

# Intersectionality in Unveiling Selves: A Phenomenological Study of Psychological Distress and Resilience of OFW Breadwinners in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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## ABSTRACT

Economic challenges in the Philippines continue to drive Filipino breadwinners to migrate abroad. Although psychological distress and resilience among migrant workers and breadwinners have been widely studied as separate constructs, these experiences have rarely been explored through an intersectionality lens that considers the negotiation of multiple identities held by OFW breadwinners. Thus, this study explored the psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners in Riyadh through an intersectionality framework, recognizing that intersecting identities produce unique experiences of vulnerability and adaptation. Breadwinning, understood as the responsibility of providing financial support for one's family, serves as a central role shaping the lived experiences of OFW migrants. To grasp the psychological perspective the study was guided by narrative identity theory to provide a nuanced understanding of how OFW breadwinners construct their identity by making sense of their life experiences through personal stories. Through a phenomenological research design with narrative analysis applied, the findings of the present study revealed that OFW breadwinners experienced initial migration adjustment challenges upon their arrival. Eventually, they encountered family-induced and work-induced psychological distress where emotional distress was manifested as a response to these stressors. Concurrently, challenges in negotiating multiple intersecting identities in everyday life surfaced. This prompted an established (re)definition of self-concept. Thereafter, psychological resilience was developed through the coping strategies identified in the study. Ultimately, the findings of the study provided a nuanced understanding of the lived experience of OFW breadwinners, and can contribute to the growing body of literature on Filipino migrants and/or breadwinners.

**Keywords:** Psychological distress, psychological resilience, intersectionality framework, self-concept, OFW breadwinners, lived experiences, narrative identity theory

## INTRODUCTION

Economic challenges including low wages and limited career opportunities in the Philippines have been identified by Yeh (2025) as the primary motivators of Filipinos to work abroad. In line with this increasing population, there is a growing body of literature which investigates a variety of phenomena experienced by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) as they are susceptible to face adversities. These commonly include identity struggles (Yeh, 2025), demanding work conditions, cultural barriers, and racial discrimination (Jesus & Adducul, 2024). These complex experiences highlight the crucial role of Intersectionality Framework (Crenshaw, 1989). Particularly, this framework provided a nuanced understanding on how social identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status intersect with one another to produce unique discriminatory or oppressive experiences.

Migrant workers, such as OFWs, refer to individuals who move to another country for economic reasons (Tataru, 2020). They are generally defined as a professional who holds employment outside their country of origin, either through independent engagement or assignment by their employer. On the other hand, breadwinning, as a phenomenon, refers to the role of earning money to provide for one's family (Schmidt, 2018). Thus, breadwinners have the obligation to support their family's needs (Geronimo et al., 2024) through providing the largest contribution of the household income (Ostan et al., 2022). Traditionally, this role has been associated

with men, but modern understandings recognize that women can be breadwinners as well. The meaning of being a breadwinner goes beyond just having a job. This involves the personal and social significance people attach to financially supporting their families (Schmidt, 2018). Despite their differences, migrant and breadwinner identities can overlap with one another creating a unique social position.

As a result of their complex experiences, previous studies reported that psychological distress is highly inevitable for migrants and/or breadwinners. Psychological distress occurs when an individual experiences an unpleasant mental state characterized by negative emotional and psychological symptoms (López-de-León et al., 2025). Moreover, feelings of stress, pressure, and anxiety are prevalent among Filipina breadwinners (Quindoza et al., 2025). Notably, these are rooted from the pressure of providing the basic needs of their families, leaving them to disregard their own emotions. This confirmed that studies have indicated that many individuals face difficulties in fulfilling the responsibilities of being the sole provider in their household (Geronimo et al., 2024). Thus, intersectionality emphasizes how overlapping social identities interact, often intensifying or buffering the effects of one another, which can influence mental health outcomes like stress and anxiety (Woods, 2024).

Nevertheless, despite the challenges associated with being a breadwinner, they are still able to develop psychological resilience from the social support they receive, particularly from their families, friends, and colleagues (Casipong et al., 2022). Psychological resilience refers to the ability of an individual to adapt and overcome adverse or traumatic experiences (Olcese et al., 2024). As for migrants, resilience is enhanced when their sense of purpose and belonging are fostered by their developed social identity (Brance et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Ostan et al. (2022) emphasized the need for more research studies to be conducted on other aspects that may have contributed to the lived experiences of Filipino breadwinners. Additionally, as the declining role of male breadwinners have become evident in research studies (Nene et al., 2023), Quindoza et al. (2025) suggested a need for balanced gender participants when exploring the lived experiences of the said target population. A growing body of literature has delved into the lived experiences of migrants and breadwinners separately. However, limited studies have investigated the lived experiences of migrant breadwinners from an intersectional perspective.

As the researcher was born and raised in Riyadh by OFW parents, the motivation to explore this phenomenon is greatly influenced by her exposure to the OFW community. Over time, noticeable changes in the community and culture of Riyadh have also become inevitable. One of these changes is that not all OFWs who are currently working in Riyadh are breadwinners. These OFWs are primarily working for their own benefits. Additionally, OFWs were commonly associated with occupations such as domestic helpers and nurses. However, over time, they have increasingly been employed in diverse industries, including education, media, beauty, construction and engineering, as well as administrative and financial services. Another observable phenomenon is that children of OFWs, or Third Culture Kids (TCKs), would return to the Philippines to finish their education and would return to Riyadh again for work, where they already have a sense of familiarity with the host culture. Therefore, the researcher is primarily focused on the lived experiences of first-generation OFW breadwinners and is interested to explore how they navigated their challenges and built resilience coming from different perspectives and backgrounds (e.g. occupation).

Moreover, this study is designed to contribute significantly to the discipline of Psychology, specifically in the fields of Clinical, Social, Cultural, Cross-Cultural, and Filipino Psychology. This can contribute to the clinical field as the present study is concerned with the psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners. Shedding light on these two psychological domains can help the field to further enhance a better understanding on the overall well-being of OFW breadwinners. Since an intersectionality framework was applied, this study will also enrich the growing body of literature in Social Psychology by examining how intersecting social identities and roles influence the participants' self-concept. In addition, this study adopted a Cultural Psychology perspective to offer an in-depth understanding of how the distinctive "OFW culture" in Riyadh shaped the psychological experiences of first-generation breadwinners. The study challenged predominantly Western-centric psychological studies by examining the social identities and adaptive strategies employed by this specific population. Therefore, the findings enhanced Cross-Cultural Psychology by providing valuable insights for future comparative studies of migrant experiences across various nationalities and host cultures. This will contribute to help differentiate culturally specific patterns from potential universal aspects of resilience. Lastly,

this study can contribute to Filipino psychology by providing a nuanced understanding of how Filipino values such as family responsibility, relational identity, and resilience are expressed and negotiated within contemporary migration contexts. It also extends the discipline by situating Filipino psychological experiences within transnational settings, highlighting how culturally rooted concepts continue to shape identity and coping among Filipinos working abroad.

Taking the aforementioned findings of past studies and research gaps into account, the present phenomenological study intended to explore the lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience through an intersectional framework among OFW breadwinners who are based in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the study was guided by narrative identity theory (McAdams, 2013), an individual's evolving life story that integrates the past, present, and future to create a sense of unity and purpose, to grasp a better understanding of their complex lived experiences. Hence, a qualitative approach was applied as it is deemed necessary for the present study to yield invaluable insights.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Identity Formation

Burke and Stets (2009) defined identity as a collection of meanings associated with the positions that individuals occupy in society (role identities), social groups that they belong to and identify with (group identities), and the distinctive ways in which they perceive themselves (person identities) (Stets and Serpe, 2013). These meanings represented the individuals' responses upon reflecting their role, social, and person identity. Identity processes are emphasized to be crucial in understanding how migration affects migrants' overall psychological well-being (Henríquez et al., 2021). As elaborated by Henríquez et al. (2021), individual and collective identity established a sense of belonging which *"helps maintain feelings of security, strength, competence, and self-acceptance"* that fostered one's overall well-being (Haslam et al., 2009).

Migrant workers commonly leave their home countries in the pursuit of better financial support for their families. Although this decision improved their relatives' economic situation, it can prompt harmful effects on the migrants' mental well-being (Mucci et al., 2019). Being far from home and lacking close family support often led to increasing feelings of insecurity and loneliness.

Alanazi (2020) identified that both life stress and adjustment levels are increased, with a negative significant correlation, among poor female breadwinners in Saudi Arabia. Conceptually, this is interpreted as higher stress is associated with lower adjustment. Among the sources of stress, economic stress ranked highest, while family-related stress ranked lowest. This study's findings may not be directly focused on identity however, it discussed adversities experienced among poor female breadwinners, which suggested that these have an influence on one's identity formation.

Relatively, Brance et al. (2024) underscore that migrants are susceptible to adverse experiences, including prejudice and disconnection from their previous identities during integration, and psychological strain. Findings revealed that resilience against these are enhanced by one's social identity. Once this is formed, it can foster an individual's sense of purpose and belonging. Furthermore, the importance of social identity continuity and the development of new identity pathways is emphasized, as it promotes successful adjustment and fosters the psychological well-being of first-generation migrants.

Maghinay's et al. (2014) results identified eight crucial factors that influence the identity formation of Filipina breadwinners: *"Acceptance, Sacrifice, Beyond Positive Thinking, Becoming a Strong Person, Fulfillment, Identification, Independence, and Feeling of Stress, Pressure, and Worry."* Hence, this finding is deemed relevant to the present study as it is primarily focused on Filipina breadwinners.

### Relevant Social Identities in Migration

This section sheds light on previous studies that have identified a variety of social identities and roles from an intersectional perspective, all of which contribute to the overall well-being and experiences of the marginalized,

migrants, and breadwinners. The following literature explores the influence of breadwinner, gender, familial, cultural, religious, and professional identities on these groups.

### **Breadwinner Identity**

A breadwinner pertains to an individual, regardless of gender, who assumes primary responsibility for financially supporting the family's needs by contributing the largest share of the household income (Nene et al., 2023; Geronimo et al., 2024; Ostan et al., 2022). Moreover, the term 'breadwinning' originated from the word 'bread' as this was referred to as a type of staple food. Meanwhile, 'winning' pertains to the act of earning. Therefore, the individual who earned and provided most of the family's income was considered the one bringing home the bread (Kagan, 2024).

Previous studies have identified breadwinners as a population susceptible to psychological distress, including stress and anxiety, due to the financial responsibilities associated with their role (Nene et al., 2023). Nevertheless, despite these challenges, breadwinning has also been associated with positive psychological outcomes, such as increased confidence, independence, self-worth, and strong personality (Geronimo et al., 2024).

Within the Filipino cultural context, breadwinning is closely intertwined with the value of filial piety, which emphasizes strong family loyalty and close kinship ties (Ostan et al., 2022). Rather than viewing financial provision solely as an obligation, many Filipinos perceive supporting their families as an expression of familial love and responsibility. This cultural orientation often motivates individuals to seek employment abroad to provide greater financial stability for their families in the Philippines. Consequently, while previous studies commonly portray breadwinning as a role driven by obligation, the Filipino perspective suggests that it is also deeply rooted in voluntary commitment and family-centered values.

### **Gender Identity**

Gender has historically shaped societal expectations of breadwinning, with men traditionally viewed as the primary financial providers and women expected to assume caregiving responsibilities within the family (Terrighena & Barron, 2020; Chesley, 2016). As increasing numbers of Filipina migrant workers entered the labor force abroad, these traditional gender roles began to shift. Employment overseas enabled many women to attain financial independence while simultaneously challenging conventional expectations of motherhood, caregiving, and family responsibilities. Consequently, these changing roles often required migrant women to renegotiate their identities within both the family and the workplace (Terrighena & Barron, 2020).

Despite these changing gender dynamics, breadwinning continues to be influenced by gendered expectations. Men remain subject to the social expectation of being strong providers, which may discourage emotional expression and help-seeking, thereby increasing psychological distress (Budyantara & Soetikno, 2025). Conversely, previous studies have suggested that the influence of the traditional male-breadwinner norm varies across sociocultural contexts, with weaker adherence to this norm being associated with greater relationship stability during periods of male unemployment (Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2022). Furthermore, Geronimo et al. (2024) demonstrated that homosexual men who serve as breadwinners encounter many of the same emotional challenges experienced by heterosexual breadwinners, suggesting that financial responsibility may transcend differences in gender identity and sexual orientation.

Collectively, these findings suggest that gender identity shapes how individuals experience and make sense of breadwinning. However, previous studies have largely examined breadwinners through gender-specific populations, often focusing separately on women or men.

This supports the recommendations of Nene et al. (2023) and Quindoza et al. (2025) for more balanced gender representation, highlighting the need to examine how gender intersects with other identities to influence breadwinners' psychological distress and resilience.

### **Familial Identity**

Familial identity refers to an affiliative identity that individuals are born into and usually remains in the

background, but can be drawn upon in times of need or stress (Naughton et al., 2015). For migrant workers, migration requires a continuous negotiation of family identity as they balance their responsibilities to their families in the Philippines while adapting to new roles in the host country (Liao, 2022). Notably, constant communication with family members has been shown to reinforce this sense of familial identity despite prolonged physical separation. Moreover, it is important to take note that in addition to the sudden disruption of the physical and sociocultural familiarity of their home country upon relocation to a foreign land, they must navigate complex negotiations within the host society, which often constructs them as outsiders based on distinctions of nationality, social class, race or ethnicity, and gender.

Previous studies consistently highlight the central role of family in shaping breadwinners' psychological experiences. Social support from family strengthens breadwinners' sense of identity, perceived importance, and overall well-being, as reflected in interventions such as the *Keep in Touch* (KIT) program developed by Nene et al. (2023). Similarly, Ostan et al. (2022) suggested that Filipinos commonly assume breadwinning responsibilities as an expression of familial love rather than obligation. However, this strong family commitment may also contribute to psychological distress. Quindoza et al. (2025) found that Filipina breadwinners often prioritize their families' needs at the expense of their own well-being, while Terrighena and Barron (2020) reported that unmet financial expectations frequently lead to guilt and emotional strain among Filipina migrant domestic workers. Likewise, Guo (2019) demonstrated that strong family commitment influences migrant workers' occupational decisions, often making them more willing to endure unfavorable working conditions to fulfill their family responsibilities.

Collectively, these findings suggest that familial identity functions as both a protective and a risk factor. While close family relationships provide emotional support, purpose, and motivation, they may also intensify psychological distress through heightened financial expectations, self-sacrifice, and competing family responsibilities. This highlights the importance of examining familial identity alongside other intersecting identities to better understand breadwinners' experiences of psychological distress and resilience.

### **Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity refers to a dynamic and evolving sense of self that develops through the interaction of personal characteristics, cultural values, and lived experiences (Ezekwem-Obi et al., 2025). For migrant workers, migration requires the continuous negotiation between the cultural values of their home country and those of the host society, making cultural identity an important aspect of their adjustment and psychological well-being.

Among Filipina migrant domestic workers, migration challenges cultural identity as individuals navigate between maintaining their Filipino identity and adapting to the sociocultural environment of the host country (Terrighena & Barron, 2020). Difficulties such as language barriers, limited mobility, prolonged separation from family, and unfamiliar cultural practices may contribute to feelings of loneliness, stress, and uncertainty, increasing vulnerability to anxiety and depressive symptoms (Mucci et al., 2019). Consequently, migrants continuously negotiate their sense of belonging while adapting to new cultural expectations.

Despite these challenges, cultural identity may also serve as a source of psychological resilience. Yeh (2025) identified gratitude, faith, and community support as important resources that enabled Filipino migrant teachers in Taiwan to navigate immigration-related challenges and cultural stereotypes. Collectively, these findings suggest that cultural identity is not merely maintained throughout migration but is continuously reconstructed as migrants negotiate their Filipino identity alongside the sociocultural norms of the host country. This ongoing process of identity negotiation shapes both their psychological distress and psychological resilience.

### **Religious Identity**

Remarkably, Terrighena and Barron (2020) highlighted the study of Van der Ham et al. (2014), which revealed that a total of 90% of Filipina migrant domestic workers self-identified as religious. The majority of their participants have perceived the act of prayer and the concept of religion as crucial for coping with adverse experiences. Indeed, religious involvement has been associated with high self-esteem, a characteristic that can aid individuals to protect themselves from humiliation or abuse in the workforce. Moreover, this suggests that

religious identity is not just merely a belief system. It is also considered as a functional protective asset which fosters the psychological resilience of the Filipinos (see *Psychological Resilience*). Consistent with what has been discussed under *Cultural Identity*, the identified motivating factors: “gratitude, faith, and community support”, of Filipino teachers in Taiwan were influenced not only by their cultural identity but also by their religious identity (Yeh, 2025). Nevertheless, these findings are highly relevant to the present study, as it focuses on a population of Filipino migrant workers.

### **Professional Identity**

Professional identity pertains to how individuals perceive themselves as part of a certain profession by gradually internalizing its values, norms, and behaviors (Toubassi et al., 2022). It is an active and ongoing process, allowing individuals to integrate their personal and professional selves while navigating the expectations of their field.

Occupational downgrading, or the loss of occupational status experienced in the host country, can lead to significant challenges to an individual’s identity and sense of self-worth, which are shaped by personal attributes, professional roles, and group affiliations (Fernando and Patriotta, 2020). This often triggers one’s sensemaking processes wherein, individuals attempt to interpret and rationalize their circumstances through retrospective understandings to maintain coherent identities. By rationalizing their occupational downgrading experiences, individuals can reframe their experiences to preserve or reconstruct their self-concept. Liao's (2022) found that migrant domestic workers frequently negotiate their professional identities while navigating challenging relationships with employers and stereotypes that portray them as less educated or unskilled. These experiences highlight how professional identity is continuously negotiated rather than merely maintained throughout migration.

Rather than solely contributing to psychological distress, professional identity may also foster psychological resilience among migrant workers. Yeh (2025) demonstrated that Filipino professionals working abroad often make conscious efforts to assert their professional identity in response to discrimination and shifting occupational expectations. Likewise, Cai and Zimmermann (2024) found that stronger identification with the host community is associated with more favorable labor market outcomes among migrants. Collectively, these findings suggest that professional identity extends beyond occupational roles and serves as an important psychological resource that shapes migrants' adaptation, self-worth, and resilience. Moreover, professional identity does not operate independently but interacts with other identities, such as being a breadwinner, family member, and migrant, in shaping experiences of psychological distress and resilience.

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is a critical theoretical and analytical framework that explains how multiple social identities interact to shape individuals' lived experiences within broader systems of power and inequality (Nicoll, 2024). Specifically, it focuses on how social identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status intersect with one another to produce unique discriminatory or oppressive experiences. Consequently, individuals' experiences of privilege, marginalization, psychological distress, and resilience cannot be understood through a single identity alone but through the interaction of multiple identities situated within specific sociocultural contexts.

This framework has increasingly been applied in psychological research to provide a more nuanced understanding of resilience among marginalized populations. For example, Adeyeba et al. (2025) demonstrated that the psychological resilience of Sexual and Gender Diverse youths of color can only be fully understood by examining the intersection of social, cultural, and individual identities. Relatively, Geronimo et al. (2024) applied an intersectionality framework to examine the lived experiences of homosexual male breadwinners, revealing how the interaction of gender, familial, and breadwinner identities shaped their emotional experiences and identity development.

Moreover, these findings demonstrate that intersectionality extends beyond identifying multiple identities as it provides a framework for understanding how these identities simultaneously shape individuals' psychological experiences. Accordingly, the present study adopts an intersectionality framework to examine how the identities

of OFW breadwinners intersect to influence their experiences of psychological distress and resilience. By recognizing the dynamic interaction of these identities within the sociocultural context of Riyadh, the study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners.

### Psychological Distress in Migrants

As migrants move to another country, it is inevitable for them to face certain challenges with regard to establishing their sense of belongingness and self-concept during this period (Barua & Maheshwari, 2025). This occurs as they are adapting to a new environment, traditions, social norms, and language. Consequently, failure to overcome these challenges may contribute to identity conflicts, diminished self-esteem, and psychological distress, particularly among migrant workers who must simultaneously adjust to new occupational and sociocultural contexts.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that migration-related psychological distress is closely intertwined with individuals' multiple social identities and life roles. Forced migrants often experience identity disruption when previous roles lose meaning within a new cultural environment (Maehler et al., 2025). Similarly, breadwinner mothers experience psychological distress arising from the simultaneous demands of financial provision and traditional caregiving responsibilities (Chesley, 2016). Among Filipino migrant domestic workers, psychological distress is further intensified by cultural transitions, conflicting social expectations, discrimination, and difficulties establishing a sense of belonging within the host country (Terrighena & Barron, 2020). Collectively, these studies suggest that migration involves not only physical relocation but also the continuous negotiation of personal, familial, and cultural identities.

Among Filipino breadwinners, psychological distress commonly manifests through financial strain, family pressures, emotional exhaustion, and role-related stress (Nene et al., 2023; Ostan et al., 2022; Quindoza et al., 2025; Cabrera, 2025). Financial responsibilities, family expectations, and deeply embedded Filipino values such as *utang na loob* often compel breadwinners to prioritize their families' needs over their own well-being, contributing to stress, anxiety, guilt, and emotional exhaustion. However, previous studies have largely examined these experiences by focusing on specific groups, such as migrant workers, breadwinner mothers, or Filipina breadwinners, rather than examining how multiple identities simultaneously shape psychological distress.

As these studies have explored various psychological distress experiences among male and female migrants, breadwinners, and breadwinner mothers, intersectionality acknowledges that these identities are interrelated and can either intensify or lessen one another's impact. Furthermore, these studies have confirmed the statement of Woods (2024) indicating that the combination of multiple identity-based experiences can result in increased stress, anxiety, and other mental health difficulties.

### Psychological Resilience in Migrants

Migrants are widely recognized as a population vulnerable to prejudice, identity conflicts, and psychological strain. According to the results of Brance et al. (2024), they found out that social identity enhances resilience that leads to fostering the sense of purpose and belonging of migrants. These help protect against psychological distress and promote well-being, particularly among ethnic minorities and migrant populations facing exclusion, discrimination, and integration challenges (Brance et al., 2023).

Within the Filipino context, religion has consistently been identified as an important source of psychological resilience among migrant workers. Terrighena and Barron (2020) found that Filipino migrant domestic workers frequently rely on prayer and religious beliefs to find meaning in adversity, maintain hope, and cope with workplace challenges. This reflects how religiosity is deeply ingrained in the religiously oriented Filipino culture. Additionally, the study reported that most of them identify as religious and rely on prayer for guidance and a sense of control when facing difficulties. Thus, reliance on faith not only promotes acceptance and emotional relief in uncontrollable situations but is also associated with higher self-esteem, which can protect their mental health and well-being amid challenges such as abuse or humiliation at work.

Similarly, breadwinners derive psychological resilience from supportive interpersonal relationships. Casipong

et al. (2022) reported that breadwinners perceive high levels of social support, particularly from their families, which serves as an important source of emotional strength and unconditional acceptance. Likewise, Ostan et al. (2022) observed that breadwinners demonstrate resilience by persevering through hardships while remaining committed to providing for their families. Although fulfilling the breadwinner role often entails personal sacrifices, family understanding and mutual support help strengthen their capacity to adapt to adversity.

Nevertheless, breadwinners may encounter challenges that they find difficult to manage, which can lead to a decline in their mental well-being. However, despite the overwhelming adverse experiences, they still have the capability to smile and bounce back, particularly, they maintain strong relationships with their family and friends (Nene et al., 2023).

## **Synthesis and Research Gap**

The review of related literature collated research studies relevant to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. It included discussions on diverse experiences affecting migrants' and/or breadwinners' psychological distress and resilience from an intersectional perspective, encompassing breadwinner, gender, family, cultural, religious, and professional identities.

However, it has been evident that literature has primarily studied the social identities of migrants and breadwinners separately, resulting in a limited understanding of their intersectional experiences. Limited studies have focused on how the psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners are shaped through an intersectional framework. Previous studies consistently indicate that both Filipino migrant domestic workers and breadwinners experience significant psychological distress, which stems from identity conflicts, conflicting social narratives, and emotional instability (Casipong et al., 2022; Quindoza et al., 2025; Terrighena & Barron, 2020). As for psychological resilience, Filipino migrant domestic workers and breadwinners demonstrate psychological resilience through coping mechanisms such as religiosity and strong perceived social support from their networks (Casipong et al., 2022; Terrighena & Barron, 2020). Nevertheless, these studies on psychological distress and resilience were able to yield these findings of experiences in a general lens, which overlooks the use of a thorough intersectional framework to explore how various identities intersect and influence the participants' experiences. Indeed, intersectional perspectives provide a nuanced understanding of human behavior and mental health within specific social and historical contexts, thereby enhancing the accuracy and inclusivity of psychological research among diverse populations (Nicoll, 2024). A growing body of literature has examined how intersecting identities influence the experiences of marginalized groups, migrants, and breadwinners. However, limited attention has been given to migrants who are also breadwinners. Accordingly, the present study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature by exploring how psychological distress and resilience are shaped through an intersectional framework among OFW breadwinners.

## **Research Questions**

The present phenomenological study intends to explore the lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners who are based in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the intersectionality framework. Furthermore, in order to provide a nuanced understanding on the phenomenon, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

### **Central Research Question:**

How do the intersectional identities of OFW breadwinners influence their psychological distress and resilience?

### **Research Sub-questions:**

1. How do OFW breadwinners perceive their identities?
2. How do intersectional identities shape the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners?
3. What significant experiences contributed to the psychological distress of OFW breadwinners?

4. How did the experiences of OFW breadwinners shape their psychological resilience?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present phenomenological research study was guided by the Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) and Narrative Identity Theory. As mentioned in “Intersectionality” of the review of related literature, the notion of intersectionality is considered as a critical theoretical and analytical framework. Crenshaw perceived identities and group affiliations as fluid, socially constructed, and varying across contexts (Nicoll, 2024). Specifically, it focuses on how social identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status, intersect to produce unique discriminatory or oppressive experiences.

Utilizing intersectionality can provide a nuanced understanding of how individual outcomes are shaped. Thus, these outcomes result from the integration of individuals’ multiple identities and social positioning within systems of power and inequality. Notably, the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2021) emphasized that conducting psychological research should aim to benefit society and promote the common good. Hence, applying Intersectionality Theory is highly relevant to the present study, as it can help explain the occurrence of adverse experiences in the lives of OFW breadwinners.

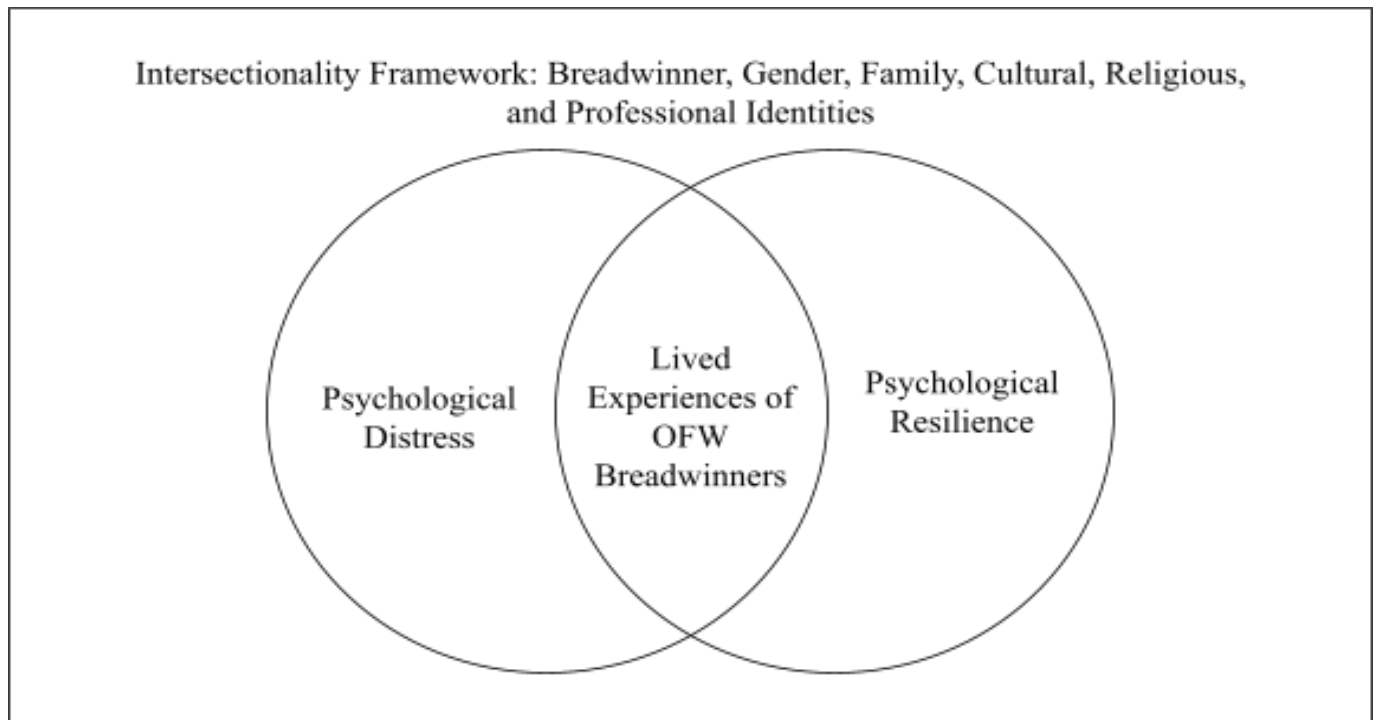
As for McAdams’ (2013) Narrative Identity Theory, it pertains to the internalized and evolving life story of an individual, wherein, the reconstruction of past, present, and future is integrated to provide a sense of unity and purpose to their life (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Studies centered on the association between life stories and adaptation revealed that narrators who were able to navigate redemptive meanings from suffering and adversity, and who narrated their life stories around themes such as personal agency and exploration, tend to manifest increased levels of mental health, maturity, and overall psychological well-being.

Research on the development of narrative identity from childhood to emerging adulthood highlights the crucial role of conversation and social contexts in shaping narrative skills, identity expectations, and the construction of a meaningful life story. Different cultures provide distinct themes, images, and story frameworks, which individuals selectively adopt and adapt as they craft personal narratives. Consequently, understanding narrative identity requires examining how life stories develop across diverse societies, nations, and cultural groups. Furthermore, Narrative Identity Theory primarily posits that identity development is heavily influenced by social interactions and personal stories (Barua & Maheshwari, 2025). Barua and Maheshwari (2025) conducted a study that delved into the complex relationship between migration and self-identity. They reported that migrants frequently contemplate their migration experiences and integrate them into a personal narrative that clarifies their identity, origins, and future aspirations. Such narratives help make sense of their experiences, encompassing challenges, resilience, adaptation, and achievements.

Moreover, the present study was guided by Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) first in order to grasp a nuanced understanding of the social structures of contexts that shapes the narratives of OFW breadwinners.

Henceforth, while Intersectionality Theory provides the social context, Narrative Identity Theory (McAdams, 2013) offers the psychological perspectives on the psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners rooted in their intersectional experiences. Nevertheless, integrating these two theories yielded the present study to conclude robust findings that are invaluable to the growing body of literature on intersectionality and the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework on the Lived Experiences of Psychological Distress and Resilience Through Intersectional Framework among OFW Breadwinners

In order to address the identified research gaps and formulated research questions, the figure presented above visually depicts the overall concept of the present study. This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience as outcomes of OFW breadwinners' intersectional experiences. Furthermore, Narrative Identity Theory served as a guide to gain a nuanced understanding of how the participants have developed a sense of unity and purpose through their narratives. Hence, a qualitative approach with a phenomenological research design was applied to gather an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

### Research Design

A phenomenological research design was utilized to meet the objectives of the present study. It is one of the approaches outlined by Creswell (2006) for conducting qualitative research. In this design, it seeks to establish the individuals' meaning of their shared lived experiences of a certain phenomenon. This was done while setting aside any preconceived notions or assumptions that the researcher may have related to the phenomenon being studied (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022). Particularly, this type of research design is a preferred choice in previous studies exploring identity formation among Filipino homosexual male breadwinners (Geronimo et al., 2024), challenges faced by single Filipino breadwinners in Qatar (Ostan et al., 2022), lived experiences of OFWs in the workforce (Jesus & Adducul, 2024), and exploring the lived experiences of Filipino breadwinners through the cultural lens of "utang na loob" (Cabrera, 2025). Inasmuch as their focus is on the distinct lived experiences of Filipino breadwinners and OFWs, and since their research objectives and participants are relatively similar to the objectives of the present study, a phenomenological research design is indeed the most appropriate design for the present study. Through the guidance of this research design, the researcher explored the lived experiences of how OFW breadwinners' psychological distress and resilience are developed by their intersectional identities or experiences. In order to yield invaluable results, the researcher gathered the data through conducting semi-structured interviews.

### Participants and Sampling

The researcher deliberately selected the participants based on criteria that targets a population of OFW breadwinners. Specifically, OFWs who are (a) first-generation migrants, (b) young adults, (c) the primary breadwinner of their families in the Philippines, and (d) based in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be selected.

Notably, past studies have identified different research gaps that need to be addressed. These include the need for more research on Filipino breadwinners (Ostan et al., 2022) and balanced gender participants (Quindoza et al., 2025). Therefore, the researcher deliberately selected male and female OFW breadwinners as the target population of this present study to contribute valuable insights to the growing body of literature on intersectionality, psychological distress, resilience, and OFW breadwinners.

The researcher purposely focused on OFW breadwinners in Riyadh due to its unique cultural environment, which is distinct from the Philippines. The Islamic religion is heavily embedded in the culture of Riyadh, and the city is historically governed by a conservative approach. Remarkably, Riyadh is undergoing rapid social and cultural transformation, progressing toward modernization and increased social freedoms, especially for women (Klemensits & Tárík, 2024). Despite these cultural changes, OFWs continue to choose Riyadh for its economic opportunities from the ongoing development projects as well as policy relaxations (e.g. absence of personal income tax). Additionally, as the researcher was born and raised in Riyadh, accessibility to participants was possible.

As suggested by Creswell (1998), a range of 5-25 number of participants is appropriate to interview in phenomenological studies (Sharma et al., 2024). Taking the aforementioned suggestion of Quindoza et al. (2025) into account, the intended sample size of the present study was 10 participants: 5 males and 5 females. However, after data saturation was assessed, the 7 participants were interviewed.

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within the target population, maximum variation sampling was employed. Maximum variation sampling technique aims to collate data from a broad range of viewpoints about the phenomenon being studied (Bobbitt, 2020). Specifically, this technique is done by selecting participants with varying backgrounds (e.g. age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, religious affiliations, etc.). Moreover, this diversity enabled the findings to reflect variations in the ways intersecting identities shaped psychological distress and resilience among OFW breadwinners.

Furthermore, the sampling procedure was conducted according to the following steps. Inasmuch as the researcher was raised in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (1) the researcher used social connections upon reaching out to OFW breadwinners. (2) Afterwards, informed consent forms, which include a debriefing on the nature of the study etc., were disseminated. Lastly, (3) those who have signed the informed consent forms were selected to participate in the present study. Nevertheless, this procedure ensured that the gathered data yielded invaluable findings for the study.

### **Researcher as Instrument**

The researcher is the primary instrument used in the present study. Therefore, the preconceptions and biases of the researcher should be taken note of to prevent any influence on the study. The preconceptions and biases are the following:

The researcher was born and raised in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Henceforth, a sense of familiarity with the host culture is developed.

The researcher is of Filipino nationality. Therefore, the researcher's parents and eldest sister are identified as OFWs. Hence, she is familiar with the common challenges and experiences of OFWs in Riyadh.

For the purposes of minimizing the influence of these preconceptions and ensuring the trustworthiness of the present study, reflexivity was strictly observed throughout the research process. Reflexivity is a continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted process in which researchers intentionally examine and evaluate how their own perspectives and contexts influence their research practices (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). Throughout the process

of the study, the researcher consciously acknowledged these personal experiences while setting them aside during the interviews, coding, and interpretation of the data. The researcher remained grounded on the participants' verbatim narratives and ensured that all interpretations were derived from their accounts rather than from the researcher's personal assumptions or prior experiences. This practice strengthened the confirmability of the findings by ensuring that the participants' lived experiences remained central throughout the research process.

## Data Collection

As the present study intends to explore how psychological distress and resilience are shaped through an intersectionality framework, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher in order to gather a nuanced understanding. The interview questions constructed were aligned with the objectives or research questions of the present study.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, interview questions were validated by three licensed psychologists who are experts in the field. Following expert validation, the revised interview guide underwent pilot testing to assess the clarity, sequencing, and appropriateness of the interview questions before the actual data collection commenced.

In consideration of the participants' varying background, the interview questions were constructed in English along with its Filipino translation. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participants' narratives during analysis. Once the data were collected from the semi-structured interviews, the researcher transcribed the narratives of the participants and speech fillers were excluded.

Prior to data collection, the participants were debriefed through an informed consent form, which discussed the nature of the study, their right to rectification and withdrawal from the study, respect for anonymity, and confidentiality. In line with this, the participants' names were replaced with their occupation. The researcher intentionally observed beneficence by strictly adhering to the aforementioned ethical considerations.

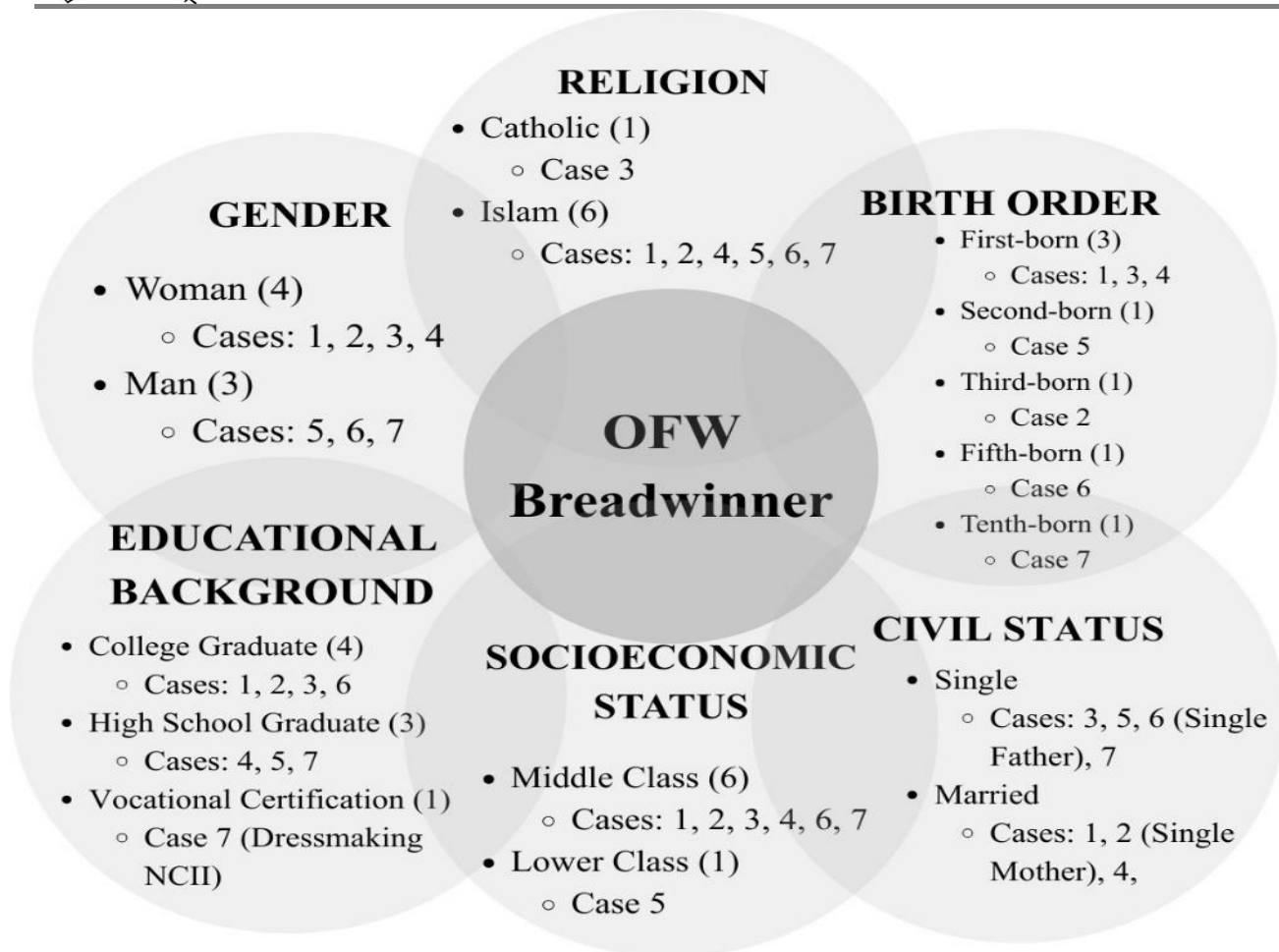
Conscious efforts were made to include participants with varying personal backgrounds pursuant to the maximum variation technique. This ensures to encapsulate valuable insights from a broad range of perspectives (see Table 1).

## Demographic Profile of the Participants

| Cases | Occupation       | Age | Duration of Stay in Riyadh |
|-------|------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| 1     | Dental Nurse     | 26  | 1 Year 7 Months            |
| 2     | Barista          | 30  | 1 Year 7 Months            |
| 3     | Sports Coach     | 30  | 5 Years                    |
| 4     | Domestic Helper  | 29  | 5 Years                    |
| 5     | Hospital Cleaner | 26  | 2 Years                    |
| 6     | Family Driver    | 30  | 7 Months                   |
| 7     | Tailor           | 27  | 2 Years                    |

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile of the Participants

To further illustrate the intersectionality framework, Figure 3 presents a visual representation of the intersecting identities that shaped the participants' lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience.



**Figure 3.** Visual Representation of Intersecting Identities of OFW Breadwinners

As depicted in Figure 3, the intersection of the participants' identities shaped their lived experiences as OFW breadwinners, influencing how they experienced psychological distress and developed psychological resilience. These intersecting identities included gender, religion, birth order, civil status, socioeconomic status, educational background, and occupation. Together, these intersecting identities provide a clearer understanding of the diverse contexts through which participants' narratives of psychological distress and resilience were constructed.

### Data Analysis

The present study intended to address the research questions using narrative analysis. Inasmuch as the study explored the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners through intersectionality framework, this analysis was deemed most appropriate to apply as it provided valuable insights into the perceptions, meaning-making, and incorporating significant life events into one's broader context of their life (Turnbull and Wu, 2025). In line with the concept of intersectionality, an individual's identity is developed within the specific historical and cultural settings and is shaped and reshaped through the stories they build from their social experiences (Nicoll, 2024). As for Narrative Identity, Barua and Maheshwari (2025) emphasized that identity development is heavily influenced by social interactions and personal stories. Additionally, Turnbull and Wu (2025) shed light on the argument of De Fina and King (2011) that expressions of identity(ies) and social realities are reflected in narratives.

Moreover, the gathered data were analyzed using an integrated method where inductive and deductive approaches were combined. Specifically, an inductive approach was applied first to code common narratives based on the participants' lived experiences. The researcher repeatedly read each transcript before and throughout the coding process to ensure familiarity with the narratives. Initial codes were manually generated using pen-and-paper coding and were continuously reviewed and refined during subsequent readings of the transcripts. This iterative analytic process enhanced the consistency of the coding and ensured that interpretations remained grounded in participants' narratives.

Participants oftentimes share their stories in a non-chronological order thus, Creswell (2006) emphasized the importance of restorying. In order to restory the participants' stories in a chronological order, a deductive approach was used where the story structure framework of beginning, middle, and end was followed. Simultaneously, this procedure was guided by the Intersectionality Framework (Crenshaw, 1989) and Narrative Identity Theory (McAdams, 2013) to further grasp a nuanced understanding of participants' complex lived experiences.

This chapter presents the narrative themes and codes emerged from the gathered narratives. Thus, the results show the shared lived experiences and are arranged according to the order of research questions. Thereafter, a story structure framework is utilized to grasp a nuanced understanding of the participants' lived experiences by restorying it in a chronological manner.

## **Results**

The present research explores how OFW Breadwinners' intersecting identities influenced their psychological distress and resilience. The following 4 main themes were yielded after the initial process of narrative analysis.

### **Main Themes**

#### **(1) Navigating One's Self-concept**

- (a) Code: Self-Understanding
- (b) Code: Open-mindedness
- (c) Code: Increased Competency-Based Self-Confidence
- (d) Code: Professional Fulfillment
- (e) Code: Sense of Fulfillment from Breadwinner Obligations
- (f) Code: Breadwinner Identity Centrality
- (g) Code: Positive Identification with Filipino Identity

#### **(2) Negotiating Intersecting Identities in Everyday Life**

- (a) Code: Professional Identity Assertion
- (b) Code: Role Conflict
- (c) Code: Intrapersonal Conflict
- (i) Subcode: Selflessness
  - (ii) Subcode: Self-Sacrifice
- (d) Code: Shift in Religious Identity

#### **(3) Experiences of Psychological Distress**

- (a) **Sub-theme: Initial Migration Adjustment Challenges**
  - (i) Code: Culture Shock
  - (ii) Code: Language Barriers

(iii) Code: Workplace Adjustment

(iv) Code: Financial Strain

(v) Code: Homesickness

**(b) Sub-theme: Family-Induced Psychological Distress**

(i) Code: Family Pressure

(ii) Code: Breadwinning Pressure

(iii) Code: Conditional Familial Acceptance

(iv) Code: Family Health-Related Financial Anxiety

**(c) Sub-theme: Work-Induced Psychological Distress**

(i) Code: Delayed Salary

(ii) Code: Financial Anxiety

(iii) Code: Sleep Disturbance due to Financial Strain

(iv) Code: Nationality-Based Discrimination

(v) Code: Occupational Devaluation

(vi) Code: Interpersonal Tension with Filipino Colleagues

(vii) Code: Emotional Strain from Turnover Intention and Breadwinner Obligations

**(d) Sub-theme: Emotional Distress**

(i) Code: Emotional Exhaustion

(ii) Code: Emotional Suppression

1) Subcode: Emotional Suppression due to Masculine Role Strain

**(4) Development of Psychological Resilience**

(a) Code: Social Support

(i) Subcode: Familial Support

(ii) Subcode: Openness with Employer

(b) Code: Self-Restraint

(c) Code: Self-Reliance

(d) Code: Resourcefulness

(e) Code: Religious Coping

(i) Subcode: Prayer

(ii) Subcode: Patience

### **Navigating One's Self-Concept**

In line with the first research question, “How do OFW breadwinners perceive their identities?”, navigating one's self-concept revealed nine codes: self-awareness, self-reflection, self-realization, open-mindedness, increased competency-based self-confidence, professional fulfillment, sense of fulfillment from breadwinner obligations, breadwinner identity centrality, and positive identification with Filipino identity.

#### **Self-Understanding:**

I knew how to get along with people, and until now I still do, but I really changed here. (Barista, F30)

I can say that I am weak when it comes to confrontation, but strong when it comes to patience. (Barista, F30)

And I think I also need to love myself. Because sometimes what comes to my mind is “No, family comes first.” (Sports Coach, F30)

After I meditate, that's when I reflect; that's when my realizations come in, including my mistakes for the whole week or the whole day. It's like, “Ah, I should have done it this way today to avoid that mistake, that decision.” “I should have calmed myself first before I responded and everything.” That way, the next day, I know how to improve myself. (Dental Nurse, F26)

Back when I was working at JCO, I thought I already knew everything, but when I came here, I realized there was still so much more to study and learn. (Barista, F30)

Because before, I think the reason I kept making mistakes or became completely exhausted was because I prioritized what my family needed above everything else. But after coming here to Riyadh, I realized that I actually need to prioritize myself first so I can provide for what they need. (Dental Nurse, F26)

In relation to the presented excerpts, the participants have manifested to be engaged in self-understanding processes, which resulted in increased self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-realization in different contexts. Particularly, Barista became aware of how much she changed while working in Riyadh. She further described her strength and weakness, which suggests an increased self-awareness. Additionally, Sports Coach expressed what she thinks she needs in the present. Self-reflection and self-realization were evident among Dental Nurse and Barista wherein, Dental Nurse has been reflecting on her mistakes after her meditation. She also came to a realization that prioritizing her family's needs led her to keep committing mistakes and eventually experience exhaustion. Henceforth, prioritizing herself first before her family was emphasized. Moreover, Barista reflected on her past experiences when she was still working in the Philippines. Upon doing so, she recognized the potential she has to advance in her career in Riyadh. Taking these excerpts into account, these suggest that the participants were able to demonstrate a better understanding of themselves through increased self-awareness and self-realizations.

#### **Open-mindedness**

Through that ustadh (Teacher), I became enlightened, especially when he explained the role and value of women in Islam. That was really the reason why I reverted to Islam. I also realized that no religion is perfect because people are still imperfect. Before, I used to think Islam meant that people never committed mistakes. But my ustadh (Teacher) explained to me that in every religion, there will always be people who do wrong. He told me not to judge an entire religion based on one person's mistakes. That made me more open-minded and helped me appreciate Islam more deeply. That's why I reverted to Islam. (Barista, F30)

The excerpt illustrates how the Barista developed a more open-minded perspective towards Islam through her interactions with a teacher. Specifically, the teacher's explanations challenged her previous assumptions about Islam and encouraged her to distinguish the actions of individuals from the teachings of the religion itself. Although there was only one participant who explicitly emphasized open-mindedness, this narrative

demonstrates how exposure to different religious perspectives can foster greater understanding and receptiveness among OFWs. Consequently, Barista stated that she reverted to Islam as she appreciated the religion. Notably, there are other participants who reported reverting to Islam as well (see Shift in Religious Identity).

### **Increased Competency-Based Self-Confidence:**

But sometimes they don't know that you're a coach, you're a trainer, and you know a lot of things. In my work sometimes, yes, I experience that. But I stand on my own feet. I stand my own ground. I tell them, "By the way, you're not my boss, okay? We're the same coach. Your training is different from mine." In my work, especially with clients, no—they don't really discriminate. They love Filipinos, Filipinas, Filipinos. They don't discriminate. It's just some coworkers. My workmates, yes, but they cannot put me down. They cannot. With clients before, yes, in my old branch, they would look at you from head to toe. But still I would tell them, "Habibti, you're just a client, you're just a customer. I'm your coach. Follow the rules, follow everything if you don't want a problem. You can complain, I don't care, I can also complain about you. That's the rule." But so far nowadays, no—since I transferred back to my new branch, no. So far, no. Even my manager is afraid of me. He's a man, but he's afraid of me. (Sports Coach, F30)

My experiences have been a big help because the more experience you have, the more knowledge you gain, and that knowledge helps you in many situations. For example, I'm a driver, and I also graduated in mechanics, so I have an advantage because if a vehicle breaks down, I know how to fix it. Aside from that, I also graduated in Agriculture, so when it comes to gardening, that also helps somehow and serves as an additional skill. In a way, it also makes me more confident because I know within myself that I have knowledge and skills in different areas. (Family Driver, M30)

For me, drivers are always in demand. So being a driver really helps me in my role as a breadwinner. Wherever I end up, if someone needs a driver, they can approach me anytime. You're able to help others while also helping yourself. (Family Driver, M30)

So my coping strategy is that I remind myself: I am Filipino, I am in demand, and even if I leave this company, there will still be people who will hire me.

Increased competency-based self-confidence emerged as a common experience among several participants. Sports Coach experienced discrimination in her workplace for being a Filipino however, she is able to confront them with the confidence she has considering her educational background and professional status. Similarly with Family Driver, he has an educational background in Mechanics and Agriculture, which makes him value his experiences more and express increased self-confidence. Moreover, Family Driver and Barista both recognize how in demand they are, which contributes to their self-confidence. Nevertheless, this suggests that increased competence-based self-confidence can help OFW breadwinners to manage adversities.

### **Professional Fulfillment:**

As a nurse, I'm compassionate. That's always what I bring into my work, I really give my all. (Dental Nurse, F26)

I never expected coffee to become my true passion until I arrived here in Riyadh. As a barista, I am very passionate and I learn something new every day. Being a barista is not just about making coffee. There is so much more to learn. (Barista, F30) But Alhamdulillah, we continue to show that this is a dignified profession, something we are proud of and passionate about, and through this we are able to support our families without stepping on anyone. (Tailor, M27)

In terms of the professional identities, Dental Nurse expressed how compassionate she is when it comes to her work. As for Barista, she reported that she is passionate as a barista and participates in learning opportunities. Similarly, Tailor expressed how grateful he is about supporting his family in the Philippines through tailoring, which is his passion at the same time. It is noteworthy that their experiences demonstrated a sense of professional fulfillment.

### **Sense of Fulfillment from Breadwinner Obligations:**

But here, aside from having peace of mind, there's also happiness. I mean, life in the Philippines was also happy because you were with your family. But it's a different kind of happiness when you're able to provide for your own personal needs and wants, while also providing for your family's needs. (Dental Nurse, F26)

Being a breadwinner will never leave me because ever since I was a child, I already liked helping my family. (Sports Coach, F30)

But Alhamdulillah, we continue to show that this is a dignified profession, something we are proud of and passionate about, and through this we are able to support our families without stepping on anyone. (Tailor, M27)

Participants have developed a sense of fulfillment from their breadwinner obligations. Notably, Dental Nurse described feelings of happiness when it comes to providing her personal and family needs. Likewise, Sports Coach liked helping her family at a young age. Using the same excerpt from the previous code, Tailor expressed gratefulness for being able to support his family.

### **Breadwinner Identity Centrality:**

Of course, being a breadwinner is the identity that feels most central to me right now. It made me stronger and more resilient. Being a breadwinner will never leave me because ever since I was a child, I already liked helping my family. (Sports Coach, F30)

Notably, the Sports Coach explicitly described her breadwinner identity as central to her self-concept. She associated this identity with her personal growth as well her resilience, and it is rooted in her early experience of helping her family. Therefore, although only one participant expressed this phenomenon, this illustrates that breadwinning can be experienced not just as a role but as a stable and meaningful part of one's identity.

### **Positive Identification with Filipino Identity:**

As a Filipino, I would say we are really known for being patient and enduring. So I just hold on to that identity, we are Filipinos, we carry our pride. Because wherever you go here, almost every store has a Filipino worker. So I remind myself of how Filipinos are truly hardworking and patient. (Barista, F30)

Of course, as a Filipino, we cannot avoid bringing our Filipino traits: being patient like that. That's really part of our identity as Filipinos, our perseverance and determination. So that's also how it is. (Domestic Helper, F29)

As a Filipino, Filipinos are very hardworking, patient, and resilient. We Filipinos are diligent and dependable people. (Family Driver, M30)

Remarkably, three participants have manifested positive identification with their Filipino identity. The excerpts presented shows that Barista, Domestic Helper, and Family Driver were able to commonly identify being patient as one of the traits associated with Filipinos. Aside from that, Barista specifically mentioned that Filipinos are also known for their perseverance and being hardworking. These are also seen in the excerpt of Domestic Helper wherein, it is inevitable for her to bring the Filipino traits with her. Similarly, Family Driver reported that Filipinos are also known as resilient and dependable people. Furthermore, this suggests that participants positively identified with culturally valued Filipino traits, which appeared to serve as personal resources in coping with various challenges as well as sustaining resilience while working abroad.

### **Negotiating Intersecting Identities in Everyday Life**

Followed by the second research question, "How do intersectional identities influence the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners?" Negotiating intersecting identities in everyday life has emerged as the main theme. This theme has established three codes namely, professional identity assertion, intrapersonal conflict (subcodes: selflessness and self-sacrifice), and shift in religious identity.

### **Professional Identity Assertion:**

They assume that if you are Filipina, you are just a nanny. I have heard this many times before. But I show them otherwise. I tell them, we have different education, and I actually have more experience than you. I show them that I can even speak with a prince or princess in a normal and professional way. That's why they get shocked. I also teach them, and then they say, "MashaAllah, we thought you were just a nanny because you are always with this Saudi friend of yours, we thought you were just driving her around." I tell them "No. I am her teacher, her coach, her friend, and I am teaching her English." (Sports Coach, F30)

On a different note, professional identity assertion was evident only in the excerpt of Sports Coach. She further narrated that the social discrimination she experienced from locals in Riyadh often involved stereotypes that associated Filipinas with nannies or domestic helpers. Hence, she confronts this type of discrimination by asserting her professional identity. Although this code emerged from only one participant, this experience is deemed relevant to the present study as it showcases the need to assert one's professional identity amidst adversity.

### **Role Conflict:**

As a breadwinner, it's confusing. It feels confusing as an older sister. As a family member, since I'm a breadwinner, a daughter, and the first grandchild, it feels pressuring. It's really pressuring because, you know, in the Philippines, when you're a breadwinner and working abroad, it feels like you're carrying the whole family financially and in every way. So it's pressuring because, as the older sister, you have to think about what's best for them, especially how you can provide financially. (Dental Nurse, F26)

It's kind of both. Because it creates tension, since as a nurse, you know how parents can be, they have a hard time listening to their children, especially when it comes to illnesses. It's difficult to get them to take this or that, their medications and everything. So it creates tension between me and them because they don't want to listen to me. But partly, it also helps because I'm able to take care of them. I'm able to look after them and support them. As the older sister, I'm also able to handle what's happening with my siblings better. Especially with my grandparents, since they also have medical needs. So whenever they feel something, I'm usually the first person they call. But as a nurse, once they consult me, I immediately become the nurse, and then they don't want to listen anymore. So that's really what creates the tension. So it's really both. (Dental Nurse, F26)

In addition, role conflict was manifested in the narrative of Dental Nurse. She indicated feeling confused as she held multiple roles, including breadwinner, daughter, eldest sister, and first grandchild. Consequently, she felt pressured, as she described carrying the responsibility for her whole family in different ways, especially financially. Thus, she became preoccupied with thinking about what would benefit her family. She further reported a tension between being a nurse and a daughter. Inasmuch as role conflict was reflected in only one participant, this code nonetheless significantly illustrates the challenges of negotiating intersecting identities.

### **Intrapersonal Conflict:**

Upon navigating a myriad of adversities in the midst of providing for their families in the Philippines, the participants commonly experienced intrapersonal conflicts wherein, selflessness and self-sacrifice were evident.

#### **Subcode: Selflessness**

As for my mother, if she needs anything, I am here for her financially and emotionally. It's just the same with my child. I do not have any issues when it comes to helping them. I am not selfish. (Barista, F30)

For myself, I may be lacking, but for my family, they still have what they need. That has always been my number one rule: even if I have nothing left for myself, as long as my family has something, then there's no problem. (Sports Coach, F30)

Actually, to be honest, it's really difficult when it comes to your own personal needs. Sometimes I think, 'Maybe I should just buy this for my family instead.' It's really hard to balance personal needs and the needs of my

family. (Family Driver, M30)

In relation to selflessness, Barista, Sports Coach, and Family Driver all conveyed that they genuinely prioritize their family needs before their own personal needs. In particular, Barista showed no hesitation in providing for her mother and daughter. Likewise with Sports Coach wherein, expressed contentment when her family had their needs met. As for Family Driver, he showed difficulties in decision-making in balancing his personal needs as he thinks of his family first. Needless to say, the excerpts from the three participants displayed prioritizing their family needs above anything else hence, selflessness has been established.

### **Subcode: Self-Sacrifice**

As a breadwinner for my child, I am completely all out. I never hesitate when it comes to sending money. If my mother tells me that my child needs something, I will send money immediately. As long as I could provide for my child's needs, from head to toe. That is how I am to my child. Even if I end up with nothing to eat, as long as my child has what she needs, that is enough for me. (Barista, F30)

Because sometimes what comes to my mind is "No, family comes first." Even when I want to tell myself, "You need to put yourself first before your family," I can't. It's always family first. (Sports Coach, F30)

Sometimes even our food here becomes simple, like just buying eggs, just to send money in the Philippines. So, we prioritize the needs in the Philippines over our own needs here. (Tailor, M27) Relatively, self-sacrifice was portrayed among the participants. Specifically, Barista described that as a mother, she goes all out for her child's needs regardless if she has reached to a point of having nothing else to eat. As per Sports Coach, hesitation in obtaining personal needs were expressed despite being aware of the importance of putting herself first. Lastly, Tailor disclosed that he ultimately purchases eggs for sustenance in order for him to send his salary to his family. In contrast to selflessness, self-sacrifice involves prioritizing the participants' family needs before their personal needs without hesitation even if it means to have nothing left for themselves.

### **Shift in Religious Identity:**

As a female, there is more respect here. Since in Islam, women are highly valued. That's actually one of the main reasons why I returned to Islam. I had a coworker before who explained it to me. He was an ustadh (Teacher), someone who studied Islam in Mindanao in the Philippines. At that time, I was still Christian. We had just arrived here when he explained to me that Islam values women and treats them with respect and equality. When he explained that, I related it to my own experiences, especially with my past relationship. That's when I realized that there really is a religion that genuinely values women. That became the reason why I started searching more about Islam. (Barista, F30) Of course, I was also influenced when I came here, especially becoming Muslim. That's what I gained here in Saudi. Because I reverted to Islam. I started praying, those things I didn't do in the Philippines. That's what influenced me here when I arrived. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Right now, I've experienced a big improvement in myself because before, I was a Christian, but now I'm a new Muslim. It's been a big improvement because I've come to see the truth and also gained more self-discipline. For me, Islam is what truly changed me. Although I had many bad experiences before when I was still Christian, I don't regret them because I believe they were destined to happen. (Family Driver, M30)

As Islam is recognized as the predominant religion in Riyadh, it is inevitable for the participants' lives to be influenced by it. For instance, Barista reverted to Islam as she appreciated how Islam values women. Domestic Helper started to become religious after reverting to Islam. Specifically, she has been praying compared to when she was still in the Philippines. Notably, Family Driver shed light on the improvement in himself after reverting to Islam. For him, he was able to develop self-discipline. Furthermore, these experiences of the participants indicated a shift in their religious identity and eventually helped them adapt to adversities (See Religious Coping).

### **Experiences of Psychological Distress**

In relation to the third research question, "What significant experiences contributed to the psychological distress

of OFW breadwinners?” four sub-themes emerged along with its codes, which explores the various causes of psychological distress commonly experienced by the participants. The first sub-theme, initial migration adjustment challenges, revealed five codes: culture shock, language barriers, workplace adjustment, financial strain, and homesickness. Second sub-theme, family-induced psychological distress, have family pressure, breadwinning pressure, conditional familial acceptance, and family health-related financial anxiety. Work-induced psychological distress established seven codes: delayed salary, financial anxiety, sleep disturbance due to financial strain, nationality-based discrimination, occupational devaluation, interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues, and emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations. Lastly, emotional distress consists of two codes which are emotional exhaustion and emotional suppression, with a subcode of emotional suppression due to masculine role strain.

### **Sub-theme: Initial Migration Adjustment Challenges**

This sub-theme identified five common challenges that the OFW breadwinners encountered upon their arrival in Riyadh. These are mainly culture shock, language barriers, workplace adjustment, financial strain, and homesickness.

#### **Culture Shock:**

When I first arrived here, the first two months were okay. But as time passed, the pressure started building up. I experienced culture shock, and I also struggled with my co-workers. I did not expect people to be like that. (Barista, F30)

Actually, in this country, you're really treated differently because you're a man. Especially when you're driving people, you need to adjust because there are things that are not allowed. For example, you're not allowed to freely mingle with women, even if they are fellow Filipinos, because there are rules being followed here. So the treatment is different, especially when the person I'm driving is a woman. It's not like in the Philippines where, even if your employer is female, it's normal to casually talk and say 'Hi.' Here, that's not really allowed. (Family Driver, M30)

The excerpt reflects culture shock as the participant, Barista, experienced difficulties in adjusting to the cultural environment, specifically with her co-workers. In addition, Family Driver encountered adjustments in terms of boundaries between genders in his line of work. Moreover, these narratives indicate that culture shock, as one of the most common initial challenges upon arrival, contributes to feelings of discomfort prompted by unfamiliarity.

#### **Language Barriers:**

Language barrier. Language barrier, because when I came here, I didn't know Arabic at all. Of course, most of us don't know Arabic when we first arrive. The only thing I really knew was how to count from one to ten and a few greetings, seriously. So when I first got here, I would just think, 'Huh?' I didn't know if they were selling me, cursing me, or what. Especially when, for example, the doctor and the patient were talking in Arabic. Of course, there were parts I could somehow understand, but whenever I started overthinking, especially when they suddenly looked at me, even just briefly, I would immediately think, 'Oh my gosh, what is this? Did I do something wrong? Are they talking about me? What are they saying? Did I make a mistake?' It got to the point where I sometimes wanted to record what they were saying and have someone

else translate it for me just so I could calm down. That was really one of the experiences that challenged me the most. (Dental Nurse, F26)

Here, when it comes to Arabic, almost everyone who comes here also does not know it at first. So when I arrived, I slowly gained a bit of understanding. When I did not understand what people were saying, I would just say I don't know and that I am new. For example, when I was still new and needed to go somewhere, I would just show the location, even if I was alone and still unfamiliar with the place. That is what I was taught: if you do not know, just show the driver the location. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

Especially when it comes to discrimination and communication, sometimes we are not fluent in English or

Arabic, because we are used to our own language. (Tailor, M27) Relatively, language barriers emerged as one of the challenges experienced by the OFW breadwinners. Three participants, Dental Nurse, Hospital Cleaner, and Tailor, reported limited Arabic proficiency when they arrived in Riyadh. Notably, Dental Nurse described frequent overthinking and anxiety due to difficulties in understanding conversations in Arabic, particularly in the clinical setting. On the other hand, Hospital Cleaner experienced difficulties in handling language barriers as well. However, he was still able to manage through non-verbal strategies such as gestures and showing locations when navigating transportation. Meanwhile, Tailor encountered language-related discrimination due to his lack of fluency in both English and Arabic. Nonetheless, language barriers contributed not only to communication difficulties but also to the psychological distress among the participants.

### **Workplace Adjustment:**

So the most challenging experience for me here is really the difference compared to the Philippines, where I get along very well with my coworkers. Back home, even when we are stressed or pressured at work, it's still just work, but there is friendship. That's why I got shocked here because in the Philippines, workmates and friends are the same. But here, workmates and friends are separated. (Barista, F30)

It's not like in the Philippines where you can be lazy sometimes. Here it's really different. You really need to be strong. You cannot be weak here. You need to be strong, especially as an OFW. You really need to be strong. (Domestic Helper, F29) In relation to culture shock, this has led some participants to eventually experience struggles in adjusting to their respective workplace. For instance, Barista's excerpt indicated challenges in setting boundaries among her colleagues. She further differentiated the work culture between Riyadh and in the Philippines. Colleagues are often treated as friends in the Philippines. Whereas, professional boundaries among colleagues are strictly observed in the workplace in Riyadh. As for Domestic Helper, her narrative reflects the pressure to continuously perform and remain emotionally and physically strong in a work environment. This suggests an adjustment process marked by increased work discipline and a reduced capacity for rest or downtime, which in turn contributes to difficulties in workplace adjustment.

### **Financial Strain:**

There is really stress when it comes to salary like that. I think almost everyone feels the same. When we cannot send money to our families in the Philippines, we really feel uneasy. (Domestic Helper, F29)

For example, when problems in the Philippines come one after another, you sometimes have to borrow money just to solve those issues. Then, when the next salary comes, you need to pay off the debt so that you can maintain trust with the person you borrowed from, so they will still be willing to lend to you in the future if needed. Because if you don't pay for several months after promising, then borrow again to solve another problem in the Philippines, it really becomes difficult. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

As much as the participants migrated to Riyadh for financial reasons in order to support their families back in the Philippines, financial strain still emerged during their adjustment period. Feelings of uneasiness were observed from Domestic Helper whenever she is unable to send her salary in the Philippines. Furthermore, Hospital Cleaner reported constant financial strain from paying debts. Notably, financial strain is recognized as the primary factor of the participants to work abroad in the first place however, this seems to remain evident as one of the contributing stressors to their psychological distress.

### **Homesickness:**

But homesickness, yes, especially during vacation, my mom's birthday, my dad's birthday, because normally I'm not with them (Sports Coach, F30)

Another thing was my day off. It was not on Friday, so I could not attend Islamic Center activities, because most Islamic Centers here are active during Fridays. Since my day off was changed, I only experienced homesickness during that time because I could not see my friends who are studying, and I felt very lonely then. That only lasted for about two weeks because my supervisor transferred me to another area. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

Lastly, homesickness occurred as part of the initial migration adjustment challenges. As mentioned by the Sports Coach, she struggled with homesickness during special occasions including birthday celebrations of her parents. On the other hand, Hospital Cleaner encountered homesickness temporarily. Despite this temporary experience, this has still manifested psychological distress as it concerns loneliness.

### **Sub-theme: Family-Induced Psychological Distress**

Followed by the initial migration adjustment challenges, four distinct experiences related to family were yielded among the participants' narratives which contributed to their psychological distress. These are mainly family pressure, breadwinning pressure, conditional familial acceptance, and family health-related financial anxiety.

#### **Family Pressure:**

But when it comes to me, it's like they place all the pressure and responsibilities of being the 'president' onto me. So the way they see me changes, especially when I don't meet their expectations. So I feel like I can't fail. (Dental Nurse, F26)

Primarily, the Dental Nurse significantly emphasized the family pressure she struggled with. Her narrative reflects the weight of expectations placed upon her within the family, where she is perceived as someone responsible for meeting collective needs and responsibilities. Hence, failure is not seen as an option. Although only one participant explicitly discussed family-imposed pressure, this specific type of pressure prompted the three succeeding codes: breadwinning pressure, conditional familial acceptance, and family health-related financial anxiety.

#### **Breadwinning Pressure:**

It's really pressuring because, you know, in the Philippines, when you're a breadwinner and working abroad, it feels like you're carrying the whole family financially and in every way. So it's pressuring because, as the older sister, you have to think about what's best for them, especially how you can provide financially. (Dental Nurse, F26)

That's really what it feels like to be a breadwinner. It's hard when you have nothing to give. Sometimes I feel ashamed to answer calls because I know they will ask for money. Sometimes I don't want to answer calls anymore because every call is about money. It's okay when I can give, but when I cannot, I just feel sorry for them. (Domestic Helper, F29)

So when that happens, your family in the Philippines is also affected because they are waiting for your support, and sometimes you have nothing to send. (Tailor, M27)

The excerpts presented denoted the different experiences of the participants rooted in breadwinning pressure. First, the Dental Nurse described the feeling of having the responsibility to carry her whole family financially. As for Domestic Helper, feelings of shame towards her family were expressed whenever she failed to send her salary. Moreover, Tailor noted that his family constantly waits for his salary. Nonetheless, these experiences exacerbate the psychological distress experienced by the participants as breadwinners, knowing that their families depend on their salaries and must be received on time.

#### **Conditional Familial Acceptance:**

So the way they see me changes, especially when I don't meet their expectations. So I feel like I can't fail. Because if I fail, their perception of me changes even more, including the way they treat me. It feels like they become emotionally distant whenever I fail. So I had to do my very best not to fail. But the more I try not to fail, the more I end up failing. (Dental Nurse, F26)

There are also times when you cannot contact them, and even when you are able to send money, sometimes they are also not reachable. That is one of the most difficult parts. (Tailor, M27)

There are also times when they no longer ask how I am. Sometimes my family only calls me during payday. (Tailor, M27)

Another negative experience observed from the narratives was conditional familial acceptance. This particularly pertains to situations in which the participants felt accepted by their families under conditional circumstances. It has been indicated by the Dental Nurse that the treatment she receives from her family varies depending on whether she was able to meet their expectations. A similar pattern was observed in the Tailor's narrative, wherein communication with his family often occurred primarily on payday. Therefore, psychological distress was manifested upon attempting to maintain or strengthen familial relationships.

### **Family Health-Related Financial Anxiety:**

It becomes very draining because there are emergency needs that come up. (Dental Nurse, F26)

I think more about my mom and dad because they are already old. We don't know what will happen. My mother is often in the hospital because she was sick before, so she is usually in and out of the hospital. So it's really work, work, work. (Sports Coach, F30)

In my case, when it comes to tension, of course there is really something like that, especially in sending money. For me, I really need to send monthly because back in the Philippines it is for buying medicine. So if I cannot send money, I feel uneasy. You end up overthinking everything because your family in the Philippines depends on it, especially for medication, bills, and other needs. There is really stress when it comes to salary. (Domestic Helper, F29)

I start to have anxiety when I cannot give. It's really intense. Especially when it comes to medicine. That's when I really get anxious, when they suddenly call and say, "The sugar level is high, we need insulin." So when I cannot provide, it feels worse, like something serious might happen. You become afraid that something might happen to your parents, and you will blame yourself because you were not able to give. I also sometimes think like that, that if something happens and I didn't send money, it might be my fault. (Domestic Helper, F29)

As depicted from the excerpts presented above, family health-related financial anxiety emerged as a common phenomenon experienced by OFW breadwinners. Feelings of emotional exhaustion, uneasiness and constant overthinking were reported by Dental Nurse, Sports Coach, and Domestic Helper to be constituting factors to their anxiety. These symptoms stemmed from providing caregiving financial support for their parents back home in the Philippines for medication and health-related emergency purposes.

### **Sub-theme: Work-Induced Psychological Distress**

Concurrently, it is noteworthy that family-induced psychological distress co-occurs with work-related stressors. These are namely delayed salary, financial anxiety, sleep disturbance due to financial strain, nationality-based discrimination, occupational devaluation, interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues, and emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations.

#### **Delayed Salary:**

Maybe it's about balance? But actually, it's not balanced at all. It really isn't. Maybe because, how do I explain this? It's emotionally draining. Really draining. Because here, a majority of companies or clinics experience delayed salaries, and we've been experiencing that for the past few months. (Dental Nurse, F26)

It's very timely actually because our salary is delayed. We still haven't received it, and we were already expecting it two days ago. So of course it affects things. (Barista, F30)

I cannot sleep, I cannot function properly, especially when the salary is delayed sometimes. It is not intentional, but there are really days when the salary gets delayed. It feels like you want to tell your employer to just release your salary, but you are also afraid, so you cannot really speak up. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Maybe this is no longer new for other breadwinners, but when our employers don't give our salaries on time, of course it creates problems for me, or for us, with our families back in the Philippines. That's really true. When those kinds of problems happen, you can no longer focus properly at work. (Family Driver, M30)

The salary here is not always consistent, it is not always exactly on a fixed date. Sometimes it is delayed, sometimes it is advanced. (Tailor, M27)

Delayed salary was predominantly identified as the phenomenon which causes significant psychological distress among OFW breadwinners. Shedding light on the narratives of the Dental Nurse, Domestic Helper, and Family Driver, feeling emotionally drained, difficulties in sleeping and work productivity were described as a result of delayed salary. This suggests how much their families in the Philippines are significantly relying on their salaries.

### **Financial Anxiety:**

Even if I can afford something, I still think carefully about every financial decision. I always ask myself, "What if something happens to me suddenly? What will I leave for my daughter?" We don't really know what will happen, even if she has communication with her father, because he already has another child with another woman, so I can't fully rely on him financially to support my child if something happens to me. That's why, as a breadwinner, I really need to be careful and secure things. (Barista, F30)

In fact, it's like set, it's already settled in my mind. When my salary comes, I immediately think that I need to send money to my mom, to my dad, like that. I also need to send for the tuition of my siblings. That's what comes into my mind right away. Even before I receive my salary, I already compute it. It's like counting chickens even when they are still eggs. (Sports Coach, F30)

You end up overthinking everything because your family in the Philippines depends on it, especially for medication, bills, and other needs. There is really stress when it comes to salary. I think almost everyone feels the same. When we cannot send money to our families in the Philippines, we really feel uneasy. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Because of overthinking, sometimes I cannot sleep at all. (Tailor, M27)

Moreover, the narratives revealed financial anxiety as a common experience among the participants as well. In the case of Barista, as a single mother, financial anxiety was inevitable. As for Sports Coach, her financial anxiety is manifested in planning on her expenses before even receiving her salary. Domestic Helper indicated that when issues regarding her salary occur, she tends to experience overthinking, stress, and feelings of uneasiness. Lastly, overthinking was also mentioned by Tailor. Furthermore, financial issues trigger the anxiety of the participants.

### **Sleep Disturbance due to Financial Strain:**

I cannot sleep, I cannot function properly, especially when the salary is delayed sometimes. (Domestic Helper, F29) Sometimes you cry in the bathroom, or even when you are about to sleep, you cannot sleep because you keep thinking about the future and what will happen next. That is the hardest part. Because of overthinking, sometimes I cannot sleep at all. (Tailor, M27)

Notably, financial strain prompted two participants to experience sleep disturbances, which then constituted psychological distress. As a result of delayed salary, this led the Domestic Helper to struggle with sleeping. Meanwhile, Tailor also experienced sleep disturbance as a result of overthinking.

### **Nationality-Based Discrimination:**

Yes, there are still some patients who are racist. If you're Filipino, they don't want you touching them or they don't want to speak to you properly. They're rude to you. That kind of behavior is still very common until now. A lot, actually. But there are also others who make you feel different in a good way. Especially our professional patients, the majority of them are professionals, like doctors and lawyers. Some patients really make you feel special. You can really feel it in the way they treat you. You know how they greet people here, right? Like,

‘Assalamualaikum,’ ‘Kefahal?,’ ‘Alhamdulillah,’ and then they ask, ‘Sister, are you okay?’ They really make sure you’re okay even if they don’t know you personally. And the way they thank you, the way they talk to you, it’s different from other patients who just act casual. Like when they have a concern and you solve it, they just move on. But some patients are so appreciative that it almost feels like they want to hug you over the simplest things you’ve done to help them. (Dental Nurse, F26)

They assume that if you are Filipina, you are just a nanny. I have heard this many times before. But I show them otherwise. I tell them, we have different education, and I actually have more experience than you. I show them that I can even speak with a prince or princess in a normal and professional way. That’s why they get shocked. I also teach them, and then they say, “MashaAllah, we thought you were just a nanny because you are always with this Saudi friend of yours, we thought you were just driving her around.” I tell them “No. I am her teacher, her coach, her friend, and I am teaching her English.” (Sports Coach, F30)

Nationality-based discrimination was identified as a contributing factor to psychological distress. The Dental Nurse shared that she experienced discrimination from patients at her workplace. However, she greatly emphasized that the treatment from the patients varies depending on their personal backgrounds. Specifically, she was often treated with respect by patients who are also professionals. Additionally, Sports Coach narrated how she was often discriminated against due to the stereotype that Filipinas are automatically associated with nannies. Nonetheless, these experiences exhibit that discrimination against Filipinos is inevitable.

### **Occupational Devaluation:**

There are also comments at work, like “you’re just a DH,” like your job is just scrubbing toilets, things like that. You really hear those kinds of comments. Even in the Philippines, there are people like that, saying “she’s just a DH.” There are people who don’t understand how hard it is to work here. (Domestic Helper, F29)

But I’ve heard many people say things like, ‘Hey, you’re just a driver!’ That doesn’t really affect me though, I don’t take it personally. A lot of people say those things, and sometimes it even comes from fellow Filipinos. (Family Driver, M30)

There are also moments when people get surprised, like when they find out I am a tailor. They say, ‘You are a tailor? But you have a big body.’ Or they assume it is a low-paying job. They ask why I chose it when there are other jobs with higher salaries. (Tailor, M27)

In relation to discrimination, other participants have encountered a distinct experience where they were discriminated for their occupation hence, occupational devaluation was developed as a code. Domestic Helper, Family Driver, and Tailor all received comments from others that devalued her occupation. Notably, these comments often came from fellow Filipinos according to Domestic Helper and Family Driver. Additionally, the occupational devaluation experienced by Tailor stemmed from gendered expectations and stereotypes involving physical appearance.

### **Interpersonal Tension with Filipino Colleagues:**

At first, honestly, I was very energetic because I was still new and eager to prove myself. I wanted to show what I could do. But eventually I started seeing people’s true attitudes. Sometimes it is actually fellow Filipinos who will pull you down, while people from other nationalities are the ones who lift you up. I never expected that kind of environment because my work experience in the Philippines was very different from my experience here. The difference is huge. There is favoritism and competition, and it never disappears. Some co-workers think you are competing with them when all you really want to do is work properly because you are supporting your child. I just want to do my job well, but some people misunderstand it as competition. So all you can really do is practice sabr, patience, until your contract finishes. (Barista, F30)

My most difficult experience here was when I had an argument with a co-worker, who is also Filipino. That situation made me very uncomfortable and it made me want to go home. It was very recent. (Tailor, M27)

In connection with the aforementioned occupational devaluation received from other Filipinos, a similar pattern

was manifested when two participants dealt with interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues. Particularly, Barista described the tension within her workplace where some of her fellow Filipino colleagues perceived her dedication to work as an act of competition rather than professionalism. As for Tailor, he has experienced having an argument with his Filipino co-worker. Both participants displayed emotional strain from this interpersonal tension, which led them to express wanting to go back home to the Philippines. Nonetheless, this will be further discussed in the next code.

### **Emotional Strain from Turnover Intention and Breadwinner Obligations:**

At first, honestly, I was very energetic because I was still new and eager to prove myself. I wanted to show what I could do. But eventually I started seeing people's true attitudes. Sometimes it is actually fellow Filipinos who will pull you down, while people from other nationalities are the ones who lift you up. I never expected that kind of environment because my work experience in the Philippines was very different from my experience here. The difference is huge. There is favoritism and competition, and it never disappears. Some co-workers think you are competing with them when all you really want to do is work properly because you are supporting your child. I just want to do my job well, but some people misunderstand it as competition. So all you can really do is practice sabr, patience, until your contract finishes. (Barista, F30)

When I get really tired, I just feel like crying and I just want to go home to the Philippines. There are really days like that, especially here, because it's not like every day there's no work. There are days when the work is really heavy. It's simple, but when you're already very tired and you still have a lot of work and thoughts about more tasks, you just feel like crying. Sometimes I just cry because that's how I am. Then I think I will just go home, and I tell myself, "It's okay, after this I will go home and I will not come back anymore." But then it already lasted 7 years, around 8 years. That's the truth. (Domestic Helper, 29)

I told my employer that I wanted to go home and exit my contract because I really could not take it anymore. It affected my mental health a lot. I was still new at that time. But Alhamdulillah, I was not allowed to leave because my employer said they still have plans for me, so my contract was extended instead of me going home. That was my biggest challenge, my peace of mind and mental health. (Tailor, M27)

Using the same excerpt from the previous code, Barista expressed her desire to return to the Philippines as she experienced interpersonal conflict or tension with her Filipino colleagues. This is similarly evident with Tailor. Meanwhile, Domestic Helper expressed the same desire but out of feelings of exhaustion. Despite the prevalence of this desire, the participants were hesitant to leave as they still have obligations to fulfill as breadwinners of their respective families. Thus, this sheds light on the emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations.

### **Sub-theme: Emotional Distress**

Attributed by family and work-related stressors, emotional distress was inevitably experienced by OFW breadwinners. In this sub-theme, emotional exhaustion and emotional suppression (subcode: emotional suppression due to masculine role strain) were identified codes. These are recognized as contributing factors to their psychological distress.

### **Emotional Exhaustion:**

So it's draining because all the pressure falls on you. You're the older sister. You're expected to provide. (Dental Nurse, F26)

So it's frustrating at some point, because you have expenses here and you also have expenses in the Philippines. It's really frustrating, but I can manage it, I'm still able to cope, thank God. I'm still standing. But it is draining and it affects my health. (Sports Coach, F30)

The responsibilities of being a breadwinner has a big effect because, first of all, my exhaustion somehow helps strengthen my mental health since that's where I draw my strength from, to be able to provide for their needs. In that way, it helps a lot. But at the same time, it also has disadvantages because those same things are also where

you become emotionally vulnerable. When the problems come directly from them, it also affects your mental health. It becomes heavy, extremely heavy and stressful. It weakens you and drains you. So there are both disadvantages and advantages. (Family Driver, M30)

Dental Nurse, Sports Coach, and Family Driver all explicitly highlighted their personal experiences unto why they felt drained or emotionally exhausted. Specifically, Dental Nurse described that it is draining for her to carry the pressure of being the primary provider of her family. Relatively, Sports Coach felt drained from managing the expenses both in Riyadh and in the Philippines. As for the Family Driver, this feeling stemmed from problems with his family. However, he ultimately emphasized that the exhaustion from his responsibilities as the breadwinner contributes to strengthening his mental health.

### **Emotional Suppression:**

A lot has happened to me here, but I just endured it because I didn't want to hurt anyone else. (Barista, F30)

Sometimes you just have to bear it, and you end up crying in silence. That is really one of the hardest parts of being abroad, you cry secretly. You find yourself talking to yourself, even in front of the mirror. That is one of the heaviest feelings of being an OFW. You cry alone. Sometimes you cry in the bathroom. (Tailor, M27)

Ultimately, emotional suppression was reflected among the narratives of the participants as a response to facing adversities. For instance, Barista endured everything she went through as she wanted to prevent herself from hurting anyone. Consistently, Tailor reported experiences of crying secretly and talking to himself as a result of suppressing his emotions.

### **Subcode: Emotional Suppression due to Masculine Role Strain:**

You can't show your family that you're becoming weak because you're a man. In the Philippines, people expect men to always be strong. (Family Driver, M30)

For men, it's really difficult because you rarely see a man cry from exhaustion or because of mental health struggles. But deep inside, he's crying alone in a corner without showing it to anyone. Men are expected not to show weakness. As for me, when I can't take it anymore, I really cry. Although I don't show it to everyone, when it becomes too much, I let myself cry for a while and then I pray. (Family Driver, M30)

It is also difficult here when you are a man. Honestly, you really need to endure things and stay strong because you are far from your family. You have to be tough, especially with your needs and responsibilities. (Tailor, M27)

Sometimes you just have to bear it, and you end up crying in silence. That is really one of the hardest parts of being abroad, you cry secretly. You find yourself talking to yourself, even in front of the mirror. That is one of the heaviest feelings of being an OFW. You cry alone. Sometimes you cry in the bathroom. (Tailor, M27)

Notably, a subcode was established involving emotional suppression due to masculine role strain. Both Family Driver and Tailor explicitly highlighted the difficulties of being a man because of the stereotypes associated with men where they are expected to remain strong. As a result, emotional suppression was inevitable for them. However, based on their excerpts, when they can no longer contain their emotions, they tend to cry discreetly.

### **Development of Psychological Resilience**

As for the last research question, "How did the experiences of OFW breadwinners shape their psychological resilience?" six codes were yielded namely, social support (subcodes:

familial support and openness with employer), self-restraint, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and religious coping (subcodes: prayer and patience).

### **Social Support:**

#### *Subcode: Familial Support:*

Also, the ustadh (Teacher) I mentioned earlier is now my husband. He constantly gives me encouragement. (Barista, F30)

I also sometimes think like that, that if something happens and I didn't send money, it might be my fault. But thankfully, I have siblings who also help, so they share the responsibility when I cannot. (Domestic Helper, F29)

I became very frustrated because I was also renting a place, and I didn't know how I would send money to my family. But the good thing was that my mom understood the situation. That was what mattered most. (Sports Coach, F30)

And I also talk to people who are willing to listen to my feelings. For me, it's simple. I cry it out, I let it out. After that, I feel lighter. I think that's really important. (Domestic Helper, F29)

In dealing with the aforementioned adversities, the participants gradually developed psychological resilience through various strategies, one of which was social support from their families. According to Barista, social support came from her husband. As for Domestic Helper, her siblings were there to help her whenever she is unable to send her salary. The Sports Coach's mother expressed a deep understanding towards her during circumstances where sending money to the Philippines seemed impossible. Lastly, Domestic Helper reported feeling lighter when she opens up to people who were willing to listen to her.

#### **Subcode: Openness with Employer:**

In terms of how I responded, there was a recent incident where I was accused about coffee and milk. I talked to Kuya, one of our team leaders. I feel more comfortable with him because he is calm and he understands me. When there is a problem, he takes you out of the bar and talks to you privately, which is good because you won't be embarrassed. (Barista, F30)

During those conflicts, I would also talk to them or report the situation to my employer so they would be aware of what I was experiencing and how it was affecting my mental health. (Tailor, M27)

At first, when you first arrive here, you're still shy and a bit hesitant. But as time passes, that fades away. Now, it's gone. I can even gossip with my employer about different things. I can express what I want to say more easily, and sometimes I even share my problems, like issues about my parents or when I need help. It became easier for me to share because I've been here for a long time, and maybe also because my employer is kind, so I feel more comfortable with them. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Relatively, social support from employers was also mentioned by the participants. In the case of Barista, opening up to one of her team leaders helped her when she encountered interpersonal tension with her Filipino colleague. Similarly, Tailor reported the argument he had with his Filipino co-worker to his employer as well. On the other hand, Domestic Helper described a close relationship she cultivated with her employer. This became easier for her to open up to her employer regarding her personal problems.

### **Self-Restraint:**

Actually, I have not really experienced situations like that because I try to keep a light and peaceful disposition, and I do not want to fight with anyone. Whatever I have, if someone needs it, even if they have different nationalities, I try to help if it will prevent conflict, because that is what Islam teaches. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

Because sometimes what comes to my mind is "No, family comes first." Even when I want to tell myself, "You

need to put yourself first before your family,” I can’t. It’s always family first. (Sports Coach, F30)

My personal needs here are manageable because I handle them properly. My needs, like hygiene kits and such, are okay because everything is free from my employer. I don’t really need to buy them anymore. Then with my salary, there is still something for them and something for me. It feels balanced because I set aside what is needed for them, especially in case of emergencies. I also keep a small amount just in case something urgent happens, so I have something to use, even if it’s not much. So there’s really no conflict between my personal needs and being a breadwinner. (Domestic Helper, F29)

In addition to social support, developed self-restraint was reflected from the excerpts of the participants. When asked whether they had experienced being treated differently because of one or more aspects of their identity, the Hospital Cleaner reported no such experiences. This is primarily because of the manifested self-restraint he has developed guided by the teachings of Islam. In contrast to Sports Coach and Domestic Helper, self-restraint was developed upon balancing their personal and family needs. However, Domestic Helper, gave emphasis that her basic essentials were provided by her employer for free, which did not lead her to experience extreme difficulties in balancing her personal and family needs.

### **Self-Reliance:**

It’s really just that you need to handle things yourself. Here, there’s really no one else to rely on. It’s different when there is someone who can help, but especially here, whatever it is, you really have to be strong on your own. You really need to be strong. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Since I can’t really let it out, I mean, yes, they’re my co-workers, but you can’t fully trust them. You may have friends, but at the end of the day, you’re still really alone. (Barista, F30)

Crucially, Domestic Helper mentioned the importance of relying on one’s self in order to be resilient. This highlights that limited availability of any kind of support may be anticipated, as it is an inevitable experience for individuals. This is consistently reflected in the Barista’s excerpt, where she emphasized the need to avoid excessive trust in co-workers, resulting in a tendency to rely on herself in coping with challenges.

### **Resourcefulness:**

When it comes to salary, I find clients, I do part-times. Yes, I do part-time work, more part-time means more work and more clients. I also need outside work like massage, teaching swimming, even if the salary is low outside, I accept it. Just to fulfill what I need to fulfill. (Sports Coach, F30)

I am resourceful when it comes to surviving. I am really resourceful. For me, like when I started, I also tried selling online. I had coffee machines back in the Philippines. I don’t rely only on my monthly salary here, thinking that it’s just this and that’s it. No. In life, you really need resourcefulness because you cannot just depend on your salary. (Domestic Helper, F29)

So like, when you have debt in the Philippines, it’s hard to pay it. But here in Saudi, somehow, there are still ways to manage and recover little by little. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

It is notable that despite the adversities that the participants faced, they were able to manage these by being resourceful. For instance, Sports Coach have been doing part-time work in order to have additional income. Similarly, the Domestic Helper engaged in various business activities, as she did not rely solely on her monthly salary. Furthermore, Hospital Cleaner mentioned that being resourceful in Riyadh is more possible than in the Philippines when it comes to finding ways in paying debts. Ultimately, these excerpts illustrate how resourcefulness can significantly help in coping with financial challenges.

### **Religious Coping:**

*Subcode: Prayer:*

I have a lot of mistakes, but I'm still trying, I'm growing. And number one, pray, be thankful to God every single day. (Sports Coach, F30)

When I experience anxiety, I pray. You really need to pray. (Domestic Helper, F29)

Although I don't show it to everyone, when it becomes too much, I let myself cry for a while and then I pray. For me, the best thing to do when the burden becomes too heavy is to pray and call out to Allah. (Family Driver, M30)

And when it comes to personal problems, I pray, I go back to the teachings of Islam. That is how I cope. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

Being a Muslim, we have this strong relationship with Allah through prayer (Salah), and also through learning every Friday. (Tailor, M27)

Another coping strategy observed across the participants' narratives was prayer. As seen in the excerpt of Sports Coach, expressing gratitude to God through prayer was her way of coping. As for Domestic Helper, she resorts to praying when manifestations of anxiety occur. Additionally, Family Driver described prayer as the best solution when suppressing his emotions starts to feel difficult to handle. Aside from prayer, both the Hospital Cleaner and the Tailor engage in studying Islam to strengthen their connection with Allah as part of their coping strategy.

#### **Subcode: Patience:**

I think part of that change also came from reverting to Islam. I was taught to practice sabr, or patience. Before, I could easily fight back or argue, but now I no longer want to. My religion taught me differently. It taught me that it is better to endure pain yourself than to hurt other people. (Barista, F30)

The learning sessions are very helpful because we gather with fellow Filipinos, share our problems and experiences, and Islam gives reminders that help us remain patient. (Tailor, M27)

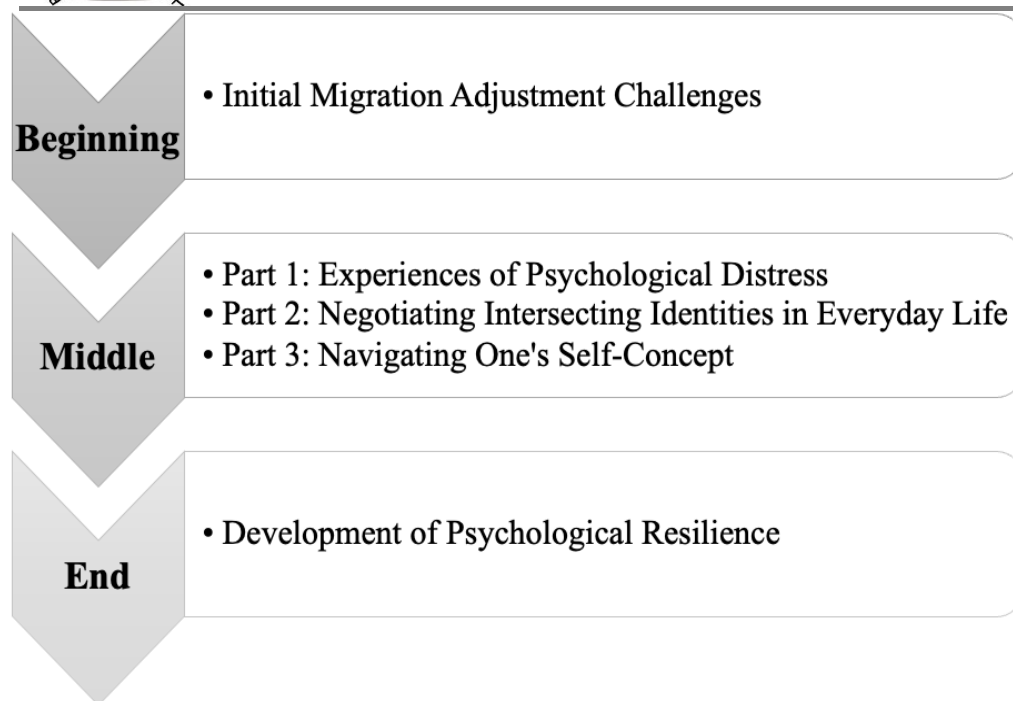
That is when I only experienced that level of exhaustion, stress, and difficulty, but it only lasted for two weeks. Still, I practiced sabr (patience), because as Allah says, all hardships can be handled as long as you are patient. So that is what I did. I remained patient until I was transferred to another area, and until now, Alhamdulillah, things have become lighter. (Hospital Cleaner, M26)

Lastly, patience was identified among three participants, which contributed to the development of their psychological resilience. Particularly, Barista noted that reverting to Islam taught her to practice patience. A similar statement was stated by the Tailor.

The same case was reflected in the excerpt of Hospital Cleaner, which he further described that things have become lighter for him by doing so.

Nonetheless, these religious coping strategies significantly contributed not only to the strengthening of their relationship with God but also to the psychological resilience of OFW breadwinners.

#### **Intersecting Identities in Psychological Distress and Resilience Among OFW Breadwinners**



**Figure 2.** Story Structure Framework of OFW Breadwinners' Lived Experiences

OFW breadwinners in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have encountered a variety of adversities. However, upon their arrival, their narratives reported shared common challenging experiences in adjusting to life in Riyadh, including culture shock, language barriers, workplace adjustment, and financial strain.

Inevitably, they dealt with more adversities making them susceptible to manifest psychological distress. These stressors were primarily caused by two factors: family and work related issues. Family-induced psychological distress include experiences, such as family pressure, breadwinning pressure, conditional familial acceptance, and family health-related financial anxiety. On the other hand, work-induced psychological distress involves delayed salary, financial anxiety, sleep disturbance due to financial strain, nationality-based discrimination, occupational devaluation, interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues, as well as emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations. Based on the narratives presented, family and work stressors frequently co-occur, contributing to psychological distress among OFW breadwinners. Consequently, these factors made participants susceptible to emotional suppression, highlighting masculine role strain as an antecedent of this phenomenon among male OFW breadwinners.

Followed by psychological distress experiences, the narratives of OFW breadwinners revealed that these are closely associated with negotiating challenges stemming from their multiple and intersecting identities in their everyday lives. These challenges primarily consist of professional identity assertion, and role conflict, in which selflessness and self-sacrifice were observed in others. Additionally, considering the strong influence of Islam in Riyadh, several participants described experiencing a shift in their religious identity through their reversion to Islam.

Through the process of negotiating and reconciling their intersecting identities, OFW breadwinners were able to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, open-mindedness, increased competency-based self-confidence, professional fulfillment, sense of fulfillment from breadwinner obligations, breadwinner identity centrality, and a positive identification with their Filipino identity.

As a result of these adversities, OFW breadwinners coped through social support particularly, familial support and openness with their employers. They also developed self-restraint, self-reliance, and resourcefulness, while religious coping was likewise emphasized. Moreover, it is notable that family was commonly perceived by the participants as both a source of their psychological strength and vulnerability. Nonetheless, these contributing factors to the development of psychological resilience do not necessarily guarantee that OFW breadwinners will no longer encounter adversities in the future, as life events such as delayed salary, financial

strain, and family medical emergencies are inevitable. Regardless of these circumstances, the findings of the present study suggest that psychological resilience is an active ongoing process, and that these identified factors are effective in fostering its development.

### Other Key Findings

Beyond the scope of the research questions, participants were asked during the interview what they would advise Filipino breadwinners who plan to work in Riyadh to support their overall well-being. Notably, common advice was evident. One of these included psychological preparedness for migration, wherein individuals are encouraged to carefully consider their decision to work abroad. If they proceed, they should psychologically prepare themselves for the adversities they may encounter. In addition, maintaining religious faith was commonly advised, as participants noted that this can help foster resilience in managing challenges. Moreover, one participant advised maintaining openness with family upon arrival in Riyadh to sustain social support. Another participant suggested being prepared for diverse job roles, as tasks outside their primary job description may be expected. Financially, another participant advised being wise and resourceful, as individuals should not rely solely on their monthly income.

This chapter of the present study further discussed the findings yielded in the narrative analysis. This primarily emphasized the psychological distress and resilience experiences of OFW breadwinners in Riyadh guided by the Intersectionality Framework and Narrative Identity Theory.

## DISCUSSION

The integration of phenomenology, narrative identity theory, and narrative analysis enabled a deeper understanding of how OFW breadwinners continuously negotiated their intersecting identities throughout their migration journey. Beyond describing participants' lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience, this integrated approach illuminated how they interpreted these experiences and incorporated them into evolving life narratives. Consequently, participants' identities emerged not as fixed social roles but as continuously reconstructed through meaning-making, migration, family responsibilities, and workplace experiences.

It is noteworthy that OFW breadwinners consistently reported that their decision to work abroad and assume breadwinner roles was primarily driven by financial necessity, particularly the insufficient income in the Philippines to sustain their families' basic needs. Although participants viewed migration as an unavoidable response to economic hardship, they emphasized that assuming the breadwinner role was their own decision rather than an obligation forced upon them. Notably, all participants had already assumed the breadwinner role while still residing in the Philippines. Rather than marking the beginning of their breadwinning responsibilities, migration became a means of sustaining and strengthening their existing commitment to financially provide for their families. This suggests that participants consciously embraced their identities as breadwinners, shaping how they understood their responsibilities and organized their lives around providing for their families. Rather than representing a fixed social role, the breadwinner identity emerged as an evolving life narrative that participants continuously constructed through their lived experiences as migrants, family providers, and professionals. Across their narratives, participants actively made meaning of these experiences, allowing them to negotiate multiple identities while continuously shaping their sense of self throughout their migration journey. This process of identity construction also provides a nuanced perspective on how Filipino breadwinners understand familial responsibility within the context of migration. Within the Filipino cultural context, filial piety has been identified as a defining characteristic, wherein strong family loyalty and close kinship ties are highly valued (Ostan et al., 2022). Accordingly, migration is often framed as an expression of familial responsibility and love, with individuals working abroad to support their families left in the Philippines. However, in the present study, participants did not explicitly frame their decision in terms of filial piety, but rather as a voluntary acceptance of the breadwinner role in response to economic hardship and the need for family survival. Upon their arrival, adjustment challenges were encountered, including culture shock, language barriers, workplace adjustment, financial strain, and homesickness (Mucci et al., 2019).

In addition to these initial migration adjustment challenges, psychological distress induced by family and work-related stressors occurred among OFW breadwinners as they are susceptible to this phenomenon (Nene et al.,

2023). Family-induced psychological distress experiences such as family and breadwinning pressure were evident in the narratives. This supports the study of Ostan et al. (2022) where their family intensified their emotional strain for being the breadwinner. As families of breadwinners are perceived as a source of one's strength and unconditional acceptance in order to cope (Casipong et al., 2022), it is noteworthy that the present study identified conditional familial acceptance among the participants. The treatment of their families varies if expectations imposed on them were met (Terrighena & Barron, 2020). Communication with them varies as well wherein, OFW breadwinners struggle in contacting them when their salaries are delayed and/or when their family have already received it. Notably, family health-related financial anxiety emerged from the narratives of the participants. This pertains to circumstances in which participants experienced financial anxiety due to the need to allocate a portion of their income toward the medical expenses of family members, including medication, treatment, and other healthcare-related costs. Moreover, these findings suggest that psychological distress was not solely rooted in financial hardship but in the intersection of participants' identities as migrants, family providers, adult children, spouses, and parents. The responsibilities attached to these identities often overlapped, making financial concerns emotionally significant because they directly affected participants' perceived ability to fulfill their familial roles.

The present research study has also determined work-induced psychological distress among the participants' accounts. Significantly, delayed salary was a common experience that has intensified the OFW breadwinners' psychological distress. Another contributing factor to psychological distress identified was financial anxiety. This was manifested as an inevitable experience by the participants, especially to Barista, a single mother (Chelsey, 2016), who can't help but to be anxious regarding her daughter's future. Work-related stressors prompt detrimental effects not only to the OFW breadwinners' mental health but to their physical health as well. For instance, participants emphasized experiencing sleep disturbances that originated from financial strain. As expected, and as consistent with previous research, OFW breadwinners faced nationality-based discrimination (Jesus & Adducul, 2024). Excerpts of the participants reflected that this was mainly rooted from the stereotype constructed by the locals. Some of this stereotype includes the presumption that all Filipinas are perceived as "nannies" or domestic helpers. These prevailing stereotypes often lead to occupational devaluation, in which the participants have encountered as well. These workplace experiences should also be understood within the sociocultural context of Riyadh, where migrant workers from different nationalities occupy distinct positions within the labor force. Within this context, participants' narratives suggest that nationality-based stereotypes and unequal power relations contributed to experiences of discrimination and occupational devaluation, further shaping how they understood themselves as Filipino professionals working abroad. Particularly, it often triggers sensemaking processes in which individuals interpret and rationalize their experiences retrospectively in order to maintain a coherent identity and preserve or reconstruct their self-concept (Fernando and Patriotta, 2020). Participants' narratives suggest that their meaning-making processes contributed to the development of increased competency-based self-confidence and a renewed sense of passion toward their profession. Additionally, OFW breadwinners were able to manage occupational devaluation through asserting their professional identities (Yeh, 2025). Notably, interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues emerged from the participants' accounts, which significantly contributed to their psychological distress. Narratives commonly emphasized that this tension stemmed from the concept of 'crab mentality' evident within the Filipino culture. This is described as the behavior of undermining or discouraging others' success, typically motivated by feelings of envy, insecurity, or perceived competition (Barroca, 2025). This has led OFW breadwinners to struggle with emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations. As much as they expressed their strong desire to return home for having conflicts with their Filipino colleagues, their deep family commitment made it difficult for them to leave their jobs (Guo, 2019). With their breadwinner obligations, they insist to continue to persevere despite adversities in order to prioritize their family needs before their own (Ostan et al., 2022). Based on the narratives of OFW breadwinners, family and work stressors frequently co-occur, contributing to their psychological distress. Furthermore, these findings are aligned with the study of Woods (2024) indicating that the combination of multiple identity-based experiences can indeed result in increased stress, anxiety, and other mental health difficulties. Rather than functioning independently, family and work identities appeared to reinforce one another. Workplace adversities became psychologically distressing because they threatened participants' ability to fulfill their responsibilities as breadwinners, demonstrating how intersecting identities intensified the emotional consequences of both work and family stressors.

As a response to these psychological distress experiences, it has led OFW breadwinners to exhibit emotional distress (Terrighena & Barron, 2020). Similarly with Cabrera (2025), participants have consistently described emotional exhaustion. Emotional suppression was reflected among the narratives as well. Based on the accounts of the male participants, emotional suppression rooted from masculine role strain was highlighted. Particularly, they narrated that they had to suppress their emotions since men are perceived as strong individuals. Moreover, this is consistent with Budyantara and Soetikno (2025), in which they affirmed that men face the social stigma that they are expected to be strong breadwinners. Thus, emotional suppression appeared to emerge from the interaction between masculine identity and breadwinner identity. Rather than simply adhering to masculine norms, participants viewed emotional restraint as necessary to continue fulfilling their responsibilities as family providers, thereby reinforcing their psychological burden.

Concurrently, while OFW breadwinners dealt with the aforementioned stressors of psychological distress, challenges to their self-concept (Barua & Maheshwari, 2025) prompted the negotiation of their multiple intersecting identities in everyday life. In relation to occupational devaluation, a participant was able to address this by having the need to make conscious effort to assert their professional identities. Meanwhile, other participants who experienced occupational devaluation did not internalize these comments as they recognized their own self-worth. Hence, this suggests that professional identity assertion is associated with increased competence-based self-confidence. This finding may be understood in light of Fernando and Patriotta's (2020) argument that occupational downgrading highlights the critical relationship between identity and sensemaking among migrant workers. By interpreting and rationalizing their occupational experiences, migrants are able to adapt to new work environments while preserving or reconstructing their sense of self-worth. In the present study, participants appeared to engage in this process through the assertion of their professional identities despite experiences of occupational devaluation.

Moreover, role conflict was revealed among one of the participants. Specifically, the Dental Nurse exhibited emotional tension from being a nurse, breadwinner, daughter, oldest sister, and the first grandchild simultaneously. She expressed feelings of confusion in carrying out these identities. This finding is consistent with Liao (2022), in which they determined that there is a continuous need to (re)define the identity between being a family member and a migrant worker in the host country. Furthermore, selflessness and self-sacrifice were commonly developed among OFW breadwinners as a response to role conflict. In relation to selflessness, participants genuinely prioritized their family needs above anything else. Relatively, prioritizing their family needs was often intensified to the extent of which participants sacrificed their personal needs (Ostan et al., 2022). Others had difficulties in balancing their personal and family needs. Notably, one of the male participants specifically mentioned that they resorted to buying and eating eggs everyday just to provide their family's needs. This partially aligns with the study of Quindoza et al. (2025), which indicated that Filipina breadwinners prioritize their family needs to the extent of disregarding their emotions. However, the present study identified that men are most likely to do so as well. These findings illustrate that psychological distress was not produced by any single social role but by the simultaneous negotiation of multiple identities, requiring participants to constantly prioritize one identity over another.

Lastly, through the strong religious influence of Islam in Riyadh, this has prompted OFW breadwinners to be exposed by this culture. Indeed, several participants have reverted to Islam. Considering that Riyadh is deeply shaped by Islamic values and practices, prolonged immersion within this sociocultural environment appeared to influence not only participants' religious practices but also how they made meaning of their experiences, fostering patience, gratitude, and personal growth. Narratives related to this reversion revealed significant improvements on their overall psychological well-being. On the other hand, participants who did not revert to Islam still maintained a strengthened relationship with God. Regardless of their religion, this appears to suggest how Filipino migrants value religiousness (Terrighena and Barron, 2020).

The everyday lived experiences of negotiating their intersecting identities have positively influenced the (re)definition of their self-concept. Participants have established self-understanding, open-mindedness, increased competency-based self-confidence, professional fulfillment, sense of fulfillment from breadwinner obligations, breadwinner identity centrality, and positive identification with Filipino identity. These findings may also be understood through narrative identity theory (McAdams, 2013), wherein individuals construct meaning and coherence by organizing lived experiences into self-defining life stories. Specifically,

the narratives suggest that participants have developed increased self-awareness and self-realization, which prompted them to have a deeper understanding of themselves. Although only one participant has explicitly noted that she became open-minded to Islam, this demonstrates how exposure to different religious perspectives can foster greater understanding and receptiveness among OFWs. As mentioned, increased competency-based self-confidence was developed (Geronimo et al., 2024) in response to occupational devaluation. Notably, despite the challenges experienced in the workplace, several OFW breadwinners were still able to attain professional fulfillment. Relatively, a sense of fulfillment from breadwinner obligations was established. Thus, this supports the study of Brance et al. (2024) wherein, a fostered sense of purpose was found among migrants. Remarkably, breadwinner identity centrality was reflected in one participant's narrative, shedding light on her meaning-making process as her life revolved around this identity, which in turn gave her a sense of purpose. Lastly, positive identification with Filipino identity was manifested among the participants. According to Terrighena and Barron (2020), Filipino migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) often experience significant psychological distress as they navigate conflicting social narratives and cultural transitions; however, the present study offers a more nuanced perspective. Particularly, despite initial migration challenges such as culture shock, positive identification with culturally valued Filipino traits served as a personal resource in coping with various challenges and in sustaining resilience while working abroad in the long term.

Despite experiencing significant psychological distress and identity-related challenges, OFW breadwinners exhibited psychological resilience as evidenced by various coping mechanisms emerging from their narratives. One of the contributing factors identified was social support (Casipong et al., 2022). Participants were able to receive social support primarily from their respective families followed by their employers. In relation to the challenges they faced from balancing their personal and family needs, they were able to develop a sense of self-restraint and self-reliance (Geronimo et al., 2024). Notably, religion played a significant role in contributing to their development of psychological resilience. OFW breadwinners consistently revealed how prayer and patience, as embedded in the teachings of Islam, guided them through adversities. Despite variations in the participants' religious affiliations, the findings of the present study are significantly consistent with those of Terrighena and Barron (2020), who identified religion as an important coping mechanism among Filipino migrant domestic workers, enabling them to find meaning in adversity and view hardships as spiritually significant. This reflects the deeply ingrained role of religiosity within Filipino culture. Beyond religiosity, the narratives also reflected core Filipino values such as close family ties, sacrifice, perseverance, and relational responsibility. These culturally embedded values shaped how OFW breadwinners understood and enacted their responsibilities, while also serving as psychological resources that guided their coping strategies and meaning-making throughout migration. Nonetheless, religious coping contributed not only to the strengthening of participants' relationship with God but also to the psychological resilience of OFW breadwinners. Rather than operating independently, social support, religiosity, and culturally embedded Filipino values collectively reinforced participants' evolving identities as breadwinners. These interconnected resources enabled participants to reinterpret adversity in ways that sustained both psychological resilience and their commitment to their familial roles. After all, it is noteworthy that psychological resilience is an ongoing process in which individuals continuously navigate and adapt to adversity.

The findings of the present study are further illuminated by intersectionality and narrative identity theory. From an intersectional perspective, OFW breadwinners' experiences are shaped by the convergence of multiple identities, including their roles as professionals, family providers, migrants, and culturally situated individuals. These intersecting identities influence how participants experience psychological distress and navigate everyday demands in work and family contexts. In addition, narrative identity theory explains how participants make sense of these experiences by constructing coherent life stories that integrate adversity, role tensions, and resilience into an evolving sense of self. Through this meaning-making process, participants (re)interpret their experiences in ways that preserve and reconstruct their self-concept over time. Thus, OFW breadwinners who narrated their life stories around themes such as self-understanding, open-mindedness, self-confidence, sense of fulfillment, and breadwinner identity centrality suggest increased levels of mental health, maturity, identity development (Barua & Maheshwari, 2025), and overall psychological well-being (McAdams & McLean, 2013). From a Clinical Psychology perspective, these findings demonstrate that psychological distress among OFW breadwinners cannot be understood solely through symptoms of anxiety, stress, or emotional exhaustion. Rather, participants' narratives reveal that psychological distress and resilience are closely intertwined with their

intersecting identities, migration experiences, and ongoing meaning-making processes. By highlighting these broader psychological contexts, the present study contributes to more culturally responsive, identity-sensitive, and narrative-informed approaches to psychological assessment, counseling, and intervention among OFWs.

Overall, the participants' narratives suggest that migration was not merely a geographical transition but an ongoing process of identity construction, in which becoming and remaining a breadwinner served as the central life narrative through which they interpreted adversity, resilience, relationships, work, and personal growth. This underscores that the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners are best understood not only through the challenges they encounter, but also through the evolving identities they construct and the meanings they continuously ascribe to those experiences.

### **Cross-Case Analysis Findings**

To further illuminate the intersectionality framework, a cross-case analysis was conducted by examining how participants' intersecting identities shaped their experiences of psychological distress and resilience. Rather than viewing participants solely as OFW breadwinners, each case was understood through the convergence of identities such as gender, occupation, familial role, and religious affiliation. The participants' detailed demographic characteristics and intersecting identities are presented in Table 1 and Figure 3, which serve as references for the succeeding cross-case analysis.

#### **Case 1: OFW Breadwinner, Daughter, Wife, and Dental Nurse**

Case 1 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, daughter, wife, and dental nurse shaped the participant's psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of her identities as the eldest daughter and primary breadwinner intensified interpersonal conflicts and contributed to self-sacrificial tendencies. These same identities also gave rise to conditional familial acceptance, as she perceived that her family's treatment of her depended on whether she fulfilled their expectations as both a daughter and the family's primary provider.

The intersection of being a Filipino and a nurse in Riyadh also contributed to psychological distress through nationality-based discrimination. She shared that while some patients refused to be treated by her because she was Filipino, others treated her with respect because of her professional role. This created tension between her identities as an OFW and a healthcare professional. Furthermore, despite working as a nurse, she continued to experience financial strain due to delayed salary.

The intersection of her identities as a nurse and a daughter further resulted in role conflict. Although her professional knowledge enabled her to guide her parents regarding their medications, her role as a daughter was challenged when her parents hesitated to follow her advice. Together, these intersecting identities heightened her psychological distress.

At the same time, her identity as a dental nurse became an important source of psychological resilience. Her compassion toward patients fostered professional fulfillment and reinforced her sense of purpose despite workplace challenges. The intersection of her identities as a wife and an OFW also strengthened her resilience through the emotional support she consistently received from her husband in the Philippines. In addition, self-restraint, maintaining work-life balance, and attending online therapy after being diagnosed with adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depression enhanced her understanding of effective coping strategies and enabled her to navigate adversities more effectively.

#### **Case 2: OFW Breadwinner, Single Mother, Muslim, and Barista**

Case 2 illustrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, woman, single mother, barista, and Muslim shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of her identities as a single mother and breadwinner intensified breadwinning pressure and financial anxiety, as she continuously strived to secure a better future for her daughter. The intersection of being an OFW and a

barista also contributed to workplace-related psychological distress through interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues, which stemmed from perceived competition. Similar to Case 1, the intersection of her identities as an OFW breadwinner from a lower-middle-class background contributed to financial strain, as delayed salary remained challenging despite her efforts to practice financial prudence. Taken together, these intersecting identities heightened her psychological distress.

Moreover, the intersection of her identities as a Muslim and an OFW became a significant source of psychological resilience. She narrated that she received social support from a colleague who introduced her to Islam and later became her husband. After reverting to Islam, she developed a deeper appreciation for how women are valued and treated within the religion. Guided by the Islamic value of patience, she learned to approach adversities with greater acceptance, which strengthened her psychological resilience. The intersection of her identities as a wife and an OFW further fostered resilience through the social support she consistently received from her husband, while support from her supervisor also contributed to her overall well-being. Similar to Case 1, her pre-existing diagnosis of neurocirculatory asthenia enhanced her understanding of effective coping strategies, enabling her to manage stress more effectively.

### **Case 3: OFW Breadwinner, Daughter, College Graduate, and Sports Coach**

Case 3 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, woman, daughter, sports coach, and Catholic shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of her identities as an OFW breadwinner and sports coach contributed to financial strain, particularly because her work required frequent transfers to different gym branches. However, this did not significantly exacerbate her psychological distress due to the social support she received from her mother. The intersection of her identities as a daughter and breadwinner fostered resilience, as her mother expressed understanding whenever she was only able to send a small amount of financial support.

The participant also demonstrated resilience through resourcefulness. The intersection of her identities as an OFW breadwinner and sports coach enabled her to seek additional sources of income by working as a part-time private fitness trainer for clients outside the gym's membership.

Similar to Case 1, the intersection of being a Filipina and a professional sports coach in Riyadh exposed her to nationality-based discrimination. She reported that some locals associated Filipinas with domestic work, which contributed to experiences of occupational devaluation. Nevertheless, the intersection of her identities as a college graduate and sports coach strengthened her competence-based self-confidence, enabling her to assert her professional identity and resist internalizing discriminatory perceptions.

In addition, the intersection of her identities as a Catholic and an OFW fostered psychological resilience through religious coping. Lastly, the intersection of her identities as a daughter and breadwinner contributed to early-developed resilience, as she began financially contributing to her family during her teenage years. Through these experiences, she developed greater self-confidence and a stronger sense of self-worth despite the adversities she encountered.

### **Case 4: OFW Breadwinner, Daughter, Wife, Muslim, and Domestic Helper**

Case 4 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, woman, domestic helper, daughter, wife, and Muslim shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of her identities as a daughter and breadwinner contributed to family health-related financial anxiety, as she continuously provided financial support for her mother's maintenance medications. This distress was further intensified whenever she experienced delayed salary. The intersection of her identities as a Filipina and a domestic helper also exposed her to occupational devaluation, particularly through negative perceptions and comments from fellow Filipinos in the Philippines. Furthermore, the intersection of her identities as a domestic helper and breadwinner resulted in physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion, which eventually led to emotional strain from turnover intention and her continuing breadwinner obligations.

Concurrently, the intersection of her identities as a breadwinner and domestic helper fostered psychological

resilience through resourcefulness. Similar to Case 3, she established a coffee vending machine business in the Philippines as an additional source of income. Although the business generated only a modest income, she explained that it became a financial buffer during emergencies and whenever she experienced financial shortfalls. The intersection of her identities as a Muslim and an OFW further strengthened her psychological resilience through religious coping, while her identity as a breadwinner promoted self-reliance in navigating everyday challenges.

### **Case 5: OFW Breadwinner, Son, Muslim, and Hospital Cleaner**

Case 5 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, man, hospital cleaner, son, Muslim, and from a lower class background shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. Compared with the previous cases, he reported relatively limited psychological distress, which was primarily characterized by temporary homesickness and financial strain. The intersection of his identities as an OFW breadwinner and son contributed to financial strain, as his monthly income was only sufficient to meet his family's needs. Consequently, delayed salary became a source of psychological distress. In contrast to the other participants, he did not report experiences of discrimination or occupational devaluation.

Despite these challenges, the intersection of his identities as a breadwinner and a man fostered self-reliance, as he resorted to borrowing money to temporarily address financial difficulties. The intersection of his identities as a Muslim and an OFW became his primary source of psychological resilience. As a born Muslim, he reported that his faith was further strengthened through the strong Islamic influence embedded in Riyadh's culture, leading him to rely on religious coping when navigating adversities. Similar to Case 3, the intersection of his identities as a son and future breadwinner contributed to early-developed resilience, as he began financially contributing to his family at the age of 16.

Although his identity as a hospital cleaner intersecting with his breadwinner role contributed to financial strain because of his limited monthly income, his Muslim identity functioned as a protective factor, enabling him to cope with adversities and maintain psychological resilience.

### **Case 6: OFW Breadwinner, Single Father, Muslim, College Graduate, and Family Driver**

Case 6 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, man, son, single father, family driver, Muslim, and a college graduate shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of his identities as a single father and breadwinner intensified financial pressure and emotional distress, particularly when delayed salary occurred. He also reported that family-related stressors had a greater impact on his mental health than work-related stress. The intersection of his identities as a man and a single father contributed to emotional suppression, as he recognized that social expectations of men to remain strong discouraged him from openly expressing his emotions.

The intersection of being a Filipino and a family driver also contributed to workplace discrimination. He shared that some locals perceived Filipinos as less likely to resist unfair working conditions, which resulted in exploitation by his previous employer. However, the intersection of his identities as a college graduate and a professional worker enabled him to positively reframe these experiences. Rather than internalizing the discrimination, he interpreted the additional responsibilities entrusted to him by his former employer as a sign of competence. Consequently, his educational and professional background strengthened his competence-based self-confidence, allowing him to assert his professional identity and buffer the psychological distress associated with occupational devaluation.

Lastly, the intersection of his identities as a Muslim and an OFW became an important source of psychological resilience. He shared that his journey of reverting to Islam significantly contributed to his personal growth. Consistent with Cases 2, 3, 4, and 5, he primarily relied on religious coping to navigate adversities, which strengthened his psychological resilience.

## Case 7: OFW Breadwinner, Son, Muslim, High School Graduate/TESDA Dressmaking NCII, and Tailor

Lastly, Case 7 demonstrates how the intersecting identities of being an OFW breadwinner, man, son, tailor, Muslim, and from a lower-middle-class background shaped the participant's experiences of psychological distress and resilience. The intersection of his identities as a son and breadwinner contributed to financial anxiety, particularly when delayed salary affected his ability to provide for his family. He also perceived that his family's treatment of him depended on his financial capacity, resulting in conditional familial acceptance, similar to Case 1. Moreover, the intersection of his identities as a breadwinner and a man intensified self-sacrificial tendencies, as he consistently prioritized his family's needs over his own. He shared that there were times when he ate eggs every day so that he could continue sending money to his family. This same intersection also contributed to emotional suppression due to masculine role strain, as he felt obligated to remain strong despite experiencing sleep disturbances, crying episodes, and talking to himself in the mirror.

The intersection of his identities as an OFW and a tailor also contributed to workplace-related psychological distress. Similar to Case 2, he experienced interpersonal tension with a fellow Filipino colleague, which stemmed from perceived competition after he was promoted because of his skills despite being newly hired. This tension caused emotional strain and turnover intention; however, his identity as a breadwinner made it difficult for him to leave his job. Instead, he sought support by opening up to both his employer and family, highlighting the role of social support in fostering psychological resilience.

Furthermore, the intersection of his identities as a man and a tailor exposed him to gender discrimination and occupational devaluation. He was frequently told that tailoring was a profession for women, while others questioned why he chose a job that offered relatively low income. Despite being a high school graduate with a TESDA Dressmaking NC II certification, he did not internalize these negative perceptions. Instead, he expressed gratitude to Allah for allowing him to pursue his passion for dressmaking while supporting his family, resulting in professional fulfillment.

Lastly, the intersection of his identities as a Muslim and an OFW further strengthened his psychological resilience through religious coping. Similar to Case 2, he practiced the Islamic value of patience when facing adversities. Taken together, the participant's experiences suggest that his family served as both a source of psychological distress and a primary source of resilience, motivating him to persevere despite the challenges associated with migration and breadwinning responsibilities.

Across the cases, participants shared the common identities of being migrants and breadwinners. However, the intersection of additional identities, including occupation, gender, familial role, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, and educational background, shaped how psychological distress was experienced, how resilience was developed, and how participants made meaning of their migration experiences. These findings demonstrate that no two participants experienced migration in exactly the same way despite occupying similar social positions. Rather, it was the unique combination of intersecting identities that influenced how participants understood, negotiated, and responded to the challenges and opportunities associated with migration.

## CONCLUSION

After restorying the narratives, the present phenomenological research yielded notable lived experiences of OFW breadwinners. As they arrived in Riyadh, common initial migration adjustment challenging experiences were evident including culture shock, language barriers, workplace adjustment, financial strain, and homesickness.

Thereafter, participants have further experienced more adversities resulting in psychological distress. These adversities primarily stemmed from family and work related stressors. Particularly, psychological distress was induced by family pressure, breadwinning, pressure, conditional familial acceptance, and family health-related financial anxiety. In contrast, work stressors consist of delayed salary, financial anxiety, sleep disturbance due to financial strain, nationality-based discrimination, occupational devaluation, interpersonal tension with Filipino colleagues, and emotional strain from turnover intention and breadwinner obligations. Emotional distress was revealed as a response to these family and work-induced psychological distress experiences. In line with this, participants manifested emotional exhaustion and emotional suppression. Notably, male participants experienced

emotional suppression due to masculine role strain.

Concurrently, challenges in negotiation of multiple intersecting identities emerged. These primarily include professional identity assertion, role conflict, selflessness, self-sacrifice, and shift in religious identity. Upon negotiating these intersecting identities in their everyday life, participants were able to construct meaning and coherence by organizing their lived experiences into self-defining life stories. Moreover, the participants have (re)defined their self-concept through self-understanding, open-mindedness, increased competence-based self-confidence, professional fulfillment, sense of fulfillment from breadwinner obligations, breadwinner identity centrality, and positive identification with Filipino identity. Henceforth, the participants have fostered the development of psychological resilience through social support, self-restraint, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and religious coping.

Nonetheless, the findings of the present study further enriched the intersectionality framework (Crenshaw, 1989) by demonstrating how the simultaneous negotiation of breadwinner, migrant, professional, familial, gendered, and religious identities shapes the psychological distress and resilience of OFW breadwinners. Rather than operating independently, these identities intersect to produce unique challenges and adaptive responses that may not be fully understood when examined through a single identity category. Importantly, the study contributes to narrative identity theory (McAdams, 2013) by illustrating how OFW breadwinners construct meaning from migration-related adversities through the continuous reconstruction of self-defining life stories. One of which was defined as the breadwinner identity centrality, sense of fulfillment, etc. Through this meaning-making process, participants were able to preserve, negotiate, and redefine their sense of self while navigating the demands of migration and breadwinning responsibilities.

After all, the present research study yielded a nuanced understanding on the lived experiences of psychological distress and resilience among OFW breadwinners in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the intersectionality framework and guided by the narrative identity theory. Thus, this study aligns with and contributes to the existing body of literature on Clinical, Social, Cultural, Cross-Cultural, and Filipino Psychology. The findings revealed various experiences which induced the psychological distress among OFW breadwinners. Narratives on navigating identity development and psychological resilience were explored, contributing to Clinical Psychology. In terms of Social Psychology, the study utilized an intersectionality framework to better understand which sociological identity and lived experiences shape participants' psychological distress and resilience. This study contributes to Cultural Psychology by examining how Filipino values such as family responsibility and relational identity shape meaning-making and coping in migration contexts. It also extends Cross-Cultural Psychology by highlighting how Filipino breadwinners navigate and adapt to sociocultural differences between the Philippines and the host country. Finally, it enriches Filipino Psychology by yielding invaluable insights into how Filipino traits such as hardworking, patience, and perseverance served as personal resources for coping with various challenges and maintaining resilience while working abroad. Meanwhile, 'crab mentality' emerged from the participants' accounts, offering a potential additional perspective within the field. Ultimately, this study hopes to serve as a guide for current and future OFW breadwinners by increasing awareness of the challenges associated with migration, identity negotiation, and breadwinning responsibilities, while highlighting factors that contribute to resilience and overall well-being.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The present research study was able to yield invaluable insights however, there are limitations observed as well. As the present study is qualitative in nature, limited sample size has been attained. Therefore, the study does not intend to generalize the findings however, it provides an in-depth understanding on the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners. In addition, geographical context was also limited. This study exclusively focused on OFW breadwinners in Riyadh, which may not fully capture the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners residing in different regions of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or other countries where culture and overall living conditions may vary. Lastly, the study gathered participants from varying occupational backgrounds, which may serve as a strength but also a limitation. While this provided a broader understanding of OFW breadwinner experiences, occupation-specific challenges may not have been explored in sufficient depth. Nonetheless, future researchers may take these identified limitations into consideration.

## RECOMMENDATION

After the present study has generated invaluable findings, the researcher would like to suggest several recommendations. Future researchers are encouraged to explore the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners across different host countries to determine how varying sociocultural, economic, and labor contexts shape psychological distress, resilience, and identity development. Studies involving larger and more diverse OFW populations across different occupations, industries, and demographic backgrounds are likewise recommended to enhance the transferability of the findings. Comparative studies between breadwinners and non-breadwinners may also provide a more nuanced understanding of how breadwinning responsibilities uniquely influence psychological distress, resilience, and identity construction. As the present study gathered a limited number of participants due to its qualitative approach, future studies may utilize quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to examine these phenomena among larger populations. In relation to one of the limitations of study, focusing on one specific occupation is suggested to explore the influence of unique demands of particular professions. Additionally, future researchers can investigate other psychological variables relevant to the lived experiences of OFW breadwinners.

For practical implication, policy makers, specifically the Philippine embassy in Riyadh, should have registered Filipino mental health professionals designated for OFWs. Thus, free psychological services should be made accessible to them. These should include mental health first-aid, mental health crisis hotline, etc. In addition, welfare checks in the workplace should be imposed to ensure the well-being of OFWs. This may increase the prevention of delayed salaries and other work stressors, which can then foster a healthy work environment.

Ultimately, participants also shared practical advice for Filipino breadwinners planning to work in Riyadh to support their well-being. This included psychological preparation for migration and readiness for potential adversities, maintaining religious faith as a source of resilience, sustaining open communication with family for social support, preparing for varied job responsibilities, and practicing financial prudence and resourcefulness rather than relying solely on monthly income.

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