

# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Issue Editor's Note

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## Communication in the Time of Anxiety, Online Media Affordances, and Advocacy

Our nation has recently suffered from two anxiety-causing events, namely former President Duterte's war on drugs that claimed thousands of victims and the COVID-19 pandemic that triggered lockdowns, mass vaccinations, illness, and death to some people. The lockdowns during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and the virus itself caused anxiety to many Filipinos, while the sight of bloodied, bandaged, and lifeless bodies of the war-on-drugs victims caused grief and consternation among the bereaved and anxiety for the general populace. Across the globe, the pandemic resulted in people turning online to communicate, hold classes, and do different online transactions. Social media like Facebook, Messenger, and TikTok became very useful for communication, connection, information, entertainment, and e-commerce even after the height of the pandemic. Online media affordances became widely accessed for different purposes such as self- and particular groups' representation, activism, political engagement, expression of views on various issues, interaction with other netizens, and more. However, there were downsides to the freedom and expression afforded by online media, such as invasions of privacy, targeted ads, and the exposure of netizens to bullying, harsh criticisms, trolls, hackers, scammers, and stalkers. These can eventually cause social anxiety on the part of netizens, especially the youth.

This year's issue of *PCS Review* showcases research articles that contain the theme of anxiety – whether it is anxiety caused by online engagements or caused by the war on drugs, the pandemic, overwork in universities, smart shaming, and other causes. It also showcases online media affordances such as self- or particular groups' representation and advocacy for supportive or well-being communication and media and information literacy. The critical role of media as the fourth estate is highlighted in a few articles, while the different research articles recommend further research to understand online and offline communication behaviors, representations, narratives, and possibilities. The advocacy for supportive communication and media and information literacy aims to alleviate or efface anxiety and cultivate critical skills in navigating the online world. The eleven research articles and two essays have been organized according to the following

topics: Mediated Communication and Anxiety, Online Media Affordances, Non-mediated Communication, and Communication and Advocacy. The last part of the journal is an interview with Jason Paolo Telles on the mediated culture of the indigenous peoples in the Cordillera Region.

### Mediated Communication and Anxiety

John Marco Nucum et al.'s "Political Efficacy and Social Anxiety from Social Media Usage as Predictors of Youth Political Disengagement" investigates if the lack of political participation among youth is explained by their political efficacy and social anxiety from social media usage in an age of online activism. The study concludes that youth's disengaged paradigm is attributed to their lack of confidence in their ability to engage in political matters actively and their fear of being scrutinized for the content they share online. The researchers think these findings provide a basis for understanding youth's ambiguous political participation and recommend civic education programs that cultivate awareness of the importance of fostering a positive climate in digital spaces.

Antonette Macey Alvarez et al.'s "Don't Get Ads, Get Even: The Effects of Prior Experiences with Targeted SNS Advertisements on Young Filipino Facebook Users' Intention to Self-disclose Information through Clicks on Facebook" looks into how the Filipino youth's privacy considerations impacted their interactions with targeted advertisements. Guided by Petronio's (2002) Communication Privacy Management Theory, the researchers theorized that young Filipino Facebook users' prior experiences with targeted advertisements on SNSs—namely Negative Prior Experiences (NPE) and Positive Prior Experiences (PPE)—affect their online privacy disposition composed of General Privacy Concerns (GPC) and Institutional Trust with Facebook as a data-collecting firm. The secondary data set used by the researchers revealed that experiences of privacy violations in SNSs affected their perception of risk on Facebook. Those who have clicked on targeted advertisements before intend to click again regardless of GPCs and with the motivation of their IT, while those who have not will only click due to their GPCs but may click due to their IT. The study illuminates young Filipino Facebook users' targeted advertisement engagement and demonstrates their need for privacy management education.

Jonel Bischocho's "*Nanonokhang v. Tinotokhang: Paghahambing sa Representasyon ng Mga Aktor ng Gera Kontra Droga Lugar sa Pangmasa at Alternatibong Midya*" (Comparison of the Representation of the War on Drugs Actors in Mainstream and Alternative Media) reveals varying representations of Rodrigo Duterte, the police force, and the drug addicts in the news features of mainstream platforms such as *Manila Bulletin* and *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, as well as alternative platforms like *Bulatlat* and *Pinoy Weekly*. The study aimed to identify the inclusion and

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exclusion, strategies of representation, and positive and negative presentation of the actors in the War on Drugs. The study revealed that mainstream media represented Duterte and the police positively, portraying them as saviors, while drug addicts were represented negatively, as dehumanized individuals reduced to mere statistics. On the other hand, alternative media portrayed Duterte and the police as a destroyer and criminals, respectively, while drug addicts were represented as struggling poor. The author concludes that, overall, the war on drugs can be viewed as more than a battle against drugs – it can also be considered a war against humanity, human rights, poverty, and truth.

Ma. Theresa de Guzman’s “Setting the Pandemic Stage: Online News Media Framing and Affective Tones in the Philippine COVID-19 Crisis Coverage of Manila Bulletin and Philippine Daily Inquirer”, which is a framing analysis of news coverage of the Covid-19 Crisis by two mainstream newspaper outlets, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* and the *Manila Bulletin*, reveals notable differences in their editorial approaches and framing techniques. With the consistent predominance of Government Response and Attribution of Responsibility frames, *PDI* is more critical, highlighting government accountability and responsibility. On the other hand, *Manila Bulletin* takes on a more positive tone. It advances inspirational stories with an editorial strategy indicating a pro-government attitude that aims to present a positive image of the Philippines while highlighting positive developments. The findings underscore the critical role of media, particularly in online news media, in information dissemination and shaping public discourse that can influence public perception, especially during national health emergencies.

Annie Fe Perez-Gallardo’s essay “Post-shutdown: Working as a Regional Correspondent in the Philippines” describes and makes sense of her experiences as a regional correspondent for ABS-CBN after the non-renewal of its franchise during the Duterte administration. The essay sheds light on the manner of reportage by correspondents like her through Shoemaker and Reese’s Hierarchy of Influences Model. The different levels of influence are the correspondent at the individual level, the new news production process at the routine level, and the organizational level, which refers to company policies, unwritten rules, ethical guidelines, and economic imperatives. Perez-Gallardo concludes that it is a roller-coaster ride to be part of a disenfranchised network and continue the work that was started. Still, the correspondent’s motivating factor is the urge to function as the fourth estate in service of the Filipinos worldwide.

### Online Media Affordances

Jacqueline Recaña's "A Rhetorical Analysis of Teachers' Self-Presentation on Facebook" examines teachers' complex strategies to shape their online identities and focuses on the rhetoric and gender expressions shown by participants across various gender identities, from gay to lesbian to heterosexual females. The study revealed that while teachers actively engage with social media, teacher participants stated that they could not freely express themselves on Facebook due to the high moral standards of the teaching profession. The researcher infers that individuals can be satisfied by shaping their behaviors and presenting themselves according to their desired image using self-presentation strategies to gain liking and respect from online audiences.

Francis Simonh Bries' "Off the Streets and On the Web: Directions for Digital Politics Research in the Philippines" provides an overview of central trends evident across three decades of digital politics research, which have been undertaken from communication and media studies, political science, psychology, sociology, and other allied disciplines, while at the same time situating the contributions of Filipino scholars within an international context. The studies he reviewed and analyzed demonstrate a general shift away from questions on the usefulness of the Internet for political processes toward recognizing these platforms' capacity to support citizen and government activities. The overview presents directions that can be prioritized for future investigations and applications, especially noting the growing yet limited scope of local work. More encompassing research programs and interventions are encouraged to respond to the capacity of digital technologies to both strengthen and undermine democracy.

Michelle Bayaua's "Femme, Feminine, Female: An Analysis of Contemporary Queer Filipino Women Representation in Online Media" analyzes three online limited series, each consisting of four to six episodes with runtimes of 20 to 30 minutes, streamed from 2020 to 2022 on iWantTFC and YouTube. Employing textual analysis within a feminist and queer theoretical framework, the research reveals that queer Filipino women in online media are depicted in a more positive light compared to traditional media representations. They are portrayed as young, confident, successful, financially and sexually independent individuals who are comfortable with their sexuality and bodies while living in accepting and tolerant environments. However, these portrayals primarily represent one facet of the queer experience: femme, middle class, cisgender, and mostly either lesbian or bisexual, with other queer women refusing to label themselves. The study indicates the need for nuanced, authentic representations that highlight the diverse gender identities and expressions of queer Filipino women to

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foster a better understanding of their lived experiences and challenge existing stereotypes.

Jethro Bryan Andrada's "Vlogging the Vice Presidency: Sara Duterte's TikTok Content as Politainment" aimed to scrutinize the image that Sara portrays for herself in TikTok through a content analysis of the 33 videos posted on her TikTok account from its creation on December 15, 2023, to June 7, 2024. The study revealed that Sara's image on the platform veers away from her father's tough-talking, informal demeanor, exhibiting instead two complementary personalities: a relatable persona and an efficient official. The study analyzed the enactment of politainment on the up-and-coming platform TikTok, providing novel knowledge about how politicians like Sarah Duterte can style themselves and maintain their relevance post-elections using the affordances of new media technologies. The study offers further directions for research about how politicians may co-opt influencer-like techniques that rely on relatability and intimacy to keep the public engaged in their lives.

### Non-mediated Communication

Joven Makiling's "Eh di, ikaw na Magaling!": Ang Pag-aaral ng Smart Shaming sa Diskursong Pangsilid-aralan" seeks to present and describe the context of intelligent shaming words and their impact on the classroom communication discourse. The researcher utilized focus interviews and focus group discussions with senior high school students from a private and a public school in Parañaque City, Metro Manila, to analyze the smart shaming terms and how they occur. Anchored on the Speech Codes Theory by Gery Philippsen (1997), the study's data reveal that smart shaming words positively and negatively impact the shamer and the shamed. Smart shaming primarily hurts shamed feelings, but on the positive side, the shamed could be motivated by the shamer to improve his/her personality. Moreover, mistakes were also addressed by these words, which can be used to improve someone's work for the better.

Kate Ashlyn N. Dayag-Nonay's research article entitled "*Pagtanda at Matanda Na*: Metro Manila Home for the Aged Residents' Narratives on the Meanings of Aging" describes and analyzes the construction of the meaning of aging of 11 aged men and women from four (4) private homes for the aged within Metro Manila. Using the Symbolic Interactionism perspective, the research sought to identify and explain the role of identity and interaction of the participants in constructing the meaning of aging. The study found that the definitions of aging were signposted during their *Pagtanda*, translated as "aging" (before home for the aged), and when they were *Matanda Na*, translated as "being old already" (living in the home for the aged). Some of the words they used to define the meaning

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of aging are (1) *kuntento* (contented), (2) *positibo* (positive), (3) *nalimitahan* (limited), (4) *prosesong hindi maiiwasan* (process that cannot be avoided), (5) *mahirap* (difficult), and (6) *pag-iba* (changed) (*pagbabago*). These definitions were affected by constructs such as marriage, health, money, interaction, and environment. It can be concluded that the selected residents of the homes for the aged within Metro Manila are arguably contented but not satisfied.

### Communication and Advocacy

Zsa Zsa Bacaling-Cabag, in her essay entitled “Confronting the Wellbeing Crisis: Supportive Communication as a Tool in Creating Healthier Philippine Universities”, argues that the well-being crisis in higher education is not just a health issue but is also a communication problem. Most universities do not communicate the value of the well-being of faculty members and staff in the Philippines, and is not prioritized in the higher education agenda. This neglect results in negative impacts on quality of life, quality of education, and academic reputation. Bacaling-Cabag presents a case for action and support to create healthier universities. She examines and criticizes the culture of unhealthy universities, advocates for the value of communicating good health and well-being, and proposes how university leaders can use supportive communication to create healthier university communities. Bacaling-Cabag calls on Philippine higher education institutions to rethink strategic priorities by emphasizing well-being in higher education conversations. To do this, leaders should practice supportive communication, champion wellbeing practices, and encourage communication scholars to contribute to wellbeing research and dialogue in the country.

Irish Jane Talusan’s and Yhna Therese Santos’s “A Communicative Constitution Perspective on Advocacy: A Case of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Advocates in the Philippines” investigate the different Philippine-based MIL advocacy groups, their initiatives and programs, and the complexities they experience in conducting their operations. Guided by UNESCO’s Global Framework for Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL Cities) and McPhee and Zaugg’s *Communicative Constitution of Organizations* to understand existing advocacies and examine perceived complexities, this research utilized interviews consisting of 15 informants from different MIL advocacy organizations and backgrounds participated. The study found that advocates bring areas of expertise that influence advocacy groups’ initiatives, such as teaching MIL, developing programs, implementing civic activities, offering media-based activities, or information-related initiatives. For these initiatives to be successful,

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the researchers recommend collaboration among the MIL advocates to foster a multidisciplinary approach.

Lastly, the interview with Jason Paolo Telles, a communication scholar who has contributed significantly to Indigenous media research with his published research papers on Indigenous peoples' media in the Cordillera Region, enabled him to express why scholars should take on Indigenous communication as their research topics. According to him, focusing on Indigenous media “brings to light the unique stories, the languages, experiences of the Indigenous communities into the discourse” and “ensures Indigenous perspectives.” Furthermore, he said, “If we understand different forms of media in Indigenous communities and even regional communities since they have been mostly neglected in the past, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Philippine media landscape.” He also acknowledged other Indigenous people's scholars like Dr. Jimmy Fong of UP Baguio and Dr. Eli Guieb of UP Diliman, who mentored and guided him when he researched Indigenous media. Though not an Indigenous person himself, he quoted Linda Smith (2021), who writes that non-indigenous individuals can actually study and write about IPs as well as long as their primary purpose is to contribute to their well-being, justice, dignity, and empowerment of their communities, and as long as they approach the subject matter with a critical mindset, respect, and ethical care.

It is my fervent hope that every reader will experience cognitive and affective enrichment by reading the various interesting research studies, a sympathetic understanding of different communication behaviors, narratives, and advocacies, and a widening of perspectives that include the marginalized mediated cultural discourses of the indigenous peoples with the 2024 issue of *PCS Review*.