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Employee Attrition of Civilian Human Resources: The Case of the Philippine Military Academy

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The high attrition of employees sends a signal of its unhealthy organizational culture. This study explores the reasons for leaving of the civilian human resources of the Philippine Military Academy by discovering: their socio-demographic profiles, the reasons that prompted them to leave, and the possible areas to improve employee turnover policies. A case study through interviews was conducted among the 17 who voluntarily left the service. Findings revealed that the majority of those who left belonged to Generation Y, females, held a second-level plantilla position, were college graduates, and rendered service from 1 to 5 years. Common reasons for leaving are lack of organizational support, biased leadership style, poor management of stress, poor working conditions, poor management practices, unequal distribution of training opportunities, and issues with the pay rate. This study recommends investing in a comprehensive retention policy that incorporates competitive benefits, career development programs, and a positive work environment.

Keywords; case study, civilian employee turnover, military organization

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Introduction

The workforce is the most valuable asset in any organization (Svensson & Wiksell, 2021). On the other hand, high employee attrition sends a signal of an unhealthy organizational culture and can severely disrupt smooth operations if left unaddressed.

This study investigates the factors contributing to civilian employee turnover at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). Focusing on the experiences of former Civilian Human Resources (CivHR) personnel, the research explores the following: specific factors influencing former civilian human resources' decisions to leave PMA, including aspects like organizational support, leadership style, stress management, working conditions, management practices, training opportunities, and pay rate; potential areas for improvement in PMA's employee turnover policies, specifically regarding civilian human resources; and propose evidence-based retention strategies to mitigate the problem of CHR attrition at PMA.

Methodology

This investigation employed case study analysis that captured cases in their uniqueness rather than using them as a basis for the wider empirical or theoretical conclusion (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Creswell & Clark, 2018). It focused on qualitative data using interviews, observations, and primary and secondary sources analysis. Hence, this study illuminated a decision and its corresponding results during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic.

The study took place at the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City, located in the northern region of Luzon Island. The Academy has an organizational structure to cater to the education and training of the Cadet Corps Armed Forces of the Philippines. This is composed of various groups – Headquarters PMA, Academic Group, Tactics Group, Support Group, Fort del Pilar Station Hospital, Dental Dispensary, and other Personal Staff. The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) employs both military personnel (officers and enlisted) and civilian human resources (regular, contractual, and casual). While the military-to-civilian workforce ratio stands at 3:1, this still results in only a 76.55% overall staffing fill rate. In this case, when a civilian human resource leaves the service, the office function will be fulfilled by the remaining military personnel who are also slated to be transferred to other areas.

Each group (Headquarters, Academic, Tactics, and Support) and its offices are led by military officers. Enlisted personnel and civilian are the supporting personnel tasked with various and different functions to attain the Academy's mission. The Academic Group is in charge of the academic development, the Tactics Group with the physical and military training, the Support Group with the overall camp management, and the Station Hospital and Dental Dispensary with the overall health and wellness of the cadets and personnel. Finally, the Headquarters PMA houses the Coordinating Staff headed by the Superintendent of the Philippines. Due to the inherent nature of military service involving frequent reassignments to various positions and locations nationwide, military personnel tend to have shorter tenures at the PMA. Consequently, the stability of the operation and the bearer of institutional knowledge rely significantly on civilian human resources. Moreover, the military personnel are covered by provisions under the Department of National Defense while the civilian is bounded by the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission.

It utilized purposive sampling. A purposive sample is one that the researcher chose based on her understanding of the topic, experience, and population. Due to the nature of this study's design, purposes, and objectives, this approach of non-probability sampling is suitable and has been proven to be successful when only a restricted number of persons may serve as primary data sources. The selection criteria for this study were those former civilian personnel of a military organization who decided to leave during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and until the transition of the work environment to adapt to the new normal. Additionally, participants were required to have held either regular or casual employment status at the time of their departure, which occurred within the timeframe of 2018 to 2023. A sample size of two to 25 is sufficient to illuminate an in-depth description of one's life experience (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Therefore, the researcher interviewed 17 participants (out of the 46 who voluntarily resigned). This number has met data saturation in which the addition of one more participant no longer reveals new information. Before conducting the interview, the semi-structured interview guide was subjected to Content Validation to ensure that the items in the tool were relevant and clear. Before participating in the study, the interviewees were asked to sign an Informed Consent form to confirm their voluntary participation. The researcher conducted a hybrid meeting at a suitable time

and then transcribed the recorded interviews. For confidentiality, the interviewees were ensured to remain anonymous in the recordings. The researcher tabulated the interview responses to identify patterns in participants' interactions and experiences, then clustered statements with similar themes to develop key trends. This was attained in the Cool Analysis by coding words, sentences, and even nonverbal responses or observations. After the data had been coded, these were sorted and summarized through the Warm Analysis. The sorting process involved assigning central ideas and statements to the most appropriate coded categories. Comparing is another important step in summarizing and analyzing concepts, themes, and events. This generated common backgrounds, characteristics, and perspectives of the participants. Finally, integrating, checking, and modifying were the last processes of treating qualitative information to obtain consistency and accuracy of interpretation, which were reflected by the researcher using a Dendogram. The Analysis is grounded on three (3) complementing theories which are the Capability-building Theory, Three-Need Theory, and Motivation-Hygiene Theory. In Sen's Capability-building Approach, learning and development are the basic constituents of "capabilities". The foremost argument of Sen's capability-building approach is to expand people's capabilities through the functions. On the other hand, the Three-Need Theory forms three categories of needs which are: the need for achievement (nAch), the need for affiliation (nAff), and the need for power (nPow). This model shows that each individual will prefer one or a combination of these three categories affecting them most powerfully which will influence the pattern of their behavior. Finally, the Motivation-Hygiene Theory was developed by Herzberg (2005). Its primary premise was that some things contribute to favorable attitudes about employment while others have the opposite effect. Then, it split into two elements, i.e. motivation, and hygiene. The first category, which came to be known as the motivational factors, was connected to "the need for development or self-actualization." Achievement, acclaim, the work itself, accountability, promotion, and the prospect of growth were all motivating aspects. The second group of elements, referred to as hygiene aspects, dealt with "the need to avoid unpleasantness." Organization administration and procedures, relationships with supervisors, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and remuneration were all hygiene-related factors. Positive work attitudes were influenced by motivational elements, and the "doing" of the task was surrounded by hygienic aspects.

The study used inter-rater reliability to guarantee the data's trustworthiness. This was achieved by asking an inter-rater to help chart, revise, and refine the themes and subthemes based on the interviews. Also, member checking was performed to increase reliability. This was accomplished by going back to the interviewees about the results and seeking validation of the report for unclear findings. These measures reduced or removed the researcher's possible biased coding, which can influence the analysis outcome. All the data were encoded and analyzed using MAXQDA which is a software that treats qualitative information.

Results and Discussion

The Philippine Military Academy, like other institutions, not only struggles with attrition among its military troops but also among its civilian human resources. In the past decade, there were approximately 250 civilian human resources in the Academy. This number remained constant despite the retirement of some because new employees joined the service. However, there was an observed prevalent decline in its number from 2018 to 2023 due to voluntary resignation from the service. This is illustrated in the figure below:

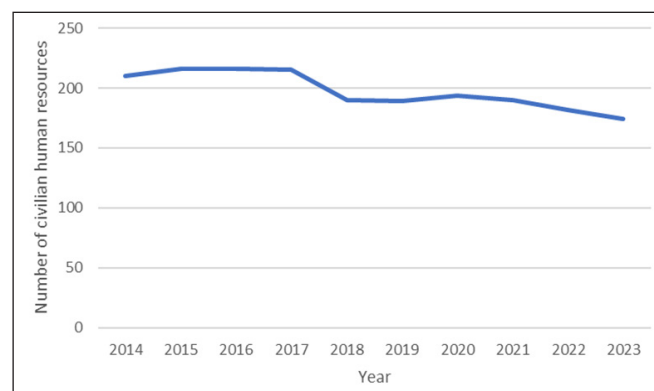


Figure 1. Trend in Employee Attrition in PMA (2014-2023)

Socio-economic profile of the former Civilian Human Resources who left the Philippine Military Academy

During the interview, the participants' ages ranged from 25 to 40, seven were single, three were solo parents, and the rest were married with at least one child. Moreover, three are males and the remaining participants are female, and have an educational attainment of college to Ph.D. holders. Finally, they have rendered service to PMA for at least 2 years to 15 years long and held either first or second-level plantilla positions. The results of these variables are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-economic Profile of Former Civilian Human Resources of the Philippine Military

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Age	28 to 43	26.47
	22 to 27	23.53
Marital Status	Married	41.18
	Solo Parent	17.65
	Single	41.17
Sex	Male	17.65
	Female	82.35
Educational Attainment	College Graduate	70.59
	Post Graduate	29.41
Salary Grade	First Level	41.18
	Second Level	58.82
Years of Service	1-5 years	52.94
	6-10 years	23.53
	More than 10 years	23.53

Mean Age = 32

Mean years of service = 7

Age

The respondents' age range of 25 to 40 can be categorized into Generation Y (born between 1980-1994) and Generation Z (born between 1995-2012). In this study, 13 belong to Generation Y, while the rest belong to Generation Z. Literature explains that people 29 to 43 years old are more likely to feel job insecurity (Jung et al., 2021). The research by Jung et al. (2021) demonstrated this across all industries included in their study. They examined the perceptions of Generation Y participants regarding job insecurity and its correlation with their intent to leave their jobs. Out of the 359 respondents, the majority felt that there was only a small chance that they would be employed and feared that they might lose their current job. Consequently, most of them are not compelled to quit their current workplace especially given the worsening situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the Philippine Military Academy is composed of an aging population who are observed to have been rendering service for 30 years or more. They were already employed there as new graduates and have witnessed decades of transformation in the Academy. On the other hand, age is not the only predictor of intent to stay. In addition to workplace relationships, Generation Y participants in this study cited factors such as better external opportunities and personal considerations when discussing their reasons for transferring to a different organization.

On the other hand, scholarly works indicate that

among the three generations, Generation Z has the highest attrition rate, which is 62% (Weeratrathne et al., 2022). In a separate study, motivation drivers to keep them onboard pertain to relationships with employees, jobs, and organizations. They expect to satisfy quality relationships with co-workers, work-life balance, job security, and reasonable workload (Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2020). This could be one of the common influences for the former civilian human resources to leave PMA. Hence, they seek organizations to fulfill friendlier strategies like ethical climates, work-life balance, soft Human Resource Management, and servant leadership (Hassan et al., 2019).

Gender

Three are males, and the rest are females. A study by Mölders (2019) about the representation of women in the collective turnover in an organization found that females have a higher sense of distrust of the top management. Such negative emotions can be attributed to workplace incivility, which creates a sense of job dissatisfaction and commitment (Smith et al., 2021). It is the women who have the higher tendency to experience workplace incivility felt in the workplace relationship.

However, the situation at the Philippine Military Academy, a male-dominated organization due to its inherent military structure, contrasts with this finding. While there is no formal study gauging the experiences and plights of being a woman in a

military organization, some efforts are aligned with the advocacy of embracing the concepts of Gender and Development. Laws protecting women from sexual harassment are also abided by the Academy. Unfortunately, the apparent lack of markers of Gender and Development Law such as women's desk, GAD office, child rearing facility, breastfeeding station, and internal protocols in openly expressing conscious effort to integrate women valuation in the organization is lacking.

Gender inclusiveness, especially in military organizations, is crucial for organizational resiliency. Bridges et al. (2021) discovered that social exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination are usually experienced in male-dominated industries. In removing these barriers, embracing diversity must improve the sense of self-efficacy, belongingness, and social inclusion. This is supported by von Hlatky and Lacoursière (2019), which gathered information about North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies in renewing commitments to increasing women's representation in its policies, education, training opportunities, and governance as part of their recruitment and retention schemes.

Salary Grade

The salary grade of those who left is from 4 (PhP16,543.00) to 15 (PhP36,619.00). This comprises employees in the first level (7 interviewees) and second level (10 interviewees) plantilla positions. The Salary Standardization Law (SSL) of the Philippines establishes salary ranges for government positions: PhP15,586.00 to PhP23,176.00 for first-level plantilla positions and PhP27,000.00 to PhP71,511.00 for second-level positions.

Salary in the government service bespeaks the consideration that limits professional growth and stunts employee engagement. When the respondents perform beyond what is expected or are being loaded with tasks not equivalent to their salary grade, unfairness, and decreasing employee morale tend to engender turnover intentions. This can be explained by the idea that salary is one of the measures of an employee's worth or performance. Therefore, when they feel their work is uncompensated, there is usually the question of fairness. This is evident in the study of Yoon and Sengupte (2023), which posited that a pay freeze or the inability of the organization to increase the salary despite improved performance raises issues of work-life balance and employee morale.

Highest Educational Attainment

Twelve respondents obtained baccalaureate, four are Master's Degree holders and one Ph.D. holder. The PMA categorizes civilian human resources as teaching or non-teaching, and notably, strongly encourages and mandates pursuing advanced schooling for promotions. On the other hand, non-teaching employees have different rating criteria, which only consider advanced schooling as a "potential" factor with a lighter weight than teaching employees. That is why most non-teaching employees barely share an interest in postgraduate studies, while almost 100% pool of faculty members are Ph.D holders.

Education attainment gives an individual a competitive advantage in the market or industries. Hence, regardless of age and gender, this is a strong predictor of turnover intention, as noted in the study of Lazzari et al. (2022) among European employees. Using logistic regression, it was able to determine that higher education attainment allows the individual to adapt to organizations brought by their advanced skill sets. Moreover, after obtaining advanced education, they tend to seek jobs that match their newly acquired skills and knowledge. This was explored in the study of Ju and Li (2019) to offer a non-Western contribution to the human capital theory and human resource development.

Marital Status

Seven are single, three are solo parents, and the rest are married with at least one child. The PMA does not discriminate against hiring based on marital status, so there is a mix of employees belonging various marital statuses. When an organization lacks clear policies and work arrangements to expressly acknowledge and support diverse employees' contributions, it diminishes their sense of value within the workplace. This lack of transparency regarding career paths and opportunities at the PMA may lead to disillusionment and encourage premature retirement decisions. Consequently, it would be easy for the single to job hunt as there are no overriding obligations to consider. Solo parents and married participants, compared to others, may prioritize family well-being when considering leaving their jobs.

Soomro (2020) linked marital status to turnover intention, suggesting spouses often make joint decisions about retirement and relocation, while the presence of children can also significantly influence an individual's decision to stay or leave due to prioritizing the child's well-being.

Years of Service Rendered

Years of service rendered to the organization were gathered. From the data, it was discovered that the interviewees rendered service to PMA for at least one year to 15 years. Younger employees, likely belonging to Generation Z (Gen Z), who have served less than five years at the PMA, have found more attractive opportunities outside the organization, both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, other former CivHR of this study opted to stay a little longer in the hope that the organization plans its expectations for career growth.

This situation is well-captured in the study of Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020), highlighting the growing importance of medium and long-term planning of Human Resource Management (HRM) to retain talents whose knowledge, skills, and abilities are found to be attractive to PMA and potential employers outside PMA. One factor is identifying the expectations of talents and working out a framework for work-life balance. Career opportunities that await the employees have a role that triggers happiness and decreases employer turnover intentions (Rasheed et al., 2020). This study linked career opportunities with the organization's valuation of their employees' skills that help keep the organization resilient amidst the constant changes in its environment.

Reasons that prompted the former Civilian Human Resource to leave the Philippine Military Academy

Lack of organizational support

The intentional provisions of resources, reinforcement, and encouragement from the leadership manifest organizational support. These are crucial in sending the message that the organization looks after the well-being of its employees, especially during the unprecedented pandemic. Many laid off or quitting their job hesitated to return, making the labor market tighter than the high unemployment rate suggests. They were apprehensive about returning to work, hoped to be rehired in their old positions, or simply couldn't return because of increased childcare duties. However, these ideals are far from the lived experiences of the participants. Figure 2 is a text map or dendrogram capturing the salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Organizational Support. Examples of which are shared below:

Inadequate Encouragement Effort

"Medyo na-overwhelm ako sa trabaho. Tapos feeling ko naging threat din ako sa family ko. Siyempre exposed sa mga tao. Di mo alam kung carrier ka ng virus tapos uuwi ka ng bahay. At siyempre natakot din ako para sa sarili ko at baka magkaroon ng sakit." (I was overwhelmed with work. I also felt that I was a threat to my family because I was exposed to people. I am uncertain if I could be a carrier of the virus then I will carry it when I go home. Also, I was scared that I could be infected and get sick.) (P11)

"Napakaraming dapat trabahuhin at asikasuhin sa opisina. Habang ako ay nakaquarantine ay gumagawa pa din ako ng mga report at presentation at iba pang mga kailangang tapusin. Napupuyat ako kahit na dapat daw ay magpahinga ako upang lumakas ang aking resistensya." (There were so many tasks that needed to be attended to at our office. While I was in quarantine, I was still working on my report and presentation and other things that needed to be done. I was sleeping late at night even if I was advised to rest so I will have stronger immune system to recover from the virus.) (P17)

Deficient Reinforcement

"Very exhausting and unrewarding because of no support at all...workload is different. I honestly felt like we were left out noong pandemya. Parang na left out kami. Yes, those are within our duty details. Pero doon nakita na iba nga ang CivHRs." (It was very exhausting and unrewarding because there was no support at all...workload is different. I honestly felt like we were left out during the pandemic.

It seemed like we were left out. Yes, those are within our duty details. However, I observed a different treatment with the civilian human resources.) (P12)

Insufficient Resource Provision

"Di kami nakaranas ng N95 masks na dapat yun yung ginagamit. Hindi ka protected. Ginagawa namin e nagdo-double masks na lang kami hoping maging effective yun." (We never experienced receiving N95 masks which is the required mask to use. We were not protected. What we do is we use double

masks in the hope that they will be effective.)
(P1)

"I was grateful na work from home naman kami. Pero parang mas dumami naman yung work ko. Tapos sa akin pa umaasa yung boss ko so kinailangan ko mag-avail ng internet connection kahit sa news sinasabi na dapat yung agency magbigay ng suporta. So nakakalula lang yung work tapos dagdag sa gastos ko." (I was grateful that PMA adopted a work-from-home arrangement. Unfortunately, my workload increased. Then my supervisor relied on me greatly so I had to apply for an internet connection which should be given by the agency as informed in the news. So, I was overwhelmed with work then my expenses increased due to an internet subscription.)

(P15)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains: Inadequate Encouragement Efforts, Deficient Reinforcement, and Insufficient Resource Provision. Encouragement Effort is manifested by a sense of respect and support from the workplace through positive feedback (Lee et al., 2021). On the other hand, Reinforcement Efforts are those practices in the organization to motivate or enhance the positive behavior of employees, which can be through rewards (Kumari et al., 2021). Resource Provision is the tangible support to ease the performance of the employees. Unfortunately, these were lacking in the perspectives of those CivHR who left PMA.

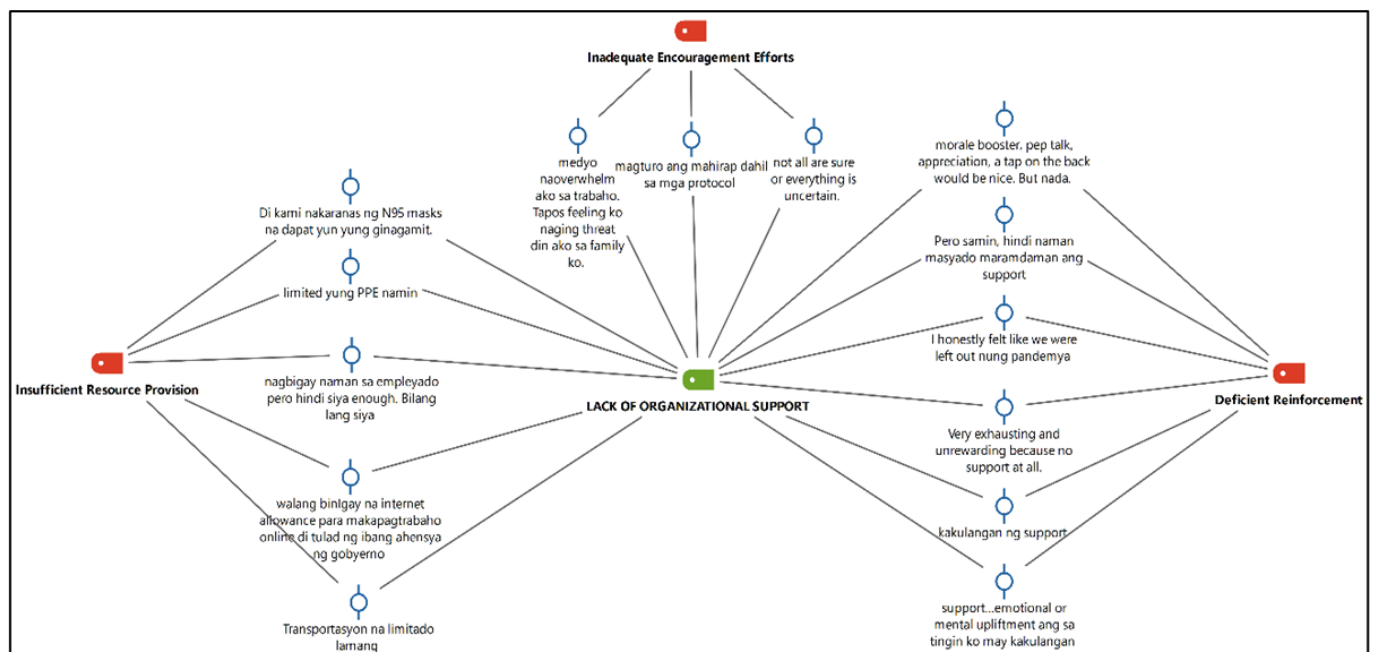


Figure 2. Reason for leaving PMA due to lack of organizational support and its sub-domains

As a military organization, the PMA has a peculiar culture of plebehood (freshmen). This training phase is when newly accepted cadets face orientation through hardships and harsh treatments. Their situation gradually improves upon leveling up in the Cadet Corps. Unfortunately, this practice has been subconsciously integrated into the civilian relationship. As young talents, they are expected to perform loads of work despite meager salary grades. Despite little knowledge of the task, they try to deliver. Young talents were often assigned menial tasks delegated by higher-paid or longer-tenured employees; while seeking social acceptance and avoiding conflict, they

tolerated this inequitable treatment until it became unbearable, ultimately leading them to leave the PMA.

Such behavior echoes Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory which opines that employees will avert unpleasantness in an organization. Such unpleasantness has many manifestations, one of which is found in workplace relationships. This was corroborated in the study of Shanock et al. (2019), which revealed that organizational support leads to more engaged employees. When the organization treats its employees well, the employees feel valued. This caring treatment convinces them that the organization

is fair, boosting employee engagement and retention. Such organizational support manifested through reinforcing the value and encouraging system results in resilience among stressful and competitive workplaces (Al-Omar et al., 2019). Employee mindfulness has also been seen to be a critical factor in perceived organizational support, especially among front liners in which fear of COVID transmission and emotional exhaustion are addressed by giving the employees a working environment that lessens fear and stress (Chen & Eyoun, 2021).

Leadership Bias

Effective leadership, evident in various strategies and behaviors, serves as a crucial driver for accomplishing organizational missions. Unfortunately, the consequences of leadership bias have weighed down the personal and professional conditions of the participants. This was considered one of the “final pushes” for them to leave the service. Figure 3 is a text map or dendrogram capturing salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Leadership Bias. These are clustered based on the sub-domains: Affinity Bias, Halo Bias, and Authority Bias, are generated to elucidate more on this plight that led to employee attrition. Examples of which are shared below:

Affinity Bias

“Maalala ko na nagpatupad yung DOH ng protocol pang buong Pilipinas. So far yung leader ng PMA sumunod. Kung may mga na-Covid, pinupunta sa isolation centers sa town. Kunyari may na-Covid na kadete, pinupunta sa isolation centers sa Camp Allen. Pero kung yung anak na nila yung na-Covid ibang usapan na yun. Naalala ko dati na may mga pasyente na mismong dependent ng General.. doon mismo kinonfine sa hospital ng PMA which is hindi pwede kasi hindi naman kasi Covid facility yun. Sumusunod nga sila sa rules ng DOH pero kapag sarili nila, hindi na nila sinusunod. Bottom line, lahat ng mga kino-confine na kadete, lahat ng mga nagtatrabaho sa hospital ay exposed at pwede magkaroon ng Covid. The fact na yung room na pinag-stayan nung Covid patient at nandoon sa mismong ward, nakakalungkot. Kapag naalala ko nakakainis.” (I remembered when DOH [Department of Health] implemented a protocol for the entire Philippines. So far, the leader of PMA has abided. If there were personnel who had been positive

of COVID-19, they were sent to isolation centers. For example, if a cadet acquired the virus, they were transferred to the isolation center at Camp Allen. However, when their child was infected, it was a different story. I remembered that there was a dependent of a General, the dependent was admitted at the PMA hospital which was prohibited because that was not a COVID facility. Indeed, they followed the DOH rules. But when it comes to their own sake, they violate it. The bottom line is, all the cadets who were confined and even the workers at the hospital were exposed and could acquire the COVID-19 virus. It was a saddening situation. As I recall it, I am pissed off.) (P1)

“Malaking issue yung understaffing kasi nagdo-double ward ang mga nurses. Tapos yung mga nurses nagco-conduct rin sila ng rounds para i-check yung kadete. May time kasi na may dependent yung General at Colonel, ginawa nilang personal taga-bantay yung nurse at doctor which is nakakainis kasi understaff na nga kukunin pa nila. Instead na nagdu-duty, ginagawa pa nilang personal nurse at doctor nila.” (Understaffing was a big issue because the nurses were attending double wards. They also do rounds to check on the cadets. There was a time when the dependent of the General and Colonel made the nurse and doctor their personal health care aids to look after them which was irksome because we were already understaffed. Instead of them performing duty, they made them their personal nurse and doctor.) (P2)

Halo Bias

“May favoritism.” (There is favoritism.) (P4)

“Pili lamang ang nabibigyan ng promosyon.” (Only selected people are being promoted.) (P5)

“Napo-posisyon yung mga nakadikit sa leader noon...kahit hindi naman nagtatrabaho. Pasa ng pasa sa akin ng trabaho tapos ang taas ng sweldo niya. Sa akin, hanggang pangako lang.” (The only people favored by the authority were positioned for advancement even if they are not performing. My colleague keeps on passing to me the tasks while my colleague's salary is higher. In my case, it was an empty promise.) (P17)

Authority Bias

"Naalala ko na ilang beses nag-lockdown mga tao sa PMA. Ang mga madaya that time, kapag mga generals or colonels or yung mga nasa higher positions at yung mga dependents nila...anytime, pwede sila pumasok at anytime pwede sila lumabas. Madaya lang. Nakakalungkot lang kasi yung nagpapatupad nung lockdown na yan, sila rin yung nagbi-breach. Tapos yung mga military doctors sa hospital, wala rin magawa kasi mababa yung ranggo nila. Hindi rin nila makwestyun yung mga ginagawa ng mga nasa taas." (I remembered that there were several times when PMA implemented lockdowns. It was unfair at that time because the generals and colonels or those in higher positions and their dependents, they can leave and enter PMA anytime. It was unfair. Sadly, those who implement the lockdowns were also the ones breaching them. The military doctors in the hospital could not do anything because they have lower ranks. They could not question the actions of those higher-ranking officials.) (P11)

"Isa ito sa naging turning point ko kung bakit

ako umalis ng service. Doon ko naisip na ayaw ko tumagal sa ganitong workplace na akala ko mataas yung moral standards na nagse-serve ka sa tao. As civilian nagse-serve ka. Pero yung andoon sa taas, wala e kaya nawalan ako ng gana sa PMA at ayaw ko makita sarili ko na tumanda na nagbubulag bulagan sa ganyang sitwasyon." (This is one of the turning points why I left the service. It was when I realized that I do not like to stay longer in this kind of workplace which I thought has higher moral standards serving people. As a civilian, I serve. However, those in the higher positions do not that is why I was demotivated by PMA and I do not like to see myself growing old and turning a blind eye to the situation.) (P12)

Affinity Bias is the (un)intentional tendency of the individual to be drawn toward people with the same interests, background, etc. (Suveren, 2022). On the other hand, Halo Bias is when the decision-making is influenced by the perceived "goodness" or positive impression innate to a specific individual (Gabrieli, 2021). Finally, Authority Bias is when there is an irrational trust in the judgment of people in position (Baudel et al., 2021).

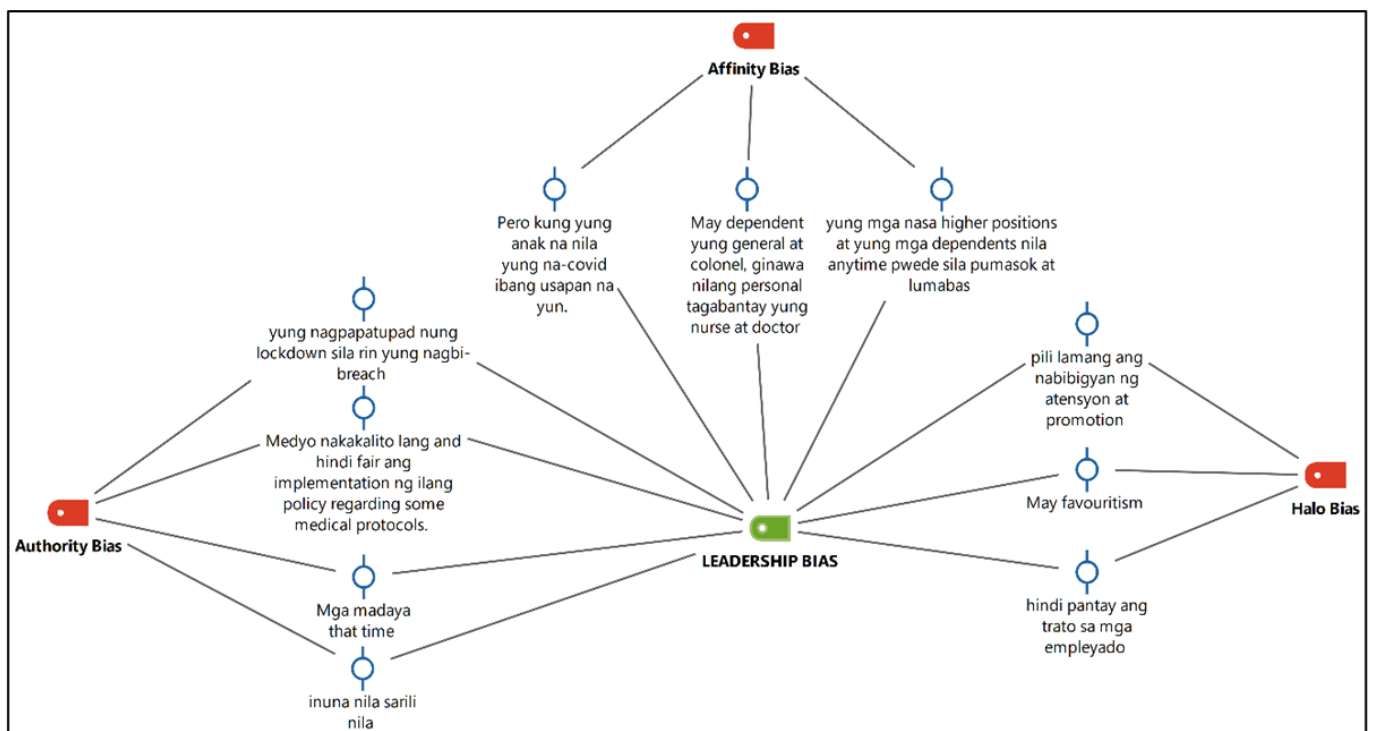


Figure 3. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Leadership Bias and Its Sub-domains

The statements shared by the respondents pertain to the former Superintendent of PMA, who was observed to be fond of bringing around with him his entire family. The PMA has a long history of housing family members inside the Academy. However, the previous leadership has curbed national and local

policies regarding responding to the needs of these families. Moreover, favoritism to certain affiliated employees was observed. Despite underperformance, favoritism shielded certain employees from consequences, fearing discontent and jeopardizing future work opportunities, ultimately compromising the overall well-being of the Command and its personnel.

In the lens of Situational Leadership Theory, the Academy expects an effective leader to be a great leader who addresses the organization's needs and tries to achieve balance despite the onset of a global pandemic (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020). Unfortunately, the whole organization was dismayed. As such, the domain and its sub-domains all agree with the study by Lee et al. (2022) which discovered that ethical leadership helps achieve intrinsic motivation among its employees. Such transformational leadership allows employees to have a work-life balance and autonomy. Moreover, Cialdini et al. (2021) opined that when leaders display unethical or biased behaviors, there is an increased likelihood of selective attrition in which only employees who feel more comfortable with their leaders' dishonesty and unethical behavior will stay. On the other hand, those employees who suffer psychological distress from such malfeasance will choose to leave.

Poor management of stress

Organizational shocks pose ramifications to the mental and social well-being of the employees. Management of stress, therefore, calls for responsive leadership to help employees endure the struggles during the pandemic. This study generated sub-domains covering the Poor Stress Management Domain recalled by the participants. Figure 4 is a text map or dendrogram capturing salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Stress Management. Examples of which are shared below:

Unreasonable Workload

"Sa mga agarang pagbabago at pagharap ng new normal siya din namang pagdami ng mga demand sa trabaho...physical, mental at maging emotional na nakakapagod, yung tipong wala na ang work-life balance toxic pa ang ibang kasama." (In transitioning to the new normal, there was also an increase in demand from work...physical, mental, and even emotional. It is tiresome to the point that

there is no longer a work-life balance. Some of my workmates are even toxic.) (P7)

"Minsan dahil sa dating opisina ay kailangan mong gumugol ng mahabang oras para matapos ang mga reports na minsa'y nagdudulot ng puyat at paghina ng resistensya." (In my former workplace, I had to spend more time finishing reports and I had to sleep late at night which caused my immune system to weaken.) (P17)

Unaccountable Stressors

"Isang masasabi ko nakadagdag ng emotional or mental challenge during the pandemic also was 'fault pointing' especially sa unit ko na direct to cadets. Just one situation, nag-accept command ng visitors from outside, and we are directed to serve them too. Without any objection, we did our duty... aware of our compromised safety due to exposure. And when the percentage of the positive case increased, the blame was on us. We are again to do these procedures like quarantines or tests again, aggravating yung hirap ng kakulangan ng manpower." (One thing I could say that added to the emotional or mental challenge during the pandemic was "fault pointing", especially in my units catering directly to the cadets. There was a situation in which the Command accepted visitors from outside, and was directed to serve them, too. Without any objection, we did our duty...aware of our compromised safety due to exposure. And when the percentage of positive cases increased, the blame was on us. We are again to undergo those procedures and tests, aggravating the struggle of lack of manpower.) (P8)

Empathetic Incompetence

"Parang wala akong naalala na tinulungan kami ng PMA para mabawasan stress ko. Kahit man lang sana nagpadala ng card na mangamusta parang ganoon para may touch of care sa 'yo kasi dito sa bagong pinagtatrabahuan ko mahilig sila magpadala ng card para kamustahin ka. Wala ako naranasang ganoon sa PMA." (It seems that I could not remember when PMA helped me cope with stress. I was hoping for a card showing that they care because in the new workplace I am working at, they are fond of sending out cards to make you feel that they care. I did not experience that in PMA.) (P11)

"Excited ako umalis sa PMA kasi hindi ko alam kung safe pa ba ako sa PMA kasi parang magkaka-mental breakdown na ako sa PMA. Although nami-miss ko yung mga katrabaho ko pero yung PMA as a whole na yung leadership magmula sa taas pababa, lalo ako na-stress." (I was excited to leave PMA because I do not know if I was still safe in PMA because I felt like I was about to have a mental breakdown...although I will be missing my workmates. But just remembering PMA, as a whole, and its leadership – from top to bottom, I feel stressed.) (P12)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains: Unreasonable Workload, Unaccountable Stressors, and Empathetic Incompetence. An Unreasonable Workload is characterized by excessive paperwork or tasks that the employee cannot handle alone or given unfavorable circumstances such as illness during the pandemic. On the other hand, Unaccountable Stressors pertain to authorities who were the root cause of stress of the employees who refrain from taking responsibility for mishaps of their actions. Empathetic Incompetence is the (un)intentional inability of the authority or person in a position to care for the workers.

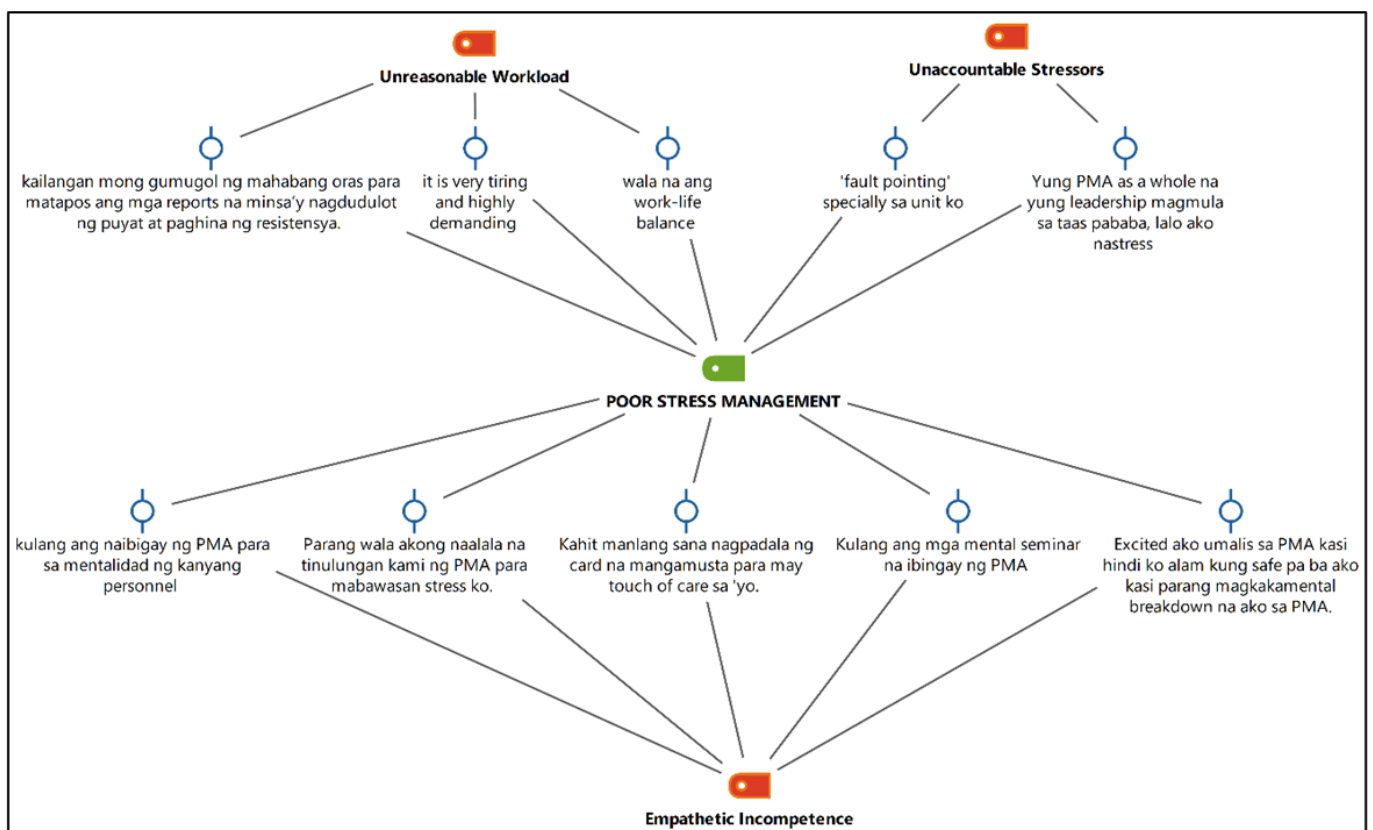


Figure 4. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Poor Stress Management and Its Sub-domains

The pandemic served as a challenge to all in which business is not as usual. However, as a military organization, PMA's mantra is "stability under pressure." This is very much evident, especially in training. This is also a silent expectation from the entire organization. PMA failed to recognize that the Academy is a mixed composition of military and civilians. These civilians didn't sign up for the conditions similar to the military training that shakes off "civilian antics" and creates a warfighting soldier from each individual. It is easy for military personnel to circumvent the challenges of the pandemic, like mobility and

access to resources, because they live inside the Academy – their very workplace. Moreover, they utilize PMA personnel and resources to meet their personal needs. Hence, they are far removed from the struggles experienced by a common civilian who is not housed in the Academy and has to walk miles to reach the pick-up point for the service shuttle. They felt that the work-from-home arrangement was a privilege that should be exchanged with the forced blurring of personal and work spaces by extending long unpaid hours complying with tasks.

Such sacrifices of the civilian human resources are explained by McLelland's 3-need Theory, which espouses the idea that a single need to a combination of the needs for affiliation, affirmation, and power shapes the employee's behavior (McClelland, 1985). Every accomplishment of the employees reflects their intention for those needs and contribution to the mission accomplishment. However, the respondents of this study felt that those needs were not satisfied; hence, they voluntarily decided to leave PMA. This is corroborated by the study of Kurniawaty et al. (2019), which revealed that weak area in stress management is seen as responsible for employee departure. Moreover, when stress in the form of work overload, low responsibility, and conflict are unaddressed by leadership policy, employee expectations are unmet, which ultimately causes them to resign. Job stress can also lead to job dissatisfaction and jeopardize affective commitment (Yukongdi & Shrestha, 2020). Such a domino effect eventually leads to turnover intention.

Poor working conditions

Counterproductive working conditions, hindering healthy work performance in both personal and professional aspects, ultimately lead to employee turnover. Figure 5 is a text map or dendrogram capturing the salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Working Conditions. Examples of which are shared below:

Workplace Politics

"Mahirap sa group namin. Parang silipan... Kung sino pa mga may pinag-aralan at matatanda...sila sana yung maging inspiration mo to excel." (Being in our group is a struggle. People there tend to find fault...I was expecting that those well-learned and older employees will be our inspiration to excel.) (P2)

"Hindi maganda ang pakikitungo ng iba at pinapatrabaho nila ang mga trabaho nila sa akin. Ang hirap kaya pumasok araw-araw tapos alam mo na may nasasabi sayong masama yung mga kasama mo. Ang hirap makipagkaibigan kapag ganoon. Paano ka gaganahan." (Others treated me poorly and made me work on what was supposed to be their tasks. It was difficult going to work everyday when your officemates are saying hurtful words against you. How can you work

in a place like that?) (P7)

Limiting Professional Growth

"Naiisip ko na nagagawa ko naman lahat ng trabaho ko nang tama at natapos ko lahat ng schooling at training para sa mga civilian employee, may masteral pa ako pero sa loob ng anim na taon wala akong naging promotion. Doon ko nakita na hindi talaga maganda ang sistema ng promotion sa aming opisina." (I was thinking that I was able to finish all tasks required of me and I was able to complete all schooling and training for civilian employees, I have a masters degree. But in the span of 6 years and there was no promotion, that was when I saw that the promotion system in our office is not good.) (P5)

"Alam mo lumipat lang naman ako dito kasi antagal ng promotion sa pinanggalingan ko. Andami ko na nagawa para sa sarili ko, nakapag PhD na ako, andami ko na rin publication, nakapagturo. Pero nalaman ko na antagal ko pa pala ma-promote. At least dito e antaas na ng SG ko pero same pa rin ang ginagawa ko...After regularization, there's no promotion again for 7 yrs. I am already left behind by my colleagues outside former organization with the same educational qualification, experiences, and age...I'm aging na din kasi." (The only reason why I left was because of the slow promotion there. I was already achieving so much. I was also able to obtain a PhD degree and was able to publish and teach. But I learned that promotion is so slow. At least, here in my new workplace, I have a higher salary grade doing the same tasks...After regularization, there was no more promotion for 7 years. I am already left behind by my colleagues outside my former organization with the same educational qualification, experiences, and age...I'm already aging also.) (P6)

Lack of Concern for Health and Well-being

"Kahit nagkasakit ako, wala sa oras...overtime. Katwiran ko na lang sa sarili ko, di bale...buti na lang work from home kaya kahit gabi mag-work. Ganoon ko na lang iniisip yung unfair situation kahit na sana kumakalma tayo gawa ng pandemya at iniisip natin na may bukas pa naman para sa mga ibang tasks na di kaya sa 8 to 5 di ba?" (Even when I was sick, beyond office hours I was working overtime. I just

reasoned to myself that it was a good thing that work from home scheme was implemented. That is how I reason about the unfair situation even if I think that we can always slow things down due to the pandemic and that there will always be another tomorrow to finish what cannot be done within the 8 to 5 working hours, right?) (P3)

"Understaffed kami. Madalas lalo sa night shift, double role ginagawa namin. Kailangan mo tumao. At the same time, kailangan mong mag-perform sa dalawang areas. For me, hindi ideal yun kasi hindi mo alam yung mga kinakasalamuha mo dun e Covid positive. So mataas yung chance na ma-acquire and madala yung virus doon sa ibang unit. Sobrang problem yun sa amin. Another is limited yung PPE namin. Yung mga PPE namin bilang lang yung ration na binibigay at inuulit namin yung PPE kasi kulang yung supply. Malaki yung chance ng cross contamination. Kung ano ginagamit mong PPE sa area na yun, madadala mo sa kabila. Tapos wala pang plan ano gagawin, kung ano flow ng work... Ang reason ko talaga ay hindi ko ma-take yung nangyayari sa paligid ko sa PMA." (We were understaffed. We frequently work on the night

shift, doing double roles. There needs to be someone to attend to a unit. At the same time, you are required to work in two areas. For me, that is not ideal because you are posing risk if someone is Covid-positive. There is a high chance you might acquire the virus from one unit and carry it to the other unit. That was a problem at that time. This is on top of the limited supply of PPE which increased the chance of cross-contamination. Then there was no plan achieved regarding the flow of work...The primary reason why I left PMA is the unacceptable things happening.) (P11)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains: Workplace Politics, Limiting Professional Growth, and Lack of Concern for Health and Well-being. Workplace Politics is manifested by the use of authority or power in influencing the processes and decision-making in the organization while Limiting Professional Growth is defined in this study as insufficient opportunities for professional advancement through promotion. Moreover, a Lack of Concern for Health and Well-being is characterized by the (un) intentional dismissal to address the needs of its employees.

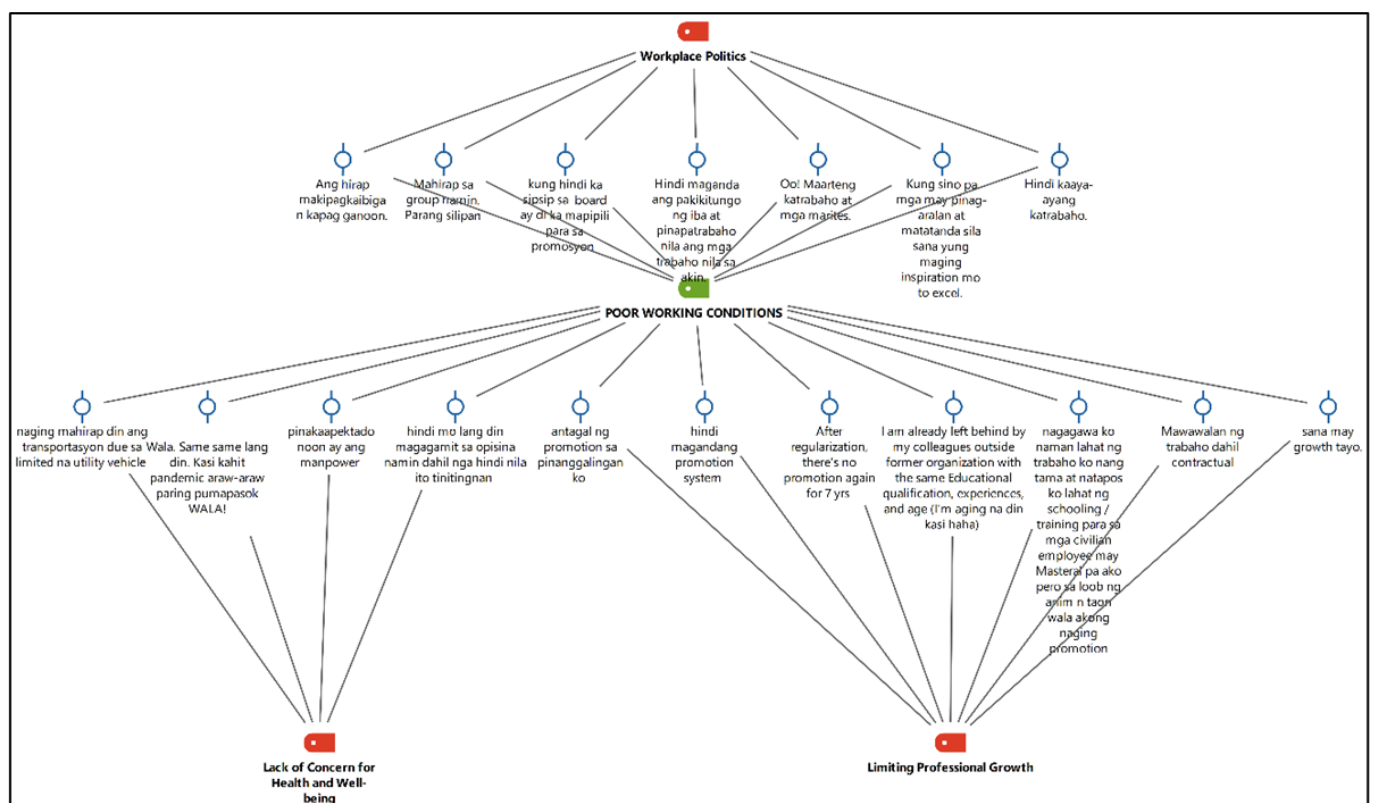


Figure 5. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Poor Working Conditions and Its Sub-domains

As a small community, the Academy houses both military and civilian personnel. Among them, there is a further hierarchical organization that colors social groupings. Such association with certain groups can be highly politicized when an individual's behavior is aimed at gaining the favor of the people in authority or position. This is evident in the Academy, which unfortunately gains criticisms for unreasonably and unfairly favoring one contender for regular or promotion positions. Unpublished policies are circumvented to their favor, and the lack of transparency in procedures left the Selection Board Members uncertain of the accuracy of ratings.

In-group and out-group are innate in an organization. This is a natural tendency of individuals who find similarities to beliefs, opinions, and world views to associate with each other. While this is evident in social settings, this can be detrimental for organizations when the out-group is disregarded or excluded from opportunities for both professional and personal growth (Kasper et al., 2023). This is supported by Sen's Capability-building Approach, which opines that individuals in an organization should be provided with the opportunities to be and do to maximize human function and optimize capabilities. Otherwise, their propensity to leave the organization is heightened. These experiences are corroborated by the study by Kang and Lee (2021), which discovered that organizations must pay competitive compensation to their employees and analyze promotional paths. Perks may help a company stand out to potential new workers and re-engage existing employees while improving employee morale. As a result, proper employee relations should be a priority. It has the potential to aid in the more effective resolution of conflicts. Moreover, Anasi (2020) opines that working relations, particularly those involving personnel, are where leaders should play a key role throughout the organization. This knowledge will enable the organization to implement relevant management activities conscientiously and effectively. Additionally, it can potentially motivate its organization to implement new best practices. When employees are under a heavy workload, yet the work environment expresses dismissal of their efforts, they feel burnout, and this served as a predictor of turnover intention based on

the findings of Wang et al. (2020).

Poor management practices

Management practices are mechanisms to ensure sustainability and lasting value of the employees to their organization. This may be through engaging employees towards quality performance and establishing a culture that makes the employees feel valued. Figure 6 is a text map or dendrogram capturing the salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Management Practices. Examples of which are shared below:

Ignoring Imbalances

"Ayoko yung supervisor ko, hindi marunong magtanggol ng kanyang sinasakupan at may kinikilingan." (I do not like my supervisor because of their incapability to defend subordinates and there is favoritism.) (P1)

"If you verbalize, ako pa may problem or ako pa ang hindi team player...Na-Promote ang senior ko. We were given instructions to respect her authority and seniority. Given that she was promoted, the workload should've lightened for me, but no. Nothing happened, just her pay grade." (If you complain, I will appear to be the problem and not a team player...My supervisor was promoted. We were given instructions to respect her authority and seniority. Given that she was promoted, the workload should've lightened for me, but no. Nothing happened, just her pay grade.) (P12)

Insensitive to Employees

"Kung sa PMA pa ako, baka abutin pa ako ng 10 years bago ako mai-angat sa SG 10 kung susundin ang promotion plan. Nung may mga na-regular na higit na mataas ang posisyon kaysa sa akin at noong promotion na inuna nila ang mas nahuling batch na ma-promote." (If I was still in PMA, it might reach 10 years before I get to be promoted to salary grade 10 if the promotion plan will be followed. When there was someone who was regularized at a higher position than mine, the new entrants were the ones promoted rather than the earlier batch.) (P9)

"Hindi ko masasabi 100% katanggap-tanggap sa pagtugon samin kasi andaming lapses nangyari. Kung siguro lapses na hindi maiwasan, ok lang. Pero yung lapses na unahin

yung sariling interest nila, hindi katanggap-tanggap yung part na inuna nila sarili nila.” (I cannot give a 100% acceptance of how the leader managed the Academy because of several lapses. If those lapses were inevitable, that can be forgivable. However, if those lapses were about prioritizing self-interest, I cannot accept that.) (P11)

Pre-occupied Organization

"Sa aking obserbasyon, nagiging "reactive" ang pagtugon ng dating leader ng akademiya noong kasagsagan ng pandemya. Habang kasagsagan ng pandemya ay mayroong mga bisita na minsan ay nagiging sanhi ng pagkakaroon " (From what I observed, the former leader was reactive in addressing the needs of the Academy during the peak of the pandemic.) (P7)

"Habang kasagsagan ng pandemya ay mayroong mga bisita na minsan ay nagiging

sanhi ng pagkakaroon o pagkalat ng virus.” (During the peak of the pandemic when there were so many visitors, they caused the spread of the virus.) (P17)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains

Ignoring Imbalances, Insensitive to Employees, and Pre-occupied Organization. Ignoring Imbalances is when performing employees are not made to feel priced, and there is a perceived blurring of boundaries between work and personal space and workload distribution. On the other hand, Insensitive to Employees is when managers or leaders fail to recognize their employees' professional and personal plights. Often, employees view their leaders as ungrateful and unkind. In terms of Pre-occupied Organization, this study characterizes this when the organization is too engrossed with several activities that do not add value to its mission accomplishment.

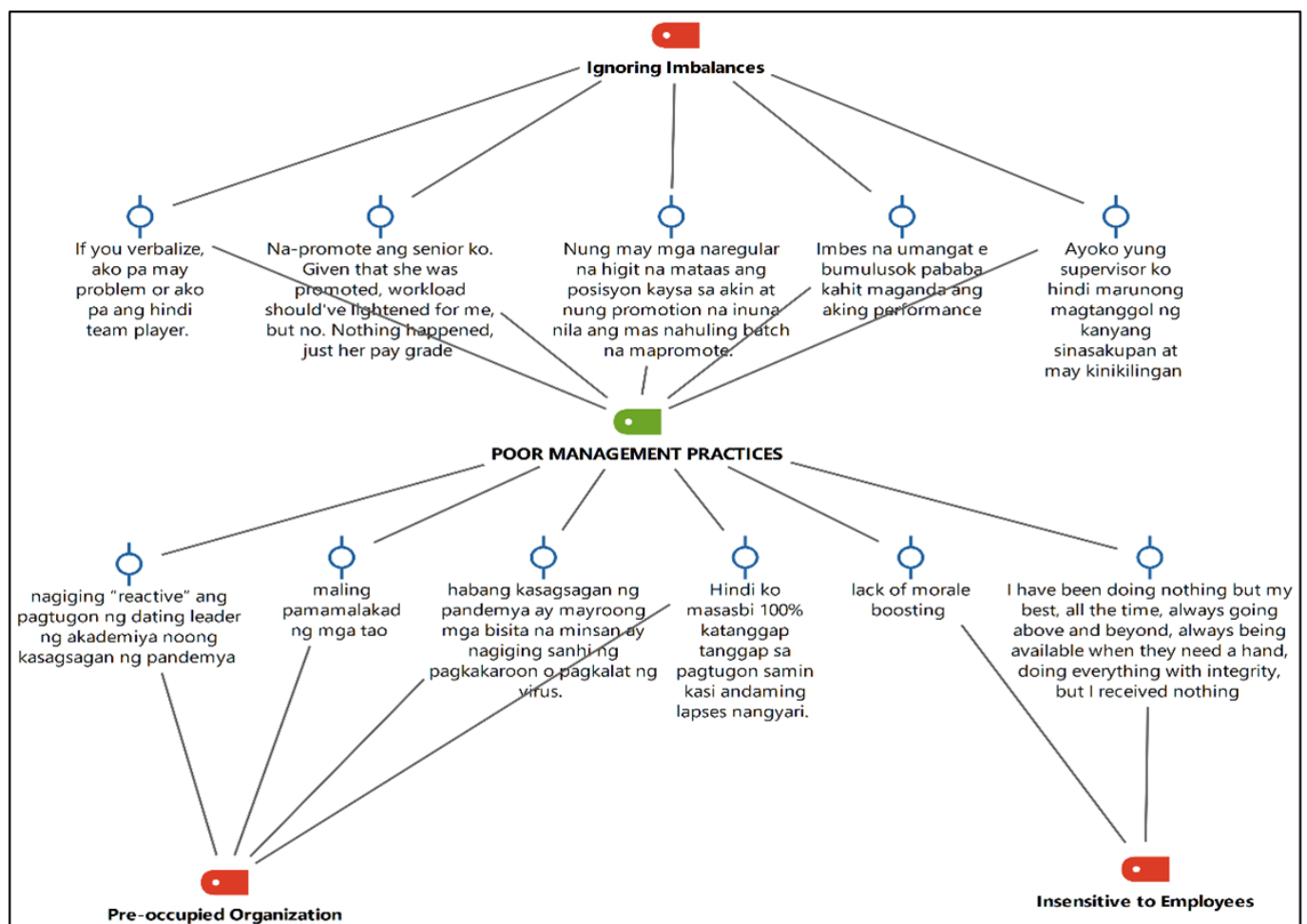


Figure 6. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Poor Working Conditions and Its Sub-domains

The PMA is not just a training hub for cadets to ready them for their obligation to be future officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It is also a go-to place for retiring alumni being rendered with Testimonial Parade and Review (TPR) as a gesture of recognition for significant contributions to their profession and the community. This is usually conducted every weekend, requiring personnel to serve as audience and cadets to perform drills. The conduct of a TPR necessitates the utilization of resources (including funds, employees, cadets, and time); however, it does not add value to the mission accomplishment of the Academy. On top of the 40-hour work required by the Civil Service Commission, civilian human resources must attend while foregoing duties at home and disregard employees' health. This was the set-up with the former Superintendent of PMA, who was fond of entertaining and convening gatherings despite the declaration of limited social gatherings.

In Fayol's Principles of Management, one of the highlights is the need for the prevalence of collective interest over individual interest (Ramakrishna, 2019). The interest of the organization should take precedence over personal caprice. Otherwise, the organization will collapse, manifested by sabotage, mediocrity, and silent resignation in which the personnel might be physically reporting to work but are no longer performing their duties. There is also the need to ensure the stability of tenure for its personnel. Offering job security maximizes performance efficiency and minimizes turnover intention. Unfortunately, the former CivHR opined that the PMA leadership turned the other way. These narratives were in corroboration by the findings of Sull et al. (2022), which revealed that quitting is attributed to the toxic culture in the organization. Usually, this reflects the leader's response to diversity, equity, and inclusion. When they feel disrespected and when they witness unethical behavior and poor response during the pandemic; it is when great resignation occurs. As such, there is instability, reorganization, and restructuring brought about by employee turnover. Ineffective HRM practices in promotion, performance appraisal, and compensation result in perceived unfairness and positively impact employees' turnover intention (Aburumman et al., 2020).

Uneven distribution of training opportunities

Training opportunities can be in-house or off-site to provide employees with the relevant skills and knowledge. The purpose is to improve their performance and advance their career. Figure 7 is a text map or dendogram capturing the salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Training Opportunities. Examples of which are shared below:

Uneven Opportunities

"Pansin ko kapag may training opportunities, yung mga malalapit sa kalan ang nauuna sa listahan. Dapat may transparency. Ipaskil nila sa may biometrics or ipakalat sa gc." (I observed that when there are training opportunities, those who are closely affiliated with the authorities are the ones first in line. There should be transparency. They can post it near the biometrics or send it out in our group chats.) (P3)

"Hindi lahat nakakatanggap ng paglinang at pagkahusay...Ang aking impresyon sa ganung pamamalakad ay hindi kaaya-aya dahil hindi pantay-pantay ang trato sa mga empleyado...Isa ito sa dahilan ng aking pag-alis sa akademiya." (Not all are given training and advancement opportunities...I find it unpleasant because of the unfair treatment of employees...This is one of the reasons why I left the Academy.) (P7)

"May mga training na the same persona lagi naga-attend lalo na kapag out of town observed sa finance group pero alam naman natin na may mga hindi pa nakakapag-attend na ibang personnel." (There are training opportunities that the same persons are attending especially those out-of-town who are observed to be among the finance group although we know that there are other people who haven't availed of the same training.) (P9)

Inadequate Opportunities

"Sa aking opinion ay hindi po sapat ang ibinibigay na training samin. Kami ay nagkukusang naghahanap ng free trainings upang magkaroon kami ng certificates. Kami din ay naghihintay minsan ng matagal para makakuha ng trainings para sa aming career at ang trainings na binibigay samin ay pang general knowledge at hindi sa aming

mismong skills na napili.” (In my opinion, the training opportunities are not enough. We are oftentimes initiating to find free training so we can have certificates. Sometimes we are always waiting for a long time to be given training opportunities. However, those are only for general knowledge and not about enhancing our specific skills.) (P10)

Minsan ka na lang maka-attend sa training, hindi pa magamit sa actual na ginagawa ko.” (I seldom received training opportunities but it was useless in my fulfillment of tasks.) (P15)

“Nagkakaroon minsan ng conflict marahil dahil sa kakulangan sa budget, hindi naipagbibigay alam sa mga opisina ng nakapaloob sa kanila o mayroong mga manggagawa na palaging sila ang pinapadala sa mga trainings

and workshops kung kaya’t hindi nabibigyan ng pagkakataon ang ibang manggagawa upang mapalawak ang kanilang kaalaman.” (Sometimes conflict arises because of insufficient budget, offices weren’t informed that funding is downloaded to them, or only the same people are being sent to training and workshops which failed to provide equal opportunities to employees to enhance and skills and knowledge.) (P17)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains: Uneven Opportunities and Inadequate Opportunities. Uneven Opportunities are when there are training activities, but only the same workers are given the slot. On the other hand, Inadequate Opportunities are when a certain office has only a limited budget to fund training opportunities their workers need.

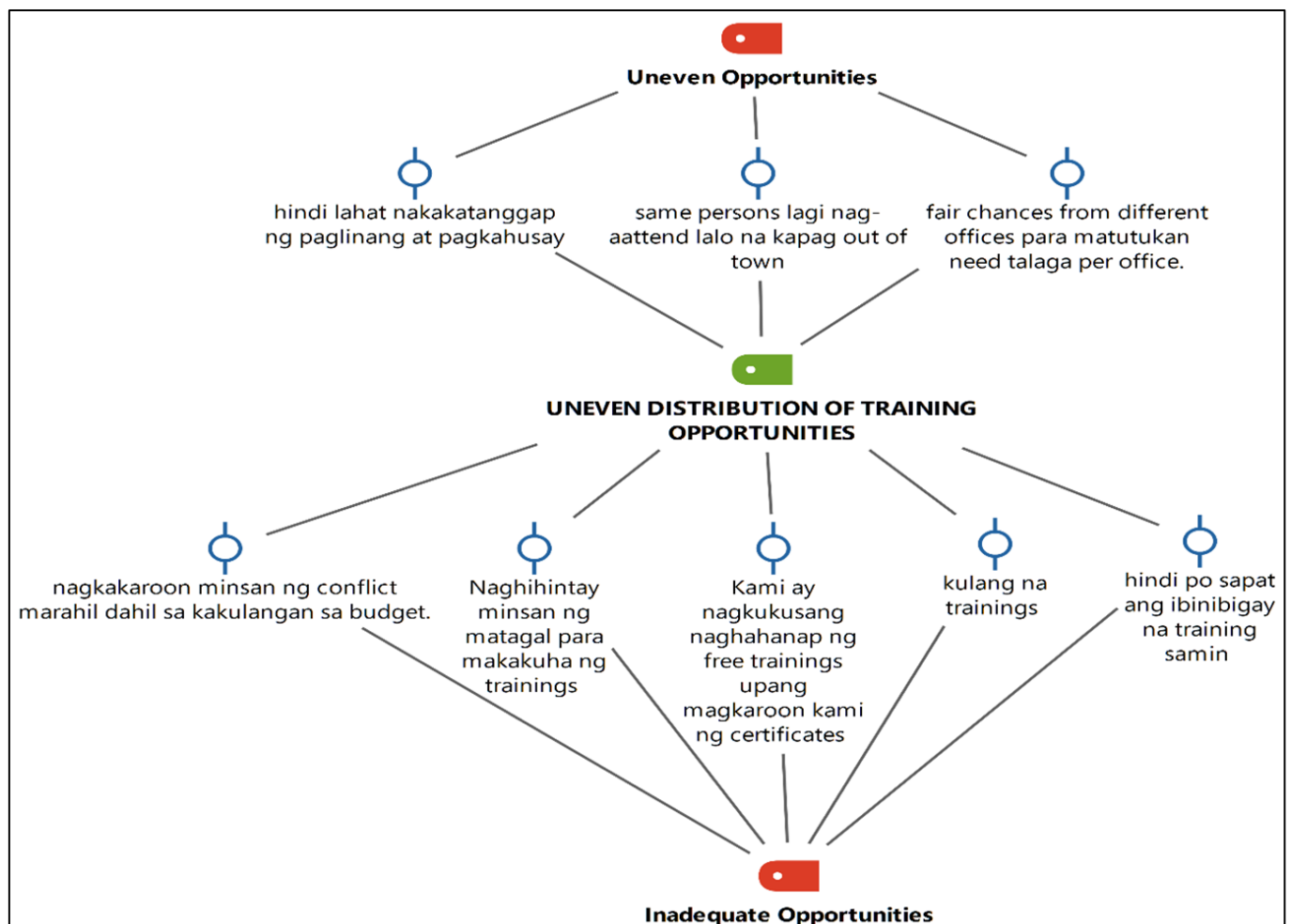


Figure 7. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Uneven Distribution of Training Opportunities and Its Sub-domains

Learning and Development (L&D) in the PMA is the joint duty of the Office of the Assistant Chief of Academy Staff for Personnel, MA1, and the Office of the Assistant Chief of Academy Staff for Education, Training, and Doctrine, MA8. These offices have laid individual and group training activities up for grabs by interested individuals. There is also the PMA Foundation, Inc. (PMAFI), an external body established to provide financial support to PMA specifically to improve the portfolio of the

PMA faculty through scholarship grants and training support. However, the only training opportunities availed by all personnel are those good-to-know events and more of Gender and Development (GAD) orientation. These yearly events are futile as they serve little to no purpose for the employees to improve their skills and work performance. Furthermore, few and the same individuals availed of discipline-specific training events such as conferences, fora, and workshops. This can be attributed to the limited knowledge of fund support from the Academy and PMAFI which they can avail of.

Based on the Cognitive Learning Theory, training is meaningful when the learner actively participates in the environment that requires their skill and knowledge to solve real problems, whether in their specific unit or the entire organization (Alam, 2022). Hence, an organization like PMA needs to design and implement a transformative learning framework to sustain increasing performance that serves the organization's future well. All these sharing is common to the study of Aldawood and Skinner (2019), which deemed that lack of training budget, training opportunity awareness, and equal opportunity are the pitfalls of the organizations. Despite the state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, undeveloped human knowledge poses risks to the organization and dissatisfied workers. Training, especially for skill-specific services, is tantamount to organizational identification in which the employer is founded on satisfying employees and improving relationships within the organization. This vital role of training in the retention intention of employees was captured in the study of Bharadwaj et al. (2022).

Unjust rate of pay

The rate of pay is the monetary valuation for the work done by the employees within the required period. This can come as salary, bonus, and compensation. As employees of a government institution, participants of this study received their pay based on the Salary Standardization Law (SSL). Figure 8 is a text map or dendrogram capturing salient narratives of the respondents in terms of Rate of Pay. Examples of which are shared below:

Unjust Pay for Skill and Performance

"Yung sweldo wala tayo magawa diyan kasi nasa batas yan. Pero kung titignan mo kasi yung iba, antataas ng sweldo pero parang ang gaan ng trabaho nila. Sila rin yung malakas magreklamo kahit wala naman gawa nakikita." (When it comes to salary, we cannot do anything about it because it is stipulated in Law. But if you will look at others who are receiving higher pay yet are performing lighter tasks. They are also the same people who are quick to complain even if they not performing.) (P3)

"Gusto ko makaipon ng mas malaki-laki sa mas maigsing panahon kumpara sa naiipon ko noong nasa mas mababa pa akong position. Mas madali na rin maghanap ng malilipatan na trabaho na higit na mataas ang sahod kung may pagkakataon." (I would like to earn more at a lesser period compared to the low position I was holding in my former workplace. It would also be easier to find better jobs when you have higher pay.) (P9)

Low Pay for Addressing Consumption

"Hindi naging sapat ang akin sahod noong panahon ng pandemya dahil madami ang dumagdag sa gastusin, tulad ng transportasyon at pagbili ng mga face mask, face shield, alcohol at iba pa." (My salary was not enough during the pandemic because my expenses increased like transportation, buying face masks, face shields, alcohol, etc.) (P7)

"Masasabing isa ito sa dahilan ng pag-alis ko ay dahil hindi sapat ang aking sinasahod. Sa pagtaas ng mga bilingin ay halos wala ng natitira upang itabi para sa savings. Halos nagalaw din ang savings dahil hindi na mapagkasya ang dating budget." (I can say that this is one of the reasons why I left because my salary is not enough. With the increasing prices of commodities, there is none left for savings. Even my savings get depleted because my budget is already insufficient.) (P14)

"Hindi sapat ang aking sahod noon para matugunan ang aking mga pangangailangan noong panahon ng pandemya. Napakataas ng mga bilingin noong panahong iyon. Mapaparami ka rin ng bibilhin dahil mahigpit ang gobyerno sa mga lumalabas na walang permit at nagkakaroon ng mga lockdown. Bukod pa sa pang-araw-araw mong pangangailangan ay

dagdag pa dito ang paglalaan ng budget para sa proteksyon laban sa Covid-19 tulad ng facemasks, alcohol, faceshield at nagtaas din ang pamasaha at gasolina.” (My salary wasn’t enough for me to sustain my needs during the pandemic. Prices of goods were high. You were also forced to buy in bulk due to the lockdowns implemented by the government. More than the basic needs that I had to buy, I also needed to buy face masks, alcohol, and face shields for protection from Covid-19. Fares and gasoline prices also increased.) (P17)

These are clustered based on the sub-domains

Unjust Pay for Skill or Performance and Low Pay for Addressing Consumption. Unjust Pay for Skill or Performance is characterized by workload or skill not compensating for the salary. At the same time, Low Pay for Addressing Consumption pertains to the inadequacy of salary to meet basic needs.

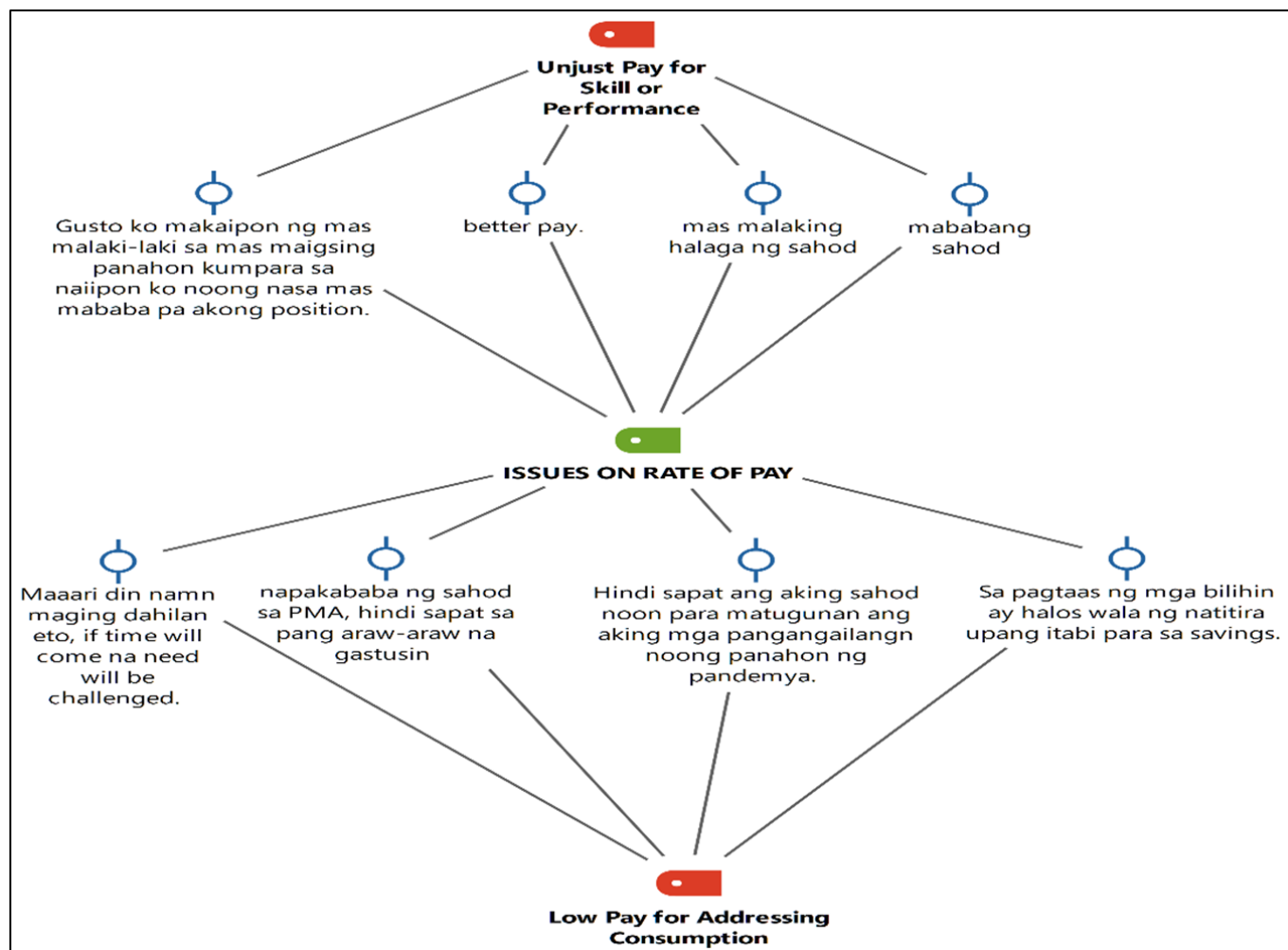


Figure 8. Reason for Leaving PMA Due to Issues on Rate of Pay and Its Sub-domains

The cost of living in Baguio City is estimated to be Php81,863 (without rent) per month for a family of four to survive (NEDA). This includes transportation, utilities, childcare, clothing and shoes, and meals. The rent of a 3-bedroom apartment outside the center costs around Php16,200.00 per month. The city's minimum wage rate is Php380 per day or roughly Php8,360.00 a month. Looking back at the salary grade of the employees who left, their income ranges from Php15,586 to Php36,619.00 per month. Unfortunately,

this was insufficient to keep the interviewees from leaving the organization.

The Theory of Compensating Wage Differential can best explain this. This theory opines that employees will opt for lower-paying jobs than a job with less-pleasing conditions (Wang et al., 2019). An example is the perceived distributive injustice in which employees perform the same level of effort as their colleagues yet are paid less. Such a condition engenders lower pay satisfaction, prompting them to leave. This

is in corroboration with the study of Mwangi (2019), which also explored civilian attrition in the Department of Army. It discovered that pay freezes (similar to the salary standardization in the Philippine government) would lead to employees leaving when the job market outside has higher or better pay. Such a pay freeze also leaves the organization with an aging population and talent loss from younger employees. This eventually leads to overall mission ineffectiveness. Moreover, the qualitative study of Choy and Kamoche (2021) has identified an unacceptable rate of pay or compensation scheme as destabilizing factors leading to job change.

Conclusion

High staff turnover presents a significant challenge for employers. Given the significant costs of employee training, it is far less expensive to keep a good employee than to hire a new one. Aside from the pandemic's interruption, every workplace must face changes, both good and bad. During difficult moments, employees look to leadership for guidance and assurance, change management that considers the overall welfare of its employees, the flexibility of leaders, and the soundness of policies.

Regardless of age, job, or stage of career, the majority of the participants were emotionally, structurally, and financially needing to deal with the issues they faced may it be personal, economic, professional, social, or psychological. With their experiences, this study offers a reflection on the lives of the civilian human resources (personal and professional) and the significance that their jobs played in the overall success of the organization and happiness as a valued civilian human resource of the Philippine Military Academy.

Recommendations

Organizations that thrive will do so because they understand that facilitating employees' desired career growth is an important aspect of enhancing employee engagement. Hence, they retain their talents and benefit from them in the long run. The following recommendations are, therefore, culled from this study:

1. Enhanced Professional Identification and Organizational Justice to do away with Employee Attrition = These two are intertwined with each other and influence the participant's decision to stay

or leave. Hence, promoting procedural justice and professional identification appears to be essential components of interventions aiming at reducing or eliminating turnover among civilian human resources. The fact that these factors are linked to the participant's decision-making supports the idea that burnout intervention can take place at the workplace level rather than just at the personal level.

2. Invest Policy on Career Growth to Improve Retention Scheme = Most organizations are aware that employees, particularly those just starting in their careers, anticipated a lot of formal career development. The PMA's attitude has to change. The expectation that its civilian human resources would make strategic investments in their personal and professional development is growing. The key to finding a solution is to be able to see career advancement through the perspective of civilian human resources.

3. Future areas to explore are also needed since there is always another story on the other side of the coin. The researcher suggests the conduct of an exploratory sequential mixed method to give meaning to the narratives in this study and capture it from the positivist's perspective. It will also provide PMA with a standardized tool to assess the tendencies of its civilian human resources vis-à-vis retention and attrition.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest: The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

Ethics Statement

All procedures followed were based on the ethical standards of the Ethics Committee of the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University. Informed Consent was obtained from all participants included in the study.

Data Access/Privacy: The researcher recognizes her responsibilities under the Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, concerning the data that was collected, recorded, organized, used, and consolidated from the participants. The personal data obtained through the interviews was entered and stored in a secured drive that is only accessible by the researcher for purposes of this research which included probable presentation and publication. Finally, the privacy of the participants was respected by maintaining

confidentiality and masking any identifying features.

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