

THE ILLUSIONS OF COMMUNITY IN FACEBOOK

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Abstract

Communication is the basic norm and practice of human beings, it gives way to any transactions at any given time and place. The rise of Internet provides a better venue in communication, thus giving people a better access to information and much comfortable site for everyday talk and even important conversations. This study sought to find out the constructs of community among the members of the CAS Family Facebook group. Using a qualitative method, the researchers collected data from the transcribed in depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Facebook posts. There were a total of eleven participants for the interview gathered by the researchers. All the data collection session were recorded and transcribed wherein, transcripts were analyzed. The researchers isolated themes by identifying recurrent words and phrases and then sorted the data into thematic categories. There are two main categories emerged and from this, the researchers found 13 themes. The findings of the study suggests that the existence of community in virtual spaces, specifically, Facebook.com is an illusion.

Keywords: *Community, Facebook, Illusion, Communication, Internet.*

INTRODUCTION

Access to the internet is proliferating rapidly wherein the communicators experience "virtual togetherness" (Bakardjiera, 2005 in Agno, 2009). Though this kind of experience, conversation lacks actualities, still this type of computer-mediated communication (CMC) allows people to locate

and talk to others with similar interests, thereby forming and sustaining virtual communities.

Recently, the evolution of the Internet has moved into the so-called Web 2.0 era. This has spawned a phenomenon in the use of social media which had made a better venue in communication (Salkhordeh, 2010) thus, giving people better access to information and much comfortable site for everyday talk or conventional conversations. Technological development further enhanced the way people communicate with each other. The Internet is one of society's most recent technological developments that changed the mode of Interpersonal Communication (IC) from verbal to visual (Cuevas, 2001).

According to the study entitled "Searching for Community Online: How Virtual Spaces Affect Student Notions of Community", it was stated that communication is a vital aspect in community formation because it is the means by which human beings interact whether it is visual, auditory, or others. Communication allows human beings to share interests (Lin and Atkin in Spiro, 2007).

It has been said that many theories of community are based upon the idea that people create communities around an area of common life and shared values rather than geographical proximity. They deal with the reasons for community participation and the benefits of community membership. Due to this notion, people may be members of multiple communities (Wood and Judikis in Spiro, 2007).

Moreover, defining community presents a significant challenge. The word has been used in many different contexts with many distinct connotations. Although many definitions may be specific to a discipline or situation, most definitions of community also involve a relationship between

the community itself and its individual members (Cook and Hoggett in Spiro, 2007).

Since the community is probably the basic building block of society, the researchers aimed to come up with a 'new look' of community which could be found in the Internet, specifically in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Facebook group. Defining community has becoming more difficult in this modern society for it could no longer be distinguished by geographical boundaries. The researchers want to explore if such community does exist in virtual spaces for as people know common spaces and social capital are important in sustaining society (Spiro, 2007).

In 2010, 'CAS Family', the Facebook group of CAS was established. With this, the researchers aimed to find out if the ways the members act inside the group are actually supporting their constructs of community which would be gathered through the means of in-depth interview. The researchers decided to analyze the content of the posts in the CAS Facebook group wherein code categories and themes had been constructed in order to come up with the meanings of community among its members which arises from the text of the Facebook postings.

Specifically, this study intended to understand the nature of both online and offline worlds, and the relationship that exist among and between them since it has been the central issue for qualitative researchers of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Therefore, the researchers aimed to surface the kind of relationship as a community among the members of the CAS Facebook group. This research also wanted to surface the implications of internet and virtual communities in the society especially, in the sense and value of community. Thus, exploring the curious interaction of virtual spaces in a small college which is the College of Arts and Sciences wherein the researchers are part of that virtual community.

Guided by the principles of qualitative approach, the researchers decided to look in the trend of studies in social media specifically in analyzing a particular Facebook group wherein they personally belong. The researchers wanted to address the implications of these “modern communities” in the conformed community which should be only measured by geographical boundaries and how meanings of community have changed along ages. The researchers also wanted to understand the nature of relationship between the members through the means of visual texts present in the Facebook group.

Review of Related Literature

Since the emergence of the Internet had provided people with much wider scope of communication and interaction with different individuals, wherein all kinds of transactions have been fast and convenient, the users could interact with friends and relatives through Social Networking Site (SNS). It could be said that the Internet had established a new trend of communication which turns the conventional interface into a fun and exciting form of interaction.

According to the study titled "The Impact of Social Networking Sites on College Students' Consumption Patterns", recent trends show that social media usage has increased. As of October 2011, one of the most well-known social media sites is Facebook (Facebook, 2011). This site currently boasts 800 million active users, and over 50% of active users log on to the site every day (Facebook, 2011). Members are able to connect with friends on the site, and the average user maintains approximately 130 friends (Facebook, 2011) (Thoene, 2012).

On the other hand, it has been said that personal interaction has always been an important function of the human experience. Prior to the

technological revolution and creation of personal computers and cellphones, relationships were typically developed and maintained by means of face-to-face interaction and verbal or written communication. With the development of the Information Age, characterized by the ability for people to freely and conveniently access and exchange information through technology, the way in which the society interacts with one another has continued to transform (McLuhan, 1962 in Drussell, 2012).

The Internet has become one of the most powerful technologies in modern society and its impact on society extends to so many different aspects of life (Spiro, 2007). The so-called virtual spaces or online communities are emerging from the SNS world wherein group of people are sharing posts, information and also interact with each other through the means of social media.

With this, transactions have been fast and convenient, information has been readily accessed. Also, it developed a fun way of learning and most importantly scattered families were bridged through different SNS and e-mails. A study conducted in University of the Philippines - Los Baños was one of the literary foundations of this study. In the year 2009, Claudine Faye Agno developed a research which aims to find a “new look” of Filipino families whose other relative is working overseas and only talks through the means of e-mail. The study shows that Filipino OFW families are still intact in spite the large distance through the means of Internet wherein they found “virtual togetherness”. These families consider the symbols which are the visual texts in the e-mails as a binding factor which helps them in sustaining their relationship (Agno, 2009).

Additionally, with the creation of the virtual world, individuals have the opportunity to interact with others, both known and unknown, in a variety of ways. With the change in nature of these relationships, it has been of

interest to gauge the perceived quality of online relationships (Drussell, 2012).

Meanwhile, from the point of view of the tourism and hospitality organizations, as the result of the social media phenomenon, social networking sites cannot be casual interaction and relationship with customers. In the business world, the power of social media was noticed and they learned that social networking is not just a tool used to attract consumers for their products and services, but has the potential to create strong and lasting relationships with their customers and to build value of their brands in the marketplace (Salkhordeh, 2010).

Furthermore, a research that was conducted at Pomona College is also one of the many literary foundations of this study. The researcher explores the impact of SNS specifically Facebook, at a small liberal art college wherein the researcher evaluates the opinions of student in considering virtual spaces as community through mathematical and ethnographic research of Facebook.com. This study shows that the strong localized community on campus makes students hesitant in calling Facebook a “virtual community,” despite its strong integration with the face-to-face community itself. Instead, Facebook is seen as simply a tool.

However, the study was conducted in 2007 wherein SNS especially, Facebook was not yet in its peak of popularity, things may have definitely changed since nowadays many things could happen in the Internet (Spiro, 2007).

Furthermore, the study entitled "An Exploratory Content Analysis of the Use of Facebook in the Lodging Industry" stated that the factor that has an impact in the successful development of online communities is the proper

understanding of the community and its members (Kim, 2004 in Salkhordeh, 2010).

Hence, the different emergence of any kind of connection through the Internet is the key in the formation of “virtual communities”, notions of community is not practically applicable to some area of virtual communities wherein the essence of community is not being practiced (Erickson, 1997; Fernback, 1999). To sum it all, a virtual community is generally understood to consist of persistently interacting members (A. D. Smith, 1999).

The term Social Networking Site also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. What makes SNS unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005 in Salkhordeh, 2010) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network (Boyd and Ellison, 2007 in Salkhordeh, 2010).

A study titled "The Impact of Social Networking Sites on College Students' Consumption Pattern" stated that students use SNS to establish personal connections with others and use the site to create affiliations with brands that define who they are and help them establish a sense of self (Hyllegard et al., 2011 in Drussell, 2012).

Thus, these motives are similar to the “social benefits” motive discovered by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), the desire to display their personality discussed by Casteleyn et al. (2009), and the desire for self-

expression cited by Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009). This motivation discovered by Hyllegard et al. (2004) is consistent with the “concern for others” motive and “self-enhancement” motives discovered by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), as students could improve their knowledge about a product (self-enhancement), and then (2004) share this information with friends (concern for others) (Drussell, 2012).

The Internet has moved to the so-called 2.0 era where in the online community had been introduced to SNS in 2003. The SNS offers the people entirely new way of communication, it had been used as an interactive tool that had brought up the encounter into a whole different level (dSPACE.udel.edu).

Facebook, which is the most popular social networking, had reached 400 million active members 2010. It provides people worldwide venue of interaction which had become efficient and helpful in different aspects. According to Salkhordeh (2010), Facebook is an SNS that is privately owned by Facebook, Inc with Mark Zuckerberg as the creator. Since September 2006, anyone over 13 years old with valid e-mail address may become a Facebook user. Users could create profile with photos; share the lists of personal interest and fan groups, where some were maintained by different organizations or companies for advertisement purposes. As for the researchers, Facebook provides rich site that helps bridge interactions, facilitate different group’s discussion and had brought those groups different edge to the conventional and conformed group relationships.

There are multiple and an almost never ending list of existing notions of communities, though it lacks an official term or formal definition, anyone cannot really give an equal footing on how he/she could define community. The concept of community can be traced back from Aristotle, wherein he promoted the interdependence of individuals and groups. In 1915, C.J

Galphin formally coined the term *community* as he published his study on rural agricultural areas, since then there have been numerous competing definitions and ideas about the nature, components, instances and value of community in human life (Spiro, 2007).

Additionally, as has been the case for some time in anthropology, community is a difficult focus for study, generally because it seems to imply a false circumscription and coherence. Individuals belong to many communities, bounded to different extents and in varying ways. In some cases, the term suggests, as in the community studies of the 1940s and 1950s, that the defined entity was reasonably complete and self-contained (Wilson et al., 2002).

Traditionally, the word “community” is regarded as geographical bond and togetherness such as neighborhood (Wellmna and Gulia, 1999 in Spiro, 2007), though in this case the word “virtual” which is part of “virtual community” specify without a physical space such as home, and the word “virtual” alone means that the primary interaction is done only through the means of electronic and technology. This trend in computer-mediated communication allows people to locate and talk with others as of similar interests thereby sustaining and forming virtual communities (Hiltz and Wellmna, 1997 in Spiro, 2007).

Meanwhile, Williams (1976) famously argued that community is treated almost universally as positive. However, many scholars have disputed this understanding, noting the 'darker' side of communities relating to exclusion, inequality, oppression and social divisions (Crow and Maclean 2006; Hoggett 1997). While ‘community’ still carries positive connotations, recent conceptualizations are more paradoxical than Williams suggested: the term is used positively to represent social belonging, collective well-being,

solidarity and support, but also negatively in relation to social problems and 'problem populations' (Mooney and Neal 2008 in Crow et al., 2011).

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a well known political and social philosopher, believes that individuals consummate a full existence in their social lives. It follows that anyone who feels self-sufficient in isolation simply lacks insight into his/her own fundamentally social nature. From this, Karl Marx concluded that community was a result of the human need for social interaction; he believed that genuine community results from the need and egoism of individuals, not from mere thinking or reflection.

Another existentialist philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard, argued that a genuine community emerges only when the egoism of individuals has been transformed into unselfish benevolence or generosity. Thus, social affiliation in itself does not provide the condition necessary for building a practical community (Jardine, 2006 in Spiro, 2007).

Most common definition of community involves the relationship between the community itself and its individual member, the relationship not just involves individuals' responsibility for serving a common good but also the community's responsibility of serving the needs of its individual members (Hoggett, 1997 in Spiro, 2007). There are also various concepts which defines community such as it is geographical area, an area of common life, a group of people with similar interests, and others. (Smith, 2005 in Spiro, 2007). However, even though there are so many definitions already available probably some are contradicting and others are giving the same idea, defining community indeed gives a significant challenge.

Furthermore, the innovation of Internet gave birth to new theorists of community that placed the theory of community are based upon the idea that people create communities around shared values rather than just

geographical proximity. This notion gave an idea that people are members of multiple communities which made way to another assumption which is the Multiple Communities Theory (Wood and Judikis, 2002 in Spiro, 2007).

They formulated six essential elements of community, these are summary of what they consider to be the common threads in modern community theory: a sense of common purpose or interest among members; an assuming of mutual responsibility; acknowledgment (at least among members) of interconnectedness; mutual respect for individual differences; mutual commitment to the well-being of each other; commitment by the members to the integrity and well-being of the group, that is, the community itself. Generally, modern communities are no longer restricted with geographical boundaries.

The word *community* has been used in many different contexts and with this many distinct meanings, it is really hard to identify the true sense and real meaning of community. But even if the word “community” cannot be easily identified, people know that community must exist.

Different notions and philosophical overview towards community have been established. To further understand the nature of community, this study will also review the key functionality and role of community for the people. According to Spiro (2007), the community wherein people live and participate could influence them in various ways. The community influences people’s needs, clothing, values, attitudes, behavior and probably even the manner on how they view the world. In socio-cultural tradition, theorists surface that communities have socially-constructed meaning--the way people perceived reality differs on how they interact with their society or community. Also, according to George Herbert Mead, who first theorizes the Symbolic Interactionism Theory, he thought that meaning arises from human beings interacting verbally and nonverbally with one another.

Also beyond basic needs, communities provide sense of belonging and a guide for both social and spiritual development. Therefore, an individual, being a member of different communities, adapts and was influenced on the way he/she builds a picture of who he/she is.

Any single community has its own ways on how it functions, it is necessary to describe on how a community should be especially in this study. Roland Warren identified five functionality of community to satisfy in order to survive and continue. These five key functions are the following:

Production-Distribution-Consumption: No community can survive if it does not provide some way for its people to make a living and obtain the material resources that they need for living.

Socialization: No community can survive if it does not arrange for its continuation. A way must be found for children to learn what they will need to know to be adults; for workers to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to do their jobs; for in-migrants to learn “how we do things here.”

Social Control: Communities are incredibly complex systems. For all those players are to move around and “do their thing,” there have to be “traffic rules” to keep them from crashing into each other. Meaning, there should be regulatory rules in order for its member to live and perform accordingly. This function is also often referred to as “boundary maintenance.”

Social Participation: The community needs the human resources of its people to get the job done. In part, it is through *participation* that much of those functions are accomplished. Much of socialization and social control is accomplished as a by-product of social participation.

Mutual Support: Finally, one of the purposes of community is to “share the journey,” and to motivate and encourage each other along the way. In fact, some would say that this is the primary reason for community. This proves that man needs another to live, no man can ever live alone, for community is an essential element in human life.

The five key primary functionality may not be considered and applicable to every community, a particular community could probably only have one or another of these primary function, other community could possess the complete set.

The phenomena of community and communication are intimately related wherein communication is commonly viewed as the lifeblood of community; community is principal context in which the communication is viewed as sacred human activity (Lindlof et al., 2002).

Through communication, groups of CMC users can create and maintain "settlements" that distinguish them from transient online gatherings.

Due to the rise of many SNS wherein people could easily interact with one another through visual spaces, they can share common set of interests and know each other in spite distances the birth of the idea of “modern community” also come. According to Spiro (2007), modern communities could no longer be measured by geographical boundaries. In past decades, usage of term “community” brought with a certain nostalgia- the feeling that there has been a loss of public sense and value of community. The talks about community also brought out the common wish of different theorists to revive the close knit groups that are somehow lost and forgotten.

Social theorists argue that the phenomena in the loss of the value of community was caused by industrializations, large scale bureaucracies, the

lost of local autonomy and people culture of mobility, convenience and mobility. All these things are embodied with the development of Internet. The so-called modernized communities had moved to virtual spaces wherein people interact and share common good, thus the lingering question revolves around especially for the researchers. Does this modernized community have already taken part in the society? Could this be considered as what substitutes to what social theorist says which is the lost value and sense of community?

Since determining the existence of community on virtual spaces is one of the objectives of this study, presenting the existing debates and written talks about communal space identity in virtual world is vital. In recent years, the creation of “virtual communities” on CMC systems has generated heated debates among scholars, government officials, citizen groups, and commentators about the relationship of such communities to “traditional communities” (Fernback, 1999; Wood et al., 2001 pp. 101-125 in Lindlof et al., 2002).

As the prominent Internet scholar, Steven Jones, notes popular definitions of community are shaped in a tension between the residual values of oral culture and traumatic development in postwar society. As a result, critics of CMC often adopt standards for defining community such as follows: common inhabitation of a locale, self-sufficiency from the external world, interdependence, common identity and binding ritual (Kollock et al., 1999).

Furthermore, the rise of CMC has raised concerns about it potentially encouraging users to withdraw and avoid the hard work of “real” citizenship in favor of consuming services and simulations. CMC however functions precisely to restore the ontological link between community and communication.

Thus, it establishes that communication is a necessary and sufficient condition for CMC users to act as if they are members of a community (Rheingold, 1993 in Lindlof, 2002). Through communication groups in virtual spaces, users can create and maintain “settlements” that distinguish them from transient online gatherings.

Quentin Jones (1997) argues that this kind of phenomenon occurs when groups in virtual spaces satisfies the following conditions: (1) a minimum level of interaction (users exchange message in sufficient quantities and rates); (2) a variety of communicators (sufficient to engender differences of opinion); (3) a common public space (an identifiable place for inhabitation and interaction); (4) a minimum level of sustained membership (as opposed to single, or only intermittent, interactions). “The existence of a virtual settlement,” Jones concludes, “is proof of existence of a related virtual community.”

Moreover, a debate has continued about whether online, virtual, or otherwise computer-mediated communities are real or imagined (Bordieu and Coleman 1991, Calhoun 1991, Markham 1998, Oldenburg 1989, Rheingold 1993, Thomsen et al., 1998). This debate explored whether these sorts of community are too ephemeral to investigate as communities per se, or whether the nature of the communication medium made them somehow quite different from the face-to-face groupings traditionally thought of as communities. Rheingold (1993) suggested that online communities were replacing public spaces such as pubs and cafes as loci of public social interaction. As Agre (1999) observed, “as long as we persist in opposing so-called virtual communities to the face-to-face communities of the mythical opposite extreme, we miss the ways in which real communities of practice employ a whole ecology of media as they think together about the matters that concern them.” Indeed, reference to “communities of practice” (Lave

and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998) or “communities of interest” (Brown and Duguid 1991, Uimonen 2001) shows the wide range of disciplinary interest in the nature of online communities, with similar discussions going on in education, management, cognitive psychology, and other fields (Fernback, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

This research aimed to understand the kind of relationship between the members of the CAS Facebook group wherein there is already an existing relationship between the college itself (e.g. colleagues, classmates, faculty, teacher-student relationship etc.). The continuous pattern and changes of interaction can be stimulus of sustaining a relationship (Bateson, 1972 in Miller, 1976). A certain person reacts on a specific message from a defined sender. Through this, the relationship remains stable (Giffin and Patton, 1971). These relationships not only happens via a medium (i.e. for this study, the posts in the Facebook group) but interactions mediated by symbols and signs. Through only the means of written communication makes the communicators search for the real meaning of the message. It can be said that at this point, Facebook postings and transcription of interviews embed meaning of the texts being the symbol and sign.

Given the premises for constructing community and assumptions on the nature of Facebook groups, the researchers will use the theory of George Herbert Mead. The researchers believe that this phenomenon can be understood through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism Theory. Symbolic Interactionism Theory teaches that the interaction between people constitutes meanings such that emergent situation arise out of underlying meanings attached to symbols by an interacting group. This means that they “understand each other’s motives, thoughts and emotions” through the

symbolic texts and signs that constitutes the Facebook group interaction (Agn0, 2009).

According to Mead (1934), meaning arises from human beings interacting verbally and nonverbally with one another. Through action and response, people come to assign meanings to words and actions and thereby come to understand events in particular ways.

According to Giffin and Patton (1971), symbolic interaction as a perspective in interpersonal communication focuses on searches for meaning in the exchanged words (both sign and symbols) of the communicators. The sender exchanged meaning with the receiver and vice versa through the symbolic language and texts.

As for Giffin and Patton (1971), the process of interpersonal relationship is symbolic interaction as the persons involved in the communication process suppose themselves with the role of the other. In this, one actor continuously adjusts according to the reaction of the “significant other” (Miller, 1976). The communicators involved in the process are interdependent with one another. It is also on the same proposition of the symbolic interactionism that the communicators adapt based on the behaviors of each other so it is important to have the same understanding of the context they are in and for a mutual understanding (Giffin and Patton, 1971).

Through this mutual understandings, interpersonal relationship forms (Miller, 1976). With this kind of relationship, the persons involved have a good grasp about each other characteristics wherein they could easily react with each other (Miller and Steinberg, 1975).

Further, according to George Herbert Mead, who is considered as the founding father of Symbolic Interactionism in his book *Mind, Self and Society*, self is at once individuality and generality, agent and recipient, sameness

and difference. This emphasizes that self is the agency in which individuals see or experience themselves in relation to others. Also, through language, one individual could create his/her sense of self, without access to language there is also no access to the symbols that is necessary for thinking and acting as self in a structured world of symbolic meaning. These symbols represent object in our own minds and in the mind of others (Mead, 1934).

The researchers could relate these propositions in studying the nature of community present in the College of Arts and Sciences Facebook group. Thus, using the assumptions of interpersonal communication and social interaction as explained by the symbolic interactionism, the researchers can surface the nature of community present in CAS group. This study looks at community relationship built in the social networking sites or computer-mediated communication, with Facebook postings and transcription of interviews as the symbolic texts mediating community relationship.

Objectives of the Study

In general, this study aimed to find out the meaning of community among the members of CAS Facebook group.

At the end of the research, the researchers aimed to:

1. find out the purpose for using the Facebook group as reflected from the text (Facebook posts, transcribed interviews);
2. determine how members view their relationship with one another as manifested in the posts and transcribed interviews; and,
3. identify the symbols that manifest the meanings of community of the members in the CAS Facebook group postings and transcriptions of FGD.

METHOD

Research Design

The planning and development for this research study began in November 2013 and continued through June 2014. During this time, introduction and review of related literature was finished, research questions were developed and data collection procedures were determined. A qualitative research design was selected to complete the study. The main purpose of this study was to understand the constructs of the community as manifested on the CAS official Facebook group which is the "CAS Family". This was conducted by collecting the content presented in Facebook group, as well as the transcriptions of the in depth interviews and FGD conducted by the researchers.

A qualitative research studies things in the natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). A qualitative study does not begin with a hypothesis or a presumed outcome as is the case in a quantitative study.

Richards (2005) noted that a qualitative study cannot begin without a plan. She argued that such an approach would be 'unacceptable for both ethical and practical reasons'.

The study design consisted of three steps in the collection of data. The first step was to identify the visual texts or posts present in the CAS Facebook group. The second step involves the conduct of interview with chosen participants that were part of the Facebook group through FGD. The said method became interactive wherein the researchers asked questions in order to pursue details and clarifications by both the interviewer and interviewee. Lastly, the researchers also conducted an in depth interviews

among the members of the group. An in-depth interview gives the circumstance that an individual informant gets to say far more, and has greater opportunity to develop an argument.

In-depth interviews became more useful in this study in order to get detailed information about a person's opinions and understanding of the constructs of community in the 'CASFamily'.

The qualitative type of research helped the researchers to find out the overall meaning of community among the members of the CAS Facebook group.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the research were the members of CAS Facebook group. The participants of this study consisted of alumni, professors and the enrolled students of the three programs under CAS. The researchers have coded the visual texts that are posted in the Facebook group.

Also, the researchers chose a portion of participants that consisted of eight students from the CAS that has undergone FGD to further test the plausibility of the results that arise from the text on the Facebook group postings. There were also three participants for the in depth interviews conducted by the researchers.

The researchers chose a convenient place to hold the interviews to avoid discomfort among participants. The researchers selected a location that is more suitable for the participants.

Since this study aimed to find out the constructs of community among the members of the Facebook group, the participants came from the

three programs of CAS namely AB Communication, AB Multimedia Arts and BS Psychology.

Data Gathering Tool

The researchers used a coding sheet wherein, code categories and themes were recorded. One of the unique characteristics of a qualitative research according to Merriam (2002), is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Since understanding is the goal of the study, the ability of humans which is to adapt and be responsive is the ideal means in collecting and analyzing data.

The human instrument has shortcoming and biases that might have an impact in the study but in qualitative perspective, instead of removing these biases or “subjectivities” it is more important to identify and monitor them on how could they help in shaping the collection and the interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002).

Procedure

The researchers collected the posts from the CAS Facebook group, from the recent postings in 2013. With this, the coding of materials had stopped because it reached the saturation point wherein, all the data that were coded were giving the same results based on the interpretation of the researchers. The data that were obtained from the Facebook group has been coded.

The researchers found a meaningful segment of text from the posts and assigned a code or category name to signify the particular segment until all the data have been segmented and completed the initial coding. The researchers also provided a master list of all the codes that were developed

from the study, then, the codes were applied to their respective segments of the data or themes (Khandkar, 2010).

Since this study aimed to find the meaning of community in the CAS Facebook group from their symbolic interaction in Facebook postings, the sampling procedure that were used is theoretical sampling. This kind of sampling procedure was achieved for the “researchers own theorizing” (Lindlof, 2002).

In this kind of sampling, the incidents were chosen when they are found to be theoretically relevant to the evolving research methodology (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The samples were chosen from the coding processes. In this study, this was done by analyzing the Facebook postings in the group and the transcribed interview of the participants.

In order to test the validity of the results from the initial coding of Facebook posts and transcribed interviews, triangulation method was done. The researchers used another two sets of method which were FGD and in-depth interviews. In the FGD, the researchers chose eight participants which came from the three programs of the college and different year levels. In the in-depth interview, the researchers chose three participants that became helpful in the formation of the meanings of community. Participants in the in-depth interview include a faculty, a CAS student and an alumnus.

From the three methods that the researchers conducted, all of the coded materials were checked and tested by a qualitative expert from the University of the Philippines - Los Banos. The researchers asked questions from the participants which became helpful in constructing the meanings of community among the “CAS FAMILY” Facebook group members.

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted a thematic analysis on the Facebook posts from the CAS group and in the transcriptions of FGD and in-depth interviews. Guided by the Symbolic Interactionism Theory and the assumptions of interpersonal communication, this study was coded and analyzed using a qualitative method.

The researchers had situated themselves with the participants in order to view how the members made sense of their world by looking at the Facebook posts and by finding symbols that prove the existence of community. The researchers have also interviewed the chosen participants and asked them how they interpret the messages inside the CAS Facebook group, how they perceive a community, how they act inside the “virtual community” they belong, and how they act inside the group that supports their own interpretation of community. As for the researchers, being part of the CAS Facebook group for three years also made the data collected more plausible.

The data that were gathered from coding and interview undergone the triangulation method in order to validate the interpretation made in the coding of the Facebook postings and the transcribed interviews. This was to see the “convergence” of the methods that were employed in this research (Lindlof, 2002).

Thematic analysis is most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within textual data set. It is also the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research. Applied Thematic Analysis approach is a rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of the study, the researchers identified two main categories namely: "The Facebook as" and "The Community as". "The Facebook as" includes different sub themes that arise from the thematic analysis of the posts, in-depth interviews and FGD which were focused on the functionality of Facebook as a whole. Meanwhile, "The Community as" pertains to the posts and transcribed interviews that were focused on the constructs of community among the participants of the study.

With this, the researchers identified six overarching themes for 'The Facebook as' and seven for 'The Community as', which were named: "Facebook as a communication tool," "Facebook as a bulletin board," "Facebook as a decoration," "Facebook as a promotional tool," "Facebook as an extended classroom," "Facebook as an outlet for expression," "Community as a small community," "Community as moving with freedom," "Community as a constant interaction," "Community as a family," "Community as a congregation of individual," "Community as a mini universe" and "Community as serving people."

The researchers' main purpose was to understand the nature of both online and offline worlds, and the relationships that exist among and between the members of the CAS Facebook group. The researchers did compare and contrast the data gathered from the Facebook posts and transcribed interviews.

Facebook as a communication tool. This characterized the period where the members of the CAS Family Facebook group interact with one another (e.g. posts, likes and comments). The participants of the study described how they view their relationship among the members of the group which were conducted through in depth interviews and FGD. With this, the

researchers also used the Facebook posts in order to identify how the members of the group use CAS Family as a tool for communication through the means of interaction.

An alumnus stated, "*Ahm, okay naman kasi I get to share 'yung mga 'di ba may nag, I post ahm CAS related like 'yung mga seminars, 'yung mga hiring sa iba't ibang CAS related companies tapos okay din naman 'yung information dissemination kasi ahm it can hmm nagagamit siya as a tool tapos it hmm mas mas madaling mas madaling ma-inform 'yung mga members no'n.*"

The participant emphasized the effectiveness of the Facebook group in information dissemination.

In connection to this, a study entitled "Searching for Community Online: How Virtual Space Affect Student Notions of Community" explores the impact of SNS specifically Facebook at a small liberal art college wherein the researcher evaluates the opinions of student in considering virtual spaces as community through mathematical and ethnographic research of Facebook.com. This study shows that the strong localized community on campus makes students hesitant in calling Facebook a "virtual community," despite its strong integration with the face-to-face community itself. Instead, Facebook is seen as simply a tool (Spiro, 2007).

On the other hand, the CAS professor said, "As a member, *ah, okay naman kasi I find naman na relevant naman lahat ng post do'n sa ano e sa group.*" This statement refers to how the members of the group used Facebook as a tool for informing the members about some announcements, specifically, during seminars that all students were required to attend.

Facebook as a bulletin board. This theme emerged from the Facebook posts about announcements and updates for every member. Most

specifically, the posts regarding events, job related posts and reminders for specific course and section. The researchers used the term bulletin board to show that most of the posts in the CAS Family Facebook group were just seen zoned by some of its members.

An alumna stated, "mostly *kasi* for me *ah 'yung nape-perceive ko dun sa sa CAS Family is parang parang bulletin board na siya*. It serves as a bulletin board for students and for alumni but *wala dun 'yung parang* real interaction between the students and the professors like if *may concern si student kay professor hindi ma-voice out dun kailangan pupunta* personally *kasi alam niyo naman 'yung mga professors namin, natin pala uhm* they want formal conversation with them so *'yun 'yung na na 'yun 'yung perception ko* with our CASFamily group."

The participant emphasized that the Facebook group is like a bulletin board, wherein there were posts about job related information, announcements of suspension of classes, deadlines of payment and the likes. But, there is no real interaction between the students and professors, members of the group just view the posts and then after that, they feel like wanting to leave the group.

Another participant added, "*Minsan hindi ko na rin po binubuksan 'yung CAS Family gawa nang karamihan po sa pino-post do'n e minsan hindi na po related sa CAS 'yung iba puro pa-like na lang po kaya parang minsan ang sarap pong mag-ano mag-leave*."

Some reported that the group was only composed of posts for a specific course and section, as well as deadlines of payment for the upcoming events specifically, CAS Week.

During the FGD, a student said that, "*Parang group lang siya kasi paano tayo magiging community kung hindi naman tayo kunyari nagco-*

comment sa mga posts, *parang wala lang, group lang siya. Sinabi lang na CAS Family pero mas maganda sana kung seen zoned group 'yan e.*" The group was just seen zoned by its members.

Another said, "Most of the time lurker *ako e, ba-basa-basa lang ako 'pag I find it ah okay naman 'yun like or comment 'yan pero bihira lang ako mag-comment bihira lang din ako mag-like so, more of a lurker.*"

In addition, there are instances when the participants do not feel like being a member of the group. It typically lasted for years depending on the members' experiences in the group. One student shared, "*Ah, okay pang-4th year ko na ngayon no'ng 1st year ayoko talaga parang ayoko, ayoko lang talaga tas no'ng 2nd year naging member ako tas ginawa rin akong admin yata pero nag-leave ako kasi ayoko nga no'ng 1st year pa tas bumalik lang ako no'ng 3rd year kasi kailangan ng announcement para sa CAS week gano'n din talaga 'yung reason no'ng 2nd year ako kaya ako naging part kasi para lang sa CAS.*"

With this, another theme emerged:

Facebook as a decoration. This is highlighted from the in-depth interview and FGD that the researchers conducted. Mostly, the ones that mentioned that posts are irrelevant, group is not really effective and the likes.

One student said, "*medyo hindi naman po siya gano'n nakakaapekto pag nagfa-Facebook ako pero karamihan po sa mga ah, halimbawa po may mga news about CAS may mga updates, mga announcements mas na mas nalalaman ko po siya via students kaysa po sa group kasi minsan hindi ko na rin po binubuksan 'yung CAS Family gawa nang karamihan po sa pino-post do'n e minsan hindi na po related sa CAS.*"

Another student said, "*Parang ano lang, parang wala lang kumbaga parang masabi lang na may group tayo, parang, parang kasi sa idea lang natin nabubuo 'yung family pero 'yung pinaka-objective hindi natin na-attain.*"

In connection to this, the interviewee explained that the name CAS Family was just for the sake of branding. Realizing that most of its members are just viewing the group just for fun and erasing the notifications in their profile.

According to a participant, "*Actually, kaya lang ako nagpost no'ng GA para masabi na nag-post lang ako, para kasi 'pag sinabi nila masasabi ko na ah Miss nagpost po ako pero kasi ang ginawa ko pa do'n nag-solo-solo ako sa mga students at sa kanya-kanyang group nila per section.*"

There's also another participant who said that, "*Wala po, wala po akong ginagawa, tinitingnan ko lang kung ano 'yung naka-post, basa lang then 'yun.*"

The researchers also came up with this theme because of the responses of the interviewees which says that CASFamily is not reliable because some of the members tend to know some information via students rather than the group itself.

The said group was also composed of posts that were about promotions wherein some of the members were asking for likes and shares.

Facebook as a promotional tool. This theme emerged through the coded Facebook posts that were focused on promoting videos that were made by Multimedia Arts (MMA) students, as well as posts that were about asking for support through liking, sharing and buying tickets for a show. (e.g. Volo Veterasce play, 143 play)

One participant posted in the group, "please do watch our online video for LPU-Laguna as a promotional image featuring about BS Psychology course. Hope you enjoy!" Another posted, "our group is proud to present you our Online Video Advertisement. Please do watch. Enjoy watching."

In the business world, in order to promote products, companies have also begun using social media sites as a way to better communicate with their customers.

Facebook as an extended classroom. This theme emerged from the academic related posts in the CASFamily, specifically announcements of the professors per course regarding deadlines of the projects and homeworks.

One Facebook post from an AB Communication professor: "All AB Communication enrolled in Print Production. Please prepare for a powerpoint presentation of your magazine on Aug. 27, Tuesday. Present all pages for peer critiquing. Thanks." This post was addressed for a specific section and not for all members.

Facebook as an outlet for expression. This characterized the period where the posts in the CAS Family Facebook group became more personal, wherein members of the group post whatever they feel like posting. Most of the posts in the said group that were related to this theme were more on greetings, words of encouragement and gratefulness, as well as post about professor's expression of feelings about the entire class for a certain project.

Sample posts include: "Happy new year *po*," "God Bless *po*," "Good Morning," "Thank you and God Bless," "*Bumati ng Merry Christmas sa lahat*," "Good luck and God bless *sa defense ng AB Comm 4-1*" and the likes.

A study entitled "The Impact of Social Networking Sites on College Students' Consumption Pattern" stated that students use SNS to establish personal connections with others and use the site to create affiliations with brands that define who they are and help them establish a sense of self (Hyllegard et al.,2011 in Drussell, 2012).

One post says: "*Pangatlong gabi na namin itong nagpupuyat. Utang na loob naman po sa 3rd year AB Comm na enrolled sa Print Production!! Pakisagot ang queries tungkol sa confirmation ng mga pangalan ng sponsors ninyo! Please naman.*"

Another says: "*Sa lahat ng mga 3rd year AB Comm na kumukuha ng Print Production. Pakisuyo lang po na ipadala ang layout ng lahat ng sponsors ninyo sa EIC o kung sino man naka-assign sa layout today ASAP. Kung hindi, ang buong klase ang magbabalik ng lahat ng ibinayad nila sa placement. Sana maging responsable tayong lahat.*"

Thus, those motives stated above are similar to the "social benefits" motive discovered by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), the desire to display their personality discussed by Casteleyn et al. (2009), and the desire for self-expression cited by Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009). This motivation discovered by Hyllegard et al. (2004) is consistent with the "concern for others" motive and "self-enhancement" motives discovered by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), as students could improve their knowledge about a product (self-enhancement), and then (2005) share this information with friends (concern for others) (Drussell, 2012).

In addition, the usage of groups on Facebook was positively influenced by expressive information sharing, and negatively by social interaction (Drussell, 2012).

This study was not limited to the use of Facebook only, but the

researchers also found out themes that are related to the constructs of community among the members of the group.

Community as a small community. The CASFamily Facebook group was established in the year 2010, wherein the members were only few during that time. The researchers found out that members of the group were more bonded if they are in a small community, meaning, few members of the group was better. They really considered each other as family.

Some of the participants stated, "Feeling ko wala pang relationship na nabuo sa CAS Facebook group 'yung magkakaibang year kunyari 1st year to 4th year do'n pero sa atin wala talagang nabu-build na relationship saka nakakatakot kapag nagpo-post ka minsan dine-deadma lang," a sentiment echoed during FGD.

"Yung iba nga tulad na lang po ngayon meron po akong mga ibang kakilala hindi sila part ng CAS group hindi rin naman lahat pati do'n nagpa-participate hindi naman lahat do'n pag nag-post ka lahat nagco-comment."

Moreover, there are members of the group that are inactive because they do not feel like visiting the group. Most of them feel like that they do not belong because most of the active members are CAS professors.

Community as moving with freedom. This theme emerged during the interviews. Most of the respondents tend not to post in the CAS Family because professors were also members of the group. The researchers found out that members of the group do not want to be policed, meaning, they are seeing community as a freedom.

During the FGD, one of the participants said that, "*Yung ano idadagdag ko na lang 'yung first time ko mag-post sa CAS Family 'yung ano sobrang kinakabahan ako kasi isip ko lahat ang mga active lang do'n mga*

professors 'yun talaga 'yung thinking ko walang masyadong students diyan puro professors lang kaya 'yung sobra-sobrang proofread tinatanong ko pa tama ba 'yung grammar ko 'yung mga gano'n lang pero 'yung sila 'yung announcement from Facebook group na 'yon parang wala naman."

In connection to this, a participant stated that there are no real interaction between professors and students because professors wanted to have a formal conversation. Students, on the other hand, could not voice out what they wanted to say because professors are also part of the group.

Community as constant interaction. This theme emerged when participants of the study said that there are time constraints in participating, there are times that they participate and there are times that they do not.

A participant said during the FGD, "*Parang as a word lang community tayo, oo community tayo pero 'yung context ng word ng community wala tayo, parang gano'n. Pero dumarating naman sa punto na parang may specific lang na event kunyari 'yun nga 'pag CAS Week lumalabas siya na parang 'pag kailangan lang siya do'n lang siya lumalabas.*" It proves that CAS Family is seasonal whenever there is an event, the group is active online. Meaning to say, the group becomes active when there is a specific event that needs to be taken care of.

Another said, "*nagbabasa rin ako ng posts nagli-like din from time to time.*" A statement that supports the theme community as a constant interaction. The reason is that, the members of the group become participative whenever there is an important matter to discuss, if it is about CAS Week or suspension of classes.

Community as a family. This is characterized by the Facebook posts and transcribed interviews that refer to the importance of family and how they relate their own meanings to it. Some of the participants of this

study keep on mentioning about the Facebook group's name which is the 'CASFamily'.

One participant said, "Actually, *ngayon ko lang nalaman na oo nga nakakaloka 'yung name kasi nga 'di ba CASFamily, family, family pero kung tutuusin wala e, walang pinaparating group lang siya, dapat CAS group lang e, super seryoso kasi family, family 'di ba is the basic unit of society, ayun 'yung pinaka-basic 'di ba? So, siyempre CAS Family ayun 'yung iniisip 'di ba? E 'yung family nga 'di natin ma-attain or ma-achieve, community pa kaya. So, 'yung CAS Family natin dapat group lang talaga, branding sabi nga."*

Participants keep on mentioning that CAS should change the name of the Facebook group or in reality, delete the group because it is useless.

"*Siguro sa akin useless din kasi tina-try naman nila kaya lang wala e, 'di tayo naapektuhan e, 'wag na lang ipagpilitan. Tanggalin na lang, tanggalin na lang"*, one participant mentioned.

Another participant mentioned, "Ahm, for me community is *'yung* you have ahm interaction with each other, you have fellowship it it's really important that you are bonded as a community not just only a college or a student body *pero* you have care for each other, you are concerned with each other *tapos* you help one another *'yun ang importante sakin* if I will define a community you help each other."

A study conducted in University of the Philippines - Los Banos aimed of Filipino families whose other relative is working overseas and only talk through e-mail, shows that Filipino OFW Families are still intact inspite the distance through the Internet wherein they found "virtual togetherness"(Agno, 2009).

The researchers found out that communication and community are

intimately related to each other just like a family. According to Lindlof et al. (2002), communication is commonly viewed as the lifeblood of community; community is a principal context in which the communication is viewed as sacred human activity.

This relates to the sense of having a family, one has his/her home and in that home there is communication that connects him/her with others. Same as in the online community, one has his/her home which is the social media, specifically, the Facebook group and then, the use of post, like and comment pertains to the communication he/she has inside the group.

The statement above about the definition of community does not mean that CAS Family's community is considered as family.

Here's an explanation:

"*Di ba community may iisang common? Ang common lang sa atin CAS Family lang pero kapag pinasok mo na 'yung community saka 'yung communication wala na, parang part lang tayo sa CAS 'yun lang 'yung same sa atin,*" a sentiment echoed by a participant.

Community as congregation of individuals. This theme emerged from the transcribed interviews which focuses on how would the participants define community. This theme is about being brought together as one.

One participant stated, "Community in a general sense, it's a congregation of individuals. With the same purpose, with the same aim similar to a group but *ah, sabihin na natin* community is *mas* large 'yung extent but *ah, depende kasi 'yun sa ano e sa environment e* let's say for example online community *ah,* it's a congregation of people who share the same interest over the internet *naman 'yun ang aking* definition *ng* community."

Some participants keep on telling that community is about a group of people having common goals wherein they help each other and relate with one another in order to achieve the goals that they are aiming for.

From the point of view of the tourism and hospitality organizations, as the result of the social media phenomenon, SNS cannot be a casual interaction and relationship with customers. In the business world, the power of social media was noticed and they learned that social networking is not just a tool used to attract consumers for their products and services, but has the potential to create strong and lasting relationships with their customers and to build value of their brands in the marketplace (Salkhordeh, 2010).

Community as mini universe. This theme emerged when one of the participants mentioned: "Actually *nga, para ano nga tayo e ah* mini universe within a universe. *Eh, kasi* we have different ah, of all the colleges we are so diverse, interest *ang dami ang dami ang dami nating ah ang dami nating* differences but whenever we have to be, to act as one we do act as one and I I I have seen that *'pag may events 'pag may college week so, hindi lang sa Facebook pati na rin sa real time.*"

This statement pertains to the part where there is unity in diversity among the members of the group, it may be online or offline.

Community as serving people. This refers as to how the members of the group use social media as a way of helping.

One participant stated, "*Ahm, okay naman kasi everytime naman na may makikita kong pwedeng maka-contribute or I can he or I can make help sa mga students ano ano nagpo-post naman ah, pinopost ko na lang so, kasi ahm hindi din kasi gano'n ka-active 'yung 'yung CAS ahm 'yung mga students so, ayun I post na lang kasi if ever the they will be interested it will be a big help para sa kanila.*"

Moreover, there were posts in the group that best portray this theme, different seminars and workshop for a cause. The main purpose of those posts was to encourage students to join and donate for those people who have been affected by the Super Typhoon Yolanda through seminars and workshops for a cause.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude that the existence of community in virtual spaces specifically in Facebook.com is an illusion. In reference to the literature that has been reviewed, “virtual settlement” is one of the vital aspects in determining the existence of community in virtual spaces. Hence, since community had changed along ages and now suffers from the fallacies of objectification and nostalgia, various researchers assumed that virtual spaces allows users to compensate for the perceived shortcomings of offline communities (Lindlof et al., 2002).

Research results conclude otherwise that there are significant factors that had resulted to separate community to virtual spaces. Groups in virtual spaces specifically “CAS Family” cannot be distinguished to transient online gatherings. The study and coded materials show various Facebook functionally (as discussed in Chapter 3) though does not necessarily satisfy the actual qualifications of a community.

The researchers also found out that although there is a communication (which is also a necessary factor and sufficient condition for Facebook users to act as if they are members of a community) that is revolving around the Facebook group, it could still not be considered a community, for a community should have constant interaction among its

members and not just a case to case basis wherein the group only showcase interaction in preparation for their college week which only arise every year.

The researchers used the symbolic interactionism lens in interpreting the acquired data. These findings could be associated with George Herbert Mead, theoretical thinking concerned with the self: symbolic interactionism. According to Mead, communication is fundamental to the development of the self. He also viewed society as realm of group life premised on cooperative interaction. For various sociologists who are interested in dynamics of interpersonal interaction, self could be considered as a central mechanism through which the individual and the social world intersect. In *Mind, Self and Society*, Mead places great emphasis upon the social self; each as individuals, fashions a sense of one's own sense of selfhood through engagement with other selves (Mead, 1934).

Language is the heart of the constitution of one's *self*, people communicate through *symbols* therefore giving birth to the term *symbolic interaction*. Symbols represent objects in one's minds and in the others also for Mead, it has a universal quality for the social groups in which they are meaningful thus serving as a common currency for individuals to create a sense of self ad interact with other people (Mead, 1934).

The researchers located the participants not just as the central domain in the social interaction but also a pivotal point in determining the results of the study; they formed their realities and understanding in the word community with their experiences from growing up and interactions with others. The participants had located their "selves" by the meaning that they attach to the word "community" therefore arriving at the conclusion that the participants does not see themselves as part of that community. Formulating that the member of the group had injected a deeper roots in defining community despite the various innovations in the world of communication.

Herbert Blumer who coined the term “symbolic interactionism” and significantly added his contribution to the theory had conceptualized three core principles in the theory which are meaning, thought and language; *meaning* arises directly from social interaction. In fact, meanings are the only basis people have for acting towards thing or other people; *language* gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols; and lastly *thought* as a mental conversation or dialogue that requires role taking, or imagining different points of views (Blumer, 1969 in Lindlof, 2002).

Human interaction is ‘mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining meaning of one another’s action’ (Blumer, 1962). In this study, the participants allocated their meaning with the term *community* thus resulting to the act of uninterest in the Facebook group, since the participants do not feel as if they are belonged to that *family*. Also, they attached meanings to the Facebook group, because of their experience not just in the group but also in their interaction with their co-members it has results to that kind of act and attitude towards the group itself. *Language* constitutes the texts and symbols that are present in the Facebook group and lastly the thought is the various perspectives of the individual members toward the group.

Through interactions, participants discover each other’s intention through the usage of significant symbols. The participants of the study do not see themselves as part of a community because of the lack of constant interaction and participants as the “self” had already assigned their deep reality about it.

Eventhough there is a common public space (the ‘CAS family’) which is one of the condition to satisfy a virtual settlement still the values of oral culture is still what needed to entail ‘strong ties’ between the member of a community, for virtual spaces such as Facebook.com only allows

communication in distinct capacity and limits the freedom of its members in expressing their real intentions.

The researchers also found out that numbers in determining community is also a vital aspect in formation of relationship among the members of CAS. Studies show that the members prefer interacting in their small individual Facebook groups and find themselves as a part of that community thus arriving in the conclusion that the members build intimacy (which is also their standard in determining a community) based on the availability of proximity with their members.

In conclusion, the CAS Facebook group member entails deeper standards in determining the group where they belong as a community. The participants conclude that virtual spaces could not serve as an alternative for the lack of geographical area in a community.

Recommendations

The researchers identified 13 interrelated and overlapping themes: "Facebook as a communication tool," "Facebook as a bulletin board," "Facebook as a decoration," "Facebook as a promotional tool," "Facebook as an extended classroom," "Facebook as an outlet for expression," "Community as a small community," "Community as moving with freedom," "Community as a constant interaction," "Community as a family," "Community as a congregation of individual," "Community as a mini universe" and "Community as serving people."

These themes do not relate specifically, to communities of place, interest, identity, attachment, or other types of communities, but rather to broader concepts which link various dimensions of current community research.

The following recommendations are offered for the improvement of this study.

1. To evince a follow up study that will produce quantitative materials that will survey the members of particular virtual group that would administer the production of results in quantitative data through numbers and statistics.
2. To improve the research by producing another qualitative study that will study an individual class section Facebook group that would further explain both online and offline worlds, and the relationship that exist among and between them. Also, to present a precise definition of the nature of relationship among the members.
3. To develop a much wider scale in conducting this research, add numbers of participants in the in-depth interviews and cover the suppose target timeline to further study the correlation of year to the changed of the meaning of the community as time passes.
4. To improve the research by using another Facebook group to study in compare to this study, since this is an idiographic research and not applicable to all the virtual spaces.

The following recommendations are offered for related studies in the field of sociology and communication particularly in using virtual spaces:

1. To conduct a study that is comparing an actual community with a geographical area and a community with a virtual common

space to test the implication of CMC in determining community and the divergence of each from another.

2. To develop a qualitative study that would examine Internet scholars and community analyst view in the emergence of community in virtual spaces and their views in 'virtual communities' being the new standard in identifying the evidence of a community.

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