience the highest rates of compliance.

Therefore, owners also want to keep up their top-notch dry-cleaning services to reassure their clients that they can match their standards and provide the greatest service possible (Global News Wire, 2020). Interestingly, according to Mintel's study (2015), out of 2,000 male and female consumers, 67% of men aged between 18 and 34 said they are mainly responsible for their laundry. With men doing the whole of laundry work, advancement in technology can help men perform laundry even better and focus more on themselves.

of nurses which may also result in gender stereotyping at work, and Under the section 2 of Equal Pay for Equivalent Jobs that employees should not discriminate in any other circumstances at their place of employment, including their gender, which can affect their wages, and even the opposite sex for employment at a position of equal value regardless of the job that they engaged in (Fair Pay Act, 2007).

Furthermore, gendered division of occupations was facilitated by the intensification of the naturalization of feminine and masculine characteristics. Women's occupations were more closely linked to dexterity and the fields of care and education, whereas men's occupations were typically based on physical strength, the exercise of high public office, and professions involving knowledge and power. According to

According to Hirsh et al. (2016), the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace is rooted in a 'gender subtext' – a set of often concealed, gendered power-based processes and organizational arrangements that differentially confer value on men and women (Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998). To mitigate the gap, the study presents the following systematic arguments regarding the lived experience of male dry cleaners which were focused on its other factor. The category men are not associated with several activities including explicit one and being in the same part of the house. Men's categories comprise the physiological capacity to understand the concept of cleaning and doing household chores and willingness to do it (Bianchi et al., 2012). Moreover, a considerable amount of research has primarily focused on

masculinity in general and its ideology provides material regarding the unrealistically high expectation that is placed on the experience of men (Corra, 2013). Some studies literally focused on what society tells but not in what really men's standard and nature to do. Most men struggle with the stereotype that they are messy but in fact it has nothing to do with the gender but in the personality itself (Austin, 2015) Gender occupational roles are part of the society. This finding examines how accountability of gender expectations is used to enact social actions (Stoeke, 2008). Also, to contribute positively to society as men are experiencing different things that they suffer with. Hence, to change the perception of most people and men being able to work in kinds of work than women do. This study aims to explore different sides and factors that are related to experience, challenges, and coping mechanisms of male dry cleaners amidst gendered occupational roles. The study involved an interview in which respondents will be expected to tell what their real experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms are.

As of now the laws that are implemented are for both genders. The law that is dedicated for men is very limited. This research wants to give the lawmakers a thinking that men also need more protection from any kind of abuse and unfairness.

### Research Questions

The study will explore the lived experiences of male dry cleaners amidst gendered occupational roles. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of male as a dry-cleaning worker?
2. What are the common problems of being a male dry cleaner employee?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of the respondents on being a male dry cleaner?

### Methodology

This study employed Heideggerian phenomenology to explore the participant's lived experiences.

### Participants of the Study

The study involved 15 male dry cleaner employees. Similarly, it is critical to consider whether the participants chosen under these criteria are willing to participate in a face-to-face or online interview. Additionally, each participant will receive an initial orientation or debriefing to avoid spontaneity.

### Instrument of the Study

This study used a semi-structured interview guide whose trustworthiness has been ensured by comprehensive content validation by experts in the field. The three main themes of this study will be condensed into a set of interview questions that the researchers will create. The questions mainly focused on the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of male dry cleaners who were working amidst gendered occupational roles.

### Data Collection Process

The researchers utilized a semi-structured interview with the male dry cleaner staff to expand the study's findings. Depending on the participants' availability, the discussion took place in-person or online. For transcribing, each participant was asked if they would agree to the discussion being recorded. Participants will be given the ain personthat all information and data will be kept private after the discussion.

### Ethical Considerations

The approval of the data collection method and instrument by the research professor ensures that consent is obtained and that ethical guidelines have been properly complied to. Participants who were selected and qualified to participate based on the defined criteria were requested to give explicit consent via informed consent with the professor's aid. The method for data collection was followed as the consent form was

discussed. The participants' research objectives regarding their voluntary 19 involvement were defined, and they were informed that they could withdraw at any time. The study's aim and objectives were also given to them. Participants were reassured that all information gathered during the study's development would be utilized only for academic and research objectives, without regard for their identities, and under code names. Confidentiality was also covered. As mandated by Republic Act 10173, participants voluntarily provided personal information will be kept private and will not be utilized in a manner that violates the Data Privacy Act.

## Data Analysis Procedure

There are several methods of gathering qualitative data. Recording and transcribing interviews is one of the greatest strategies to avoid content discrepancies. Interpreting the information obtained from the struggles and experiences of male dry cleaners. The verbatim comments made by each participant will be included in the interview transcripts and carefully examined. In this study, the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which was developed on the modified Van Kaam technique made well-known by Moustakas, was employed. Horizontalization, breaking down experiences into their invariant parts, thematic clustering to develop core themes, comparison of different data sources to validate the invariant parts, crafting of individual textural descriptions, construction of composite structural descriptions, and synthesis of texture and structure into an expression are the seven key steps.

## Results and Discussion

Based on the data collected, the following themes were identified in this study; namely, (1) The Steadfast, (2) and The Challenged. Likewise, the following sub themes were identified from the data-gathering and are based on their perspectives.

### The Steadfast

According to Alcala (2021), perseverance indicates when certain individuals are determined and will not give up easily, specifically in working toward their challenging goals. It is a way of shaping character and accepting different consequences that could possibly face. As participants mentioned in the interview there are two (2) factors and ideas that make them come up with this; those are Motivated amidst the struggle, and Everything for my family regarding the workplace. It clearly shows how male dry cleaners grapple with the idea of working in this kind of work.

### Motivated amidst the struggle

Male employees in the laundry shop are criticizing their own abilities in the workplace. But despite the situation they still give themselves encouragement and a positive mindset to continue with the work that they have. The Self-determined are those male dry cleaners who feel motivated not just to fulfill the responsibility but also to provide their psychological needs. According to Lopez (2022), self-determination puts the individual in the driving seat, it makes the

person both responsible and potentially culpable for whatever happens.

“Ako ay nahihirapan sa trabaho pero tsina-tiyaga ko kasi kailangan ng pamilya ko tsaka yung misis ko wala kasi siyang trabaho ngayon.” Based on participant 1's response, the reason that motivates him to persevere in work is to provide for his necessity. It doesn't matter what work it is, what is important is he earns money and to support his own family as well.

### Everything for my family

Male employees who work at a laundry shop, and who have their own family right now are more likely to work to support the needs and wants of their family. Mavungu (2013) stated that the prevalent conception of fathers as primarily agents for providing financial and material support for children and families. In addition, fathers' capacity to live up to provider expectations is impacted to play such a role.

“Okay lang naman, maganda naman at nakahawak ka ng pera lalo na at nagkapamilya na ako nagpokus talaga ako sa pamilya ko kase dati kase yung asawa ko yung nagtatrabaho sa ano kaya pinasok nya lang ako.”

According to Fishilevich et al.(2022), money is the driving force behind choosing a career and that's why jobs are generally regarded as chores. Furthermore, an article of Aaron (2021), supports that most people would do better if they concentrated on the main priority such as family and personal goal rather than getting caught up in too much detail.

### Gender dominance

Gender influences how work is organized, rewarded, and experienced, and it operates at all levels of social life (Wharton,2020). However, idealized aspirations may also be seen in the fact that young men and women, despite supporting the usual gendered job pattern, stated that they intended to share primary caring responsibilities.

“What other people don't see kasi kaya din kasi ng lalaki ang maging laundry attendant and actually this is the great opportunity para maka gained ng experience and also sa income na din.”

Participant 5 also stated that being a part of this work is a great opportunity for them to understand and experience more about this kind of work. It clearly shows that even though there has gender inequality and stereotyping presents in their workplace it doesn't make any sense. It makes them to view their own self more equally in others.

## The Challenged

Focusing on your positive qualities, skills, and strengths rather than your limitations can give positive insights in life. It can also increase the confidence level and not just that, but it can also influence even the mental health and quality of life of the person. In other words, it is important to balance what will be the best for you as a person because it makes the people unique and even how to handle any difficult situations. (Cherry 2022)

## Working Hard

Employees will achieve significantly higher levels of organizational effectiveness, including financial performance, customer satisfaction, productivity, and employee engagement, if the workplace has a culture of value and positivity (Organizational culture, 2015).

“Kaya ko naman gampanan yung trabaho ko eh kailangan lang dapat at alam mo yung mga papagawa sayo o proseso nun maiwasan lang na hindi magalit yung customer sa service na ginawa mo”.

Based on the participants' responses, the more the individual values their work, the more they gain trust from their colleagues in the workplace that results in them to be more motivated and productive.

## Eagerness to learn

Cavoulacos (2022) stated that challenging yourself on your own sometimes makes you feel grown and skillful individually as a person. It can be hard and difficult when it comes to work, but it will also help you to learn how to handle the situation.

“Pero dahil sa kailangan natin ng trabaho, nagamay natin yung trabaho”. So for participant no 6 based on his own perspective as a male employee on the laundry shop he knows that mostly of the women works in there are suitable for that kind of job but despite of that even he is a male laundry attendant and his gender is different that normally people see on the laundry shop because the most important for him is to maintain the goal that he have and perform his job very well when it comes to his customers.

## Conclusion

Based on the summary of finding, following are the conclusion: (1) The males working on a laundry experiences gender stereotyping in terms of how well they are doing their job as a laundry employee, there are times that they are being compared by the customers to their co-employee that is female because of the cleanliness they are doing. But not most of the employees experienced this kind of treatment. The researchers can conclude that most of the people in the society no longer have that gendered kind of perspective. (2) They are also experiencing distress because of the desire to be better and do their job and not be compared to others. Even so, the male employees convert that kind of feedback to a motivation to do the work more effectively and efficiently. (3) Masculinity of a male laundry employee can really affect the perspective of an individual, the more the male look masculine the more that the people can easily conclude that his physique is not suitable on the jobs like laundry, because people always expect that men should work on a heavy work like truck, construction sites, and etc.

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