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DANIELLE ANGELA MORTEL FUERTE

VLOG(G)ING SINO KA MAN:

On Vlogs and Created Filipino Identities

Thesis Adviser:

Assistant Professor Jane O. Vinculado

College of Mass Communication

University of the Philippines

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DANIELLE ANGELA MORTEL FUERTE
College of Mass Communication
University of the Philippines

VLOG(G)ING SINO KA MAN:
ON VLOGS AND CREATED FILIIPINO IDENTITIES

by

DANIELLE ANGELA MORTEL FUERTE

has been approved for
the Department of Broadcast Communication
and the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication
by

Assistant Professor Jane O. Vinculado

Professor Elena E. Pernia, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Mass Communication

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

PERSONAL DATA

Name Danielle Angela Mortel Fuerte
Permanent Address Acacia St., SantarosaVillag, Brgy. Don Jose, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
Telephone Number (049) 541-2309
Date & Place of Birth 11 November 1996, Manila

EDUCATION

Secondary Level 6th Honors, Colegio San Agustin-Bñ, Biñan City, Laguna
Primary Level Learning Links Visionary Award (Highest Honors), Learning Links Academy, Silang, Cavite

ORGANIZATIONS

Deputy Corps Sponsor, UP Corps of Sponsors (2013-2014)
President, Filmmakers' Guild of UP (2013-2014)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Intern, CNN Philippines, August – November 2016
Intern, DZUP 1602, November 2016 – February 2017

ACHIEVEMENTS

University Scholar 2nd Semester AY 2015-2016, 1st Semester AY 2016-2017
College Scholar 1st & 2nd Semester, AY 2013-2014, 2nd Semester AY 2014-2015, 1st Semester AY 2015-2016

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DEDICATION

To the ones who lost track

And are finding their way back

To Him

ABSTRACT

Fuerte, D.A.M. (2017). *VLOG(G)ING SINO KA MAN: On Vlogs and Created Filipino Identities*, Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, University of the Philippines, College of Mass Communication.

Blogs as a communication medium have been making a mark in the Filipino virtual sphere, and continue to evolve with the onset of technological innovations. YouTube, since its launch in 2005, has also played an integral role in this evolution. More and more Filipinos are adapting to this change, and now, blogs have become video blogs or vlogs, which are much easier to navigate but include more space for implications and stereotypes to emerge.

With that said, this study seeks to answer the theoretical inquiry: What Filipino identity is created according to the Filipino-centric content of the vlogs and the personalities of the vloggers themselves?

Through comparative textual analysis using semiotics and *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as framework, it was found that *pakikipagkapwa* is successfully presented as a dominant ideology that simply defines how a Filipino should be. The Filipino as *Kapwa* is an identity that was presented as a stereotype justified by a system wherein individuals perceive, understand, and explain an existing situation or arrangement with the result of the situation being maintained (Jost & Banaji, 1994). The vloggers play a vital role in the creation of this perception and the proliferation of the stereotypes, although unknowingly or unintentionally, because of the signs and symbols they present in their content.

Keywords: vlogs, YouTube, Filipino-ness, stereotypes, *pakikipagkapwa*

ABSTRAKT

Fuerte, D.A.M. (2017). *VLOG(G)ING SINO KA MAN: On Vlogs and Created Filipino Identities*, Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, University of the Philippines, College of Mass Communication.

Ang mga *blogs* bilang medyum ng komunikasyon ay patuloy na lumalago ayon sa paglaganap ng teknolohiya. Malaki rin ang nai-ambag ng paglunsad ng YouTube noong taong 2005 sa mabilis na paglago nito. Ngayon, ang mga *blogs* ay naging *video blogs* o *vlogs*, na sadyang napakadaling gamitin, ngunit nagbibigay din ng mas malaking pagkakataon para sa mga implikasyon at *stereotypes* na maaaring mag-ugat dito.

Alinsunod dito, ang pag-aaral na ito ay minabuting bigyan ng kasagutan at malalim na pagsusuri angkatanungang: Anong pagka-Pilipino ang naililikha ayon sa nilalaman ng mga *vlogs* at mga personalidad ng mga mismong *vloggers*?

Sa pamamagitan ng mga paghahambing ng mga tekstwal na panunuri gamit ang *semiotics* at Sikolohiyang Pilipino bilang balangkas, napagtanto na ang pakikipagkapwa ay isang dominanteng ideolohiya na nagtatakda kung paano maging isang Pilipino.

Ang Pilipino bilang Kapwa ay naipakikilala rin bilang isang *stereotype* na pinatatag ng isang sistema kung saan ang isang indibidwal ay naniniwala, umiintindi, at nakakapagpaliwanag sa mga bagay na kasalukuyang nagaganap o di kaya mga bagay na naging resulta ng pagkakataon. May malaking ugnayan at kontribusyon ang mga *vloggers* sa mga pagpuna at paglaganap ng *stereotypes*, bagamat sadya man o hindi, dahil na rin sa konteksto ng mga hugis at simbolismong kanilang kinakatawan.

Keywords: *vlogs*, YouTube, pakikipagkapwa, *stereotype*

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of personal computers and the Internet in the early 1980s and 1990s respectively, paved the way for digital technologies to reach a number of dimensions in people's everyday lives. Now, these technologies are referred to as new digital media technologies and are continuing to be of influence on social relations for several developed societies (Lupton, 2013).

In 2013, about eight years after YouTube was launched, my sister Dana and I grew fond of watching Judy (itsjudyslife on YouTube) and her husband Benji sharing interesting aspects of their daily lives on YouTube. It became a summer bonding experience for my sister and I, as we waited for Judy to upload a new video every morning. As we slowly immersed in Judy's world, we found ourselves relating to her and following her stories on life, love, and family. For me and my sister, it was Judy who started the world of vlogs—stories and/or information posted on a website in a form of video, rather than just text, as seen in traditional blogs (Griffith & Papacharissi, 2010).

According to an article by Thompson (n.d., n.p.), it was in the late 1990s when the term 'web journal' came about. It later transformed into 'web log' which changed into 'weblog' coined by Jorn Barger in 1997, again changed into 'wee blogs' and finally into 'blogs' coined by Peter Merholz (Thompson, n.d., n.p.). In the earlier days, blogging was not as accessible as it is now. In order to start a blog, one is required to learn the basics of coding or Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), and spend a significant amount of time before a blog post can be completed. According to an article titled *Tracing Back the*

Philippine's Blogging History on yugatech.com, it was not until 1999 when a number of bloggers and programmers wanted to make it easier for people to join the community. It was during this time when Brad Fitzpatrick founded LiveJournal (more commonly known as LJ), a simple way for him to stay connected with his high school friends, now known as a social networking site and blogging platform. Also during this time, Pyra Labs launches Blogger.com, a free blog publishing platform that offers pre-coded layouts for aspiring bloggers like myself.

At that point, anyone with an Internet connection can create a Blogger or LJ account and publish their own blogs more easily. This then meant availability worldwide, including of course, the Philippines. In late 1999, IndayWorks.com was the first blog site that won the People's Choice Award, under Family & Personals category, of the 2nd Philippine Web Awards. Four years after Pyra Labs launched Blogger.com, Google acquires the site and releases it as a completely free blogging website. On top of that, in 2003, Google launched AdSense to connect bloggers and advertisers online. Developments continued within the year with the launch of the first major podcasting service for bloggers called Audioblogger (<http://www.yugatech.com>).

The popularity across the globe can be seen in the launching of the first full-service Filipino blog hosting by plogHost (www.ploghost.com) in January 2003. In August of 2004, The Philippines According to Blogs project was re-launched at PinoyBlog (www.pinoyblog.com), which serves as the first and only blog community portal with over 1,500 Filipino blog members. With its popularity came the expected exploration of business entities in social networking sites. On February 14, 2005, the famous YouTube was launched and lead to the rise of video blogging, as it allowed users

to post videos easier and cheaper, if not for free. Google then acquires YouTube for \$1.65 billion dollars, and is now said to be turning out “bigger than TV,” according to Google Inc.’s executive chairman (2001 to 2011), Eric Schmidt (“Eric Schmidt sees YouTube as bigger than TV,” 2013).

I then found it necessary to look into YouTube as a platform and how it paved the way for vlogging across the web. Burgess and Green (2009) refer to YouTube as a mediated cultural system, where participatory culture can be observed. They also described it as a “distribution platform that can make the products of commercial media widely popular... (p.6)”and as a platform for user-created content to possibly challenge popular culture. Vlogging, according to Burgess and Green, is a generic form of video content on YouTube, which might be “exploited by the traditional media industry (p. 6).”

According to socialblade.com’s statistics, among the top YouTubers worldwide are Pewdiepie with more than 54 million subscribers and earning up to \$9.6M a year, HolaSoyGerman with over 31 million subscribers and earning up to \$1.7M a year, and Smosh with almost 23 million subscribers and earning up to \$2.9M a year. These YouTubers, with Pewdiepie leading the list, started the trend on YouTube-gaming, or playing online games and filming themselves while doing so. In the Philippines, the top YouTubers (YouTube users not including mainstream television networks) according to socialblade.com’s data and based on the count of subscribers are KAYCEE & RACHEL in WONDERLAND with over 1 million subscribers and earning up to \$6M a year, Kids’ Toys with over 2 million subscribers and earning up to \$1.8M a year, Little Big Toys over 500,000 subscribers and earning up to \$1.5M a year,fliptopbattles with almost 1.8 million subscribers and earning up to \$1.4M a year, and Ranz Kyle with over 1 million

subscribers and earning up to \$1.6M. First on the list is Kids' Toys, a channel that features two little girls reviewing (playing with) toys.

On the other hand, the top vloggers in the Philippines are Wil Dasovich with a growing 430,000 subscribers and earning up to \$333,000 a year, Mikey Bustos with over 383,000 subscribers and earning up to \$133,000 a year, and Michelle Dy with over 380,000 subscribers and earning up to \$215,000 a year. Other Filipino vloggers or YouTubers are based overseas and cater to a wide variety of audiences. To this day, the Filipino community of vloggers grows each day as more and more technology becomes available. Vlogging covers most age brackets, as teenagers now explore the possibilities and opportunities that may come with it (Lenhart & Madden, 2005).

Before I conducted this study, I came across Wil Dasovich's YouTube channel and learned that he started producing more YouTube videos after his "Foreigners Speak Salitang Beki" video from his "The Art of Tagalog" series went viral in 2015. To this day, Wil Dasovich uses being half Filipino as the theme and asset of most of his videos. Unlike my relationship with Judy, I found Wil's channel quite a problematic take on the Filipino concepts he tends to generalize.

Research Problem

As stated, blogs have been around since the 1990s, and since then, people have been trying to create systems to make it easier for aspiring bloggers to join the writing space. It was in 1999 when Blogger.com, a free blog publishing platform, was launched. With it came a gradual acceptance of the mass to the medium made available to them. The Filipino community, specifically, is known to be avid supporters, readers, and writers

of blogs. A wide variety of topics can be found on different blogs on the web: pop culture, fashion, beauty and lifestyle, food, arts, technology, entertainment, music, movies, travel, love and life, and many more.

An evolution of this medium was expected, but it was not until the latter part of 2003 when video blogs or vlogs began appearing on the Internet. With the onset of YouTube, a video-sharing website created in 2005, the blogging community grew and even transformed into what we call now as ‘vloggers.’ Currently, a growing number of Filipinos are part of this vlogging community, from locals to part Filipinos living overseas.

The growth of the Filipino vlogging community creates additional but more similar themes in the content of such vlogs. Among the most common are: personal diary, beauty and lifestyle, comedic spoof, and how-to-vlogs that usually use being Filipino as main topic. Because of this, a collective idea of the Filipino identity is created.

This is why I find it necessary to analyze Filipino-produced vlogs by addressing the theoretical inquiry: What Filipino identity is created according to the Filipino-centric content of the vlogs and the personalities of the vloggers themselves?

Research Objectives

There are three main objectives of this study that will serve as the framework for developing an answer to the research problem. The objectives are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the vlogs produced by Filipino vloggers based in the Philippines and vloggers based overseas;
- 2) To determine Filipino stereotypes and identities created through vlogs by

- analyzing signs and symbols used by these vloggers on their produced content;
- 3) To compare and contrast the vlog content of Filipino locals with that of Filipinos based overseas.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will contribute greatly to the benefits of society especially in this age wherein technology plays an important role in the constant development of media. This includes the emergence of new platforms that may stand as communication opportunities for the mass audience to take part in.

This fast development demands for more studies on emerging communication media, especially vlogs, and their maximum potential in discussing nationwide, and even worldwide, issues. It is also important to note that there is a rapid evolution in the blogging community or the blogosphere, and this change may already have affected certain members who cannot instantly adapt to the environment. This study will not only benefit the viewers who are free to choose the content they watch, but also old and new producers who actually create content. More importantly, this study's emphasis on the outcome of produsage in the Philippine context, highlighting the choices of the Filipino vloggers in the conceptualization of their content may open more opportunities and spark new ideas that will better contribute to the Philippine society.

Moreover, the findings of this study may be used as basis to a number of future studies. To start, it may be a basis to future sociological and anthropological studies that might investigate further on the question of nationhood and the issue of stereotypes that flourish on mainstream media. This study may also be a basis on future political

economic studies that might explore on the interests that vloggers or YouTubers might be serving in producing their content. And lastly, this study will hopefully inspire other researchers to do an audience analysis study on the YouTube community.

Scope

This qualitative research employs comparative textual analysis as a research method that aided me to closely analyze the medium, and compare and contrast the meanings and themes that arose from them. I selected two (2) vloggers raised and based in the Philippines, two (2) vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and two (2) vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines. All in all, I analyzed twelve (12) vlogs (two vlogs each vlogger) in total.

This study is limited to analyzing only vlogs, which are pertained to as journalistic documentations of a person's stories and interests in the form of video, rather than text (Griffit & Paparachissi, 2010). Although vlogs can fall under different themes like travel, beauty, and lifestyle, to state a few, other forms of content on YouTube (music videos, parodies, professional productions, advertorials, and the like) shall not be considered as vlogs. In addition, only vlogs produced by Filipinos based overseas and in the Philippines, and vlogs produced within the past year (2016 to present) with content related to the subject matter, in my point of view, shall be considered. Most, if not all, materials needed to be watched and analyzed are available on YouTube.com (www.youtube.com), freely accessible by the public.

I also looked at the vloggers' personal Instagram accounts for any content consistencies or inconsistencies. However, any observation from this did not greatly

affect the findings of the study. Similarly, the findings in the vlogs were compared and contrasted only in the context of concepts and ideologies that are presented or implied as the Filipino identity. This study did not attempt to show whether or not these implications and representations are correct.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although there is no existing study that explores vlogs and represented identities to date, I have found related studies that have explored blogging, which has many similarities with vlogging in terms of concept. To add to that, I have also found studies that greatly focus on YouTube as a promising platform, vlogging and shared intimacies explained through self-disclosure, stereotyping in the context of system-justification, and defining the Filipino identity in the context of values and culture.

The Shift to Web 2.0

The Web evolved from Web 1.0, wherein technologies were based solely on websites and devices, to Web 2.0, wherein wireless and broadband internet access stood as instruments for the propagation of developing technologies (smartphones, tablet computers, social networking sites, and many more). Web 2.0 has merged both acts of consumption and production in the numerous online platforms that “encourage users to contribute content and share it with other users.” Beer and Burrows on *Consumption, Prosumption and Participatory Web Cultures*, and other internet researchers refer to this as ‘prosumption’ and presents this as a compliance to the “democratic ideal of citizen participation and sharing (Beer & Burrows, 2010, p.3).”

The shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 disjointed a number of users and required writers and users who wanted to publish their works to have basic knowledge on coding and HTML. According to Lupton (2013), YouTube’s main function when it was

launched in 2005 was for video sharing purposes. On the same note, while YouTube offered easy access to its users, it was also a platform that introduced the concept of video blogging or what we call now as vlogging.

Blogs and the Blogosphere

Before the onset of weblogs, digital communities existed in the form of chat rooms, email lists, and intranet groups (Prabhakar, 2006). Coined by John Barger in December 1997, the word weblog was broken into the phrase ‘we blog’ and was eventually called ‘blog’ by Peter Merholz. In the ‘real’ world, blogs can be compared to journals or diaries. Prabhakar (2006) also emphasizes on the main similarity between paper diaries and blogs: they are both are written in a casual, informal, and reflective style. Their differences show that blogs in digital communities can offer more access to unlimited numbers of readers; they are not only personal but also interactive and collaborative due to comments features; and they offer instant publishing with editing still possible even after the material has been posted.

On the other hand, Wijnia on *Understanding Weblogs: A Communicative Perspective*, described a blog to be a “webpage on which the author publishes entries with the intention to start conversation (Wijnia, 2004, p. 9).” Since anyone with internet connection immediately has the access and the ability to publish a blog, blogging then begins with disseminating information through the internet. Some technical functionality features are also required to start, support, and maintain a blog.

On a communication aspect, a blog is pertained to be a form of communication that integrates three information patterns: consultation, registration, and conversation.

These patterns are said to be what make the blog a new medium (Prabhakar, 2006, p. 155). On the same note, a blog not only broadcasts information but also has a receiving role by giving the readers the opportunity to respond. Prabhakar expounds:

“The weblog can be used for reflection on three domains: on the subjective domain, for self-expression and self-reflection, on the objective domain, for sharing knowledge; and on the inter-subjectivity domain, for criticism on society. Through the internet, the weblog is an easy way of publishing and therefore offers a good platform for self-expression.” (p. 155-156)

As mentioned, bloggers in the blogosphere are regarded as information senders and receivers alike. Focusing on bloggers as senders, Cabling (2013) found that according to bloggers, they should have certain characteristics to have blogs that are ideal to a specific audience.

The blogosphere is said to be consisted of more teens than adults, as one in five teens in the US keeps a blog. Lenhart and Madden on *Teen Content Creators and Consumers* also found that two in five teens (38%) read blogs, and only about a quarter (27%) of adults online do so. In addition to that, they find that “blogging teens are more enthusiastic content creators, manipulators, and sharers than their non-blogging brethren (Lenhart & Madden, 2005, p. 8).”

YouTube and its Utility

According to Burgess and Green, YouTube is a “potential site where people can engage with the self-representation of others and encounter cultural differences (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 81).” When YouTube was launched in June 2005 by creators Chad

Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, it was one of the many competing services aiming to eliminate technical barriers to the posting and sharing of videos online. Now, YouTube is part of the mainstream media landscape (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 15).

Since the birth of YouTube on February 14, 2005, it has gone through several changes. In April of the same year, Jawid Karim posts the very first video on YouTube, and it is of him standing in front of elephants in the zoo (Gannes, 2006). It was not until June 2005 when YouTube revamped and caught the eye of many. According to Burgess and Green (2009), this was because YouTube provided a simple interface in which users could easily upload, publish, and view streaming videos without having to know coding and other technicalities. They add that YouTube was the first to offer its users an unlimited number of videos to upload, some basic community functions like sharing an uploaded video's link to others, and Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) and HTML code that allowed videos to be easily embedded into other websites. Jawid Karim explains four key features as to how YouTube's success jumped in just a few years: 1) a video recommendations list, 2) an email link to enable video sharing, 3) social networking and user interaction tools like video comments and thumbs up or down, and 4) an external video player (Gannes, 2006).

In October of 2006, soon after YouTube's revamp, Google acquired it for \$1.65 billion. In the following years, a number of web metrics services like nielsen-netratings.com and alexa.com showed that YouTube was consistently on the top ten most visited websites globally. Currently considered to be a part of the mainstream media landscape, YouTube is also referred to as a "media company that is a platform for, and an aggregator of, content (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 4)."

YouTube users appear to be in favor of the conversational form that is somewhat a characteristic of YouTube's user-generated content, as shown in their byline, 'Broadcast Yourself.' Burgess and Green (2009) defines YouTube as a space where familiar forms of mass media content may be encountered. A survey of the most popular content on YouTube shows that viewers lean towards consuming user-created videos; a majority of these were vlogs. YouTube users engage in new forms of publishing, somehow as a way to narrate and communicate their own cultural experiences. Hartley (2008), as cited in Burgess & Green (2009) emphasizes that these experiences greatly include their being 'citizen consumers' (p. 48).

Aganon and Medina (2010) found that the strongest motivation of selected college students in Manila lay mostly on the desire to be entertained. Their study also showed that YouTube has the potential to gain mainstream popularity in the long run because it incorporates all types of media and provide a means for more active audience participation as a user-generated medium. On the same note, Pamatmat (2011) found that YouTube, as an alternative venue for production, enables users to "explore their individuality by expressing their opinions and views through the videos in their YouTube channels (Pamatmat, 2011, p. 59)." To add to that, Abubacar and Palami (2009) found that YouTubers directed the use of this media technology towards watching, downloading, and uploading videos. Moreover, YouTube satisfies its users' diversion needs and cognitive needs through its entertainment value and through acquiring new ideas, respectively.

While YouTube allows for an accessible platform for self-expression and audience participation, the common assumption that raw talent joined by digital

distribution can directly translate into ‘legitimate success and media fame’ (p.15) still remains. This introduces the ‘amateur video’ on YouTube and how much it is connected with the history of the ‘home movie,’ which was used solely to document certain events in ‘ordinary’ citizens’ lives (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 21-25).

Vlogging and Shared Intimacies

Since YouTube paved the way for the blogosphere to widen and diversify, it then introduced video blogging or vlogging as a “conversational form that is somewhat emblematic of YouTube’s user-created content (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 41-43).” On YouTube, vlogs are said to be user-created content that make up more than two-thirds of the content coded in both the most responded and most discussed categories. Moreover, vlogging shares an emphasis on ‘liveness’, immediacy, and conversation. On the same note, Burgess and Green (2009) emphasized that vlogs remind users of the characteristics of interpersonal face-to-face communication.

Similar to blogging, vlogging also invites feedback from viewers through social networking tools. Lange (2007) introduced the concept of intimacy, as video bloggers or vloggers share intimate moments on the internet for everyone to see. She found that:

“These shared intimacies may translate into larger spheres of social action and political participation. Part of the problem in either attacking or supporting notions about the personal as political is that the distinction between the public and the private is blurring in certain ways. As more people carry around cameras and mediate their everyday experiences, private moments posted on the Internet enter the public record, with images archived in searchable, reproducible ways(Lange, 2007, p. 5).”

By sharing intimate moments and personal events on the internet through vlogging, vloggers acknowledge that the video image promotes a key connection between them and their viewers, thereby achieving “greater understanding of oneself and others (Lange, 2007, cited in Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 80).”

Johnson (1981) defined self-disclosure as a process by which people provide personal information about their thoughts, feelings, and/or needs to others.

On the context of blogs, Jang and Stefanone investigated the relationship between bloggers’ individual differences in terms of gender, intended audiences, tendencies towards self-disclosure, and “expectations for familiar communication norms such as equitable reciprocity (Jang & Stefanone, 2011, p.1).” and suggested that individuals with large networks of strong ties use blogs as a device to maintain relationships. By offering its users the ability to disclose personal information to a larger audience with the least amount of time and energy, blogs are able to act as an inexpensive tool to preserve said relationships. In addition to that, they found that disclosures via personal-journal-style blogs are often non-directed in nature and present a unique channel for self-disclosure. Because most bloggers do not set access restriction to their blogs, content is widely accessible, reaching more people at a time.

Griffith and Papacharissi (n.d., n.p.) examine the culture of vlogging including its rhythm, language, and communication style. They concluded that:

“Through various means of self–presentation, many vloggers share their lives, making personal video blogs fascinating gateways into individuals. Vloggers create and negotiate a self online as well as shape a new and more rich kind of cyberspace (Griffith & Papacharissi, n.d., n.p.).”

Stereotyping

Jost and Banaji (1994) looked at stereotypes, which are fixed and over-generalized beliefs about a particular group or class of people (Cardwell, 1996, cited in McLeod, 2008), and hypothesized that they accompany any system characterized by the separation of people into roles, classes, positions, or statuses, because such arrangements tend to be explained and perceived as justifiable by those who participate in them. The main goal of Jost and Banaji's study was to address the relationship between stereotyping and false consciousness. By looking at stereotypes in the context of system-justification, Jost and Banaji suggested that individuals perceive, understand, and explain an existing situation or arrangement with the result of the situation being maintained (as in maintaining a *status quo*). The dangers, however, of the power of system-justification and stereotyping, include stigmatized groups acting in such a way that other people's negative stereotypes of them are affirmed and supported, thereby ensuring their continued subordination (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

Defining the Filipino Identity

A qualitative study entitled *Making Sense of Being and Becoming Filipinos: An Indigenous Psychology Perspective* by Yacat (2005) explored how 36 undergraduate students from the University of the Philippines who were born, raised, and residing in the Philippines at the time of his study, made sense of their *pagka-Pilipino* (being Filipino). By using the *ginabayang talakayan* (indigenous facilitated discussion), Yacat found that their notions of being Filipino were greatly shaped by any of these factors: a sense of

shared origins (*pinagmulan*); growing up in a similar cultural milieu (*kinalakhan*); and a shared consciousness (*kamalayan*).

He discussed ‘Filipino’ as a social category that denotes a specific group of people, and emphasized that his participants’ identification of features greatly depended on the attributes that separated Filipinos and non Filipinos. The first factor, *pinagmulan* (a sense of shared origins), involved responses that were about being born in the Philippines, having Filipino parents, and residing in the Philippines. The second factor, *kinalakhan* (cultural roots), include speaking of a Philippine language, and subscribing to a variety of beliefs and practices, specifically *diskarte* (approach or strategy), which Yacat’s participants’ considered as identifiably Filipino. The last factor, *kamalayan* (consciousness), presented responses that were associated with the awareness of the self as Filipino, acceptance of membership in the category ‘Filipino’, and pride in the said membership. Although Yacat found that there are three main factors as to how being Filipino is defined, he also found that different people and groups tend to place difference emphases on the said factors in an attempt to come to terms with their identities as Filipinos (Yacat, 2005).

On the question of the Filipino identity and who, specifically, can be considered as ‘Filipino’, Salazar (1991), a Filipino historian and proponent of Pantayong Pananaw, argued that Filipino-Americans are not technically Filipinos because they are not legitimate ‘culture-bearers’—they were born in the United States, do not share the Philippine cultural experience, and hardly speak any Philippine language (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

Similarly, Protacio-Marcelino (1996, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000), in her dissertation on ethnicity and identity issues of second generation Filipino-Americans, stressed that Filipino-Americans are not Filipino but both Filipino and American. She mentioned that Filipino-Americans have different cultural experiences growing up in America, but they can still lay claim to the Filipino cultural identity because they share the very same values that Filipinos in the Philippines hold dear: respect for elders, sense of family and community, value for education, appreciation of the language, and devotion to religion. Moreover, Filipino-Americans may be ‘outsiders’ to everyday Philippine experience but they still somehow possess elements of Philippine life and culture as taught by their parents and reinforced by their regular visits to the Philippines. This, then, makes them ‘insiders’ to a certain extent (Protacio-Marcelino, 1996, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

We then look at the Filipino identity in the context of the Filipino family. Morillo, Capuno, and Mendoza (2013) explored the correlates of views on family values among Filipinos, and found that Filipinos share a number of common family values which are: being family-centered, being child-centric, having close ties characterised by reciprocity, and having a large family size (Medina, 2001; Miralao, 1994, cited in Morillo et al., 2013). Although they provided evidence on the evolving Filipino values, their study emphasized and banked on the role of the family in the formation of the Filipino identity. It is said that societal norms can also be perceived as being rooted in the family; attributing familial names to make one feel that the other is not a stranger. For example, Filipinos relate to total strangers as *kuya* (older brother), *ate* (older sister), and *tatang* (father), just to name a few. Attributing familial names was also said to be adopted by

influential mass media networks by using slogans to call their viewers or listeners *kapamilya* (family member), *kapuso* (beloved one), and *kapatid* (sibling).

Although *balikbayans* (returning Filipinos based abroad) are said to still relish family ties (sending remittances to their families, retiring to their ancestral provinces, etc.), they were still regarded as part of the evolving family values manifested: shifting family structures and dynamics (for example, the changing roles of the woman in the family) and migration, which are some factors that hinder a collective definition of the Filipino identity in the context of the Filipino family (Morillo et al., 2013).

Synthesis

This review presents previous studies which analyze blogs and vlogs as platforms for self-presentation and self-disclosure, looking into bloggers and vloggers' intentions, identities, and impressions they want to give or portray. The most common type of blogs is in the personal-style-journal format, wherein bloggers share personal information or feelings to their readers, introducing self-disclosure in the blogosphere.

The onset of the internet and the worldwide web paved the way for the digital community to introduce numerous platforms wherein users can choose to primarily share information to a bigger audience with minimal effort and time. Moreover, the evolution of Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 enabled easier video sharing—from the previous personal-journal-style blogs to including embedded videos on blogs and eventually a whole new media platform, YouTube—with only a number of technical features needed.

Researchers defined the blog as a web page wherein authors can instantly publish works in order to start conversation, aided by interactive tools such as comments.

Similarly, vlogging incorporates multiple platforms, which make the medium more complex in nature, but is still able to provide its users with a very interactive interface. On YouTube, the most subscribed channels and most watched videos are under the category of vlogs.

I also deemed it necessary to look at studies that emphasized on the creation of the Filipino identity, in the context of ‘being Filipino’ as a social category and an identity formed that is rooted in Filipino family values. As I have discovered, there have been debates on who to identify as Filipino, however for this study, I chose to identify even the part-Filipinos (e.g. Filipino Americans) as Filipino. It is also important to note that there is no one specific or boxed Filipino identity as Morillo et al. (2013) found that shifting family structures and dynamics greatly affect the evolving definition of the Filipino family.

With that said, this study hopes to provide an understanding on vlogging and the Filipino identities created, as presented in the medium. We cannot dismiss, however, the changing characteristics of new media and the continuously evolving definitions of the Filipino.

Chapter 3

STUDY FRAMEWORK

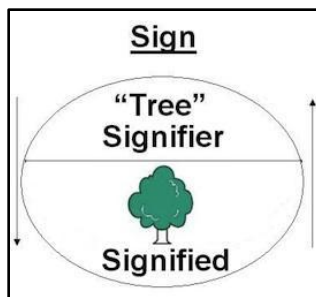
This research focuses on the Filipino identity that is created on selected Filipino vloggers' video blogs or vlogs. Thus, the following theories were used to develop this study:

Semiotics

Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguist whose ideas on language structure laid the foundation for much of the progress of linguistic sciences in the 20th century. He advocated that language must be considered a 'social phenomenon', a structured system that can be viewed synchronically and diachronically. He also introduced semiology as a science that studies 'the roles of signs as part of social life.'

Put simply, Saussure defines semiotics as the study of signs. It involves the theory and analysis of signs, codes and signifying practices. A sign, then, is an image, object, sound or action that stands for something else, including objects and concepts (Chandler, 2007). Saussure presented two parts of a sign: the signifier and the signified. The signifier, as Saussure says, is the material or physical form a sign takes, and the signified is the object or concept to which the signifier refers. These two parts relate to each other through the process of signification; with neither of the two functioning without the other (Saussure, 1983, cited in Chandler, 2007). The figure below shows their relationship:

Figure 1. Saussure's two-part model of the sign



In media language, Saussure suggests that there are three levels on which the audience read a media text: 1) syntactic level, 2) representational level, and 3) symbolic level. On the first level, the audience identifies the basic denotations of a text, describing what they see or observe directly. On the second level, the audience notes the portrayal of characters and settings. And on the third level, the hidden cultural or symbolic meaning of the text is taken into consideration. Both the second and third levels are examples of connotations.

Roland Barthes, a French literary philosopher, recognizes the relationship between the signifier and the signified as presented by Saussure, but suggests that it is more 'motivated' than 'arbitrary.' Barthes also describes signs as mediated by language. There are three orders of signification in semiotics according to Barthes. In the first order, the sign is 'self-contained,' which is also the denotative meaning according to Saussure's model. The second order involves connotation, where meaning encounters a range of cultural meanings that are derived from the way society uses the signifier and the signified. And the third order involves meanings derived from a cultural picture of the world, which Barthes pertains to as naturalization (Chandler, 2007).

To integrate this to my study, vlogs were used as texts that are made up of several signs communicated through a medium. The signs in these texts work together to produce

meaning. At the same time, vlogs, as having denotative and connotative meanings tied up with their narratives, can produce cultural meanings or myths, to the extent of normalizing certain values, beliefs, and cultures. Moreover, the medium in which these signs are portrayed is vlogging, and the main platform for this medium is YouTube.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino

Virgilio Enriquez denounced the uncritical acceptance of Western theories and methods that dominated Philippine psychology in the 1970s, and envisioned to formalize a psychology that would be sensitive to Filipino realities. With *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Enriquez started the indigenization of psychology in the Philippines (Yacat, 2005).

Sikolohiyang Pilipino is greatly anchored on “Filipino thoughts and experiences as understood from a Filipino perspective (Enriquez, 1975 cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000, p. 50).” Moreover, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* emphasizes on fostering national identity and consciousness, social involvement, and psychology of language and culture.

Enriquez highlights five Filipino values and examined them both in the exogenous and indigenous perspectives. While we will be looking at exogenous definitions, will be focusing on the indigenized definitions for this study. Enriquez defines *bahala na*, a Filipino cultural value with no exact English translation, as determination and risk-taking. Usually connoted negatively because of the lack of considering affixation, *hiya* (directly translated as shame) is defined as sense of propriety. Enriquez also looked at *utang na loob* in the context of Filipino culture, and found that it actually means gratitude or solidarity, and not debt of gratitude or a mere principle of

reciprocity incurred when an individual helps another (Kaut, 1961; Andres 1994, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Next, Enriquez puts the concept of *kapwa* (shared identity) at the core of Filipino social psychology, and at the heart of the structure of Filipino values. He differentiates *pakikipagkapwa* (treating the other as fellow human being) from *pakikisama*, defined by Lynch (1964, cited in Enriquez, 1986) as the maintenance of smooth interpersonal relations, as in conformity. And lastly, *pakikiramdam*, or shared inner perception, shows the Filipino personality of being sensitive to non-verbal cues, having concern for the feelings of others, and being truthful but not in the expense of hurting others' feelings.

Going back to the concept of *kapwa*, Enriquez discovered two categories: the *Ibang-Tao* (outsider) and the *Hindi-Ibang-Tao* (one-of-us). In Filipino social interaction, one is placed into one of the two categories, and how and where one is placed determines the level of interaction received. If one is regarded as *ibang-tao*, the interaction can range from *pakikitungo* (civility with), to *pakikisalamuha* (interaction with), to *pakikilahok* (joining or participating), to *pakikibagay* (in conformity with), and to *pakikisama* (being along with). On the other hand, if one is categorized as *hindi-ibang-tao*, then one can experience *pakikipagpalagayang-loob* (being in rapport/understanding/acceptance with), *pakikisangkot* (getting involved), or the highest level of *pakikiisa* (being one with).

Understanding that these Filipino values were defined 'from without' prior to indigenizing them 'from within', I used both the exogenous and indigenous definitions (as Enriquez presented in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*) to help me identify and determine the Filipino values and identities presented and represented in the vlogs.

Synthesis

Applying Saussure's semiotics to my study, vlogs were viewed as texts, or assemblages of signs existing within a medium of communication which is vlogging. Barthes' three levels of signification—denotation, connotation, and naturalization or mythology, were also incorporated to identify the meanings constructed in the texts. To specify, Barthes' third order of signification, mythology, was used to explain signs that no longer appeared constructed but instead, naturally occurring, and easily spread to an audience.

The five main Filipino values mentioned in Enriquez' *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* were used to identify the themes embedded in the vlogs. Specifically, both exogenous and indigenous definitions of these values were used to compare and contrast the identities formed through the vloggers' representations, through their vlogs' narrative, of the Filipino culture.

Chapter 4

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter provides further details on the methodology and important concepts undertaken and utilized in collecting data and analyzing research results for this study.

The goal of this research is to analyze the creation and representation of the Filipino identity on vlogs produced by Filipino vloggers here and overseas.

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design that employs textual analysis, which McKee describes as a methodology that helps researchers “understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live (McKee, 2003, p. 1).” Specifically, interpretative textual analysis, which aims to get both denotative and connotative meanings, shall aid this study by viewing culture as a narrative in which ‘texts’ or ‘cultural artifacts’ link themselves to larger entities and stories in the society.

To further aid this study, concepts from Saussure’s and Barthes’ models of semiotics and order of signification respectively were applied. As discussed in the framework for this study, Saussure defines semiotics as the study of signs, which involves the theory and analysis of signs, codes, and signifying practices. Saussure’s and Barthes’ models were used to get both the denotative and connotative meanings behind the text, which, in this study, are the vlogs.

Moreover, Enriquez’ concepts on Sikolohiyang Pilipino were used to identify the

Filipino values and themes embedded in the vlogs. Other concepts on stereotypes and defining the Filipino identity discovered through the review of related literature were also used as reference and guide in gathering the data and analyzing the texts.

Concepts and Indicators

A semiotic backbone and lens were used to analyze the vlogs, which were accessed on the vloggers' public YouTube accounts. Different signs observed on each vlog shall be noted and taken into account. Specifically, I looked into the following units of analysis: 1) demographics of the vlogger; 2) language used; 3) content and narrative; 4) representation of relationships between the main vlogger and other characters seen on the vlog; and 5) representation of Filipino values as exhibited by the main vlogger and his or her interaction or relationship with other characters in the vlog.

The demographics of the vlogger refer to the age, gender, class, nationality, religion, and educational attainment. The vlogger's use of language refers to any form of communication (spoken or written, choice of words, vlog titles) found in the text that shall also be noted to supply the content and narrative of each vlog. The narrative, then, will specifically be a description of the storyline and plot of the vlogs. The representation of relationships and the representation of Filipino values work hand in hand as determinants to the creation of the Filipino identity.

Research Instruments

As a main data gatherer, I used one textual analysis form for each vlogger which acted as an organized guide in collecting the data needed for this study. The textual

analysis form can be found in the following table.

Table 1. Sample Textual Analysis Form

Vlogger's Name	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
Vlog Title	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use?</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention?</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented?</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog?</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow?</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable?</p>

Sampling

My criterion for selecting the vloggers and two of their vlogs is the relevance of the text to the study. To reiterate, the vloggers' number of subscribers and views or their popularity were not bases of my selection. While going through units to sample, I found that other vloggers' content did not exhibit any observable qualities that could be deemed Filipino in nature. In addition, other YouTubers' content did not fall under the category of vlogs, which, in this study and as defined by the urban dictionary, are journal-style video documentations of a person's life, thoughts, opinions, and interests. Consequently, the vloggers I chose met the following criteria: have posted at least twenty vlogs at the time of study, produce vlogs as defined in this study, and present Filipino-centric content on their produced vlogs. The chosen vlogs per vlogger are as follows:

Pamela Swing – TheLifeofPam

1. VLOG #76 MAY PASOK NG GABI SA COLEGE
<www.youtube.com/watch?v=chcoKO2h0VI>

2. VLOG #88 MAY NAKA-KILALA SAKIN SA SM
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0Ef8EVovPQ>>

Maphy Rañadas – maphyducky05

3. SINISIMULAN NA! – March 07, 2017
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDxCSf1oAE4>>
4. ULILA NA SA AMA!! - Feb. 17, 2017
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeqZdhEDH7g>>

Rhaze – simplyrhaze

5. NAGLUTO NG CHOPSEUY PARA SA MGA BISITA | rhazevlogs
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJOgj-2zpFg>>
6. I GOT THE JOB!! YAY!!! |rhazevlogs
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPNkmQ_D1qk>

Judy Travis - itsjudyslife

7. Julianna's First Day of School Ever! Sept. 12. 2016
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UVDYQfMC-E&t=796s>>
8. First Time Meeting Their Cousins! January 11, 2017
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M14acI4sdY>>

Wil Dasovich

9. My Crazy Filipino Family
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coZnYc2GEpg>>
10. 90-yr-old Filipino Online Sensation is Back! (WORLD'S CUTEST LOLA)<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDXdoJWU1jM>>

Mikey Bustos

11. WHY I LOVE LIVING IN THE PHILIPPINES | February 28th, 2017 | Vlog #40 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8tAIOReGqI>>
12. OMG! I GOT ROBBED! | February 25th, 2017 | Vlog #37
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unPajXF2c0Y>>

Vloggers' Profiles

A. Vloggers raised and based in the Philippines

Pamela Swing – TheLifeofPam

Pamela, more commonly known as Pam, is a student of the College of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Sto. Tomas. She started with one YouTube channel where she produces challenges, hauls, tags, funny videos, and many more. She created her vlog channel, TheLifeofPam, in 2015, which she describes as a channel where she uploads random, personal, and *puchu-puchung* (not well-thought of/done with not much effort) vlogs. Pam does not usually upload full-length daily vlogs; she compiles her vlogs from different days and uploads it as one vlog, unless a special event happens in a particular day in her life. Pam is usually very comic in her vlogs, with most of her video thumbnails depicting a wacky (distorted or funny) pose.

Maphy Rañada – maphyducky05

Maphy is a Filipina mom and wife who joined YouTube in 2014. Since then, she has been posting “Simple Pinoy” family vlogs, as said on her YouTube About page. Staying true to how she describes her channel, Maphy’s vlogs are very straightforward—shot on her smartphone, no fancy editing, and no background music to supply the video. Her daily vlogs are mostly about being a hands-on mother and wife, and her family trying to survive and go forward in life.

B. Vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas

Rhaze – simplyrhaze

Rhaze is a 27 year-old Cebuana who has been to a number of countries like USA and Australia in hopes of earning a living for her family. She joined YouTube in 2012 and uploaded a number a videos while she was in the US, but she had to delete her first few videos because of a conflict with her employer. After some time, she decided to restart posting vlogs and makeup tutorials but made sure they were in Filipino so her employers will not understand. Rhaze currently produces hauls, makeup tutorials, vlogs, tags, challenges, daily routines, story time (sit-down vlogs), and more on her channel.

Judy Travis – itsjudyslife

Judy is a Filipino mom of three little girls, Julianna, Keira, and Miya. She and her husband Benji Travis (American Japanese) started vlogging every day since October of 2012 even before they had kids. They reside in Seattle, but they come back to the Philippines every now and then to visit Judy's relatives. To this day, the Travis family uploads vlogs and shares their eventful lives, usually centered on the three toddlers.

C. Vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines

Wil Dasovich

Wil Dasovich is a Filipino American bachelor from San Francisco, California. He became viral on YouTube when he and his dad did a video on the *bekimon* language (gay lingo) in 2014. Since then, he has been traveling Southeast Asia and now resides in the Philippines where he works as a model and a fulltime YouTuber. According to Wil's

About page, his YouTube content consists of his day-to-day life and adventures with an emphasis on traveling and personal well-being. He has also been learning the Filipino language by trying his best to speak in Filipino for most of his vlogs. Aside from travel and daily vlogs, Wil also produces video collaborations with other YouTubers, but usually incorporates this in his vlogs. He also produced a series titled “The Art of Tagalog” where he shares his hardships in trying to become fluent in the Filipino language

Mikey Bustos

Mikey Bustos introduces himself as a Canadian Filipino YouTuber, recording artist/performer, actor, comedian, business man, animal lover, foodie, and world traveler. He currently resides in Manila, and produces daily vlogs on his *vlogserye*¹, parodies, and other comedic content. He puts a twist to the daily vlogging scheme as he calls it *vlogserye* complete with a recall of the highlights of yesterday’s vlog, and a cliffhanger to hook the audience into watching tomorrow’s vlog. When he uses Filipino terms and concepts on his vlog, he puts subtitles and translations, as if directly teaching his audience—whom he calls *Mabuhay Squad*.²

Data Gathering

I analyzed two (2) videos from six (6) vloggers’ YouTube channels. That is, to clarify, a total of twelve (12) vlogs analyzed. The said videos must have been produced and uploaded from 2016 up to the present. The number of videos produced by the

¹*Vlogserye* - vlogs in the form of *teleseryes*

²*Mabuhay* (to be alive) *Squad* – a term Mikey uses to pertain to his viewers

vloggers, their subscribers and views accumulated per video as reflected on YouTube shall not be taken into consideration. Screenshots of significant aspects of the vlog are taken to exhibit certain areas of analysis. Moreover, other platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram were monitored but only for supplementary information like demographics, language, content, and style.

Data Analysis

By using a qualitative research design for this study, I used data collection methods and techniques that are geared towards textual analysis, which is concerned more with description and explanation than with measurement and quantification (Bainbridge & Tynan, 2008). I also used an inductive thematic analysis, a process that involves reading through textual data, identifying themes in the data, coding those themes, and then interpreting the structure and content of the themes (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The next step in my analysis involved comparing and contrasting the themes that arose from the vlogs produced by 1) vloggers raised and based in the Philippines 2) vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and 3) vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines. This comparison method is a feature of the grounded theory, a type of inductive thematic analysis, which requires a systematic analysis of the texts that are compared and contrasted with each other (Guest et al. 2012)

The Researcher

I, the main researcher, am a Broadcast Communication major in the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines-Diliman. My background prior to

writing this study includes Socio 10, a GE subject with the course title, “Being Filipino: A Sociological Exploration,” and Socio 101, an elective entitled, “Introduction to Sociology” which sparked my ideas on the representation and misrepresentation of the identity and culture of the Filipinos. On top of being a *producer* on YouTube myself, I have also been an avid fan of watching vlogs, which enabled me to see the problem concerning Filipino vloggers here and overseas representing the Filipino culture and identity

Chapter 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the data collected through comparative textual analysis guided by Saussure and Barthes' concepts on semiotics, and the Filipino values emphasized in Enriquez' *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. The findings of this study will give a detailed narrative on the Filipino identity created through the six Filipino vloggers' selected YouTube content.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, I divided the vloggers into three categories namely: A) Vloggers raised and based in the Philippines, B) Vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and C) Vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines. The discussion will follow the three categories stated, and will be rooted on one overarching value, which is *pakikipagkapwa* (regarding the other as fellow human being). Under the general theme are two main themes that recurred in most of the vlogs: 1) *utang na loob* (gratitude/solidarity) as Filipino staple; and 2) *karangalan* (dignity and/or honor) and the great cultural divide.

Utang na Loob as Filipino Staple

The first theme I found that strengthens *pakikipagkapwa* as the overarching theme is *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple. *Utang na loob* is represented by all six of the vloggers, as different signs and symbols are used to integrate a number of meanings tied up to the said Filipino value. As previously discussed, Enriquez (1986) emphasized the concept of *kapwa* in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* and stated that *pakikipagkapwa* is more important than *pakikisama*, and is both a *paninidigan* (conviction) and a value. After

analyzing the vlogs and the vloggers' YouTube content, I found that *utang na loob* is signified by many different signifiers in the texts. A table below shows a general breakdown of the signifiers observed on the chosen vlogs and signified values (connotative meanings) that all fall under *utang na loob*. I divided it into three sections only to show my categorization of the vloggers which is as follows: blue for vloggers raised and based in the Philippines, red for vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and green for vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines. I found that all the vloggers depict *utang na loob* as a generally integrated value in their day-to-day lives.

Table 2. Vlogs' signifiers and signified meanings rooted on *utang na loob*

SIGNIFIER	SIGNIFIED
College/education	Respect for mom, doing chores, giving time for friends over dinner
Car	<i>Lakbay</i> (journey), perseverance, process, giving back, going/travelling back to roots
Wake	<i>Pakikiramay</i> (sharing hardships with <i>kapwa</i>), <i>pakikiramdam</i> (feeling for others)
Choseuy	Hospitality, respect for authority, sharing taste of roots with <i>kapwa</i>
New job	Wanting/needing to earn more to be more capable of giving
Ice cream	Family bonding, tightly-knit family, <i>balikbayans</i> relinquishing family ties
Food/Meal	giving back, respect for elderly, gratitude, hospitality
Barangay	Going back to roots, center for <i>pakikipagkapwa</i> (regarding other as <i>kapwa</i>), giving help to less fortunate

To discuss further, let us look at the first vlog entitled “VLOG #76 MAY PASOK NG GABI SA COLEGE”. In this 10-minute vlog, Pamela, more commonly known as Pam, a Filipino vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, appears to have just woken

up. She greets her viewers “good morning” and shares that she was not able to take a shower the day before. She is seen in her *pambahay* (clothes worn in the house), lying down on a couch, stating that it is 10 in the morning, and her class is not until 4 p.m. She gives a brief outline of how she is planning to spend her day: do household chores and other tasks, attend class from 4p.m. to 9p.m., and have dinner with a friend. The body of her vlog contains what she had just mentioned in her introduction. She ends her vlog at a dinner with two of her high school friends.

I have chosen college/education, also seen from Pam’s vlog title, as the signifier to the values rooted on *utang na loob* (Pam’s YouTube channel content also exhibits this recurring signifier). In this situation, Pam is seen alone in her condo unit and mentions that she has a few hours to spare before her class starts. She shows a timelapse (fast-forward video) of her doing household chores, which is a manifestation of her respect for her mom, which is a very common value in the Filipino culture (Miralao, 1994, cited in Morillo et al., 2013). The signifier also shows that although Pam belongs to a non-traditional nuclear family, which is a different living arrangement pattern—in Pam’s case, this consists of one parent and two children—the vlog still exhibits the value of a Filipino family being child-centric, placing the child’s needs and concerns central to the family’s goals (Medina, 2001, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). This, then, may explain where Pam’s *utang na loob* comes from. In this case, *utang na loob* means gratitude or solidarity, and does not conform to Kaut’s (1961, cited in Enriquez, 1986) exogenous definition of debt of gratitude.

Similarly, Maphy, also a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, exhibits *utang na loob* indigenously. On Maphy's vlog entitled "SINISIMULAN NA! – March 07, 2017", Maphy goes to Nueva Ecija with some relatives (not introduced properly or formally) to check on the progress of the site where their new house will be built. She shares that her dogs will be transferred to that site first and she will miss them badly. She ends the vlog with a clip of her and her husband, together with one of their dogs, seated at the back of a pickup truck. She is seen smiling, enjoying her night after a long day. I observed that most of Maphy's footage came from her time in the car, travelling. The car is a signifier to different things: *lakbay* (journey), perseverance, process, giving back, and going back to roots. Maphy's YouTube channel exhibits a simple Filipina mom who is trying to get by the day, and who is constantly looking for new and effective ways to provide for her family. The car, in this case, is a symbol of *pag-unlad* (progress), a value that is still mostly rooted on *utang na loob* in the context of progressing to ultimately help the family.

On Maphy's second vlog entitled, "ULILA NA SA AMA!! - Feb. 17, 2017", she and her family depict a funeral practice in the Philippines where vigils are held throughout the night until the burial of the dead to keep the deceased company ("*Funerals in the Philippines*", n.d., n.p.). Maphy accompanies her husband in his father's wake, and even ends the vlog by showing that she will be sleeping in with the family, as the nearest kins expected to be ready to receive visitors with *abuloy* (financial contribution to a funeral). The theme of Maphy's vlog follows *pakikiramay* (sharing others' hardships), and *pakikiramdam*, another aspect of the Filipino personality that is highlighted in Sikolohiyang Pilipino. *Pakikiramdam* is part of the Filipino's socialization

employed by understanding indirect communication. Moreover, *pakikiramdam*, as depicted by Maphy, and as defined by Mataragnon (1987, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000) is shared inner perception, or feeling for another. The wake, then, signifies the Filipino values greatly rooted on *utang na loob*, which arose from the presentation and representation of relationships in Maphy's vlog.

Yacat (2005) presented three dimensions of being Filipino to explain why and how his respondents defined being Filipino. These dimensions are: *pinagmulan* (socio-political origins), *kinalakhan* (cultural roots), and *kamalayan* (consciousness). In this study, however, these dimensions are used to explain how and why the vloggers present different Filipino values in many different ways.

As discussed, Pam and Maphy, who are placed in the same category as vloggers raised and based in the Philippines, also share the same dimension of being Filipino in terms of *kinalakhan* (cultural roots) and *pinagmulan* (socio-political origins). To illustrate, Table 3 below shows certain aspects or signs on how the six vloggers present and identify themselves as Filipino, based on Yacat's (2005) study:

Table 3. Vloggers and their dimensions of being Filipino

Vlogger	Aspects/Signs	Dimension of being Filipino
Pam	Language, citizen of the PH, residing in the PH	Kinalakhan, Pinagmulan
Maphy	Language, citizen of the PH, residing in the PH	Kinalakhan, Pinagmulan
Rhaze	Language, citizen of the PH, cultural practices	Kinalakhan, Pinagmulan, Kamalayan
Judy	Cultural practices, born in the PH	Kinalakhan, Pinagmulan
Wil	Awareness and acceptance of being	Kamalayan, Pinagmulan,

	Filipino, residing in the PH, cultural practices	Kinalakhan
Mikey	Pride in being Filipino, residing in the PH, cultural practices	Kamalayan, Pinagmulan, Kinalakhan

Pam and Maphy's YouTube vlogging content, as represented by the two vlogs analyzed, show a recurring theme of *utang na loob* signified by different values arising from different situations and narratives. To add to that, both Pam and Maphy do not identify as Filipino based on the dimension of *kamalayan* (consciousness), as they do not overtly portray acceptance and pride of being Filipino.

On the other hand, Rhaze, a vlogger raised in the Philippines and based overseas, interestingly demonstrates the third dimension of *kamalayan*. On her vlog entitled "I GOT THE JOB!! YAY!!! | rhazevlogs", she depicts yet another aspect of *utang na loob*, which is yearning to do more and earn more, to fulfill her responsibilities of being the breadwinner of the family. As seen on her vlog title, Rhaze's vlog revolves around how happy she is that she finally got a job in Australia. Rhaze also shares how difficult it is to be jobless in Australia, although Dan, her partner, is perfectly okay with it. On the first few minutes of her vlog, she talks to her viewers and expresses her disappointment and hard feelings about how people say that Dan forced her to get a job. She explains that getting a job was her choice because she did not want to just stay in the house all day. Here, she depicts a Filipina basically trying to provide for herself and for her family in the Philippines by defying societal expectations and maintaining *utang na loob* as an endearing value of a breadwinner.

It is interesting to note that Maphy, a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, and Rhaze, a vlogger raised in the Philippines and based overseas, both depicted *utang na*

loob as a Filipino value that is defined as yearning to do more to earn more to help their families. Similarly, Pam, another vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, also depicted *utang na loob* as a value that means gratitude or solidarity, which are greatly rooted on her responsibilities as a daughter. Although Rhaze is a vlogger raised in the Philippines and based overseas, she depicts the same definition of *utang na loob* as seen on Pam and Maphy's vlogs.

After coding the recurring themes in the vlogs, I found that there are repetitive signifiers that signified *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple: 1) food as an instrument to employ *utang na loob*, and 2) *hiya* as a driving force. These two signifiers are subthemes to *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple because they further strengthen and employ *utang na loob* as a value that is greatly rooted on *pakikipagkapwa*.

Food as an Instrument to Employ Utang na Loob

Based on the data collected, I found that food plays an important role in all six of the vloggers' vlog content. Both vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, Rhaze and Judy's vlogs entitled "NAGLUTO NG CHOPSEUY PARA SA MGA BISITA | rhazevlogs" and "First Time Meeting Their Cousins! January 11, 2017" respectively, highlighted food as an employer of *utang na loob*. Chopseuy, on Rhaze's vlog, was pertained to as a Filipino dish served with rice, which is a staple food in the Filipino diet (Kittler, Sucher & Nelms, 2011). The dish is perceived as a signifier to hospitality, respect for authority or elders, and sharing one's roots with a fellow. Similarly, on Judy's vlog, their whole family visits the Philippines all the way from Seattle. *Utang na loob* is again reinforced by the value of relinquishing family ties and going back to roots. The

gathering of the whole family, including the kids, around ice cream, further strengthens the said values. Although it can be observed that the dining table is where the family gathers to share a meal, it is also vital to recognize the role of the veranda or porch as a casual area in a Filipino home, where everybody can elicit *pakikipagkapwa*. This makes the ice cream a stronger instrument that employs *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple.

On the same note, Wil and Mikey, vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines, exhibit this important aspect of the Filipino family. On Wil's 8-minute vlog entitled "My Crazy Filipino Family", Wil shares what happened in his grandmother's 90th birthday celebration in Mindoro. He focuses on what happens in a Filipino party: an overflow of food, conversations, and laughter. On this vlog, Wil highlights the Filipino foods usually present in a Filipino party: *pancit*, *lechon*, *lumpia*, *biko*, fried and roasted chicken, buko salad, and many more. Food as a signifier in the Filipino party allows for several values to arise. These values, which also arose in Wil's second vlog entitled, "90-yr-old Filipino Online Sensation is Back! (WORLD'S CUTEST LOLA)", include hospitality, respect for authority or elderly, and gratitude. Although Wil highlights his grandmother on the second vlog, food still plays as an instrument to the proliferation of *utang na loob*, as Wil and his sister Haley take their grandmother out to dinner.

Another vlog that exhibits this subtheme is Mikey's vlog entitled, "OMG! I GOT ROBBED! | February 25th, 2017 | Vlog #37". This vlog shows how Mikey immerses himself in the *barangay*, which is the smallest unit of administration in the Philippines. The situation shows Mikey and RJ, Mikey's manager, eating at a *karinderya* (canteen) for lunch, and then buying food for street kids. They then ride a cab to Gilmore to get Mikey's webcam fixed. After which, they go back to the *barangay* to buy some fruits and

visit Mikey's monkey friends. Inserted in the narrative are different times of the day when Mikey and RJ grab something to eat or share a meal with a *kapwa*. First is when they eat *brunch* (breakfast and lunch in one meal) at a canteen. In this scenario, the value of *utang na loob*, againrooted on *pakikipagkapwa*, is employed through Mikey's offering of food to the less fortunate. In this aspect, the *barangay* stood as a signifier to the many Filipino values shown through the interactions, representations, and relationships on the vlog. Moreover, I looked at the *barangay* not just as a setting but also as a center for *pakikipagkapwa*. Specifically, the values depicted were: going back to roots and *pakikiramdam* (sharing others' hardships). Again, these two values further strengthen *utang na loob* as a value that naturally transpires in the vloggers' content. On Mikey's other vlog entitled, "WHY I LOVE LIVING IN THE PHILIPPINES | February 28th, 2017 | Vlog #40", he directly presents the value of *utang na loob* when a lady on the street offers him food by saying, "Sir Mikey, *kain tayo!* [Sir Mikey, let's eat!]." After being taken aback and politely saying no and thank you, Mikey explains to *Mabuhay Squad*, "here in the Philippines it's polite to offer food when you're eating." This can be supported with how Maphy, a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, casually invites her viewers to eat with her before she begins to enjoy a meal with her family.

Another aspect on Mikey's vlog that shows how food employs *utang na loob* is when he received *pasalubong* (goods from a fellow who recently came home from a trip) from his friends who just came from from the US and Netherlands. Mikey opens the package and shows that he had received some of his favorite snacks from the US, and even some biscuits from Netherlands. Again, Mikey directly presents this gesture as very sweet and thoughtful, but translates *pasalubong* as plainly being gifts. In this aspect, an

exogenous meaning of *pasalubong* was presented, stripping off the Filipino context to which the very concept of *pasalubong* is used. On a different note, Pam, a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, shares what she is about to eat on her vlogs, but does not directly invite her viewers to eat with her. Food, in this regard, does not necessarily signify *utang na loob* but only signifies Pam's consumption habits shared with her viewers.

Interestingly enough, the vloggers that highlight food as an instrument to employ *utang na loob* are Judy and Rhaze, vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and Mikey and Wil, vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines. These vloggers share the same situation because they were all raised and immersed in different cultures caused by migration. Rhaze's gesture to cook chopseuy for her in-laws depict hospitality, respect for authority, and sharing a taste of her roots. The ice cream in Judy's vlog was seen as a signifier to the Filipino family being tightly-knit, and *balikbayans* constantly relinquishing family ties. And food in Wil and Mikey's vlogs signified giving back to family, respect for the elderly, gratitude, hospitality, and giving help to the less fortunate. All of these signs show how food becomes an important instrument that employs *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple. On the other hand, the vloggers raised and based in the Philippines either supported (not necessarily highlighted) the importance of food in employing *utang na loob* or merely presented food as part of their consumption habits. In this aspect, *utang na loob* is manifested more by the vloggers who were raised and immersed in different cultures.

Hiya as a Driving Force

After considering the many definitions of *hiya*, including the exogenous definitions of shame (Shibley, 1965, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000), and self esteem (Fox, 1956, cited in Enriquez, 1986), let us now look at the concept of *hiya* and define it under the third order of signification. Barthes pertains to this as naturalization or myth-making, wherein a supposed text, as in pop culture, is used in a different light and thus stripped off of its original meaning (Chandler, 2007).

I found that although most of the vloggers use food as an instrument to employ the main value of *utang na loob*, I saw that *hiya* also played an important role in this proliferation. *Hiya*, defined by Enriquez as a sense of propriety, has been naturalized in all the vloggers' narratives, as they are put in a system of societal norms and values expected of them. Smith (1759, cited in Bennett, 2010) defined propriety as correctness or rightness, but Bennett (2010) emphasized that today, having a sense of propriety means "conformity to conventional standards of behavior (p. 6)." *Hiya*, in this sense, has then become a myth and a driving force that Filipinos are expected to conform to. However, we cannot discount the many possibilities and evolving meanings that tie up to this Filipino value. For example, Pam, on her vlog entitled, "VLOG #88 MAY NAKA-KILALA SAKIN SA SM", depicts *hiya* not as a sense of propriety but as shame or shyness, as in *napahiya* (embarrassed) or *pagkamahiyain* (shyness) when some fans approached her to say hi. This definition brings us to another value on the other side of the spectrum that strengthens *pakikipagkapwa* as an overarching theme: *karangalan*.

After analyzing the twelve vlogs, I found that there is no significant difference as to how the six vloggers conformed to the societal value of *hiya* as a driving force to

showcase *utang na loob*. However, only Pam's depiction of *hiya* in the said vlog and most of her vlogs' contents differed from the other vloggers' depiction of *hiya* as merely having to do socially accepted practices to belong in the Filipino society.

To reiterate, the three dimensions of being Filipino (*kinalakhan*, *pinagmulan*, and *kamalayan*) do not serve as degrees of the vloggers' Filipino-ness. Instead, these dimensions were used to interpret the values they presented and represented in their vlogs. However, by looking at *utang na loob* as a Filipino staple, we can infer that all the vloggers manifested this value equally, although signified in many different ways.

***Karangalan* and the Great Cultural Divide**

Although *pakikipagkapwa* is a value deeply rooted on the unselfish regard of others as fellow, I found that *karangalan*, both *puri* (honor from without) and *dangal* (honor from within), also appeared repetitively on the vloggers' videos. Furthermore, *karangalan* also led to the representation of the great cultural divide, which, according to Enriquez (1992, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000), separates the Filipinos into two personalities: on one side, those who “maintain a more mass-oriented worldview, culture, and way of life” (p. 57) and on the other, those who subscribe to an ‘elitist viewpoint’ (p. 58).

For this discussion, I shall use *dangal* (honor from within) and *puri* (honor from without) as opposite sides in the divide, but also as values that work interconnectedly to provide a more collective definition of *karangalan*. Table 4 below shows a breakdown of the signifiers and the signified values that arose from their vlogs. Based on the data, it can be inferred that all the vloggers depict *karangalan* as *puri* or honor from without.

Table 4. Vlogs' signifiers and signified rooted on *karangalan*

SIGNIFIER	SIGNIFIED
College/education	Respect for self, achieving goals
Fame	<i>Puri</i> (honor from without), <i>hiya</i> (sense of propriety, shyness), <i>pakikisalamuha</i> (interaction with others)
Car	<i>Pag-unlad</i> (progress), <i>puri</i> and <i>dangal</i> (honor from within)
New job	Defying gender roles/hierarchy, financial independence
Child's first day of school	Milestones as family success, child-centric attribute of family
Food/Meal	<i>Puri</i> , appearing capable to treat family to a meal, <i>dangal</i> , feeling good about having the capability
Migration	<i>Puri</i> and <i>dangal</i> , maximizing opportunities to earn a living, living in passion

To discuss further, Pam, as a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines and as a college student also represents an adolescent with high respect for herself, by carefully and slowly accomplishing tasks at hand to achieve bigger goals. In this sense, *karangalan* is defined as honor from within. Similarly, the car signifies Maphy's *pag-unlad* (progress) and *dangal* (honor from within). Crossing to the other two of my categories, vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines, we can see that a sense of independence and success employ both *puri* (honor from without) and *dangal*. Judy's vlog entitled, "Julianna's First Day of School Ever! Sept. 12. 2016", exhibits their traditional nuclear family—consisting of the parents and the children—being a child-centric family that prioritizes the needs of the child and considers the ability to provide for these needs, as a success (Morillo et al., 2013).

Consequently, I also found *karangalan* as a value rooted on the dimension that a vlogger depicts to be in. As previously discussed, the vloggers' Filipino-ness is

determined with the help of the three dimensions of being Filipino (Yacat, 2005).

Although we can say that exhibiting the three dimensions complete the perfect package of being Filipino, these dimensions shall not be presented as levels of being Filipino but as dimensions that work interconnectedly and variously in different Filipinos.

Interestingly, only Rhaze, a vlogger raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and Wil and Mikey, vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines, exhibit *kamalayan* or the sense of pride and acceptance of being Filipino (see Table 3). Hence, their vlogs depicting more concepts on *karangalan* being *puri*, and a need to survive in a different culture to prove and maintain society's expectations of them. Moreover, Rhaze, a vlogger raised in the Philippines and currently based in Australia, depicts *karangalan* (honor and dignity) as an underlying value to keep up with the image of the 'modern educated Filipina' (Medina, 2001, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Similarly, Mikey and Wil, vloggers raised overseas and now based in the Philippines, depict *karangalan* as both *puri* and *dangal*, as signified by food and migration (see Table 4). At the same time, they also depict *kamalayan* as a dimension of their being Filipino.

Although Rhaze and Judy, vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas, and Wil and Mikey, vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines, all showcase *karangalan* both as *puri* and *dangal* signified by different Filipino values, only Rhaze, Wil, and Mikey depict all three dimensions to their being Filipino. This may be because of the fact that Judy was raised in the Philippines, but later migrated to the United States with her whole family, as compared to Rhaze, who migrated to Australia alone to make a living for her family. We can compare Judy's dimensions of being Filipino with Pam and Maphy's dimensions, as they also only exhibit *kinalakhan* and *pinagmulan* on their vlogs.

With that said, *karangalan* crosses both the categories of the vloggers and the three dimensions as used by Yacat (2005). Furthermore, both definitions, *puri* and *dangal*, strengthen the overarching theme of the vlogs which is *pakikipagkapwa* or regarding the other as fellow, based on the signifiers that allowed a number of Filipino values to transpire in the vlogs.

More than accepting both definitions of *karangalan* to support *pakikipagkapwa*, the great cultural divide has also appeared as a natural phenomenon in Philippine society, at least as depicted in the vlogs analyzed. On Wil's vlog entitled, "My Crazy Filipino Family," he presents the Filipino party as a place of division of the social classes. As previously discussed, this is a sphere divided into two, which consists of the elite and the mass-oriented. As seen on his vlog, inside the house were people of authority (doctors, *amigas*, elderly, *ninongs* and *ninangs*), and outside the house were relatives or friends seemingly depicted as people without authority. Wil also mentions certain expectations of the province, as he talks to the people found outside: "*kapag nasa probinsya... dapat walang shirt, and then you should use your kamay-kamay pag kumakain*[if you're in the province, you shouldn't be wearing a shirt, and you should use your bare hands when eating]." On the same note, when Wil's dad introduced his good friend who helped him with a shoulder dislocation back in the day, Wil says, "that's so provincial..." talking about how the doctor just used his foot to fix his dad's dislocation. On his other vlog entitled, "90-yr-od Filipino Online Sensation is Back! (WORLD'S CUTEST LOLA)," he also says, "living in the province just makes you live long because you don't have to like deal with stress... the worries of the big city... and smoke."

He also calls everybody *tsong*, *tsang*, *repapips*, *tropa*, *mga* ³*teh* as compared to how he addressed the visitors inside as *tito*(uncle), *tita*(aunt), *ninang*(godmother)and even *banyaga* (foreigner).Here, Wil further strengthens the great cultural divide as he expresses his expected norms in the province that are based on his mere notions of the Philippines as a society. Enriquez calls this regionalism, where the Filipinos adhering to the elitist viewpoints look down on the Filipinos on the other side of the divide. Moreover, they are expected to be *bakya* or lacking in sophistication (as seen on Wil’s expectation of the use of bare hands to eat), and expected to have their own culture and language (as seen on how Wil addressed to the people outside the house).

Similarly, Mikey, on his vlog entitled, “OMG! I GOT ROBBED!” presents the cultural divide by giving his manager RJ the responsibility to talk to locals in the *barangay* or even in Gilmore (where they had his webcam fixed). By minimizing his interaction with the locals, Mikey presents himself as a *kapwa*, but on the other side of the divide. However, he usually includes on-screen text translations of Filipino concepts or words he explains to *Mabuhay Squad*. With this, he presents himself a foreigner trying to learn the Filipino ways of living. By using migration as a signifier to both *puri* and *dangal*, he portrays these values as living in passion and maximizing opportunities to earn a living.

Wil and Mikey’s learned experiences of being Filipino influence this representation of the great cultural divide. Their learned Filipino-ness pushes them to exhibit expectations of certain notions of being Filipino. This can also be explained by the concept of self-categorization (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner et al., 1987, cited in

³Jargons used to refer to a *kapwa Pilipino*

Jost & Banaji, 1994), where the social identity perspective seems to suggest that an individual is motivated to form stereotypes of the group he or she is in, and these will determine and reflect the group's position in society. Unfortunately, in this scenario, although Wil and Mikey categorized themselves as part of the Filipinos by using signifiers such as language, appearance, and interactions with locals, they presented this specific group as the stereotyped *bakya*, further strengthened by their personal expectations.

Interestingly, Maphy, a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, on her vlog entitled, "SINISIMULAN NA!! March 07, 2017", also used the word *payak* (simple, easy) to describe life in the province. Here, she also sets a divide and a comparison between her life in the city and the life she could be living in the province. In this scenario, *payak* was depicted by certain signifiers such as the *poso* (well of water), the appearance of the houses (wooden, no electricity), and the mountains seen in the background. Maphy ends her vlog riding a pickup truck with her husband and her dog, while enjoying the city breeze. Ironically, although she mentions that it would be wonderful to be living a simple life in the province, she also showed *karangalan* as *pag-unlad* (progress) using the car as a signifier.

Pam, also a vlogger raised and based in the Philippines, placed herself in a more progressive environment and presented fame as part of her success. By entitling her vlog as "VLOG #88 MAY NAKAKILALA SAKIN SA SM", and immersing herself in a mall far from where she usually vlogs, she frames SM Sta. Rosa as an unfamiliar habitat and a more-esteemed setting, as compared to when she just goes around vlogging in Espanya (her normal habitat). *Karangalan*, in this scenario, is then defined as *puri* or honor from

without. Pam being recognized by strangers in a place such as SM Sta. Rosa, then presents *karangalan* as a form of success that roots from the exogenous ideology of fame. Moreover, fame in this aspect then forwards the cultural divide of the idol and the fan. Although Pam interacts with her fans, she frames this scenario as awkward or *nakakahiya* (embarrassing) because she is not in her normal habitat (school, home, other areas she is familiar with). On top of that, she frames the fan as someone part of an external group, by showing how overwhelmed they are of meeting her.

Lastly, Judy, a vlogger raised in the Philippines and based overseas, presents the great cultural divide when he visited her family in the Philippines. On her vlog entitled, “First Time Meeting their Cousins! January 11, 2017,” a very obvious visual comparison is seen between their rented modern house in Tagaytay and their cousins’ old house in Batangas. Judy’s husband, Benji, also shares his experience in a ‘Philippine backyard’ where a number of fruit trees can be found. He expresses his adoration of the Philippines based on the availability of fresh fruits in one’s backyard. This also magnifies the great cultural divide in terms of *karangalan*, in a way that it is actually a privilege for their whole family to be able to visit the province. More than that, Benji’s representation of the ‘Philippine backyard’ creates a myth regarding the availability of fresh fruits in each Filipino home, which also actually signifies the Filipinos having easier and more bountiful lives in the province.

As discussed, all the vloggers except Rhaze depict the great cultural divide in terms of *puri* signified by different signifiers in each of their vlogs. *Puri* or honor from without is more manifested and emphasized by vloggers raised overseas because of their learned Filipino-ness. Moreover, the *puri* plays an important role in proliferating the great

cultural divide, as vloggers categorize themselves as part of a certain group to ultimately be regarded as *kapwa*. On the other hand, by immersing herself in a new culture and defying societal norms, Rhaze presents a number of Filipino values that she continues to live by, without setting a great divide in the vlogosphere. Instead, she presents *karangalan* both as *puri* and *dangal* as she yearns to do more to earn more for her family in the Philippines.

Perhaps it is also vital to understand why the great cultural divide transpires in the vlogosphere. Yacat (2005), explained the three dimensions of being Filipino with two overarching concepts of Filipino-ness: 1) *Pilipino sa puso* (Filipino by heart); and 2) *Pilipino sa pangalan* (Filipino in name) (p. 30). Yacat found that a *Pilipino sa puso* is someone who considers Filipino-ness as a *paninindigan* (conviction), and that a *Pilipino sa pangalan* is a passive citizen “not involved in activities that highlight the identity (p. 30).” In this study, these two identities of the Filipino were depicted by the vloggers through the signs and symbols that signified repetitive Filipino values. Based on the discussion, it can be inferred that the dimension of being Filipino greatly depends on the depth tied up to it. The *Pilipino sa puso* is labeled as such because of *gawa*, or a sense of action. The *Pilipino sa pangalan*, on the other hand, exhibits pride and acceptance of being Filipino but lacks *gawa*, which involves the activities that adhere to the mass-centered worldview of the Filipino personality.

I would like to argue, however, that based on the discussion, there is no clear manifestation of the identities found in Yacat’s study. Although the vloggers raised and based in the Philippines do not represent the third dimension of *kamalayan* (consciousness and acceptance of membership in the category ‘Filipino’), it does not

automatically follow that they are Filipinos only by name, and not my heart. At the same time, although vloggers raised and immersed in different cultures exemplify the three dimensions of being Filipino, this does not make them more Filipino than the former. This can be seen in the diversity and varying signified Filipino values that arose from all of the vloggers' content.

On a similar note, I found that Wil and Mikey, both vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines, by emphasizing their cultural identities, use vlogging as a medium to represent themselves as part of a certain group, the Filipinos. Enriquez (1995, cited in Ignacio, 2005) explains this with respect to the Filipino diaspora, as many Filipino Americans turn to discovering their Filipino identity to be able to grasp a full definition of who they are in relation to others.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to answer the theoretical inquiry: what Filipino identity is created according to the Filipino-centric content of the vlogs and the personalities of the vloggers themselves? After thorough analysis and discussion, I found that as presented in the vlogs, the concept of *pakikipagkapwa* (regarding the other as *kapwa*) has been diluted into two socially accepted values of the Filipino: *utang na loob* and *karangalan*.

Utang na loob was discovered to be a Filipino staple, and a breach to this social norm was almost impossible because of *hiya* being a driving force. Because *hiya* is a force that keeps the value of *utang na loob* intact in society, *hiya*, in a sense, has been reinforced with its indigenous meaning which is a sense of propriety. It was stripped off of what Lynch (1961, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000) defined as an “uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action (p.55).” These actions, as shown in the data, are actions that seem to be going against the values and practices common among the vloggers.

On the same note, food is a very important aspect of the Filipino life (Kittler, Sucher & Nelms, 2012). After going thru the vloggers’ YouTube content and analyzing the chosen vlogs I have discussed, I discovered that their vlogs almost never miss out on food and sharing a meal with a *kapwa*. Only one of the six vloggers did not depict eating as a communal activity, and this is because she is immersed in a non-traditional living arrangement set-up, and she is affected by a factor that impinges on family values—

migration (Morillo, et al., 2013). Moreover, she depicts the changing roles of the woman in the family, defies the gender hierarchy, and maintains *utang na loob* as an endearing value of a breadwinner. In this case, she also depicts *karangalan* (honor and dignity) as a value to keep up with the image of the ‘modern educated Filipina’ (Medina, 2001, cited in Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000).

Karangalan was found to be a value that also employs *pakikipagkapwa* as an overarching theme. However, the two definitions of *karangalan*, *puri* (honor from within) and *dangal* (honor from without), underlyingly support the proliferation of the great cultural divide. This divide was presented by most of the vloggers as they casually showcase regionalism, which consequently creates a cultural disparity within the Filipino community.

Yacat’s (2005) three dimensions of being Filipino were used to strengthen the three categories of the vloggers presented in the study. After analyzing data, it was found that only Rhaze, Wil, and Mikey represent all three dimensions of *kinalakhan* (cultural dimension), *pinagmulan* (socio-political dimension), and *kamalayan* (psychological dimension). Through further analysis, I found that they share a common trait which is migration and being immersed in a new culture. In terms of Filipino-ness, I argued that although the three vloggers mentioned depicted a complete package of being Filipino, it does not automatically follow that they inhabit a higher level of being Filipino as compared to the other vloggers, Pam, Maphy, and Judy. Based on the data analyzed, all six of the vloggers manifest similar and varying Filipino values that all root to the Filipino as *kapwa*.

In conclusion, *pakikipagkapwa* was successfully presented as a dominant ideology that simply defines how a Filipino should be. The ‘Filipino as *Kapwa*’ is an identity that was presented as a stereotype justified by a system wherein individuals perceive, understand, and explain an existing situation or arrangement with the result of the situation being maintained (Jost & Banaji, 1994). The vloggers play a vital role in the creation of this perception, and the proliferation of the stereotypes, although unknowingly or unintentionally, because of the signs and symbols they present in their content.

Chapter 7

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications

By looking at vlogs as texts that contain signs and symbols to signify concepts and values, I was able to identify one identity to which the Filipino is tied up to, at least according to the vlogs I chose to include in my sample. I personally chose to pertain to part-Filipinos as Filipinos for my study, and this allowed me to read analyze their vlogs without the presumption that they are depicting a blurred identity of the Filipino. It is also very interesting to learn that by doing so, multiple definitions of the Filipino values highlighted in Enriquez' Sikolohiyang Pilipino emerge. Moreover, by taking into consideration the different dimensions to which being Filipino can be attributed to, a deeper understanding of the created Filipino identity was met. However, it is also imperative to note that these dimensions were read as representations and not directly or voluntarily presented by the vloggers themselves. Another implication that my study reveals is that our national identity as Filipino is constructed and not fixed. This means that there will always be more than one definition of being Filipino, and these definitions may be constantly changed depending on a wide array of factors such as gender and gender roles, ethnicity and cross-ethnicity, political and religious convictions, the changing dynamics of the family, and many more.

The concepts I borrowed from Saussure's and Barthes' semiotics and Enriquez' Sikolohiyang Pilipino sufficed what I wanted to find out in my study. However, I found that the two theories cannot work directly together, as semiotics greatly depend on the

three levels of signification. Sikolohiyang Pilipino, on the other hand, presents fixed meanings, although open to interpretation, of the Filipino personality. This greatly limited me in finding other possible values that emerged in the vlogs, especially with the evolving societal norms not just in the Philippines but also around the globe.

As for the methods I employed to gather and analyze data, I found it very limiting to view and understand the vlogs with lens from the ‘outsider’. While I also looked at the visual components of the vlog, I could not help but focus on the narrative which, for me, contains more themes that could emerge. However, there would surely be themes arising from the more technical visual components like color grading, shot styles, editing, and many more. This is yet another limitation of the method I used for this study. In the future, perhaps a qualitative interview should be considered so as to get more context on the representations that the vloggers aim to achieve. However, this may also limit the study in the sense of the vloggers being all around the country—not only will it be an expensive research, but it will also take so much time to conduct.

Recommendations

I recommend that further research be done on other implicated identities that might come up from the thousands of vlogs on YouTube. On the same note, I think it will also be interesting to look at just one vlogger’s content, whether it be on YouTube or another site that might emerge in the future. I also recommend that the other genres of vlogs or YouTube videos be looked at and analyzed to see if there are more problems that can arise from representations and misrepresentations of the Filipino culture.

The methodology and framework could also be taken further so as to find more

underlying themes and arising stereotypes that involve the Filipino-centric content of the YouTube videos. Although YouTube is a very effective platform for interaction and proliferation of ideas, I recommend that the other platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook be considered as supplementary platforms for further representations and marketing of said representations.

To add to these, a political economic approach can also be taken into consideration when studying the implicated reasons and approaches with regard to *producing* on YouTube. It is very interesting to see that these vloggers help each other stay in the vlogging world, so I also would like to recommend that a study on the platform not only being a virtual community, but a community of influencers and people looking for a stable source of income be done.

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APPENDIX A. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS FORMS

A. Vloggers raised and based in the Philippines

<p><i>Pamela Swing</i> – <i>TheLifeofPam</i></p>	<p>AUDIO</p>	<p>VISUAL</p>	<p>NARRATIVE</p>
<p>VLOG #76 MAY PASOK NG GABI SA COLEGE</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? Doing household chores, accomplishing tasks started (<i>karangalan, bahalana</i>), making sure that her friend will show up (<i>kasiguraduhan</i>)</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Directly, often introduced by first name & showing face to cam</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? Pam goes to 7/11 with her classmates (<i>pakikisalamuha, pakikilahok</i>); Pam goes to dinner with her high school friends (<i>pakikisama</i>)</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Pam wakes up, greets her viewers, and tells them her plans for the day. She does household chores, goes to class, and eats dinner with two of her high school friends.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? Fulfilling responsibilities (<i>karangalan</i>); not identifiable at once, but through signs and scenarios (connotative meanings)</p>
<p>VLOG #88 MAY NAKA-KILALA SAKIN SA SM</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? “ano ba ‘yang kinalakihan mo?” (after her boyfriend sings a parody of an unfamiliar Filipino song), “nakakahiya”</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Directly, often introduced by first name & showing face to cam (including viewers she just met); (<i>pakikitungo</i>)</p> <p>How are relationships and</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Pam goes to SM Sta. Rosa with her boyfriend. While they’re there, some viewers recognize Pam and approach her. Pam and her boyfriend go to Golden City, Laguna, Pam’s previous hometown.</p> <p>What is the theme of</p>

	(when some viewers approach her to ask for a picture)	interactions represented in the vlog? <i>Pakikisalamuha</i> (with some viewers who recognize her); <i>pakikipagpalagayn g-loob</i> (with her boyfriend, when they eat two meals together)	the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? <i>Pakikipagkapwa</i> (treating the “outsider” as a fellow human being); at first, a notion of bragging about the ‘fame’ is observed
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<i>Maphy Rañada</i> – <i>Maphyducky05</i>	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
SINISIMULAN NA! – March 07, 2017	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? <i>Ligaya sa payak na pamumuhay</i></p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Directly, often introduced by first name & showing face to cam (except those relatives who are not comfortable)</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? Maphy shares two meals (lunch and dinner) with her relatives; she also invites her viewers to eat (<i>pakikipagkapwa</i>); Maphy shares an intimate moment with her husband (<i>pakikiisa</i>)</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Maphy goes to Nueva Ecija with some relatives. They check on progress of construction. Vlog ends with clips of her with her husband at the back of a pickup truck.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? <i>Utang na loob</i> (going back to where she came from and giving back)</p>

<p>ULILA NA SA AMA!! – Feb. 17, 2017</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? “God bless you” (when her son sneezes); praying before a meal, Maphy openly shares the story of how her father-in-law passed away, and how she feels sad for her mother-in-law for being left alone ; <i>pakikiramdam</i></p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Directly, often introduced by first name & showing face to cam</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? tightly-knit; in-laws are treated as own family</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Maphy’s father-in-law passes away. She shares how hectic their schedule. She shows how they spend the night in the wake (usually done in the Filipino tradition)</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? <i>Pakikiramay/ Pakikiramdam</i></p>
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B. Vloggers raised in the Philippines and based overseas

Rhaze – simplyrhaze	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
<p>NAGLUTONG CHOPSEUY PARA SA MGA BISITA rhazevlogs</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? A mix of English and Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? Respect for authority of parents (in-laws visiting them, cooking a meal for them); <i>panlasangpinoy</i></p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Rhaze rarely shows other people in her vlog, except of course Dan, her husband</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? not too much interaction between Rhaze & Dan; but <i>pakikiisais still</i></p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Rhaze shares a normal day in her life with Dan, her Australian husband. She cooks chopseuy for Dan’s parents. She talks to her viewers while preparing the meal, and still talks to them while she does the dishes .</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and</p>

		apparent	understandable? <i>utang na loob</i> (going back to roots and sharing cultural roots with others – <i>pakikipagkapwa</i>)
I GOT THE JOB!! YAY!!! rhazevlogs	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? a mix of English and Filipino</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? <i>“Makikita mo talagayungpinagh irapan mo”</i> (reaping the fruit of your labor)</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Rhaze rarely shows other people in her vlog, except of course Dan, her husband; Dan seems to play a very important/vital role in her life</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? Hierarchy: Dan as man/provider of the household, Rhaze as wife who plays a domesticated role in the household</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Rhaze receives good news- she gets a new job. She tells her viewers the news. Dan calls her. She cries as she shares her frustration with bashers/haters. She ends the vlog with a thankful note.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? <i>karangalan</i> (getting a new job; reaping fruit of labor); “the modern educated Filipino” with more opportunities offered to her</p>

Judy Travis - itsjudyslife	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
Julianna’s First Day of School Ever! Sept. 12. 2016	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? English</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? Being sentimental about her daughter’s</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Casually, as if no camera is present (most of them are used to Judy vlogging already)</p> <p>How are relationships and</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? It’s Julianna’s first day of school ever. Judy and Benji help her with her first homework. Benji makes her school lunch sandwich. Judy expresses how nervous she is for</p>

	<p>milestones;</p>	<p>interactions represented in the vlog? Tightly-knit relationship within the family; Judy’s mom still plays an important role and is very hands-on with her grand kids</p>	<p>JB’s first day. Judy’s mom goes with them to drop JB off too.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? Family being <i>child-centric</i>, where each milestone should be celebrated</p>
<p>First Time Meeting their Cousins! January 11, 2017</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? English</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? Dirty kitchen in a Filipino home; authentic Filipino food; fresh fruits picked off their trees in the backyard; ube; “when I was little I used to stay at that house”</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Judy’s family isn’t introduced individually;</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? How a Filipino home receives guests; Filipino kids need to warm up before they get comfortable with unfamiliar faces;</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Judy, Benji, and their kids visit Judy’s relatives in Batangas. They are welcomed with lots of food. The kids meet their second cousins for the first time. Benji talks about how great it is in the PH because of the weather and the fruits.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? Always going back home (<i>utang na loob</i>); having a large family size</p>

C. Vloggers raised overseas and based in the Philippines

Wil Dasovich	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
My Crazy Filipino Family	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? Filipino-English</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Wil visits the kitchen, calls</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Wil goes to Mindoro with</p>

	<p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? <i>Kasipagan</i>(those who work in the kitchen); <i>“lahat ng ginagawako para sayo, Lola”</i> (high regard for the elderly); <i>“kapag nasa probinsya... dapat walang shirt, and then you should use your kamay-kamay pag kumakain”</i> (Wil’s expectation of the province); <i>“that’s so provincial...”</i></p>	<p>everybody <i>tsong, mga ‘te, mga tropa</i>(he doesn’t introduce them individually); Wil goes outside of the house, calls people <i>mga tsang, mga repapips</i></p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? Wil shakes hands or <i>beso</i>(does not do the <i>manopo</i>); Wil offers comfort (hugs, caress) to those in the kitchen</p>	<p>his family for his grandmother’s 90th birthday party. He shares what happens in the party; food, conversations, laughter.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? The Filipino party; large family size</p>
<p>90-yr-od Filipino Online Sensation is Back! (WORLD’S CUTEST LOLA)</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use?</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? <i>“living in the province just makes you live long because you don’t have to like deal with stress... the worries of the big city and smoke”</i></p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Wil’s Lola is the highlight of the vlog; she is presented as “cool” (young-at-heart, reklamador but still attacks situations lightly)</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? Wil’s Lola clearly has favoritism – she talks to Wil more than Haley (Wil’s sister), and when she does talk to Haley, she usually calls her off; a playful relationship between grandma and grandson</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Wil’s Lola visit Manila. They take her out to dinner.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? Grandchildren paying back to family ; utang na loob ; having high regard for the elderly</p>

Mikey Bustos	AUDIO	VISUAL	NARRATIVE
<p>WHY I LOVE LIVING IN THE PHILIPPINES February 28th, 2017 Vlog #40</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? English</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? “here in the Philippines, people like to dip things in sauces and dips called sawsawan” ; “here in the Philippines it’s polite to offer food when you’re eating”; they ride the tricycle (a public transpo vehicle in the PH); kagandahang-loob; pasalubong (translated by Mikey as “gifts”) pakikipagkapwa</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Mikey introduces his friends (people of higher authority) formally; RJ, Mikey’s manager is presented as very quiet and formal but still very engaging</p> <p>How are relationships and interactions represented in the vlog? “Sir Mikey, kaintayo!” Mikey exhibits hiya (sense of propriety) when a lady offers him some food</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Mikey gets locked out of his apartment. He and his manager go to Mandala Park. They eat at a restaurant called "Googel" Mikey uses some Filipino words and explains their meanings to the audience. At the end of the vlog, Mikey talks to his audience in a serious tone, telling his story and how he decided to move to the Philippines.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? Bahala na (determination/risk-taking)</p>
<p>OMG! I GOT ROBBED!</p>	<p>What language does the vlogger mostly use? English (with a ‘Filipino’ accent)</p> <p>What Filipino values or concepts does the vlogger mention? Poverty is “common” and it is</p>	<p>How are other characters in the vlog presented? Street kids were delicately presented; Mikey didn’t really interact with them much, but RJ did</p> <p>How are relationships</p>	<p>What narrative does the vlog follow? Mikey and RJ eat at a karinderya (canteen) for lunch, they buy food for street kids. They go to Gilmore to get Mikey’s webcam</p>

	<p>a problem that needs to be really looked at; <i>lutongbahay</i>(cheap and yummy food); <i>the bakery</i> (Filipino families owning bakeries in the province) being a one-stop shop for Filipinos; “your typical Filipino barangay consisting of: <i>palengke</i>, mobile variety shop (highlighting the <i>tabo</i>)</p>	<p>and interactions represented in the vlog? Mikey doesn't really talk to locals much; he lets Mikey do all the talking (he isn't very comfortable)</p>	<p>fixed. They go back to the <i>barangay</i> to buy some fruits. And they visit Mikey's monkey friends.</p> <p>What is the theme of the vlog? Is it clearly identifiable and understandable? <i>Bahala na</i> (<i>determination/risk-taking</i>); <i>pakikipagkapwa</i></p>
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