

## Negative Antecedents of Affective Commitment of Filipino Call Center Employees: The Mediating Role of Leader-Member Exchange

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### *Abstract*

The study aims to provide empirical evidence on the effects of perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, and perceived stress on Filipino call center employees' affective commitment. Also, the study intends to show how leader-member exchange (LMX) mediates the relationships between the three posited antecedents and affective commitment. The study further proposes a hypothesized model based on insights from the literature. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used in testing the hypotheses using a dataset from a sample of 689 Filipino call center employees. The results revealed that emotional dissonance and perceived stress are consequences of perceived customer unfriendliness. They, in turn, posited adverse effects on affective commitment. The results also indicated that LMX exercised a fully mediating role on perceived customer unfriendliness and affective commitment while partially mediating the stress-commitment relationship. The findings highlight the importance of stakeholders' intervention programs in decreasing employees' emotional dissonance and perceived stress. It further implies that quality LMX initiated by leaders may also facilitate in reducing the adverse effects of customer-related stressors and psychological strains on the affective commitment of Filipino call center employees.

*Keywords:* Call center, affective commitment, perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, perceived stress

## *Introduction*

Most businesses agree that today, more than ever before, the most significant resources of an organization are the employees. They are instrumental either in an organization's momentous success or in a tumultuous plunge to failure. Therefore, in the business world, keeping employees committed to the organization, especially the experienced and competent ones, is of utmost importance and one of the fundamental managerial objectives.

The importance of the affective facet of organizational commitment has become more pronounced in the past few decades, receiving considerable research interest. This interest has led researchers to investigate the influence of commitment to work and personal outcomes and examine the antecedent impacts of various organizational and psychological factors (Fazio et al., 2017; Mamman et al., 2012). The results have provided valuable insights leading to human resource management (HRM) practices that improve employees' affective commitment and other work attitudes and behaviors favorable to the organization. However, despite the extensive studies, it is observed that there was an oversight on some job-specific contextual variables. These variables are mainly present in relatively new industries that have gained momentum in recent years. One of these industries is the call center in the Philippines.

The Philippines' call center industry is robust and has been continuously growing in line with the increasing popularity of the global trend of business processes outsourcing (BPO). In the early part of the current decade, the Philippines overtook India as the world's call center capital, and it retains that position as the industry continues to expand (Lee, 2015; Mercurio, 2018). The call centers are located across the country. They primarily represent large American, other West-based businesses and other smaller firms that need company representations over the phone. These businesses include Citibank, Safeway, Chevron, Aetna (Lee, 2015), AT&T, Microsoft, Amazon,

Wells Fargo & Co., HSBC Holdings, Citi, AXA, Procter & Gamble, and Pfizer, among others (Magellan Solutions, 2020). The majority of these call centers operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week, and most of the work shifts are in the evening to cater to international clients' needs from countries with different time zones.

Previous studies in call centers in the Philippines mainly focused on the antecedents of stress, job performance, and turnover intent (Hechanova, 2013; Puyod, 2019). To the best of the authors' knowledge, the call center employees' antecedents of affective commitment were given little interest. Therefore, the authors believe that an empirical investigation focused on affective commitment and its antecedents in the Philippine call centers context is necessary. The results may provide insightful revelation of how call-center-related factors affect the variable known to have many desirable organizational and personal outcomes.

## *Conceptual Framework*

The stress-strain-outcome model suggest that work-specific stressors contribute to strain, followed by adverse outcomes (Koeske & Koeske, 1993). In this model, "stress" pertains to a stressor a person encounters; "strain" refers to psychological distress as a reaction to the stressor, and "outcome" is related to the attitudinal or behavioral consequence of the strain.

Previous studies conducted in various service jobs and call centers provided evidence that interaction with unfriendly customers exposes employees to experience conflict between their expressed and experienced emotions, otherwise known as emotional dissonance (Goussinsky, 2011; Wegge et al., 2010). Furthermore, prior studies also unveiled that emotional laborers working in various service businesses, including call centers, feel stressed when exposed continuously to unfriendly customers (Walsh, 2011; Wegge et al., 2010).

Hence, in line with the findings above and Koeske and Koeske's (1993) model, this paper conceptualized that perceived customer unfriendliness is a stressor contributing to the variances of emotional dissonance and perceived stress as strains. Also, in line with the notion that negative psychological states at work reduce affective commitment (Dal Santo et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2002), the current study advanced that the psychological strains, emotional dissonance and stress negatively impact affective commitment as an outcome.

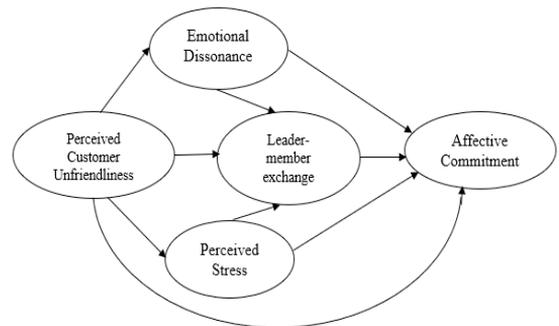
Walsh's (2011) research disclosed that perceived customer unfriendliness has indirect and direct impacts on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is known to have a strong relationship with affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002; Sharma & Dhar, 2016). Considering these findings, the current study also posited that it is likely that perceived customer unfriendliness also influences affective commitment directly.

Koeske and Koeske's (1993) model also suggest that social support potentially buffers the effect of strain on the outcome. Hence, the current study also places weight on the roles of leaders as potential sources of social support. More specifically, this study propositions that the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX) has mediating effects on the three variables' posited impacts on affective commitment.

The literature also supports the positioning of LMX between psychological strains and outcomes. Prior studies indicate that the negative affectivity of followers in the workplace negatively affects their perceptions of LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Negative affectivity is a disposition to experience aversive emotional states (Boyes et al., 2017). As perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, and perceived stress are associated with negative emotions (e.g., Walsh, 2011; Wegge et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2018), the current study presumes that they have negative relationships with LMX, which is a known antecedent of affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

In summary, based on the stress-strain-outcome model and cited empirical findings, the present study proposed a conceptual structural model that posits that perceived customer unfriendliness (stressor) positively affects both emotional dissonance and perceived stress (strains). As a consequence, the two strain variables negatively impact affective commitment (outcome). Furthermore, it is also advanced that perceived customer unfriendliness directly impacts affective commitment. Finally, LMX is proposed to mediate the effects of perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, and perceived stress on affective commitment. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework representing the proposed structural model.

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework of the Proposed Structural Model*



## *Literature Review*

### *Affective Commitment*

Meyer et al. (2002) categorized organizational commitment into three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitments. The affective element of organizational commitment shows the extent to which an employee feels an emotional attachment to his or her organization. In contrast, continuance commitment pertains to the employee's considerations of the pros and cons of staying and leaving the organization, while normative commitment is associated

with the worker's sense of obligation to the organization.

This study chooses the affective facet as the representative of organizational commitment since prior studies provided empirical evidence that, of the three components, affective commitment has the strongest associations with job-relevant outcomes (e.g., Meyer et al. 2002; Ramalho et al., 2018).

Prior studies focused on investigating the antecedents of affective commitment showed that a variety of work variables such as objective appraisal, empowerment, procedural justice, job involvement, organizational support, and perception of human resources management system count as its positive antecedents (e.g., Albrecht & Andretta, 2011; Flint et al., 2013). In comparison, employment-related stressors and unhealthy psychological states are negative predictors (Meyer et al., 2002).

#### *Perceived Customer Unfriendliness*

In the service industry, one salient negative customer behavior is unfriendliness. This is manifested by the customers' insults or verbal aggression over the concerned employee (Walsh, 2011). It is perceived that the display of such behavior may likewise convey adverse effects on service employees' emotional state. Goussinsky's (2011) study among service employees empirically supports the notion that customer aggression can increase emotional dissonance.

Additionally, the comparative study of Zapf et al. (2003) indicates that call center representatives are required to regulate their negative emotions and suggest a friendly smile when they are on the phone, exposing them to states of emotional dissonance. Such practice of showing only positive emotions is a common requirement for emotional laborers, and it is also reported as a common practice in Philippine call centers (Hechanova, 2013; Ruppel et al., 2013).

Emotional exhaustion and burnout have significant relationships with affective commitment (Lapointe et al., 2012; Sharma & Dhar, 2016). Therefore, considering the findings mentioned above and presuming that customer aggressive and unfriendly attitudes and behaviors count as significant stressors in a call center job, the current study posits that it is likely that perceived customer unfriendliness also affects affective commitment.

#### *Emotional Dissonance*

Emotional dissonance is the conflict between expressed and experienced emotions to conform to display rules (Abraham, 1999). In service settings, the discrepancy arises when the employees' inner feelings as natural responses to customers' unwanted behaviors or attitudes are not in line with the organizationally predefined emotional responses (Wegge et al., 2010).

Prior studies in call centers have uncovered that emotional dissonance is significantly related to various undesirable personal outcomes, including lower work motivation, strained well-being, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Castanheira & Chambel, 2010; Wegge et al., 2010). In separate studies, the outcomes mentioned above have been found to have adverse influences on commitment (e.g., Sharma & Dhar, 2016; Thanacoody et al., 2014). Based on the synthesis of the findings of the studies mentioned above, the current study postulates that customer-induced emotional dissonance negatively impacts call center employees' emotional attachment to their employing organizations.

#### *Perceived Stress*

Stress is a serious concern in the Philippines' call centers (Hechanova, 2013; Montecillo, 2012; Ruppel et al., 2013). However, most research attributed Filipino call center employees' stress as an outcome of work schedule, work-life balance, and emotional labor (e.g., Hechanova, 2013; Ruppel et al., 2013). They did not include in their scrutiny the direct role of customer

behaviors as stressors. Therefore, the current study's researchers feel the need to empirically examine the link between perceived customer unfriendliness and the employees' perception that their lives are stressful. The results can provide an insightful empirical explanation of the possible contribution of customer behavior on stress that is straining Filipino call center employees' wellbeing.

Previous studies indicated that stress has various detrimental consequences in service organizations, including reduced affective commitment levels (Ruppel et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2017). However, the vast majority of those studies only considered role stress, job stress, and other work-related stresses as the antecedents of commitment, with little emphasis on the role of stress outside of work. The current study sees this as a gap because a stressful life, in or out of the workplace, is known to have a variety of negative impacts on wellbeing, mental health, and physical health, which are conceptually and empirically associated with negative attitudes and behaviors towards work (Brunetto et al., 2013; Hechanova, 2013).

Considering the said gap, the current study proposes that stress measurement should not be limited to work-related stress. It should include a stress variable that also encompasses other aspects of life. Such presumption is exceptionally sensible in the context of the Philippine call centers, where employees are generally known to be stressed both inside and outside of work premises (Errighi et al., 2016; Montecillo, 2012). Hence, the current study chooses perceived stress, which pertains to how situations in a person's life are perceived as stressful (Cohen et al., 1983), as the last variable posited to influence affective commitment.

### *Leader-member Exchange*

Leader-member exchange (LMX) is the exchange relationship between a supervisor and each subordinate. In previous studies, LMX was found to have positive relationships with affective commitment (e.g., Garg & Dhar, 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2010). On the basis

that the three variables hypothesized to have adverse effects on affective commitment also have associations with LMX, the current study contends that LMX mediates their effects on Filipino call center employees' affective commitment.

### *Research Objectives*

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, perceived stress, and LMX to call center employee's affective commitment. Specifically, it aimed to address the following research objectives:

- 1.) Determine the relationship among perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, perceived stress, and LMX on call center employee's affective commitment.
- 2.) Estimate both direct and indirect effects of perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, perceived stress, and LMX on call center employee's affective commitment.
- 3.) Construct the best fit model on affective commitment among Filipino call center employees.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on cited literature, this study hypothesized that:

- H1a:* Perceived customer unfriendliness positively affects emotional dissonance.
- H1b:* Perceived customer unfriendliness positively affects perceived stress.
- H1c:* Perceived customer unfriendliness negatively affects affective commitment.
- H2:* Emotional dissonance negatively affects affective commitment.
- H3:* Perceived stress negatively affects affective commitment.
- H4a:* The effect of perceived customer unfriendliness on affective commitment

is mediated by LMX.

*H4b:* The effect of emotional dissonance on affective commitment is mediated by LMX.

*H4c:* The effect of perceived stress on affective commitment is mediated by LMX.

### *Methodology*

#### *Data Collection*

A total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed to employees employed in eight call centers located in three cities in the Philippines, namely, Davao and Cagayan de Oro in the southern island of Mindanao and Cebu in the Visayan islands. Of the 1,000 distributed questionnaires, 715 were returned, a 71.5% return rate. However, due to some extreme cases of missing values, 26 of the collected questionnaires were discarded. The final sample size was 689.

#### *Research Instrument*

The current study adopted the measurement items of all latent variables from the literature. The measurement items belonging to the variables perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, perceived stress, and LMX were measured on five-point Likert-type scales. The measurement items of affective commitment were measured through seven-point Likert-type scales. There were 25 measurement items in the original measurement model. Three were omitted in the final measurement model due to factor loading issues.

#### *Perceived Customer Unfriendliness*

A four-item scale from Walsh (2011) was adopted to measure Filipino call center employees' perception regarding the extent of the customers' unfriendly behaviors when having a transaction or interaction with them over the phone. One item (PCU4) showed a factor loading lower than .50 and was deleted following the conventional rule of thumb of excluding items with factor loadings lower than .50 (Hair et al., 2010). The reliability  $\alpha$  of the remaining three items is .78.

#### *Emotional Dissonance*

Emotional dissonance was measured using a four-item emotional dissonance scale (Jonker, 2012). The items measure the extent of the conflict between Filipino call center employees' expressed and experienced emotions. The items have a reliability  $\alpha$  of .83.

#### *Perceived Stress*

The current study adopted the shorter four-item scale version of the perceived stress scale of Cohen et al. (1983). The scale measures the extent to which situations in Filipino call center agents' life are perceived as stressful. One item (PS3) also showed a factor loading lower than .50 and was excluded. The remaining three items have a reliability  $\alpha$  of .74.

#### *Leader-member Exchange*

The current study adopted the seven-item measurement from the work of Scandura and Graen (1984). The scale measures the quality of exchanges between call center leaders and their subordinates as perceived by the latter. The items have a reliability  $\alpha$  of .89.

#### *Affective Commitment*

The study utilized the six-item affective commitment scale of Meyer et al. (2002). The items measure Filipino call center agents' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Three items were reverse-coded, and one item (AC2) was also excluded in the analysis as it showed a factor loading lower than .50. The remaining five items show a reliability  $\alpha$  of .84.

#### *Sample Demographics*

Out of the 689 respondents, 381 (55.30 %) were females, and 308 (44.70 %) were males. Most of the respondents or 35.27% were of ages 29 years old and under, and 43.40% were below 25 and 25 to 29, respectively. The remaining respondents were ages 30 through 34 (13.50%); 35 to 39 (4.64%); 40 to 44 (2.56%); 45 to 49 (.29%), and 50 or over (.29%). These call centers catered mostly to American customers. In

response, 555 (80.55%) worked on graveyard shifts, while only 134 (19.45%) worked on non-graveyard shifts.

*Ethics Statement*

The present study’s questionnaire was scrutinized by the committee members of the Institutional Review Board of the Institute for Population and Social Research (IRB-IPSR) of Mahidol University, Thailand, to ensure the contents’ ethical appropriateness. The board provided a certificate of approval. Each questionnaire was placed inside a sealable envelope along with a copy of the ethical approval certificate and a cover letter that addressed concerns on voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity.

*Results*

*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of the Variables*

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the variables. Affective commitment is correlated negatively with perceived customer unfriendliness, emotional dissonance, and perceived stress, confirming the posited relationships. Affective commitment has a positive correlation with LMX. LMX appears to have negative correlations with perceived customer unfriendliness and perceived stress. However, it is not significantly related to emotional dissonance. The presumptions that perceived customer unfriendliness has positive relationships with emotional dissonance and perceived stress are also confirmed.

**Table 1**  
*Means, Standard Deviations (SD), and Intercorrelations of the Variables.*

	Mean	SD	PCU	ED	LMX	PS
Perceived customer unfriendliness (PCU)	2.86	.83				
Emotional dissonance (ED)	3.14	.76	.37***			
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	3.51	.70	-.15**	-.04		
Perceived stress (PS)	2.67	.74	.32***	.16***	-.22**	
Affective commitment (AC)	4.81	1.10	-.22***	-.19***	.37***	-.32***

Note. \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .01.

*Measurement and Structural Models*

The current research used the two-step structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The first step required assessing the measurement model’s validity through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The initial CFA assessment results using AMOS (version 22) revealed that three items had factor loadings lower than .50, indicating validity issues (Hair et al., 2010). As a remedy, the model was modified by deleting three items with factor loading deficiencies.

The modified measurement model shows factor loadings greater than the required minimum of .50 (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the construct reliabilities and average variance extracted (AVE) of each of the six variables are over the recommended minimum of .70 (Nunnally, 1978) and .50, respectively (Hair et al., 2010), supporting the construct validity of the modified measurement model.

The assessment of the model fit of the measurement model reveals that the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) is large and significant ( $\chi^2 = 1619, p < .01$ ). The desirable value of  $\chi^2$  is small and insignificant since a value closer to zero implies a better fit (Hair et al., 2010). However,  $\chi^2$  is sensitive to sample size. It is almost always statistically significant for large sample sizes (Hair et al., 2010), rendering the  $\chi^2$  value of the current study’s large sample size (*N* = 689) not meaningful and a non-issue.

The modified measurement model’s absolute and incremental fit indices disclose acceptable figures. The values of the standardized root mean residual (SRMR) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are under their cutoff maximums of .08. The incremental fit indicators comparative fit index (CFI) and Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) requirements of at least .90 are also fulfilled (Hair et al., 2010).

In the second step, the measurement model was transformed into a structural model, reflecting the conceptual framework’s hypothesized relationships. The assessment of

the fit indices of the structural model unveils slight and insignificant differences from the indices of the measurement model [ $\chi^2 = 737.62$  (199 *df*), SRMR = .055, RMSEA = .063, CFI = .917, GFI = .909, PCFI = .790, PNFI = .767] as shown in Table 2. Further examination revealed that the r-squared ( $R^2$ ) of the endogenous variable affective commitment is .22.

The mediations test measures only the mediating effects of LMX; hence, to ensure that emotional dissonance and perceived stress had no roles in the mediations, the researchers created an alternative structural model. In the alternative model, the regression paths from perceived customer unfriendliness to emotional dissonance and perceived stress were constrained to zero. As also shown in Table 2, the model fit assessment of the alternative model revealed that constraining the two paths to zero worsens the model fit. In comparison to the fit indices of the original structural model, the alternative model's indices show a significant change of the  $\chi^2$  [ $\Delta \chi^2$  (2 *df*) = 113.51,  $p < .01$ ] and changes of the other Goodness-of-fit statistics (SRMR = .083, RMSEA = .069, CFI = .900, GFI = .894, PCFI = .783, PNFI = .760).

**Table 2**  
*Goodness-of-fit Statistics of the Measurement, Structural, and Alternative Models*

Goodness-of-fit Statistics	Measurement Model	Structural Model	Alternative Model
$\chi^2$	736.66***	737.62***	851.13***
<i>df</i>	198	199	201
$\chi^2/df$	3.72	3.71	4.23
SRMR	.054	.055	.083
RMSEA	.063	.063	.069
CFI	.917	.917	.900
GFI	.909	.909	.894
PCFI	.786	.790	.783
PNFI	.763	.767	.760

Note. \*\*\* $p < .001$ .  $\Delta \chi^2$  from the hypothesized model to the alternative model (2 *df*) = 113.51,  $p < .01$ .

*Hypotheses Test Findings*

The evaluation of the path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) revealed that *H1a* and *H1b* were supported, indicating that perceived customer unfriendliness was an antecedent of both

emotional dissonance ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) and perceived stress ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ). Likewise, *H2* and *H3* were also confirmed, indicating that affective commitment was negatively affected by perceived stress ( $\beta = -.22, p < .001$ ) and emotional dissonance, albeit rather small ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ). However, *H1c* is not supported ( $\beta = -.10, p > .05$ ). The structural parameter estimates are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Parameter Estimates of the Direct Effects*

Relationship	Unstandardized $\beta$	Standard Error	<i>t</i> -value	Standardized $\beta$
H1a PCU $\rightarrow$ ED	.28***	.04	7.14	.37***
H1b PCU $\rightarrow$ PS	.38***	.06	6.74	.32***
H1c PCU $\rightarrow$ AC	-.10	.08	-1.30	-.06
H2 ED $\rightarrow$ AC	-.25*	.09	-2.54	-.12*
H3 PS $\rightarrow$ AC	-.29***	.06	-4.60	-.22***

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The alternative model's path estimates confirmed the acceptability of *H4a* and *H4c*, as illustrated in Table 4. The effect of perceived customer unfriendliness on affective commitment is fully mediated by LMX, while the mediation on the impact of perceived stress on affective commitment is only partial. LMX does not mediate the effect of emotional dissonance on affective commitment.

**Table 4**  
*Parameter Estimates of the Mediated Effects*

Relationship	Path Estimates				
	<i>c</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c'</i>	<i>ab</i>
H4a: PCU $\rightarrow$ AC LMX	-.11*	-.10*	.31***	-.08	-.03*
H4b: ED $\rightarrow$ AC LMX	-.12*	.01	.31***	-.12*	-.00
H4c: PS $\rightarrow$ AC LMX	-.28***	.19***	.31***	-.22***	.06***

*Discussion and Conclusion*

The findings that perceived customer unfriendliness positively impacts perceived stress and emotional dissonance provide empirical evidence that customer behaviors are potent stressors that affect the employees' wellbeing. Accordingly, in the Philippine call

center settings, customer unfriendliness is one source of psychological strains. These strains, in turn, affect the employees' affective commitment negatively in support of earlier studies that stress-related emotional and mental strains are potent in reducing employees' emotional attachment to their organizations (e.g., Ruppel et al., 2013; Sharma & Dhar, 2016).

Based on the findings above, the current study suggests that human resource managers in call centers in the Philippines should develop a comprehensive human resource program responsive to employees' emotional and psychological needs. Proper recognition and management of emotions are expected to yield mechanisms to protect employees from stress and emotional dissonance, increasing the likelihood of developing affective commitment at work.

Concerning the findings that LMX fully mediates the effect of perceived customer unfriendliness and partially mediates the impact of perceived stress on affective commitment, the implication is that leaders have significant roles in alleviating the adverse consequences of the mentioned antecedents. It follows that if leader-initiated LMX is of high quality, it will diminish the unfavorable effect of perceived customer unfriendliness and reduce the negative impact of perceived stress on affective commitment.

Employees may come to judge LMX as good or healthy for various reasons, including the leaders' management skills (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013; Dulebohn et al., 2012). The roles of leaders in improving employees' perception of LMX was highlighted in Dulebohn et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis. The meta-analysis revealed that leader behaviors and other leader-related variables explained the most variance in LMX quality.

Call centers in the Philippines are not particularly known to have a strong emphasis on quality LMX. Instead, they have a reputation of heavy monitoring and high demands in terms of work quotas (Friginal, 2013) that have been known to result in higher job strain

levels (Hesselgreaves & Scholarios, 2014; van Doorn & Hülshager, 2015). Therefore, as far as minimizing the effects of perceived customer unfriendliness and perceived stress on affective commitment is concerned, a shift from heavy monitoring and job demands to a quality LMX may result in more desirable consequences. Generally, leaders who have friendly traits and innovative communication styles are perceived by employees as supportive, and supportive leaders are known to increase employees' involvement in a quality LMX (Dulebohn et al., 2012; O'Donnell et al., 2012).

In conclusion, servicing unfriendly customers over the phone is common in call centers in the Philippines. Such a situation causes stress and emotional dissonance to the employees, which negatively affects their affective commitment. Thus, human resources managers should design programs and implement practices to help call center employees cope with the psychological strains of customer-induced stress and dissonance. A shift of focus from heavy monitoring and demanding leadership to more pleasant ones that can help facilitate a more quality LMX is also expected to improve the work environment. Fewer psychological pressures and more a high-quality LMX equate to an improved affective commitment, which is known to have numerous positive consequences, including improved productivity, increased job satisfaction, and reduced turnover intent (Albrecht & Andretta, 2011; Ramalho et al., 2018).

#### *Limitations and Future Research Directions*

Cross-sectional data were used in the investigation. Cross-sectional data can only offer information of a single moment in time; therefore, their predictive power is flawed. The results lack the ability to make accurate causal inferences concerning time-related changes. The study can be improved in the future by utilizing a longitudinal approach. In a longitudinal study, the respondents can be observed multiple times, making it possible to identify changes in employees' affective commitment over time.

The shift to longitudinal research in the future will help improve the predictive power of the results.

The results indicated that the three negative antecedents and LMX only accounted for a 22 percent variance of affective commitment. The addition of more variables, both with potential positive and negative effects, will provide more thorough information on what causes Filipino call center employees' affective commitment to increase or decrease. The inclusion of personality traits (e.g., openness and neuroticism), motivation, organizational variables (e.g., leadership styles and job autonomy), and human resources management practices, among others, may provide more insightful results.

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