

Attribution Study of *Puna* and *Pakialam* in Workplace Conflict

RENALYN J. VALDEZ*

Polytechnic University of the Philippines

ABSTRACT

The study examined the concept of *puna* (*criticism*) and *pakialam* (*concern*) in workplace conflict. This paper examined an organisation that underwent changes in leadership brought about by dissatisfaction among members. It tried to understand and interpret the messages and behaviour of members in relation to the organisation's culture (sense of morality and proper conduct), as well as the organisation's power structure. The study used the Attribution Theory of Heider (1958), Kelly (1967), and Weiner (1985), as well as the Filipino Communicative Behavior of Lacson (2005). The study used Direct Participatory Observation and Textual Analysis as tools for qualitative research. Important events relevant to the study were recorded in a journal covering the period in which the crisis was at its peak. Facebook posts of the union faculty president, officers, and active members, all belonging to the same college undergoing conflict, were examined. Selective coding and thematic analysis were conducted. *Puna* and *pakialam* are valuable means of achieving positive change in an organisation. They become practical tools of influence and control when grounded on collective motivation, delivered by people with a high sense of ability, and seen as belonging to a credible circle. *Puna* and *pakialam* are highly operational in a workplace conflict. Interestingly, there are varying degrees and types of being critical, and there is a dichotomy of attributions of this concept.

Keywords: *Puna at pakialam, workplace conflict, attribution, Filipino communicative behaviour, Facebook.*

INTRODUCTION

Major organisational conflict may be triggered by changes in leadership or by a breakdown in the morale of the workforce. Conflict may lead to positive or negative changes in the institution, starting with the unit affected and eventually spreading through the entire organisation, leading to policy changes. An essential dimension of organisation is the interplay of management, control and power. Control does not always emanate from top management. It is organised by patterns of influence or control systems referred to as a political system where "power is distributed, influence is exerted, and decisions are made" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005, p. 241). *Puna* (*criticism*) and *pakialam* (*concern*) in the workplace are communication behaviours that Filipinos exhibit for many reasons, namely: to exercise power and control, to express care and concern, to reflect involvement in the workplace, to show superiority over others, to release anxiety, and to get sympathy and support from others. In extending Lacson's Filipino Communicative Behavior (FCB) on *puna* and *pakialam*, the study examined how these were used by workforce members to gain control, power and influence in management's decisions on workplace conflict.

*Corresponding author: rjvaldez@pup.edu.ph

E-ISSN: 2289-1528

<https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2025-4102-19>

Received: 12 January 2024 | Accepted: 7 February 2024 | Published: 30 June 2025

The study by Rahim and Omar (2017) emphasized the important function organisational leaders play in setting sustainability and resolving dilemmas at work. In the study by Galander (1999), it identified various approaches of organizational communication both horizontal and vertical, internal and external, and the importance of appropriating the approach with the subject of concern. In the study by Fong and Wan Idrus (2011), it was found that face-to-face communication, which leads to higher level of social presence and richness of information, was the most frequent used and preferred communication channel by the faculty members in faculty-student interaction. This may in turn be the preferred type of communication among faculty and management.

The study examined the concept of *puna* and *pakialam* in a workplace conflict. This paper examined an organisation that underwent changes in leadership brought about by dissatisfaction among members. It tried to understand and interpret messages and behaviour of members in relation to the organisation's culture (sense of morality and proper conduct) and in relation to the organisation's power structure. The study may clarify and extend FCB as a theory and examine the relational attribution of *puna* and *pakialam* in workplace conflict.

It asked, "How are the concepts of *puna* and *pakialam* observed in a workplace conflict?" In particular, it asked: "How are concepts of *puna* and *pakialam* communicated within organisation issues on morality, power, and control?" and "What values are manifested with behaviours on *puna* and *pakialam*?"

The dissatisfaction among members of the organisation started when the former unit head replaced two key section heads of the unit. When the two were replaced, the faculty saw this as a chance to express their growing frustration towards the leadership of the former unit head. One of the two section heads resigned, while the other served as one of the leaders of the union. The former unit head eventually resigned after much conflict. With a year of management transition, the unit accomplished not much.

With the appointment of the new unit head, everybody was in high spirit even if management decided to appoint somebody from outside. The management explained that they opted to hire an outsider so as to appease section heads whose loyalty remained with the former unit head, and as a show of respect to the former unit head.

In a few weeks, the new unit head exhibited behaviour that offended the faculty. In a few months, the new unit head ordered faculty transfer and replacement, which the section heads did not follow. The new unit head replaced the section heads with program assistants, citing paralysis in operations as she claimed that the chairs were uncooperative. This move triggered more tension in the college, creating a faction between the newly appointed program assistants and the faculty with the section heads. The conflict worsened after the new unit head attacked the university faculty union. This action made the union president retaliate with complaint letters and petitions against the new unit head. This workplace conflict paralysed the operations of the unit.

Examining the concepts of *puna* and *pakialam* in a workplace context allowed for an in-depth understanding of Filipino values operational in organisations like the academe. Knowing which Filipino values were held mostly by employees, values that were negotiable and non-negotiable in organisational conflicts, provided principles that may serve as a guide in

communicating behaviours and in managing and communicating crises within the context of academic organisations. Conflict in organisations may be better understood, communicated, managed and solved if values and organisational culture are examined along with the problem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflicts may arise based on three factors. First, judgments are made about others and specific situations. Two, there is the denial of responsibility from people accountable for problems. Third, there is a lack of alignment in values (Van der Linden, 2023). People judge others when they fail to see the situation based on another's perspective. This is often the case for organisational conflicts between management and employees. One is looking at the issue from a top-down perspective, while the other is from an on-the-ground point of view. Another cause of organisational conflicts emanates from a lack of responsibility and accountability from leaders, which results in low morale among employees. If leaders are not made accountable, employees see this as favouritism, which leads to bigger issues of nepotism and cronyism. The values of people in a workplace are diverse. It is, therefore, understandable that conflicts arise out of differences in values. Members, however, of the same organisation are expected to hold and live by the values of the organisation. And when they do, this lessens conflicts between and among employees. In organisations experiencing conflicts, which of these three factors are observed most? What values are held most important by people in an organisational conflict? (Van der Linden, 2023).

Peter Senge defined systems thinking as a discipline for seeing wholes and frameworks, for seeing interrelationships rather than things, and for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots. Senge also asserts that people who succeed in handling complexity are working in an intuitive domain, underscoring an intuitive property of systems thinking (Arnold & Wade, 2015).

He identified ten principles in handling conflicts, namely: (1) Today's problems come from yesterday's solutions; (2) The harder you push, the harder the system pushes back; (3) Behavior grows better before it grows worse; (4) The easy way out usually leads back in; (5) The cure can be worse than the disease; (6) Faster is slower; (7) Cause and effect are not closely related in time and space; (8) Small changes can produce big results – but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious; (9) You can have your cake and eat it too – but not at once; (10) Dividing an elephant in half does not produce two small elephants; and (11) There is no blame (Senge, 1990).

These principles of Senge are useful in examining conflicts in organisations. It allows leaders and members to reflect on past events that led to the problem; examine processes that may have contributed to difficulties causing misunderstanding between and among people; review and retract quick solutions that worsen the problem over time; identify solutions that are for the long term; and most importantly work on the problem internally following principles of equality and equity, and that instead of blaming, work proactively towards a win-win solution. Emphasis is on root cause analysis, processes and operations, and employee relationships. These principles may be observed in organisations undergoing conflict. Which of these principles are dominant in workplace conflict, particularly between management and employees? How do

these principles manifest among members of an organisation belonging to the management and non-management side?

Attribution Theory of Heider (1958), Kelly (1967), and Weiner (1985), and the Filipino Communicative Behaviour of Lacson (2005)

Attribution Theory examines the ways people identify causes of their behaviour, thereby understanding their own and that of other people's behaviour. Heider identified several attributions people make. These are situational causes (being affected by the environment), personal effects (influencing things personally), ability (being able to do something), effort (trying to do something), desire (wanting to do it), sentiment (feeling like it), belonging (going along with something), obligation (feeling you ought to) and permission (being permitted to). Attribution also depends on how people assign meanings to their observations. Motivation and psychological makeup come into play. Therefore, people, as much as they may be logical and systematic, may also be biased and illogical in their attributions. Attribution error refers to the tendency of a person to attribute the cause to personal qualities, i.e., blaming the situation when bad things happen to oneself while blaming the person when bad things happen to him/ her (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

Attribution helps people establish or re-establish control in their lives and improve their ability to predict events. The theory states that in exploring the whys, people are able to distinguish between the internal (self) and external (outside of oneself) explanations and determine the locus of causality (Allport, 1979; Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967). In understanding the causality of behaviour, i.e., internal vs. external locus, stability and controllability dimensions, people are able to make sense of their actions, control their behaviour, and predict situations and events in their lives.

The study by Jin (2010) examined three key dimensions of certainty, control and predictability from an attribution perspective (elements of controllability and predictability). It looked at the effects of crisis predictability and controllability appraisal on the public's emotional responses, coping strategy preference, and acceptance of different organisational crisis responses.

Internal attributions refer to dispositional or behavioural characteristics (e.g., effort or ability) of the person being observed, whereas external attributions refer to situational factors that are often beyond the observed individual's control (Weiner, 1985). Controllability refers to the extent to which an observer perceives the cause of an outcome to be under someone's volition. Factors such as luck and task difficulty are generally perceived to be uncontrollable, whereas effort and ability are viewed as controllable factors (Weiner, 1985).

The stability dimension of attributions refers to the perceived variability or permanence of a causal factor. As an example, a person's intelligence is typically viewed as a relatively stable factor, whereas effort level is more variable (Weiner et al., 1971). Unlike the locus of causality, the stability dimension is rarely studied separately from other dimensions. More commonly, researchers examine the locus and stability dimensions in tandem. This is logical in that the stability of a cause can weaken or strengthen the emotional and behavioural responses driven by the attribution (Harvey & Martinko, 2009).

Relationships, teams, and group dynamics are important components of organisational communication. Relational attributions refer to explanations made by a person that identifies the cause of an event within the relationship the individual has with another person. It does not solely refer to internal and external attributions but is grounded on the interaction of parties (Eberly et al., 2011).

Kelley (1967, 1973) focused on how individuals determine the cause of a behaviour or event by considering information regarding the consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness of the behaviour or event. Kelley's model explores the dimensions people use to locate the causality of a behaviour or event, which can involve oneself or others. It includes consensus—how shared is the behaviour/event; consistency—how consistent a behaviour/event is across similar contexts and times; and distinctiveness—how unique the behaviour/event is to the particular situation.

Filipino Communicative Behavior (FCB) refers to concepts of awareness, knowledge, attitude, values, beliefs, opinions, tendencies, predispositions, practices and perceptions relevant to the communication behaviour of Filipinos. One main observation of FCB that is relevant to organisations is the ownership and credit-seeking model. It states that positions and titles are not positions of trust but are rather positions of advantage where one's self-interest is over and above everyone else (Lacson, 2005). Other FCB observations are dichotomies of traits, namely, hardheadedness vs. subservience and resiliency or flexibility vs. unyielding. Some notable FCB observations are *kulang sa pansin* (deprivation attention) or quest for ownership/recognition or credit seeking, ready for disappointment, wanting to belong and be recognised, sense of rumour and humour, and *puna* or *pakialam*. The last will be the communicative behaviour in focus.

In recognizing that individuals are motivated by their relationships with others and that these relationships influence attribution processes, the study hopes to broaden the applicability of attribution theory to workplace conflict specifically *puna* and *pakialam* manifested by behaviour, events, and emotions of members of an organisation undergoing conflict brought about by change in leadership.

METHODOLOGY

The study used Direct Participatory Observation and Textual Analysis as tools for qualitative research. Important events relevant to the study were recorded in a journal covering the period of September 21 to December 5, 2017- the period in which the crisis was at its peak.

Facebook posts of the union faculty president, officers, and active members, all belonging to the same unit undergoing conflict, were examined from September 21 to December 5. Only those posts pertinent to the workplace conflict were screenshots and analysed. Selective coding and thematic analysis were conducted.

Behaviours and events were categorized under relational attributions of consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. These were marked as high (if the behaviour is evident) or low (if the behaviour is not evident). Emotions and feelings were categorised under locus (internal or external), stability (stable or unstable), and controllability (controlled or uncontrolled). Themes were discussed under the main observations of the study. Concepts of power, control, morality,

and management were integrated into the analysis. Only emotions exhibited by the members were categorised under locus, stability, and controllability; behaviour and events, including middle management's actions, were categorised under consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness and were examined under observations.

As a declaration, the researcher was a member of the college which underwent a crisis and was a member of the faculty union. The researcher examined attributions of *puna* and *pakialam* from the lens of a faculty and a union member. These are example of Facebook posts and comments about *puna* and *pakialam*.

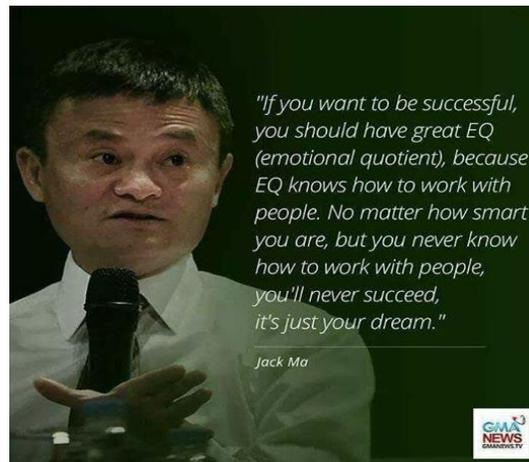
Example Post 1

So saddened by the glooming reality how some educators and academic leaders are infusing deviated educational philosophies far from what are ought to be manifested, demonstrated in the academe. We educators must be consistent in upholding truth, justice, honesty and professional integrity... we must at all times be humane yet critically minded. We set the future through our dedicated efforts in generating mentally and psychology healthy pool of future professionals and leaders... Despite the fact that we are very much neglected and being served with a number of injustices we still have to be upright, we are the Shapers of the Nation!

I like the mentally healthy and psychologically prepared professionals....we are dealing with wackos and insane creatures at the college
Ironically... we profess to be promoting justice..... and yet... injustices prevail...
WITHOUT TEACHERS THERE WILL BE NO SOCIETY..... THEREFORE.. WE HAVE TO UPHOLD THE VALUES OF INTEGRITY. RESPECT. HONESTY AND JUSTICE....
HOWEVER THERE ARE SOME WHO PREFER TO BE UNDER THE CLOAK OFTHE DEVIL

Example Post 2

Jack Ma, you really are correct to claim that EQ is an essential tool especially to leaders..It's not how smart you are but how good you are in dealing/relating with people...You will have no pacing at all and no manifested significant displacement of leadership outputs... Just a waste of energy proving how smart you are when majority of the critically minded subordinates do have deviated perception...
Paying such leaders mean WASTED RESOURCES...
Just an early morning thoughts when I come across with Jack Ma's words...



tama yan mam! marami sa **** na hindi yan alam, hehehehe, Thanks mam, d best ka talaga
(Translation: Very true.. Its not all about the awards and the degrees.. Its all about being humane....)

Example Post 3

Your choices today affect your outcome tomorrow. When we suffer the consequences of our bad choices, we often try to blame our problems on other people, or on the devil. Some people even blame God! But the fact is, no one forced you to sin. You have a free will. You made the choice. And choices have consequences.

Galatians 6:7-8: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." - Pastor Richard Whitcomb



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The paper examined the behaviours of *puna* and *pakialam*, which were categorized either as high or low in terms of consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. This was followed by emotions and feelings of *puna* and *pakialam* categorized under locus, controllability, and stability. The last part identified major observations of the study integrating morality, power, control, and management.

The discussion was within the context of the relational characteristics of the people and the relational characteristics of the situation. Relational characteristics of faculty ranged from passive to aggressive, emotional to logical, weak to strong, rude to polite, quiet to loud, and careful planning to quick thinking, while those of middle management were manipulation, power play, intimidation, threat, and coercion. The relational characteristic of the situation was saturation. It had come to the point of no negotiation, no compromises. The only solution at hand was the removal of one party.

The relational attribution between the two parties (that of middle management, and of faculty) was mainly negative--hostile, suspicious, threatening, and resistant. As illustrated in Table 1, a list of negative behaviour among the faculty was categorized under consensus, consistency and distinctiveness, marked as high or low.

Table 1: List of negative behaviour among the faculty

| FCB Behavior/Event | Relational Attributions | | | Description |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--|
| | Consensus | Consistency | Distinctiveness | |
| Filing a Petition | High | High | High | The difference from the past petitions is the gravity of the complaint and the signing of all regular and full-time faculty per department |
| Criticising | High | Low | Low | Faculty members do not criticise middle management openly. |
| Name-calling/ Labeling | High | Low | High | The difference is faculty's angry reactions to middle management resorting to name calling and labeling i.e., calling them "lunatic", "tuta", "idiots", etc. |
| Insulting | High | Low | High | Faculty openly insulting middle management by laughing at memos and correcting them, and making them the subjects of jokes. |
| Gossiping | High | Low | High | There are conflicts between middle management and faculty. This condition has made gossiping a regular activity in the faculty room. |
| Arguing | High | Low | High | Faculty members are more open and aggressive in their discussions and meetings with middle management. |
| Shouting | Low | Low | Low | Isolated cases of shouting between middle management and faculty. |
| FB Posting/ Commenting/ Messaging | High | Low | High | In the past, there was no union group chat. People rarely post or comment on FB attacking school administrators. |
| Getting sick | High | Low | High | People do not get sick due to workplace stress. |
| Uncooperative | High | Low | High | The unit was excluded from an external audit because of the workplace conflict. |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|--|
| Abuse in power | High | Low | High | Abuse in power started only in the last two years. |
| Personal politics | High | Low | High | Management's prerogative power was abused in the last two years. |
| Suspicion | High | Low | High | The unit used to be a family where trust and transparency were evident. |
| Faction | High | Low | High | The faction is mainly between middle management and faculty. |
| Jokes | High | High | Low | Faculty members have always tried to laugh at the worst situations and be optimistic about top management's actions. |
| Loyalty | High | High | Low | Faculty members have always shown their loyalty to their students and to the institution. |
| Care | High | High | Low | Faculty members have shown their care to the institution by cooperating in university-wide events and activities. |
| Responsibility and accountability | High | High | Low | Faculty members do not use students in their fight against middle management. |
| Trust in management | High | High | Low | Faculty members remain positive about the top management's action to this problem. |

Most behaviours on *puna* and *pakialam* had high consensus and low consistency, namely *criticising, name calling/labelling, gossiping, insulting, arguing, shouting, suspicion, faction, abuse of power, getting sick, FB activity, uncooperative and personal politics*. These behaviours were exhibited, shared, and observed by most members of the organisation during the study, but not in the past. Given the saturation point and hostile characteristics of the two parties, negative behaviours may appear even without records of similar actions in the past. It may also mean that these behaviours are not common attributes of faculty, and these may only have been triggered by the workplace conflict.

Positive attributes and behaviours brought about by *puna* and *pakialam* had high consensus and consistency and low distinctiveness. These were behaviours *such as jokes, loyalty, care, responsibility and accountability, and trust in management*. This may mean that even with the worst situation and with negative behaviours, there were positive behaviours and attributes exhibited by the members. This may also mean that members still trust top management, even with a breakdown in middle management and that members have a high sense of obligation as displayed in their attitude towards their work, i.e., loyalty to students, cooperation to university-wide events, responsibility and accountability to their actions. These positive attributes had high consistency and low distinctiveness, which meant they were common to members, both in the past and at present.

Behaviours which had high consistency and low distinctiveness were positive behaviours like *jokes, loyalty, care, responsibility and accountability, and trust in management*, while those which had low consistency and high distinctiveness were negative behaviours like *name calling/labelling, gossiping, insulting, arguing, suspicion, faction, abuse in power, getting sick, FB activity, uncooperative and personal politics*. This strengthened the findings on the negative and

positive behaviours: negative behaviours were not common and may have just been triggered by the conflict, and positive behaviours appeared to be common attributes among the members. *Shouting* is not a common behaviour among members, even in the worst situations, when there is low consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. This may be attributed to the Filipino characteristic of being non-confrontational, as identified by Lacson’s FCB.

Behaviours on *FB activity, getting sick, being uncooperative, suspicion, faction, abuse of power, and personal politics* had high consensus, low consistency and high distinctiveness. This meant that these behaviours were highly observed during the study but were not common in the past. It was only during the workplace crisis that these became highly evident.

Filing a petition had high consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness. Members saw the petition as an effective means of removing a leader as they did in the past. What was distinct from this petition, however, was the signing of all faculty members of the unit, including most of the special lecturers and part-timers. In similar past petitions, only regular faculty members signed the petition. The next table examined emotions and feelings on *puna* and *pakialam* brought about by workplace conflict.

Table 2: Examination of emotions and feelings on *puna* and *pakialam* brought about by workplace conflict

| FCB | Attribution Factors | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| | Locus (within the actor or situational) | | Controllability (controlled/ determined by the actor or not) | | Stability (permanence of the cause) | |
| | Internal | External | Controlled | Uncontrolled | Stable | Unstable |
| Anger | | The threat of displacement by management | | Power of the top management | Implication of K12 | |
| | Empathy to a friend/colleague | | Self-control; openness | | | Disposition, mood, state |
| | | Insults from management | | Action of others | | Selective/biased treatment of faculty |
| Frustration | | Mismanagement | | Stubborn, hard-headed middle managers | | May be replaced |
| | Seeking position/title | | | Prerogative of management | | |

Based on the findings, internal attributions were seen as controlled, like in the emotions of anger, frustration, sadness, pessimism, and pride, while external attributions were viewed as uncontrolled, like in the emotions of anger, frustration, disappointment, doubt, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear.

Moreover, internal and external attributions vary across emotions, such as in the cases of anger and frustration. For example, frustration may be internal, such as seeking justice and a position/ title, and may be external, brought about by mismanagement. Anger may be internal, as in the case of empathy to a friend and external, as in the case of displacement, insults, and mismanagement.

The stability factor shows that, in most cases, situations are unstable and may change, thereby affecting locus and control factors depending on the changes of events and situation. This is true for anger, frustration, disappointment, doubt, uncertainty, pessimism, pride and fear. Pessimism may be attributed to the Filipino mindset of expecting the worst to happen or preparing oneself for the worst which may be seen as a positive trait or it may also be attributed to lacking in faith which may be seen as negative.

Frustration and anger may emanate from oneself or may be triggered by others. These may be brought about by expecting other people to live by our ideals and values or failing to live by the expectations of other people on us.

Doubt or loss of trust is manifested highly in workplace conflict as indicated in the table. Cases of shifting loyalties like acceptance of an administrative post by a union officer, leaking the petition to remove the unit head, not all part-timers signing the petition, and advancing oneself are observed. This is followed by anger, frustration and disappointment.

Main Observations

Based on statements and actions on FB and in the workplace, the following are the main observations of the study. Sample Facebook posts and messages are found in the appendices. Members who are invested in the organisation seemed to be the most critical in the FB chat group. This is true for the union president, officers, and active members who have served the organisation the longest.

Members who voiced out their critical opinions are those seen by members as respected in the organisation. Only those respected senior members of the organisation start conversations pertinent to the new management.

Only when new members are directly affected by the new management that they become more critical of the organisation. The care starts to manifest when they join in the conversations and collective movement of the union. This was true for most new members of the organisation who started to become more active and vocal against the new unit head when their regularization was threatened.

When there is workplace conflict emanating from top management, the workforce is divided between pro- and anti-management. Friendships are tested. Faculty accepting management posts are seen as enemies. As one member told another when she hesitated to sign the petition, *"It's either you're with us or against us."*

When members of the workforce become saturated with conflict, they address their problem straight to the President of the company and to CHED. Letters, both individual and collective, are submitted to the President. Letters are also forwarded to CHED and to DOLE regarding concerns on alignment and retrenchment.

Puna and *pakialam* are often seen in the same light. Both are often interpreted negatively. Caring for most people in a workplace conflict is manifested through being critical of the organisation, and often negative messages are attached to it, i.e., wanting to be in power, sourgraping, looking for attention / *kulang sa pansin*, credit seeking, and all-knowing. Care is often attributed to people who act with no agenda, while criticism is attributed to those with agenda.

Workplace conflict, when prolonged, leads to a stressful environment, resulting in members of the organisation having health problems. In September, three members suffered a mild stroke (2) and Bell's palsy (1). In October, two members were hospitalised due to stress. In November, a faculty suffered high blood pressure (200/130bp). Most have complained about the stress leading to members not staying in the office.

When there is a breakdown of morale and trust in an organisation, members no longer respect the leader. This is evident with the leader of the organisation being ignored and insulted. Members of the workforce, when insulted and threatened, react emotionally. Logical reasoning is put aside. Proper conduct is no longer observed. Language is rude and straight to the point. Labelling and name-calling are evident.

Members of the workforce adhere to the concept of responsibility and accountability in their FB posts in reference to the new leader of the organisation. Abuse of power, compassion, kindness, and other posts pertinent to good and bad leadership are the FB messages on their walls. No matter how strong the posts are, they are not directly addressed to the people concerned. Some sample posts are found in the appendices.

The union has power because the top management recognizes its contribution. The credibility of its president extends to the union. Workforce feels management needs to fulfil this as its duty to employees and other stakeholders. Influence and control emanate both from the top and the bottom; there is a two-way political system in the university.

Members of the workforce lighten up the stressful work environment by jokes, blind items, games, and laughing at possible worst situations. When exchange of messages becomes serious and heated, a member tries to break the heavy flow with a joke or by slightly changing the topic.

Concepts of loyalty and principle are highly operational in workplace conflicts. For some, principles change when loyalty shifts. For most, principles are retained and are fought for, and loyalties are put aside.

Middle management reflects on top management. With bad leadership under the new unit head, members bashed top management calling them selfish, uncaring, self-serving capitalists. When there are frustration and anger building up, people become emotional and aggressive in their behaviour.

There is a dichotomy of FB reactions from faculty members: at one end, extremely negative critical posts on bad leadership, and at another positive faith-based posts on hope for good results and better days. Sample posts are found in the appendices. Even with the most negative work environment, positive behaviour and values still come out. The negative behaviour and environment are needed for positive change to happen.

CONCLUSION

Relationships between and among locus, controllability and stability are examined, along with relational attributions of consensus, consistency and distinctiveness. Major findings of the study are summarized. Most negative emotions in a workplace conflict have unstable causal factors thereby allowing for changes in behaviour and events. Moreover, most negative emotions in a workplace conflict are based on external and situational factors.

Locus and controllability are more directly connected than stability. When the locus is internal, emotion is controlled. When the locus is external, emotion is uncontrolled. Stability's relationship to locus and controllability, on the other hand, may vary depending on the permanence and variability of the situation. Consistency and distinctiveness are often indirect in relationships, i.e., when consistency is high, distinctiveness is low.

Behaviours that have high consistency and low distinctiveness are those that have positive behaviours, while those that have low consistency and high distinctiveness are those that have negative behaviours. Positive behaviour appears to be more lasting, while negative behaviour is temporary. *Puna* or *pakialam* may either be seen as positive or negative depending on a person's motivation, situation, and relations.

The dichotomy of attributions is observed in workplace conflict, namely: (1) Being critical may be attributed to the personal agenda of one's advancement, or may be caused by a genuine desire for positive change; (2) Loyalty over principle for people with position and for those who want to be in position, while principle over loyalty for people who do not desire power and titles; (3) FB posts on *puna* and *pakialam*—highly negative critical attacks on a person, and faith-based posts on trust and positivity; (4) Responsibility and accountability are grounded on students' welfare both for the middle management and the faculty. However, each party believes that his/her ways are better than the other or that he/she is correct while the other is wrong; (5) Two parties are both seen as responsible and abusive. Responsible as they think that they are doing the right thing, but abusive as they fail to see each other's points and refuse to give in. Both are hardheaded and stubborn; (6) People can be the most respectful, obedient members, but when insulted and threatened, they can be the most rude, uncooperative members.

Rumor and humor are effective tools to lighten a hostile environment and to release anxiety felt by members of the workforce. It is used commonly by people to indirectly attack a person. In conclusion, *puna* and *pakialam* are valuable means of achieving positive change in an organisation. They become effective tools of influence and control when grounded on collective motivation, delivered by people with a high sense of ability, and seen as belonging to a credible circle.

Puna and *pakialam* are highly operational in a workplace conflict. Interestingly, there are varying degrees and types of being critical, and that there is dichotomy of attributions of this concept. Leadership is defined largely by members. It is through members that a leader may succeed or fail. More than competency, relationship and people skills are important factors in effective leadership. A leader must not confine himself to his/her inner circle, he/she must expand and reach out to people outside his/her circles. Team, social networks, relationships are important in organisational successes.

In leadership transition, there is always the question of change vs. stability. Change is triggered by the interplay of factors on control, influence, and management, referred to by Littlejohn and Foss as the political system. When change is accepted by the community, and is just and necessary, stability is strengthened. Forced change leads to instability. When change creates instability in an organisation, and paralyzes operations, what should management do? The management may continue with the change and hope for stability in the next few years or remove the cause of instability and sacrifice change at the moment.

In examining past events, relational attributions of people's behaviours, and the power structure of an organisation, one may be able to predict management's decisions. In this particular study, management may decide to remove the cause of instability. Replacing the new unit head will be more practical as it will prevent labour cases from being filed by the faculty, it will show faculty that management cares for them, it will stabilise and normalise operations at the unit, and most importantly, it will put a stop to all complaint letters, petitions, and other protests of faculty. With regard to relationships, the new unit head is seen by her colleagues as an outsider, thereby making the decision to replace her, supported by other university officials.

Findings of the study pertinent to attribution and relationships may be validated by a follow-up study using a quantitative design. An interesting area to explore is the motivation factor in negative behaviours and emotions brought about by workplace conflict. Doubt and suspicion are another area of interest in terms of examining profiles of people who are most likely to doubt others. Expanding Kelly's relational attribution, future studies may look at organisational and social attributions maximizing the potentials of attribution theory and FCB in organisational communication.

BIODATA

Renalyn J. Valdez is the current Chair of the Department of Journalism at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines- College of Communication. She took PhD in Communication at the University of the Philippines, Diliman (completed all course requirements and passed the candidacy exam) before transferring to PhD in Communication at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines; completed Master's Degree in Communication at Ateneo de Manila University; and graduated *Cum Laude* at Far Eastern University, Manila with an AB Mass Communication Degree. She was a recipient of the Graduate Scholar Award in the Technology Conference in 2012 at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and in 2018 at St. John's University in New York. Email: rjvaldez@pup.edu.ph

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