

Assessing the Patterns of Temporary Employment in the Food Processing Industry in Lagos

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Abstract: Temporary employment has continued to grow globally. Employers of labour have capitalized on the use of temporary workers to minimize cost and administrative complexity. Previous studies viewed temporary employment workers as homogeneous groups without focusing on the differences among temporary employees in Nigeria. This study, therefore, assesses the patterns of temporary employment in the food processing industry. Specifically, it examines how these categories of workers cope in the work environment, differences in treatment, economic benefits and opportunities for conversion to permanent workers. This study is anchored on work stress models and social comparison or exchange theories as it theoretical leanings to reflect the situations of workers in Nigeria. Qualitative Method was used to collect information for this study. A sample size of 40 respondents were chosen for In Depth Interviews (IDI) through snow ball method from fifteen casual workers, eight contract workers, six temporary workers, seven outsourced workers and four disengaged workers. The study revealed that the work environment has been most challenging for these categories of workers as they faced discrimination, sexual harassment, excess workload, poor wages, job insecurity, high fatigue, backaches and muscular pains amongst other. The study found that among the various categories of temporary employees the casual workers are the most degraded and stigmatized. It is hoped that government and employers of labour would put a stop to this unfair labour practices and more studies will further examine the dynamic of precarious work in other industries in future.

Key words: Temporary, employment, food processing, industry, workers

INTRODUCTION

Employers of labour are encouraging precarious forms of work to minimize cost of production while maximizing profits, avoiding being held responsible for their own employees and also destroying unions. Since, employment situation around the world has become more competitive and unstable, companies and organizations have tended to offer more flexible employment conditions, focusing on potential problems (such as lower demand of the market) and the possibility of lay-offs (OECD, 2002). The growth in temporary employment is driven by employers' demand for more flexibility and innovation as well as their wish to reduce labour costs and administrative complexity (Kalleberg *et al.*, 2003; Burgess and Connell, 2006). One of the ways in which organization does this is to hire or fire workers according to the requirements of the market at any given situation (Martinez *et al.*, 2010). The use of flexible contracts, in the form of temporary employment is a way to achieve this. Precarious work is created when permanent, regular jobs are replaced by subcontracted labour, temporary and

short-term jobs, fixed-term contracts and informal day labour (Hevenstone, 2010). Temporary employment typically lacks job security, fringe benefits and possibilities for advancement that are available to incumbents of permanent job (Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993). This kind of work has increased in recent years across the globe. Temporary employment emanates from continuous change in the working arrangement where it is difficult to secure employment relationships (Kalleberg, 2000; Foote, 2004), economic uncertainty (Greer, 2001), increase in global competition and the urge to reduce the cost of doing business (Wandera, 2011). On a daily basis, increasing number of firms are employing workers on short-term temporary basis to enhance their competitiveness in the global market (Kalleberg, 2000; Adewumi, 2008; Wandera, 2011). Many organizations use short term workers for a variety of reasons such as seasonal or cyclical workforce adjustments, cost saving efforts and specific skill needs (Jolliffe and Farnsworth, 2003) among other reasons.

In Nigeria, temporary employment is very common in many establishments, whether indigenous, transnational

or multi-national firms, either public or private industry including telecommunications sector, oil and gas sector, power sector, banking sector, education sector and so on (Okougbo, 2004; Onyeonoru, 2004; Okafor, 2007; Adewumi and Adenugba, 2010; Aduba, 2012). In some foreign firms in Nigeria, it is not uncommon to have more workers employed on contract or short time employment basis as against permanent workers. Similarly in some indigenous industries, it is possible to have situation whereby virtually all the employees are either casual or contract staff. These categories of workers possess either professional or administrative skills (Adebimpe, 2003). In an attempt to maximize profit and keep up with competition, some work organization have resulted to unethical business practices like casualisation of workers thereby hurting worker's interest and violating some fundamental labour laws (Okafor, 2007).

Associated with temporary employment is labour exploitation which is pervasive in many organizations in Nigeria. It manifests itself in one form or the other including poor salary, low wages, few benefits, de-motivation and dehumanization of work and workers, lack of collective representation by unions, job insecurity and definite duration (Okougbo, 2004; Mokwenye, 2008; Okafor, 2010). Casualization which is the other name for temporary employment has become rampant in many industries. Studies have shown that organizations use temporary employment condition as a pseudo-probationary period to assess the performance of workers who may likely secure long term employment and those that do not fit the organization (Druker and Croucher, 2000). This has been found to create a more meaningful employer-employee relationship with their short term workers. It has also been established that this kind of condition is not applicable in all organizations as some workers may not likely secure long time employment after the probation period. Till date empirical research on temporary employment has been primarily descriptive (Pfeffer and Baron, 1988; Davis-Blake and Uzzi, 1993; Casey and Alach, 2004), some reporting statistics on the demographic characteristics of temporary workers (Cohen and Haberfeld, 1993; Kalleberg *et al.*, 2000), others attempt to establish relationships between one independent and dependent variables. Most of the studies in Nigeria have focused on the problem of nonstandard employment in indigenous, transnational or multi-national firms, either public or private industry including telecommunications sector, oil and gas sector, power sector, banking sector (both old and new generations banks), education sector and so on (Okougbo, 2004; Onyeonoru, 2004; Okafor, 2007; Aduba, 2012). Similarly, previous studies have

viewed temporary workers as homogeneous groups without looking at the differences among temporary employees that would bring about better understanding of their peculiar situations. It is against this backdrop that this study assesses the patterns of temporary employment in the food processing industry in Lagos State. In the light of this, the following questions are examined:

- How do temporary employment workers cope with work environment in the food processing industry?
- Are their differences in the way temporary employment workers in food processing industry are treated?
- What are those economic benefits that temporary workers enjoy in the food processing industry?
- Are their opportunities for temporary employment workers to be converted to permanent workers in the food processing industry?

Literature review: There have been an increase in the growth of temporary employment and its effects on individual have been hindered by the absence of a universally accepted definition (Kalleberg, 2000; Gallagher and Parks, 2001). Contingency employment is used most often in USA and Canadian literature while temporary, fixed-term or non-permanent employment are used interchangeably in European literature (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004; De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). Temporary employment is those kinds of employment that depart from the Standard Employment Relationship (SER) on three or in the US, four dimensions (Cranford *et al.*, 2003; Campbell, 2004; Gallagher and Sverke, 2005). De Cuyper *et al.* (2008) identified four differences between SER and Temporary employment. First, Standard Employment Relationship (SER) is characterized by permanency and continuity of employment while this is absent in temporary employment arrangement. In the case of temporary employment there is a limited duration which often includes a fixed terminal date. Second, in Standard Employment Relationship (SER), employees work at the employer's workplace and on the employer's premise under his or her supervision. In contrast, some temporary employment arrangement is market mediated as in the case of temporary agency workers. Third, unlike temporary employment, SER are associated with extensive statutory benefits and entitlements such as minimum wages, unemployment insurance, protection against unfair dismissal and paid leave. And lastly, this is limited to US, the association between the SER and waged work. Self employment as in case of independent contracting falls into this category temporary employment (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004).

In most developed economies, non-regular employment such as part time and temporary work has increased as a proportion of the workforce in recent years. This trend seems to be stronger in countries like France, Italy and Spain where regular employees have strong job protection which in return encourages firms to employ more non-regular workers who can easily be terminated when the reduction of labour become necessary (Booth *et al.*, 2002). Organizations usually composed of two main groups of workers: the primary group (core workers) and the secondary group (peripheral workers). Core workers are mostly “standard” or permanent employees. These employees work under the so-called Standard Employment Relationship (SER) which according to Kalleberg (2000) and De Cuyper *et al.* (2008) has some typical characteristics: which offers continuity of employment which gives the workers a certain level of security regarding their working situation; the employees work in the employer’s workplace and receive employer’s supervision. All these types of employment are different from the standard employment in aspects such as working hours, terms of the contract, access to fringe benefits and supervision received. Some temporary workers are managed by agencies, giving the work relation a tripartite character (worker, agency and client organization). Most of the companies have a certain number of temporary workers as a way to deal with periods of decreased productivity or lower demand. This characteristic is considered by many authors as a quantitative (or numerical) external flexibility, concerning employees who belong to the “external” part of the company and not to the “core” (Martinez *et al.*, 2010).

The notion of temporary employment may suggest intermittent contract yet anecdotal evidence suggests that there are cases of people employed on a continuous temporary basis in worse cases for >20 years. It is obvious in such a case that the labour is required but the employer is not willing to pay the cost of permanent employment. Non-standard employment relationship is frequently associated with the following types of employment: part-time employment, casual work, contract work, outsourced jobs, fixed-term work, temporary work, on-call work and home workers. This encourages organizations to limit the duration of employment by using; part-time and short-time temporary workers who are often viewed as being disposable and can be recruited and selected quickly, used when an organization does not have the approval to hire and cheaper than regular, full-time employees. These categories of workers are on the company payroll but have relatively weak ties to the organization (Kalleberg, 2003).

All of these forms of employment are related in that they depart from the standard employment relationship (full-time, continuous work with one employer). Each form of nonstandard employment may offer its own challenges but they all share more or less the same disadvantages: low wages, few benefits, lack of collective representation by unions and little to no job security and definite duration (Okougbo, 2004; Mokwenye, 2008; Okafor, 2010). Similarly, short term employment has been seen as a means of job continuity in an era of restructuring, redundancy and unemployment. Job continuity is replacing job security for many professionals and short term work is a way to stay continuously employed (Brosman *et al.*, 1997). Short term employment may open up opportunities for previously unemployed people to find employment (Hasluck, 2011) and it provides the needed opportunities and experience for people re-entering the workforce. It is also argued that temporary workers are usually paid less than continuous workers employed by or contractually assigned to the same company and have reduced entitlements to a range of employee benefits such as paid holidays, superannuation schemes or health insurance (Nolen, 1996; Garsten, 1999).

Literature also suggests that many temporary workers because of their high turnover and lack of integration into employing organization or trade union, may be subject to reduced protection by labour legislation and union membership (Vosko, 2000; Adewumi, 2008). It is argued that temporary employees have little or no control over workplace decisions or over design and implementation of their work tasks (Casey and Alach, 2004).

Furthermore, the traditional industrial relations systems based on the concept of a full-time employee working within an organization are increasingly being challenged by the use of Non Standard Work Arrangements (NSWAs) by employers. This changing nature of work has taken a new dimension with the adoption of flexible work arrangements by many firms globally. These changes have been linked to the globalization of the world economy (Blanpain, 1999; Floro and Meurs, 2009). The new approach to management in a globalised economy today is the development of a more flexible workforce (Benson and Ieronimo, 1996) which has become employers’ new frontier in the management of labour (Baglioni, 1990). According to Rodgers (2007) employers prefer flexibility more than workers. This has implication for workers, particularly those in the production industries and in blue collar unskilled occupations which mean fewer, insecure and stressful jobs as workplaces become lean and mean with a focus on producing “more with less” (Kumar, 1993). In Nigeria, the changing patterns of work such as

casual, contract, temporary, part-time employments, subcontracting, etc., occasioned by intermittent adjustment programmes have created concerns for workers and trade unions alike. Job security, social security, terminal benefits and minimum conditions of work are some of these issues that have made the ILO objectives on decent work impossible in many organizations. Scholars have argued that these new forms of work arrangements have led to the prospects of a “race to the bottom” in labour standards, particularly in the developing nations (Banks, 2006). On close scrutiny, one can observe that labour standards are being compromised by most firms involved in all categories of non standard work practices. Such standards include the right to form or belong to a trade union and the right to collective bargaining. Casualisation of employment is growing at an alarming rate. More and more workers in permanent employment are daily losing their jobs and are being re-employed as casual/contract workers or are replaced by casual or contract workers (Otobo, 2000; Okougbo, 2004; Onyeonoru, 2005; Okafor, 2007). Casual work which is supposed to be a form of temporary employment has acquired the status of permanent employment in Nigeria without the statutory benefits associated with that status.

These changes have had a number of consequences such as reducing the effectiveness of workers voice, certainly at the level of the company and plant. As a result, workers now have less check on arbitrary and unfair employer practices (Fajana, 2005; Pastore, 2008; Adewumi, 2008). In addition, these changes may have reduced the standardization and increased the variety of terms and conditions within companies, industries and countries. At the same time, however new mechanisms of direct participation may have increased workers’ say over immediate task of work. On their part, unions have reacted in various ways such as working with management to increase employee satisfaction and well-being. This partnership relationship is likely to provide an effective basis for maintaining jobs and members in a peaceful environment. Pastore (2008) noted that trade unions have become powerless to deal with this situation as globalization of the labour market has occurred much faster than globalization of labour protection. Inequality and informality have greatly increased in work environment with about two thirds of the world workforce unprotected. Cheap labour is equivalent to poor conditions of work as organizations can mitigate the suffering of workers in trying to remain relevant and competitive.

Theoretical framework: There is no clear cut theoretical framework that explains the effect of temporary

employment. But there are some psychological theories that may be helpful in explaining temporary employment relationship. These theories can be classified into two main groups: work stress models and social comparison and social exchange theories. Work stress models explain the consequences of temporary employment by highlighting certain characteristics that make temporary workers more prone to suffer work related strain (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). This model is based on three variables. First, temporary workers are peripheral to the organization which makes the employers not to consider temporary workers in the aspects of benefits, wages, promotion or further training. This idea is advanced in theories of Flexible Firm Model developed by Atkinson (Valverde *et al.*, 2000) and the Dual Labour Market Model of Doeringer and Piore (Dickens and Lang, 1985). The adverse working conditions for the temporary employees can cause a decrease in the worker’s well-being and deteriorate performance at the workplace (Rousseau and Libuser, 1997). The second variable considers the reduced level of control that temporary workers have over their job. Temporary workers are usually hired to perform a very specific task that has been previously defined by the employer (Martinez *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, temporary workers do not have total control over their work and decisions within the workplace. Also, the lack of support from co-workers, supervisors or even the union can also be a source of stress and this can be detrimental to their well-being. The third variable is the lack of control that temporary workers might experience regarding the demands of the employer (or employers). The worker is under pressure to perform in a good way and also has to look for alternative sources of income, foreseeing the future unemployment. As a result of the stressful situation, workers can go through physical and mental weakening, therefore, increasing the likelihood of presenting sickness related absenteeism. Other consequences such as deteriorated family and organizational relations may also affect the workers’ productivity.

The second type of theories use in explaining the relationship between contract type and the negative outcomes among workers are social comparison and social exchange theories. These theories rely on the notion that workers evaluate their situation in terms of perceived fairness in the workplace (Buunk and Gibbons, 2007). If the temporary workers feel they are not receiving what they think they deserve, this might generate a sense of deprivation and therefore, create a negative perception of the working situation (Turnley and Feldman, 1999). The concept of psychological contract becomes relevant in this approach. According to Rousseau (1989), the

psychological contract concerns “the individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between individual and the organization”. He argued that the formal contract defines the framework and conditions of the psychological contract, stating the expectations employees have regarding their obligations and entitlements. According to Rousseau (1990), there are two types of psychological contract: transactional and relational. The transactional focus on the economic exchange between the employer and the employee, i.e., for a specified period of time and with a narrow scope and definition. On the other hand, the relational psychological contract is based on a non-economic/affective exchange with no defined duration and a broad scope and definition (Martinez *et al.*, 2010). Temporary employees who are employed for specific task for a specific amount of time and have the required skills are more likely to hold a transactional contract (Millward and Hopkins, 1998). On the other hand, permanent workers whose employment is a long term relationship with the employers and a strong commitment with the organization are more likely to hold a relational contract. According to Millward and Hopkins (1998), aspects such as trust, attachment and commitment are left out of transactional contracts. The relationship is directed towards the exchange of money for performing certain tasks without any other kind of motivation for the employee. When this happen, the employee will not identify with the organization’s values and goals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: The study was carried out in Lagos State, the commercial capital of Nigeria. Its natural harbour and the population have positioned the state since, independence as the most industrial city in Nigeria. It has a projected population of >18.8 million (at a projected growth rate of 2.6%) (George, 2010). A wide range of manufacturing industries are located in Lagos State and manufactured goods are produced in the city including processed food, beverage, machinery, motor vehicles, electronic equipment, chemicals, beer and textiles. As such the choice of the selection of food processing industry is based on the fact that over the years the sector has been confronted with problems of unemployment, inadequate supply of local sourced raw materials, weak infrastructural facilities, unfair competition and unfair labour practices. There are 84 affiliate branches of the food, beverage and tobacco industry in Nigeria. Out of these 84 affiliate branches, 49 are located or have their operations in Lagos. Again out of the 49 branches, there are 42 companies that are into food (i.e., confectionaries, millers, biscuits, sugar, refineries, cocoa and related drinks) and the remaining 7 into beverages (i.e., breweries, bottlers and distillers).

Research design: The research design employs the use of qualitative methods in the collection, organization and analysis of data. It employs the use of In Depth Interviews (IDIs) to elicit information from the respondents. This method allows us to gain valuable insights through the subjective narratives of the respondents that is gives us understanding from the participants’ perspectives. The specific focus of the study was on all categories of workers on temporary employment in the food processing industries in Lagos State.

Sampling techniques: The study employs the use of non-probability technique, i.e., Snowball Method in selecting the respondents. This method was adopted primarily to overcome the problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations in work environment. The criteria for choosing the respondents among the workers include those who have been working for the past 1 year; those that have their employment status changed from temporary to permanent or vice versa; those that were employed directly by their organizations and those that are recruited by contractors or agencies for the organizations. The study also focused on some temporary workers who had concluded the terms of contract with their respective contractors, agencies or organizations. The inclusion of this category is to have first hand information about their past experiences. In all, the sample size for the study was forty In Depth Interviews (IDIs). There were 15 workers on casualisation, 8 on contract employment, 6 on temporary jobs for a fixed period of time ranging for 12-18 months, 7 out sourced workers and 4 disengaged workers.

Data analysis: Content analysis method was used to analyze with the Nvivo 8 Software. Themes from the interviews and discussion transcripts were identified from the range of objectives and theoretical frameworks validated through deductive method. Information derived from in-depth interview were transcribed and content analyzed under different headings depicting the different aspects of the discussion. The required sample size was got through snowball method. The data gathering took 18 months because of the busy nature of the respondents and also the Snowball Method adopted. On ethical consideration, consent forms were administered to the participants who could read and were asked to sign the consent forms while those who could not had the content interpreted for them in local languages and were asked to thumb print on the consent forms. Their decision to participate and withdraw from time to time was also ensured.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1, 42% of the respondents were between the age bracket of 31-40 years old, 25% in the age bracket of 41-50 years and another 20% in the age bracket of 20-30 years, respectively. Also, 83% of the respondents were male while the remaining 17% were female. Their marital status indicates that majority of the respondents 52% were married, 30% single, 10% separated and 5% divorced. Furthermore, 63% of the respondents were Christians and 37% Muslims. Their educational background indicates that 35% of the respondents possessed Bachelors and Higher National Diplomas, 20% had Ordinary National Diplomas and National Certificate of Education, 18% had First School leaving Certificates and 10% of respondents possessed the Professional degrees and WASC/SSCE, respectively. Ethnic background shows that 40% of the respondents were Yoruba, 25% were Igbo, 13% Hausa and the remaining 22% were Ijaw, Ibibio, Itsekiri, Idoma and Urhorobo.

Coping with the work environment: The conditions of work described the practical conditions under which people work and cope with specific technical and organizational environment. While the conditions of

employment describe the rules and statuses under which people are employed, trained and paid in any given organization. The working environment provides an avenue for all categories of workers to work in a conducive atmosphere. In an ideal situation, opportunities should be given to both male and female workers without discrimination. From time to time, employment opportunities are given to temporary workers as the need arises through direct employment by the company or through accredited contractors who employ on behalf of the organization.

The respondents explained the reasons that made them work as temporary workers and their coping strategies in the work environment. These include lack of permanent job, opportunity to be employed as permanent worker (Hasluck, 2011), better opportunity to combine work with schooling as a source of income as a source of building experience for better job, an avenue to get recommendation for a full time employment, opportunity to move away from the unemployment market and the need for survival. One of the respondents, a casual worker in his 30 sec and who lives with his friends explained that the reason he chose to work as a casual work was because he wanted to be employed as a permanent worker:

I finished my secondary school about 3 years ago. I learned electrical fittings for 2 years. At the expiration of my vocation, I decided to take a temporary job with this organization. I was told that after working for 1 year, I would be absolved as a permanent staff. This is my 2nd year in this organization. I have not been considered for permanent employment. Some of the workers I met here told me that some of them had been on temporary employment for 6-10 years now (IDI/Male/P2/Casual/2013)

Another respondent, a contract worker in his early 40s a graduate of mechanical engineering and married with three kids explained that he finished his university education about 11 years ago. After searching for non existing job for 6 years without success, he decided to take this opportunity as a source of regular income to take care of his family. He said:

I got this job through one of the accredited recruitment agencies for this organization about 4 years ago. I have searched the nook and crannies of Lagos for jobs all to no avail until one of my friends told me about this agency. I needed to take the job as a source of income because my wife has been the one taking care of the family while I was searching for job (IDI/Male/P4/Contract worker/2013)

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in IDI

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
20-30	8	20
31-40	17	42
41-50	10	25
51-60	5	13
Total	40	100
Sex		
Male	33	83
Female	7	17
Total	40	100
Marital status		
Single	12	30
Married	21	53
Divorced	2	5
Separated	4	10
Widowed	1	2
Total	40	100
Religion		
Christianity	25	63
Islam	15	37
Total	40	100
Educational qualification		
No formal education	3	7
First school leaving certificate	7	18
WASC/SSCE	4	10
OND/NCE	8	20
B.Sc/HND	14	35
Professional degree	4	10
Total	40	100
Ethnic background		
Hausa	5	13
Igbo	10	25
Yoruba	16	40
Others	9	22
Total	40	100

Fieldwork (2013)

For many of the respondents, the choice of temporary employment was to move away from the unemployment market and secure a livelihood. They argued that there are many people who are graduates roaming the streets of major cities looking for non existing jobs. The harsh economic conditions in the country have further compounded the problems of unemployment. Most organizations are looking for ways of reducing their staff strength and avoiding paying all compensations associated with hiring permanent workers. As explained by one of the disengaged workers who had spent 20 years as a temporary worker and in his 60s:

Like I said earlier I spent 20 years working as a temporary worker in this organization. I wanted to make a living. I came with my first school leaving certificate in 1991 through my uncle who was a manager in this organization then. We were told that after working for 2 years on temporary basis the organization would absorb us. Not quite long there was a policy that placed embargo on employment. Since, that policy was introduced, we have been renewing the contract on yearly basis. When we came in there was nothing like discrimination as you have now. We were allowed to eat in the same canteen with permanent staff, we had access to staff clinic, we were given allowances and the company products. The only difference was that as a casual or temporary worker, you are expected to do overtime, work for longer hours and you are not entitled to pension or severance package (IDI/Male/P3/Disengaged Worker/2013)

The work environment has equally created different experiences for temporary workers and their coping mechanisms differ. Respondents reported coping with discrimination, sexual harassment, excess workload, poor wages, job insecurity, high fatigue, backaches and muscular pains amongst others. The stress at work also relate to their employment status. As explained by a casual worker:

As a casual worker one needs to cope with the poor wages with excess workload. Most times, it is the casual workers that do majority of the work here. The permanent staff do very little but we received the lowest pay. We also cope with discrimination. We are not allowed to eat in the same canteen with the permanent workers, we do not have access to staff clinic in this organization, we work for 10 h without overtime and we are not allowed to unionize (IDI/Male/P1/Casual/2013)

Another respondent, a contract staff, aged 29 who has been working as a contract staff for 2 years, reported that:

As a contract staff, I am under pressure to meet certain targets or deadlines from time to time. I have been coping with this stress of meeting my target. You know production must not be aborted for any reason. We ensure that the machines are constantly working and this is stressful for me (IDI/Male/P6/Contract Worker/2013)

A female respondent in her 30s who has been working with the organization for 5 years and married with two children explained that:

As a woman working in this kind of environment, you are constantly harassed by male colleagues who will always want to take advantage of you. As a casual or contract worker, you are intimidated by your immediate supervisors since, they know you are poorly remunerated. They make advances at you and sometimes make derogatory comments when you prove hard to get. It is even worse for single ladies (IDI/Female/P5/Casual worker/2013)

For a fixed term temporary worker, the situation is not as stressful as that of a casual worker. As elaborated by one of the respondents aged 35 years who was employed about a year ago:

I do not need to stress myself to please my supervisor at work. My contract with my organization reads 12 months. So, why should I over labour myself when I know that my performance does not guarantee my full employment. I only cope with my time which is not enough to carry out the assignment given to me. I also cope with the little salary I receive monthly anyway (IDI/Female/P1/Fixed Term temporary worker/2013)

Differences in treatment of temporary workers: The increasing use of temporary workers has prompted concerns about treatment received in the workplace and the consequences of this treatment for effective use. Being a temporary worker is a visible or publicly known fact in one's immediate working environment as workers and supervisors are aware that an individual is a temporary worker. Despite quite differences in treatment of categories of workers, the uneducated, low skilled workers employed as casual workers suffer the more. While the contract workers and outsourced workers received better privilege and economic benefits in the industry. However, there are observable differences in the

treatment of various categories of temporary workers. Casual workers received the most degrading treatment among the temporary workers. As explained by one of the respondents, a casual worker in his late 30s:

There are some mistakes that ordinarily may be overlooked for a permanent staff but when it is committed by casual workers, they may take it up to any length except if the person that brought the worker in happens to be a strong person in the management (IDI/Male/P9/Casual/2013)

There is also the issue of stigmatization of temporary workers. As explained by one of the disengaged respondents in his 50s and who worked for 12 years as a casual worker:

Most permanent workers usually avoid personal contact with casual workers. They create barriers of silence; avoid exchanging pleasantries with casual workers. Atimes, some of them make derogatory statement like “casual workers are lazy”, “unskilled”, “inexperienced” and “drop out from school” (IDI/Male/P1/Disengaged worker/2013)

Another respondent, a female casual worker in her late 20s explained that:

The truth is that casual workers are treated like slaves between and amongst workers. Some of the permanent workers treat us like slaves except for those few ones who have these human feelings. In my company, there is disparity in the way the contract staff are treated. They are given some respect and they talk to them politely because some of them are graduates. They see most casual workers as not too educated and without adequate skill forgetting that the situation in the country forced most people to take casual jobs. Outsourced workers are well treated because they see them as professionals in their various fields. It is only temporary workers who are employed directly or through agents that are mostly badly treated (IDI/Female/P10/Casual/2013)

The disparity in the treatment of temporary workers was also buttressed by a contract worker who had spent 5 years in the company. He asserted that:

As a contract worker you are expected to wear badges and reflective jackets everywhere you go within the premises. You have certain restriction on your movement and at the end of the day every body knows your status. This to me is dehumanizing (IDI/Male/P2/Contract worker/2013)

Most of the respondents admitted that the disparity in the treatment of temporary workers also has to do with the negotiating power of the recruiting agents and management of the organization. It was noted that most of the recruiting agents are owned by some retired personnel of the various companies as well as by some serving personnel or close allies to management. Depending on the negotiating power and how close they are to management, some of them get better package for their employees. While some of these agents translate it to better package for their workers, others choose to shortchange their workers. It was reported that it is how influential the agent or agency is that determines the treatment of workers in the organization. Since, most companies have started outsourcing some of their duties to employment agencies, the ownership structure also goes a long way in determining the treatment and benefits that accrue to various workers. Organizations do not deal directly with most of the temporary workers but with their employment agencies except in situation in which employment is done directly by the organizations but this has reduced lately.

Economic benefits: In terms of the economic benefits which include: health insurance, pension issues and other fringe benefits, it is to a great extent, relative in terms of ownership structure of the various organizations. The package of the ownership structure varies for instance in organizations fully owned by Europeans which seems to have better package for workers compared to those owned by Asians and Africans:

In fact, European established organizations have better packages for the various categories of workers both temporary and casual in terms of better health insurance as well as other fringe benefits for all categories of workers. Temporary employees with fixed-term employment contracts of a year or longer appear to enjoy the same benefits as permanent employees with the same employer. Temporary workers who are more educated have significantly better chances to receive training and to move into permanent jobs than less educated temporary workers. On the other hand, the Asian and African established organizations do not have better packages for their categories of workers in terms of health insurance and other fringe benefits. For the Asian and African established organizations, it is only the permanent staff as well as some outsourced professional workers that enjoy some of these economic benefits.

A respondent who was to be a casual worker revealed that he took up the casual work hoping that with that employment he could meet up with some certain needs but, unfortunately, it has not met what he had anticipated. He explained thus:

I do not even enjoy good health insurance not to talk about other benefits. More so, when one sustains injury(ies), one is not even well taken care of, not to talk of even when one is ill. For a casual worker, there is nothing like pension as well as other fringe benefits. And when one does any overtime work one does not even get the overtime allowance that is paid to other categories of workers (IDI/Male/P11/Casual/2013)

Another respondent, a temporary worker, submitted that:

In terms of health insurance and some other fringe benefits, I enjoy that to some extent but not on the benefit of pension which should help one in securing future benefits when one is out of active service. One does not enjoy the pension benefits. And even those benefits enjoyed are not enjoyed in the way other categories of workers enjoy them (IDI/Male/P3/FixedTerm Temporary/2013)

Another respondent who is also a contract worker that was outsourced by the management of the organization from a contractor company who happens to be a professional (Mechanical Engineer):

On the issue of benefits, I enjoy better health insurance and other fringe benefits. But that I am not pensionable (IDI/Male/P1/Outsourced Worker/2013)

The respondents' submission revealed that in terms of economic benefits that the various categories of workers enjoy which are pension, health insurance and other fringe benefits, many of the various categories of workers enjoy health insurance benefits relatively and also some of various categories of workers also enjoy other fringe benefits except for the pension benefits that are only enjoyed by some categories of workers in the higher hierarchy of the various organizations. In terms of health insurance benefits, casual workers are only treated when they sustain injury in the organization and perhaps when ill, the organization does not give extensive treatment thus showing no respect for the lives of workers in the organization. Concerning the temporary workers, they still enjoy an improved level of health insurance benefit better than that which are enjoyed by the casual workers, although, this also depends on the contractor company negotiation with the management of the organizations. And for the contract workers (professionals) they enjoy good health insurance benefit better than those of both the casual and the temporary

workers. These also apply to other fringe benefits that are enjoyed by all the categories of workers but are relatively better based on the various categories of the workers as well as the various organizations. On the idea of pension benefits, the high rank management workers of the various organizations enjoy this facility. In fact in some organizations the contract workers in the management also enjoy pension benefits as enjoyed by the permanent management workers.

Opportunity for regularization: Opportunity for conversion from temporary to permanent work is restrictive in many organizations in the food processing industry as very little opportunities exist for temporary workers. This is because most jobs are now outsourced, seasonal, cyclical and most time with definite duration. Often times, when workers are employed on temporary basis, they might not spend >6 months before they are laid off. Some that are fortunate could work for a long period of time like 5-10 years before they are engaged. Rather than delivering the promise of flexibility, temporary workers find themselves trapped in uncertain employment environments, unable to move beyond their temporary status. As noted by Okougbo (2004) and Okafor (2007) each form of non-standard employment may offer its own challenges but they share more or less the same disadvantages such as low wages, few benefits, lack of collective representation by unions and little job security and definite duration. Temporary workers also face relative isolation as they do not remain with the same employer for extended periods as some of them often change job from time to time.

There is relative opportunity for casual workers who are employed directly to be converted to full time worker based on performance and recommendation from a superior officer than for a casual worker employed for the company through a recruiting or employment agent or agency. In the same vein, because of the competition in the industry, most organizations are comfortable with non standard employment because it is cost effective, offer low wages, few benefits, lack collective representation by unions and does not offer job security and definite duration. As explained by one of the respondents (casual worker):

Before, it was very easy for a casual worker to be converted to a full time permanent worker and this made a lot of people to accept temporary job. But the reality on ground today makes it difficult for a casual worker to be converted to a permanent one.

On a daily basis, permanent workers are being retrenched just because organizations know it is cheaper to employ on temporary basis which does not involve pension and gratuities that must be paid to permanent workers (IDI/Male/P6/Casual/2013)

There have been instances in which people are employed on a continuous temporary basis for >10 years without conversion of employment to full time. Much as the desire to take temporary employment is geared towards survival, it is also premised on getting the opportunity to be employed as permanent worker. While the economic reality and the globalization of the labour market has occurred much faster than the globalization of labour protection, inequality and informality have greatly increased in work environment.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this study was to assess the patterns of temporary employment in the food processing industry in Lagos State in terms of how the categories of temporary employment workers cope with work environment, differences in treatment, economic benefits and opportunity to be converted to permanent employment. It is obvious that coping with work environment has been most challenging for these workers as a result of corporate restructuring which has placed workers in precarious employment environments that limit flexibility and mobility into permanent employment. The findings reveal various ways by which temporary workers cope with work environment. This includes discrimination, sexual harassment, excess workload, poor wages, job insecurity, high fatigue, backaches and muscular pains amongst other. Studies have found that work stressors are high in temporary employment arrangement and hence have been used to predict unfavourable attitude, poor wellbeing and undesirable behaviour among temporary workers (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2008). There is little influence over the work place decisions as workers receive limited support from permanent co-workers which further confirm their anxiety at work.

The study reveals that among the various categories of temporary workers (i.e., casual workers, contract staff, temporary workers, outsourced staff), the casual workers are the most degraded and stigmatized among the temporary employment workers in the industry. Stigma decreases the chances of temporary workers integrating in the workplace and feeling at ease with permanent co-workers. They received inadequate changes to their

shifts or hours at work, do most of the work and receive low wages, find it difficult to access sick or bereavement leave and are the mercy of the superior to survive.

Parker (1994) and Vosko (2000) assertions that temporary employees are not treated as human resources but as disposable commodities becomes obvious in this study. As more work is replaced by technology, work becomes increasingly deskilled, creating more room for precarious and unstable temporary employment. It is hoped that future research will examine the dynamics of the recruitment of the various categories of temporary employment in similar industries.

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