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**Participation and Non-Participation in Cyberbullying:
A Semiotic Study on a Twitter Encounter
among Senior High School Students**

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**Charity T. Turano
September 7, 2018**

This dissertation titled Participation and Non-Participation in Cyberbullying: A Semiotic Study on a Twitter Encounter among High School Students is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Communication (DCOMM).

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Abstract

This study explored the senior high school students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying through the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory which views communication as an intersubjective mediation of signs and specifically using the Semiotic frame by Charles Sanders Pierce, which emphasizes the inter-relations between the sign or the signifier, an object (the signified) and an interpretant or interpretation. Eleven senior high school students who are digital natives participated in the study by engaging themselves in a conversation with the researcher. The participants of the study viewed the cyberspace as platforms for community building where friendships, alliances and sympathy are demonstrated in the course of interactions or communications. Also, the cyberspace is viewed as a platform for freedom of expression that allows them to express grievances about an issue and criticisms towards a person. These significations of the cyberspace intersubjectively mediated the students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying. For those who did not participate in the cyberbullying incident, viewing the cyberspace as a platform where disrespect, aggression, immaturity, and thoughtlessness could manifest in the exercise of the freedom of expression mediated their action of non-participation. Also, interpretations that in the practice of freedom of expressions in the cyberspace, messages delivered could be seen by a vast audience where spread can be expansive hence ensuing a serious impact on the one bullied has interceded an act of non-participation in cyberbullying. However, interpreting the cyberspace as a platform where alliances are formed in their communications, and free expressions are expediently permitted has mediated participation in cyberbullying.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The exponential evolution of technology in the 21st century has irrefutably afforded people highly modern communication platforms such as the social media that permit vibrant and gratifying interactions whether for personal, entertainment, academic, civic, political or business engagements. The features made available in these 21st communication technologies have undoubtedly offered humanity opportunities for incessant, speedier, global, up-to-date forms of dialogues and connections more than people had ever experienced in the previous eras.

A common observation is that many of the young people in this day and age who are considered to be digital natives are the most ardent communication participants in the cyberspace or virtual arena. The term digital natives which Marc Prensky coined in 2001 means that these people who are mostly young (between 6-30 years old) are “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet (p.1). According to Techopedia (n.d.), digital natives are those individuals who have been growing up using technology such as the Internet, mobile devices and computers. They are those who are highly accustomed to technologies and use them to perform their day-to-day activities such as gaming, downloading and watching videos and films, listening to music, studying, obtaining varieties of new information and interacting with others through Computer-Mediated-Communications (CMC) or online communications. Hence, participating in

online activities and communications among these young digital natives becomes integrated in the daily routine and is seemingly even more performed habitually than joining in offline communication scenarios.

Ahmad (2014) posits that people now, especially those who have the access to the Internet have become citizens in the *cyberspace*. William Gibson, a science fiction novelist who wrote *Burning Chrome* coined the term cyberspace in 1984. He then popularized the concept in his debut novel titled *Neuromancer*. The dictionary now defines the word cyberspace as the *notional environment in which communication over computer networks occur*. The term cyber has now been popularly and synonymously used with the terminologies virtual, digital or online.

With the rise of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and other cyberspace communication platforms that could still be developed and added as the Internet continues to advance, digital communication has become a topic of interest by a number of scholars. Themes of these studies cover personal, relational, communal, political, commercial, and organizational functions and affordances of social media; positive and negative effects of CMC on interpersonal communication skills, behaviors, and academic performance; risks involved and safeguarding strategies administered by guardians, the academe, the government, the general participants and even by the young digital natives themselves.

Various communications both positive and negative occur in the cyberspace, specifically in social media. Positive communications could include interactions, collaborations, raising awareness, data and information and other communication activities that help foster knowledge sharing and

building, socio-political and environmental mindfulness while negative communications could involve proliferation of fake news, phishing, sexual exploitations, bashing/cyberbullying and other forms of negative communication. One of the popularly identified negative communicative acts happening in social media and has become a rising and universal concern investigated by a number of scholars is cyberbullying (e.g. Asanan, et al., 2017; Athanasiades, et al., 2016; Hase, et al., 2015; Hinduja and Patchin, 2012; Mishna, F., et al., 2010; Navarro, et al., 2017; Wegge, et al., 2016, etc.). Slonje, et al. (2014). These studies define cyberbullying as any aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself.

Typically, cyberbullying is carried out repeatedly and over time, and is characterized by an imbalance of power. It can also be defined as deliberate and continual harm inflicted on someone through the use of electronic devices (Sticca and Perren, 2013). Further, Squicciarini, et al. (2015) describes cyberbullying as a repetition of insult, hurt or harassing and a systematic abuse of power, which occurs through the use of information and communication technologies. Other scholars in their studies on this topic commonly share this definition of cyberbullying.

However, alongside the evolution of human activities, is the likelihood for communication events to go through transformations causing alterations and modifications on accepted and popularized views of certain communicative acts such as cyberbullying. These new viewpoints, angles and perspectives added to the already established meaning may arise from those who have in one way or another been involved in the communication

situation. For instance, contrary to the popular definitions, which emphasized that the one more powerful is the initiator, someone who is not necessarily of higher status or more powerful than the target could actually instigate cyberbullying. And as to frequency, this attack may not necessarily be repeated but could be a one-time mob event. The virtual community calls this *online bashing*. Highly similar to cyberbullying, online bashing is described as a verbal attack or harsh criticism directed towards an organization or a person through social media. Anyone can be a target, even the one occupying the highest position of a country. Bashing now seems to be an unstoppable norm and practice in the online arena and is quite disturbing since this is a form of verbal abuse that could indubitably cause harm on the person attacked. In this study however, the researcher preferred to use the more conventional term, cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying as one of the identified and known cyber risks that maybe encountered or carried-out by an individual in the virtual space could indubitably cause a severe negative impact on victims especially the highly vulnerable ones since this communicative act normally involves humiliation and assault before a large number of audience. Nixon (2014) for instance in her research found that "adolescents who are targeted via cyberbullying reported increased depressive affect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms and perpetrators of cyberbullying are more likely to report increased substance use, aggression, and delinquent behaviors (p.1)." Ybarra (2004 in Bhat, 2008) reported that youth who reported depressive symptoms were significantly more likely to report experiencing Internet harassment. It is plausible that victims of cyberbullying and traditional bullying

would experience similar negative effects (Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, & Morrison, 2006 in Bhat, 2008). In many studies in cyberbullying, the young ones have become victims and some are the offenders themselves.

Victims of cyberbullying and the instigators of this communicative act apparently need professional counseling and guidance. The current researcher therefore sees this study as an opportunity to inquire further on the diminuendos of the cyberspace and the bullying that occurs in this space, the symbols or signs associated with the platform and how these signs define the students' participation or non-participation of this virtual communicative act, cyberbullying as viewed by the young digital natives themselves, who are Senior High School students in this study.

The analysis of the findings will contribute to the expansion of the field of communication under the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory, particularly Charles Sanders Peirce's principle of Semiosis that emphasizes on the triad relationship of "sign, object and interpretant" which concepts will be further expounded in the succeeding discussions of this paper. Through this theoretical frame, the researcher's scholarly or theoretical pursuit on responsible or ethical cyber communication could be embarked upon appositely.

Other than theorizing, this study could help provide the necessary and appropriate support in fostering responsible online communication as views of the cyberspace and cyberbullying surface in the course of the researcher-participants' dialogues. Necessities such as further supervision and education from the hypothetically mature individuals such as the adult caregivers (parents, older siblings, other guardians) in the family and established

organizations such as the government and schools could be determined as the young individuals' thoughts on the cyberspace and the communicative act, cyberbullying are explored. Scholars (Holloway and Livingstone, 2013; Drussel, 2012; Mims, Llanes and Didona, 2013) assert that these young people may still lack the required critical, social and ethical skills hence putting them on the risky zones of the cyberspace either as targets or initiators of imprudent online communication conduct such as cyberbullying hence making this study timely and highly relevant.

Noting the above, the researcher is intent on doing a Semiotic exploration of the young people's thoughts about the cyberspace and cyberbullying as a known type of online communication being practiced by some young digital natives in the virtual arena, specifically, on Twitter in this study. This scholarly investigation will expose what the digital natives associate cyberspace with and the cyberbullying instance as well as its surrounding elements that dissuade them from participating or on the other hand encourage them to participate in this communicative act.

Further, this study hopes to comprehend the young digital natives' virtual communication propensities to either act conscientiously or otherwise thus support worldwide attempts of fostering responsible online communication and online safety by some organizations such as the government, schools and family units. Gaining insights about how these young individuals are actually engaging themselves in virtual interactions specifically on Twitter; how they view the cyberspace as a platform and cyberbullying; and why they participate or do not participate in cyberbullying

as based on their individual perspectives in the hope to pave the way to more enlightened policies, campaigns, programs and media literacy curriculum.

Theoretical Framing: The Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory/Sign Theory by Charles Sanders Peirce

This study is anchored on the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory. In this communication tradition, communication is viewed as mediation or an intersubjective negotiation by signs and sign systems (Craig, 1999). Specifically, the Semiotic or Sign Theory of Charles Sanders Peirce, which he continued to develop from the 1800s-1900s provided grounding for the scientific inquiry and functioned as lens that aided the researcher in examining, understanding and analyzing the data within the semiotic communication tradition of Craig.

Peirce's Semiotic theory emphasized the inter-relations between the sign or the signifier, an object (the signified) and an interpretant and its interpretation. "The basis of semiotic thinking is the concept of the triad of meaning and this maintains that meaning comes from the relationship between the object (referent), the interpretation, and the sign."

The triad relationship of sign, object and interpretant

The Sign or Signifier

In one of his many definitions of a sign, Peirce writes:

I define a sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the later is thereby mediately determined by the former (EP2, 478 in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010:1).

To elaborate, the sign according to Peirce is the signifier which can be in form of a written word, an utterance, an act, can be verbal or non-verbal, a concept or something material. For instance, a form that a sign takes is smoke as a sign of fire (Peirce's Theory of Signs, 2010). A smoke can have certain characteristics - volume, color, velocity and density. Thin, black, fast smoke means that a well-ventilated fire is nearby while a slow, white, dissipating smoke (first thick but thinning quickly) is a sign of steam, and indicates early stage heating (Firefighternation, 2013). Not every characteristic necessarily plays a primary part in indicating the presence of a signifier. Black as a characteristic for instance does not immediately indicate a presence of a smoke. However, the connections between some features of a smoke – black color and fast velocity and the one signified according to Peirce makes smoke the qualified representamen or signifier. He stressed further that a sign signifies only when it is interpreted and that the sign has signifying elements or features that are crucial in its functioning or role as a signifier. These elements are also known as sign-vehicles. In this study, cyberspace is the identified signifier, which carries with it certain signifying elements hence making it a capable signifier.

The Object

The object (a thing, concept, condition, an act) on the one hand is the one signified. These objects have certain characteristics relevant to signification. "For Peirce, the connection between the object of a sign and the sign that represents it is one of determination: the object determines the sign" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010, p.1). This means that it is the

object that enforces certain constraints that “a sign must fall within if it is to represent an object.”

In this scholarly inquiry, the objects of cyberspace as a sign are community building and freedom of expression. Community building and freedom of expression determine the sign, cyberspace, in as much as, if the cyberspace is to succeed as a sign for community building and freedom of expression, it must show the observable presence or characteristics of community building (friendship, alliance, support) and freedom of expressions (grievance, criticisms).

The Interpretant

The interpretation is the understanding or the thought that one has on the sign/object relation. This is the translation of the sign. As emphasized by Peirce, the sign determines the interpretant. In this paper, the interpretation is determined by the cyberspace as the signifier. These interpretations then mediated communicative acts such as participation and non-participation in cyberbullying.

Semiotic as a theory and communication tradition as a framework used in examining the data of this study viewed how the young digital natives understand the cyberspace, the associations they ascribe to the cyberspace and how these representations mediate the communicative act, participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

Cyberspace and cyberbullying as a virtual communication act was examined in the researcher's guided conversations with young people. Through the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory, the individual

thoughts and interpretations of the young digital natives about the cyberspace and the communicative act, cyberbullying have been underscored. Through the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory, details of the young virtual participants' representations and exemplifications of the cyberspace, which could signify concepts, words or objects that mediate certain acts such as participation or non-participation in the communication situation have been revealed.

Research Objective

This study pursued a Semiotic exploration on the young digital natives' views on the cyberspace and their participation or non-participation in cyberbullying and answered the following **Research Questions**:

1. What does the cyberspace signify for the senior high school students?
2. How do these significations of the cyberspace mediate the senior high school students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying?

Significance of the Study

This research will benefit the following:

Young Digital Natives. Through this study, the young people will be provided "voice" as they are allowed to express their thoughts on why they participate or do not participate on the communicative act, cyberbullying. Through this exercise of self-reflection, the young digital natives will be hopefully brought to a higher degree of consciousness in their social media participation.

Consequently, knowledge of and possible recommendations for responsible online communications can still be advanced through intervention and regulation schemes, which maybe determined later through further related studies.

Guardians. The adult guardians who may include entities such as the government, schools, and family units will be afforded insights that may influence their guidance, protection, education and safeguarding strategies provided for these young people who are participating in virtual interactions.

Communication Scholars. Findings and insights gained from this study maybe helpful for other researchers and scholars whose areas of interests are relevant to computer-mediated-communications or Internet communications in general. The knowledge gained from this study could serve as additional resources and take off points for sizeable and in-depth research efforts on the young digital natives social media communication practices and their implications on human developments.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A popular communication tradition used as a lens to examine cyberbullying is the **Socio-psychological Tradition of Communication Theory** where the individual as a social being, one's social behavior, the psychological variables composing the individual personalities, perception and cognition (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009) is the focus of the study. Examples of these investigations explore effects and impacts of cyberbullying on health, aggression as a behavior, self-esteem, association with loneliness and depression, emotional consequences, and moral identity. To cite and quote some of these literatures:

Ang (2015) reviewed Internet usage, psychosocial problems and challenges, proactive aggression characteristics and normative beliefs about the acceptability of aggression. Likewise, the parent-adolescent relationship variables, such as poor emotional bond, lack of knowledge about the adolescent's online activities, and lack of adequate parental monitoring and parental mediation were also reviewed to be related to cyberbullying. The author then highlighted strategies targeting both adolescent issues, parent-related, and parent-adolescent relationship variables as suitable targets for prevention and intervention work. The researcher suggested that a multi-pronged and multi-systemic approach would be most effective.

A study by Athanasiades, et al. (2016) investigated the predictive effect of Internet use, parental mediation, school bullying and victimization, gender and empathy on cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Using a self-report

questionnaire, four hundred and forty secondary school students within the age range of 12-14 from six public schools in the Greater Metropolitan Area of Thessaloniki in Greece participated in the study. The study found out that the factor with the highest predictability for cyberbullying and cybervictimization is the involvement in traditional bullying as a victim or perpetrator and this also remains constant across time.

Balakrishman (2017) on the one hand in his study aimed at designing a cyberbullying behavioral model, and determined the predictors for intention to cyberbully. The methodology used was a mixed-method approach, namely focus groups and online questionnaire surveys. Sociocultural (social influence and social acceptability) had the strongest impact on the intention to cyberbully, followed by Technology (availability and ease of use) and Psychology (entertainment) according to the research.

Chan and Wong (2015) reviewed the prevalence of traditional school bullying and cyberbullying in selected major Chinese societies, namely the Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Empirical findings on the characteristics of bullying perpetrators, victims, and the offense circumstances are described. The researchers then conducted a comprehensive review of the whole-school intervention approach in tackling traditional school bullying and cyberbullying. The different factors such as origin, key components and other variables that may contribute to the effective implementation of the whole-school approach in preventing and reducing bullying behaviors among children and adolescents were discussed in their study. The authors then concluded the review with potential implications for the application of this

intervention approach in tackling traditional school bullying and cyberbullying in Chinese communities.

Dempsey, et al. (2009) inquired on cyberbullying further by using confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether cyber victimization is a separate latent factor from overt and relational victimization and explored the relationships between cyber victimization and indices of psychosocial maladjustment using previously validated measures of symptoms of depression and social anxiety. Respondents of the study's survey were middle school students in the southern United States. The study found that cyber victimization is a separate construct from relational and overt victimization. However, the researchers emphasized that the separate forms of victimization continued to be weakly related to one another, indicating some overlap between factors. Also, they suggested recognizing cyber victimization as a unique phenomenon that youth may encounter regardless of whether they are exposed to overt relational aggression in other settings. For the second major goal which was to assess the relationship between cyber victimization and psychosocial adjustment using established indicators of depressive and social anxiety symptoms, the research found that cyber victimization was only associated with symptoms of social anxiety, and not depression, after controlling for relational and overt victimization. Relational victimization was the form of victimization most highly associated with symptoms of social anxiety.

Den and Konjin (2016) examined whether all bullied adolescents experience the Cyclic Process, which describes the process underlying the relationship between victimization and cyberbullying. Their study investigated

whether the manner an adolescent deals with one's anger affects the processes of the Cyclic Model by either negatively regulating feelings of victimization or positively regulating the emotions. Their study found that using positive emotion regulation strategies to cope with anger did not decrease cyberbullying but negatively coping with anger resulted in higher levels of cyberbullying behavior. The study also noted that adolescents' tended towards performing cyberbullying when they blamed others or themselves or frequently thought about their negative experience.

Another study under the Socio-psychological tradition within the quantitative paradigm was conducted by Doanne, et al. (2014) among college students who participated in a survey on cyberbullying experiences survey that assessed four types of cyberbullying (deception, malice, public humiliation, and unwanted contact). The findings revealed that "lower empathy toward cyberbullying victims predicted more favorable attitudes toward cyberbullying perpetration, more favorable attitudes toward cyberbullying predicted higher intentions to cyberbully, and higher cyberbullying intentions predicted more frequent perpetration of cyberbullying behaviors". Further, according to the authors, "injunctive norms regarding cyberbullying (e.g. perception of peers' approval of cyberbullying perpetration) predicted intentions to engage in malice and unwanted contact behaviors."

Fletcher, A., et al. (2014) obtained data from 1,144 young individuals aged 12-13 from eight English secondary schools to study the occurrence of cyberbullying perpetration and its associations with sociodemographics, other behaviors, and health outcomes. Their research reported that 14.1% who declared that they cyberbully others had no significant differences by gender

or socioeconomic status. They also discovered a strong, exposure-response relationship between aggressive behavior at school and cyberbullying others implying that cyberbullying may not only be a feature of wider patterns but also of aggression in general. Also, cyberbullying was associated with poorer quality of life and with psychological difficulties but not with peer/social problems or on a more serious level, mental being. The authors recommend longitudinal studies to further assess causality of such associations.

Also, a research by Gualdo, et al. (2015) aimed at shedding more light on young people's perceptions concerning the emotional impact of cyberbullying. The researchers determined whether cyberbullies and cybervictims perceived the emotional consequences of this form of aggression in the same way and compared the perceptions of those who have experienced victimization offline versus online. One thousand three hundred fifty three (1,353) students aged 12-20 from twenty-two (22) schools in Murcia, Spain were invited to participate in the study. The findings showed that cyberbullies believed that their victims would experience more discomfort than cybervictims actually reported experiencing. It was also uncovered that those who had experienced in both traditional and cyber contexts evaluated cyberbullying as having greater negative impact than did those who had experienced victimization only in cyber contexts. There was little evidence of gender-related differences, with only exception of 'sadness' as an emotion in which girls scored higher than boys. Perceptions differed according to role and the context(s) in which bullying has been experienced.

Another study by Hase, et al. (2015) under socio-psychological tradition sought to find out whether cyberbullying create new victims or merely

a new means of victimization and whether cyberbullying uniquely contributes to negative outcomes above and beyond those of traditional bullying. A survey was conducted among students. It was found out that majority of the students who were bullied online were also victims of in-person bullying. "Both forms of victimization were independently associated with negative outcomes. However, when controlling for traditional bullying, cyberbullying did not remain a predictor of negative mental health outcomes. In contrast, when controlling for cyberbullying, traditional bullying remained a significant predictor of negative mental health outcomes. These results suggest that although traditional and cyber forms of bullying tend to target the same victims, traditional bullying is more uniquely associated with negative psychological outcomes."

Also a study by Hemphill, S. and Heerde, J. (2014) attempted to investigate adolescent risk and protective factors at individual, peer group and family level for young adult cyberbullying, perpetration and victimization. The longitudinal study conducted in Australia gathered data from 927 Victorian students where the participants completed a self-report survey. The study revealed that the adolescent predictors of cyberbullying perpetration only, were traditional bullying perpetration, traditional perpetration and victimization, and poor family management. On the other hand, for young adulthood cyberbullying victimization only, the adolescent predictor was emotion control. The adolescent predictors for young adult cyberbullying were traditional bullying perpetration and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. The study concluded that prevention and early intervention strategies could have reduced adolescent involvement in traditional or cyber bullying hence

supporting families with adolescents in monitoring the latter's behavior and tendencies as well as programs that generally develop and assist adolescents in improving emotional control are demanded.

Another study, within this communication tradition is the research by Holfeld and Sukhawathanakul (2017) which examined the unique associations between attachment, cyber victimization, and two internalizing symptoms: anxiety and depression. The study verified whether cyber victimization mediates the associations between Internet attachment and anxiety and depression. The research also attempted to find out when cyber victimization experiences are most frequent and investigated the moderating effects of gender. The number of participants involved was 1,151 middle school students in two Midwestern cities. Most of the samples were Caucasian (62%) followed by Asian (14%), Aboriginal/Native (7%), Black (6%), Hispanic (3%), and other groups (8%). As anticipated by the researchers, greater Internet attachment was associated with more cyber victimization and greater symptoms of anxiety and depression. Cyber victimization was found to mediate associations between Internet attachment and anxiety and depression. Gender differences surfaced for two pathways (e.g., from cyber victimization to depression and from Internet attachment to anxiety). Also, Internet attachment was positively associated with both anxiety and depression. The research further revealed that greater Internet attachment was associated with greater anxiety for males than females. Consistent with other researches, the study disclosed that adolescents who experience cyber victimization are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression with females being more vulnerable to the effects than males. Cyber

victimization also accounted for some of the association between Internet attachment and internalizing symptoms. Specifically, a partial mediation of cyber victimization was found on the associations between Internet attachment and anxiety and between Internet attachment and depression. In other words, greater Internet attachment increased the likelihood of cyber victimization, which in turn increased symptoms of anxiety and depression (p.94).

Another study explored thoroughly the impact of school versus cyberbullying whether victims and perpetrators are involved in school bullying only, cyberbullying only, or both. The study by Kubiszewski, V., et al. (2015) examined the possible overlap of school and cyber bullying, the similarities and/or differences between the two forms while taking modality of involvement into account. One thousand four hundred twenty two (1,422) junior high and high-school students were interviewed individually. Results of the study showed a little overlap between cyberbullying and school bullying with majority of the students who were involved in cyberbullying not simultaneously involved in school bullying. The research further revealed that “psychosocial problems such as psychological distress, social disintegration and general aggression varied according to the form of bullying. Victims of school bullying had greater internalizing problems than cyber victims, while school bullies were more aggressive than cyberbullies.” The study emphasized the need for schools and public health authorities to give attention to the issue especially that bullying has a significant relationship with mental health.

Laftman, et al. (2013) investigated the prevalence of cyberbullying among students in Stockholm, Sweden, the overlap between cyberbullying

and traditional forms of school bullying and the association between the experience of cyberbullying and subjective health. The study gathered data from 22,544 students who are 17-18 years old. The research found out the following: About 5 % of the students are victims of cyberbullying, 4% are perpetrators, and 2% are both victims and perpetrators. There is some overlap between cyberbullying and traditional bullying: those who are victims of traditional bullying are at increased risk of also being victims of cyberbullying; while being a traditional bully is strongly associated with the likelihood of also being a cyberbully. However, many students who are involved in cyberbullying are not involved in traditional bullying. It was also found that being a victim of cyberbullying remains associated with worse subjective health when being the victim of traditional bullying and socioeconomic factors are taken into account. In addition, perpetrators of cyberbullying as well as students who are both victims and bullies, have worse subjective health than those who are not involved in cyberbullying.

The research of Lee, C. and Shin, N. (2017) aimed to examine the incidence of cyberbullying and factors in cyberbullying executions with a sample of 4,000 adolescents in 7th-12th grades at 24 middle schools and 24 high schools across South Korea, selected through multi-stage cluster sampling. Survey results disclosed the following: “ First, 34% of the respondent students were involved in cyberbullying as bullies (6.3%), victims (14.6%), or both bullies and victims (13.1%). Boys had a higher percentage of cyberbullying perpetration than girls. Second, variables for time spent on chat services and Social Network Services (SNS), the experience of being cyberbullied, and offline bullying perpetration tended to increase the

probability of students being perpetrators of cyberbullying. However, the cognitive empathy variable contributed to decreased cyberbullying perpetration behaviors. Third, the variables of parental attachment and satisfaction with school life had little impact on perpetration of cyberbullying." With an improved understanding of the characteristics of cyberbullying among young people, the researchers suggested practical consideration to prevent online aggression.

Navarro (2017) claimed that while past studies have highlighted numerous factors that affect risks of cyberbullying experiences in a general, only a few studies have focused on identifying risk factors within social networking sites (SNS) to help fight against cyberbullying as a social problem. Also, he argued that even fewer studies have utilized a theoretical perspective to frame and ground findings. The author therefore attempted to fill a substantial gap in the literature by reviewing the activities within SNS that affect the risk of experiencing cyberbullying through Routine Activities Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) in analyzing the data collected as part of the Pew Internet Project.

The study of Ozden (2104) aimed at explaining university students' perceptions of cyberbullying and cybervictimization in terms of its relationship with their personality factors. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Cyber Bully / Victim Scale, Rank Scale for Cyberbullying Indexes were given to 136 university students. The most important finding of the study was being either a cyberbullying offender or to be a victim was related to be psychotism. Regarding the participants' gender, male university students were significantly

more likely to be cyberbullies than females and male university students perceived cyberbullying behaviors more harmless than females.

Palermi, A. L., et al. (2017) investigated cyberbullying risk related to self-esteem, social, and personal variables. A good sample of Italian young people were interviewed using standardized questionnaires. The results of their study showed that, although few subjects were affected by cyberbullying (perpetrators and victims), a relationship exists between lower levels of self-esteem and cyberbullying risks. The role of parental control represents a good opportunity for the subjects in preventing aggressive behaviour. Their study underlines the importance to design and realize specific didactical programs to prevent aggressive behaviour, and to increase parental awareness about cyberbullying risk.

Park, S., Na, E. and Kim, E. (2014) in their research looked into the relationship between levels of online activities and cyberbullying behavior, and the moderating impact of netiquette taking into account parents, age, gender and location. The data was gathered through a face-to-face survey with 12-15 years old adolescents on a nationally representative sample (1,200) from South Korea. Findings revealed that those who frequently use the Internet are more likely to engage in, become victims of and witness cyberbullying behavior. Studying online netiquette, and communication time with parents on the one hand were negatively correlated to cyberbullying behavior. Also, it was discovered that cyberbullying due to its uniqueness as an online interaction is more pervasive with a longer-lasting impact compared to face-to-face bullying. The researchers underscored the need to understand more broadly the context of online activities and how adolescents perceive what is acceptable in the online interactions. The study

recommended more proactive methods and mechanisms to mitigate effects of unfavorable online behavior and promote awareness about negative consequences of cyberbullying and other destructive social interactions.

Through experimental methods, the studies of Pieschel, et al. (2013) revealed that power imbalance in terms of perceived popularity is relevant for the affective, cognitive, and behavioral experience of cyberbullying. Their study also showed that cyberbullying by a popular bully is more distressing than cyberbullying by an unpopular bully. Their second study showed that factors unique to cyberbullying are also relevant for the experience of cyberbullying, namely the media and the type of bullying. These types of bullying are related to different types of coping strategies.

The research of Reio and Ledesma (2016) focused on the emotional consequences of cyberbullying among children and adolescents. The authors clarified the definition of cyberbullying and discussed the three theories namely Aizen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, and Andersson and Pearson's (1999) "tit-for-tat" theory. Their study presented intervention strategies to mitigate harm.

Based on the integration of the general aggression model and the social-cognitive model of moral identity, the study of Wang, et al. (2017) investigated (a) the mediating role of moral disengagement in the relation between trait anger and cyberbullying, and (b) the moderating role of moral identity in the direct and indirect relations between trait anger and cyberbullying. The model was examined with 464 Chinese young adults. Participants filled out questionnaires regarding trait anger, cyberbullying, moral disengagement, and moral identity. After gender and age were

controlled, trait anger was significantly and positively associated with cyberbullying. Mediation analysis revealed that moral disengagement partially mediated the relation between trait anger and cyberbullying. Moderated mediation analysis further indicated that the direct and indirect relations between trait anger and cyberbullying were moderated by moral identity. The direct and indirect effects of trait anger on cyberbullying became non-significant for high moral identity individuals.

Ybarra, et al. (2012) conducted a two split-form survey online among 6–17 year olds (N=1,200 each) to inform recommendations for cyberbullying measurement. Measures that use the word 'bully' result in prevalence rates similar to each other whether or not a definition is included, whereas measures not using the word 'bully' are similar to each other whether or not a definition is included. A behavioral list of bullying experiences without either a definition or the word 'bully' resulted in higher prevalence rates and likely measures experiences that are beyond the definition of 'bullying'. Follow-up questions determining the differential power, repetition, and bullying over time were used to examine misclassification. The measure using a definition but not the word 'bully' appeared to have the highest rate of false positives and, therefore, the highest rate of misclassification. Across two studies, an average of 25% reported being bullied at least monthly in person compared with an average of 10% bullied online, 7% via telephone (cell or landline), and 8% via text messaging.

Yen, et al. (2014) used a huge sample ($N = 1,893$) of secondary school students in Hongkong. Their study examined gender differences in mean levels of traditional school bullying (i.e., physical and verbal forms of

bullying, and extortion and exclusion) and cyberbullying (i.e., overt and relational aggression) behaviors, and psychosocial characteristics (i.e., self-efficacy, empathy, prosocial behavior, family bonding, perception of a harmonious school, sense of belonging in school, and positive school experiences and involvement). The differential role of psychosocial characteristics in types of bullying perpetration was also explored. Findings indicated that the perpetrations of traditional school bullying and cyberbullying behaviors are positively correlated, and male adolescents reported higher levels of bullying perpetration than female adolescents. Multivariate findings revealed that, to some extent, male and female adolescents shared a similar set of psychosocial risk factors of bullying perpetration, especially in the perpetration of traditional school bullying.

Noticeably, in the review of related literature, those that are within the reach of the researcher, the Socio-psychological has been the most dominant Tradition of Communication Theory leaving scholarly discourses within Cybernetics, Critical, Phenomenological, Socio-cultural, Rhetorical and Semiotic traditions of communication the under utilized frameworks. For this current investigation, the researcher attempted to add to the limited number of studies on cyberbullying framed through the Semiotic Tradition of Communication as one of the muted Communication Traditions.

This study has given voice to the young digital natives as they revealed their important views about their participation or non-participation in cyberbullying, the associations, representations and meanings they attach to certain elements in the cyberspace communication hence resulting in their non-participation or participation to this online communicative practice.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The narratives of the participants were subjected to an in-depth analysis in order to achieve a clear understanding of the participant's individual views. A qualitative paradigm was employed in this study since the focus is on the exploration of meanings, interpretations and processes of human online social interactions. Specifically, since this study is grounded on the Semiotic Communication Tradition Theory, it particularly made use of Peirce's Sign Theory or Semiotic as a lens in examining the gathered data.

Participants and Environment

This study was conducted among grades 11 and 12, senior high school students who were 16-17 years old and are considered to be digital natives. Digital natives refer to those young people who are highly comfortable using communication technologies and have been actively and frequently participating in virtual interactions for at least two years. These young digital natives are students from a private academic institution in Cebu City. Eleven young people were interviewed and engaged in in-depth conversations regarding their thoughts on cyberbullying as a communicative act; what they associate cyberspace and cyberbullying with and how these representations mediate their act of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

These young individuals should have been directly or indirectly involved (either as participants or readers of the *tweet* respectively) with the communication phenomenon on twitter that went viral in December, 2017

among senior high school students and became a controversial topic among the academic institution's community. To protect the real identities of the eleven participants, these fictitious names were assigned to them: *Shyna, Ana, Mitsy, Karleen, Gio, Susan, PJ, Thomas, Hanz, Leslie and Amie*.

Data Gathering

For ethical purposes, letters of consent were given to the research participants for them to understand clearly the research objectives and the data gathering procedure and for the researcher to be assured of the students' sincere cooperation towards the inquiry. Also, permissions from the respective school director and the teacher concerned were sought before the researcher engaged the participants in a semi-structured interview and conversations.

Conversations with these young digital natives were conducted and recorded in order to explore the meanings, descriptions, and interpretations of the twitter encounter and the intersubjective mediations of their non-participation or participation in cyberbullying. A semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to probe interesting and novel responses that were communicated in the course of the researcher-participant dialogue hence resulted in gathering richer data.

The Data

The Twitter Encounter Context

In December 2017, a *tweet* went viral among senior high school students of an academic institution in Cebu City. This was a *suggestive tweet* that posted a “screenshot” of a portion of a conversation between a student and a teacher. This tweet shows a senior high school student asking the teacher if she could be given permission to be absent from a school activity due to the demise of her grandmother. The teacher however appeared to deny her of the request. Other senior high school students then started to post mostly negative comments about the teacher with explicit mentions of the teacher’s perceived “unlikely” behaviors in class and in relating with students. The conversations went viral as a number of students also posted messages of resentment towards the teacher concerned resulting in cases of cyberbullying wherein the teacher became the target.

Reduced Transcriptions

Participant 1. Shyna

What did you see in the situation?

The thing is both parties really need to like understand both sides because as you can see like the act of tweeting itself is very subjective and like tweeting is very direct and so do the direct thoughts of a person so like you really need to understand the side of the twitter and of course the one being attacked...

What about the comments, what can you say about the content of the tweet and the content of the comments?

It's expected because you know it's a teenager so teenagers you know, we're carefree and we'd say whatever we want and stuff and not really caring about what they think because I think in that tweet, the twitter was in my perspective, she was looking for people to side on her so that more people

would support her and yes I agree with what she was saying and you can see like in the comments were like a lot more stuff being said and you can see that a girl was really getting a lot of people on her side.

What were those things being said for example?

I mean it's definitely offensive but what do you expect? You know...

What do you mean by saying, what do you expect?

It was a sensitive topic... 'cause of course it was the death of a loved one and that is very very sensitive especially for someone who's coming to adolescence. We need people who understand what we're feeling. I really do understand what she's going through but I think she got it a little too far with tweeting and stuff.

So what was offensive with the comments?

You can see it's directed to someone and you can see it's actually meant to offend someone because you know it has like screenshots. It was like a lot of stuff you wouldn't want to see yourself. I didn't really look in depth into what really was said but I know it was pretty offensive I can tell from the reactions of the media towards it.

When you were reading what was going on in your mind?

It's a typical teen drama between a teacher and a student and of course it gets pretty normal. The thing about tweeting especially teenagers tweet is that, we're not afraid to be direct. It's something like *directing* to a person without actually mentioning anything, so a lot of us do that a lot especially when we are having problems with a teacher or with a fellow classmate and I guess I'm just really used to seeing things like that but I didn't think it would go that far as in mentioning teacher and mentioning the stuff that happened and what the pictures contained, the screenshots.

So there was a mention of the teacher... do you think that was also what made it offensive?

Yeah, of course...

What can you say about the act of tweeting for that situation?

Twitter for us is like a freedom wall because what I notice is that when we tweet we don't have filter. We don't try to hide something like we just go on unlike facebook where there's a lot of people and we're kind of hesitant to say or tweet something I mean post something because of course it has our parents but twitter is more on just a freedom wall, it has your friends in it. It has people that support you or people that have the same side of you. In twitter you can find friends, you can find a lot of people who will agree to what you stand for.

So, it's a freedom wall regardless of being already offensive to other people?

Yes . It's pretty much...

So what can you say about tweeting about someone online. Commenting against someone online?

For sure, it's not right. It's something very explicit. It's something that is like over the line offensive because it's online and what you put online you can't...It 's just there even if you delete the tweet people would know you actually tweeted it. You know it's in the histories, it's in the ainet files, it's in everything. So what you said once will be taken against you sooner or later no matter how long.

It is a form of cyberbullying because it is involving everyone. It's involving not only between the school not only between the classmates. It's involving everyone in the world because everyone can actually see it. There's an audience and one click, one search and you can find everything.

So what did you do after reading, did you also comment?

Oh no, I did not. I preferred not to get anything in. I mean, I'm usually not that kind of person who would try to...I mean I would speak up about something for sure if I'm really... it it's something that really strikes me or something that is really sensitive to me, I would definitely speak up but for that I didn't really want to be out there because I don't know the whole story of course. We're just bystanders. We're just there to see what's happening but we don't actually know what is happening. We only see like the tip of the iceberg.

Can you also say that you didn't want to be in that offensive thread...?

Definitely. I mean no one would want to be offensive to someone but I guess if it's to really defend someone, you're gonna have to really, if that's what it means to be with a friend or support a friend then definitely, I would do that but I don't know the person. We're just bystanders so I wouldn't know what to say because I don't really know the whole story.

So, you said awhile ago that a lot of people can read and stuff like that...and you know it was already offensive so what made you not comment in the tweet?

It was disrespecting authority for sure and you know authorities will always be higher and I wouldn't mind speaking out if I knew what really happened but I wouldn't want to. I mean if it's in certain situations, I would speak up against authority but I guess for that, I wouldn't disrespect, I wouldn't go that far 'cause I also think that the subject also had his you know his kind of rationale as to why he chose to make that decision for the student and I guess that's kind of the main reason why I didn't really get into it. And we're like following the bandwagon because everyone is doing that, everyone is tweeting against that someone, then you're just following them for the sake of it.

Participant 2. Ana

So what can you say about the content of the tweet and the comments?

There's no sense of having those tweets because I think that both parties are being put to shame especially the victim also for the one who tweeted first, the girl who was making rants about the victim. And I think that her ranting on twitter doesn't bring any good to her because she is just twitting on twitter so her rants will only be until twitter. It will not reach anywhere. She is just humiliating someone who may not really care about her so like there's no point really.

So, you're saying that the twitter situation was a form of shaming or bullying?

Yes, I think that it's shameful for the subject because obviously the girl tweeted a screen shot of their conversation and the subject was not properly aware about the tweet. It's very inappropriate for the subject because he was simply being put to shame. Even like comments from other people, replies and everything I've read them... I follow other grade 12 students from the university and I've seen them commenting also and I think it's very inappropriate because they are talking about a person who has proven already himself. They can't say that they have the right to speak for themselves because, you know if you have the right then you won't talk bad about a person and if you have the right, what you really have to say is only good. If you're talking bad that means that you are not using your right correctly.

It's not okay to put someone to shame, like anyone to shame even though like you have grudges on that person, personal stuff should stay personal. It's not okay because they do not have the right...

What went on in your mind when you were reading?

"I didn't comment. I think because I've gone through those stuff already. I find it immature. When I was still in junior high school I've been a bully and I was also bullied in social media. I've experienced those stuff and I think that now, I have realized. I have come to a realization that it's not good. It doesn't make any sense, it won't do any good to anyone really.

What can you say of someone who cyberbullies others?

I think cyberbullying is a sign of disrespect because even 'though you're holding grudges, you can't just put anyone to shame. You're just like disrespecting him or her because that will stay in social media, once in social media, that will always be there even though you already erase it. Many people have seen it, many people will have copies and you know it will put that person, it may give him fears. It's a sign of disrespect and it's cyberbullying.

Participant 3. Mitsy

What have you seen in the situation?

So, first it was okay. Actually, the tweet was sent by my friend to me on a messenger and then when I looked at the tweet, I read the screenshot she sent me. So, at first my initial reaction was that I felt that what happened was not right because first of all, he is a teacher and he was just doing his job. And then I didn't really see anything wrong with what the teacher replied to the student.

What if the person tweeted about was not a teacher?

Even if he was not a teacher, he is still human. So how would you feel if it was done to you on twitter? It doesn't feel good because it's a form of bullying. He didn't even expect that it would happen to him. As I said again he was just doing his job as a teacher but even if he was not a teacher, he still didn't deserve what was told about him online.

From what I remember, the girl was asking the teacher if she could be absent or be excused from a school activity because her grandmother passed away and there were some favors she asked from the teacher, for instance if she could take it (an activity) next year and hoped that she would still earn a grade but I think that what the student did was a formal thing to do. As a student, I was taught that if there are important matters we want to communicate to our teachers, we should be formal in our approach like send a letter through emails for instance. And I think it would have been better if she did not put expressions of emotions such as "hihi" in her private message. I did not approve of the manner she asked for permission. It was too informal. So, the teacher also replied in a brief manner, denying her of her request and I didn't really see anything wrong with him being direct.

Actually, there should have been a more proper way...or maybe if we look at the girl's side probably she was in a hurry but I think the fastest way for her was to send a letter through email that she needed to travel due to her grandmother's death. Based on what I've seen it was just communicated through a messenger.

If you look at it from a social media point of view, it is not appropriate to communicate very important matters on social media. Again, the best thing was to ask for the teacher's email address and send the communication through email because after all, you are communicating to a teacher.

What can you say about the comments to the tweets?

There were positive and negative comments in the tweets. A number of those who tweeted sided on the one who tweeted or the student including those who were not directly involved in the issue. There were negative comments about the teacher. I was glad to see however that there were those who also defended the teacher and commented that these things should not have been posted online.

I remember one comment by someone I don't know. I think he was a batch mate of the one who tweeted. He also posted a screenshot of his conversation with the teacher that could be misinterpreted as something "cheeky" or "flirty" but I think the one who messaged first was the student and the teacher only replied and I think the manner he replied was the usual way the teacher expresses himself and I didn't see any malice with what and how he said things. I remember that other students also mentioned the teacher's inadequacies in class...that the teacher insults students... yeah that's what I remember.

What was going on in your mind when you were reading the tweet and it's comments?

Actually, I was mad reading their posts. If I were in the teacher's place, I would really get hurt even if I wasn't in his place, I was really hurt because I'm also human and even if you think he made mistakes, he doesn't deserve that kind of publicity. Again I think he was just doing his job as a teacher and I didn't see anything wrong with what he did. Just because you didn't get what you want, you should already post about it or someone online. It's a form of cyberbullying and it only shows what kind of person you are. It's like, I don't mean to insult the person (the one who tweeted) but I think she is like a brat who threw a tantrum because she didn't get what she wanted and so she posted things online to seek for sympathizers, something like that. It was immature of her to post online. She then showed and announced to her friends online what her teacher did and expectedly, the friends sided on her.

What can you say about the act of tweeting for that situation?

I think it was a very immature act because there are certainly other ways to express how you feel. I just don't understand why she chose that manner like she had time to post about it on twitter when she could have reported to her parents what her teacher did or said. She should have just complied with what the school required from her.

What are your views about cyberbullying?

Social media and bullying if put together is cyberbullying. What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person. You're connecting, communicating and it becomes cyberbullying when there's miscommunication. I mean communicating in a wrong way.

If you bully a student in school at least not everybody knows about it unlike what was done. She posted it online for everybody to see and it didn't just include the school, it also included everybody because everybody saw the post even those from other schools so it became a double publicity. The audience was doubled.

Cyberbullying is somehow like I don't really have the word to describe it but I think that cyberbullying is form of humiliation. He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online.

Humans deserve respect and one doesn't have the right to judge someone by their mistakes. No one is perfect, right? Everybody has their flaws, nobody is perfect and we should all respect that because we are not all alike. We have our differences and we should respect each other for that.

Why do you think the students participated in the cyberbullying situation?

I don't know, maybe there are different factors why they cyberbully or do the wrong things. Probably, like what I said earlier, they just hate not getting what they want maybe they want to get attention from it or maybe it just gives them joy to do such things even if they know they're already hurting other people's feelings. Maybe it makes them happy to hurt others or maybe they don't know that they are already hurting others.

Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want but actually, it should not be used to hurt others. Also, you need to think of your own dignity or your own image first before you post not only for the other people but also for yourself.

Participant 4. Karleen

What did you see in the situation?

What I saw was that when the student asked for permission from the teacher, the teacher's response was a bit like so abrupt in a way, like he was mean in such a way if you misunderstand him and then maybe the student was also surprised of his answer so she decided to tweet about it or something.

What can you say about the content of the tweet and its comments?

What I saw was only a part of the conversation they had...not really the whole conversation and then only a part where the teacher's chat was kinda mean in a way... She asked for permission that she won't be able to attend a certain school event then the teacher responded that she can't be absent...The teacher did not allow her since it was an important event where the students were all required to attend.

I can say that she was a bit a wrong since she only showed a part of the conversation and then people will react only to what they see so it was wrong for her. It was wrong for her to not show the whole conversation.

What can you say about the comments of the tweet?

A lot of people agreed on the tweet like and then some secrets were disclosed. I mean everyone's ill feelings towards the teacher that were bottled up were tweeted and the tweet was somehow boosted since others opened up on their feelings against the teacher.

Examples were mostly about the teacher's negative actions in classes like when we were in grade 11. I mean the teacher was teaching research and then he didn't teach it properly. He would give unclear instructions and then he would always come to class late and then he was choosy with his students.

It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher. Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him and he didn't know about what was going on and then he just knew about it through others who told him that there was something that happened on twitter where he was the topic.

What if the one being talked about was not a teacher?

Even if he was not my teacher, still the same because for example in that situation, he was not aware of it and it's not good to judge based on one person's perspective so it's better if you won't talk about things in public. Why don't you like talk about it in person or address it to the person privately.

What was going on in your mind when you were reading the tweets?

I was shocked, at the same time I agreed to some of the comments and I was also intrigued with the other comments and then after thinking about those things I thought that the student shouldn't have done it because it was too public and it's not good because others do not know about it but still commented negative things. It was better to talk about it privately.

Why do you think they participated in that tweet?

They want to somewhat prove. They just want to ruin the person because I experienced it before. I felt disrespected because she tweeted something about me online, something which I didn't do. And so many asked me about it what were said were true or not or something. You're not even sure of what you're tweeting about, some are just plain imagination and then you tweet about them.

What did you do after reading the tweet and its comments?

I did not comment because when I saw the tweet, I didn't want to participate because I didn't want to choose sides. The following day, when things became clearer to me, I did not side on anyone because I thought that both have a point.

Cyberbullying is...

Cyberbullying is when you post your opinion about someone or even a picture of yourself and you send it to your friends and they gossip about it. That's a form of cyberbullying when you start to bash someone, when you react to it negatively. If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings.

Probably she just opened up. I forgot the caption but the people retweeted, they commented. The teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying.

Participant 5. Gio

What did you see in the situation?

So basically in that situation, someone or a friend of mine tweeted about the conversation she had with our teacher then there were many who commented and I also commented. The student said something about her flying to Japan because of her grandma's death and asked if she could be absent and the teacher said something that triggered the situation.

What can you say about the content of the tweet and its comments?

I'd say that what was known was more of my friend's side and we overlooked the side of the teacher, that it was already kind of offensive.

I think people were not thinking about what they were tweeting. They did not think about the perspective of our teacher.

There were many negative rants...bad words were said. There were also comments however which defended our teacher.

There was a twitter fight. There were comments which said that a case should be filed against the teacher and those who defended the teacher said that the side of the teacher must also be considered because they know the teacher and they believe he is not as bad as publicized and others said that the teacher was really inconsiderate.

What was going on in your mind when you were reading the tweets?

I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments.

What made you participate in the tweeting situation?

I participated because I also wanted to defend my friend but after I processed things I realized that I should have also considered my teacher's side and that I should have also kept to myself my comments.

After thinking things over, I thought that it would have been better for my friend to do a PM [Private Message] so that not many would have been involved to the point that it became chaotic. So, instead of saying things in public, you could have shared your thoughts to a few trusted individuals so as not to complicate things.

Can you say it was a form of cyberbullying?

It was a form of cyberbullying because an individual was bashed. The situation sort of destroyed the character of the teacher because of the bashing. It's disrespecting the morality of a person. So if you decide to tweet about someone, it's better not to mention a name or you can always PM the person concerned.

Participant 6. Susan

What did you see in the situation?

The situation was... Can I share the story? The girl needed to fly to Japan due to her grandmother's death and she asked permission from the teacher but was denied of her request so she tweeted about it. She then tweeted very negative comments and then she shared her conversation with the teacher in twitter. However, the teacher had other statements which were not shared like uhm the teacher said "It's ok, nothing to worry about". She was like, encouraged by the teacher that she doesn't have to worry but she sort of deleted the part of their conversation.

What did you do after reading the tweets?

I did not retweet. I just read. It was a wrong thing to do. She should not have tweeted about it. It was wrong because she was tweeting about our teacher, our coordinator. I think, people now, especially millenials my age are too vocal. And in that situation because the girl was popular, many were able to read the tweet and her screenshot. And those who retweeted should not have at all retweeted. They just destroyed the reputation of the teacher.

She had many friends and expectedly they supported her. And those other students who did not know the whole story they also commented and they sided with the girl even if they didn't know the whole story.

One student said, that yes, he says that "I'm not your chatmate, I'm your teacher" but there were times the he chatted with the male students. A screenshot of these conversations between the teacher and the male student was also posted. And I think it was wrong for the students to post negative things online about the teacher because what if you were the teacher and your students will do such things to you. It doesn't feel good. It's cyberbullying and any kind of cyberbullying is wrong. No matter what your status is, no one should talk bad things about you. We always have to be positive and be kind to people because you will never know if that person will be the one to help you in the future.

It was inappropriate because I think cyberbullying is bad in itself. It's really bad. What if the one you are bullying has a mental illness? Cyberbullying can cause depression on the victims. There's a negative impact. I was also bullied before and I was depressed. Good thing, I had friends who encouraged me not to mind them.

I never commented I have an experience with him, with the teacher. He helped me before when I was in grade 11. I made a mistake by spreading a

rumor about someone who transcribed our research from English into Tagalog. When the teacher heard about it, he called my attention and advised me to be tactful, that I shouldn't be tactless, that I shouldn't be gossiping and spread rumors and I've learned that lesson from him.

What can you say about tweeting about the situation?

Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person. You shouldn't, I mean you can't mention any name or name drop, something like that.

Maybe I can relate because I'm also like them... I let out frustrations. Yeah, but I think when you do it, that's all you get, let out frustrations and that's it. You don't gain anything out of it.

What can you say about cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying makes people feel superior about themselves. I want to be an advocate against cyberbullying. I want to redefine cyberbullying. They say that if you are bullied, you are weak. For me, it's not like that. The one who bullies is the one who is weak because they are insecure so they seek for sympathizers to ally with them. Cyberbullying is weakness. They bully because they want attention.

Participant 7. PJ

What did you see in the situation?

At first, I saw a student complaining about an unethical act of a teacher in terms of how he... At first, I was really with this student at that moment... although it was a double-edged sword actually. It was wrong also for the student because you see when you ask permission especially if it involves academic, you should be following some legal processes or a technical process like sign letters for example which the teacher has a point.. but the big chunk of it was really how the teacher responded to that student... it was really quite obscene and insensitive to reply that way considering the situation she was in at that moment...

What can you say about the act of twitting about the situation?

Not exactly fine because the thing about the internet is that people can have their own interpretations. Although you can understand where the student is coming from but you can't blame how the social media can sensationalize the message and sometimes mislead people what is actually or what is actually the message.

What can you say about the contents of the tweet and its comments?

It was really quite reactive considering how they, how the screenshots were just one sided, although if you try to weigh things, both parties really had mistakes but the thing about it is that the message that was conveyed is that the student really hated the teacher for what he has done. If you try to look at

it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance... the line is blurry between those things and you just can't categorize that thing in one context because it can be in every context, it depends on how you look at it.

What do you mean by being reactive?

It's positive in a way that people become responsive because when people doesn't really react to it like there's something wrong with the tweet basically, there's something wrong with the message because it's both antagonizing that person you're actually tweeting about but it's also about expressing one's grievance at some point, like people might have the same experience and then people react to it and like for example the hashtag "me too" and sympathize. I think even if people say that it's a bad thing, people just react to it and for me it's actually a good thing because people become responsible when they become reactive.

What can you say about the comments?

Yeah sure, I remember specific comments. The other obscene posts of that teacher also went out so like how he treats students and there's a screen shot of how he treats his male students... I know what they are trying to say but it's quite antagonizing. They didn't put it in the right context, although they had the right intention but they didn't put it in the right context...

I think if you really want to tweet about someone online I mean, at the very least you can just hide your identity... by virtue of the right, the freedom of expression, the least you can do is just make that someone anonymous. You can express your grievance sure like a general, a universal statement... the wrong thing, the wrong situation comes in when you put the name of the person and let the whole world interpret what your context is.

What did you do after reading the tweets?

I participated but I contextualized it in a sense that the way he responded to the message was inappropriate. I didn't say that he's bad, altogether, it's just that I put it in a context, I placed it in a context that his act on his response to the student is not appropriate, you can say a more, you can say a better response other than that... I admit that it could be one side of the story but still that chunk, that even that one dialogue it already speaks a lot of what it means... an objective basis because that's what he told us, that's what he told that student, therefore you judge him based on that certain basis only. It becomes cyberbullying when you judge him beyond that certain basis.

I don't know if it's part of confidentiality, but I know the whole story. I asked the whole convo so that's why I can put myself in the shoes of those who tweeted, who retweeted.

What to you is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is more on destroying a person, destroying that is out of context and most of the time it is subjective and really ad hominem to the point that what you are saying are not actually happening because like if you can have

social media to critique someone...I don't really get why people can't get criticisms sometimes even 'though how objective they are. Cyberbullying has this dynamics... that you can already consider it as cyberbullying if it's not factual already, if its out of the context, it's not objective, the words that are used are too much of what it's supposed to be and the message, the words that are being used are not conveying the right message that you wanted to convey.

Participant 8. Thomas

What did you see in the situation?

The situation itself, if you look at it, it's a bit like in away rude especially for our adviser but I cannot also blame the one who posted it in a sense that the teacher was also somewhat disrespectful in the way he replied. I would understand the point of the student that she felt disrespected because she asked if she could be excused from a school activity but on the otherhand, the manner of asking through chat was also unprofessional. But even so, I think she asked permission calmly but our teacher gave her that reply... so I think she didn't expect that kind of very straightforward response from the teacher.

What can you say about the content of the tweet and its comments?

Some of the comments, retweets actually made sense while others were plain rude like just for the sake of commenting which only added to the tension or just to release anger towards our adviser, to our teacher...50/50. Some had really good points. They were mature in their take but again others were plain rude and they kept on adding more comments which were already out of context, things which were already too personal.

Some co tweets mentioned about the teacher's other offenses like his always being late, and that he does not ask permission if he would not report to class and he would require projects on the 11th hour wherein students are not given ample time to prepare and he would expect a lot from his students.

What was going on in your mind when you were reading the tweet?

When I was reading the tweet, I actually got mad because the student really took time to ask for the teacher's permission but the teacher just told her to stop crying because you can't do anything about the situation anymore. He could have given the student a time to grieve especially that it's the death of a family member. So, that's the picture I saw in the viral tweet based on how the teacher responded to the student.

What can you say about the act of tweeting about the situation?

As a millennial, we tend to express a lot especially on twitter and we tend to think that we are protected by the screen so we feel that we can say anything we want to say even if they are wrong. As to that particular tweet however, the student just showed that the teacher was disrespectful but she could not have

tweeted about it and could have enclosed the conversation within a specific group among close friends. But I think she tweeted about it because she presumed that many other students do not like the teacher and she wanted for others to validate what she feels towards the teacher. However, it would have been more mature if she did not use twitter in expressing her disappointment. It would have been better if she confided with her parents or with close friends and not on social media.

Social Media as a platform...

What's good about social media is it helps us blow off steam. In social media we can release our anger, our hatred, our heavy feeling so in that sense if you tweet like personally I tweet a lot about how I feel even if sometimes it's for a specific person, it's in a way relieving but of course you have to have limitations especially if you talk about another person. You should be able to handle it maturely. It would have been acceptable if she only talked about her feeling of disappointment but not explicitly referring to a specific person and telling the whole world about it. This can destroy a person's character and in that tweet other strands like ABM and STEM already got involved.

What did you do after reading the tweet and its comments?

I didn't co tweet but I tweeted. Honestly at first, I reacted negatively towards the teacher. Perhaps, I was shocked with the teacher's unprofessional response so I tweeted in my own timeline. Afterwards, I realized that I should not be participating in that issue.

What for you is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying in a sense is destroying a person's dignity. In that situation students from other stands were able to judge the teacher based solely on that tweet. That tweet creates a bad picture of the teacher, that he is disrespectful. In a sense, it's a form of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is when you destroy someone or say hurtful or negative things to a person through social media whether it's true or not because if it's true then what is that to you? But if its false then the impact is worse because you're spreading something not true about a person on social media. And in this generation, whatever you post in social media could spread rapidly even if it's a hoax. In that tweet, the character of the person was gravely destroyed.

Participant 9. Hanz

What did you see in the situation?

What I saw on twitter was a screenshot of the conversation of a fellow Humms student and a teacher wherein the student asked permission from the teacher that she cannot join the school activity because her grandmother died so she had to travel to Japan. The first time I read the conversation was that I think it was mean for the teacher to deny her of her request bluntly. It was a very

direct answer. At that time, I still didn't know the whole story so my initial reaction was that I found the teacher mean.

What can you say about the content of the tweet and its comments?

Most of the students' comments about the teacher were negative and some students went overboard...for example, they pointed out the bad side of the teacher, his being mean. They criticized the teacher.

What was going on in your mind when you were reading the tweets?

The moment I saw the tweet, the first thing that came to my mind because of all the negative comments I read, I was kind of brainwashed so I got carried away. I agreed that the teacher was rude, like that and he was not able to handle the student properly. That was the first thing that came to my mind so I sided with the student.

Act of tweeting about the situation...

For me, tweeting about the situation was a careless move because first of all the conversation between the teacher and the student was private so for you to share it especially on twitter wherein so many people can view so it was a careless act. She was not thinking about the effect of what she did.

After reading the tweet...

After reading the tweet, I also commented. I also expressed my disappointment like the others because I also got carried away and I was shocked with what I read in the tweet. Almost all students gave negative comments so my brain sort of sided with the majority especially that I didn't know the whole story yet.

Like the rest, I also bullied. The teacher didn't know anything about what's happening in twitter like I said earlier, it was supposed to be a private conversation between him and the student but it was shared. I could have been more thoughtful before giving comments. I should have known the whole story first.

Twitter for me now is already toxic like once you express your opinion it will always have a reaction and it could start conflicts. A lot of people are fighting in twitter. Cyberbullying can also start like people gossip and talk about others online.

Cyberbullying is...

Cyberbullying is when you ruin the reputation of someone through the use of social media like when you hurt them through tweets, through statuses, through messages, through words. It's a sign of disrespect because if you are really angry towards a person you can always approach him and not hit on

that person online. One needs to really think first before saying anything online, think of the outcomes of one's actions.

After that incident, I now think first before I react to a tweet. I now try to think if what I'm about to say is right or not.

Participant 10. Leslie

What did you see in the situation?

In the tweets, I just saw students ranting about a particular teacher whom we've had and this teacher has caused a lot of problems for us as students. The tweets were simply complaints for the experiences they had about the teacher, observations they have about him.

What can you say about the tweet and its comments?

Well, they were mostly complaints or observations like for example there was this one student.. a lot of them were negative like for example there was this one tweet that stated that this teacher is really irresponsible because he always arrives to class late and he likes bossing the students around and likes insulting them and I've seen my classmates crying because of him, just his behavior.

Honestly, I agreed with them because I also felt what they felt and I've also experienced what they've experienced what they shared in twitter because we all know that twitter is sort of a venting place for students like us...especially when... it's okay when not mentioning names I suppose when it's not explicitly saying anything.. The name was mentioned, and chats were actually posted, screenshots of the teacher...

What makes it not okay is when people start going overboard with criticism and the hate and people are jumping into it and becomes kind of like a sort of trend as you can see and some people don't even mean what they say, they just, they just go along with it so, but the good thing about tweeting about these sort of things is, it gives people awareness, it gives them some background info on what the students are going through because I've had personal experience, sometimes it really feels like the teacher is bullying us so and he's a teacher so we can't really retaliate much we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to twitter and rant about their frustrations. It's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything.

What did you do after reading the tweets?

Yeah, I tweeted once but I didn't mention a name. It was a conversation that we heard in the classroom about the teacher, I just said, teacher x, then their conversation. That's just what I did but not in the thread of the tweet. They were saying everything that I wanted to say, they were saying, already saying most of the things that I felt and thought about the teacher. I felt like it was already too much and I've already said what I wanted to say, I didn't want to

personally attack the teacher, I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself so that's why I didn't participate cause I didn't want to attack him personally...they were going so overboard and I just wanted his behavior to change. That's all that I want.

Was the situation a form of cyberbullying? Cyberbullying is...

I guess it's more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying because the students didn't really know who to go to and who to tell their issues and I guess they were outraged considering the issue behind it so I guess it was really just that, a venting place. They were angered so they went there and posted whatever which was bad but I can't call it cyberbullying it was like an indirect thing.

Cyberbullying is when people post things in social media that explicitly mention a particular person. Cyberbullying is intrusive... of course it's hurtful... it's emotionally abusive.

It's a sign of repressed emotions on the part of the cyberbully because maybe they are projecting their own emotions into other people or maybe they are projecting what they feel and it was suppressed so they...

What can you say about tweeting about others online?

Twitter really is used as a platform, though it's brought a lot of good things, it has it's bad effects like, like that tweet issue in December. It really went big and a part of me actually liked that it was given awareness, that issue but it was also out of control. Since the original tweet was a screen shot of everything that went on. Of course students would naturally feel outraged reading it but people should have taken into consideration that it was just one side of the story.

Twitter as a platform for that issue was actually really toxic because in truth students should just confront him or talk to the administration or anyone in school about the problem. It's just that I suppose the students were scared or anxious about doing that so instead they turned to twitter, so it's a bad mechanism, coping mechanism for the things they've been through. It's what I do sometimes. Yeah, I'm always careful in social media, I don't really attack the person. I just attack the concepts.

Participant 11.Amie

What did you see in the situation?

I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media. Perhaps she felt that social media was a great outlet because people would be able to even support her arguments especially people who didn't know the real story so maybe it becoming viral was in her favor.

What can you say about the content of the tweet and the comments?

When placed out of context, the content of the tweet seemed very alarming, it seemed like insensitive, yes.

Many of them were alarmed because they didn't expect that coming from a teacher and many of them, some of them even supported the argument citing other instances of the teacher acting in a certain manner in another situation like how he teaches, how he communicates with his students. Sometimes, they can be very personal... some personal things about a certain student that the rest of the class doesn't know about... they were mentioned, maybe almost a form of attack... it can be taken as derogatory.

What was going on in your mind while you were reading the tweets?

I was intrigued and at the same time I couldn't help but I felt strongly about the content of the tweet because I knew the person and I knew the situation and maybe I didn't know the whole story so of course I felt my favor was for the student.

I don't think it was the most appropriate thing especially since the names could be seen in the picture and I didn't think it was appropriate but perhaps in the heat of the moment that's the only way that she felt she could gain support.

What can you say about tweeting about the situation?

It's a platform that people look to when they wish to... because social media is like, there's a screen, you can't really tell the consequences of your actions or you can't really tell immediate responses from the person you are tweeting about so it can almost feel safer compared to personal interactions. It's not ok because there was no complete background on the entire situation and people only see one side of the situation so sometimes they join and they put out some more negative comments about another person without actually knowing the whole story.

What did you do after reading?

I retweeted, I liked the tweet and I talked about it to my friends and it was a big issue so many conversations happened. I tweeted in favor of the student, I called out the teacher for some other things that I felt he was lacking in or he was doing wrong.

Was it a form of cyberbullying? Why? Why not?

It was cyberbullying because the person on the other hand didn't have the chance to defend himself, didn't even know what was going on. I joined because there were instances when I also felt, or I was also caught up by my emotions. You have no time to think about things, you know it's social media it's, we would have talked to the person face to face... I would have thought about it a lot more but since it's social media then I went ahead.

Social media wasn't around before and now that we have it, it's like, it's opened up, it's a platform to express your emotions maybe to people or to other people, things about ourselves that we don't necessarily want other

people to know about or maybe we do want them to know but we don't want to tell them directly.

Cybebullying is...

Cyberbullying is an attack on another person through using digital means. Cyberbullying could be an attack, could be a defense, could be a negative expression.

Data Analysis Procedure

This research made use of the modified van Kaam method as described by Moustakas (1994) for data analysis, which follows the eight step approach in organizing, scrutinizing, analyzing and synthesizing the data. Afterwhich, the data were further examined using the semiotic frame (sign/signifier-object/signified-interpretation) of Charles Sanders Pierce.

The data gathered went through rigorous methods of transcribing, coding, interpreting and analyzing of themes and trends. To ensure reliability, integrity and accuracy of the data interpretations and analyses, an inter-analyst was recruited to help examine the transcripts. The inter-analyst is a university professor and a researcher who has an experience in qualitative data analysis. The inter-analyst and the researcher compared findings, corrected, validated and confirmed emerging themes.

Step One: Listing and Preliminary Grouping

The data were transcribed verbatim. All words including expressions and word fillers in both the local and English languages used by the participants and recorded by the researcher were transcribed regardless of the relevance of their answers to the questions asked. In other words, all statements were considered to be of the same value and were given

importance since they might have contribution to the whole meaning that the speaker intended to communicate. Those responses, which were expressed in the local tongue were translated into English for the broad readers to understand.

Step Two: Reduction and Elimination

All transcripts were read thoroughly and repeatedly, and the vague answers or those, which did not answer the questions, were then excluded. Expressions and word fillers were also eliminated. Only those statements that have direct bearing on the idea in focus were retained. These statements are referred to as the invariant constituents or also called as the horizons or meaning units. Below are examples of reduced and translated statements about the *cyberspace* and *cyberbullying* in the cyberspace.

Shyna: ...the twitter was in my perspective... she was looking for people to side on her so that more people would support her and yes I agree with what she was saying and you can see like in the comments were like a lot more stuff being said and you can see that a girl was really getting a lot of people on her side... twitter is more of just a freedom wall, it has your friends in it. It has people that support you or people that have the same side of you. In twitter you can find friends, you can find a lot of people who will agree to what you stand for.

Mitsy: Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want but actually, it should not be used to hurt others.

Susan: Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person. You shouldn't, I mean you can't mention any name or name drop, something like that. Maybe I can relate because I'm also like them... I let out frustrations. Yeah, but I think when you do it, that's all you get, let out frustrations and that's it. You don't gain anything out of it.

Thomas: As a millennial, we tend to express a lot especially on twitter and we tend to think that we are protected by the screen so we feel that we can say anything we want to say even if they are wrong... But I think she tweeted about it because she presumed that many other students do not like the teacher and she wanted for others to validate what she feels towards the teacher... What's good about social media is it helps us blow off steam. In social media we can release our anger, our hatred, our heavy feeling so in that sense if you tweet like personally I tweet a lot about how I feel even if sometimes it's for a specific person, it's in a way relieving but of course you have to have limitations especially if you talk about another person.

Leslie: ...we all know that twitter is sort of a venting place for students like us...I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself so that's why I didn't participate cause I didn't want to attack him personally...they were going so overboard and I just wanted his behavior to change. That's all that I want.

Amie: I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media. Perhaps she felt that social media was a great outlet because people would be able to even support her arguments especially people who didn't know the real story so maybe it becoming viral was in her favor... It's a platform that people look to when they wish to... because social media is like, there's a screen, you can't really tell the consequences of your actions or you can't really tell immediate responses from the person you are tweeting about so it can almost feel safer compared to personal interactions... Social media wasn't around before and now that we have it, it's like, it's opened up, it's a platform to express your emotions maybe to people or to other people, things about ourselves that we don't necessarily want other people to know about or maybe we do want them to know but we don't want to tell them directly.

Ana: I think that both parties are being put to shame...especially the victim... he was put to shame and also the girl who tweeted... her ranting doesn't bring any good to her...and I think that she is just humiliating someone...

Mitsy: There were positive and negative comments in the tweets...A number, including those who were not directly involved in the issue sided on the one who tweeted or the student. I was glad to see however that there were those who also defended the teacher and commented that these things should not have been

posted online. It was a form of cyberbullying and it only shows what kind of person you are.

Karleen: I can say that she was a bit wrong since she only showed a part of the conversation and people only reacted to what was seen or heard from her side on twitter... A lot of people agreed on the tweet and some secrets were disclosed...such as their ill feelings towards the teacher... It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher...

Susan: I think it was wrong for the students to post negative things online about the teacher. It doesn't feel good. It's cyberbullying.

PJ: It was really quite reactive...The message was trying to convey that the student really hated the teacher for what he has done. It's cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or merely expressing one's grievance.

Thomas: Some of the comments, retweets actually made sense while others were plain rude like just for the sake of commenting which only added to the tension or just to release anger towards our adviser...things which were too personal...

Step Three: Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

The researcher grouped and *thematized* the invariant constituents and provided classifications and descriptions for each theme.

Step Four: Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation

The researcher double-checked the invariant constituents or elements of cyberspace and cyberbullying for the two groups –those who participated in cyberbullying and those who did not participate, and the themes against each individual transcript to ascertain the presence of recurring themes and if these matched the constituents. This validated the researcher's synthesizing and organizing of ideas.

Step Five: Construction of Individual Textural Description

A description of each participant's views and interpretations on the communication situation based on the transcriptions was done. Providing explanations of the themes in a narrative format were carried out in order to understand better the thoughts or views of the participant. This step focused on "what" the participants' views were.

The following shows **what** each participant saw in the situation; what he/she was thinking while reading the tweets; his/her understanding of the tweeting phenomenon; interpretations about cyberbullying in the tweeting as a signifier to an object signified; hence defining one's act of participation/non-participation in the communication situation:

Participant 1. Shyna

Shyna saw a need for two parties (the students and the teacher) to understand each other's points of view and for the readers to understand the individual point of the two parties involved – "The thing is both parties really need to like understand both sides... you really need to understand the side of the tweeter and of course the one being attacked. " She thought that the tweet and its comments were expected from that of a teenager whom she describes as carefree – "It's expected because you know it's a teenager so teenagers you know, we're carefree and we'd say whatever we want and stuff and not really caring about what they think..." Shyna believed that the tweet was meant to seek support, which indeed gained support from a number of people – " I think in that tweet, in my perspective, she was looking for people to side on her so that more people would support her... and you can see like in the comments were like a lot more stuff being said and you can see that a girl was really getting a lot of people on her side."

While reading the tweets, Shyna perceived what was happening as a usual teenage drama that teenagers exhibit – “It’s a typical teen drama between a teacher and a student and of course it gets pretty normal.” She thought of tweeting as a freedom wall where people especially teens can use to express their frustrations – “Twitter for us is like a freedom wall because what I notice is that when we tweet we don’t have filter. We don’t try to hide something like we just go on unlike facebook where there’s a lot of people and we’re kind of hesitant to say or tweet something I mean post something because of course it has our parents but twitter is more on just a freedom wall, it has your friends in it. It has people that support you or people that have the same side of you. In twitter you can find friends, you can find a lot of people who will agree to what you stand for.... The thing about tweeting especially teenagers tweet is that, we’re not afraid to be direct. It’s something like *directing* to a person without actually mentioning anything, so a lot of us do that a lot especially when we are having problems with a teacher or with a fellow classmate and I guess I’m just really used to seeing things like that...”

She described the comments as absolutely offensive – “...it’s definitely offensive... You can see it’s directed to someone and you can see it’s actually meant to offend someone because you know it has like screenshots. It was like a lot of stuff you wouldn’t want to see yourself... I know it was pretty offensive I can tell from the reactions of the media towards it.”

However she also felt that the tweeting encounter went overboard so Shyna expressed disapproval of the tweeting situation – “I didn’t think it would go that far as in mentioning teacher and mentioning the stuff that happened and what the pictures contained, the screenshots.... For sure, it’s not right. It’s something very explicit. It’s something that is like over the line offensive because it’s online and what you put online you can’t...it’s just there even if you delete the tweet, people would know you actually tweeted it. You know it’s in the histories, it’s in the ainet files, it’s in everything. So what you said once will be taken against you sooner or later no matter how long.”

Shyna considered the tweeting situation as a form of cyberbullying – “It is a form of cyberbullying because it is involving everyone. It’s involving not only between the school, not only between the classmates. It’s involving everyone in the world because everyone can actually see it. There’s an audience and one click, one search and you can find everything.” Cyberbullying for her means disrespecting, in that situation, disrespecting authorities – “...I wouldn’t disrespect, I wouldn’t go that far ‘cause I also think that the subject also had his kind of rationale as to why he chose to make that decision for the student and I guess that’s kind of the main reason why I didn’t really get into it.”

When asked why she did not participate in the tweeting incident, she responded – “...for that I didn’t really want to be out there because I don’t know the whole story of course. We’re just bystanders. We’re just there to see what’s happening but we don’t actually know what is happening. We only see like the tip of the iceberg... I mean no one would want to be offensive to someone but I guess if it’s to really defend someone, you’re gonna have to really, if that’s what it means to be with a friend or support a friend then definitely, I would do that.”.

Participant 2. Ana

Ana thought that the tweet was baloney, pointless and even humiliating for both parties especially the target- “There’s no sense of having those tweets because I think that both parties are being put to shame especially the victim also for the one who tweeted first, the girl who was making rants about the victim. And I think that her ranting on twitter doesn’t bring any good to her because she is just twitting on twitter so her rants will only be until twitter. It will not reach anywhere. She is just humiliating someone who may not really care about her so like there’s no point really.”

For Ana, the tweeting situation was unsuitable and considers it a form of cyberbullying because it’s putting people to shame – “I think that it’s

shameful for the subject because obviously the girl tweeted a screen shot of their conversation and the subject was not properly aware about the tweet. It's very inappropriate for the subject because he was simply being put to shame. Even like comments from other people, replies and everything I've read them..." Also, she emphasized that people do not have the right to say anything bad against other people, which made the act of tweeting for that situation inappropriate – "I follow other grade 12 students from the university and I've seen them commenting also and I think it's very inappropriate because they are talking about a person who has proven already himself. They can't say that they have the right to speak for themselves because, you know if you have the right then you won't talk bad about a person and if you have the right, what you really have to say is only good. If you're talking bad that means that you are not using your right correctly. It's not okay to put someone to shame, like anyone to shame even though like you have grudges on that person, personal stuff should stay personal. It's not okay because they do not have the right..."

Ana associated cyberbullying with disrespect – "I think cyberbullying is a sign of disrespect because even 'though you're holding grudges, you can't just put anyone to shame. You're just like disrespecting him or her because that will stay in social media, once in social media, that will always be there even though you already erase it. Many people have seen it, many people will have copies and you know it will put that person... It may give him fears. It's a sign of disrespect and it's cyberbullying."

She did not participate in the tweeting communication occurrence as she replied - "I didn't comment. I think because I've gone through those stuff already. I find it immature. When I was still in junior high school I've been a bully and I was also bullied in social media. I've experienced those stuff and I think that now, I have realized. I have come to a realization that it's not good. It doesn't make any sense, it won't do any good to anyone really."

Participant 3. Mitsy

Mitsy saw something inappropriate in the situation especially that it involves a so-called authority, a teacher who was the target of the messages – “...I felt that what happened was not right because first of all, he is a teacher and he was just doing his job. And then I didn’t really see anything wrong with what the teacher replied to the student...and I think it would have been better if she (the student) did not put expressions of emotions such as “hihi” in her private message. I did not approve of the manner she asked for permission. It was too informal. So, the teacher also replied in a brief manner, denying her of her request and I didn’t really see anything wrong with him being direct... ..or maybe if we look at the girl’s side probably she was in a hurry.”

She saw both positive and negative comments from the students – “There were positive and negative comments in the tweets. A number of those who tweeted sided on the one who tweeted or the student including those who were not directly involved in the issue. There were negative comments about the teacher. I was glad to see however that there were those who also defended the teacher and commented that these things should not have been posted online...”

She further declared - “ I remember one comment by someone I don’t know. I think he was a batch mate of the one who tweeted. He also posted a screenshot of his conversation with the teacher that could be misinterpreted as something “cheeky” or “flirty” but I think the one who messaged first was the student and the teacher only replied and I think the manner he replied was the usual way the teacher expresses himself and I didn’t see any malice with what and how he said things. I remember that other students also mentioned the teacher’s inadequacies in class that the teacher insults students...”

When Mitsy was reading the posts she said she was angry at the tweeting incident – “Actually, I was mad reading their posts. If I were in the teacher’s place, I would really get hurt even if I wasn’t in his place, I was really

hurt because I'm also human and even if you think he made mistakes, he doesn't deserve that kind of publicity. Again I think he was just doing his job as a teacher and I didn't see anything wrong with what he did. Just because you didn't get what you want, you should already post about it or someone online."

Mitsy considered what happened to be cyberbullying as she expressed her views about the communicative act – "It's a form of cyberbullying and it only shows what kind of person you are. It's like, I don't mean to insult the person (the one who tweeted) but I think she is like a brat who threw a tantrum because she didn't get what she wanted and so she posted things online to seek for sympathizers... It was immature of her to post online..." Mitsy also commented that for her what happened was inappropriate – "I think it was a very immature act because there are certainly other ways to express how you feel. I just don't understand why she chose that manner like she had time to post about it on twitter when she could have reported to her parents what her teacher did or said. She should have just complied with what the school required from her."

Mitsy who felt strongly against cyberbullying did not participate in the tweeting situation and further expressed her perspectives – "What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person. You're connecting, communicating and it becomes cyberbullying when there's miscommunication. I mean communicating in a wrong way. If you bully a student in school at least not everybody knows about it unlike what was done. She posted it online for everybody to see and it didn't just include the school, it also included everybody because everybody saw the post even those from other schools so it became a double publicity. The audience was doubled... Cyberbullying is form of humiliation. He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online."

Mitsy further shared her views about millenials (being one), how she sees them behave in social media and her expectations of a supposedly proper conduct – "Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless

about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want but actually, it should not be used to hurt others. Also, you need to think of your own dignity or your own image first before you post not only for the other people but also for yourself."

Similar to the other participants in this study, she saw cyberbullying as disrespect to others – "Humans deserve respect and one doesn't have the right to judge someone by their mistakes. No one is perfect, right? Everybody has their flaws, nobody is perfect and we should all respect that because we are not all alike. We have our differences and we should respect each other for that."

The participant assumed that people participate in cyberbullying due to some reasons – "...maybe there are different factors why they cyberbully or do the wrong things. Probably, like what I said earlier, they just hate not getting what they want maybe they want to get attention from it or maybe it just gives them joy to do such things even if they know they're already hurting other people's feelings. Maybe it makes them happy to hurt others or maybe they don't know that they are already hurting others."

Participant 4. Karleen

What Karleen saw in the tweeting communication situation was a student opening up to her friends on social media regarding her frustration about a teacher whom she believes as harsh and inconsiderate – "...Probably she just opened up. I forgot the caption but the people retweeted, they commented..." She further added, "What I saw was that when the student asked for permission from the teacher, the teacher's response was a bit like so abrupt in a way, like he was mean in such a way if you misunderstand him and then maybe the student was also surprised of his answer so she decided to tweet about it or something."

Karleen however thought that what the student did was wrong – "I can say that she was a bit a wrong since she only showed a part of the

conversation and then people will react only to what they see so it was wrong for her. It was wrong for her to not show the whole conversation."

Some of the comments according to Karleen were in favor of the student who tweeted due to similar views about the teacher – "A lot of people agreed on the tweet like and then some secrets were disclosed. I mean everyone's ill feelings towards the teacher that were bottled up were tweeted and the tweet was somehow boosted since others opened up on their feelings against the teacher. Examples were mostly about the teacher's negative actions in classes like when we were in grade 11. I mean the teacher was teaching research and then he didn't teach it properly. He would give unclear instructions and then he would always come to class late and then he was choosy with his students."

Karleen thought that the tweet and the comments were somehow disrespectful – "It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher. Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him and he didn't know about what was going on and then he just knew about it through others who told him that there was something that happened on twitter where he was the topic."

While reading the posts, Karleen couldn't help but react and assessed the situation – "...it's not good to judge based on one person's perspective so it's better if you won't talk about things in public. Why don't you like talk about it in person or address it to the person privately... I was shocked, at the same time I agreed to some of the comments and I was also intrigued with the other comments and then after thinking about those things I thought that the student shouldn't have done it because it was too public and it's not good because others do not know about it but still commented negative things. It was better to talk about it privately."

Karleen shared her views about cyberbullying – "Cyberbullying is when you post your opinion about someone or even a picture of yourself and you send it to your friends and they gossip about it. That's a form of cyberbullying

when you start to bash someone, when you react to it negatively. If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings." She referred the tweeting situation as cyberbullying - "The teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying."

The participant shared that people who participate in cyberbullying just want to prove something perhaps ruin someone - "They want to somewhat prove...they just want to ruin the person..." Karleen further mentioned that she did not participate because of her past experience - "because I experienced it before. I felt disrespected because she tweeted something about me online, something which I didn't do. And so many asked me about it what were said were true or not or something. You're not even sure of what you're tweeting about, some are just plain imagination and then you tweet about them."

Karleen considered the act as cyberbullying because through the comments and reactions, the teacher's flaws were publicized to a big audience - "...the teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying." She considers cyberbullying as a sign of disrespect because this act hurts other people's feelings - "...If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments, you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings." With these representations of cyberbullying, Karleen decided not to participate in the tweeting communication phenomenon.

Participant 5. Gio

What Gio saw in the situation was a student who just shared her conversation with a teacher - "So basically in that situation, someone or a friend of mine tweeted about the conversation she had with our teacher then there were many who commented and I also commented. The student said something about her flying to Japan because of her grandma's death and

asked if she could be absent and the teacher said something that triggered the situation (tweeting encounter)."

Gio commented that in that tweeting situation, the side of the teacher was muted, and only the student's side was highlighted; and that somehow people were careless in their giving of comments - "I'd say that what was known was more of my friend's side and we overlooked the side of the teacher, that it was already kind of offensive. I think people were not thinking about what they were tweeting. They did not think about the perspective of our teacher."

As to the comments, Gio said, "There were many negative rants...bad words were said. There were also comments however which defended our teacher." He added, " There was a twitter fight. There were comments which said that a case should be filed against the teacher and those who defended the teacher said that the side of the teacher must also be considered because they know the teacher and they believe he is not as bad as publicized and others said that the teacher was really inconsiderate."

Gio thought that what happened was an instance of cyberbullying and that it could be associated with disrespect - "It was a form of cyberbullying because an individual was bashed. The situation sort of destroyed the character of the teacher because of the bashing. It's disrespecting the morality of a person."

The participant admitted that he participated because he was confused at first when he was reading the tweet and its comments - " I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments." He added - " I participated because I also wanted to defend my friend but after I processed things I realized that I should have also considered my teacher's side and that I should have also kept to myself my comments..."

He further relayed some of his realizations regarding communicating feelings and thoughts through social media – “After thinking things over, I thought that it would have been better for my friend to do a PM [Private Message] so that not many would have been involved to the point that it became chaotic. So, instead of saying things in public, you could have shared your thoughts to a few trusted individuals so as not to complicate things... So if you decide to tweet about someone, it's better not to mention a name or you can always PM the person concerned.”

Participant 6. Susan

The situation that Susan saw was a student communicating negatively and maliciously about her experience with a teacher whom she asked permission from but did not responded to her favor – “The girl needed to fly to Japan due to her grandmother's death and she asked permission from the teacher but was denied of her request so she tweeted about it. She then tweeted very negative comments and then she shared her conversation with the teacher in twitter. However, the teacher had other statements which were not shared like the teacher said “It's ok, nothing to worry about”. She was like, encouraged by the teacher that she doesn't have to worry but she sort of deleted the part of their conversation.”

Susan further relayed that many friends sided on the one who tweeted – “She had many friends and expectedly they supported her. And those other students who did not know the whole story they also commented and they sided with the girl even if they didn't know the whole story. One student said, that yes, he says that “I'm not your chatmate, I'm your teacher” but there were times the he chatted with the male students. A screenshot of these conversations between the teacher and the male student was also posted.”

The participant thought that the communicative act of tweeting for the situation was a wrong thing to do and considered it as cyberbullying – “I think it was wrong for the students to post negative things online about the teacher

because what if you were the teacher and your students will do such things to you. It doesn't feel good."

When asked to share her views on tweeting and using social media, Susan mentioned – " Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person. You shouldn't mention any name or name drop, something like that. Maybe I can relate because I'm also like them...I let out frustrations. But I think when you do it, that's all you get, let out frustrations and that's it. You don't gain anything out of it."

She added that what happened was cyberbullying and shared her opinion about it - " It's cyberbullying and any kind of cyberbullying is wrong. No matter what your status is, no one should talk bad things about you. We always have to be positive and be kind to people because you will never know if that person will be the one to help you in the future. It was inappropriate because I think cyberbullying is bad in itself. It's really bad. What if the one you are bullying has a mental illness? Cyberbullying can cause depression on the victims. There's a negative impact. I was also bullied before and I was depressed. Good thing, I had friends who encouraged me not to mind them."

She thought that cyberbullying is a sign of weakness and insecurity on the part of the bully - "Cyberbullying makes people feel superior about themselves. I want to be an advocate against cyberbullying. I want to redefine cyberbullying. They say that if you are bullied, you are weak. For me, it's not like that. The one who bullies is the one who is weak because they are insecure so they seek for sympathizers to ally with them. Cyberbullying is weakness. They bully because they want attention."

Apparently, Susan did not participate in that tweeting encounter and commented about how millenials can be too vocal in social media– " I did not retweet. I just read. It was a wrong thing to do. She should not have tweeted about it. It was wrong because she was tweeting about our teacher, our

coordinator. I think, people now, especially millenials my age are too vocal. And in that situation because the girl was popular, many were able to read the tweet and her screenshot. And those who retweeted should not have at all retweeted. They just destroyed the reputation of the teacher. Susan further said- "I never commented I have an experience with him, with the teacher. He helped me before when I was in grade 11. I made a mistake by spreading a rumor about someone who transcribed our research from English into Tagalog. When the teacher heard about it, he called my attention and advised me to be tactful, that I shouldn't be tactless, that I shouldn't be gossiping and spread rumors and I've learned that lesson from him."

Participant 7. PJ

PJ saw that the situation had two sides so he tried to justify the student's act of tweeting and at the same time mentions where the student had been deficient – "At first, I saw a student complaining about an unethical act of a teacher in terms of how he... At first, I was really with this student at that moment. Although it was a double-edged sword actually. It was wrong also for the student because you see when you ask permission especially if it involves academic, you should be following some legal processes or a technical process like sign letters for example which the teacher has a point... but the big chunk of it was really how the teacher responded to that student... it was really quite obscene and insensitive to reply that way considering the situation she was in at that moment...

When asked about his thoughts on tweeting about the situation and the use of social media, PJ expressed – "Not exactly fine because the thing about the Internet is that people can have their own interpretations. Although you can understand where the student is coming from but you can't blame how the social media can sensationalize the message and sometimes mislead people what is actually or what is actually the message."

PJ thought that the comments were quite reactive and that the tweet of the student conveyed a message of hatred towards what the teacher did – "It

was really quite reactive considering how they, how the screenshots were just one sided, although if you try to weigh things, both parties really had mistakes but the thing about it is that the message that was conveyed is that the student really hated the teacher for what he has done."

PJ considered what happened and what were said as both positive and negative – "It's positive in a way that people become responsive because when people doesn't really react to it like there's something wrong with the tweet basically, there's something wrong with the message because it's both antagonizing that person you're actually tweeting about but it's also about expressing one's grievance at some point, like people might have the same experience and then people react to it and like for example the hashtag "me too" and sympathize...."The other obscene posts of that teacher also went out so like how he treats students and there's a screen shot of how he treats his male students...I think even if people say that it's a bad thing, people just react to it and for me it's actually a good thing because people become responsible when they become reactive.

He admitted however that what were said were provocative and quite confrontational – "...I know what they are trying to say but it's quite antagonizing. They didn't put it in the right context, although they had the right intention but they didn't put it in the right context... I think if you really want to tweet about someone online I mean, at the very least you can just hide your identity...by virtue of the right, the freedom of expression, the least you can do is just make that someone anonymous. You can express your grievance sure like a general, a universal statement...the wrong thing, the wrong situation comes in when you put the name of the person and let the whole world interpret what your context is."

The participant thought of the situation as cyberbullying but further argued that it could just be a mere expression of grievance – "If you try to look at it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance... the line is blurry between those things and you just can't categorize that thing in one

context because it can be in every context, it depends on how you look at it." He further shared his views about cyberbullying saying, "Cyberbullying is more on destroying a person, destroying that is out of context and most of the time it is subjective and really ad hominem to the point that what you are saying are not actually happening because like if you can have social media to critique someone...I don't really get why people can't get criticisms sometimes even 'though how objective they are. Cyberbullying has this dynamics... that you can already consider it as cyberbullying if it's not factual already, if its out of the context, it's not objective, the words that are used are too much of what it's supposed to be and the message, the words that are being used are not conveying the right message that you wanted to convey."

PJ participated in the tweeter encounter for the reason that he strongly disliked how the teacher in a way inappropriately responded to the student - "I participated but I contextualized it in a sense that the way he responded to the message was inappropriate. I didn't say that he's bad, altogether, it's just that I put it in a context, I placed it in a context that his act on his response to the student is not appropriate, you can say a more, you can say a better response other than that... I admit that it could be one side of the story but still that chunk, that even that one dialogue it already speaks a lot of what it means... an objective basis because that's what he told us, that's what he told that student, therefore you judge him based on that certain basis only. It becomes cyberbullying when you judge him beyond that certain basis. I don't know if it's part of confidentiality, but I know the whole story. I asked the whole convo so that's why I can put myself in the shoes of those who tweeted, who retweeted. "

Participant 8. Thomas

Thomas saw rudeness in the tweet of a student an in its comments as a reaction to a disappointing, "somewhat disrespectful" and an unexpected reply of a teacher – "The situation itself, if you look at it, it's a bit like in away rude especially for our adviser but I cannot also blame the one who posted it in a sense that the teacher was also somewhat disrespectful in the way he

replied. I would understand the point of the student that she felt disrespected because she asked if she could be excused from a school activity but on the otherhand, the manner of asking through chat was also unprofessional. But even so, I think she asked permission calmly but our teacher gave her that reply... so I think she didn't expect that kind of very straightforward response from the teacher."

The comments according to Thomas were both positive (in favor of the teacher) and negative (against the teacher). He thought that the negative comments were harsh and straightforward – "Some of the comments, retweets actually made sense while others were plain rude like just for the sake of commenting which only added to the tension or just to release anger towards our adviser, to our teacher...50/50. Some had really good points. They were mature in their take but again others were plain rude and they kept on adding more comments which were already out of context, things which were already too personal." He further relayed the specific comments that were against the teacher – "Some co tweets mentioned about the teacher's other offenses like his always being late, and that he does not ask permission if he would not report to class and he would require projects on the 11th hour wherein students are not given ample time to prepare and he would expect a lot from his students."

While reading the tweet and the comments, Thomas couldn't help but react and sympathize with the student – "When I was reading the tweet, I actually got mad because the student really took time to ask for the teacher's permission but the teacher just told her to stop crying because you can't do anything about the situation anymore. He could have given the student a time to grieve especially that it's the death of a family member. So, that's the picture I saw in the viral tweet based on how the teacher responded to the student."

For Thomas, tweeting has become a millennial's expression podium yet he also believes that for that situation, tweeting could not be the best manner of sharing the experience. He justified however that the student's act of

tweeting could be reasonable given the context – “As a millennial, we tend to express a lot especially on twitter and we tend to think that we are protected by the screen so we feel that we can say anything we want to say even if they are wrong. As to that particular tweet however, the student just showed that the teacher was disrespectful but she could not have tweeted about it and could have enclosed the conversation within a specific group among close friends. But I think she tweeted about it because she presumed that many other students do not like the teacher and she wanted for others to validate what she feels towards the teacher. However, it would have been more mature if she did not use twitter in expressing her disappointment. It would have been better if she confided with her parents or with close friends and not on social media.”

Thomas thinks that social media has its good side because it has helped him personally in terms of releasing stress or letting off steam he believes however that this should be used with limitations and handled maturely – “What’s good about social media is it helps us blow off steam. In social media we can release our anger, our hatred, our heavy feeling so in that sense if you tweet like personally I tweet a lot about how I feel even if sometimes it’s for a specific person, it’s in a way relieving but of course you have to have limitations especially if you talk about another person. You should be able to handle it maturely. It would have been acceptable if she only talked about her feeling of disappointment but not explicitly referring to a specific person and telling the whole world about it. This can destroy a person’s character and in that tweet other strands like ABM and STEM already got involved.”

Cyberbullying for Thomas is about destroying a person’s dignity and he considered the tweeting situation a form of cyberbullying – “Cyberbullying in a sense is destroying a person’s dignity. In that situation students from other stands were able to judge the teacher based solely on that tweet. That tweet creates a bad picture of the teacher, that he is disrespectful. In a sense, it’s a form of cyberbullying. He added, “Cyberbullying is when you destroy someone or say hurtful or negative things to a person through social media whether it’s

true or not because if it's true then what is that to you? But if its false then the impact is worse because you're spreading something not true about a person on social media. And in this generation, whatever you post in social media could spread rapidly even if it's a hoax. In that tweet, the character of the person was gravely destroyed."

He admitted however that he also tweeted about the incident but realized later that he was impulsive in doing so and somehow regretted what he did – "I didn't co tweet but I tweeted. Honestly at first, I reacted negatively towards the teacher. Perhaps, I was shocked with the teacher's unprofessional response so I tweeted in my own timeline. Afterwards, I realized that I should not be participating in that issue."

Participant 9. Hanz

What Hanz saw in the tweeting situation was a student complaining about the teacher's unkind and uncaring reply to a student's request – "What I saw on twitter was a screenshot of the conversation of a fellow Hums student and a teacher wherein the student asked permission from the teacher that she cannot join the school activity because her grandmother died so she had to travel to Japan. The first time I read the conversation was that I think it was mean for the teacher to deny her of her request bluntly. It was a very direct answer. At that time, I still didn't know the whole story so my initial reaction was that I found the teacher mean."

Hanz said that he was able to read a number of negative comments and criticisms about the teacher – "Most of the students' comments about the teacher were negative and some students went overboard...for example, they pointed out the bad side of the teacher, his being mean. They criticized the teacher."

He admitted that while reading the tweet and the comments, he was brainwashed by the comments – "...because of all the negative comments I

read, I was kind of brainwashed so I got carried away. I agreed that the teacher was rude and he was not able to handle the student properly. That was the first thing that came to my mind so I sided with the student."

Tweeting about the situation for Hanz however was inappropriate and a careless move – "For me, tweeting about the situation was a careless move because first of all the conversation between the teacher and the student was private so for you to share it especially on twitter wherein so many people can view so it was a careless act. She was not thinking about the effect of what she did."

Cyberbullying for Hanz is when you ruin the reputation of someone and it is a sign of disrespect – "...through the use of social media like when you hurt them through tweets, through statuses, through messages, through words. It's a sign of disrespect because if you are really angry towards a person you can always approach him and not hit on that person online... Cyberbullying can also start like people gossip and talk about others online."

Admittedly, Hanz confessed that he participated in that cyberbullying incident but later realized it was wrong for him to have participated – "After reading the tweet, I also commented. I also expressed my disappointment like the others because I also got carried away and I was shocked with what I read in the tweet. Almost all students gave negative comments so my brain sort of sided with the majority especially that I didn't know the whole story yet. He further narrated, "Like the rest, I also bullied. The teacher didn't know anything about what's happening in twitter like I said earlier, it was supposed to be a private conversation between him and the student but it was shared. I could have been more thoughtful before giving comments. I should have known the whole story first... after that incident, I now think first before I react to a tweet. I now try to think if what I'm about to say is right or not."

He further commented about the platform, twitter – "Twitter for me now is already toxic like once you express your opinion it will always have a reaction and it could start conflicts. A lot of people are fighting in twitter..."

Participant 10. Leslie

For Leslie, what she saw in the tweeting situation were simply complaints about a certain teacher's inadequacies – "In the tweets, I just saw students ranting about a particular teacher whom we've had and this teacher has caused a lot of problems for us as students. The tweets were simply complaints for the experiences they had about the teacher, observations they have about him."

Leslie said that these comments were mostly criticisms about a teacher's behavior which for her are legitimate – "Well, they were mostly complaints or observations like for example there was this one student.. a lot of them were negative like for example there was this one tweet that stated the, the, she stated that this teacher is really irresponsible because he always arrives to class late and he likes bossing the students around and likes insulting them and I've seen my classmates crying because of him, just his behavior...Honestly, I agreed with them because I also felt what they felt and I've also experienced what they've experienced what they shared in twitter."

Twitter for Leslie has become a venting place for students – "...we all know that twitter is sort of a venting place for students like us... the good thing about tweeting about these sort of things is, it gives people awareness, it gives them some background info on what the students are going through because I've had personal experience, sometimes it really feels like the teacher is bullying us so and he's a teacher so we can't really retaliate much... we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to twitter and rant about their frustrations...it's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything."

She admitted however that for that situation, twitter had not been used responsibly – "Twitter really is used as a platform, though it's brought a lot of good things, it has it's bad effects like, like that tweet issue in December. It really went big and a part of me actually liked that it was given awareness, that issue but it was also out of control. Since the original tweet was a screen

shot of everything that went on. Of course students would naturally feel outraged reading it but people should have taken into consideration that it was just one side of the story." Leslie added, "What makes it not okay is when people start going overboard with criticism and the hate and people are jumping into it and becomes kind of like a sort of trend as you can see and some people don't even mean what they say, they just, they just go along with it..."

Leslie further commented – " Twitter as a platform for that issue was actually really toxic because in truth, students should just confront him or talk to the administration or anyone in school about the problem. It's just that I suppose the students were scared or anxious about doing that so instead they turned to twitter, so it's a bad mechanism, coping mechanism for the things they've been through."

Leslie thinks, "...cyberbullying is when people post things in social media that explicitly mention a particular person. Cyberbullying is intrusive... of course it's hurtful, it's emotionally abusive..." She also considers cyberbullying as a sign of repressed emotions – "...it's a sign of repressed emotions on the part of the cyberbully because maybe they are projecting their own emotions into other people or maybe they are projecting what they feel and it was suppressed..."

She believes however that what happened was more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying – "I guess it's more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying because the students didn't really know who to go to and who to tell their issues and I guess they were outraged considering the issue behind it so I guess it was really just that, a venting place. They were angered so they went there and posted whatever which was bad but I can't call it cyberbullying it was like an indirect thing."

She confessed that she participated in the tweeting event and reasoned that she was more careful in her participation – "I tweeted once but I didn't mention a name. It was a conversation that we heard in the classroom

about the teacher, I just said, teacher x, then their conversation. That's just what I did but not in the thread of the tweet. They were saying everything that I wanted to say, they were already saying most of the things that I felt and thought about the teacher. I felt like it was already too much and they've already said what I wanted to say, I didn't want to personally attack the teacher, I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself so that's why I didn't participate cause I didn't want to attack him personally...they were going so overboard and I just wanted his behavior to change. That's all that I want."

Participant 11.Amie

What Amie saw in the situation was a student slighted by a teacher's insensitive reply to a request and finds social media as an opportunity to express her frustration – " I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media. Perhaps she felt that social media was a great outlet because people would be able to support her arguments especially people who didn't know the real story so maybe it becoming viral was in her favor... it's a platform that people look to when they wish to... because social media is like, there's a screen, you can't really tell the consequences of your actions or you can't really tell immediate responses from the person you are tweeting about so it can almost feel safer compared to personal interactions."

As to the tweet and its comments, Amie thinks that it was alarming and the comments were very personal - " When placed out of context, the content of the tweet seemed very alarming, it seemed like insensitive..." She further narrated that – " Many of them were alarmed because they didn't expect that coming from a teacher and many of them, some of them even supported the argument citing other instances of the teacher acting in a certain manner in another situation like how he teaches, how he communicates with his students. Sometimes, they can be very personal... some personal things about a certain student that the rest of the class doesn't know about... they were mentioned, maybe almost a form of attack... it can be taken as

derogatory... it's not ok because there was no complete background on the entire situation and people only see one side of the situation so sometimes they join and they put out some more negative comments about another person without actually knowing the whole story. Amie added, "I don't think it was the most appropriate thing especially since the names could be seen in the picture and I didn't think it was appropriate but perhaps in the heat of the moment that's the only way that she felt she could gain support."

While reading the tweet and its comments, Amie confessed that she sympathized with her friend and the other students – "I was intrigued and at the same time I couldn't help but felt strongly about the content of the tweet because I knew the person and I knew the situation and maybe I didn't know the whole story so of course I felt my favor was for the student."

She thought that what happened was a form of cyberbullying- "It was cyberbullying because the person on the other hand didn't have the chance to defend himself, didn't even know what was going on." For Amie, "Cyberbullying is a sign of... cyberbullying is an attack on another person through using digital means. Cyberbullying could be an attack, could be a defense, could be a negative expression."

Amie confessed however that she also retweeted since she felt strongly for the issue raised by her friend but realized the inaptness of her act – I retweeted, I liked the tweet and I talked about it to my friends and it was a big issue so many conversations happened. I tweeted in favor of the student, I called out the teacher for some other things that I felt he was lacking in or he was doing wrong... I joined because there were instances when I also felt, or I was also caught up by my emotions... You have no time to think about things, you know it's social media ...I would have thought about it a lot more but since it's social media then I went ahead."

She thought that Social Media became a very accessible tool that facilitated their conversations – "Social media wasn't around before and now that we have it, it's like, it's opened up, it's a platform to express your

emotions maybe to people or to other people, things about ourselves that we don't necessarily want other people to know about or maybe we do want them to know but we don't want to tell them directly

Step Six: Construction of Individual Structural Description

A structure was integrated into the textural description to provide explanations on "how" the participant reached certain views or understandings. The researcher attempted to use her judgment in determining the circumstances, influences and other conditions that accompanied the participant's interpretations to achieve a structural description.

A structure was integrated into the textural description ("what") to provide explanations on "how" each participant arrived at certain views or understandings. The researcher attempted to use her own judgment in determining the circumstances, influences and other conditions that accompanied the participant's interpretations to achieve a structural description.

The textural and structural narratives (constructed from steps 5 & 6) were combined and the researcher used one's own interpretation of "what" (texture) thoughts and "how" (structure) the participants reached these thoughts. After a thorough and careful deliberation, the participant's narrative responses were explained, and given meaning and sense according to the researcher's own understanding and judgment of the thoughts shared by the participants.

Participant 1. Shyna

Shyna saw a need for two parties (the students and the teacher) to understand each other's standpoint and for the readers to understand the parties involved suggesting that both (the teacher and the student) could have reasons behind their actions – *"The thing is both parties really need to like understand both sides... you really need to understand the side of the tweeter and of course the one being attacked."* Shyna thought that the tweet and its comments were expected from that of a teenager whom she describes as carefree – *"It's expected because you know it's a teenager so teenagers you know, we're carefree and we'd say whatever we want and stuff and not really caring about what they think..."* She is suggesting that teenagers could have the tendency to be carefree or perhaps careless in their words and acts. Shyna believes that the tweet was meant to seek support, which indeed gained support from a number of people – *"I think in that tweet, in my perspective, she was looking for people to side on her so that more people would support her... and you can see like in the comments were like a lot more stuff being said and you can see that a girl was really getting a lot of people on her side."*

While reading the tweets, Shyna perceived what was happening as a usual teenage drama that teenagers exhibit – *"It's a typical teen drama between a teacher and a student and of course it gets pretty normal."* She thought of tweeting as a freedom wall where people especially teens can easily use to express their frustrations and other emotions, no - holds -barred – *"Twitter for us is like a freedom wall because what I notice is that when we tweet we don't have filter. We don't try to hide something like we just go on unlike facebook where there's a lot of people and we're kind of hesitant to say or tweet something I mean post something because of course it has our parents but twitter is more on just a freedom wall, it has your friends in it. It has people that support you or people that have the same side of you. In twitter you can find friends, you can find a lot of people who will agree to what you stand for.... The thing about tweeting especially teenagers tweet is that, we're not afraid to be direct. It's something like directing to a person without*

actually mentioning anything, so a lot of us do that a lot especially when we are having problems with a teacher or with a fellow classmate and I guess I'm just really used to seeing things like that..." Twitter has somehow been used as a handy tool in seeking support from friends or people of the same views and the platform has given people license to speak openly and candidly about anything - situation, people, etc.

She described the comments as absolutely offensive based on the showing of a screenshot of a former conversation between the teacher and the student and the public's reactions toward what has been tweeted – *"...it's definitely offensive... You can see it's directed to someone and you can see it's actually meant to offend someone because you know it has like screenshots. It was like a lot of stuff you wouldn't want to see yourself... I know it was pretty offensive I can tell from the reactions of the media towards it."*

However she also felt that the tweeting encounter went overboard so Shyna expressed disapproval of the tweeting situation – *"I didn't think it would go that far as in mentioning teacher and mentioning the stuff that happened and what the pictures contained, the screenshots.... For sure, it's not right. It's something very explicit. It's something that is like over the line offensive because it's online and what you put online you can't...it's just there even if you delete the tweet, people would know you actually tweeted it. You know it's in the histories, it's in the airmet files, it's in everything. So what you said once will be taken against you sooner or later no matter how long."* Shyna expressed her concern about permanence of online messages especially unpleasant words directed to other people, which may eventually be taken against you.

Shyna considered the tweeting situation as a form of cyberbullying due to the fact that it involves an audience – *"It is a form of cyberbullying because it is involving everyone. It's involving not only between the school, not only between the classmates. It's involving everyone in the world because everyone can actually see it. There's an audience and one click, one search*

and you can find everything.” Cyberbullying for her means disrespecting, in that situation, disrespecting authorities – “...I wouldn’t disrespect, I wouldn’t go that far ‘cause I also think that the subject also had his kind of rationale as to why he chose to make that decision for the student and I guess that’s kind of the main reason why I didn’t really get into it.”

When asked why she did not participate in the tweeting incident, she responded – *“...for that I didn’t really want to be out there because I don’t know the whole story of course. We’re just bystanders. We’re just there to see what’s happening but we don’t actually know what is happening. We only see like the tip of the iceberg... I mean no one would want to be offensive to someone but I guess if it’s to really defend someone, you’re gonna have to really, if that’s what it means to be with a friend or support a friend then definitely, I would do that.”* Shyna in that instance considered herself a mere bystander who does not know the whole issue hence she did not give her comments in the tweet’s thread. However, she confessed that given the condition that it happened to someone she knows or a friend, she would in no doubt participate in the tweeting situation.

Participant 2. Ana

Ana thought that the tweet was baloney, pointless and worse, humiliating for both parties especially the target- *“There’s no sense of having those tweets because I think that both parties are being put to shame especially the victim also for the one who tweeted first, the girl who was making rants about the victim. And I think that her ranting on twitter doesn’t bring any good to her because she is just twitting on twitter so her rants will only be until twitter. It will not reach anywhere. She is just humiliating someone who may not really care about her so like there’s no point really.”*

For Ana, the tweeting situation was unsuitable and considers it a form of cyberbullying because it’s putting people to shame – *“I think that it’s shameful for the subject because obviously the girl tweeted a screen shot of their conversation and the subject was not properly aware about the tweet. It’s*

very inappropriate for the subject because he was simply being put to shame. Even like comments from other people, replies and everything I've read them..." Also, she emphasized that people do not have the right to speak wrongly against other people, which made the act of tweeting for that situation inappropriate – *"I follow other grade 12 students from the university and I've seen them commenting also and I think it's very inappropriate because they are talking about a person who has proven already himself. They can't say that they have the right to speak for themselves because, you know if you have the right then you won't talk bad about a person and if you have the right, what you really have to say is only good. If you're talking bad that means that you are not using your right correctly. It's not okay to put someone to shame, like anyone to shame even though like you have grudges on that person, personal stuff should stay personal. It's not okay because they do not have the right..."* Ana kept on reiterating that it's not right to put people to shame and that one's freedom and right to speak should only be used for something good.

Ana associates cyberbullying with disrespect and suggests the gravity of its impact especially that messages posted in social media become undeletable – *"I think cyberbullying is a sign of disrespect because even though you're holding grudges, you can't just put anyone to shame. You're just like disrespecting him or her because that will stay in social media, once in social media that will always be there even though you already erase it. Many people have seen it, many people will have copies and you know it will put that person...it may give him fears. It's a sign of disrespect and it's cyberbullying."*

She did not participate in the tweeting communication occurrence because of an unfavorable experience she had in junior high school – *"I didn't comment. I think because I've gone through those stuff already. I find it immature. When I was still in junior high school I've been a bully and I was also bullied in social media. I've experienced those stuff and I think that now, I have realized. I have come to a realization that it's not good. It doesn't make*

any sense, it won't do any good to anyone really." Anna's experience taught her to be more mature in her social media encounters.

Participant 3. Mitsy

Mitsy saw something unfitting in the situation especially that it involves a so-called authority, a teacher who was the target of the messages – *"...I felt that what happened was not right because first of all, he is a teacher and he was just doing his job. And then I didn't really see anything wrong with what the teacher replied to the student...and I think it would have been better if she (the student) did not put expressions of emotions such as "hihi" in her private message. I did not approve of the manner she asked for permission. It was too informal. So, the teacher also replied in a brief manner, denying her of her request and I didn't really see anything wrong with him being direct... ..or maybe if we look at the girl's side probably she was in a hurry."* She tried to justify however the student's act by trying to understand the student's situation.

She saw both positive and negative comments by students – *"There were positive and negative comments in the tweets. A number of those who tweeted sided on the one who tweeted or the student including those who were not directly involved in the issue. There were negative comments about the teacher. I was glad to see however that there were those who also defended the teacher and commented that these things should not have been posted online..."*

She further declared in detail the comments written on the tweet's thread - *"I remember one comment by someone I don't know. I think he was a batchmate of the one who tweeted. He also posted a screenshot of his conversation with the teacher that could be misinterpreted as something "cheeky" or "flirty" but I think the one who messaged first was the student and the teacher only replied and I think the manner he replied was the usual way the teacher expresses himself and I didn't see any malice with what and how*

he said things. I remember that other students also mentioned the teacher's inadequacies in class that the teacher insults students..."

When Mitsy was reading the posts she said she was angry at the tweeting incident believing that the negative tweets were rather hurtful for the teacher and that the teacher she thinks does not deserve such publicity – *"Actually, I was mad reading their posts. If I were in the teacher's place, I would really get hurt even if I wasn't in his place, I was really hurt because I'm also human and even if you think he made mistakes, he doesn't deserve that kind of publicity. Again I think he was just doing his job as a teacher and I didn't see anything wrong with what he did. Just because you didn't get what you want, you should already post about it or someone online."*

Mitsy considered what happened to be cyberbullying as she expressed her views about the communicative act – *"It's a form of cyberbullying and it only shows what kind of person you are. It's like, I don't mean to insult the person (the one who tweeted) but I think she is like a brat who threw a tantrum because she didn't get what she wanted and so she posted things online to seek for sympathizers... It was immature of her to post online..."* Mitsy also commented that for her what happened was inappropriate – *"I think it was a very immature act because there are certainly other ways to express how you feel. I just don't understand why she chose that manner like she had time to post about it on twitter when she could have reported to her parents what her teacher did or said. She should have just complied with what the school required from her."* Mitsy thought that the student's act of tweeting and using social media as a platform for expressing her complaints was immature and suggested that there are other better ways to report such incident.

Mitsy who feels strongly against cyberbullying did not participate in the tweeting situation and further expressed her perspectives – *"What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person. You're connecting, communicating and it becomes cyberbullying when there's miscommunication. I mean communicating in a wrong way. If you bully a student in school at least not everybody knows about it unlike what*

was done. She posted it online for everybody to see and it didn't just include the school, it also included everybody because everybody saw the post even those from other schools so it became a double publicity. The audience was doubled... Cyberbullying is form of humiliation. He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online." For Mitsy, cyberbullying is an act of humiliating someone online and its even worse than face-to-face bullying due to its audience and wide reach. She further expressed her views how people should remember that everyone commits mistakes and should not be condemned nor judged nor talked about online.

Mitsy further shared her views about millennials (being one), how she sees them behave in social media and her expectations of a supposedly proper conduct – *"Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want but actually, it should not be used to hurt others. Also, you need to think of your own dignity or your own image first before you post not only for the other people but also for yourself."* Mitsy admitted that many millennials are not careful about their posts in the virtual space. She also thinks that social media has indeed become like a freedom wall and sometimes used to harm others.

Similar to the other participants in this study, she sees cyberbullying as disrespect to others – *"Humans deserve respect and one doesn't have the right to judge someone by their mistakes. No one is perfect, right? Everybody has their flaws, nobody is perfect and we should all respect that because we are not all alike. We have our differences and we should respect each other for that."* Mitsy reiterated the word "respect" and believes this is what all people deserve hence for her cyberbullying is a serious offense because it can be a sign of disrespect.

The participant assumes that people participate in cyberbullying due to some reasons – *"...maybe there are different factors why they cyberbully or*

do the wrong things. Probably, like what I said earlier, they just hate not getting what they want maybe they want to get attention from it or maybe it just gives them joy to do such things even if they know they're already hurting other people's feelings. Maybe it makes them happy to hurt others or maybe they don't know that they are already hurting others." Apparently, Mitsy finds most reasons behind cyberbullying as unacceptable.

Participant 4.Karleen

What Karleen saw in the tweeting communication situation was a student opening up to her friends on social media regarding her frustration about a teacher whom she believes to be unsympathetic and inconsiderate – *"...Probably she just opened up. I forgot the caption but the people retweeted, they commented..."* She further added, *"What I saw was that when the student asked for permission from the teacher, the teacher's response was a bit like so abrupt in a way, like he was mean in such a way if you misunderstand him and then maybe the student was also surprised of his answer so she decided to tweet about it or something."* Karleen however thought what the student did was wrong – *"I can say that she was a bit a wrong since she only showed a part of the conversation and then people will react only to what they see so it was wrong for her. It was wrong for her to not show the whole conversation."*

Some of the comments according to Karleen were in favor of the student who tweeted due to similar views and judgments about the teacher – *"A lot of people agreed on the tweet like and then some secrets were disclosed. I mean everyone's ill feelings towards the teacher that were bottled up were tweeted and the tweet was somehow boosted since others opened up on their feelings against the teacher. Examples were mostly about the teacher's negative actions in classes like when we were in grade 11. I mean the teacher was teaching research and then he didn't teach it properly. He would give unclear instructions and then he would always come to class late and then he was choosy with his students."*

Karleen thought however that the tweet and the comments were somehow disrespectful – *“ It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher. Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him and he didn’t know about what was going on and then he just knew about it through others who told him that there was something that happened on twitter where he was the topic.”*

While reading the posts, Karleen couldn’t help but react and assessed the situation. She thought that the comments were hypercritical and should not have been brought up in public – *“...it’s not good to judge based on one person’s perspective so it’s better if you won’t talk about things in public. Why don’t you like talk about it in person or address it to the person privately... I was shocked, at the same time I agreed to some of the comments and I was also intrigued with the other comments and then after thinking about those things I thought that the student shouldn’t have done it because it was too public and it’s not good because others do not know about it but still commented negative things. It was better to talk about it privately.”*

Karleen shared her views about cyberbullying. For her cyberbullying is gossiping and criticizing someone in the virtual space hence disrespecting a person– *“Cyberbullying is when you post your opinion about someone or even a picture of yourself and you send it to your friends and they gossip about it. That’s a form of cyberbullying when you start to bash someone, when you react to it negatively. If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person’s feelings.”* She referred the tweeting situation as cyberbullying - *“The teacher’s wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying.”*

The participant shared that people who participate in cyberbullying just want to prove something or perhaps ruin someone – *“They want to somewhat prove...they just want to ruin the person...”* Karleen further mentioned that she did not participate because of her past painful and unfair experience – *“because I experienced it before. I felt disrespected because she tweeted*

something about me online, something, which I didn't do. And so many asked me about it what were said were true or not or something. You're not even sure of what you're tweeting about, some are just plain imagination and then you tweet about them."

Karleen considered the act as cyberbullying because through the comments and reactions, the teacher's flaws were publicized to a big audience - *"...the teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying."* She considers cyberbullying as a sign of disrespect because this act hurts other people's feelings - *"...If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments, you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings."* With these representations of cyberbullying, Karleen decided not to participate in the tweeting communication phenomenon.

Participant 5. Gio

What Gio saw in the situation was a student who just simply shared her conversation with a teacher - *"So basically in that situation, someone or a friend of mine tweeted about the conversation she had with our teacher then there were many who commented and I also commented. The student said something about her flying to Japan because of her grandma's death and asked if she could be absent and the teacher said something that triggered the situation (tweeting encounter)."*

Gio commented that in that tweeting situation, the side of the teacher was muted, and only the student's side was highlighted; and that somehow people were careless in their giving of comments - *"I'd say that what was known was more of my friend's side and we overlooked the side of the teacher, that it was already kind of offensive. I think people were not thinking about what they were tweeting. They did not think about the perspective of our teacher."*

As to the comments, Gio said that many of them were unpleasant and had caused tension among those who participated who had opposing views - *"There were many negative rants...bad words were said. There were also comments however which defended our teacher."* He added, *" There was a twitter fight. There were comments which said that a case should be filed against the teacher and those who defended the teacher said that the side of the teacher must also be considered because they know the teacher and they believe he is not as bad as publicized and others said that the teacher was really inconsiderate."*

Gio thought that what happened was an instance of cyberbullying and that it could be associated with disrespect as it caused moral damage - *"It was a form of cyberbullying because an individual was bashed. The situation sort of destroyed the character of the teacher because of the bashing. It's disrespecting the morality of a person."*

The participant admitted that he participated because he was confused at that time when he was reading the tweet and its comments. He also admitted that he got carried away by the majority's negative comments and that he wanted to defend a friend (the student) - *"I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments."* He added - *" I participated because I also wanted to defend my friend but after I processed things I realized that I should have also considered my teacher's side and that I should have also kept to myself my comments..."* Later on however, Gio realized that he should have kept his comments to himself.

He further relayed some of his realizations regarding communicating feelings and thoughts through social media - *"After thinking things over, I thought that it would have been better for my friend to do a PM [Private Message] so that not many would have been involved to the point that it became chaotic. So, instead of saying things in public, you could have shared*

your thoughts to a few trusted individuals so as not to complicate things...So if you decide to tweet about someone, it's better not to mention a name or you can always PM the person concerned." He stressed the importance of discreteness (sharing thoughts with a few trusted individuals, not explicitly mentioning names etc.) so as not to add more complications on such situations

Participant 6. Susan

The situation that Susan saw was a student communicating negatively and maliciously about her experience with a teacher whom she asked permission from but did not responded to her favor – *"The girl needed to fly to Japan due to her grandmother's death and she asked permission from the teacher but was denied of her request so she tweeted about it. She then tweeted very negative comments and then she shared her conversation with the teacher in twitter. However, the teacher had other statements which were not shared like the teacher said "It's ok, nothing to worry about". She was like, encouraged by the teacher that she doesn't have to worry but she sort of deleted the part of their conversation."* Susan noticed that the student who tweeted spitefully shared only what was partial in order to draw sympathy and cause disgust towards the teacher.

Susan further relayed that many friends sided on the one who tweeted – *"She had many friends and expectedly they supported her. And those other students who did not know the whole story they also commented and they sided with the girl even if they didn't know the whole story. One student said, that yes, he says that "I'm not your chatmate, I'm your teacher" but there were times the he chatted with the male students. A screenshot of these conversations between the teacher and the male student was also posted."* She observed that even those who did not have any idea on the story's background were joining the crowd who bashed the teacher.

The participant thought that the communicative act of tweeting for the situation was a wrong thing to do and considered it as cyberbullying – *"I think it was wrong for the students to post negative things online about the teacher*

because what if you were the teacher and your students will do such things to you. It doesn't feel good."

When asked to share her views on tweeting and using social media, Susan mentioned – *" Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person. You shouldn't mention any name or name drop, something like that. Maybe I can relate because I'm also like them...I let out frustrations. But I think when you do it, that's all you get, let out frustrations and that's it. You don't gain anything out of it."* Susan thought that even if we can express anything in twitter such as frustrations, this should be used responsibly and in no way should one use this to explicitly speak bad things about specific people.

She added that, for her, what happened was cyberbullying and shared strongly that cyberbullying has always been cruel act and that its impact on the victims cannot be understated - *" It's cyberbullying and any kind of cyberbullying is wrong. No matter what your status is, no one should talk bad things about you. We always have to be positive and be kind to people because you will never know if that person will be the one to help you in the future. It was inappropriate because I think cyberbullying is bad in itself. It's really bad. What if the one you are bullying has a mental illness? Cyberbullying can cause depression on the victims. There's a negative impact. I was also bullied before and I was depressed. Good thing, I had friends who encouraged me not to mind them."*

She thinks cyberbullying is a sign of weakness and insecurity on the part of the bully as this act is normally done to seek sympathy and attention - *"Cyberbullying makes people feel superior about themselves. I want to be an advocate against cyberbullying. I want to redefine cyberbullying. They say that if you are bullied, you are weak. For me, it's not like that. The one who bullies is the one who is weak because they are insecure so they seek for sympathizers to ally with them. Cyberbullying is weakness. They bully because they want attention."*

Apparently, Susan did not participate in that tweeting encounter and commented about how millenials can be too vocal in social media – *“ I did not retweet. I just read. It was a wrong thing to do. She should not have tweeted about it. It was wrong because she was tweeting about our teacher, our coordinator. I think, people now, especially millenials my age are too vocal. And in that situation because the girl was popular, many were able to read the tweet and her screenshot. And those who retweeted should not have at all retweeted. They just destroyed the reputation of the teacher. Susan further said- “I never commented I have an experience with him, with the teacher. He helped me before when I was in grade 11. I made a mistake by spreading a rumor about someone who transcribed our research from English into Tagalog. When the teacher heard about it, he called my attention and advised me to be tactful, that I shouldn’t be tactless, that I shouldn’t be gossiping and spread rumors and I’ve learned that lesson from him.”* She again emphasized the negative effect (destroyed reputation) of cyberbullying on the victim.

Participant 7. PJ

PJ saw that the situation had two sides so he tried to justify the student’s act of tweeting and at the same time mentions where the student has been deficient – *“At first, I saw a student complaining about an unethical act of a teacher in terms of how he... At first, I was really with this student at that moment... although it was a double-edged sword actually. It was wrong also for the student because you see when you ask permission especially if it involves academic, you should be following some legal processes or a technical process like sign letters for example which the teacher has a point... but the big chunk of it was really how the teacher responded to that student... it was really quite obscene and insensitive to reply that way considering the situation she was in at that moment...”* He considered that the behavior of the student could have been triggered by the teacher’s insensitive reply.

When asked about his thoughts on tweeting about the situation and the use of social media, PJ expressed – *“Not exactly fine because the thing about the Internet is that people can have their own interpretations. Although you can understand where the student is coming from but you can’t blame how the social media can sensationalize the message and sometimes mislead people what is actually or what is actually the message.”* He thought that tweeting for that situation was not acceptable but understands where the student is coming from.

PJ thought that the comments were quite reactive and that the tweet of the student conveyed a message of hatred towards what the teacher did – *“It was really quite reactive considering how they, how the screenshots were just one sided, although if you try to weigh things, both parties really had mistakes but the thing about it is that the message that was conveyed is that the student really hated the teacher for what he has done.”* He again explained that both parties were at fault in the situation.

PJ considered what happened and what were said as both positive and negative – *“It’s positive in a way that people become responsive because when people doesn’t really react to it like there’s something wrong with the tweet basically, there’s something wrong with the message because it’s both antagonizing that person you’re actually tweeting about but it’s also about expressing one’s grievance at some point, like people might have the same experience and then people react to it and like for example the hashtag “me too” and sympathize....”* The other obscene posts of that teacher also went out so like how he treats students and there’s a screen shot of how he treats his male students...*I think even if people say that it’s a bad thing, people just react to it and for me it’s actually a good thing because people become responsible when they become reactive.”* For PJ, the tweet and its negative comments despite being blunt are not at all destructive especially that what were brought up were legitimate criticisms, which allowed people to react and participate in a discussion that hopes to correct a person’s flaw.

He admitted however that what were said were provocative and quite confrontational hence boundaries could have been observed – “...I know what they are trying to say but it's quite antagonizing. They didn't put it in the right context, although they had the right intention but they didn't put it in the right context... I think if you really want to tweet about someone online I mean, at the very least you can just hide your identity...by virtue of the right... the freedom of expression, the least you can do is just make that someone anonymous. You can express your grievance sure like a general, a universal statement...the wrong thing comes in when you put the name of the person and let the whole world interpret what your context is.”

The participant thought of the situation as cyberbullying but further argued that it could just be a mere expression of grievance – “If you try to look at it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance... the line is blurry between those things and you just can't categorize that thing in one context because it can be in every context, it depends on how you look at it.” He further shared his views about cyberbullying saying, “Cyberbullying is more on destroying a person, destroying that is out of context and most of the time it is subjective and really ad hominem to the point that what you are saying are not actually happening because like if you can have social media to critique someone...I don't really get why people can't get criticisms sometimes even though how objective they are. Cyberbullying has this dynamics... that you can already consider it as cyberbullying if it's not factual already, if its out of the context, it's not objective, the words that are used are too much of what it's supposed to be and the message, the words that are being used are not conveying the right message that you wanted to convey.” For him, it is not cyberbullying when your criticisms about a person are not objective and factual and is perplexed why people are not able to embrace criticisms constructively.

PJ participated in the tweeter encounter for the reason that he strongly disliked how the teacher in a way inappropriately responded to the student - “ I participated but I contextualized it in a sense that the way he responded to

the message was inappropriate. I didn't say that he's bad, altogether, it's just that I put it in a context, I placed it in a context that his act on his response to the student is not appropriate, you can say a more, you can say a better response other than that... I admit that it could be one side of the story but still that chunk, that even that one dialogue it already speaks a lot of what it means... an objective basis because that's what he told us, that's what he told that student, therefore you judge him based on that certain basis only. It becomes cyberbullying when you judge him beyond that certain basis. I don't know if it's part of confidentiality, but I know the whole story. I asked the whole convo so that's why I can put myself in the shoes of those who tweeted, who retweeted. " He justified that he was able to put his participation in context; that he was not attacking the person but the act committed; and that it was reasonable for him to speak up because he was being objective in his comments.

Participant 8. Thomas

Thomas sees rudeness in the tweet of a student and in its comments as a reaction to a disappointing, "somewhat disrespectful" and an unexpected reply of a teacher – *"The situation itself, if you look at it, it's a bit like in away rude especially for our adviser but I cannot also blame the one who posted it in a sense that the teacher was also somewhat disrespectful in the way he replied. I would understand the point of the student that she felt disrespected because she asked if she could be excused from a school activity but on the otherhand, the manner of asking through chat was also unprofessional. But even so, I think she asked permission calmly but our teacher gave her that reply... so I think she didn't expect that kind of very straightforward response from the teacher."* Thomas however defended the student's act and tried to put his self on the shoes of the student whom he believes to be disrespected by the teacher.

The comments according to Thomas were both positive (in favor of the teacher) and negative (against the teacher). He thought that the negative

comments were harsh and straightforward – *“Some of the comments, retweets actually made sense while others were plain rude like just for the sake of commenting which only added to the tension or just to release anger towards our adviser, to our teacher...50/50. Some had really good points. They were mature in their take but again others were plain rude and they kept on adding more comments which were already out of context, things which were already too personal.”* He further relayed the specific comments that were against the teacher. He added - *“Some co tweets mentioned about the teacher’s other offenses like his always being late, and that he does not ask permission if he would not report to class and he would require projects on the 11th hour wherein students are not given ample time to prepare and he would expect a lot from his students.”*

While reading the tweet and the comments, Thomas couldn’t help but react and sympathize with the student – *“When I was reading the tweet, I actually got mad because the student really took time to ask for the teacher’s permission but the teacher just told her to stop crying because you can’t do anything about the situation anymore. He could have given the student a time to grieve especially that it’s the death of a family member. So, that’s the picture I saw in the viral tweet based on how the teacher responded to the student.”*

For Thomas, tweeting has become a millennial’s expression podium yet he also believes that for that situation, tweeting could not be the best manner of sharing the experience. He justified however that the student’s act of tweeting could be reasonable given the context – *“As a millennial, we tend to express a lot especially on twitter and we tend to think that we are protected by the screen so we feel that we can say anything we want to say even if they are wrong. As to that particular tweet however, the student just showed that the teacher was disrespectful but she could not have tweeted about it and could have enclosed the conversation within a specific group among close friends. But I think she tweeted about it because she presumed that many other students do not like the teacher and she wanted for others to validate what she feels towards the teacher. However, it would have been more*

mature if she did not use twitter in expressing her disappointment. It would have been better if she confided with her parents or with close friends and not on social media." He believes that the student sought validation of her grievances from other students who have been in one way or another offended by the teacher yet thinks that resorting to social media was not a very mature decision since social media is not the best venue for such sensitive discussions.

Thomas thinks that social media has its good side because it has helped him personally in terms of releasing stress or letting off steam he believes however that this should be used with limitations and handled sensibly – *"What's good about social media is it helps us blow off steam. In social media we can release our anger, our hatred, our heavy feeling so in that sense if you tweet like personally I tweet a lot about how I feel even if sometimes it's for a specific person, it's in a way relieving but of course you have to have limitations especially if you talk about another person. You should be able to handle it maturely. It would have been acceptable if she only talked about her feeling of disappointment but not explicitly referring to a specific person and telling the whole world about it. This can destroy a person's character and in that tweet other strands like ABM and STEM already got involved."*

Cyberbullying for Thomas is about destroying a person's dignity and he considered the tweeting situation a form of cyberbullying and a disrespectful doing – *"Cyberbullying in a sense is destroying a person's dignity. In that situation students from other stands were able to judge the teacher based solely on that tweet. That tweet creates a bad picture of the teacher, that he is disrespectful. In a sense, it's a form of cyberbullying."* He added, *"Cyberbullying is when you destroy someone or say hurtful or negative things to a person through social media whether it's true or not because if it's true then what is that to you? But if its false then the impact is worse because you're spreading something not true about a person on social media. And in this generation, whatever you post in social media could spread rapidly even if it's a hoax. In that tweet, the character of the person was gravely destroyed."*

For Thomas regardless of whether the comments or criticisms about a person are true or not, as long as you have caused hurt or humiliation on the person, it is already cyberbullying. He also stressed on how messages in social media could rapidly spread and how cyberbullying could intensely affect on the person "attacked".

He admitted however that he also tweeted about the incident but realized later that he was impulsive in doing so and somehow regretted what he did – *"I didn't co tweet but I tweeted. Honestly at first, I reacted negatively towards the teacher. Perhaps, I was shocked with the teacher's unprofessional response so I tweeted in my own timeline. Afterwards, I realized that I should not be participating in that issue."* Thomas thought that his participation was a knee-jerk reaction to what was exposed in twitter. He did not expect such conduct from a teacher as to how it was portrayed in the thread and as a response, he instantaneously reacted before being able to *weigh things properly.*

Participant 9. Hanz

What Hanz saw in the tweeting situation was a student complaining about the teacher's unkind and uncaring reply to a student's request – *"What I saw on twitter was a screenshot of the conversation of a fellow Hums student and a teacher wherein the student asked permission from the teacher that she cannot join the school activity because her grandmother died so she had to travel to Japan. The first time I read the conversation was that I think it was mean for the teacher to deny her of her request bluntly. It was a very direct answer. At that time, I still didn't know the whole story so my initial reaction was that I found the teacher mean."* Through that tweet, Hanz like most of the tweet's readers assumed that the teacher was mean.

Hanz said that he was able to read a number of negative comments and criticisms about the teacher, which were over the line offensive – *"Most of the students' comments about the teacher were negative and some students*

went overboard...for example, they pointed out the bad side of the teacher, his being mean. They criticized the teacher."

He admitted that while reading the tweet and the comments, the messages against the teacher sort of brainwashed him and persuaded him on the students' side – *"...because of all the negative comments I read, I was kind of brainwashed so I got carried away. I agreed that the teacher was rude and he was not able to handle the student properly. That was the first thing that came to my mind so I sided with the student."*

Tweeting about the situation for Hanz however was inappropriate and a careless and thoughtless move – *"For me, tweeting about the situation was a careless move because first of all the conversation between the teacher and the student was private so for you to share it especially on twitter wherein so many people can view so it was a careless act. She was not thinking about the effect of what she did."*

Cyberbullying for Hanz is when you ruin the reputation of someone and it is a sign of disrespect – *"...through the use of social media like when you hurt them through tweets, through statuses, through messages, through words. It's a sign of disrespect because if you are really angry towards a person you can always approach him and not hit on that person online... Cyberbullying can also start like people gossip and talk about others online."*

Admittedly, Hanz confessed that he participated in that cyberbullying incident but later realized it was wrong for him to have joined the mob – *"After reading the tweet, I also commented. I also expressed my disappointment like the others because I also got carried away and I was shocked with what I read in the tweet. Almost all students gave negative comments so my brain sort of sided with the majority especially that I didn't know the whole story yet."* He further narrated, *"Like the rest, I also bullied. The teacher didn't know anything about what's happening in twitter like I said earlier, it was supposed to be a private conversation between him and the student but it was shared. I could have been more thoughtful before giving comments. I should have*

known the whole story first... after that incident, I now think first before I react to a tweet. I now try to think if what I'm about to say is right or not." That incident gave Hanz a lesson and that is to think first before giving remarks in social media.

He further commented about the platform, twitter – *"Twitter for me now is already toxic like once you express your opinion it will always have a reaction and it could start conflicts. A lot of people are fighting in twitter..."* Thomas now views twitter as "toxic" and not a safe place for one to be very candid in his/her speech since whatever is said in this platform may start potential uncontrollable disputes."

Participant 10. Leslie

For Leslie, what she saw in the tweeting situation were simply complaints about a certain teacher's inadequacies – *"In the tweets, I just saw students ranting about a particular teacher whom we've had and this teacher has caused a lot of problems for us as students."* The tweets were simply complaints for the experiences they had about the teacher, observations they have about him.

Leslie said that these comments were mostly criticisms about a teacher's behavior which for her are legitimate concerns of students thus for her are agreeable – *"Well, they were mostly complaints or observations like for example there was this one student... a lot of them were negative like for example there was this one tweet that stated that this teacher is really irresponsible because he always arrives to class late and he likes bossing the students around and likes insulting them and I've seen my classmates crying because of him, just his behavior...Honestly, I agreed with them because I also felt what they felt and I've also experienced what they've experienced what they shared in twitter."* She strongly sympathized with the students for she herself could attest to the teacher's unfavorable conduct towards his students.

Twitter for Leslie has become a venting place for students and it has become an avenue where students can freely express and share their concerns, raise awareness of certain issues without fear of being reprimanded by school authorities and justifies the acceptability of this manner as long as no names are dropped in the conversations – *“...we all know that twitter is sort of a venting place for students like us... the good thing about tweeting about these sort of things is, it gives people awareness, it gives them some background info on what the students are going through because I've had personal experience, sometimes it really feels like the teacher is bullying us so and he's a teacher so we can't really retaliate much... we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to twitter and rant about their frustrations...it's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything.”*

She admitted however that for that situation, twitter had not been used responsibly and became uncontrollable – *“Twitter really is used as a platform, though it's brought a lot of good things, it has it's bad effects like, like that tweet issue in December. It really went big and a part of me actually liked that it was given awareness, that issue but it was also out of control. Since the original tweet was a screen shot of everything that went on. Of course students would naturally feel outraged reading it but people should have taken into consideration that it was just one side of the story.”* Leslie added, *“What makes it not okay is when people start going overboard with criticism and the hate and people are jumping into it and becomes kind of like a sort of trend as you can see and some people don't even mean what they say, they just, they just go along with it...”* Leslie thought that people were just going along with the mob and went overboard with their statements. It started with a supposedly good intention for her but caused a huge scandal, which severely damaged the teacher's morality.

Leslie further commented that twitter had not been positively useful for that situation – *“Twitter as a platform for that issue was actually really toxic because in truth, students should just confront him or talk to the administration or anyone in school about the problem. It's just that I suppose the students*

were scared or anxious about doing that so instead they turned to twitter, so it's a bad mechanism, coping mechanism for the things they've been through." Twitter became a tool improperly used to cope with students' challenges and struggles against a teacher.

Leslie thinks "...cyberbullying is when people post things in social media that explicitly mention a particular person. Cyberbullying is intrusive... of course it's hurtful, it's emotionally abusive..." She also considers cyberbullying as a sign of repressed emotions – "...it's a sign of repressed emotions on the part of the cyberbully because maybe they are projecting their own emotions into other people or maybe they are projecting what they feel and it was suppressed..." Like the other participants, Leslie believes that since cyberbullying is intrusive and emotionally abusive, then it is definitely hurtful on the one inflicted. She believes that cyberbullying is a sign of suppressed feelings.

She believes however that what happened was more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying – "I guess it's more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying because the students didn't really know who to go to and who to tell their issues and I guess they were outraged considering the issue behind it so I guess it was really just that, a venting place. They were angered so they went there and posted whatever which was bad but I can't call it cyberbullying it was like an indirect thing." Leslie justified the act because of the surrounding factors and elements – students' not knowing where to bring up certain matters; students were just retaliating towards an unfavorable conduct done them; and they were just provoked.

She confessed that she participated in the tweeting event and reasoned that she was more careful in her participation by not mentioning any name– "I tweeted once but I didn't mention a name. It was a conversation that we heard in the classroom about the teacher, I just said, teacher x, then their conversation. That's just what I did but not in the thread of the tweet. They were saying everything that I wanted to say, they were already saying most of the things that I felt and thought about the teacher. I felt like it was already too

much and they've already said what I wanted to say, I didn't want to personally attack the teacher, I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself so that's why I didn't participate cause I didn't want to attack him personally...they were going so overboard and I just wanted his behavior to change. That's all that I want." She spoke up not to personally attack the teacher and not just for the sake of expressing how she feels about the teacher but she participated hoping that through these sentiments shared, a change of behavior on the part of the teacher will take place.

Participant 11.Amie

What Amie saw in the situation was a student slighted and upset by a teacher's insensitive reply to a request and finds social media as an opportunity to express her frustration – *"I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media. Perhaps she felt that social media was a great outlet because people would be able to support her arguments especially people who didn't know the real story so maybe it becoming viral was in her favor... it's a platform that people look to when they wish to... because social media is like, there's a screen, you can't really tell the consequences of your actions or you can't really tell immediate responses from the person you are tweeting about so it can almost feel safer compared to personal interactions."* Amie thought that the student like other people took social media as a "safe" channel for her to express her unlikely experience with the teacher believing that the *asynchronosity* of social media could spare someone from experiencing immediate negative consequences or feedback from a person being tweeted about.

As to the tweet and its comments, Amie thought that if taken out of context, it was alarming and the comments were very personal and pejorative- *"When placed out of context, the content of the tweet seemed very alarming, it seemed like insensitive..."* She further narrated that – *"Many of them were alarmed because they didn't expect that coming from a teacher and many of*

them, some of them even supported the argument citing other instances of the teacher acting in a certain manner in another situation like how he teaches, how he communicates with his students. Sometimes, they can be very personal... some personal things about a certain student that the rest of the class doesn't know about... they were mentioned, maybe almost a form of attack... it can be taken as derogatory... it's not ok because there was no complete background on the entire situation and people only see one side of the situation so sometimes they join and they put out some more negative comments about another person without actually knowing the whole story. Amie added, "I don't think it was the most appropriate thing especially since the names could be seen in the picture and I didn't think it was appropriate but perhaps in the heat of the moment that's the only way that she felt she could gain support."

While reading the tweet and its comments, Amie confessed that she sympathized with her friend and the other students especially that only one side of the story was known – "I was intrigued and at the same time I couldn't help but felt strongly about the content of the tweet because I knew the person and I knew the situation and maybe I didn't know the whole story so of course I felt my favor was for the student."

She thought that what happened was a form of cyberbullying since the one being talked about did not have the chance to defend himself- "It was cyberbullying because the person on the other hand didn't have the chance to defend himself, didn't even know what was going on." For Amie, "Cyberbullying is a sign of... cyberbullying is an attack on another person through using digital means. Cyberbullying could be an attack, could be a defense, could be a negative expression."

Amie confessed however that she also retweeted since she felt strongly for the rightful issue/s raised by her friend and the other students but eventually realized the inaptness of her act – I retweeted, I liked the tweet and I talked about it to my friends and it was a big issue so many conversations happened. I tweeted in favor of the student, I called out the teacher for some

other things that I felt he was lacking in or he was doing wrong... I joined because there were instances when I also felt, or I was also caught up by my emotions... You have no time to think about things, you know it's social media ...I would have thought about it a lot more but since it's social media then I went ahead." She realized that she was caught up by her emotions and was being thoughtless in her participation as the usual case with other people in social media.

She thought that Social Media became a very accessible tool that facilitated their conversations – *"Social media wasn't around before and now that we have it, it's like, it's opened up, it's a platform to express your emotions maybe to people or to other people, things about ourselves that we don't necessarily want other people to know about or maybe we do want them to know but we don't want to tell them directly."*

Step Seven: Construction of a Textural-Structural Description

The textural and structural narratives (constructed from steps 5 and 6) were combined and the researcher used one's own interpretation of "what" (texture) thoughts and "how" (structure) the participants reached these views. After a thorough and careful deliberation, the participant's narrative responses were explained, and given meaning and sense according to the researcher's own understanding and judgment of the thoughts shared by the participants.

The following is an example of a portion of the textural-structural account of Karleen (Participant 4) to illustrate the participant's understanding of the tweeting phenomenon, interpretations about tweeting in the cyberspace as a signifier to an object signified thus defining her act of non-participation in the communication situation;

What Karleen saw in the tweeting communication situation was a student opening up to her friends on social media regarding her frustration about a teacher whom the tweeter believes to be harsh and inconsiderate. Karleen thought of this communicative act as a reaction to a perceived "rudeness" in the reply of the teacher. Some of the comments according to Karleen were in favor of the student who tweeted due to similar views about the teacher. However, she described these comments as somewhat disrespectful – *"...it was somehow disrespectful against the teacher... things happened quickly...like all of a sudden, everyone was against him (the teacher)..."* Karleen considered the act as cyberbullying because through the comments and reactions, the teacher's flaws were publicized to a large audience – *"...the teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying."* She considers cyberbullying as a sign of disrespect because this act hurts other people's feelings – *"...If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments, you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings."* With these representations bullying in the cyberspace, Karleen decided not to participate in the tweeting communication phenomenon.

Step Eight: Composite Description Textural-Structural

In the textural and structural description, the researcher synthesized the narratives and their themes in order to determine the over-all meaning of the student-participants' views. For instance, the participants' views on the specific tweeting encounter might vary yet recurring themes were recognizable. For those who participated, they considered the twitter as a

platform where they can express their grievances and objective criticisms to what has been perceived to be wrongly done to the one who tweeted and to them as well. They thought that the student who tweeted only expressed and shared to her friends her frustration about the teacher. Also, the comments of those who agreed on the tweet were understood as a support to a friend's sentiments because some of them have the same feeling and judgment about the teacher.

On the one hand, those who did not participate in the communication situation considered the act of tweeting as a device to get attention and sympathy from the tweeter's sphere of influence and the general public. They also thought that the cyberspace as a platform for expression was abused through tweets, which are quite offensive, hence could be categorized as an act of cyberbullying.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the discussions of the results of the study. The statements of the participants are cited every now then in the progression of discussions as their narratives are the bases of inferring and conjecturing essential notions derived from the views shared by the young digital natives.

Examining the twitter encounter using Peirce's semiotics principles where any instance of signification or making sense contains a signifier or a sign, an object and interpretant or interpretation that determines an act, the succeeding discussions will focus on the sign or signifier and its signifying elements, the objects or the ones signified and the interpretations that intermediated the participants' actions of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

The importance of the interpretant or interpretation for Peirce is that signification is not a simple "dyadic" relationship between sign and object: a sign signifies only in being interpreted. This makes the interpretant central to the content of the sign, in that, the meaning of a sign is manifest in the interpretation that it generates in sign users. The interpretation provides a translation of the sign (Atkins, 2013).

Table 1.0

Object/Signification	Interpretant/Action	
	Participation	Non-Participation
cyberspace is a platform for community building	friendship, alliance sympathy for good or bad	friendship, alliance, sympathy
cyberspace is a platform for freedom of expressions thoughtlessness impact	grievances, criticisms	disrespect, immaturity, aggression, audience, reach and

THE SIGN AND THE SIGNIFIED: What the cyberspace signifies for the senior high school students:

The Cyberspace interpreted as a platform for community building

Shyna, Susan, Gio, Thomas, Hanz, Leslie and Amie interpret the cyberspace as a platform for community building wherein characteristics or nuances such friendships, alliances and sympathy are demonstrated in the cyberspace communications. These significations of the cyberspace clearly mediate acts of participation in cyberbullying.

In Shyna’s story, elements of community building such as friendship and show of support are highlighted, “... *In twitter you can find friends, you can find a lot of people who will agree to what you stand for...I think in that tweet, the twitter was in my perspective, she was looking for people to side on her so that more people would support her and yes I agree with what she was saying and you can see like in the comments were like a lot more stuff being said and you can see that a girl was really getting a lot of people on her side.*”

Friendship and support in the cyberspace were also seen by Susan as she told her story, *"...She had many friends and expectedly they supported her. And those other students who did not know the whole story they also commented and they sided with the girl even if they didn't know the whole story..."*

The story of Gio is an honest admission of his sympathy for a friend, *"...I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments...I participated because I also wanted to defend my friend but after I processed things I realized that I should have also considered my teacher's side and that I should have also kept to myself my comments..."*

Thomas also thought that an alliance among the cyberspace community members are demonstrated, *"...I think she tweeted about it because she presumed that many other students do not like the teacher and she wanted for others to validate what she feels towards the teacher..."*

Hanz story emphasized how the messages of other members of the community made him join them in their show of support to a friend, *"The moment I saw the tweet, the first thing that came to my mind because of all the negative comments I read, I was kind of brainwashed so I got carried away. I agreed that the teacher was rude, like that and he was not able to handle the student properly. That was the first thing that came to my mind so I sided with the student."*

make the cyberspace a qualified signifier in the twitter encounter being studied.

This interpretation of communication in the cyberspace by these young digital natives appears to be "mutually agreed upon" as the situation is given a common meaning or a shared definition by the interacting beings. This sharing of the same "sense" or "thought" about the discourses happening in the virtual arena, specifically the Twitter conversations in this study, depicts a "communal meaning" adequate for a signifier such as the cyberspace to mediate acts of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

The Cyberspace interpreted as a platform for Freedom of Expressions

Other than the cyberspace being viewed as platform of community building, the young digital natives thought of the cyberspace as a podium for freedom of expressions. In the cyberspace, young people like them are able to voice out opinions, disapprovals and complaints about certain issues. Emergent in the students' narratives is that the tweet and some of its comments were expressions of grievance and criticisms towards a "perceived" unfavorable act done upon the one who started the conversation and the other students who participated in the Twitter interaction. Some of the research participants suggested that those tweets that supported the student maybe interpreted as more of a retribution and a defense than an offense.

In Shyna's story, exercising of freedom of expression in the cyberspace is emphasized, *"It's expected because you know it's a teenager so teenagers you know, we're carefree and we'd say whatever we want and stuff and not really caring about what they think...The thing about tweeting especially*

teenagers tweet is that, we're not afraid to be direct. It's something like directing to a person without actually mentioning anything, so a lot of us do that a lot especially when we are having problems with a teacher or with a fellow classmate and I guess I'm just really used to seeing things like that...Twitter for us is like a freedom wall because what I notice is that when we tweet we don't have filter..."

Mitsy shared about how expressive the young people are in the cyberspace, " *Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want..."*

Susan also views the millenials to be very outspoken, "...I think, people now, especially millenials my age are too vocal... Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person."

"If you try to look at it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance..." as told by P.J.

Thomas' story presents his views on how young people could bravely speak their minds regardless of being incorrect, "As a millennial, we tend to express a lot especially on twitter and we tend to think that we are protected by the screen so we feel that we can say anything we want to say even if they are wrong...What's good about social media is it helps us blow off steam. In social media we can release our anger, our hatred, our heavy feeling so in that sense if you tweet like personally I tweet a lot about how I feel even if

sometimes it's for a specific person, it's in a way relieving but of course you have to have limitations especially if you talk about another person..."

In the story of Leslie, the cyberspace can be a venue where everyone are equals, "...we can't really retaliate much we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to twitter and rant about their frustrations. It's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything..."

In the story of Amie, she saw the cyberspace as an opportunity of expressing feelings, " I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media...it's a platform to express your emotions maybe to people or to other people, things about ourselves that we don't necessarily want other people to know about or maybe we do want them to know but we don't want to tell them directly..."

These students found the cyberspace to be a leveling ground, where no authorities (teacher, or anyone higher in status) can restrict the young people's straightforward views and sentiments.

The story of Shyna points out the young individuals' directness in the cyberspace, "The thing about tweeting especially teenagers tweet is that, we're not afraid to be direct..." Karleen thought that the cyberspace provides an avenue for honest confessions of ill feelings, "A lot of people agreed on the tweet and then some secrets were disclosed. I mean everyone's ill feelings towards the teacher that were bottled up were tweeted and the tweet was somehow boosted since others opened up on their feelings against the teacher."

PJ's story tells that being reactive in the cyberspace is not at all a bad thing, *"I think even if people say that it's a bad thing, people just react to it and for me it's actually a good thing because people become responsible when they become reactive."*

In the story of Leslie, the cyberspace is seen to be a safe place for students to express their frustrations, *"...he's a teacher so we can't really retaliate much we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to Twitter and rant about their frustrations. It's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything."*

The young digital natives see the cyberspace as a platform where they can call the attention of even those in the "authority" for certain matters that they do not agree with. This freedom of expression is something they believe to be not normally afforded to them on a face-to-face encounter.

Leslie's story expressed that expressions of criticisms in the cyberspace changes other people's behavior, *"...I didn't want to personally attack the teacher, I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself so that's why I didn't participate cause I didn't want to attack him personally...I just wanted his behavior to change. That's all that I want."*

In the cyberspace, one could feel safer compared to offline encounters and calling out people's attention is easier done than on a personal interaction as the story of Amie emphasized, *"...because social media is like, there's a screen, you can't really tell the consequences of your actions or you can't really tell immediate responses from the person you are tweeting about so it*

can almost feel safer compared to personal interactions...I tweeted in favor of the student, I called out the teacher for some other things that I felt he was lacking in or he was doing wrong."

Compared with Face-to-Face (FtF) interactions, tweeting has been seemingly a very accessible and most convenient way of sharing what one thinks or feels whether positive or negative to friends or people who may share the same outlook, sentiment, passion, frustration and other human emotions towards something or someone.

Susan's story underscored twitter's communicative affordances, *"...Twitter is your own account and you can express anything in twitter but this should be used in a good way and not to talk bad things about people just because you are mad about that person...Maybe I can relate because I'm also like them... I let out frustrations..."*

Leslie in her story again emphasizes that the cyberspace is a place of free expressions, *"...the students didn't really know who to go to and who to tell their issues and I guess they were outraged considering the issue behind it so I guess it was really just that, a venting place..."*

Viewing the cyberspace as a platform for various expressions of communications such as dissatisfactions, frustrations, protests, etc. mediates actions of participation in virtual interactions. Again, the signifying elements identified earlier such as grievances and criticisms acted as the signifying vehicles which presence according to Peirce, make a sign, in this case, the cyberspace a capable signifier for freedom of expression.

These young individuals believe that the platform gives them the liberty to speak openly and candidly about anything, albeit carelessly and thoughtlessly sometimes. The platform has become a venting place, a freedom wall to young people according to the participants.

The narratives provide perspectives as to how the cyberspace is seen by the young digital natives as a ground where people could gather as a community, and where issues can be openly discussed in the virtual venue free from power structures. The cyberspace, specifically Twitter for these young digital natives has its own purpose enjoyed and valued by its users and participants. It has allowed these young people to meet as a community and to share their opinions with the other people in the community. They are able to express freely some thoughts that they may not be able to easily or comfortably share with others face to face. The cyberspace provides a ground for them to participate in discussions they deem important, an arena where no authorities can intimidate them and where they can freely and fearlessly speak to anyone even to an authority in question – something that could not be done on an FtF encounter.

The participants have appreciated and valued the use of twitter in terms of revealing what their hearts genuinely feel; sharing what their strong convictions are and communicating these views to an audience; and facilitating interactions that may not be conveniently afforded them somewhere else, not in their classrooms, not in their respective family settings, but only in this venue, the cyberspace. This representation of the cyberspace hence defined some of the students' participation in cyberbullying.

This signification of the cyberspace as a platform for freedom of expression wherein the highlighted "shared meaning" constructed by the young individuals is that the cyberspace affords them a sense of emancipation from the highly structured face-to-face communications and allows them to exercise democratic discourses with the other communication participants. This therefore has mediated their act of participation in cyberbullying.

The stories of the participants provided a context for the deeper views of the young digital natives about their participation or non-participation in the communicative action, cyberbullying. The participants' contextualizing of the Twitter encounter provides a depiction of the constituents or the surrounding elements (friendship, alliances, sympathy) of the "shared understanding" of the situation. The narratives portray "multiple cognitions" of the situation interacting with each other as well as a "common grasp" of the twitter dialogues in the cyberspace. This common consciousness of the tweeting circumstance as well as the divergent views of the situation has provided equilibrium in recognizing the presence of a signifier (cyberspace) that arbitrated the communicative acts of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

THE SIGNIFIER: How the SIGNIFICATION OF THE cyberspace MEDIATES the senior high school students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying

Non- Participation in Cyberbullying

The participants, who have regarded the cyberspace as an avenue where aggression in the freedom of expression can be exhibited,

conveyed that they did not participate in cyberbullying. Aggression as one of the characteristics of the object, freedom of expression in the cyberspace has clearly mediated their act of non- participation in the cyberbullying incident.

Shyna's story speaks of this "offensiveness" or "aggression" in the tweets, *"...it's definitely offensive... You can see it's directed to someone and you can see it's actually meant to offend someone because you know it has like screenshots...I didn't think it would go that far as in mentioning teacher and mentioning the stuff that happened and what the pictures contained, the screenshots.... For sure, it's not right. It's something very explicit. It's something that is like over the line offensive..."*

Ana emphasized in her view a nuance of the exercise of the freedom of expression such as aggression, *"...She is just humiliating someone...Mitsy commented, "...Maybe it makes them happy to hurt others... What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person... He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online..."*

"...everyone's ill feelings towards the teacher that were bottled up were tweeted and the tweet was somehow boosted since others opened up on their feelings against the teacher...Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him..." as told by Karleen in her story where "ill feelings" were expressed online.

Susan's story underscored the "destructiveness" or "aggressiveness" of the messages encountered on twitter, *"They just destroyed the reputation of the teacher... She then tweeted very negative comments and then she shared her conversation with the teacher in twitter."*

The statements shared by the participants confirm previous studies (Ang, 2015; Balakrishnan, 2017; Doanne, et al. , 2014; Fletcher, A., et al., 2014; Gualdo, et al., 2015; Hemphill, S. and Heerde, J. , 2014; Kubiszewski, V., et al., 2015; Lee, C. and Shin, N., 2017; Palermi, A. L., et al., 2017; Yen, et al., 2014; Wang, et al., 2017, etc.) that describe cyberbullying as an aggressive behavior demonstrated in the communicative act.

Participants described what they saw in the comments of the tweet as destructive, provocative, hateful, and violent. In this current study, *aggression* in the cyberspace is cogitated as one of the signifying elements of the signifier intermediated the students' act of non-participation in cyberbullying.

Also, the young digital natives' interpretations of the cyberspace as a platform with a massive audience hence covering an expansive scope in the freedom of expressions, have mediated actions of non- participation in cyberbullying.

As told in Shyna's story, *"You can see it's directed to someone and you can see it's actually meant to offend someone because you know it has like screenshots. It was like a lot of stuff you wouldn't want to see yourself... I know it was pretty offensive I can tell from the reactions of the media towards it... For sure, it's not right. It's something very explicit. It's something that is like over the line offensive because it's online and what you put online you can't...It 's just there even if you delete the tweet people would know you actually tweeted it... It is a form of cyberbullying because it is involving everyone. It's involving not only between the school not only between the classmates. It's involving everyone in the world because everyone can actually see it. There's an audience and one click, one search and you can*

find everything... It's a typical teen drama between a teacher and a student and of course it gets pretty normal. It's something like directing to a person without actually mentioning anything, so a lot of us do that a lot especially when we are having problems with a teacher or with a fellow classmate and I guess I'm just really used to seeing things like that but I didn't think it would go that far as in mentioning teacher and mentioning the stuff that happened and what the pictures contained, the screenshots."

Mitsy emphasized in her story the "double publicity" of the message, "If you bully a student in school at least not everybody knows about it unlike what was done. She posted it online for everybody to see and it didn't just include the school, it also included everybody because everybody saw the post even those from other schools so it became a double publicity. The audience was doubled..."

Karleen thought of the tweet as "too public", having the world as its audience, "...it's not good to judge based on one person's perspective so it's better if you won't talk about things in public. Why don't you like talk about it in person or address it to the person privately... I thought that the student shouldn't have done it because it was too public and it's not good because others do not know about it but still commented negative things. It was better to talk about it privately... The teacher's wrongdoings were like shown to the whole world and it became cyberbullying..."

Susan also thought of the number of readers or viewers of the tweet, "And in that situation because the girl was popular, many were able to read the tweet and her screenshot..."

The enormity of the audience and the far-reaching scope of the cyberspace have been stressed in the narratives of some of the young digital natives. Taking into consideration the social media as a platform, what makes the action cyberbullying tremendously embarrassing according to those who did not participate is its large audience and the extent to which cyber messages could reach. One of the participants called it "double publicity". Many of them mentioned "having the whole world" as the audience. In this case, the young digital natives see the cyberspace as a platform with the entire globe as its spectators and whatever unconstructive messages for an individual are broadcasted on this space could be accessed by a huge number of spectators thus resulting in severe destructive impact on the subject. This view of the exercise of freedom of expressions clearly mediated the act of non-participation of cyberbullying as relayed in the narratives of the students.

Similar to the claims of other studies (Gualdo, et al., 2015; Dempsey, et al., 2009; Hase, et al., 2015; Holfeld and Sukhawathanakul, 2017; Laftman, et al., 2013; Park, S., Na, E. and Kim, E., 2014; Pieschel, et al. 2013; Reio and Ledesma, 2016, etc.) , typically, cyberbullying could have serious outcomes on the victim. The participants thought that the tweeting event, which turned into cyberbullying humiliated the person and seriously destroyed the target's character given the whole world as its viewers.

Ana in her story speaks of the "embarrassment" of the subject spoken of in the tweets, *"I think that it's shameful for the subject because obviously the girl tweeted a screen shot of their conversation and the subject was not*

properly aware about the tweet. It's very inappropriate for the subject because he was simply being put to shame...".

Mitsy thought of the "hurt" and "humiliation" experienced by the authority being critized on the cyberspace as her story goes, " If I were in the teacher's place, I would really get hurt even if I wasn't in his place, I was really hurt because I'm also human and even if you think he made mistakes, he doesn't deserve that kind of publicity... What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person."

Susan judged the act of cyberbullying as "wrong" as she expressed her views, "I think it was wrong for the students to post negative things online about the teacher because what if you were the teacher and your students will do such things to you. It doesn't feel good... They just destroyed the reputation of the teacher... Cyberbullying can cause depression on the victims. There's a negative impact. I was also bullied before and I was depressed."

The elements mentioned such as aggression, audience and reach, and impact compose the characteristics of the communication phenomenon in the cyberspace. Peirce refers these features or gradations of freedom of expression in the cyberspace as signifying elements. These signifying elements play a crucial part in signifying the presence of a signifier, representamen or a sign. These rudiments are important in the functioning of the sign because the existence of their connection is the one responsible for signification. These signifying elements according to Peirce play a critical part in representing the presence and authenticity of a sign or signifier.

For those who did not participate in cyberbullying, a “communal signification” about the cyberspace (demonstrations of aggression, scope and reach of the platform, gravity of impact) in the practice of freedom of expression has intersubjectively mediated their communicative response. Albeit, these young individuals mutually share the view of those who participated that the cyberspace is a platform for freedom of expression, one can remarkably note that within this universal thought is a differing belief that is somehow shaped by certain principles or standards of interrelating with each other. Interestingly, the “like-mindedness” of these individuals in terms of how they perceive the characteristics or elements of the freedom of expression in cyberspace has co-regulated their non-participation in cyberbullying.

Interpreting the Cyberspace as a platform for offensive, disrespectful, immature and thoughtless exercise of *Freedom of Expressions* mediating Non-participation in Cyberbullying

The research participants had interesting further interpretations of the cyberspace. There were participants who interpreted the cyberspace as a platform for disrespectful, immature and thoughtless expressions. These interpretations of the cyberspace thus determined the participants' act of non-participation.

Ana in her story emphasized the “unsuitability” of the tweet, “...*I think that it's shameful for the subject because obviously the girl tweeted a screen shot of their conversation and the subject was not properly aware about the tweet. It's very inappropriate for the subject because he was simply being put*

to shame. Even like comments from other people, replies and everything I've read them... I follow other grade 12 students from the university and I've seen them commenting also and I think it's very inappropriate because they are talking about a person who has proven already himself. They can't say that they have the right to speak for themselves because, you know if you have the right then you won't talk bad about a person and if you have the right, what you really have to say is only good. If you're talking bad that means that you are not using your right correctly. It's not okay to put someone to shame, like anyone to shame even though like you have grudges on that person, personal stuff should stay personal. It's not okay because they do not have the right..."

Mitsy thought of that communication phenomenon in the cyberspace as "immature" as her story goes, "...he is still human. So how would you feel if it was done to you on twitter? It doesn't feel good because it's a form of bullying. He didn't even expect that it would happen to him. As I said again he was just doing his job as a teacher but even if he was not a teacher, he still didn't deserve what was told about him online... Actually, there should have been a more proper way...Actually, I was mad reading their posts. If I were in the teacher's place, I would really get hurt even if I wasn't in his place, I was really hurt because I'm also human and even if you think he made mistakes, he doesn't deserve that kind of publicity... Just because you didn't get what you want, you should already post about it or someone online. It's a form of cyberbullying and it only shows what kind of person you are. It's like, I don't mean to insult the person (the one who tweeted) but I think she is like a brat who threw a tantrum because she didn't get what she wanted and so she

posted things online to seek for sympathizers... It was immature of her to post online. She then showed and announced to her friends online what her teacher did and expectedly, the friends sided on her.... What she did was cyberbullying because she posted something online that humiliated the person. You're connecting, communicating and it becomes cyberbullying when there's miscommunication. I mean communicating in a wrong way. If you bully a student in school at least not everybody knows about it unlike what was done. She posted it online for everybody to see and it didn't just include the school, it also included everybody because everybody saw the post even those from other schools so it became a double publicity. The audience was doubled....I think that cyberbullying is a form of humiliation. He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online.... maybe there are different factors why they cyberbully or do the wrong things. Probably, like what I said earlier, they just hate not getting what they want maybe they want to get attention from it or maybe it just gives them joy to do such things even if they know they're already hurting other people's feelings. Maybe it makes them happy to hurt others or maybe they don't know that they are already hurting others."

As told by Karleen in her story, "...I can say that she was a bit a wrong since she only showed a part of the conversation and then people will react only to what they see so it was wrong for her. It was wrong for her to not show the whole conversation. It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher. Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him and he didn't know about what was going on and then he just knew about it through others who told him that there was something that happened on

twitter where he was the topic....Even if he was not my teacher, still the same because for example in that situation, he was not aware of it and it's not good to judge based on one person's perspective so it's better if you won't talk about things in public. Why don't you like talk about it in person or address it to the person privately. I was shocked, at the same time I agreed to some of the comments and I was also intrigued with the other comments and then after thinking about those things I thought that the student shouldn't have done it because it was too public and it's not good because others do not know about it but still commented negative things. It was better to talk about it privately. Cyberbullying is when you post your opinion about someone or even a picture of yourself and you send it to your friends and they gossip about it. That's a form of cyberbullying when you start to bash someone, when you react to it negatively. If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings."

"... It was a wrong thing to do. She should not have tweeted about it... It's cyberbullying and any kind of cyberbullying is wrong. No matter what your status is, no one should talk bad things about you... It was inappropriate because I think cyberbullying is bad in itself. It's really bad...Cyberbullying makes people feel superior about themselves. I want to be an advocate against cyberbullying. I want to redefine cyberbullying. They say that if you are bullied, you are weak. For me, it's not like that. The one who bullies is the one who is weak because they are insecure so they seek for sympathizers to ally with them." As told by Susan.

The above statements Ana, Mitsy, Karleen and Susan highlight the offensiveness of the communicative act, cyberbullying. They emphasized that expressions or statements, which are hurtful and disrespectful are wrong and unjust in every sense.

In addition, for those participants who did not participate in cyberbullying, they believe that there was a display of disrespect in the Twitter encounter. Apparently, in that tweeting encounter, some of the student-participants viewed the cyberspace as a platform for freedom of expressions, which could exhibit disrespect on certain occasions. For most of the participants, this view of the cyberspace as a platform for this unlikely exercise of freedom of expressions determined their communicative act of non-participation in the twitter conversations. This again exemplifies Peirce's "sign/object/interpretant relation".

Shyna's story spoke of "disrespect" among those who exercised their freedom of expression to an extreme, *"It was disrespecting authority for sure and you know authorities will always be higher and I wouldn't mind speaking out if I knew what really happened but I wouldn't want to. I mean if it's in certain situations, I would speak up against authority but I guess for that, I wouldn't disrespect, I wouldn't go that far 'cause I also think that the subject also had his you know his kind of rationale as to why he chose to make that decision for the student and I guess that's kind of the main reason why I didn't really get into it..."*

Also Ana believes that, *"... cyberbullying is a sign of disrespect because even 'though you're holding grudges, you can't just put anyone to shame. You're just like disrespecting him or her because that will stay in*

social media, once in social media, that will always be there even though you already erase it. Many people have seen it, many people will have copies and you know it will put that person, it may give him fears. It's a sign of disrespect and it's cyberbullying."

Mitsy thought that bullying on the cyberspace deeply humiliates another individual as she said, " *Cyberbullying is somehow like I don't really have the word to describe it but I think that cyberbullying is a form of humiliation. He's a human being, people make mistakes but I don't think they should be judged for their mistakes and being talked about online. Humans deserve respect and one doesn't have the right to judge someone by their mistakes. No one is perfect, right? Everybody has their flaws, nobody is perfect and we should all respect that because we are not all alike. We have our differences and we should respect each other for that.*"

Karleen saw that there was "disrespect" in the tweets of those who criticized the teacher, "It was somehow disrespectful towards the teacher. Things happened quickly like all of a sudden everyone was against him and he didn't know about what was going on and then he just knew about it through others who told him that there was something that happened on twitter where he was the topic... If you try to post bad comments about other people and share to others these comments you are disrespecting someone because you hurt the person's feelings."

The cyberspace, due to its signifying elements or conditions mentioned earlier therefore becomes a clear signifier or representamen or ground of the object. As Peirce puts it, *the object determines the sign*, which means that

"the object determines the signs by placing constraints which any sign must meet if it is to signify the object."

Interestingly, the young individuals, those who did not participate in cyberbullying perceive the communicative act as a display of immaturity and thoughtlessness other than disrespect.

As Peirce suggests, smoke as a signifier of fire can have certain characteristics - volume, color, velocity and density. Thin, black, fast smoke means that a well-ventilated fire is nearby while a slow, white, dissipating smoke (first thick but thinning quickly) is a sign of steam, and indicates early stage heating (Firefighternation, 2013). Not every characteristic necessarily plays a primary part in indicating the presence of a signifier. Black as a characteristic for instance does not immediately indicate a presence of a smoke. However, the connections between the characteristics of a smoke as a whole – black color and fast velocity and the one signified according to Peirce makes smoke the qualified representamen or signifier.

In the context of the cyberspace, *audience* as a feature taken alone does not immediately imply any signification neither does *reach* or *spread* of the message in the exercise of freedom of expression. However, the presence of other characteristics such as aggression, disrespect, immaturity and thoughtlessness in the exercise of freedom of expression in the cyberspace makes the cyberspace a qualified representamen and when given interpretations, mediated an act of non-participation.

Shyna in her story speaks of the teens' carelessness in her cyberspace expressions, " *It's expected because you know it's a teenager so teenagers you know, we're carefree and we'd say whatever we want and stuff and not*

really caring about what they think... It's a typical teen drama between a teacher and a student and of course it gets pretty normal. The thing about tweeting especially teenagers tweet is that, we're not afraid to be direct..."

Ana saw the situation as a display of immaturity on 'cyberspace, " I think that her ranting on twitter doesn't bring any good to her because she is just twitting on twitter so her rants will only be until twitter. It will not reach anywhere. She is just humiliating someone who may not really care about her so like there's no point really...I didn't comment. I think because I've gone through those stuff already. I find it immature..."

As told by Mitsy in her story, she also saw immaturity demonstrated on the cyberspace, "I don't mean to insult the person (the one who tweeted) but I think she is like a brat who threw a tantrum because she didn't get what she wanted and so she posted things online to seek for sympathizers, something like that. It was immature of her to post online. She then showed and announced to her friends online what her teacher did and expectedly, the friends sided on her...I think it was a very immature act because there are certainly other ways to express how you feel. I just don't understand why she chose that manner like she had time to post about it on twitter when she could have reported to her parents what her teacher did or said..." She added, "Actually as a millennial, a lot of us are actually careless about our posts because social media becomes like a freedom wall wherein we feel free to post what we want but actually, it should not be used to hurt others..."

The tendencies of young people to abuse the Twitter platform and to be thoughtless in their communications in the cyberspace made some of

these young individuals suggest that tweeting should be done more thoughtfully.

This is an interesting finding that further suggests that while young individuals are able to "jointly construct" interpretations and meanings of the cyberspace as a platform wherein communications in this arena are viewed as something that potentially enable people to build communities and permit them to exercise freedom of expressions, other "sub-thoughts" or views which are shaped by individual ethical standards such as notions of respect for others, considerations of conscientiousness and maturity in actions, reflections of sensitivity towards other communication participants could further mediate actions of non-participation in cyberbullying.

Participation in Cyberbullying

On the one hand, Gio, PJ, Thomas, Hanz, Leslie and Amie who participated in the cyberbullying incident shared the views of those who thought that the Twitter encounter manifested characteristics of cyberbullying. However, the participants' view of the cyberspace as a venue where honest and forthright interactions such as expressions of grievances and criticisms and even ranting may occur dominantly mediated their participation in cyberbullying.

Gio in his story emphasized that "friendship" mediated his participation in cyberbullying, *"It was a form of cyberbullying because an individual was bashed. The situation sort of destroyed the character of the teacher because of the bashing. It's disrespecting the morality of a person... I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so*

I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments."

PJ viewed the situation more of an expression of grievance than cyberbullying, "If you try to look at it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance... the line is blurry between those things and you just can't categorize that thing in one context because it can be in every context, it depends on how you look at it...there's something wrong with the message because it's both antagonizing that person you're actually tweeting about but it's also about expressing one's grievance at some point, like people might have the same experience and then people react to it and like for example the hashtag "me too" and sympathize...Cyberbullying is more on destroying a person, destroying that is out of context and most of the time it is subjective and really ad hominem to the point that what you are saying are not actually happening because like if you can have social media to critique someone...I don't really get why people can't get criticisms sometimes even though how objective they are. Cyberbullying has this dynamics... that you can already consider it as cyberbullying if it's not factual already, if its out of the context, it's not objective, the words that are used are too much of what it's supposed to be and the message, the words that are being used are not conveying the right message that you wanted to convey."

Thomas in his story stressed that sympathy for a friend in the cyberspace made him participate in the communicative act, cyberbullying , "The situation itself, if you look at it, it's a bit like in away rude especially for

our adviser but I cannot also blame the one who posted it in a sense that the teacher was also somewhat disrespectful in the way he replied. I would understand the point of the student that she felt disrespected because she asked if she could be excused from a school activity but on the other hand, the manner of asking through chat was also unprofessional. But even so, I think she asked permission calmly but our teacher gave her that reply... so I think she didn't expect that kind of very straightforward response from the teacher...When I was reading the tweet, I actually got mad because the student really took time to ask for the teacher's permission but the teacher just told her to stop crying because you can't do anything about the situation anymore. He could have given the student a time to grieve especially that it's the death of a family member..."

As told by Hanz in his narrative, "The moment I saw the tweet, the first thing that came to my mind because of all the negative comments I read, I was kind of brainwashed so I got carried away. I agreed that the teacher was rude, like that and he was not able to handle the student properly... Almost all students gave negative comments so my brain sort of sided with the majority especially that I didn't know the whole story yet. For me, tweeting about the situation was a careless move because first of all the conversation between the teacher and the student was private so for you to share it especially on twitter wherein so many people can view so it was a careless act. She was not thinking about the effect of what she did....Cyberbullying is when you ruin the reputation of someone through the use of social media like when you hurt them through tweets, through statuses, through messages, through words."

Leslie participated in the cyberbullying incident believing that it was more of a call for a change of behavior of someone than a baseless attack to a personality, *"I just saw students ranting about a particular teacher whom we've had and this teacher has caused a lot of problems for us as students. The tweets were simply complaints for the experiences they had about the teacher, observations they have about him...Well, they were mostly complaints or observations like for example there was this one student.. a lot of them were negative like for example there was this one tweet that stated that this teacher is really irresponsible because he always arrives to class late and he likes bossing the students around and likes insulting them and I've seen my classmates crying because of him, just his behavior...What makes it not okay is when people start going overboard with criticism and the hate and people are jumping into it and becomes kind of like a sort of trend as you can see and some people don't even mean what they say, they just, they just go along with it so, but the good thing about tweeting about these sort of things is, it gives people awareness, it gives them some background info on what the students are going through because I've had personal experience, sometimes it really feels like the teacher is bullying us so and he's a teacher so we can't really retaliate much we can't really fight him about it so instead of confronting him head on because everyone is scared of him they go to twitter and rant about their frustrations. It's okay if the names are not said explicitly and everything...I guess it's more of a miscommunication than cyberbullying because the students didn't really know who to go to and who to tell their issues and I guess they were outraged considering the issue behind it so I guess it was really just that, a venting place. They were angered so they went*

there and posted whatever which was bad but I can't call it cyberbullying it was like an indirect thing...Cyberbullying is when people post things in social media that explicitly mention a particular person. Cyberbullying is intrusive... of course it's hurtful, it's emotionally abusive."

Amie sympathized for a co-student in the cyberspace as she speaks, "I saw a student who felt perhaps victimized maybe in a wrong sense and then she found the opportunity to express herself on social media... I was intrigued and at the same time I couldn't help but I felt strongly about the content of the tweet because I knew the person and I knew the situation and maybe I didn't know the whole story so of course I felt my favor was for the student. I don't think it was the most appropriate thing especially since the names could be seen in the picture and I didn't think it was appropriate but perhaps in the heat of the moment that's the only way that she felt she could gain support . It was cyberbullying because the person on the other hand didn't have the chance to defend himself, didn't even know what was going on. I joined because there were instances when I also felt, or I was also caught up by my emotions. You have no time to think about things, you know it's social media it's, we would have talked to the person face to face... I would have thought about it a lot more but since it's social media then I went ahead."

Emergent in the young digital natives' narratives is the view that even if they share the thought construction that cyberbullying in the cyberspace is an undesirable online behavior, It is also understood by other individuals that this communicative act is something that could rectify a disorder or correct a wrongdoing. People's interpretation of the cyberspace where expressions of criticisms for someone or a situation are freely permitted

enables one to get involved in communicative acts such as cyberbullying without necessarily being conscious of its wrongness and its adverse effect on the target person. On the other hand, in a Twitter community in the cyberspace, people could possibly feel a strong social obligation towards a friend who tweeted by showing relational support to an ally who gives an impression that he/she is in need of a friend hence they participate in interactions that could be characterized as offensive and disrespectful such as cyberbullying.

For some participants, participation in cyberbullying has been mediated by seeing the platform as a setting where freedom of expressions can be exercised. These expressions of grievance and objective criticisms for them are aimed at rectifying certain injustices done by a person. For these young digital natives, this is one way of calling the attention of the one concerned in the hope that he might take heed of the crowd's clamor for his behavior to change. The cyberspace in this aspect has played a significant role, as this setting is viewed to have facilitated no-holds-barred interactions, alliances and some forms of community building. In the cyberspace, egalitarianism and autonomy are enjoyed and practiced by the young digital natives.

Like the sign-vehicles of the smoke - volume, color, velocity and density, and the interconnections of these constituents, the components or sign-vehicles such as friendship and alliances in community building and expressions of grievances and criticisms in the freedom of expression, how they are interweaved in the cyberspace and the interpretations of the interpretants about them mediated an act of participation in cyberbullying.

Also, the thought of cyberspace as platform for community building where coalitions or group of friends who share the same experience, sentiments, opinions towards a situation or person has undoubtedly mediated the action, such as cyberbullying participation. Some participants confessed that "they got carried away" or they yielded to the community's judgment thus expressed their agreement with the other members of the community.

To those who participated, albeit they shared views and significations about the cyberspace as a platform for freedom of expressions where disrespect is apparently demonstrated, nonetheless, did not have this view mediate their response to the tweeting communication situation. For them, the context of the communicative event became a more significant consideration in their participation. The accompanying representations of the cyberspace such as agreeing to expressions of grievances about certain wrongdoings, and reactions towards unlikable practices of others; supporting highly relatable and perceived valid criticisms; and showing sympathy to a mistreated friend can significantly mediate a communicative act such as cyberbullying.

Gio in his story admitted that "he got carried away" by the other members' messages in the cyberspace community, " I was confused at first. And I was also triggered because the one who tweeted was my friend so I also co-tweeted to be honest because I felt for my friend. However, I wasn't able to think before I tweeted because I got carried away by the negative comments... I participated because I also wanted to defend my friend.."

Expression of grievance mattered most to PJ, " *If you try to look at it, it's quite cyberbullying at some point but we can also say that it's an expression at some point or just merely expressing one's grievance... the line is blurry between those things and you just can't categorize that thing in one context because it can be in every context, it depends on how you look at it... it's also about expressing one's grievance at some point, like people might have the same experience and then people react to it and like for example the hashtag "me too" and sympathize. I think even if people say that it's a bad thing, people just react to it and for me it's actually a good thing..*"

Hanz in his story underscored his personal disappointment with the teacher, " *After reading the tweet, I also commented. I also expressed my disappointment like the others because I also got carried away and I was shocked with what I read in the tweet. Almost all students gave negative comments so my brain sort of sided with the majority especially that I didn't know the whole story yet. Like the rest, I also bullied...*"

Also, Leslie claimed that her participation was more of expressing complaints, " *Well, they were mostly complaints or observations like for example there was this one student... a lot of them were negative like for example there was this one tweet that stated that this teacher is really irresponsible because he always arrives to class late and he likes bossing the students around and likes insulting them and I've seen my classmates crying because of him, just his behavior.*" Leslie added, " *...I tweeted once but I didn't mention a name. It was a conversation that we heard in the classroom about the teacher, I just said, teacher x, then their conversation. That's just what I did but not in the thread of the tweet. They were saying everything that I*

wanted to say, they were saying, already saying most of the things that I felt and thought about the teacher. I felt like it was already too much and I've already said what I wanted to say, I didn't want to personally attack the teacher, I just wanted to say that sometimes, he's too much for us and should control himself..."

Amie in her story strongly sympathized with a co-student whom she thought was the one wronged in the situation, " I retweeted, I liked the tweet and I talked about it to my friends and it was a big issue so many conversations happened. I tweeted in favor of the student, I called out the teacher for some other things that I felt he was lacking in or he was doing wrong..."

For these participants who participated in cyberbullying, viewing the cyberspace as a platform for community building where like-minded beings are able to unreservedly converge and their relationships are innovatively nurtured; and freedom of expressions where one can voice stances without being restricted by power structures can be spontaneously demonstrated, defined their communicative act of participation.

Chapter V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Theoretical Framing: Semiotic Tradition of Communication and Semiotic Theory

This study is grounded on the Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory, specifically the Semiotic Theory by Charles Sanders Peirce which views communication as an intersubjective mediation of signs, emphasizing the inter-relations between the sign or the signifier, an object (the signified) and an interpretant or interpretation.

Semiotic as a theory and communication tradition as a framework used in examining the data of this study viewed how the young digital natives understood the cyberspace, the associations they ascribed to the cyberspace and how these representations mediated their communicative acts, participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

The Research Objectives and Reasons for the Scholarly Pursuit

This paper titled *Participation and Non-Participation in Cyberbullying: A Semiotic Study on a Twitter Encounter Among Senior High School Students* looked into how the participants signify cyberspace and how these significations of the cyberspace mediated their action of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying. This study intends to investigate the young people's communication participation in the virtual arena specifically on *Twitter* and finds out their tendencies to either act responsibly or otherwise in

a shared communication situation in the hope to help advance ethical online communication.

Dominant Communication Tradition Used in Cyberbullying Studies

The Socio-psychological Tradition of Communication Theory was a popular communication tradition used as a theoretical underpinning for the related studies covered in this paper. This Communication Tradition focused on the individual as a social being, one's social behavior, the psychological variables composing the individual personalities, perception and cognition (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). Many of these investigations explored effects and impacts of cyberbullying on health, aggression as a behavior, self-esteem, association with loneliness and depression, emotional consequences, and moral identity.

The Research Methodology

After seeking permission from the teacher concerned, the researcher approached eleven senior high school students involved in a Twitter encounter and asked for their consent to participate in this study. The researcher conversed with each participant who expressed willingness to share his/her stories and views about the twitter encounter that went viral among senior high school students in a University in Cebu City in December of 2017. Their narratives were recorded and transcribed accordingly and systematically, and the important constituents surrounding the twitter encounter were thematized. Afterwhich, the data were carefully examined under the Semiotic frame.

Summary of Results

The following presents the summary of the answers to the research questions:

What does the cyberspace signify for the senior high school students?

The participants have viewed the cyberspace as a platform for community building where friendships, alliances and sympathy are displayed in their communications and a platform for freedom of expressions, which warrant expressions of grievances and criticisms. These significations of the cyberspace inter-subjectively mediated the students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying.

How do these significations of the cyberspace mediate the senior high school students' participation or non-participation in cyberbullying?

For those who did not participate in the cyberbullying incident, viewing the cyberspace as a platform where disrespect, aggression, immaturity, and thoughtlessness are discernable in the practice of the freedom of expression mediated their action of non-participation in cyberbullying. Also, views that in the practice of freedom of expressions in the cyberspace, messages conveyed could be read by a massive audience where reach can be extensive hence implying a severe effect on the one bullied has arbitrated an act of non-participation in cyberbullying.

However, seeing the cyberspace as a platform where alliances are created in their interactions, and spontaneous expressions about almost anything are conveniently allowed has mediated participation in cyberbullying.

The co-created meaning, the communal view of the young individual about the cyberspace as a platform or a sign for community building and freedom of expression mediated communicative actions such as participation and non-participation in cyberbullying.

This study has illustrated Peirce's sign-object-interpretation relations under the semiotic frame and provides more meaningful views for the Semiotics Tradition of Communication Theory.

Conclusions

The Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory

The Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory which covers the theory of signs and underscores the triad of meaning and maintains that meaning comes from the relationship between the object (referent), person (interpreter) and the sign has been reinforced in this communication study. The authentic stories of the senior high school students have clearly established that signs when interpreted, mediate communication actions.

In this study, where communications in the cyberspace is viewed as a sign of community building and freedom of expression, the shared constructions of meaning or significations of the sign by the interpretants have meaningfully mediated actions such as participation or non-participation in communication situation, cyberbullying.

It is interesting to note however, that despite the shared view of a communicative action, it is possible that some signifying elements or sign vehicles could compete with each other and that dominant signifying elements or sign characteristics identified will not initially mediate a person's

communicative response but may only influence or mediate a delayed communicative act.

In communication, signs may they be in forms of objects, animals, words, or concepts that when interpreted as signifiers of certain objects, which could be in forms of concepts can define certain communicative acts as exemplified by the signifier and signified relationship illustrated in this research. In this investigation, signs take the form of concepts such as cyberspace as a platform for community building and freedom of expression.

Triad relation of the "Sign, object, Interpretant" in Communication

Signifying the cyberspace as a platform for community building and freedom of expression becomes the intersubjective mediation of the communicative act, cyberbullying. This interpretation of cyberspace then determined the participants' act of participation or non-participation in cyberbullying. For those who participated, albeit admittedly, they also viewed the cyberspace as a platform where unlikely expressions of disrespect and display of immaturity and thoughtlessness could occur, may still suspend this view during the actual communication event and allow other sign-vehicles such as expressions of grievance, alliance, etc. to offset the more affirmative signifying elements of the sign hence determining the young digital natives' communication participation in cyberbullying.

Community Building and Freedom of Expression in the Cyberspace

The cyberspace, specifically, social media has in one way or another fostered community building, self-expressions, and public discussions. This has brought good in several aspects such as people being more politically involved, socially, environmentally aware and concerned and for some health conscious (Effing, et al., 2011, Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010, Mangold and Faulds, 2009, Moorhead, et al., 2013, Zúñiga, et al., 2012, etc.).

Expressions in the cyberspace however may not always bring out positive outcomes especially when these are used to exploit, deceive, victimize people, damage reputations whether done intentionally or unintentionally such as in the case of this current study. Efforts such as promotions of responsible and ethical social media use therefore must be given emphasis in schools and other human organizations.

Immaturity and Thoughtlessness in the Cyberspace

While it is undeniable that social media has its good side as discussed in the earlier part of this paper, when not handled cautiously, social media could also be a powerful and convenient tool to cause confusion and chaos in the online communities. A common observation is that, social media has empowered people in terms of expression of self and viewpoints, which are at times not necessarily constructive. On certain occasions, some digital participants such as the case in this research have apparently abused this freedom that has been afforded by social media for everyone. People's tendencies to be uncontrollable and thoughtless in their giving of comments

for instance has been easily facilitated by the cyberspace such as twitter in this study.

Participation in Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has always been labeled as an unconstructive communicative act as it involves violence in one way or another. Clearly, cyberbullying is a form of public humiliation that could be utterly destructive for an individual or even for an organization. There are those who believe however that not all cyberbullying are done with the main intention to destroy an individual but rather to point out an individual's flaws, which the so-called "aggressors" desired to be corrected through bashing. Nevertheless, this method of communication, cyberbullying, bashing or whatever a digital participant calls it, in most cases could in no doubt cause harm instead of reform. Regardless of the surrounding explanations why one consciously or unconsciously engages in aggressive forms of communication such as bashing or cyberbullying, one may have to contemplate hard on the consequences of such communicative act.

Non-Participation in Cyberbullying

Certain ethical views among senior high school students who did not participate in cyberbullying in this study have arbitrated conscientious actions such as non-participation. Principles such as respect, regard for authority, maturity and thoughtfulness in speech balanced their exercise of freedom of expression and participation in community building.

Recommendations

Theoretical

The Use of Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory in other Communication Studies

On a theoretical note, this study recommends further use of Semiotic Tradition of Communication Theory in the Communication discipline. As one of the muted communication traditions, it could be commendable for communication scholars to employ lenses such the Semiotic frame in their theoretical pursuits to provide balance in the utilization of the seven communication traditions in communication researches.

Also, as far as relations of "sign-object-interpretations" in the Semiosis principle of Peirce is concerned, sign-vehicles or the characteristics that make every signifier qualified can be further explored in future researches as this study discovered how purposeful and functional sign-vehicles or sign characteristics are in mediating communication actions.

On a practical level, this study recommends the following:

Promotion of Respect in Cyberspace Interactions

Tweeting as communicative activity in the cyberspace is generally understood by the participants as an expression of anything that a tweeter finds interesting to share such as a feeling of disappointment, anger, excitement, happiness or an opinion, experience, and other things. Speaking up and contributing to the conversations spontaneously and impulsively

without contemplating on the act of cyberbullying and its potential effect on the object of discussion could occur in the cyberspace.

Bashing in this social media generation has undeniably been quite normal and seemingly acceptable to some individuals. Public figures for instance such as celebrities, and politicians have been favorite targets of bashing by Internet citizens or commonly known as netizens. Many of these personalities could have presumably developed certain skills of resilience for them to survive in their chosen careers and positions. Some of them however confess in media every now and then that they are only human beings and like other normal people, they do get distressed and depressed when bashed or cyberbullied. For other ordinary individuals however, especially those who highly value privacy of their lives, those who think they have not been transgressing anyone or violated any law or rule or defied an expected behavior, those who are not in this "bashing culture", the impact could more detrimental to the extent that some develop suicidal ideations and tendencies due to severe depression (Bauman, et al., 2013, Geel, et al., 2014, Hinduja and Patchin, 2010, Kim and Leventhal, 2008, Klomek, et al., 2010, etc.) hence should be given adequate consideration.

This study therefore suggests promoting peaceful and respectful cyberspace interactions by being cognizant of other people's feelings and reputes. This can be done by maintaining tact and courtesy in interactions, always bearing in mind diplomacy in all online talks.

Fostering Non -Violent Communication in the Cyberspace

Tweeting has been generally associated with youth or the digital natives' communication activities in the virtual setting. Twitter has seemingly

empowered young individuals and increased their capacity and interest to engage in discussions happening in the cyber space. Twitter as a platform in the cyberspace has become a place where one can feel a sense of belongingness to a community with members or friends who can embolden one to make a stand on a "perceived" issue and voice out audaciously one's opinions frankly but sometimes thoughtlessly, carelessly or even violently, if not being handled sensibly. Also, as already stated, the twitter platform has seemingly become a venting and ranting site, a freedom wall for the young digital natives.

Cyberbullying or bashing and other varieties of derogatory communications are all violent forms of communications, which in most cases will only result in serious and complicated disputes. This research therefore recommends to the general public especially those who are enthusiasts of digital communication to adhere to non-violent forms of communications in the cyber arena.

Restraining rather than engaging in Cyberspace Communications

This research also encourages people to practice restraint in their online discussion participation especially when conversations are leaning towards defamation and other unethical digital communication practices. This will spare one from possible indictments of cybercrime.

Integration of Netiquette and Cyberspace Ethics in the Curriculum

Schools are one of the most instrumental settings where ethics can be strategically and intentionally taught. Lessons that emphasize etiquette on the

Internet can be explored in detail in books and class materials and through discussions and inclusions of specific vignettes that illustrate Internet communications and possible online communication issues and negative behaviors (e.g., ranting that may lead to oral defamation, bashing, expressing of anger and grievances that may lead to cyberbullying, etc.). These kinds of class discussions could start at the very onset when a child learns to participate in online communications and followed up in the succeeding grades in Basic Education and still reiterated in the tertiary levels.

Reviewing School Policies

School policies must include items that address proper online decorum for students to maintain whether their virtual communications were executed in the school premises during class days or when they are off from school. These policies should restrict students from being involved in negative online behaviors such as bashing, cyberbullying and other destructive online communication behaviors that might harm the reputation of anyone or the their respective school. Proper sanctions that violate such policies must also be reasonable enough.

Anti-Bashing/Anti-Cyberbullying Campaigns

The guidance offices may include in their program of activities promotions of responsible digital citizenship by spearheading campaigns such as anti-bashing or anti-cyberbullying campaigns. These promotions could be implemented through symposia, concerts, stage plays and other events highlighting the theme responsible online communication.

Grievance Committees in School

Students are generally hesitant to air out their rightful complaints about their teachers, the reason why some of them resort to a platform they thought to be more convenient and tolerant such as twitter. To help address this concern, schools may form grievance committees composed of selected faculty members and members of the student council who under sound guidelines will study issues and handle cases impartially.

Future Studies

Future related communication studies may employ Critical, Phenomenological, Sociocultural and Rhetorical Traditions of Communication in exploring cyberbullying as an online communication issue since these communication traditions have been muted in the communication discourses in published studies.

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Appendix A
Transmittal Letters
Letter to the Basic Education Director of the institution

Director

Basic Education Division

Dear Dr. _____,

This is to ask for your kind support to my dissertation tentatively titled "Cyberbullying under Semiotic Frame: Tales of Young Digital Natives" undertaken at the University of the Philippines-Open University, Los Banos.

It is the general objective of this research to explore the young people's perspectives about responsible online communication by trying to determine their tendencies and propensities to act conscientiously or otherwise. This study hopes to shed light on *cyberbullying* as a specific virtual risk hence may guide the academe in its efforts to help promote ethical online communication and prevent people in their community from becoming victims or as instigators of irresponsible online communication themselves.

In this connection, I would like to ask for your permission to interview 8-12 students from Senior High School particularly those who were witnesses either as viewers/readers or participants of the controversial twitter of one of our students regarding a faculty member that went viral in December, 2017.

Utmost confidentiality and objectivity will be exercised in the course of the interview by concealing the real identities of the participants and by not mentioning the University of San Carlos' name as the institution of the students and the teacher involved. Also, the interview questions should not in anyway create further intrigues and embarrassment on the part of the teacher involved and should not in anyway cause tension among the students to be interviewed, more so apprehensions of being judged especially those who in one way or another participated in the twitter conversation. Further, the researcher will exercise due prudence and by all means respect the right of the participants if they choose not to answer all of the questions asked during the interview.

The researcher will also seek the consent/assent of the teacher involved and the students who will be interviewed for the study.

The data for this study will be used mainly for the research's aim to contribute knowledge to a certain online communication phenomenon termed "cyberbullying" and help promote responsible virtual communications in the academic institutions and other communities.

May I therefore ask for your assistance by providing me access to interview these students?

I am hoping for your positive reply to this request. Attached is the consent letter to be given to the participant and the teacher concerned.

Sincerely,

Charity T. Turano
Faculty/Researcher

Appendix B

Letter to the Student-Participants

January 16, 2018

Dear student,

I am Charity T. Turano, a faculty member of the ****

I am currently working on a study that hopes to explore the young digital natives' views on virtual communications in social media. Further, this study aims to shed light on *cyberbullying* as a specific virtual risk hence may guide the academe in its efforts to help promote ethical online communication and prevent people in their community from becoming victims or as instigators of virtual harm themselves.

May I possibly include you as one of my participants for the study tentatively titled "Cyberbullying under Semiotic Frame: Tales of Young Digital Natives"?

Utmost confidentiality and objectivity will be exercised in the course of the interview by not concealing your names and real identities in the report of this research. Also, be assured that the research should not put you in jeopardy, in one way or another whether you have participated or not in the "controversial twitter" that happened in December.

Again, please understand that this study is conducted not to cause intrigue nor harm on the concerned individuals but its sole purpose is for the academe to have a better understanding of the virtual communications among young digital natives.

I am hoping for your willingness to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Charity T. Turano
Faculty/Researcher

Appendix C

Timetable of Activities

March, 2017	Topic Proposal
March- October 2017	Writing of Chapters One and Two
November/December 2017	Dissertation Proposal
January, 2018	Data Gathering
February-April, 2018	Writing of Chapter Three
May, 2018	Submission to Adviser for Review
June, 2018 Oral	Revise Manuscript and Submit for Defense Schedule
July/August 2018	Conduct of Oral Defense