

Rated SPG: “Filthy Sensual and Unfiltered” A Click for Viewing Pleasure:

The Lived Experiences of Tiktok Content Moderators

A Thesis

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Abstract

This study utilized qualitative phenomenological methodology to explore the lived experiences of Tiktok Content Moderators employed by various companies through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis involving five participants with over a year of experience, the research deepened understanding of the challenges and transformations these moderators undergo while filtering content on Tiktok. The analysis focused on major themes and their corresponding sub-themes. The first theme, “Challenges in the Workplace”. Under this theme, it consisted of three (3) sub-themes which were: “Nature of Work”, “Psychological Hazard”, and “Mental Trauma”. The second theme, labeled "Coping Mechanisms,". Under this theme, it has four (4) sub-themes which were: “Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness”, “Colleague Support”, "Self-Care Routines”, and “Financial Motivations”. Finally, the third theme, "Insights". These themes shed light on the real-life experiences of the Content Moderators who were employed by TikTok.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background and Rationale of the Study

The number of social media users has increased every year. The Philippines were even predicted to have a consistent rise in the number of social media users between 2023 to 2028, with 7.7 million social media users (Degenhard, 2023). With this, a lot of individuals who had the freedom to share any type of content they desired potentially breached the guidelines that were established by the specific social media company. This was the reason why the job "content moderation" existed.

Every social media platform had its own guidelines to be followed. Content moderators were frequently assigned the responsibility of eliminating improper or offensive material. However, they also received requests to incorporate fresh content or revise existing content as required. Their primary objective was to safeguard the reputation and image of the company while ensuring a secure environment for social media users (Career Insights, 2023).

In order to excel in content moderation, individuals had to possess a range of essential skills. The first skill that stood out was sharp analytical skills, to understand user behavior and assess content performance in different online communities. The second skill was content screening because it was important to be knowledgeable about various platforms to effectively moderate content that met their requirements. The third skill was patience, as content moderators needed to handle daily tasks without becoming overwhelmed by content-related issues. The fourth skill was integrity that allowed content moderators to uphold company values and make changes to policies or practices

that did not align with the company's long-term vision or work ethic. Being open and curious about new content ideas and ways to enhance the brand image and user experience was the fifth and the sixth skills that content moderators needed to stay ahead of competitors. Lastly, content moderators should have had expertise in multiple languages to effectively monitor and understand text-based content in different languages and ensure its appropriateness and adherence to company guidelines on social media platforms (Crisan, 2023).

Their duties included checking and controlling content created by users to ensure it followed the company's guidelines, reporting any content that went against company policy to the relevant team for further assessment, making decisions quickly in a fast-paced environment based on their own judgement, staying current on company policies and procedures, and implementing intricate content moderation guidelines (Career Insights, 2022).

It was clearly evident that exposure to explicit material such as pornography, nudity, sexual violence, physical violence, verbal violence, killings, and bullying content on social media had a substantial impact on the well-being and mental health of content moderators. That was why there were current approaches to help content moderators in this aspect. Furthermore, there was an industry group that worked together to solve this problem. One of these groups, called The Technology Coalition, helped companies work together to stop people from hurting children on the internet. Recently, in 2015, they published an “Employee Resilience Guidebook For Handling Child Sex Abuse Images” as one of the stepping stones in helping content moderators. The guidebook advised limiting employees' exposure to child pornography, but many subcontractors allowed or

required their moderators to filter it all day. Companies were supposed to obtain consent and provide information to employees, but former employees of subcontractors overseas were surprised by encountering child pornography and violent content. Companies were supposed to have a resilience program to support employee well-being, but employees in the Philippines did not mention such a program (Arsht and Etcovitch, 2018).

The number of people using social media globally increased significantly, reaching 4.48 billion, which was more than double the amount recorded in 2015 (Dean, 2023). As the number of individuals utilizing social media platforms continued to rise, the demand for content moderation also escalated. However, it was important to note that content moderation remained relatively unfamiliar within the job market of the Philippines. Consequently, it was imperative that these content moderators received fair and substantial compensation for their efforts, as their work had been proven to take a toll on their psychological and mental well-being, all while being adequately remunerated.

Researchers conducted this study as they were active social media users and recognized the significance of the internet and media in today's world. They believed that their findings could contribute to enhancing the role of content moderators in ensuring the safety of social media platforms to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by content moderators. It was essential to look beyond the gaps which included the limited number of local studies and the limitations of previous research that may not have fully disclosed the drawbacks of content moderation. The researchers recognized the importance of identifying the specific needs of content moderators, which would enable social media companies and the government to develop effective strategies and support systems to assist them in their demanding roles. By delving deeper into this

subject, they could shed light on the intricacies of content moderation and ultimately improve the overall well-being of these individuals.

Epistemological and Theoretical Perspective of the Study

The notions of truth, objectivity, and value neutrality were rejected by a social constructionist orientation which embraced the idea that truth is elusive and objectivity and value neutrality merely weaken our capacity to view and consider things from a new variety of perspectives. This perspective challenged the idea that there was a single, objective reality that could be known through unbiased observation (Creswell, 2008). Therefore, social constructionism was suitable to apply in the gathering process of this qualitative research as it eliminated any existing biases to uncover new knowledge about the certain topic.

A sociological method of interpretivism was also used to analyze the study through the form of social interaction in understanding the participants' beliefs, norms, and human values. According to Simply Sociology (2023), interpretivism was used by researchers for neutral and passive external observation such as face-to-face interviews. It also asserted that reality was subjective, emphasizing the phenomena of understanding an individualistic point of view. With all of that, this was relatable to the essence of the study which focused on understanding the lived experience of the participants, including their own reflection and thoughts about facts merely influenced by the society that was part of accomplishing this study.

A theoretical perspective of grounded theory in qualitative approach was used as a part of this study. As explained by Turner (2021), it was a research approach used to gain an emic insight into a phenomenon, understanding the perspective, or point of view, of an

‘insider’, those who have experience of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, grounded theory generated a theory that was grounded in data and shaped by the views of participants, thereby moving beyond description and towards theoretical explanation. This kind of approach was suitable to be used in this study, acknowledging that through grounded theory the researchers could gather and identify participants' own interpretations or explanations about their lived experiences. For instance, reflected on the struggles of their line of work and the impact of it on their physical and mental health.

Additional Micro Theories

In this study, researchers utilized the application of the Psychological Stress and Coping Theory as a theory that guided them throughout the research.

Lazarus and Folkman identified and differentiated between two primary coping strategies, namely problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. These coping strategies were utilized by individuals in order to effectively address and handle the issue that was causing them distress and to regulate and manage their emotional reactions towards the problem. Problem-focused coping involves actively taking steps to manage or change the source of the problem, while emotion-focused coping focuses on regulating and controlling one's emotional responses to the problem (Stanislawski, 2019).

Content moderators were regularly exposed to distressing and troubling videos that had a profound impact on their mental and emotional well-being. However, these dedicated individuals had developed coping mechanisms as a strategic approach to effectively manage the distress caused by their challenging work, and one of these mechanisms was from Lazarus and Folkman: the “Psychological Stress and Coping Theory”.

Purpose of the Study

To understand the lived experiences of Tiktok content moderators.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of Tiktok Content Moderators. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions.

1. What are the lived experiences of a content moderator?
2. What are the effects on the psychological well-being of a content moderator who are exposed in extreme explicit content?
3. What motivates the individuals to continue working as content moderators?

Significance of the Study

The result of this study was deemed significant and beneficial to the following:

Content Moderators. Their field of work benefited from this research because it allowed them to explore different functions and operations in addition to it. This evaluated the specific needs they faced workers in an individual company, particularly how demanding their work was and how little information they were allowed to disclose about it. This broke down information about their benefits and drawbacks as content moderators in the mentioned industry, particularly on the specifics of work linked to the filtration and removal of content that was in violation of community guidelines on every social media platform.

Future Content Moderators. Our study provided a ton of proven advantages for those who would work in this profession in the future, including advanced social media etiquette awareness and in-depth knowledge of content moderators' roles and the challenges their jobs brought. They gained insight into the physical, mental, emotional,

and spiritual health of a content moderator along with the obligations assigned. Additionally, this assisted them in acknowledging specific guidelines and standards, maintaining their dedication, and fostering a friendly and encouraging environment for efficient moderation.

Social Media Companies. This study benefited by gaining more concern and focused on assessing the nature and scope of the content moderator's needs within their work and outside the premises. It provided them with insights and suggestions about potential areas for improvement in accordance with the content moderator's needs for engaging through their field of work. Lastly, this aided users of social media in evaluating the actual experiences of content moderators.

Academe. It was advantageous in a way that they were introduced to the existence and experiences of a content moderator and enlightened them to recognize the moderator's duties and responsibilities that kept everyone safe from viewing and browsing social media. It provided beneficial details that could help other areas comprehend how content moderators functioned as well as how people and media figures could drive advantage from it. It also aimed to educate users on whether the content was appropriate for a particular location, locale, or jurisdiction

TikTok Users. Due to the TikTok app's broad usage around the world, this study provided accurate and precise insights on the conditions and rules the application provided for the specifications of contents being uploaded. Users of TikTok were concerned about the background settings of the platform and how content spread globally. This gave them a notion of how frequently misguided content may have been removed and how simple it was for users to access content from one person to another. This made

them aware of the application's sensitivity to user material and the way content moderators monitored and controlled the application and posted contents.

Social Media Users. Aimed to raise awareness among social media users, encouraged them to exercise great caution and judgement in all of their actions on using social media. Provided information about the particulars of the terms of service and the community guidelines that were obtainable through every social media network. Certainly impacted on other social media users, including family members, friends, and peers, on the study's thorough evaluation of the heroes who endured to filter and remove content that violated community standards. Parents, specifically, must remain vigilant when posting pictures or videos of their children, ensuring their safety and privacy are protected in the online realm.

Future Researchers. This discovery might have inspired further research that could have benefited society greatly and provided new ideas for scholars in the future. They gained a perspective on the information about content moderators through this study when they wanted to conduct future research on the same content, regardless of how restricted and discreet the work of content moderators was. This gave them insight into how interesting their field was. This study acted as a reference for them when they conducted a replicated study or as an additional source of data for a future study on content moderators.

Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms were used and conceptually or operationally defined to enhance the insights and understanding of the readers.

Challenges in the workplace is one of the themes in this study, this is the

difficulties, issues, conflicts, and problems that occur and affect the content moderators. There can be unforeseen problems that arise at any moment that cause discomfort and hindrances that impact work performance and the overall atmosphere. These challenges encompass any stressful, negative, or difficult situations or adversities encountered in the work environment.

In this study, Challenges in the Workplace is the major theme that revolved around the various obstacles encountered in the workplace. Within this theme, there are three distinct sub-themes namely, Nature of the Job, Psychological Hazard, and Mental Trauma. These three sub-themes encapsulated the key challenges faced by individuals in their professional environments.

Content encompassed a wide range of materials that individuals chose to share on various social media platforms. It has encompassed diverse formats such as textual updates, captivating photographs, visually appealing graphics, engaging videos, and informative links. These contents served multiple purposes, including sharing personal life updates, promoting and advertising products or services, and instilling motivation and inspiration among users (West, 2023).

In this study, it referred to the substance or concept that is being shared by individuals who created content or use social media platforms to post their ideas or thoughts. These content may be positive or negative that is being streamed and filtered by content moderators.

Content moderators protected social media users from a plethora of distressing and illicit content. They ensured the safety and well-being of social media users (Golemanova, 2021).

In this study, content moderators are individuals who worked in a company which is in-charge of reviewing and assessing user-generated content, specifically on an online platform called “TikTok” to make sure the contents comply with the platform's community standards, terms of services, and legal requirements.

Coping Mechanisms is a strategy used by content moderators for them to reduce pleasant emotions due to the significant mental pressures content moderators face in their line of work.

In this study, content moderators have different ways to cope with the stress and difficulty of their work by the Coping Mechanisms. It managed and overcame the immense stress and challenges associated with their work. Under the major theme: Coping Mechanism, sub themes are Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness, Colleague Support, Self Care Routines and Financial Motivations.

Insights is the change in a perspective or life of a Content Moderator after they entered the Content Moderation job that brought about a significant shift in perspective and understanding of human nature, which led to a broader and more profound comprehension of the intricacies of human behaviour.

In this study, content moderators have developed a comprehensive outlook on human behaviour through their experiences that led to Insights. As content moderators continued to engage with different types of content, they gradually developed a more extensive viewpoint on the norms, values, and behaviours that exist within society. This accumulation of knowledge and experiences greatly enhanced their comprehension of human nature in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Lived experiences encompassed an individual's innermost thoughts, emotions,

beliefs, and perspectives in relation to their immediate surroundings. It encompassed the sum total of a person's encounters, actions, and choices, as well as the wisdom derived from these encounters and decisions. Moreover, the term "lived experience" found application in the realm of qualitative research, specifically in studies exploring various aspects of culture, society, language, and interpersonal communication (Birch, 2022).

In this study, lived experiences referred to the content moderator's real experiences from their field of work and this experience has impacted their prejudices, ideas, understanding, points of view, and health after a year of working in this area of work.

Quality Analysts (QA) were the one responsible for consistently assessing and pinpointing important behaviours and flaws that impact both sales and customer satisfaction. Their role involved continuous effort to identify areas for improvement and enhancement in the overall customer experience.

In the context of this study, it is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance (QA) team to review the videos following the application of policies by a Content Moderator. The primary objective of the Q'A team is to ensure that the videos are appropriately tagged according to the specified criteria. Moreover, the Q'A team ensured that the videos adhered to the established standards and maintained a high level of quality.

Tiktok is a social media application where users made and shared short videos on various subjects. While primarily used on mobile devices, it is also accessible through a web app. Users have the ability to be creative by adding filters, stickers, voiceovers, sound effects, and music to their videos (Geysler, 2022).

In this study, content moderators worked in a company under the Tiktok

account.

Workplace Coach (WoCo), played a crucial role in assisting Content Moderators in alleviating their burdens. Through scheduled sessions, these Workplace Coaches offered guidance and support to Content Moderators, addressed their individual challenges and concerns in their role as Content Moderators.

In this study, WoCo provided support and guidance to Content Moderators who were struggling to cope with the emotional toll of their work, particularly in relation to the disturbing content they are exposed to on a daily basis.

Researchers Subjectivity

The researchers were third-year BS Psychology students who saw content moderators as people who were responsible for screening user-generated content to ensure that it was not inappropriate, offensive, or harmful. They might have also occasionally removed scenes that the government did not want the public to see. The researchers determined if the content moderator's experiences were accurate. They saw content moderators as someone who was at risk of experiencing mental stress due to their job. As a result, during interviews, the interviewer inadvertently affected the interviewee's responses by asking leading questions. There was also the possibility of response bias, where the interviewer tried to provide the "correct" answers to the interviewee. This led to a shorter amount of time for the interviewee to fully explain their perspective. Moreover, one of the researchers also knew one of the participants, which could have been a possible bias in connection with the interview.

One effective way to minimize research bias was to start planning early and established clear goals. It was important to maintain a focus on the experiences of content

moderators as participants, rather than our own biases or preconceived notions.

Researchers also asked questions indirectly to get honest answers. It was also crucial that the researcher responsible for conducting interviews did not have a personal relationship with any of the participants. To further ensure the accuracy of our study, we enlisted the help of a research adviser who reviewed our work at multiple stages.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This qualitative research aimed to explore the common experiences and practices of Tiktok Content Moderators in Iloilo City, Philippines. The study was conducted specifically from February 2023 to April 2024. The respondents were moderators who are officially employed in TikTok Company in Iloilo City.

In phenomenology, the research identified the factors that contributed to the TikTok content moderators' shared live experience. This study was conducted in Iloilo City and utilized a purposive sampling method. The researchers also used a purposive snowball sampling method where the availability and willingness of our initial or existing participants referred or introduced other potential participants.

The study was conducted through face-to-face interview and to ensure the security of respondent's privacy, the researcher also presented a document of agreement assuring that the respondents' identity will remain autonomous. Hence, if the respondents might show symptoms of psychological distress, the researchers will refer the particular respondents to a licensed Psychologist. The referral was based on the participants' term, and will not be forced to imply the medication.

The most recent research and studies were consulted in order to gather the necessary data. The fact that "Rated SPG: "Filthy Sensual and Unfiltered" A Click for

Viewing Pleasure: The Lived Experiences of TikTok Content Moderators” was such a recent issue and that much of the research repeated the same studies could have been a drawback of the study.

One of the limitations of the research is during the interviews, researchers frequently encountered participants who hesitated to provide in-depth details about their work. This hesitance created a significant barrier to obtaining the thorough data and insights we required. Therefore, the researchers reassured them that their identity will be protected and their privacy will be upheld.

To address this challenge, the researchers utilized our questions and follow-up questions to foster greater openness and engagement among participants. One strategy involved creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment that encouraged participants to feel comfortable sharing their experiences. This included building rapport early in the interview, actively listening to their responses, and demonstrating genuine interest in their perspectives.

Another challenge arose when the researchers were trying to recruit participants, as many of them showed disinterest when invited for interviews and were often in a rush. However, the Snowball Sampling Method proved to be useful in finding participants, as one individual would frequently refer their colleague to us.

In the end, researchers managed to overcome the challenge of hesitant participants and successfully collected the comprehensive and detailed data required by employing a combination of these strategies and tailoring our approach to the specific dynamics of each interview

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

Chapter II presents the literature from both foreign and local studies. The following literature connected to the present study under the following subtopics: (1) Introduction to Content Moderation, (2) Job Scope, (3) Response of Content Moderators: Distress, (4) Risks of Content Moderators, (5) Care for Content Moderators, and (6) Local Studies of a Content Moderator.

Introduction to Content Moderation

Enormous platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and even TikTok, which distributed user-generated content globally, all imposed content restrictions. In the terms of service and community rules, social media networks outlined their content moderation policies alongside their privacy policies, copyright policies, and fair use policies (Singhal, 2022). These platforms offered the regulations as community norms or standards, which were established in simple terms, so that the users could understand them easier. Uploaded materials were diversified; users often posted information including child pornography, unnecessary and hateful messages, and excessive violence. Content platforms tended to characterize any infrastructure that allowed users to access and exchange content; this included online content sharing platforms like YouTube, social networks like Facebook, wikis like Wikipedia, search engines like Google, blogs, and more (Sartor, 2020).

As various contents disseminated and circulated from one platform to another, a multitude of content moderators spent days and nights evaluating whether to remove falsified or questionable content utilizing frequently unclear and ethnically-specific

suitable standards. Content moderation was the screening of inappropriate content that users published on a platform. The procedure comprised using predefined rules to monitor material. If it did not meet the criteria, the content was identified and removed. The grounds could range from violence to offensiveness, extremism, nudity, hate speech, copyright infringements, and so on. According to Stackpole (2022), content moderators were presented with a piece of content that had been flagged; it may or may not have any contextual information and based on the interpretation of the company's policies, they decided whether to delete the content. Although there was occasionally specialization—for example, someone might have focused on hate speech or self-harm content—even routine cases that generalists handled could be horrifying.

Social media firms had algorithms that were capable of identifying rule violations, but they still needed to employ or contract out thousands of people to manually evaluate content and uphold their policies. It made sense to tighten a platform's moderation policy only when the additional costs and benefits were equal because moderation on a wide scale required a lot of resources (Jimenez-Duran, 2022). The content and behavior moderators had to consider were ugly, varied, and ambiguous, meant to evade judgement while still having an impact. There was no pretty way to conduct this kind of moderation, and it required making some unpleasant judgments and some hard-to-defend distinctions.

Job Scope

A content moderator's responsibilities were extremely varied. They reviewed the content for offensive language or pornographic material that might have been against state laws prohibiting the use of child pornography, as well as any libelous comments or infringements of intellectual property rights like copyright or trademark infringement.

The salary of a content moderator depended on their level of education, number of years of experience, and the organization they worked for. Content moderators were paid differently. In the form of bonuses, they received additional pay. \$47,000 (\$22.6/hour) was the median yearly wage earnings, with the top 10% earning \$85,000 (\$40.87/hour). Over the next ten (10) years, it was anticipated that employment of content moderators would increase more slowly than usual (Career Insights, 2023).

According to an article (Pineda, 2023), to be eligible for a position as a TikTok Moderator, you had to be at least 18 years old and fluent in English, as set by TikTok.

Response of Content Moderators: Distress

Every day, content moderators examined reported content to determine whether it was suitable for viewing or complied with the rules. While this content was being moderated, they saw nudity, sex, and violent activities on their screens. For these content moderators, watching these movies of abuse, self-harm, or inappropriate behavior resulted in a certain amount of mental illness. In the vast majority of these circumstances, PTSD manifested itself after analyzing several films and photographs over the course of days and weeks. Their minds underwent the same level of trauma after seeing these images as medical, counseling, and law enforcement experts. The support of a counseling expert was crucial for their mental health because this trauma caused a breakdown in their work (Davos, 2020).

According to the End Violence Against Children (2022), qualitative reports indicated that many moderators may have experienced PTSD, and there were many legal cases involving PTSD that had arisen from moderating content. According to anecdotal evidence, it was also connected to substance misuse, heart disease, and interpersonal

conflict. If left unattended, this could result in absenteeism, a poorer quality of life, burnout, and a lack of enjoyment at work. The level of assistance for moderators also varied substantially as a result of the reliance on outsourcing. Others claimed to have been micromanaged and unable to leave their workstation for more than a few minutes during a shift, while some moderators claimed to have been able to take multiple breaks from viewing material or have had a limited shift length. Some employees had access to certified "wellness coaches" or had on-site counselors and phone support lines, while others received no assistance. Where the worker was located globally was probably going to have an impact on how much support was provided.

Moderators required mental restoration and downtime. This was done by placing a time restriction on how long somebody could spend reading the most unpleasant types of content. Similar to this, moderators were given regular breaks for their well-being so they could unwind, get therapy, or just reset. If at all feasible, a space separate from the workspace for these breaks was provided, and private spaces were available for counseling. Employers not only had a well-being team but also made it simple for moderators to access psychological support both within and outside of the office, for example, through an employee assistance plan. Employers made mental health treatments available to content moderators at least six to twelve months after they left their jobs (Insights, 2023).

According to qualitative research by Roberts (2019), content moderators used unhealthy coping mechanisms, as evidenced by weight gain and increased alcohol consumption. Regardless of their disinclination to open up about their personal lives in detail, it appeared that the work also had an impact on their close relationships. Prior

studies with ICE researchers had shown the usage of social support, including sharing work- and personal-related experiences and worries, with a preference for talking to colleagues due to their similar lived experience. After a shift, researchers also engaged in activities like exercise or washing (such as taking a shower) to decompress or symbolically "switch off" and keep the task distinct. As a result of their frequent exposure to upsetting material, these moderators experienced long-term psychological and emotional anguish. In this review of the literature, the psychological symptomatology of moderators was examined. To explain symptoms and coping mechanisms, knowledge of other professions where trauma exposure occurred was used (Chotiner, 2019).

Moreover, there were about 100,000 persons employed as content moderators. These moderators frequently came into contact with distressing material, which could cause long-term psychological pain and emotional distress (Barucha, 2021). This literature review examined the psychological symptomatology of moderators, using knowledge of other professions that exposed workers to trauma to better understand symptoms and coping techniques.

Risks of Content Moderators

The mental well-being of content moderators was significantly impacted by the risks associated with content moderation. It was acknowledged that these workers were responsible for monitoring and filtering online content through identifying and removing inappropriate contents that were against the community guidelines (Olivia, 2020). This constant exposure to sensitive and explicit media was found to have negative and traumatic effects on content moderators. For example, journalists who reported on traumatic events, both related to war and non-war situations such as terrorism and natural

disasters, were also at risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder or symptoms. Similarly, research conducted by Bourke and colleagues surveyed 600 individuals involved in investigating internet crimes against children, including cases involving child exploitation and pornography. The study discovered that 25% of these personnel experienced secondary traumatic stress, which was also known as compassion fatigue. This condition was defined by symptoms that resembled PTSD but were caused by indirect exposure to traumatic material or events (Otheman and Benjelloun, 2020).

Studies also revealed that the exposure to disturbing contents had led many content moderators to develop eating disorders. This condition, known as emotional eating disorder in psychology, was developed as a form of coping mechanism with the emotional distress created by their work (Fuesto et al., 2020). As explained by Mayo Clinic Staff (2022), individuals may have turned to food as a means of alleviating negative emotions such as stress, anger, fear, boredom, sadness, and loneliness.

In addition, the act of content moderation was deeply intertwined with societal standards of mental disorders. Moderation practices tended to reinforce specific ideals of what constituted "normal" and valuable experiences and bodies, while simultaneously marginalizing and rejecting others. It was crucial to address these concerns by reevaluating moderation practices. Both the nature and demands of content moderation work had a negative impact on content moderators' mental health. Content moderators experienced an increased burden on their mental health as a result of the stress brought on by exposure to explicit content and the need to meet unjustified standards for evaluating it. Moreover, continuous exposure to unpleasant and distressing content had an adverse impact on their well-being. The safeguarding of content moderators' psychological well-

being was crucial due to this risk.

Care for the Content Moderators

In certain situations, content moderation was carried out in a haphazard, disorganized, or inconsistent manner; in others, it was a highly planned, routine, and particular process (Roberts, 2017). It has become a crucial component of the online experience with the rise of social media use and online community participation (Heetal, 2021). Due to the complicated online environment and growing need for volunteer moderators who managed material, they typically burned out while trying to keep an active and vibrant online community alive (Dosono and Semaan, 2019; Grimmelmann, 2015; Seering et al., 2017). The growing interest in content moderation had sparked by academics who contended that because social media was a part of the public sphere, its regulations should not be imposed by businesses with limited economic incentives (Klonick, 2017).

The significance of moderation became increasingly challenging to discern. However, content moderators were trained to become algorithms, hidden from users and other actors. From the content moderators' perspectives, their complaints and discontents, as well as their creative abilities and innovative thinking, and the inadequate and unsatisfactory administration of platforms, were explored. The position of a moderator involved both bearing witness to the very intimate, upsetting evidence of human suffering and eradicating that evidence in order to preserve the other residents of the virtual world's emotional and psychic welfare (Barkowski, 2019). Still, numerous companies placed monetary and economic pressure on moderators to form a productive cleaning force, and the moderators were eager to position themselves as human interpreters by connecting

with and responding to the wants and goals of users online.

According to Roach (2022), in a Financial Times study, TikTok hired hundreds of content moderators from organizations like Accenture, Covalen, and Cpl. The short-form video provider has employed several hundred censors in the U.K. and Ireland since January 2021, as reported by the FT. The goal of TikTok, a division of China's Byte Dance, was to differentiate itself from competitors like YouTube and Facebook by offering these moderators internal roles with greater pay and benefits. The benefits and atmosphere within the service were greater, according to a moderator who switched from Accenture to TikTok last year. Another content moderator who switched from YouTube to TikTok claimed that while they continued to see distressing content, TikTok offered them more psychological support.

Ruckenstein & Turunen (2019) stated that care, which was the core of understanding the effectiveness of managing virtual and realistic cultures, broadened the content moderators' exploration of handling standard procedures. The concept of care could also be useful in the examination of other fields with strong human networks (Yu et al., 2019). Both volunteers and paid content moderators were subjected to harmful content and endured emotional burdens, so researchers started to be concerned about the well-being of content moderators and studied the efficacy of current methods to lessen their workload. With different degrees of success, researchers attempted to lighten the burden on content moderators by changing the objectionable content to decrease exposure, frequently by obscuring image and video content, and by either assisting or completely displacing human censors with artificial intelligence systems (Cook et al., 2022).

Despite the advanced nature of AI, even Mark Zuckerberg admitted that delicate content moderation still largely depended on people. According to Mukhopadhyay (2020), Facebook offered a \$52 million settlement payment to content moderators who had PTSD and other mental health problems. Each moderator received a minimum payment of \$1,000 from the social media giant. In comparison to the enormous number (in the hundreds of thousands) of moderators engaged in this task globally, the settlement only covered 11,250 moderators. The services offered included 24/7 counseling, AI-powered analytics tools that cross-analyzed various types of data to detect weak signals pointing to mental health issues, a bot that pushed various mental health resources depending on the tools the moderator used, and an individualized managerial structure with team supervisors trained to detect early warning indicators among other tied assistance workers. Some major social media companies reaffirmed their commitment to protecting their employees' privacy in the wake of rising complaints about mental health and provided on-call clinical psychologists.

However, MetaFilter was established in 1999. It had a strong reputation for generating an atmosphere conducive to positive involvement and excellent content. Its longevity presented the opportunity to expose and comprehend long-term online community dynamics (Yu et al., 2019). The usability and engagement of their platforms depended heavily on this curation (Diaz & Felella, 2021). In many cases, moderators took proactive steps to avoid taking such harsh measures or, if they had to, contacted the member in addition to doing so to explain their decision-making process and suggest possible alternatives.

Care offered a relevant framing notion as a proactive alignment. When practiced

in moderation, care acknowledged how poorly maintained upkeep, health, and protection were by solely reactive effort. It was likely that moderators' awareness of and aptitude for resolving these conflicts depended on the presence of a climate of mutual respect and trust as fundamental elements of interaction between all members, including high-caliber workers and fellow moderators. Therefore, encouraging care as a mindset for every person involved effectively communicated active maintenance.

Local Studies of Content Moderator

The Philippines, one of the largest and fastest-growing centers for such labor and a byproduct of the nation's decades-old call center sector, was where the vulnerability of content moderators was most severe. Workers at offices around Manila assessed pictures, videos, and posts from all over the world, in contrast to moderators in other significant hubs, such as those in India or the United States, who only checked content that was uploaded by citizens of those countries. They had to work extremely hard to comprehend different cultures, moderate content in up to 10 languages they did not speak, and make hundreds of decisions every day about what should be kept online.

In an article titled, “Content Moderation Outsourcing Philippines: Leading the Way”, Ralf Ellspermann, the co-chief executive officer of PITON - Global, was portrayed as a seasoned expert in content moderation outsourcing. Ellspermann stated, “TikTok also had several thousand content moderators working for them in the Philippines who reviewed and removed inappropriate content. Both Facebook and TikTok had implemented AI-powered tools to aid in identifying content that violated their platforms guidelines” (SunStar Cebu, 2023). Moreover, he added that the Philippines had established itself as a dependable and affordable option for outsourcing

content moderation.

The country's abundant supply of workers proficient in multiple languages and technology made it attractive to companies looking for comprehensive and thoughtful moderation at a reasonable cost. Just as Forrester Research acknowledged the potential of the country as a place to outsource content moderation. According to their report, the country had a large pool of skilled workers and offered affordable labor (SunStar Cebu, 2023).

As mentioned above, the country had an abundant supply of workers. However, even with a large number of workers, this did not necessarily mean that they were being paid well or that they were overall healthy. The documentary, "The Cleaners" by Moritz Rieseewieck and Hans Block (2018), shared information about a certain Filipina employee. She referred to her digital work as a preventer of sinful images and drew on Catholic imagery to describe it as a sacrifice and atonement for sins: "I sacrifice myself, yes. Sacrifice is always there. It will always be a part of life. It's my job to prevent the sinful images, I'm a preventer" (Marte-Wood & Santos, 2021).

For some of the largest social media platforms and content services, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google, Twitter, and others, Manila effectively became the center for content moderation. However, outsourcing the damaging work did not solve the issue. According to the website The Verge (2018), "The Cleaners" is a documentary about Filipino content moderators in the Philippines who were utilized to decide whether or not to remove shared images and videos from the internet. The movie follows a small group of Manila-based individuals who spent their days watching videos of terrorism, political propaganda, self-harm, and child pornography. The individuals

were divided into two categories: "ignore," where they chose to leave the post as is, and "delete," where they chose to take down the post because it violated community standards.

Since the Philippines had a low online censorship policy, the number of pictures depicting sexual exploitation and abuse considerably increased in the Philippines. In 2018, at least 600,000 videos and photographs of abused, sexualized, and naked Filipino minors were posted, distributed, and sold online (Colina, 2023). Filipino content moderators possessed the ability to effectively moderate content on a global scale; however, their own country, the Philippines, lacked a robust online censorship policy and failed to adequately prioritize the security of its users. This stark contrast raised questions about the discrepancy in approach and highlighted the need for improvements in the local regulatory framework. Therefore, content moderation in the Philippines needed to be prioritized by the government to prevent further mental disturbances to the netizens and especially to content moderators who filtered the content.

Synthesis

Content moderation involved the filtration and censorship of online content by individuals known as content moderators. Their responsibilities included removing inappropriate content that violated community guidelines, typically posted by users on social media platforms. This work entailed closely monitoring the content posted on these platforms and ensuring that all visible content complied with community guidelines, thus making it accessible to all users.

There have been studies conducted on content moderators, addressing issues related to their physical, psychological, and emotional health, as well as complaints about salary or promotion. However, these studies often lack a local perspective to fully

understand their working conditions and well-being. Therefore, conducting a study focused on local content moderators would help eliminate existing biases and gaps in information, providing a deeper understanding of their experiences and promoting comprehensive knowledge in this area.

It was also readily apparent that the existence of content moderators was not acknowledged or identified by most individuals. Our study was focused on the importance of providing knowledge about the visible shortcomings of previous, restricted studies. This established a positive impact on local content moderators in terms of acknowledging their existence and addressing their overall well-being, including their physical, emotional, and mental health. In the end, a discussion about the overlooked content moderators could have been considered to explore possibilities for exploitation and the blurring of lines between virtual and reality domains.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The third chapter is the Research Design and Methodology, which is outlined in this section. It includes: Research Design and Methodology, Participants of the Study, Research Setting, Ethical Considerations, Dissemination Plan, Data Collection Procedures and Strategy, Analysis of the Study, and the Validity and Reliability of the Study.

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative methodology using a phenomenological approach as a strategy of inquiry. Qualitative research, a method of inquiry, investigated and addressed how behavioral patterns and language were used to convey information in typical and daily settings. According to Busetto et al. (2020), in qualitative research, the nature of a phenomenon was examined, including its quality, multiple manifestations, the context in which it came out, or points of view from which it was viewed and considered, but not its range, frequency, or the spot in an objectively established cause-and-effect chain. As explained by Aspers and Corte (2019), the description and methodology of qualitative research were frequently validated by prominent researchers and had a strong and authoritative foundation. In general, qualitative research acknowledged people's lived experiences and was fundamentally subjective (Gonzalez, 2020).

This study was qualitative research that used the phenomenological approach to extract the theme from the lived experiences of the selected content moderator. According to Creswell (2008), qualitative research was a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social human problem.

The process of research involved emerging questions and procedures, collecting data in the participants' setting, analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

Phenomenological research, on the other hand, was a qualitative research approach that sought to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon. The approach investigated the everyday experiences of human beings while suspending the researchers' preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon. In other words, phenomenological research studied lived experiences to gain deeper insights into how people understood those experiences. The qualitative approach was suitable for researchers to utilize a research study since it provided researchers with access to research participants' thoughts as well as other aspects of emotions that may relate to the study and allowed the researchers to obtain in-depth insights. Considering the research study, it focused on the lived experiences of the research participants, in which the phenomenological approach helped the researchers in describing the lived experiences of the participants. Furthermore, researchers could employ the phenomenological approach to examine themes that were difficult, vague, as well as emotionally sensitive.

Participants of the Study

The study's participants were employed in Iloilo City as TikTok Content Moderators. Participants had to meet the legal working age limit and have one year of experience working as content moderators. Participants also had to present a certificate attesting to their status as content moderators employed by a business affiliated with the TikTok Company. Using a purposive technique, which involved the researchers using their knowledge to pick specific subjects, a sample of participants was obtained.

Additionally, to aid in the accomplishment of the study's objectives, the researchers employed a purposive snowball sampling technique, in which the willingness and availability of initial or current participants introduced or referred to other possible participants. An ideal number of 8–10 participants was estimated; nevertheless, after the interview sessions, researchers finalized a list of five (5) participants which reached the data saturation.

In terms of inclusion criteria, participants needed to have at least one year of paid experience as content moderators, along with relevant software training and proficiency in digital content. This is important as it ensures that the Content Moderator understands company policies and cannot continue without completing the required training. The participants have to be explicitly employed by TikTok Company in Iloilo City as content moderators. The study concentrated on the real-world experiences of Filipino TikTok content moderators in Iloilo City.

In terms of exclusion criteria, the researchers did not choose content moderators working outside Iloilo City or those working with other social media platforms. Specifically, only TikTok content moderators were qualified to be participants in the study. Hence, participants with under one year of experience and volunteer content moderators were not qualified to participate in the study

Research Setting

The research interviews were conducted at a co-working space in Iloilo City. Participants congregated in a calm, quiet, air-conditioned location where they will feel most at ease. The person inside was the sole interviewer and participant.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration was an important part of the research endeavor, encompassing a set of principles and guidelines that governed the ethical conduct of the study. These considerations played a critical role in protecting the rights, dignity, and well-being of the participants, as well as ensuring the integrity and credibility of the qualitative research process (Bhandari, 2021). In this section, this composed of those important parts that discussed the ethical practice needed prior to conducting this study such as the following:

A. Researchers have conducted a study on the lived experiences of a TikTok content moderator, the researchers typically need to follow ethical guidelines and obtain the necessary approvals. This included seeking approval from a Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) or a similar ethics review committee. Additionally, they required permission or cooperation from TikTok as a platform and consent from the content moderators involved. It's crucial to ensure the protection of participants' rights and privacy when conducting such research.

B. With adequate precautions, the researchers ensured the safety and well-being of the participants by ensuring that they were well-informed prior to the study, and their consent was obtained to allow the researchers to gather sensitive and personal information. Certainly, before conducting a study on TikTok content moderators, it was essential to assess potential risks and plan mitigation strategies. Here's an overview of risks based on your categories and how to mitigate them:

A. Negligible Risk:

Data Privacy: Ensured that all data collected was anonymized and did not

include personal information.

Informed Consent: Clearly informed participants about the study and obtained their consent.

B. Low Risk:

Confidentiality: Safeguarded sensitive data by storing it securely and limiting access.

Participant Well-being: Monitored participants for emotional distress and provided resources for support.

C. Minimal Risk:

Ethical Guidelines: Adhered to ethical research guidelines and standards.

Bias: Minimized bias by using diverse and well-defined criteria for participant selection.

D. More than Minimal Risk:

Emotional Distress: Assessed the potential emotional impact on participants, offering counseling or debriefing.

Data Security: Implemented robust data security measures to prevent unauthorized access.

E. High Risk:

Psychological Impact: Recognized the potential for moderators to experience trauma and provided access to professional mental health services.

Legal Considerations: Consulted with legal experts to ensure compliance with privacy laws and labor regulations.

C. The benefits of this study provided knowledge and in-depth understanding about the perspective of the existence, purpose, and difficulties of content moderators in our society to the researchers and those who were part of this research study. The participants also benefited from this study for their personal voice and experiences were heard, and helped them improve their productivity in their field.

D. The criteria for withdrawal in this study consisted of various conditions. Initially, individuals who chose to withdraw from the study at any point were taken into account. Furthermore, participants who supplied incomplete or inadequate information, and those who did not provide the required data, were also eligible for withdrawal. Additionally, individuals identified as content moderators residing outside of Iloilo City, participants without any connection to the social platform industry as content moderators, and participants who partook in unethical behaviors during the study by spreading falsehoods or deliberately misleading the Researchers, were also considered for withdrawal.

E. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were ensured in the conduct of this study. In the process of performing safekeeping of participants' personal information that was collected, it was kept safe away from the public's access, secured in a digital storage accessible only to the researchers. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, their full names were not disclosed in the research. When conducting interviews, researchers only used participants' screen names. The researchers also ensured that their personal information was not mentioned or shared with anyone. Access to the gathered data was restricted,

as soft copies were stored in a password-protected folder and hard copies were kept in a locked cabinet in a secure room that was inaccessible to others.

Confidentiality was a precious principle that ensured the connection and trust of the participants and the researchers, and it was the researchers' duty to preserve and secure their privacy and identities.

F. Participation in this study was purely voluntary. Participants could choose to participate or not without pressure, intimidation, or undue influence. If the participants chose not to participate or withdrew from the study at any time, they could stop responding to the informed consent or the interview. The researchers prioritized the protection of the well-being and rights of those involved in the study.

G. In concern of the disposal of research materials, all gathered data after the conduct of this research was disposed of accordingly to maintain confidentiality of the participants, security, and environmental responsibility. This was done by shredding all the hard copies from the secured drawer where only the researchers had access. For the digital data such as audio or video recordings, it was removed or deleted from all used devices, and it was ensured that nothing remained in deleted history. This process was performed by the researchers as soon as the final defense was done.

H. This study aimed to contribute to the local communities a comprehensive understanding of the existence and purpose of content moderation in our society. The data that was gathered was used as a tool to educate and emphasize the impact and value of content moderators in this modern technological era. The

knowledge that this study presented could influence the perspective and behavior of an individual to perform properly online, with the goal of understanding the importance of internet etiquette.

I. Incentives, when thoughtfully designed and ethically administered, served as powerful motivators, enhancing performance, and establishing rapport. The participants who accomplished the data gathering process received items of gratitude from the researchers in the form of gifts, which were coffee glass tumblers with lids and straws that the participants could use for their office work or simply on the go trips as a means of keeping their drinks at hot or cold temperatures according to their personal choice of beverage to enhance their productivity during work or in an ordinary day alongside with pastries. The incentives were given to the participants in gift bags.

J. As researchers, we hereby declared the following potential conflicts of interest:

1. Personal Relationships: We may have had personal relationships, including friends, or acquaintances, who were content creators or stakeholders on TikTok. We strived to ensure that these relationships did not affect their moderation decisions, and we recused from reviewing content associated with these individuals when necessary.

2. Financial Interests: If the TikTok moderator had financial interests in companies or entities connected to the content being moderated on TikTok, we disclosed these financial interests as necessary and refrained from taking part in the moderation of content that could benefit or harm these interests.

3. Employment or Affiliations: We maintained transparency about our affiliations if the TikTok content moderator was employed by or affiliated with organizations, businesses, or groups that had a vested interest in the content on TikTok.

4. Personal Bias: We, as researchers, recognized that personal beliefs, opinions, or biases might have inadvertently influenced us in moderation decisions. We committed to being aware of our biases and to making decisions based on the platform's content guidelines and policies rather than our personal preferences.

5. Personal View: Upon getting the result, it might have affected the individual's perception of the job, as we knew their journey, salary, and the advantages and disadvantages of being a content moderator. It might have also affected employment due to the risk and exposure to an unhealthy environment.

Dissemination Plan

In line with this topic, the importance of discussing this matter about content moderation is also the fact that it can shed light and knowledge to those who belong in such educational institutions, for instance the students, who are less knowledgeable with this kind of discussion. They, the students, who are the future researchers can far explore this similar study if they wish to. In providing a novel comprehensive discussion of laying out information that will be helpful in the coming future by producing this research as a journal in libraries after final defense.

Furthermore, the goal was to engage with and provide knowledge to every social

media user and aspiring content moderator about the deeper aspects involved in their role, going beyond simply removing unwanted and disturbing content. Through this approach, both the government and social media companies worked together to create strategies that prioritized the well-being of TikTok content moderators.

Content moderation involved more than simply removing videos and collecting a paycheck. It is crucial to recognize the importance of providing content moderators with comprehensive support that caters to their emotional and mental well-being, allowing them to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Since individuals respond to these roles differently, it is essential to tailor the assistance provided to meet their specific requirements. Thus, it is imperative to offer them a range of benefits that address their psychological, emotional, and physical needs.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers utilized the Snowball Method to identify the participants of the study. In order to gather data, the researcher has obtained the participant's informed consent. A screening interview has been conducted with the identified and selected participants using the suggested questions.

Prior to the interview, participants were given the opportunity to give their informed consent. Each participant received information regarding the data collection, their right to confidentiality and privacy, and their voluntary involvement. If they wish to withdraw, they are allowed to do so.

The primary form of data collection for this study was enormous face-to-face interviews. The researchers advised the participants of the interview before it began that it was audio recorded. The interview took 45-minutes to an hour depending on how the

participant responded to the open-ended questions. The researcher's strategies will be as follows: (1) They asked the participants questions about the challenges they face; (2) While participants are sharing their experiences, the interviewer listened to them; (3) When they are talking about things that are off-topic, the interviewer will brought them back on track. This means they did not select their answer from a list of multiple-choice options, but answered freely based on their knowledge, experiences, thoughts, and challenges as a Tiktok Content Moderator. During the interview, when the participant feels uncomfortable to answer a certain question, they approached the interviewer by saying "next question", "too private/personal", or using a hand or face gesture that may state "no" or "declined" as an answer in order for the interviewer to move on to the next question. The researchers provided an incentive as a token of solely due for the subjects' willingness to volunteer their valuable time to partake in the research study.

The data that was acquired was translated and transcribed. The data was organized using a thematic analysis, which also helped in finding study-related topics and provide new ideas and insights. The information that was gathered through audio and video recordings were kept in a password-protected device in Google Drive which was only accessible to the researchers. Hard copies were stored in a cabinet with padlock that only the researchers have access to as well.

Analysis of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative approach of thematic analysis in analyzing the accumulated data. The point of collection and comprehension of the data was thematic analysis for it suited the practice and essence of this study. As defined by Smith (2015), it was a process of identifying and analyzing possible patterns in data through the form of

reading or data coding.

Based on Clarke and Braun (2015), issued a guiding principle in using thematic analysis, which are based on six-phase procedures:

First, the data was gathered from the source of recorded interviews or transcribed data. Second, initial codes were produced that highlighted key aspects of the data necessary for addressing the research questions. Third, possible themes were identified through inspecting the scripts and compiled data to recognize greater patterns of importance or message. Fourth, existing themes were re-analyzed through the method of putting prospective themes to the challenge on the dataset to see if they presented a satisfying account of the data, and those that needed to be polished, separated, combined, or removed from the study were identified. Fifth, the process of identifying and naming themes was undertaken, in which a detailed analysis was executed for each theme. The last procedure involved making a report combining narrative and data segments for analysis, and making a connection with the analysis to the previous study.

In general, the purpose of the thematic analysis was to perform a summarization of the participants' values, ideas, and topics which were collected in a form of a face-to-face interview with the goal of achieving a descriptive understanding of their lived experiences. The researchers utilized the participants' comments as a form of theme. It was always understood that the participants' view of reality regarding the study might differ from the researchers' point of view. The manner of coding and categorizing methods was important in classifying the coded data.

Therefore, with utmost confidence in the dependability and authenticity of the materials that were presented coming from the participants, this served as the basis of

thematic analysis. During the whole analyzing stage of patterns and themes, it was kept safe away from public reach in a secured digital access. The data that was collected after the study was subjected to disposal accordingly by the researchers. In the interest of ensuring external validity and the importance of reliability, the researchers provided a thorough summary of the participants' interpersonal responses with the goals, intentions, and those who influenced the participants' experiences. Nonetheless, thematic analysis could be described as descriptive, critical, or even explanatory, which assured that the researchers could define the participants' reality, reflect on their experiences, and use their oral testimony as a guide to understand the themes and ideas related to their lived experiences alone, which was the point of the study.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

Research is the process of gathering, evaluating, and interpreting data. However, not all studies were equally reliable or trustworthy. It was crucial to acknowledge the research limitations and difficulties to ensure its validity and reliability. The adequacy of the research's significance, instruments, methods, and procedures, including the gathering of data and validation, was referred to as validity (Mohamad et al., 2015).

Reliability was measured when the exact result was obtained repeatedly by using the same methods under the same circumstances. To ensure the validity of the study, the researchers formulated interview questions based on the objectives of the research, and they were subjected for validations by (3) three experts. The validators received a copy of the interview questions from the researchers with the approval from the (3) three experts. The questionnaires were reviewed by validators, and the researchers took note of their

advice.

The following measures were carried out so as to guarantee the trustworthiness of our data (Ahmed, 2024). To ensure credibility: Building trust between the researcher and the participants prior to data collection. During the interview, the researcher reviewed the participants by reiterating certain questions and also to make sure the participants hear the narrative accurately, the researcher recounted the story to them. Transferability: An overview data set that illustrates the study's context will be given, along with a precise or thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Dependability: The researchers provided an in-depth methodological description to allow the study to be repeated. Confirmability: The researchers provide an “audit trail” that ensures that the findings accurately reflect the participants' responses and are not unduly influenced by bias, thereby upholding the integrity of the research process.

Chapter 4

Research Findings and Discussion

The discussion of the themes that emerged from the participants' transcribed stories are presented in this chapter. Five interviews were conducted, and a phenomenological thematic technique was utilized to record the key themes that emerged regarding the lived experiences of TikTok content moderators.

Profile of the Participants

The participants' real identities were replaced by false names to ensure that they remained anonymous. Notably, throughout the data collection, the researchers utilized face-to-face interviews as a means of contact and required the participants to read the rules before signing their informed permission consent forms.

The profile of the respondents was taken from the initial process, where the researchers asked for their demographics. During the course of the face-to-face interview, these participants had the option to freely discuss themselves according to their lived experiences as a TikTok content moderator.

Participant 1: Kat

Kat, one of our female participants, had been working as a content moderator in a certain company for about one (1) year and (3) months already. The participant was unaware that she was applying for the position of content moderator. She only became aware during the interview.

Participant 2: Hannah

Hannah, aged 26, started her employment in January 2022. Before the pandemic, she worked as an instructor in a center in Iloilo City, where she assisted students with

special needs. Additionally, she worked as an English teacher online. However, she developed seasonal anxiety during exam preparation and result waiting periods, prompting her to seek a job where she could interact more with people.

Participant 3: Mikaela

Mikaela, 24, female, started working as a content moderator last May 16.

One of the participants shared an amazing experience in her job .

Participant 4: Natalie

Nathalie, aged 22, began her role as a TikTok content moderator on June 22nd.

She has been working for more than one year, and she has a soft spot for animals.

Participant 5: Candy

Candy, aged 21, female, joined an undisclosed company in July 2020, where she focused on content moderation specifically for TikTok.

Lived Experiences of the TikTok Content Moderators

Participant 1: Kat

This participant began narrating her experiences by detailing her responsibilities as a content moderator at the company she was working for, specifically focusing on her role in handling TikTok content in the U.S. (United States). “Ang naga moderate kami sang mga TikTok vid [uh] TikTok videos from U.S. (United States) tapos gina moderate namon kag gina applyan policy nga applicable sa videos.” (*We moderate TikTok video [uh] TikTok videos from the U.S. (United States) then we moderate it and we apply policies that are applicable on the videos.*) (Kat, 2023).

Having been with the company for one (1) year and three (3) months, the participant pointed out the necessity of possessing a strong personality to deal with the

graphic contents of the job. She continued on to say that it was difficult to work if you lacked a sufficient amount of strong character to deal with the unpleasant videos that came up at work.

[Uhhh] Syempre damo [uhmm] first dapat ano ka ang strong person, kag ay you have a strong personality, kay kung [uhmm] kung indi ka—indi strong personality mo, dasig ka mas depressed sa amuna nga work kay actually damo na ko na experienced like syempre—mag watch ka sang mga TikTok videos nga may mga [uhmm] torture nga mga amuna ho — torture tapos mga killing tapos mga [uhmm] SPG nga mga videos so need mo na—need mo gid ya mag [uh] strong personality mo para di ka dayon ma-stress sa work (Kat, 2023).

([Uhhh] of course there are a lot [uhmm] first you must be a strong person and have a strong personality because if [uhmm] if you're not—you don't have a strong personality, it's easy for you to be really depressed in this work because actually I had experienced a lot like of course—if you watch TikTok videos that has [uhmm] torture like that—torture then those killing and then [uhmm] SPG videos so you need—you need to have a strong personality so you won't get stressed easily at work) (Kat, 2023).

The participant commented that despite the explicit content, she found it easier to function after being continuously exposed to it. “[Hmm] Actually, kung sige-sige na sa kalawigon ko—daw naghapos na kag na adapt ko man dayon ang ano—ang environment didto.” *([Hmm] Actually, by the continuous work and the length of my employment,—it's like it becomes easy and I fastly adapt—the environment there.) (Kat, 2023).*

She proceeded to say that she ended up working for that kind of company because

Nearsol, her previous company, closed. She additionally indicated that she had never heard of a content moderator before and that she had only just written an email to the company she was applying to. Her interview was the first time she understood what a content moderator was. Discussing the challenges she faces at work, she mentioned that she finds it hard to understand languages used in different nations. There are multiple interpretations for the videos, she added.

[Hmm] May ara daan cases or videos nga daw budlay bala [uhmm] inchindihon [uhmm] budlay inchindihon ang paghambal bala sang mga U.S. pa gid nga mga ano—wala ko kabalo if its under sisner mga budding statement daw kabudlay bala [uhmm] may ara siya nga ano multiple interpretations nga mga ano mga language. So, amuna kis-a gina-pass mo lang ang video kay abi mo wala na kay gale may meaning na to—so masala ka na sa Q'A (Quality Analyst) so bale amuna (Kat, 2023).

([Hmm] There are these cases or videos that are difficult [uhmm] to understand [uhmm] it's hard to understand how they speak in the U.S.—I don't know if it's under sisner, budding statement that is difficult [uhmm] it has something like multiple language interpretations. So, that's why sometimes you just skip the video because thinking it's just nothing, however it has meaning behind it—so this is tagged as a mistake by a Q'A (Quality Analyst), basically that's it) (Kat, 2023).

She additionally talked about the psychological effects of these videos on her role as a content moderator. Moreover, she mentioned that watching videos of torture stressed her out because it was so awful to witness the suffering depicted in the videos. “[Hmm] Syempre una na ano ko mo na—na-stressed ko una kay syempre—magtaw-an ka sang

mga videos nga gina-torture, diba? Kalaw-ay sa feeling tapos ano Nang—daw dali ka bala ma-ano—daw ang imo bala nga pagpaminsaron daw indi daw—[pauses].” (*[Hmm] Of course at first I was—stressed about it at first of course—watching these videos that shows torture, right? It’s feels awful also, Miss—like it’s easy for you to—like your mind would not—[pauses].*) (Kat, 2023).

She came to the conclusion that she couldn't watch videos on her own, especially the ones of torture that they were meant to moderate. “Daw indi mo bala ma-basta, daw kalaw-ay—daw kalaw-ay sa feeling ‘di ko ma-explain. Basta indi ka bala sanay sa amuna nga magtan-aw sang mga videos nga mga ano—nga mga like torture.” (*It’s like you cannot, —like it really doesn’t feel good. I cannot even explain it. Since you are not used in watching those videos—about torture.*) (Kat, 2023).

She highlighted how she overcame the challenges in spite of them. She watches satisfying TikTok videos as a way for her to relax and clear her mind in order to overcome those uncomfortable feelings. “Actually, gatan-aw man ko gihapon TikTok videos didto mo. Ang mga satisfying videos daw ga amo ko na [laughs] para lang ma-clear lang dayon mind ko.” (*Actually, I still watch TikTok videos there and there are those satisfying videos like that [laughs] just so it can clear my mind.*) (Kat, 2023).

The participant also added that the company she works for provides a "wellness" program in which individuals speak with a wellness coach for 30 minutes to an hour about any issues they may be encountering.

Oo, tapos may ano kami may wellness nga tagaan kami wellness didto sa company bala mo 30 mins kis-a 1 hour tapos ang may gina-talk kami na nga WOCO bala something amuna tapos ginahambal namon mga problema namon

about sa ano nga na (Kat, 2023).

(Yes, then we have wellness that is given in the company for 30 minutes, sometimes 1 hour. With that, we get to talk with a WOCO (Wellness Coach) something mlike that then we will voice out our problems about it) (Kat, 2023).

Lastly, she outlined how her work is recommended to those who may be considering applying for a similar position at work.

Actually kung gusto nila, kung strong personality ka, guro pwede kay kung strong [uhmm] strong imo nga personality [uhmm] hapos lang gid ya ang content moderator nga ubra, kay unlike ya kung customer service ka need mo mag talk sa customer mismo. Kung content moderator ya focus mo na ang video nga ginatanaw mo, amo lang na (Kat, 2023).

(Actually if they like it, maybe if you have a strong personality, it's gonna be fine because if [uhmm] your personality is strong [uhmm] content moderator job is going to be very easy. Unlike if you're working in customer service you really need to talk. While for a content moderator, it's all about the video that you are watching, that's it) (Kat, 2023).

Participant 2: Hannah

This participant provided insights into her role as a TikTok content moderator, likening it to the experience of browsing TikTok videos throughout her shift. She expressed a sense of enjoyment in this work, implying that she found it engaging and perhaps even entertaining. However, amidst this enjoyment, she also acknowledged the intrinsic challenges embedded within her role. She openly recognized the presence of

disturbing content, such as gore or sexually suggestive videos, which she encountered and moderated regularly.

Despite the enjoyable aspects of her job, the participant struggled with the difficult responsibility of ensuring that such unsettling content did not spread on the platform. This aspect of her role introduced a layer of complexity and emotional weight to her daily tasks. The participant's experience highlighted the placement of enjoyment and challenge inherent in content moderation. While she may have found satisfaction in her work, she had to navigate the unsettling and potentially distressing nature of the content she encountered.

For this particular participant, the experience of moderating TikTok content went beyond mere enjoyment; it involved a dynamic interplay between personal fulfillment and professional obligation. Her role required her to confront the darker side of online content, necessitating a delicate balance between her emotional well-being and her duty to maintain a safe and appropriate online environment. This lived experience underscored the nuanced nature of content moderation and the complexities inherent in safeguarding digital spaces.

Actually [uhmm] ano siya, different sya nga ano—they are like, ma-enjoy mo ang work cause kag imagine ga watch ka lang TikTok all throughout the shift pero there are—kay ga moderate kami sang TikTok, so there are disturbing ano gid ya—disturbing contents. It could be mga gore or mga sexually allusive nga mga videos (Hannah, 2023).

(Actually [uhmm] it's different—they are like, you can enjoy your work and imagine you just watch TikTok videos all throughout the shift that's why it's

enjoyable; however, we moderate TikTok (videos) and so, there will really be disturbing content. This content could be gore or sexually allusive videos) (Hannah, 2023).

She emphasized the importance of being open-minded, suggesting that although the content may not affect one personally, exposure to it could eventually have an impact if one is not accustomed to such material. She highlighted the necessity of learning to enjoy the job in order to mitigate the potential effects of disturbing content on oneself.

Just be open. I mean—it won't affect you personally man pero at some point, maapektuhan ka if you are not used sa mga muna nga mga contents and all [uhmm] pero you have to learn to ano lang gid ya—enjoy ang job para di ka maapektuhan (Hannah, 2023).

(Just be open-minded. I mean—it won't affect you personally but at some point, it will affect you if you are not used to those contents and all [uhmm] but you have to learn to—enjoy the job so that it won't affect you) (Hannah, 2023).

The participant expressed her feelings about her work, mentioning that while she finds the task of working on videos is acceptable, she admits to experiencing stress more quickly now. She attributed this to her usual ability to control the outcomes of her actions and decisions in other aspects of her life. However, in her current role at TikTok, there is a quality assurance analyst responsible for checking the correctness of tags and other elements, which sometimes leads to unavoidable errors. Despite not considering herself a perfectionist, she admitted to not being accustomed to mistakes and preferring everything to be resolved smoothly without delay.

Wala [ah] I mean sa work, sa videos daw na okay naman ko pero subong dali ako

dun ma stress pag ako nga daan [uhmm] used ako nga kung ano gina ubra ko nga every decision nga gina ubra ko daw controlled ko bala ang result like always ano ko sa—sa TikTok we have quality assurance analyst. So they take something, gina check kung tsakto ang taggings and all. So, sometimes indi malikawan may error. Indi man ko perfectionist pero indi lang gid ko ya sanay guro nga mag ano bala sa mga sala, gusto ko okay dayon ang tanan [laughs] like I can't avoid (Hannah, 2023).

(Nothing [ah] I mean the work on videos, it's okay but as of now, I get stressed quickly since I am [uhmm] used to in whatever I do, in every decision I make, I can control it's result—in TikTok we have a quality assurance analyst. So they're checking if the taggings and all are correct. So, sometimes errors cannot be avoided. I am not a perfectionist but I am not really used to mistakes—I want everything to be okay right away [laughs] like I can't avoid it) (Hannah, 2023).

The participant stated that her role as a content moderator presented significant challenges, particularly because she tends to be sensitive to the content she encounters. Nonetheless, she found enjoyment in her work primarily due to the supportive environment created by her colleagues. Despite having numerous opportunities outside of TikTok, her decision to remain with the company was largely influenced by the significant roles her coworkers played and the camaraderie they shared.

[Hmm] [Uhhh] Very challenging siya kay dali ako maapektuhan but because of people sa work [uhmm] I get to enjoy as a content moderator. It's not actually the job ga stay ako, but I have a lot of opportunities outside my company—outside TikTok but it's the people gid ya kay ang role nila daku-daku gid ya (Hannah,

2023).

([Hmm] [Uhhh] It is very challenging since I easily get affected but because of my colleagues at work [uhmm] I get to enjoy being a content moderator. The reason why I stayed isn't actually because of the job, I do have a lot of opportunities outside the company—outside TikTok but it's the people itself because their role is very huge) (Hannah, 2023).

The participant concluded the interview by highlighting her past experiences, mentioning how she found dealing with various people exhausting in her previous role at the same company before becoming a moderator. She emphasized the significance of breaks, particularly wellness breaks, citing them as essential for managing stress and dealing with toxic individuals. According to her, taking a 30-minute wellness break can significantly alleviate the challenges faced in such roles.

Huo, like for example sa ga take cost. Before ako nag moderator, same company man nang seasonal account nga ga take cost, it's very very exhausting to do with different people and there are people pa nga toxic. Very important nga may breaks, nga mga wellness break, kay ga 30-minute wellness break is a big help gid ya (Hannah, 2023).

(Yes, for example, when I used to take the cost. Before I became a moderator, in the same company with a seasonal account, it was very exhausting to deal with different people and there are people who are toxic. It's very important to have breaks, those wellness breaks, because a 30-minute wellness break is a really big help) (Hannah, 2023).

Participant 3: Mikaela

The participant, Mikaela seemed to provide her details with a clear mind and put effort into establishing her thoughts with her answers. She proceeded to deliver her experiences as a content moderator with ease and confidence, also justifying that she was able to handle her work by getting used to it after being employed as a content moderator for one (1) year. “[Uhhh] Still a content moderator pero daw medyo naka-adjust na and [uhmm] naggamay na ang work.” (*[Uhhh] Still a content moderator but slightly adjusted already and [uhmm] the work became lesser.*) (Mikaela, 2023).

She mentioned the policies that they follow to determine the violation of a certain video being uploaded on the TikTok platform for possible actions to be conducted against the uploader.

So [uhmm] basically if content moderator ka, you filter videos nga indi pwede makita sa application nga under ka. So ginahimo namon is tanan nga raw videos may it be porn, gore [uhmm] tanan nga videos nga ging upload sang mga consumers is lantawon na siya namon and then may mga ara kami nga gingtun-an nga mga policies wherein amuna siya ang basis namon if ano ang mga violations sang nag upload (Mikaela, 2023).

(So [uhmm] basically if you're a content moderator, you filter videos that shouldn't be seen on the application you're under. So what we do is all raw videos may it be porn, gore [uhmm] we will watch all videos that have been uploaded by consumers and then there are policies that we try to learn wherein that's our basis if what are the violations of what's been uploaded) (Mikaela, 2023).

She further discussed more details of her job position, including the salary, obligations, and experiences. She unhesitatingly mentioned that as a content moderator and a normal person, she got affected by the disturbing contents that she was exposed to and/or witnessed during her duty, which disrupted her emotions and well-being.

[Uhhh] Siguro [uhmm] pina [uhmm] mga devastating type of videos, suicide [uhmm] amuna guro ang isa sa mga video nga like du may ma-feel ka gid nga emotion nga indi mo kaya i-separate imo nga pagiging ikaw, and sa pagiging content moderator, if I see videos [uhmm] gina torture and suicide. Kay if mga porn siya and other stuffs, kaya mo siya ya i-disregard mo ang emotion pero when it comes sa mga suicide and [uhmm] mga torture so dira gid (Mikaela, 2023).

([Uhhh] Maybe [uhmm] the [uhmm] devastating type of videos, suicide [uhmm] like that maybe one of the video that you'll feel emotion that you can't separate yourself, and being a content moderator, if I see videos [uhmm] torturing and suicide. Since if it is porn and other stuffs, you can disregard it—the emotion but when it comes on suicide and [uhmm] especially torture) (Mikaela, 2023).

With this kind of negative effect on her, she praised the company's countermeasure to address this kind of issue which she called “everyday wellness,” where she personally justified the purpose and help.

Ang nami lang bi is may ara kami everyday wellness. So, may ara kami nga mga work counselor mismo. If may ara kami videos and daw bothered kami and kumbaga affected gid kami mentally, pwede kami ka-tap sa amon nga work counselors. Pwede kami nila i-pull out, pwede kami maka-talk sa ila if ever amuna. Pero everyday we are provided either 15 mins wellness break, 1 hour

wellness break, or 30 mins wellness break. Nakadepende siya kay workforce if pila ka wellness break if [uhmm] how long is your wellness break sa muna nga day, pero usually may duwa ka ka-15 mins sa isa ka-week, may duwa ka ka-30 mins sa isa ka week, and may ara ka isa ka-1 hour sa isa ka week (Mikaela, 2023). *(So, what's great is that we have everyday wellness. So, we have a work counselor. If we have videos and if we're bothered and like we're really affected mentally, we can tap on our work counselors. We can be pulled out, we can talk to them if ever like that. But everyday we are provided either 15 mins wellness break, 1 hour wellness break, or 30 mins wellness break. It depends on our workforce if how many wellness breaks if [uhmm] how long is your wellness break for that day, but usually we have two 15 mins in a week, there are two 30 mins in a week, and we have one 1 hour in a week) (Mikaela, 2023).*

The purpose of this everyday wellness is truly motivating according to her words, which aims to give them a period to relax from the tension of their duty, which could be fifteen (15) minutes or more depending on the demand the workforce can provide on a specific day. The bottom line of this is to assure that they will not succumb to the negative effects of their exposure to violent contents, yet they can still maximize their work. The participant also talked about the reason why she decided to work in Iloilo City despite the distance from her hometown. She testified that her thesis was delayed, and while she was processing all about it, she was convinced to find a way to earn in order to maintain her lifestyle while being in the city area considering that she wanted to be independent and help her parents in some way, which led her to work in a content moderator position.

[Uhm] Actually, ang reason that time was, ma-stay lang ko na di sa Iloilo coz na delay akon nga thesis. So, like mabalik lang ko di sa Iloilo for my thesis. And I thought to myself nga hambal ko indi 24 hrs ang pag-ubra sang akon nga thesis physically. So gusto ko mangita paagi para kumbaga indi nako—indi ko bala magsalig sa akon nga parents nga kumbaga, I know in myself nga high maintenance ko nga tawo. So why not ako ang mahimo paagi para sa akon self nga i-maintain ang muna ko nga klase nga lifestyle. So, akon nga friend ga-work na gid siya sa diri nga company ging refer niya ko (Mikaela, 2023).

([Uhhh] Actually, the reason was, I was about to stay here in Iloilo because my thesis was delayed. So, like I'll come back here in Iloilo just for my thesis. And I thought to myself that I don't really spend 24 hours doing my thesis physically. So I want to find a way—I won't be depending on my parents, besides I know in myself that I am a high maintenance kind of person. So why not I'll be the one to find a way for myself to maintain that kind of lifestyle. I have a friend who works in this company and referred me) (Mikaela, 2023).

She further discussed her viewpoints regarding her position as a content moderator, which revolved around her thoughts and opinions on how to survive and deal with the pressure.

[Uhhh] Daw wala man ko nabudlayan actually kay hapos lang gid sa ya. Hapos lang gid ya imo himuon kaso amo lang na, need mo lang i-analyze ang cases kag [pauses] may mga videos lang gid nga amuna eh nga maka affect simo pero ang nature gid sang work itself, if i-disregard ta bi ang mga emotional factors simo sang work or videos nga na encounter mo or if nature lang sang work, hapos lang

siya (Mikaela, 2023).

([Uhhh] It seems I haven't really found it challenging actually since it's easy.

Very easy to do but like that, you need to analyze the cases and [pauses] there are videos that can affect you but the nature of the work itself, if we disregard the emotional factors from the work or videos you encounter or the nature of work, it is just easy) (Mikaela, 2023).

She also added some words of advice for those who are interested and planning to be part of the company or be in content moderation. “If mentally ready sila and bisan indi sila mentally ready, actually pero kaya nila mag adjust and mag cope sa environment, yes. Kung gusto nila hapos nga work, while ga study, definitely yes. Kay damo kami students nga ga content mod.” *If they're mentally ready or even if they're not fully ready but can actually adjust and cope with the environment, yes. If they prefer an easy job while studying, definitely yes.” (Because there are many students who work as content moderators in the company.) (Mikaela, 2023).*

The participant ended the interview with testifying the sense of individuality and the importance of teamwork in the workplace to maintain the accepted pace and performance. “Oo. Kay indi tanan—indi tanan gid ya sa content mod nga mga upod ko nga kaya bala. Like for example, akon tupad ko, indi niya kaya maglantaw torture, gina tap niya ko, ako ang ga moderate para sa iya.” *(Yes. Since not everyone—not everyone in content moderator even my colleagues can handle those. Like for example, the one who's beside me can't watch torture videos, so they tap me, and I moderate those videos for them.) (Mikaela, 2023).*

Participant 4: Candy

The participant reflected on the potential impact of their role as a content moderator on their mental well-being. They recognized that exposure to distressing content, like videos depicting suicide, could be troubling, especially for those who were sensitive. Some individuals may have struggled with sleep or found it challenging to move past such content. However, the participant mentioned that their workplace offered support through counseling services, providing guidance to cope with the demands of the job. Despite acknowledging the potential difficulties, the participant personally felt capable of handling the content they encountered, considering the cases they addressed to be manageable and not excessively traumatic. This underscored the significance of mental resilience and access to supportive resources in managing the emotional toll of content moderation responsibilities.

Like sa amon since kay L2 (Level 2) sya—so ano gid, maka-affect gid bala sa mental health mo or what pero may mga possibility gid ya na kung for example bi, kung sensitive ka tapos may nakita ka nga ‘ay nag suicide sya’, ay daw amu na bala daw ang iban na mahambal sila nga indi sila katulog or—or hindi sila ka move-on sa mga certain videos. So, may ara man workplace counselor. For example bi nga naghatag to simo sang iban nga ideology. So, sila man na ga counsel sa imo pero sa akon daw okay lang man kay hindi man gid tam-an ka ano ang mga cases, ka traumatic kumbaga (Candy, 2023).

(Like on us since it's L2 (Level 2) —so, it can affect your mental health or what but there is really a possibility for example, if you're sensitive then you saw 'Oh he took his own life', like that. Others may say they can't sleep or—or they can't

move-on with those certain videos. So, there is a workplace counselor. For example it gives you a different ideology. So, they will still be the one who will counsel you but for me it is fine because the cases are not really that traumatic) (Candy, 2023).

The participant acknowledged the emotional strain of being a content moderator, particularly when exposed to distressing material such as videos depicting suicide. While some struggled to cope and experienced sleep disturbances or difficulty moving on, the participant found solace in the counseling services offered by their workplace. Despite the challenges, they felt capable of managing the content they encountered, viewing it as manageable and not excessively traumatic. This underscored the importance of having support systems in place to assist content moderators in navigating the emotional demands of their role.

Siguro ang amu to, ang certain person nga nag-live sya gulpi ya lang gin tiro iya nga kugalingon like una—una ko nga kita daw shocked gid ko eh. I was expecting nga wala sang may ga amuna abi ko daw sa movie lang na bala, gale sa real life may mga muna man nga cases (Candy, 2023).

(Maybe that certain person that was on live who shot itself like first—first time to see it and I was really shocked. I was expecting that nobody will do that and like it is just in the movie, but there are cases like that in real life) (Candy, 2023).

The participant felt that while the company itself was satisfactory, the training process was quite extensive and demanding. They described it as feeling lengthy due to the large amount of information, including numerous cases and tags, that needed to be memorized. Additionally, they stressed the importance of being highly attentive during

training, as even a small mistake could result in termination from the position. This underscored the rigorous nature of the training and the need for careful attention to detail in their role as a content moderator.

Like okay lang man ang company. Amu lang na galing sa training tam-an ka indi man gid lawig pero daw ka long—long ano bala, long term nga process kay ti syempre damu-damu kamo cases nga need saulohon like mga taggings tapos dapat ano kagid bala sipat gid mata mo kay gamay mo lang nga sala [uhmm] ano dayun ang ekis kagid dayun (Candy, 2023).

(The company is fine. It's just that the training feels not too lengthy but like a very long—long, long term process because there's a lot of cases needed to be memorized like the taggings then you really need to be attentive to your eyes since a small mistake [uhmm] you might be terminated) (Candy, 2023).

Participant 5: Natalie

The participant was noticeable for her meticulous and enthusiastic approach when it came to answering questions during the entirety of the interview. She possessed an ability to quickly respond to queries while ensuring the accuracy and precision of her answers. When inquired about her typical tasks as a content moderator, she explained that her primary responsibility entailed thoroughly examining videos and ensuring compliance with established policies.

[Uhhh] Ang amon nga task as a content moderator, bali ara i-check namon ang video then mangita kami kung—kay before kung ga training, kami na tudluan na kami nga daan kung sang mga policies. So, kung paano namon i-check ang video, kung ano ang ma-apply namon sa policies. So, we're train to check the video and

apply ang mga policies sang TikTok (Natalie, 2023).

([Uhhh] Our task as content moderator, we check the video and search for any— because before during our training, we were taught the policies beforehand. So, how we check the video, how we apply those policies. So, we're trained to check the video and apply the policies of TikTok) (Natalie, 2023).

The participant added that as a content moderator, there were various levels or stages that determined the level of graphic content in a video. Initially, an artificial intelligent system was responsible for evaluating whether a video adhered to the community standards. If the video failed to meet these standards, it was then passed on to the Round 1 (R1) Team to implement the appropriate policies and guidelines. However, if the video that didn't meet the community standards managed to spread and appear on users' TikTok feeds, it was then the responsibility of the Round 2 (R2) Team to filter it out. Essentially, the Round 2 Team did not constantly encounter extremely disturbing and graphic videos because the AI or Round 1 Team had already identified and filtered them out, and the particular participant, luckily, was a part of the R2 Team.

Actually [uhmm] kay sa content [uhmm] I mean sa work namon may gina tawag nga R1 (Round 1), R2 (Round 2). So sa R1, dira mostly ang gruesome nga video. So, naka assign ko daan sa R2, wala na gawa mga grabe gid nga videos. Pero so far, may videos nga sa R1 nga ga talang sa R2—so pero mostly gid ya mga videos. Mostly gid ya gina moderate namon is child pornography (Natalie, 2023).

(Actually [uhmm] since in content [uhmm] I mean in our work we have what we call R1 (Round 1) and R2 (Round 2). So in R1, it's mostly a gruesome video. So, I am assigned to R2, it's rare to encounter extremely severe videos. But so far,

there are videos in the R1 that mistakenly reach R2— so mostly those were the videos. Mostly we moderate are concerned with child pornography) (Natalie, 2023).

As a member of the Round 2 (R2) Team, she is responsible for reviewing and categorizing videos that are not as distressing or unsettling, allowing her to easily navigate through the content. However, one of the more disturbing aspects of her role in R2 (Round 2) is having to handle and report instances of child pornography. The sight of child pornography is so unbearable to her that she cannot bring herself to watch it to completion. It deeply disturbed her to think about the children who are forced into this deplorable industry either for financial gain or by manipulative individuals exploiting them for their own profit. She felt tremendous sympathy for these innocent victims who are robbed of their childhood and exploited in the most disturbing ways. “Huo, like minors gina exploit sila or muna ga uba-uba. Naluoy ko kay amu na at the young age, amun na gina ubra nila.” *(Yes, there are minors being exploited or just like that they’re being undressed. I feel pity because just like that at a young age, that’s what they do.) (Natalie, 2023).*

Video accidents, torture, and animal abuse are few examples of the disturbing videos she moderated as she elaborated. At the time that she moderated these types of videos made her hands shake and her heart race. Even after her shift was over and she went home, the images from these videos continued to play on a loop in her mind. It was a constant struggle to shake off the disturbing content she witnessed on a daily basis but her colleagues are a great help as they are there to entertain her. With the help of the people around her in the workplace, the workload becomes light.

Na luoy ko nga daw basta indi sya kanami sa feeling tapos daw biskan after sang shift, ga replay bala ang theme scenario sa imo nga head. Siguro during kung matan-aw ko sya daw ga kudog ang akun kamut, ga dasig ang akon heartbeat pero after sang shift syempre malingaw kana daw madula daw wala na ang physical nga ga kurog (Natalie, 2023).

(I feel pity like it's just not good for the feeling like even after the shift, the theme scenario replays in my head. I think while watching it like my hands are trembling, my heartbeat is going fast but after the shift of course you're being entertained like it'll disappear and the physical effect fades) (Natalie, 2023).

The participant was unable to let go of the disturbing videos, and she proceeded to compile a list of the three most impactful and unforgettable videos that, to this day, relentlessly occupied her thoughts and tormented her psyche.

Actually damo pero siguro may top 3—top 3 nga most disturbing nga na kita ko before. Bali first sikat ni siya kuno sa U.S. pero I'm sure kung nakita lang sang iban but ga-livestream ang lalaki then daw ga sugid siya ata sang mga problems, ga wakal-wakal siya then, indi [ah] lawig-lawig ang video like 10 minutes guro then ga live stream siya gulpi siya nag kwa sang shotgun gin tiro na, ging tiro nang ging tiro ya iya self sa head and then amo na biskan ging tiro niya na iya self, padayon gyapon ang live stream asta nag abot ang pulis, amu na ang sa crime scene—amu na ang pag stop sang livestream. And the second ang bata na bungguan sya sang truck and amu na nag lasug-lasog na iya itsura daw ka damak na iya itsura and then ang mother nag dalagan sya gin bitbit nya gyapon iya bata biskan tsura sang bata ya daw indi na manami and then ang third naman is ang

girl ga tupad sya and then gina sulod ang penis sang dog sa iya gina force isulod sa iya (Natalie, 2023).

(Actually a lot but I think there are top 3—top 3 that are the most disturbing ones I've seen before. The first is supposedly famous in the U.S. but I'm sure if others saw it, the man was live streaming, seemed to be talking about problems, looking distraught then [ah] the video wasn't long like maybe around 10 minutes and suddenly, while livestreaming, he grabbed a shotgun and shot himself repeatedly in the head. Even after shooting himself, the livestream continued until the police arrived, which ended the livestream at the crime scene. The second one involves a child being hit by a truck, resulting in severe injuries and its appearance was really gruesome and then the mother despite the child's terrible condition carried the child while running even though the child's face is disturbing and then the third one is about a girl who was beside a dog, and the dog's penis was forcibly inserted into her) (Natalie, 2023).

As she recounted the tale, a potent mix of fear and disgust overwhelmed her. She emphasized the importance of meticulously checking and viewing the disturbing videos in order to implement the appropriate measures because at the end of the day, what was in their scorecard was what really mattered, as per their Quality Analyst's standards and rules. The participant had held the position of a content moderator for a period of one year, during which she encountered a multitude of experiences that exposed her to distressing videos on a daily basis, eventually turning it into a regular occurrence in her life.

Sa kadugayon ko na-anad nalang ko nga daw normal nalang makita ko bata nga

gina bihak [laughs] normal nalang makakita ko sang naga gaka disgrasya daw na anad nalang ko time goes by. Huo daw nag numb nalang ko—daw naging part, so bali sa kadugayon daw wala nako labot daw—wala na ko gaka shock amu na (Natalie, 2023).

(In the long run it seems like I'm already used to it like it's normal for me to see a child that is being slaughtered to half [laughs] it's normal to see accidents like I'm already used to it as time goes by. "Yes like I got numb—I lost my care in the long run—I don't get shock anymore) (Natalie, 2023).

Engaging in the function and job responsibilities of a content moderator was extremely demanding and taxing on the well-being of employees. Consequently, the participant diligently sought out strategies to safeguard her mental, psychological, and physical health. One such approach she adopted was embracing a lifestyle that aligned harmoniously with her job, allowing her to effectively detach and distance herself from the existence of those distressing videos when she was not at work.

I think [while laughing] ang coping mechanisms bala sang ga work pako, kay lagaw gid ya like amu na kada day off, makwa ang sweldo, lagaw kung diin–diin muna everytime maka lagaw ko, maka pahuway akon eyes kay sometimes daan like outside work—mag call ko sa Facebook or TikTok, daw amu man dyapon makita ko, gaka disgrasya, so kung may time gid ko—galagaw ko para ‘di ko pagkamtan akon nga phone—di ko mag check sang phone kay sa boarding house man daan mapalso daw ma ano ka gid ya bala, ma-inganyo ka gid ya kay bored ka pero kung ara ka outside with your friends and family, amu na wala ka ga check sang imo nga phone. [Uhhh] Daku gid na help sang coping mechanisms sa akon.

For me daan as long as healthy imo nga coping mechanism, amu gid maka help gid sya sa imo (Natalie, 2023).

(I think [while laughing] the coping mechanisms while I'm still working, by strolling like that since it's day off, get the salary, stroll everywhere that's why everytime I entertain myself, I can rest my eyes since sometimes like outside work—if I make a call on Facebook or TikTok, like that's still what I see, accidents, so if I have time—I stroll so that I won't use my phone—I won't check my phone since at the boarding house I am still, I am really encouraged since you're bored but outside with your friends and family, that's why you don't have to check your phone. [Uhhh] This coping mechanism is a big help to me. To me, as long as your coping mechanism is healthy, that's what will help you) (Natalie, 2023).

Despite facing numerous challenges, she found the strength to persevere in her role as a content moderator thanks to the backing of her loved ones and her financial obligations. Throughout her journey, she cultivated valuable qualities that were essential to her job, such as ensuring the protection and well-being of social media users even beyond her work hours.

[Uhhh] Siguro mas naging ano na ko sa social media, naging mas aware and then siguro makita ko kis-a nga mga di manami nga videos sa social media—gina report ko na sya kay hambal ko ay hala daw disturbing ni gale kay daw na adapt ko ang batasan ko as a content moderator nga dapat di makita sang iban kay what if para sa iban disturbing sya tapos ako may makita ko nga graphic content sa Facebook, Instagram, amu na gina-report ko kay para ma-take down sya (Natalie,

2023).

([Uhhh] I think I became, more aware and then sometimes the unpleasant videos on social media—I report it since I said that oh my it's like this is disturbing since like I adapt the attitude of mine as a content moderator that others shouldn't see this because what if for others it's disturbing then for me if I see graphic content on Facebook, Instagram, that's why I report it for it to be taken down) (Natalie, 2023).

The experiences she acquired while working as a content moderator had a profound impact on her personal growth and development, ultimately transforming her into a better person and empowering her to offer support to those around her.

Additionally, she successfully overcame her anxiety when confronted with distressing video content.

Thematic Map

Figure No. 1 served as the thematic representation of the main and sub-themes of the study entitled "Rated SPG: "Filthy Sensual and Unfiltered" A Click for Viewing Pleasure: The Lived Experiences of TikTok Content Moderators." As the researchers gathered, transcribed, and analyzed their data, the study formed three (3) main themes.

The theme "Challenges in the Workplace" solely focused on the individual's job functions, the possible hazards of video contents, and how these contents affected their mental well-being. In essence, a content moderator's role lay in the nature of their work, which defined and shaped their identity as professionals in the field. This involved a detailed examination of their job duties, responsibilities, and the methods they employed to effectively carry out their tasks. An employee's function within an organization was

defined by the specific roles and responsibilities outlined in their job description. Below the Challenges in the Workplace, the sub-themes that emerged were: Nature of Work, Psychological Hazard, and Mental Trauma.

The second theme was "Coping Mechanisms," which solely focused on coping mechanisms. This theme served as a guiding approach or strategy employed to address both mental and physical aspects related to carrying out a specific procedure or task. Under this theme included four (4) sub-themes which were: Workplace Support Employee's Wellness, Colleague Support, Self-Care Routines and Financial Motivations.

Lastly, "Insights" solely focused on the insight about TikTok content moderators. All these themes were illustrated in Figure 1 below. Table 1 illustrated both the main and sub-themes.

Figure 1

Thematic Representation of Main Themes and Sub-themes

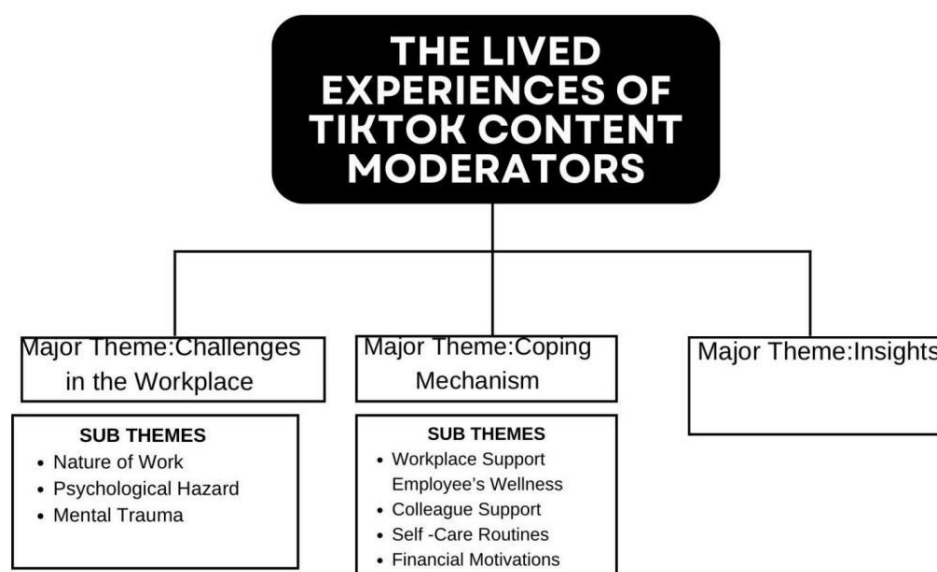


Table 1*Table of Main Themes and Sub-themes of Participants*

Major Themes	Sub-Themes
Challenges in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature of Work ● Psychological Hazard ● Mental Trauma
Coping Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workplace Support Employee's Wellness ● Colleague Support ● Self-Care Routines ● Financial Motivation

Insights

Thematic Analysis***Major Theme: Challenges in the Workplace***

The workplace served as the primary environment where a worker, in this case, a content moderator, spent most of their time performing their respective duties. Within the workplace, unexpected problems could arise at any time, creating feelings of unease and difficulties that impacted the performance and atmosphere of the workplace. These challenges encompassed any stressful, negative, or difficult situations or adversities encountered in the work environment. Anchored by the participants, several challenges in the workplace were generated from their interviews. Participants in face-to-face interviews openly shared the challenges they encountered at work, providing helpful details on the range of difficulties they faced in their respective fields. These challenges

could arise from various workplace factors, including coworkers, tasks, and occurrences involving an employee's mental health.

Zeinolabedini et al. (2022) stated that work-related stress occurred when employees felt overwhelmed by the demands and pressures of their job and challenging their abilities. These stressors could manifest in various forms, such as miscommunications, disagreements with colleagues, and job stagnation (SEEK, 2024). If workplace issues were not promptly addressed, they could escalate and negatively impact a worker's mental health. This resulted in three (3) sub-themes, which were: "Nature of Work", "Psychological Hazard", and "Mental Trauma". The major theme "Challenges in the Workplace" discussed the constructive view of the content moderators' difficulties and the possible impact from their workplace. Their experiences could be perceived as negative or positive depending on the personal perspective of the content moderator. Acknowledging the fact that it was solely dependent on the capacity of the person working as a content moderator to perform the task, which involved establishing responsible censorship in accordance with the company's policy, handling violent and traumatic content that was undoubtedly terrifying and challenging for an unexposed individual.

a. Nature of Work

The nature of the work of a content moderator entailed meticulously reviewing each video that came their way and ensuring that the appropriate policies were upheld for each specific video. This involved a thorough examination of the content to determine if it aligned with the guidelines set forth by the platform or organization they were working for. Additionally, they were responsible for making decisions on whether certain videos

should be removed or allowed to remain based on these policies. It was a critical role that required attention to detail and a deep understanding of the rules and regulations surrounding content moderation.

The essence of a content moderator's role lay in the nature of their work, which defined and shaped their identity as professionals in the field. This involved a detailed examination of their job duties, responsibilities, and the methods they employed to effectively carry out their tasks. An employee's function within an organization was defined by the specific roles and responsibilities outlined in their job description. Essentially, job descriptions served as a blueprint for how an individual contributed to the overall success of the company and how their work fit into the larger organizational structure (Bhayani, 2023). The content moderators were assigned to various roles within the content moderating job based on their individual skill sets. Just having a skill meant that they understood how to do something, the concept behind it, and how to derive positive results. The job role defined one's competency to take that skill and put it to use in different cases (Talent Guard, 2024).

This was seen in how content moderators interpreted the different policies to be certain of their job. Quality standards were set forth as principles for how a company managed the specifications of their services. According to Davidson (2023), businesses implemented quality standards to ensure that the level of quality met expectations, was suitable for its intended purpose, and ultimately led to customer satisfaction. In this portion, the participants discussed how important it was to uphold the company's own quality standards in order to have a positive outlook at work.

Both R1 (Round 1) and R2 (Round 2) were responsible for completing the task at

hand, but the main difference lay in the type of videos they needed to watch and filter. In this study, participants focused on their personal understanding of how they handled such unwanted circumstances in the workplace in accordance with the quality standards of the company. Here, one of the participants explained how she responded quickly to undesirable conditions while accomplishing her tasks. According to this participant, they were somehow unable to quickly and clearly catch up with certain foreign languages. They needed to absorb every detail as quickly as possible given the various accents of languages to avoid making errors.

[Hmm] May ara daan cases or videos nga daw budlay bala [uhmm] inchindihon [uhmm] budlay inchindihon ang paghambal bala sang mga U.S. pa gid nga mga ano—wala ko kabalo if its under sisner mga budding statement daw kabudlay bala [uhmm] may ara siya nga ano multiple interpretations nga mga ano mga language. So, amuna kis-a gina-pass mo lang ang video kay abi mo wala na kay gale may meaning na to—so masala ka na sa Q'A (Quality Analyst) so bale amuna (Kat, 2023).

([Hmm] There are these cases or videos that are difficult [uhmm] to understand [uhmm] it's hard to understand how they speak in the U.S.—I don't know if it's under sisner, budding statement that is difficult [uhmm] it has something like multiple language interpretations. So, that's why sometimes you just skip the video because thinking it's just nothing, however it has meaning behind it—so this is tagged as a mistake by a Q'A (Quality Analyst), basically that's it) (Kat, 2023).

Oo—ay indi ah! Una is AI tapos may round 1 tapos round 2 kami. Daw pinaka last na nga ano—pero gaguwa gyapon sa amon pero once nga ma

ano nana, ma-moderate ano na siya dayon ng indi na siya magguwa sa TikTok nga ano mga videos bala (Kat, 2023).

(Yes—oh not like that! First is AI (artificial intelligence) then there is round 1, then round 2 is us. We are gonna be the last to moderate it—however, it still appears but once that is being completely moderated, those videos are not gonna show on TikTok.) (Kat, 2023).

Actually [uhmm] kay sa content [uhmm] I mean sa work namon may gina tawag nga R1(Round 1), R2(Round 2). So sa R1, dira mostly ang gruesome nga video. So, naka assign ko daan sa R2, wala na gawa mga grabe gid nga videos. Pero so far, may videos nga sa R1 nga ga talang sa R2—so pero mostly gid ya mga videos. Mostly gid ya gina moderate namon is child pornography (Natalie, 2023).

(Actually [uhmm] since in content [uhmm] I mean in our work we have what we call R1 (Round 1) and R2 (Round 2). So in R1, it's mostly a gruesome video. So, I am assigned to R2, it's rare to encounter extremely severe videos. But so far, there are videos in the R1 that mistakenly reach R2— so mostly those were the videos. Mostly we moderate are related to child pornography) (Natalie, 2023).

The performance of employees was essential for the organization to reach its goals. Another participant, emphasized her concern about the difference between understanding certain policies among several handlers in which she attempted to adjust

within the sudden shift of interpretation of policies while preserving a good level of performance and maintaining the required quality of her work. She also highlighted that in relation to her work, she believed that it was currently easier compared to before, considering that there was a presence of their head that provided reliable and a good amount of assistance that made everything at work able to handle smoothly. Saleem et al. (2022) stated that elements like the support from supervisors and employees' belief in their own abilities were very important. Specifically, the support from supervisors was vital in establishing a positive work environment. The support provided by supervisors affected how employees felt about the organization and could forecast how effective the organization would be (Basaad & Basahal, 2023).

Siguro ang lain-lain policies [uhmm] kay may ara kami nga mga certain policies nga gina liwat-liwat and syempre, ang adjustment guro namon is naglain nga lahi. Amon nga client kasi before is L.A. (Los Angeles) Q'A (Quality Analyst), subong Indian. So, ga adjust gid kami sa mga Indiano kay du medyo indi kami same way of thinking and mag interpret policy. So, medyo dira kami na cha-challenge recently pero somehow, tungod sa amon mga Q'As (Quality Analysts) and TMs, so medyo na co-cope man namon (Mikaela, 2023).

(Perhaps the various policies [uhmm] since we have certain policies over and over again and of course, our adjustment based on (a client) different race . Our client used to be in L.A. (Los Angeles) Q'A (Quality Analyst), but now it's Indian. So, we're really adjusting to the Indian because we have slightly different ways of thinking and to interpret policy. So, that's where we're being challenged recently but somehow, with our Q'As (Quality Analysts) and TMs, we're managing to

cope with it) (Mikaela, 2023).

Continuous training, learning, and development programs were integrated into the organization to enhance the skills, capabilities, and adaptability of its workforce (Adefowora, 2020). Training was crucial for achieving the organization's objectives and served the employer's interests. One of the participants composed a realization of the process of her training as she was not in favor of the long procedure. Aside from that, the long training also required an outstanding need for an amount of knowledge to memorize certain important principles at work such as taggings, in order to tag duties appropriately. This participant additionally indicated that it had to do with the level of quality of the company they handled. Any failure to perform the accepted level of performance could absolutely affect the reputation of the worker, which could lead to an unfortunate termination. Managers had to keep up high levels of accuracy and work at a fast pace to meet the job standards (Spence et al., 2023). This could add to their stress on top of the stress they might feel just from looking at the content.

Like okay lang man ang company. Amu lang na galing sa training tam-an ka indi man gid lawig pero daw ka long—long ano bala, long term nga process kay ti syempre damu-damu kamo cases nga need saulohon like mga taggings tapos dapat ano kagid bala sipat gid mata mo kay gamay mo lang nga sala [uhmm] ano dayun ang ekis kagid dayun (Candy, 2023).

(The company is fine. It's just that the training feels not too lengthy but like a very long—long, long term process because there's a lot of cases needed to be memorized like the taggings then you really need to be attentive to your eyes since a small mistake [uhmm] you might be terminated (Candy, 2023).

Sang first week guro sang training namon daw ma-give up nako tani kay diba [uhmm] sang first week sang training daw gina discuss ang lain-lain nga policies and kung ano mga sub policies sang ging tackle namon ang VGC (Violent Graphic Content) daw ma-give up nakita kay una daw di ko kaya everyday amu nalang ni tan-awun ko pero naka-adjust man ko bi sa kadugayon kay biskan sa training palang gina-anad kana nila nga maka lantaw sang mga damak nga videos (Natalie, 2023).

(On the first week of my training I think I'm about to give up since [uhmm] on the first week of my training like the different policies are being discussed and what are the sub policies of what is being tackle by us the VGC (Violent Graphic Content) like I'll about to give up when I see it since at the start I can't handle it everyday that's what I only watch but I already adjusted in the long run since even on the training they condition us to watch unpleasant videos) (Natalie, 2023).

The participant pointed out the importance of satisfaction by assuring that the classifying of videos must be taken with carefulness in order to assure that everything was in compliance with the company guidelines and policies. As she mentioned, a single mistake might bring a negative outcome to the company and to the workers. In that sense, maintaining the company's high standards was a must and crucial to her. “Like syempre ang quality sang company bala, like dira ga base kung daw target ya na bala. Example, maka 100% gid kamo wala gid dapat kamu sala— kay ti may possibility ang team nyo gaan sang sanction or what.” *(That is the basis of the quality of the company, it's their*

target. Example, all of you should hit 100% without any mistakes—because if you fail, there's a possibility that the team may be given a sanction or what.) (Candy, 2023).

LinkedIn (2024) stated that employees were the ones who carried out the operations and duties involved in producing and building satisfaction for customers. Their involvement was essential in reaching quality targets and goals. In order to keep clients committed and encourage them to make more expenditures in the future, quality was necessary and made by the employees (Study Smarter, 2024). This guaranteed that assessments about content moderation were implemented uniformly across various content types, platforms, and moderators. Standards aided moderators in precisely determining if information met accepted standards, ensuring that objectionable or dangerous content was appropriately identified and dealt with. Simply put, standards were the best practices that had been tried and tested for the company. Experts with the reliable knowledge necessary to build best practices established them (BSI Knowledge, 2021).

Ang videos biskan ano sya ka damak, need mo gid tan awun kay kung ma-missed ka biskan isa ka pares, bali daan mag moderate ka tanan nga applicable nga policies i-butang mo gid sya pero like for example, nag subra ka sang policy or nag kulang ka sang gin apply nga policy ma-error na sya, madakpan ka sang Q'A (Quality Analyst) amu na ma-affect sya sa imo nga scorecard. So dapat tan-awun mo gid sya para mabutang mo ang mga sakto nga nga policy (Natalie, 2023).

(No matter how disturbing the videos are, you really need to watch them because if you miss even one pair, you need to moderate all applicable policies you need to put it but like for example, if you exceed or fall short in applying the policies, it

will be marked as an error by the Q'A (Quality Analyst) affecting your scorecard. So, you really have to watch them to apply the correct policy) (Natalie, 2023).

Siguro ang challenge gid is ang ano—oras sang shift kay ano na daan sya night bala diba. Ang content moderation ya hindi kumo Sunday or Saturday wala duty since nga kay weekends like content moderating is 24/7. So, amo gid na siguro ang night nga shift daw kabudlay even though nga kahapos sang ubra pero budlay sang time (Candy, 2023).

(Perhaps the challenge is the—time of shift because they're usually at night, right? The content moderation isn't like Sundays or Saturdays have no duties since during weekends because content moderation happens 24/7. So, perhaps the night shift is difficult even though the work is easy but it's difficult for the time) (Candy, 2023).

a. Psychological Hazard

In a general sense, psychological hazards are elements of the work environment and its organization linked with mental disorders and/or illness. Psychological hazards are specific to mental health and are not observable to the naked eye. These cover topics pertaining to mental health in the workplace, such as emerging dangers and their associated concerns (SciSpace, 2023). Mental hazards, for instance, are dangerous instances where participants encounter graphic and explicit content from time to time during their work, which could lead to feelings of unease and discomfort. Also, these psychological hazards are likely to be present in employees in different combinations of psychosocial dangers. This may contribute to job demands encompassing the workload, deadlines, and level of responsibility required for the job and traumatic events or contents

such as encountering violence, accidents, or other distressing events, as well as exposure to disturbing materials (Wyatt, 2023). At work, particular hazards may constantly exist while others may only happen intermittently.

Here, participants discussed circumstances and experiences they had that might have contributed to or been identified as psychological hazards for them at work. One of the participants revealed the time she witnessed a video of someone shooting him or herself during a live video. The participant also mentioned that she was surprised by the incident because she had assumed that the videos would be parts of movie scenes and not real-life events. However, after seeing such content, she realized that those kinds of videos will most likely happen in real life. “Like ga-live sya nga ging tiro ya iya kugalingon mga muna.” (*Like he is on a live and shot himself like that.*) (Candy, 2023).

Siguro ang amu to, ang certain person nga nag-live sya gulpi ya lang gin tiro iya nga kugalingon like una—una ko nga kita daw shocked gid ko eh. I was expecting nga wala sang may ga amuna abi ko daw sa movie lang na bala, gale sa real life may mga muna man nga cases (Candy, 2023).

(Maybe that certain person that was on live who shot itself like first—first time to see it and I was really shocked. I was expecting that nobody will do that and like it is just in the movie, but there are cases like that in real life) (Candy, 2023).

Another participant shared how watching such unpleasant videos would make her hands tremble and her heart racing.

Siguro during kung matan-aw ko sya daw ga kudog ang akun kamut, ga dasig ang akon heartbeat pero after sang shift syempre malingaw kana daw madula daw wala na ang physical nga ga kurog (Natalie, 2023).

(I think while watching it like my hands are trembling, my heartbeat is going fast but after the shift of course you're being entertained like it'll disappear and the physical effect fades) (Natalie, 2023).

The same participant additionally talked about the top three (3) unsettling videos she encountered. The first is a well-known incident in the United States where a guy aired his troubles live before grabbing a shotgun and taking his own life. As soon as police officials showed up at the crime scene, the live coverage quickly ended. The second incident involved a kid and a truck, with the child suffering serious injuries as a result of the truck's impact. Despite the infant's terrible appearance as a result of the injuries, the mother made an effort to have hope that her child might be saved. The last video involved a girl and a dog in which the girl inserted the dog's penis inside of her.

Actually damo pero siguro may top 3—top 3 nga most disturbing nga na kita ko before. Bali first sikat ni siya kuno sa U.S. (United States) pero I'm sure kung nakita lang sang iban but ga-livestream ang lalaki then daw ga sugid siya ata sang mga problems, ga wikal-wikal siya then, indi [ah] lawig-lawig ang video like 10 minutes guro then ga live stream siya gulpi siya nag kwa sang shotgun gin tiro na, ging tiro nang ging tiro ya iya self sa head and then amo na biskan ging tiro niya na iya self, padayon gyapon ang live stream asta nag abot ang pulis, amu na ang sa crime scene—amu na ang pag stop sang livestream. And the second ang bata na bungguan sya sang truck and amu na nag lasug-lasog na iya itsura daw ka damak na iya itsura and then ang mother nag dalagan sya gin bitbit nya gyapon iya bata biskan tsura sang bata ya daw indi na manami and then ang third naman is ang girl ga tupad sya and then gina sulod ang penis sang dog sa iya gina force

isulod sa iya (Natalie, 2023).

(Actually a lot but I think there are top 3 —top 3 that are the most disturbing ones I've seen before. The first is supposedly famous in the U.S. (United States) but I'm sure if others saw it, the man was live streaming, seemed to be talking about problems, looking distraught then [ah] the video wasn't long like maybe around 10 minutes and suddenly, while livestreaming, he grabbed a shotgun and shot himself repeatedly in the head. Even after shooting himself, the livestream continued until the police arrived, which ended the livestream at the crime scene. The second one involves a child being hit by a truck, resulting in severe injuries and its appearance was really gruesome and then the mother despite the child's terrible condition carried the child while running even though the child's face is disturbing and then the third one is about a girl who was beside a dog, and the dog's penis was forcibly inserted into her) (Natalie, 2023).

A particular participant pointed out seeing videos of people torturing or killing themselves, which were disturbing. She said that's where a feeling or certain emotion may arise that can't be distinguished between her personal life and her role as a content moderator. The participant also addressed the fact that, while watching porn and other related content can obviously be ignored, but processing videos about suicide or torture is challenging because it generates strong emotions.

[Uhhh] Siguro [uhmm] pina [uhmm] mga devastating type of videos, suicide [uhmm] amuna guro ang isa sa mga video nga like du may ma-feel ka gid nga emotion nga indi mo kaya i-separate imo nga pagiging ikaw, and sa pagiging content moderator, if I see videos [uhmm] gina torture and suicide. Kay if mga

porn siya and other stuffs, kaya mo siya ya i-disregard mo—ang emotion pero when it comes sa mga suicide and [uhmm] mga torture so dira gid (Mikaela, 2023).

([Uhmm] Maybe [uhmm] the [uhmm] devastating type of videos, suicide [uhmm] like that maybe one of the video that you'll feel emotion that you can't separate yourself, and being a content moderator, if I see videos [uhmm] torturing and suicide. Since if it is porn and other stuffs, you can disregard it—the emotion but when it comes on suicide and [uhmm] especially torture) (Mikaela, 2023).

A participant additionally brought up the potential mental hazards associated with watching videos of torture, particularly those including beheadings. “[Uhmm] Sa torture siguro ara bala gina ano—gina bulot bala liog, nan amo siya.” *([Uhmm] In torture maybe there are—beheadings, like that.) (Hannah, 2023).* According to Innodata (2022), some content moderators are required to review hundreds of similar posts every day, week after week. This can lead to psychological harm that may linger long after they stop this job. Steiger et al. (2021) stated that although moderation work is commonly seen as unpleasant, there is now acknowledgment that frequent and prolonged exposure to certain content, combined with inadequate workplace support, can greatly affect the mental well-being of human moderators. In addition to the ongoing risk of exposure, moderators must also navigate interactions with management and platform users.

b. Mental Trauma

Psychological trauma can lead to ongoing struggles with disturbing emotions, memories, and anxiety that persist. However, in the workplace, work-related mental trauma remains a possibility. Workplace trauma happens when employees undergo a

traumatic experience while at work. This could be a singular event, such as a workplace accident, or it could be ongoing stressors. Mentioned by Brooks et al. (2019), literature on the mental health of those who work in positions where trauma is frequently experienced, these persons are significantly more likely to experience psychological issues. Mental trauma, for instance, exposure to unwanted and graphic contents that affected the moral beliefs, and well-being of a person. That can result in nightmares and flashbacks afterward. As for the content moderators, they be obliged to see images of child sexual assault and violence in addition to less explicit but nonetheless offensive material that shows prejudice, cruelty, and degrading treatment of others. Regular exposure to disturbing internet content poses psychological issues for moderators, which have been demonstrated to negatively impact their well-being in multiple survey research (Matias & Nathan, 2024). Content moderators claim to feel depressed, anxious, having nightmares, being exhausted, and having panic attacks. Their relationships and physical health are also impacted (Spence et al., 2023).

In this area participants discussed their experiences at work that accumulated and/or contributed to the forming of their mental trauma. This mental trauma affects their comfort and productivity at work. For instance, one of the participants shared her awful experience at work as she was able to witness animal cruelty, and as she defined that as an animal lover it is hard for her to digest that graphic content, and tolerate the insanity of the video that she suspected somewhere in China.

Syempre hilig ko daan sa animals. Kung makita ko muna nga gina sakit nga animals na ano ko—na luoy and I find it disturbing kay sometimes muna mag puli ko may ara ako daan na kita before nga ang ido sa China to guro kay daw Chinese

ila nga language pero amu na katay ang ido, gin butang sya sa daku nga pot nga daw gin pabukalan, muna daw kalain sa ano—there are times pa nga madamguhan iban nga mga videos nga ma-moderate ko sa TikTok [ah] sa amun nga work (Natalie, 2023).

(Of course, I have a soft spot for animals. If I see animals being harmed I feel—I pity them and I find it disturbing since sometimes when I go home I recall seeing an incident before where a dog from China because it seemed like their language was Chinese, was treated terribly. They placed the dog in a large pot, seemingly boiling it, which was really upsetting—there are times when I dream about other videos I moderated on TikTok [ah] in our work) (Natalie, 2023).

After seeing that video, the participant suffered a form of mental trauma that resulted in flashbacks caused by the memory of the video that remains in her mind that even haunts her after her shift and also terrifies her well-being. “Na luoy ko nga daw basta indi sya kanami sa feeling tapos daw biskan after sang shift, ga replay bala ang theme scenario sa imo nga head.” *(I feel pity like it’s just not good for the feeling like even after the shift, the theme scenario replays in my head.) (Natalie, 2023).*

Another participant, emphasized that it is not easy for a person like her to watch and handle those videos that contain torture. “Sometimes like especially if bag-o mo lang tan-aw ang video tapos pila ka day madumduman mo sya and the artis ka matulog daw ga replay ang scene sa imo nga head.” *(Sometimes, especially if you recently watched it, then after a few days you’ll remember it and then when you sleep the scene will replay in your head.) (Natalie, 2023).* As this affects the moral beliefs and mental well-being as a person. Despite these unfortunate work related experiences that brought terror on them.

“Daw indi mo bala ma-basta, daw kalaw-ay—daw kalaw-ay sa feeling ‘di ko ma-explain. Basta indi ka bala sanay sa amuna nga magtan-aw sang mga videos nga mga ano—nga mga like torture.” *(It’s like you cannot,—like it really doesn’t feel good. I cannot even explain it. Since you are not used in watching those videos—about torture.) (Kat, 2023).* They are able to surpass and regulate the stress of their work as they get used to it as time runs. They also established a mindset of separating their work from their outside life. “Sakto kay before ma-depart ako ma-content moderator, amu ko nakita nga mga videos or mga picture sang mga disgrasya na, kulbaan gid ko ya, ga kudog ang akon nga kamot, wala na ko ga open Facebook one week.” *(Right before I depart as content moderator, that’s what I see on videos or pictures of accidents, I am really frightened, my hands feel tremors, I don’t open Facebook for one week.) (Natalie, 2023).*

Siguro ang challenge, ang naging challenge ko gid during my work as a content moderator kung pano ko—ko sya [uhmm] di ko sya madala outside of work like ang mga makita ko nga hindi sya maka apekto sa daily ko nga sa outside sang work ko nga, hindi gid sya maka apekto sa akon mentally and emotionally (Natalie, 2023).

(I think the challenge, the challenge during my work as a content moderator is how I—I [uhmm] can’t bring outside of work like what I see that won’t affect on my daily basis outside of my work it won’t really affect mentally and emotionally) (Natalie, 2023).

End Violence Against Children (2022) stated that content moderation is a challenging role, with high turnover rates as most employees leave within a year. The nature of their work can create a demanding environment, affecting both their

professional performance and personal lives (Gupta, 2024). Continual exposure to disturbing content can greatly harm the mental health of human moderators. The exposure to such material adversely affects their mental well-being, resulting in conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). According to Chen (2019), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) stems from experiencing or witnessing a terrifying event, with symptoms such as acute anxiety, flashbacks, and intrusive thoughts. While PTSD is commonly associated with war or direct involvement in a crisis, there is increasing recognition that repeatedly witnessing traumatic events could also lead to the condition. It's crucial to recognize the toll on participants' well-being and daily lives when they are exposed to graphic and explicit video content like this.

Major Theme: Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms in the workplace of content moderators are vital for managing the unique stressors and challenges they face on a daily basis. Content moderators are regularly exposed to disturbing and potentially traumatic material, including graphic violence, hate speech, and explicit content, which can take a toll on their mental and emotional well-being. To cope with these challenges, content moderators often employ various coping mechanisms. Roberts (2020) offered a thorough investigation of the hidden world of content control. The writer illuminated the mental strains experienced by content moderators and investigated the ways in which they employed coping strategies to deal with the upsetting material they came across (Roberts, 2020). Emotion regulation (ER) typically denoted an individual's capacity to control and adjust their reactions to emotional situations. How individuals manage their emotions impacts their mental health

and overall performance (Chang et al., 2023). Spence et al. (2023) also stated that moderators undertook emotional labor by managing their own emotions when exposed to such content, as well as during interactions with users as they endeavored to represent the platform professionally.

This study shed light on the unseen difficulties moderators encountered and emphasized the significance of comprehending their coping strategies for handling the psychological effects of their job. Gillespie and Boczkowski (2019) provided insightful information about the challenges faced by content moderators, including the psychological fallout and coping measures such as defense mechanisms. This major theme consisted of four (4) sub-themes which were: “Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness”, “Colleague Support”, “Self Care Routines”, and “Financial Motivations”.

a. Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness

Mental health was about how we felt, thought, and handled life's challenges. It was about our emotions, thoughts, and how we related to others. When our mental health was in good shape, we were better equipped to handle stress, maintain healthy relationships, and make positive decisions. Furthermore, mental health in the workplace specified the psychological well-being of employees within their work environment. This sub-theme involved how individuals felt about their work, how they coped with workplace stressors, and how their mental well-being was supported by the organization. In this sub-theme three (3) out of five participants shared insights on how the wellness program provided by their respective companies significantly aided them in coping with the demands of their work as content moderators.

The content contained unforeseen and surprising aspects, often leading to

repeated and extended exposure to material that could potentially be traumatic (Zevo Health, 2020). Steiger et al. (2021) stated that although it was common to anticipate that moderation tasks may not be enjoyable, there was growing recognition that continued exposure to specific content, combined with insufficient support in the workplace, could significantly impact the mental well-being of human moderators. A participant interpreted the idea of mental health in the workplace as to how the company handled their psychological well-being. In line with the unpleasant contents they were working with, she expanded on the idea that their company offered an everyday wellness program, which provided a designated period to relieve the tension from the mentally disturbing videos for that specific day.

Ang nami lang bi is may ara kami everyday wellness. So, may ara kami nga mga work counsellor mismo. If may ara kami videos and daw bothered kami and kumbaga affected gid kami mentally, pwede kami ka tap sa amon nga work counsellors. Pwede kami nila i-pull out, pwede kami maka talk sa ila if ever amuna. Pero everyday we are provided either 15 mins wellness break, 1 hour wellness break, or 30 mins wellness break. Nakadepende siya kay workforce if pila ka wellness break if [uhmm] how long is your wellness break sa muna nga day, pero usually may duwa ka ka 15 mins sa isa ka week, may duwa ka ka 30 mins sa isa ka week, and may ara ka isa ka 1 hour sa isa ka week (Mikaela, 2023).

(So what's great is that we have everyday wellness. So, we have a work counselor. If we have videos and if we're bothered and like we're really affected mentally, we can tap on our work counselors. We can be pulled out, we can talk to them if ever like that. But everyday we are provided either 15 mins wellness break, 1 hour

wellness break, or 30 mins wellness break. It depends on our workforce if how many wellness breaks if [uhmm] how long is your wellness break for that day, but usually we have two 15 mins in a week, there are two 30 mins in a week, and we have one 1 hour in a week) (Mikaela, 2023).

Similar to the idea of the previous participant, her company implemented a wellness program that includes designated wellness breaks for its employees. During these breaks, moderators have access to a workplace counselor who provides a confidential and supportive environment for discussing and addressing work-related challenges. For instance, a so-called “workplace counselor” was responsible for providing emotional support and mental aid to reduce the impact of violent content on the worker if needed. Gani & Roel (2022) mentioned that psychological counseling assisted employees in handling their emotions, decreasing stress, and enhancing their mental health. It offered a confidential environment where employees could discuss their concerns and find solutions with HR.

Oo, tapos may ano kami may wellness nga tagaan kami wellness didto sa company bala mo 30 mins kis-a 1 hour tapos ang may gina-talk kami na nga WOCO (Workplace Counsellor) bala something amuna tapos ginahambal namon mga problema namon about sa ano nga na (Kat, 2023).

(Yes, then we have wellness that is given in the company for 30 minutes, sometimes 1 hour. With that, we get to talk with a WOCO (Workplace Counsellor) something like that then we will voice out our problems about it) (Kat, 2023).

Another participant noted that within the workplace there’s an efficient method for catching up on tasks or updates, ensuring that communication flows smoothly.

Additionally, there's someone available whom they can readily confide. "Yeah [hmm] I forgot the term, pero duwa kabilog like may ara nga fast lang—kamustahanay with the ano namon and may ara man nga if you have problems and you need someone to talk to may ara nga available." (*Yeah [hmm] I forgot the term, but it's both like there's fast—quick catch-up with and there's also someone available if you have problems and need someone to talk to.*) (Hannah, 2023). With the assistance and guidance of a work counselor, they were able to avail themselves of this self-care and well-being protection program provided by the company. Throughout life, everyone faced challenges, yet there existed numerous complex issues to comprehend. Addressing these challenges necessitated employing various essential strategies; offering assistance was known as counseling, constituting the entire process (Din et al., 2021). Counseling was a crucial service that aided individuals in striving to achieve personal fulfillment. Workplace counseling was an emerging area within the business field, offering promising solutions to many employee issues encountered in the workplace.

According to the World Health Organization (2022), nearly 60% of people worldwide were employed, and 15% of persons in the working age group had a mental health condition. Every employee had the right to work in a secure and healthful environment (WHO, 2024). Signorini et al. (2022) stated that the way an employee interacted at their workspace was crucial. People's productivity and, more importantly, well-being were greatly impacted by their work environment. Mental health issues at work could be avoided. Additionally, a lot could be done to protect and improve mental health at work and enable those with mental health issues to engage thoroughly and fairly in the workforce (WHO, 2022). Kelloway et al. (2022) mentioned that although there

were differences in the definitions and descriptions of each state on the mental health continuum, the general idea remained the same: at any given moment, individuals could be in one of three states: positive mental health, in which they were generally content and happy with their lives; mental health problems, in which they faced some distress and found it difficult to cope but were still able to go about their daily lives; or mental illness, or disordered mental health, in which they were unable to cope and experienced crippling distress that significantly affected daily life functions.

b. Colleague Support

Colleague support is crucial for content moderators in coping with the demands of their work. Through emotional support, colleagues provide a safe space for content moderators to share their experiences, vent their frustrations, and receive empathy and understanding. This support helps content moderators feel less isolated and more resilient in managing the challenging content they encounter. Additionally, colleagues offer practical assistance by sharing strategies for workload management, providing feedback on content, and offering guidance on navigating complex cases. This theme highlighted the supportive role of peer relationships in fostering resilience and managing the psychological toll of the job.

The significance of confiding in coworkers as a means to seek solace and mitigate the emotional impact of disturbing content was emphasized. Venting to colleagues was portrayed as a valuable strategy for coping with the challenges inherent in content moderation and maintaining emotional well-being. Fiaz and Qureshi (2023) stated that employees considered the interactions they had at work as a critical aspect of organizational life. Employees within and across departments were connected via

relationships within an organization to fulfill its goals. When individuals had positive relationships at work, they were more engaged and committed to their jobs, and they also felt fewer pressures. According to one of the participants, her work as content moderator is undeniably challenging and she finds herself susceptible to being deeply affected by the distressing content encountered daily.

[Uhhh] Through sa amon nga mga Q'As, kay every time may mga questions kami, gina-cater gid nila. Every time may mga confusions kami sa policies dabi, gina-try man nila pa-inchindi samon and we were given ano [uhmm] 1 hour before the shift, I mean 1 hour before kami mag-start moderation, may ara gid kami calibration with our Q'A para aligned kami sa mga new policies and mga updated nga mga ano—answers sang mga client namon with regards man sa mga questions namon if may mga confusions man kami (Mikaela, 2023).

([Uhhh] Through our Q'As, since every time we have questions, they really cater to us. Every time we have confusion about the policies, they try to help us understand and we were given [uhmm] 1 hour before the shift, I mean, 1 hour before we start moderation, we have calibration with our Q'A to align ourselves with the new policies and updated on—answers to our client with regards to our questions if we have any confusion) (Mikaela, 2023).

But through her colleagues it helps her alleviate the emotional burden of the job but also fosters a sense of solidarity and teamwork, making the challenges more manageable and the work more fulfilling. “[Hmm] [Uhhh] Very challenging siya kay dali ako maapektuhan but because of people sa work [uhmm] I get to enjoy as a content moderator.” *([Hmm] [Uhhh] It is very challenging since I easily get affected but*

because of my colleagues at work [uhmm] I get to enjoy being a content moderator.)
(Hannah, 2023).

Another participant, she highlighted the importance of receiving support and clarification from her peers, particularly when they addressed her questions during Q&A sessions. This underscored the significance of seeking guidance and sharing concerns with colleagues as a valuable means of managing stress and maintaining psychological well-being in the workplace. Koopmann et al. (2020) investigated the mechanisms behind the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior, which includes helping colleagues, and a person's chances of progressing within the company. One of the participants highlighted that one of her coping mechanisms as a content moderator involves actively sharing her challenges and concerns with her colleagues rather than keeping them bottled up inside. “Huo. Tapos gina-share gid sa colleague, like daw wala ko ya gina sarili [interrupted].” *(Yes. Then I share it with colleagues, like I’m not keeping it all to myself [interrupted].)* (Candy, 2023).

Zhang and Jiang (2021) investigated how organizational support, self-efficacy, and social support influenced the mental health of content moderators in their study published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*. They found that colleague support, considered within the broader framework of social support, played a crucial role in moderating the mental well-being of content moderators. Their research shed light on the importance of understanding and enhancing support systems, including the support received from colleagues, to better address the mental health challenges faced by content moderators.

c. Self-Care Routines

Self-care routines play a crucial role in helping content moderators cope with the demands of their work. By prioritizing self-care, content moderators can effectively manage the emotional toll of repeatedly encountering distressing content. Engaging in self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, or spending time on hobbies allows them to decompress and recharge after intense moderation sessions. These routines provide a much-needed break from the challenging aspects of the job, helping content moderators maintain a healthy work-life balance and prevent burnout. Additionally, self-care practices promote mental and emotional well-being, enabling content moderators to approach their work with greater clarity, focus, and resilience. By investing time and energy in their own well-being, content moderators can enhance their ability to navigate the stresses of their role and sustain their performance over the long term.

The conscious and proactive practice of taking care of one's physical, emotional, and mental well-being is known as self-care. It includes a variety of practices, routines, and actions people take to maintain and improve their health and vitality. Self-care involves being aware of one's own needs and acting to fulfill them, whether that be by getting enough sleep, relaxing, eating well, exercising, enlisting the help of others, establishing boundaries, being thoughtful, or doing things that make one happy and fulfilled. One of the participants shared that they still watch lighthearted content available on TikTok, to clear their minds and alleviate the mental strain incurred from exposure to various types of videos. This coping mechanism involves using the platform not only as a professional duty but also as a personal means of relaxation and mental reset. “Actually, gatan-aw man ko gihapon TikTok videos didto mo. Ang mga satisfying videos daw ga

amo ko na [laughs] para lang ma-clear lang dayon mind ko.” *(Actually, I still watch TikTok videos. Those satisfying videos like that [laughs] just so it can clear my mind.)* (Kat, 2023).

Another participant recalled how, when feeling stressed in the past, they would seek comfort in walking, particularly in the Esplanade area. Now, as a content moderator, they have adapted this habit. When they experience a sense of heaviness or emotional burden, unrelated to interpersonal issues at work, they utilize their lunch break as an opportunity for a therapeutic walk. They described a specific route, walking from their building to Festive Walk and then returning. This routine allows them to physically distance themselves from their work environment and offers a period of mental respite.

Like even before ko pa sya ni na ubra is whenever I’m stress like ga lakat, like walking—before ga walking sa Esplanade. So, now like if feeling ko daw like wala problema sa mga tawo sa work, I just feel heavy lang gid ko ya. What I do is during lunch break ga walk ako from our building going to Festive Walk balik naman dayon (Hannah, 2023).

(Like even before I do this whenever I am stressed, I’m walking—before I am walking in Esplanade. So, now, if I feel like I have no problem with people at work, and I just feel heavy, what I do is during lunch break, I walk from our building going to Festive Walk then go back after) (Hannah, 2023).

According to one of the participants, when it was her day off from work, she entertained herself without relying on her phone for the freedom and relaxation that comes with strolling outdoors. She also highlighted the importance of giving her eyes a break from the screen, noting the potential negative effects of constant exposure to

distressing content, even outside of work hours. By choosing to stroll instead of using their phone, she creates a healthy boundary between work and personal time, allowing herself to fully disconnect and enjoy her surroundings. Additionally, she noted that spending time with friends and family further encourages her to stay away from her phone, emphasizing the value of genuine human connection over digital distractions. Affective commitment is highlighted as a mediator in Truong et al. (2020) investigation of the relationship between self-care behaviors and wellbeing. The goal of the study was to clarify the processes by which self-care improves psychological health by examining this link.

I think [while laughing] ang coping mechanisms bala sang ga work pako, kay lagaw gid ya like amu na kada day off, makwa ang sweldo, lagaw kung diin–diin muna everytime maka lagaw ko, maka pahuway akon eyes kay sometimes daan like outside work—mag call ko sa Facebook or TikTok, daw amu man dyapon makita ko, gaka disgrasya, so kung may time gid ko—galagaw ko para ‘di ko pagkamtan akon nga phone—di ko mag check sang phone kay sa boarding house man daan mapalso daw ma ano ka gid ya bala, ma-inganyo ka gid ya kay bored ka pero kung ara ka outside with your friends ‘and family, amu na wala ka ga check sang imo nga phone (Natalie, 2023).

(I think [while laughing] the coping mechanisms while I’m still working, by strolling like that since it’s day off, get the salary, stroll everywhere that’s why everytime I entertain myself, I can rest my eyes since sometimes like outside work—if I make a call on Facebook or TikTok, like that’s still what I see, accidents, so if I have time—I stroll so that I won’t use my phone—I won’t check

my phone since at the boarding house I am still, I am really encouraged since you're bored but outside with your friends and family, that's why you don't have to check your phone) (Natalie, 2023).

Also one of the participants shared a personal coping strategy for dealing with anxiety, when faced with high levels of anxiety, the participants turned to coffee as a means of seeking comfort and temporary relief. Additionally, she utilized her days off as an opportunity to engage in excursions, suggesting a deliberate effort to prioritize self-care and relaxation outside of work responsibilities. “Coping mechanism siguro, kung stress gid ko ya ano—coffee, amo na.” (*Coping mechanism maybe, if I am really stressed—coffee, that's it.*) (Candy, 2023). People drew boundaries in order to categorize and simplify the environment around them, and this had implications for behavior and psychology (Mirbahaeddin & Chreim, 2023). Setting limits enabled people to maintain a good balance between their personal and professional obligations, which increased their level of fulfillment and overall comfort.

d. Financial Motivations

Financial motivations play a crucial role in enhancing employees' work experience by providing them with tangible rewards for their efforts, fostering motivation and engagement, and ultimately contributing to organizational success. In this sub-theme, four (4) out of five (5) participants highlighted that monetary compensation helps them navigate challenges that they encountered at work. While money cannot directly alleviate the emotional distress caused by exposure to disturbing content, it can provide content moderators with financial stability, which may alleviate worries about meeting basic needs or financial obligations.

Ako actually, ang nagapa motivate gid sakon nga mag [uh] magpadayon is amuna, while waiting for my graduation ceremony, kay sang summer ko nag graduate. So while waiting for my graduation ceremony, at least I'm earning—I mean, kaya ko ibakal akon needs and wants nga wala gapangayo sa parents ko [hmm] huo (Mikaela, 2023).

(On me actually, what really motivates me to [uh] continue is that while waiting for my graduation ceremony, since I graduated last summer. So while waiting for my graduation ceremony, at least I'm earning—I mean, I can buy my needs and wants without asking from my parents [hmm] yeah) (Mikaela, 2023).

Ferris, Hochwarter, and Wright (2019) defined motivation as a combination of internal and external factors that influence an individual's behavior at work, shaping its structure, progression, intensity, and duration. Similarly, Mulyani et al., (2019) characterized employee motivation as the impetus that propels employees to undertake a set of activities, ultimately leading to the attainment of specific objectives. In this area, the participants emphasized the pivotal role of monetary compensation in fueling their commitment as content moderators and helping them cope in navigating the myriad challenges inherent in their work. According to one of the participants, she was motivated to work because she was able to provide support for her families. “Syempre [uh] syempre family kay ako—isa man ko sa mga naga-support sa ila bala sa mga—sa balay amuna.” *(Of course [uh] certainly my family since I—I'm the one who supports them with their—in the house) (Kat, 2023).*

Another participant mentioned that, as a result of certain circumstances, she tried to find a way to support herself on a daily basis out of an intense need to be financially

independent and to avoid financial reliance on her parents. For her, the financial compensation provided a crucial means of support, enabling her to meet her financial necessities and maintain a certain standard of living. Another participant emphasized that it was the salary above all else that served as the primary driving force behind her continued commitment to the job. “[Laughs] More on sweldo gid ya pero curiosity man kay daw everyday daan daw may something new ka man nga makita” (*[Laughs] More on the salary itself but of curiosity too since everyday like there’s something new to see*) (Natalie, 2023).

Similarly, another participant expressed her views aligned to the other participant which emphasized how the salary brought her a profound sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Knowing that she could rely on her salary to meet her basic necessities, this participant found herself better equipped to cope with the demands of her job, drawing strength from the financial stability it afforded her. “Siguro sakon—para gid sakon, syempre para ano—for the money.” (*Perhaps for me—for myself, of course—for the money*) (Candy, 2023). Okoth and Florah (2019) looked at a number of factors that could be crucial for motivating workers to put in more effort, including salaries and benefits, employee recognition, job satisfaction and job security, and training and development

Major Theme: Insights

The theme titled delved into the insights of a Content Moderator. It explored how individuals, particularly content moderators, developed a comprehensive outlook on human behavior through their experiences. This theme explored the idea that exposure to diverse content and interactions online allowed content moderators to gain insights into

the complexities of human nature. They witnessed a wide range of emotions, motivations, and interactions across different cultures and backgrounds, fostering empathy and a nuanced understanding of human behavior. Through their work, content moderators developed a broader perspective on societal norms, values, and behaviors, contributing to a deeper comprehension of human nature in the digital age.

One of the participants highlighted the critical importance of resilience and mental fortitude in the demanding role of a content moderator. By acknowledging the inevitability of encountering distressing and emotionally taxing content, they emphasized the need for individuals to possess a robust inner strength to navigate such challenging circumstances effectively.

[Uhhh] Syempre damo [uhmm] first dapat ano ka ang strong person, kag ay you have a strong personality, kay kung [uhmm] kung indi ka—indi strong personality mo, dasig ka mas depressed sa amuna nga work kay actually damo na ko na experienced like syempre—mag watch ka sang mga TikTok videos nga may mga [uhmm] torture nga mga amuna ho — torture tapos mga killing tapos mga [uhmm] SPG nga mga videos so need mo na—need mo gid ya mag [uh] strong personality mo para di ka dayon ma-stress sa work (Kat, 2023).

([Uhhh] of course there are a lot [uhmm] first you must be a strong person and have a strong personality because if [uhmm] if you're not—you don't have a strong personality, it's easy for you to be really depressed in this work because actually I had experienced a lot like of course—if you watch TikTok videos that has [uhmm] torture like that—torture then those killing and then [uhmm] SPG

videos so you need—you need to have a strong personality so you won't get stressed easily at work) (Kat, 2023).

Furthermore, the participant's statement underscored the psychological toll that continuous exposure to graphic and disturbing material could exact on individuals lacking in resilience. “Siguro mas naging wider ang perspective ko sa life like damo ko na encounter nga abi ko makita ko lang sa mga movies and all gale those in real life may mga amo na nga scenarios.” *(Perhaps my perspective on life became wider like I encountered a lot already that I thought I'd only see in movies and all but they actually happen in real life scenarios.) (Candy, 2023).*

They suggested that without the necessary emotional resilience, content moderators might be vulnerable to experiencing significant mental health issues such as depression and stress, highlighting the profound impact of the work environment on one's psychological well-being. “Like, may mga positive man and negative man pero daw more gid ya [ah] nga ang ano—positive changes.” *(Like, there are both positive and negative but like more on [ah] positive changes.) (Candy, 2023).*

A participant believed that her perspective on life had become more expansive as a result of her encounters. She was surprised to find situations in real life that she had previously only seen in movies. This suggested that her exposure to a wide range of experiences had broadened her understanding of the world beyond what she had initially thought possible based on fictional representations. She recognized that themes depicted in movies could extend beyond fiction into reality, providing her with a deeper understanding of the world. One of the participants regularly encountered content that sharpened her awareness of the darker sides of human behavior and the various types of

inappropriate or harmful content online. She remained vigilant in identifying such content and understanding its potential impact on users and the wider community.

[Uhhh] Siguro mas naging ano na ko sa social media, naging mas aware and then siguro makita ko kis-a nga mga di manami nga videos sa social media—gina report ko na sya kay hambal ko ay hala daw disturbing ni gale kay daw na adapt ko ang batasan ko as a content moderator nga dapat di makita sang iban kay what if para sa iban disturbing sya tapos ako may makita ko nga graphic content sa Facebook, Instagram, amu na gina-report ko kay para ma-take down sya (Natalie). *([Uhhh] I think I became, more aware and then sometimes the unpleasant videos on social media—I report it since I said that oh my it's like this is disturbing since like I adapt the attitude of mine as a content moderator that others shouldn't see this because what if for others it's disturbing then for me if I see graphic content on Facebook, Instagram, that's why I report it for it to be taken down) (Natalie).*

Consequently, whenever she encounters disturbing content in her moderation tasks, she promptly reports it to ensure that necessary steps are taken to limit its spread and safeguard users from harm. “Like you see different videos, you get to know the culture, the people, like a lot.” *(Ye-yes, because at some point you'll grow. You'll see different videos, you get to know the culture, the people, like a lot.) (Hannah, 2023).* This duty highlighted her dedication to upholding the integrity and safety of the online space, promoting a more positive and responsible use of social media platforms.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presented the findings from face-to-face interviews intended to further discuss the experiences of TikTok content moderators. This study presented the lived experiences of the five (5) participants. It also presents the recommendation and potential conclusive implications of the study based on the researcher's presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data.

Summary of Findings

The themes that appeared in the study regarding the participants' lived experiences in content moderation was quite challenging. This was shown in the participants' way of expressing how it was difficult for them to deal with unpleasant video contents, particularly if it is their first time in such a role. Furthermore, they struggled with fulfilling the work standards; for instance, because their companies had sensitive volumes of information that demanded a certain level of precision in their tasks, every individual had a distinct limit or tolerance in exposure to disturbing material. Although the nature of their job requires them to filter and eliminate vast amounts of graphic online content that was not accepted through the application's guidelines, it could be seen that each individual had their own capabilities and awareness in dealing with their unwanted circumstances.

However, Challenges in the Workplace somehow received positive feedback based on how the participants described their filtration role and how convenient and flexible their duties were. Also, it was mostly criticized by the participants for handling the modifiable work standards, and dealing with the graphic and explicit contents that

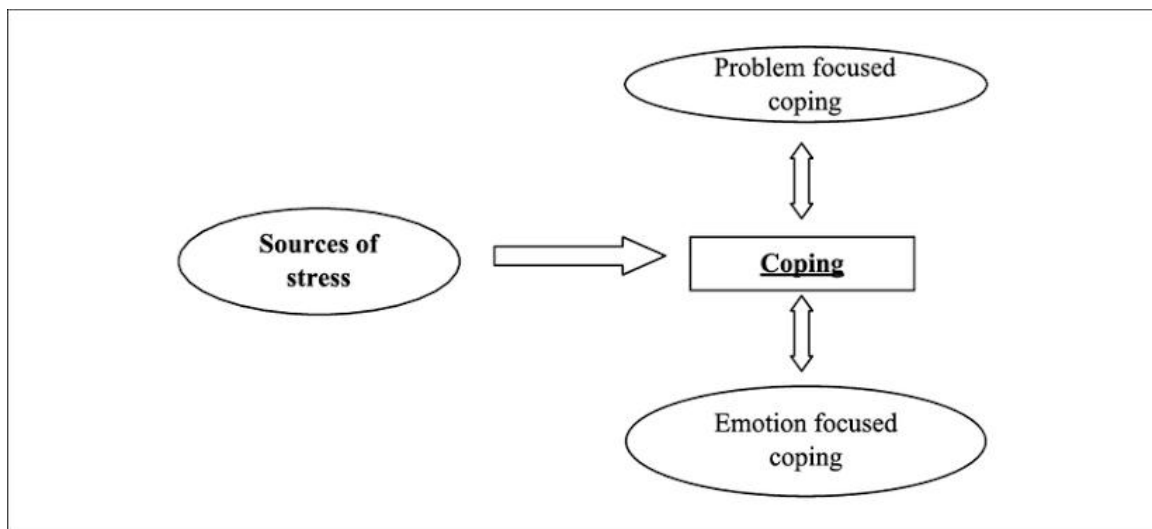
may be labeled psychologically dangerous for them and most likely affect the participants' mental health. In terms of coping mechanisms, the majority of participants had their own strategies to deal with the difficulties they face at work. Also, a "wellness" was highlighted to enlighten a participant's difficulties. As for the Insights, it was primarily given encouraging comments by the participants in which they referred to how their perspective towards work and life had changed and widened due to their experiences from their job.

Implications of Theory and Practice

According to Mind Tools Content Team (2024), Lazarus and Folkman created a framework meant to help individuals in applying coping mechanisms and objective evaluations to manage stressful situations. As further justification for the theory, they considered that our stress level was frequently influenced more by how we perceived or responded to an occurrence than by the event itself. Lazarus and Folkman distinguished two main coping approaches: problem-solving coping and emotion-focused coping. These coping strategies were utilized by individuals in order to effectively address and handle the issue that was causing them distress and to regulate and manage their emotional reactions towards the problem. Problem-focused coping involves actively taking steps to manage or change the source of the problem, while emotion-focused coping focuses on regulating and controlling one's emotional responses to the problem (Stanislawski, 2019). Figure 2 showed the framework of Lazarus and Folkman's Model of Stress and Coping.

Figure 2

Framework of Lazarus and Folkman's Model of Stress and Coping



By addressing problems directly, content moderators utilized problem-focused methods to overcome difficulties in the workplace. This involved employing strategies like creating precise standards for content assessment, managing workload effectively with tools and technology, and working with members of the team to find and apply workable solutions to challenges. This could be seen with participants who used an accurate and affirmative planning of situations, either independently or with assistance from the company. As for the emotion-focused coping strategies, through controlling their emotions and stress levels, content moderators utilized this coping mechanism to deal with job setbacks. To relieve pressure and de-stress, they engage in mindfulness, ask for and accept social support from coworkers, and take regular breaks. This was visible throughout the participants, as they tapped into or conversed with their fellow colleagues during duty hours whenever they felt uncomfortable with contents or after work about what made them uneasy during the working hours. In order to prevent conflict between the two domains of their lives, they were also able to establish boundaries in both their

personal and professional lives. Content moderators encountered numerous psychological and real-life difficulties when managing TikTok content. Despite this, they managed to come up with coping strategies on their own and with the company's assistance so they could continue to operate without being excessively impacted.

As for the thematic map, participants' regularly faced distressing content, and encountered challenges at work impacting their mental and emotional well-being. Yet, they developed coping mechanisms, guided by Lazarus and Folkman's Psychological Stress and Coping Theory, to manage this stress effectively. It could be seen that participants engage in activities both during and outside of work to release stress and promote psychological well-being. This included taking breaks, practicing relaxation techniques, or participating in recreational activities. These strategies aligned with Lazarus and Folkman's emphasis on emotion-focused coping, where individuals regulated their emotional responses to stressors to reduce distress. Furthermore, with a supportive work environment where participants could seek assistance, share experiences, and receive emotional support from their peers and supervisors. This colleagues' support served as a valuable coping resource, providing them with a sense of belonging and validation. Lazarus and Folkman highlighted the importance of social support as a coping mechanism, emphasizing its role in helping individuals cope with stress and adversity. In conclusion, the coping mechanisms utilized by content moderators, such as finding ways to release stress and seeking support from colleagues, aligned with key aspects of Lazarus and Folkman's Model of Stress and Coping. By employing these coping strategies, moderators could effectively manage the demands of their job and maintain their well-being in the face of challenging and emotionally stressful situations.

Content moderators often utilized a combination of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies to manage stress. Psychologists could integrate these coping techniques into their treatment approaches for clients dealing with stress or trauma-related issues. For example, incorporating techniques such as mindfulness, emotion regulation, or cognitive restructuring based on moderators' coping strategies could enhance the effectiveness of therapy sessions. Moreover, content moderators often relied on peer support to cope with the emotional challenges of their work. Psychologists could facilitate peer counseling programs modeled after moderators' coping strategies. These interventions provided a supportive environment for participants to share experiences, learn coping techniques from one another, and foster a sense of community. In conclusion, Psychologists could learn from content moderators' coping mechanisms to inform the development of intervention strategies for individuals experiencing similar stressors. By understanding which coping strategies were most effective in managing the emotional toll of content moderation, psychologists could tailor interventions to better support individuals facing similar challenges.

Conclusions

1. The challenges of the participants stemmed more from how the graphic and explicit contents they worked with impacted their mental health in which they have difficulties in sleeping, absorbing such an idea of reality upon the videos watched, or forgetting the unpleasant video contents that may lead to trauma. These experiences from the participants indicate that content moderators have a demanding job that costs their mental well-being and other aspects of their lives. The discussion in which such types of contents are handled by the content moderators that may be considered

dangerous to handle were also emphasized the risks to themselves. Also, their roles and functions that were carried out by various teams, each responsible for a different level of content filtration were highlighted in which it explained how flexible and convenient the roles were. Finally, the nature of work for content moderators is crucial for their mental well-being and effectiveness of the Content Moderator. This is challenging in their part because they must utilize advanced skills to carefully review graphic videos and apply the appropriate policies to them.

2. The participants highlighted self-care routines as their primary coping mechanisms in their roles as content moderators. This emphasis underscores the importance of prioritizing personal well-being to effectively manage the demands and challenges of content moderation.
3. The participants came to share the deep insights they gained into human behavior from their work as content moderators. Exposure to a diverse range of online content, including distressing content, affected them, leading them to observe a wide spectrum of emotions, motivations, and interactions across various cultural contexts. This exposure cultivated empathy and a nuanced understanding of human behavior, resulting in a deeper comprehension of societal norms and values within the digital sphere. As content moderators fulfilled their responsibilities, they experienced personal growth and maturity, which shaped their broader perspective on human behavior in the digital era. These revelations not only enhanced their professional endeavors but also played a pivotal role in their personal development, highlighting the transformative impact of their role as content moderators.

Recommendation

The recommendations listed below are suggested in relation to the study's results and conclusions:

Content moderators should prioritize their well-being by creating individualized self-care routines, which might involve taking breaks, practicing mindfulness, and seeking assistance from colleagues or mental health professionals. They should also actively advocate for access to mental health resources, such as counseling and stress management programs, by engaging with their employers. Additionally, fostering a supportive community through peer support groups or online forums can provide moderators with a platform to share experiences, offer mutual support, and exchange coping strategies, while continuous participation in training sessions enables them to improve coping skills, build resilience, and stay informed about the latest content moderation practices.

Social media companies must prioritize the well-being of content moderators by recognizing their critical role in maintaining online safety and making their welfare a primary concern. This involves implementing policies emphasizing mental health, including comprehensive training, adequate staffing, and access to resources. Establishing robust support systems with access to mental health professionals, counseling, and peer networks, along with regular assessments, is essential. Additionally, fostering a culture of empathy and implementing trauma-informed practices, such as minimizing exposure to distressing content and providing coping resources, is vital for creating a healthier work environment.

TikTok Users should be aware of the potential effects of their content on other

users and content moderators. Sharing explicit, violent, or upsetting content should be avoided, and one should think about the broader effects of online interactions. In order to support moderators in their review process and maintain a safer online environment, users should report content that they come across that either violates TikTok's community guidelines or poses a risk. On TikTok, interactions with content and other users should be civil and responsible. Harassment or bullying of moderators or other users should be avoided as these actions can exacerbate the poisonous environment on the platform.

Social media users should practice digital citizenship by being mindful of the content they create, share, and engage with online, considering the potential impact of their interactions on others and striving to contribute positively to online communities. It's important to support the well-being of content moderators by advocating for initiatives aimed at improving their working conditions and mental health support, using one's voice to raise awareness about the challenges they face, and emphasizing the importance of prioritizing their well-being on online platforms. Additionally, users should actively contribute to fostering positive, inclusive, and respectful online communities where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported. This includes challenging toxic behaviors and attitudes while promoting empathy, understanding, and compassion in all online interactions. Parents must remain vigilant when posting pictures or videos of their children, ensuring their safety and privacy are protected in the online realm.

Future content moderators should place a high priority on self-care by being aware of the possible psychological effects of their work and by practicing self-care techniques that support mental health, such as taking regular breaks, reaching out to

friends and family for support, and engaging in enjoyable and relaxing activities. By limiting exposure to upsetting content outside of work hours, it's critical to create boundaries between work and personal life and avoid burnout and emotional tiredness. Furthermore, it is critical to advocate for broad support networks and tools from social media companies or workplaces, such as regular check-ins with managers, training in coping methods, and access to mental health services. Making connections with other content moderators to exchange stories, offer assistance to one another, and normalize conversations about mental health issues at work can also be beneficial.

Academe. It is advised that students become familiar with the duties and responsibilities of TikTok content moderators. Gaining insight into the difficulties and nuances of this role might help one better understand the dynamics of online content control. We will be conducting a webinar aimed at helping students gain a deeper understanding of content moderation and its intricacies. By delving into the ethical challenges inherent in platforms like TikTok, such as issues related to freedom of expression, censorship, and mental well-being, participants will gain invaluable insights. Critical thinking abilities and knowledge of the wider societal impact of online information can be fostered by participation in content moderation-related studies, projects, and conversations. With a more profound comprehension of this facet of social media, learners can cultivate a more sophisticated outlook on digital citizenship and make a valuable contribution towards fostering a safer and more welcoming virtual environment.

Future Researchers. This study is recommended for future research because it provides important insights and understanding into an understudied region, laying a

strong foundation for further analyses. In order to improve our understanding of the difficulties, dynamics, and ramifications of content moderation on TikTok, more research in this area is needed. Subsequent research endeavors may focus on more in-depth elements such as the mental effects, coping strategies, and efficacy of support networks.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Adviser-Advisee Agreement Form



**Central Philippine University
College of Arts and Sciences
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Research Thesis Adviser/Advisee Agreement

General Information: Please fill in the following important details .

Course: **BS in Psychology** **BA in Political Science and Public Administration**

List of Group Members:

Antaran, Sharlotte Church,
Bergantinos, Maria Nicole J,
Bono, Elyssa Maffet A.,
Dian, Vanessa J.,
Nangan, Aljane May,
Sevillena, Neclar M.

Representative Student Email Address:

sharlottechurch. antaran - 20 @cpu.edu.ph.

Adviser Name: _____

Adviser's Department: _____

Adviser Email Address: _____

Thesis Title: The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators in Iloilo City

Brief Description of the Thesis Proposal (3-5 sentences):

This thesis proposal aims to explore and provide an in-depth understanding of the life of a content moderator by probing all related factors to their working experiences, impacts to their well-being, and the coping mechanisms through their field of work. It will concentrate on the mode of moderation and filtration work since the specific content moderators we chose are responsible for reviewing contents that will be exposed on every social media platform. Their work is not yet widely known in the public or they're in reticent level, but their duty is a huge factor in the safety and security for an enjoyable and safe viewing experience of internet users.

Annotated Bibliography (5 References):

- Raghu et al. (2021). The Effects of Machine-powered Platform Governance: An Empirical Study of Content Moderation.
- Madia and Quinn. (2023). Content Moderation and Advertising in Social Media Platforms.
- Strayer et al. (2021). The Psychological Well-Being of Content Moderators: The Emotional Labor of Commercial Moderation and Avenues for Improving Support.
- Archt and Fitzgitch. (2018). The Human Cost of Online Content Moderation.
- Tanesh and Bright. (2020). Countering Extremists on Social Media: Challenges for Strategic Communication and Content Moderation

Responsibilities of Research Students

- i. Know the University's policy and procedures on academic honesty and adhere to the University Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."
- ii. Assume a proactive nature in pursuing your goals for your undergraduate education. The faculty and staff of the Department are strongly invested in the success of the program and are willing to help you fulfill your goals. But, keep in mind that this is YOUR degree. The faculty and staff are here to help YOU help YOURSELF.
- iii. Meet all deadlines and review critiques imposed by the Program, the Adviser, the technical review panel and the REC. Failure to do so will not be the adviser's responsibility. Delays will be the students' accountability.
- iv. Complete and file all necessary forms with the adviser in a timely manner. Forms are given in the Research Class.
- v. Maintain and follow a practical timetable in the writing of one's research paper. Students are to inform the adviser with this time flow.
- vi. Students are responsible for the plagiarism check of their research papers. Plagiarism scan and certification shall be done by the University Research Center before submission to REC. Payment shall be made via Cashier/Finance Office.
- vii. After the Proposal Defense, the Study shall be submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee (REC) for evaluation and review. Submit the needed documents required by REC and settle the fees specified.
- viii. Professional fees for mentor and panel members should be paid before the Defense Proposal and Final Defense. The fees are specified as follows:

Professional Involved	Professional Fee
Adviser (Effective for 1 school year)	Php 4,000 : Php 2,000 per semester after Defense
3 Technical Review Panel members	Php 1000 per panelist : Php 500 per semester.

Responsibilities of Faculty Members or Staff Assigned as the Adviser:

- i. Welcome undergraduate Research students and assist them effectively in writing the Research proposal and the Final paper. Accept the responsibilities of an adviser and co-author as outlined in various research guidelines.
- ii. Arrange a schedule with the student researchers, maintain close contact with them and specify the date and time of consultation.
- iii. Provide the best possible environment for research training of students. While advisers/co-authors are given the duty to critique and assist their advisees, the students are expected to acquire a substantial degree of independence in their daily research work as well as their oral and written presentations.
- iv. As co-author, be fiscally responsible in terms of not only meeting them safely, but also reviewing the quality of the Paper and helping them to address comments or critiques by the panelists and the REC without causing major delays on the designated schedules and time frame prescribed by the Program.
- v. Serve on the Department Advisory Committees as often as is reasonable. Service need not be restricted to the committees of students whose research is within a faculty member's area of expertise. An outside point-of-view can be valuable, and all students should be able to effectively present their work to non-experts.
- vi. Assist in providing a mechanism for the student to fulfill and follow schedules and time frame prescribed by the Research Professor and by the REC; such as deadlines of revisions.
- vii. Provide both scientific and professional mentoring (as co-authors of the paper) in the production of research papers that are worthy of publication, and seek other opportunities for students to explore the best options for their paper such as presentation and publication.

Dissolution and Termination of Contract

The adviser and the advisees are expected to maintain cooperation and collaboration with one another but if relationships are deemed unproductive and unhealthy, or by reason of force majeure, both parties can end the contract after all remedies have been exhausted. In this case, the advisees should find another adviser.


Student: By signing this agreement, you are agreeing to perform your thesis work with the following chosen adviser for Research I and II and with the following duties listed and to adhere to the guidelines of the Program.

You are also aware that this contract is only effective for **one (1) school year**. In the case you are not able to complete your Research Study within the allotted timeframe, you are responsible in initiating a re-negotiation of the contract. **For BS Psychology:** Inability to complete the undergraduate paper will prevent you from taking the Comprehensive Examination which may delay your Graduation.

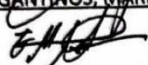
Professor: By signing this agreement, you are agreeing to mentor these undergraduate students listed below and to adhere to the guidelines of the Program Adviser-Advisee contract. In addition, you are stating that you have the professional capacity to support the students for the foreseeable future. You will receive monetary compensation of Php 4,000.00. You will be recognized as a co-author of the said research study provided that the contract has not ended before the Research had fully completed.

The following are the schedules for meetings via (platform) _____ every (time and days of meeting)


Student Names (print) and Signatures:



ANTARAN, SHARLOTTE CHURCH


BERGANTINOS, MARIA NICOLE J.


BONO, ELYSSA MAFFET A.

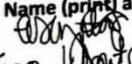

DIAN, VANESSA J.


NANGAN, ALJANE MAY


SEVILLENA, NECLAR M.

Date: March 15, 2023

Adviser's Name (print) and signature:


Fala

Date: _____

Research I Professor Signature:

DARRIL F. PAMOCOL

Date: _____

Department Head Signature:

DARRIL F. PAMOCOL

Date: _____

Appendix B

Informed Consent



RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY
 Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines
 329-1971 to 79 local 3336



INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ICF) TEMPLATE (VERSION No. 03-2023)

1. KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Title of the Study: The Lived Experiences of Content Moderator Under Tiktok

Name of Researcher/s: Antaran, Sharlotte Church
 Bergantinos, Maria Nicole J.
 Bono, Elyssa Maffet A.
 Dian, Vanessa J.
 Nangan, Aljane May N.
 Sevillaena, Neclar M.

Research Adviser: Ms. Erla Grace Agutaya

Department/College: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: : Central Philippine University

2. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

You are invited to take part in this research study. This form contains information that will help you in deciding whether to participate or not in this study/research. Before you decide to participate in this study, you will be given enough time to read and understand the contents of the informed consent. If there are words or concepts that you do not understand feel free to ask questions at any time, the researchers are willing to explain it to you and your questions will be answered to your satisfaction. The study will begin once you have signed the informed consent form.

This study focuses on the life of content moderators and its significance in today's world. The researchers, who are active social media users, conducted the study to understand the challenges faced by content moderators and to

enhance their role in ensuring the safety of social media platforms. They recognized the need to go beyond the limited local studies and previous research to fully understand the drawbacks of content moderating. Identifying the specific needs of content moderators will help develop effective strategies and support systems for them. The study aims to shed light on the complexities of content moderation and improve the well-being of these individuals.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research study is to understand the Lived Experiences of Tiktok content moderators.

4. TYPE OF RESEARCH INTERVENTION/DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

The researchers will use an interview session to the participants and will provide a questionnaire consists of demographic questions, screening questions and work related questions for collecting the needed data.

5. PARTICIPANT SELECTION (INCLUSION & EXCLUSION CRITERIA)

You are chosen as a participant based on the following criteria: (1) participants must have experience with digital content and software-specific training with a minimum of one-year paid experience as a content moderator, (2) participants should be working as a content moderator specially at TikTok Company in Iloilo City.

The following are excluded: (1) participants working outside Iloilo City, (2) working in other social media platforms, (3) participants with under one year experience, (4) volunteered content moderators are not qualified to participate in the study.

6. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty or other consequences and without need to give any reason.

7. PROCEDURE

You will be given a question and the researcher will let you answer freely. The answers will be based on your knowledge, thoughts, experiences, and challenges as a Tiktok content moderator. The interview will be conducted face to face at Mind's Crib Co-working Space & Study Hub, situated close to Central Philippine University on the second level of Lifeline Building Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines. The researchers will inform you that they will be recording the interview session using a phone and afterwards, you will receive an information regarding to the data collection, your right to confidentiality and privacy, and your voluntary involvement. After the interview, the audio will be saved in Google Drive with a password. All gathered data will be disposed accordingly so that there will be no trace of their identities and private information once disposal is executed as a part of the researchers' responsibility. All hard copies will be shredded, and digital copies will be removed in all used devices accordingly.

8. DURATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be conducted from February 2023 to November 2023.

The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour depending on how the participant will respond to the open-ended questions. During the interview, if the participant feels uncomfortable to answer a certain question, they can approach the interviewer by saying "next question", or "too private/personal" or using a hand or face gesture that may state "no" or "declined" as an answer in order for the interviewer to move on to the next question.

9. RISKS AND INCONVENIENCES

There is the possibility of response bias, where the interviewer may try to provide the "correct" answers to the interviewee. This can lead to a shorter amount of time or the interviewee to fully explain their perspective. During interviews, the interviewer may inadvertently affect the interviewee's responses by asking leading questions. The risk assessment is categorized as below minimal risk involved in this study. If you are uncomfortable with the question you do not have to answer them/proceed. The researcher will provide them with our chosen psychologist.

10. BENEFITS

This study might help to provide a clear understanding of the existence, purpose, and difficulties of content moderators in modern society. It will also promote knowledge of their importance in social media interaction which is responsible for preventing malicious and disturbing contents. Their efforts and services will be further discussed for others to recognize and acknowledge. With all that has been mentioned, any individual who will have the chance to encounter this study will be further enlightened of the facts surrounding content moderation in our current society.

11. REIMBURSEMENTS

You will be given an incentive as a token of appreciation for participating and for your willingness, effort and bravery to share and reflect your knowledge and experiences.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you have provided is solely for the purpose of this study. Your identity will be kept private and confidential to the extent provided by law. You will be assigned an ID number and your data will be stored with utmost respect to your privacy.

13. RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty or other consequences and without need to give any reason. If at any time you withdraw from the study, your data will be discarded properly.

14. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT INTEREST

The researchers declare that one of the participants is known by one of the researchers. Therefore to avoid a possible bias, when conducting interviews it is crucial that the interviewer does not have a personal relationship with any of the participants. An unbiased form of interaction in the participants with isolating any possible interest that may be a conflict or can influence the run of the study. Proper actions and behavior will be observed by the researchers at all times to come out with a reliable result.

15. STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF RESEARCH DATA/MATERIALS

The electronic copy of the data will be kept in a computer with password that only the researcher(s) has/have access to. Hard copies will be stored in a secured cabinet that only the researcher(s) will have access to and will be stored after the interview and will be disposed after final defense through shredding all the hard copies. For the digital data such as audio or video recordings, manual deletion and rebooting as well as performing factory data reset will be used in removing and deleting all stored digital files and documents from all used devices to make sure that nothing will remain in deleted history including the devices. This process will be performed by the researchers as soon as the final defense is done.

16. SHARING OF RESULTS/DISSEMINATION PLAN

The results of this study can shed light and knowledge to those who belong in such educational institutions, for instance the students, who are less knowledgeable with this kind of discussion. They, the students, who are the future researchers can far explore this similar study if they wish to. In providing a novel comprehensive discussion of laying out information that will be helpful in the coming future by producing this research as a journal in libraries after final defense.

As a participant, you are informed that the research findings will be shared more broadly through publications and conferences.

17. WHO TO CONTACT

If you have any questions or clarifications regarding your participation in the study, you may contact:

Lead Researcher: Aljane May N. Nangan
 Address: Noble St Brgy Ubos Ilawod Miagao
 Contact Number: 09270790806
 Email address: aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph

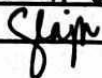
If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a participant, you may contact:

Joy G. Raso, PhD.
 Chair, CPU Research Ethics Review Board
 Email: researchethics@cpu.edu.ph
 Phone: 329-1971 (local 3336)

18. CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read and explained to me in a language/dialect I know and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print name of participant JANNAH UNA JUNO

Signature of participant 

Print name of participant: RACEL ESCAVA (AMM KAT)
 Signature of participant: [Handwritten Signature]
 Date: 12/7/23
 MM/DD/YYYY

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best on my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done.

1. Prioritize the well-being of the participant
2. Comfort and convenience of the participants
3. To create a safe space for the participants to share his/her stories
4. Confidentiality and anonymity will be put into consideration
5. Proper data disposal of transcripts and audio recording after accumulating the needed data will be done.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent Allyson Marie Anagnost
 Signature of Researcher/ person taking the consent [Handwritten Signature]
 Date: 12/7/23
 MM/DD/YYYY

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The results of this study can shed light and knowledge to those who belong in such educational institutions, for instance the students, who are less knowledgeable with this kind of discussion. They, the students, who are the future researches can far explore this similar study if they wish to. In providing a novel comprehensive discussion of laying out information what will be helpful in the coming future by producing this research as a journal in libraries after final defense.

As a participant, you are informed that the research findings will be shared more broadly through publications and conferences.

17. WHO TO CONTACT

If you have any questions or clarifications regarding your participation in the study, you may contact:

Lead Researcher: Aliane May N. Nangan
 Address: Noble St Brgy Ubos Ilawod Miagao
 Contact Number: 09270790806
 Email address: alianemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph

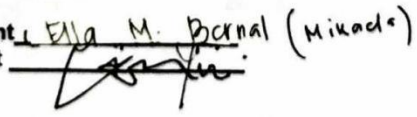
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Print name of participant Ella M. Bernal (Mikado)

Signature of participant 

16. SHARING OF RESULTS/DISSEMINATION PLAN

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As a participant, you are informed that the research findings will be shared more broadly through publications and conferences.

17. WHO TO CONTACT

If you have any questions or clarifications regarding your participation in the study, you may contact:

Lead Researcher: Aljane May N. Nangan
 Address: Noble St Brgy Ubos Ilawod Miagao
 Contact Number: 09270790806
 Email address: aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph

If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a participant, you may contact:

Joy G. Raso, PhD.
 Chair, CPU Research Ethics Review Board
 Email: researchethics@cpu.edu.ph
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Print name of participant Maxine A. Andrade (candy)
 Signature of participant [Handwritten Signature]

16. SHARING OF RESULTS/DISSEMINATION PLAN

The results of this study can shed light and knowledge to those who belong in such educational institutions, for instance the students, who are less knowledgeable with this kind of discussion. They, the students, who are the future researchers can far explore this similar study if they wish to. In providing a novel comprehensive discussion of laying out information what will be helpful in the coming future by producing this research as a journal in libraries after final defense.

As a participant, you are informed that the research findings will be shared more broadly through publications and conferences.

17. WHO TO CONTACT

If you have any questions or clarifications regarding your participation in the study, you may contact:


Lead Researcher: Aljane May N. Nangan
 Address: Noble St Brgy Ubos Ilawod Miagao
 Contact Number: 09270790806
 Email address: aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph

If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a participant, you may contact:

Joy G. Raso, PhD.
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Print name of participant Natalia G. Flores (Natalia)
 Signature of participant 

Appendix C

Researcher-made Questionnaire

Screening Profile:

- Are you employed as a content moderator? If yes, where?
- What are your specific tasks or job function as a content moderator?
- How long have you been working as a content moderator?

Research Questions:

1. What are your experiences as a content moderator?
 - How did you manage to continue?
 - How did you end up doing this kind of work?
2. What are the challenges that you face as a content moderator?
 - How did you overcome those challenges that you encountered in your work?
 - What is the impact of being a TikTok content moderator to your psychological well-being, emotional health, mental health, and spiritual health?
 - What are your coping mechanisms? How did it help you?
3. What motivates you in continuing working as a content moderator?
 - What changes happen to your life when you become a content moderator?
 - Would you recommend content moderating to others? If yes, how would you encourage them?

Appendix D

Letter to Validators

VALIDATION SHEET

NAME OF VALIDATOR: Jade S. ErmitanoDEGREE: Master of Arts in PsychologyPOSITION: University Psychometrician

To the evaluator:

We are currently working on our qualitative research study entitled "The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators Under Tiktok". The objective of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Tiktok content moderators.

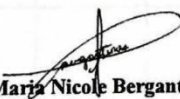
In connection with this, we would like to humbly request your expertise to validate the researchers' questionnaire including its demographic profile and screening questions. Attached herewith are the research questionnaires.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

The Researchers,


 Sharlotte Church Antaran


 Vanessa Dian


 Maria Nicole Bergantinos


 Aljane May Nangan


 Elyssa Maffet Bono


 Neclar Sevillena

VALIDATION SHEET

NAME OF VALIDATOR: PRINCE IDRACH DACUST
DEGREE: BS PSYCHOLOGY
POSITION: INSTRUCTOR - PSYCHOMETRICIAN

To the evaluator:


We are currently working on our qualitative research study entitled **"The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators Under Tiktok"**. The objective of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Tiktok content moderators.

In connection with this, we would like to humbly request your expertise to validate the researchers' questionnaire including its demographic profile and screening questions. Attached herewith are the research questionnaires.


RESPECTFULLY YOURS,


The Researchers,


Charlotte Church Antaran


Maria Nicole Bergantinos


Elyssa Maffet Bono


Vanessa Dian


Aljane May Nangan


Néclar Sevillena

VALIDATION SHEET

NAME OF VALIDATOR: Pauline Marie D. Wong

DEGREE: MS Psychology

POSITION: Program Coordinator - Psychology

To the evaluator:

We are currently working on our qualitative research study entitled “**The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators Under Tiktok**”. The objective of this study is to understand the lived experiences of Tiktok content moderators.

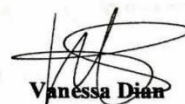
In connection with this, we would like to humbly request your expertise to validate the researchers’ questionnaire including its demographic profile and screening questions. Attached herewith are the research questionnaires.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

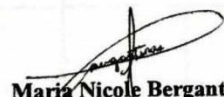
The Researchers,



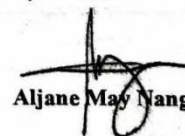
Charlotte Church Antaran



Vanessa Dian



Maria Nicole Bergantinos



Aljane May Nangan



Elyssa Maffet Bono



Néclar Sevilla

Appendix E

Inclusion Criteria

Demographic Profile:

- What is your name, sex, and age?
- What is your address?
- When did you start working as a content moderator?
- How much is your monthly salary as a content moderator?

Appendix F

Audit Trail

Creation of Audit Trail

The theoretical, methodological, and analytical decisions the researchers made during the research process were all documented in an audit trail. Ravelo (2023) stated that an audit trail encompasses a thorough documentation of the research journey, outlining the steps undertaken by the researcher from the inception of the research inquiry to the eventual conclusions reached. It acts as a mechanism for verifying the precision and dependability of the data while offering a clear account of the research process that is open to scrutiny by fellow researchers or reviewers. As a crucial component of this study, an audit trail was developed and maintained.

In order to confirm and clarify information, member checking in qualitative research involves “participants confirming the accuracy and validity of their data” was utilized. This validation process can occur casually during data collection, where the researcher or evaluator reiterates and verifies their understanding of participants' statements (Kallós, 2023). Emphasizing credibility in this study fosters trust among participants and colleagues, elevating your impact within your field. The researchers were able to sustain critical thoughtfulness due to member checking promoted reflexivity and accuracy, which, in the words of SooleenAbbas (2023), is, “generating reliable and accurate findings contributes significantly to the advancement of knowledge within the area of study and establishing credibility is imperative for conducting impactful and trustworthy qualitative research”.

CODES AND EXCERPTS FOR STORIES OF NATURE OF CHALLENGES IN
THE WORKPLACE, COPING MECHANISMS, AND INSIGHTS

Category	Codes	Secondary Codes	Case	Text
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Kat	<p>“[Hmm] May ara daan cases or videos nga daw budlay bala [uhmm]inchindihon [uhmm] budlay inchindihon ang paghambal bala sang mga U.S. pa gid nga mga ano—wala ko kabalo if its under sisner mga budding statement daw kabudlay bala [uhmm] may ara siya nga ano multiple interpretations nga mga ano mga language. So, amuna kis-a gina-pass mo lang ang video kay abi mo wala na kay gale may meaning na to—so masala ka na sa Q’A (Quality Analyst) so bale amuna.”</p>
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Candy	<p>“Like okay lang man ang company. Amu lang na galing sa training tam-an ka indi man gid lawig pero daw ka long—long ano bala, long term nga process kay ti syempre damu-damu kamo cases nga need saulohon like mga taggings tapos dapat ano kagid bala sipat gid mata mo kay gamay mo lang nga sala [uhmm] ano dayun ang ekis kagid dayun.”</p>
Challenges in	Nature of Work		Candy	<p>“Like syempre ang quality</p>

the Workplace				sang company bala, like dira ga base kung daw target ya na bala. Example, maka 100% gid kamo wala gid dapat kamu sala— kay ti may possibility ang team nyo gaan sang sanction or what.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Natalie	“Ang videos biskan ano sya ka damak, need mo gid tan awun kay kung ma-missed ka biskan isa ka pares, bali daan mag moderate ka tanan nga applicable nga policies i-butang mo gid sya pero like for example, nag subra ka sang policy or nag kulang ka sang gin apply nga policy ma-error na sya, madakpan ka sang Q’A (Quality Analyst) amu na ma-affect sya sa imo nga scorecard. So dapat tan-awun mo gid sya para mabutang mo ang mga sakto nga nga policy.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Natalie	“Sang first week guro sang training namon daw ma-give up nako tani kay diba [uhmm] sang first week sang training daw gina discuss ang lain-lain nga policies and kung ano mga sub policies sang ging tackle namon ang VGC (Violent Graphic Content) daw ma-give up nakita kay una daw di ko kaya everyday amu nalang ni tan-awun ko pero naka-adjust man ko bi sa kadugayon kay biskan sa training palang gina-anad

				kana nila nga maka lantaw sang mga damak nga videos.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Candy	“Siguro ang challenge gid is ang ano—oras sang shift kay ano na daan sya night bala diba. Ang content moderation ya hindi kumo Sunday or Saturday wala duty since nga kay weekends like content moderating is 24/7. So, amo gid na siguro ang night nga shift daw kabudlay even though nga kahapos sang ubra pero budlay sang time.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Candy	“Like okay lang man ang company. Amu lang na galing sa training tam-an ka indi man gid lawig pero daw ka long—long ano bala, long term nga process kay ti syempre damu-damu kamo cases nga need saulohon like mga taggings tapos dapat ano kagid bala sipat gid mata mo kay gamay mo lang nga sala [uhmm] ano dayun ang ekis kagid dayun.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Kat	“Oo—ay indi ah! Una is AI tapos may round 1 tapos round 2 kami. Daw pinaka last na nga ano—pero gaguwa gyapon sa amon pero once nga ma ano nana, ma-moderate ano na siya dayon ng indi na siya magguwa sa TikTok nga ano mga videos bala.”

Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Natalie	<p>“Actually [uhmm] kay sa content [uhmm] I mean sa work namon may gina tawag nga R1 (Round 1), R2 (Round 2). So sa R1, dira mostly ang gruesome nga video. So, naka assign ko daan sa R2, wala na gawa mga grabe gid nga videos. Pero so far, may videos nga sa R1 nga ga talang sa R2—so pero mostly gid ya mga videos. Mostly gid ya gina moderate namon is child pornography.”</p>
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Kat	<p>“[Hmm] May ara daan cases or videos nga daw budlay bala [uhmm]inchindihon [uhmm] budlay inchindihon ang paghambal bala sang mga U.S. (United States) pa gid nga mga ano—wala ko kabalo if its under sisner mga budding statement daw kabudlay bala [uhmm] may ara siya nga ano multiple interpretations nga mga ano mga language. So, amuna kis-a gina-pass mo lang ang video kay abi mo wala na kay gale may meaning na to—so masala ka na sa Q’A (Quality Analyst) so bale amuna.”</p>
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Mikaela	<p>“Siguro ang lain-lain policies [uhmm] kay may ara kami nga mga certain policies nga gina liwat-liwat and syempre, ang adjustment guro namon is</p>

				naglain nga lahi. Amon nga client kasi before is L.A. (Los Angeles) Q'A (Quality Analyst), subong Indian. So, ga adjust gid kami sa mga Indiano kay du medyo indi kami same way of thinking and mag interpret policy. So, medyo dira kami na cha-challenge recently pero somehow, tungod sa amon mga Q'As (Quality Analysts) and TMs, so medyo na co-cope man namon.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Nature of Work		Candy	“Like okay lang man ang company. Amu lang na galing sa training tam-an ka indi man gid lawig pero daw ka long—long ano bala, long term nga process kay ti syempre damu-damu kamo cases nga need saulohon like mga taggings tapos dapat ano kagid bala sipat gid mata mo kay gamay mo lang nga sala [uhmm] ano dayun ang ekis kagid dayun.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Candy	“Like ga-live sya nga ging tiro ya iya kugalingon mga muna.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Candy	“Siguro ang amu to, ang certain person nga nag-live sya gulpi ya lang gin tiro iya nga kugalingon like una—una ko nga kita daw shocked gid ko eh. I was expecting nga wala sang may ga amuna abi ko daw sa movie lang na bala, gale sa real life may mga muna man nga cases.”

Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Natalie	<p>“Siguro during kung matan-aw ko sya daw ga kudog ang akon kamut, ga dasig ang akon heartbeat pero after sang shift syempre malingaw kana daw madula daw wala na ang physical nga ga kurog.”</p>
Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Natalie	<p>“Actually damo pero siguro may top 3—top 3 nga most disturbing nga na kita ko before. Bali first sikat ni siya kuno sa U.S. (United States) pero I’m sure kung nakita lang sang iban but ga-livestream ang lalaki then daw ga sugid siya ata sang mga problems, ga wakal-wakal siya then, indi [ah] lawig-lawig ang video like 10 minutes guro then ga live stream siya gulpi siya nag kwa sang shotgun gin tiro na, ging tiro nang ging tiro ya iya self sa head and then amo na biskan ging tiro niya na iya self, padayon gyapon ang live stream asta nag abot ang pulis, amu na ang sa crime scene—amu na ang pag stop sang livestream. And the second ang bata na bungguan sya sang truck and amu na nag lasug-lasog na iya itsura daw ka damak na iya itsura and then ang mother nag dalagan sya gin bitbit nya gyapon iya bata biskan tsura sang bata ya daw indi na manami and then ang third naman is ang girl ga</p>

				tupad sya and then gina sulod ang penis sang dog sa iya gina force isulod sa iya.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Mikaela	“[Uhmm] Siguro [uhmm] pina [uhmm] mga devastating type of videos, suicide [uhmm] amuna guro ang isa sa mga video nga like du may ma-feel ka gid nga emotion nga indi mo kaya i-separate imo nga pagiging ikaw, and sa pagiging content moderator, if I see videos [uhmm] gina torture and suicide. Kay if mga porn siya and other stuffs, kaya mo siya ya i-disregard mo—ang emotion pero when it comes sa mga suicide and [uhmm] mga torture so dira gid.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Psychological Hazard		Hannah	“[Uhmm] Sa torture siguro ara bala gina ano—gina bulot bala liog, nan amo siya.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Natalie	“Syempre hilig ko daan sa animals. Kung makita ko muna nga gina sakit nga animals na ano ko—na luoy and I find it disturbing kay sometimes muna mag puli ko may ara ako daan na kita before nga ang ido sa China to guro kay daw Chinese ila nga language pero amu na katay ang ido, gin butang sya sa daku nga pot nga daw gin pabukalan, muna daw kalain sa ano—there are times pa nga

				madamguhan iban nga mga videos nga ma-moderate ko sa TikTok [ah] sa amun nga work.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Natalie	“Na luoy ko nga daw basta indi sya kanami sa feeling tapos daw biskan after sang shift, ga replay bala ang theme scenario sa imo nga head.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Natalie	“Sometimes like especially if bag-o mo lang tan-aw ang video tapos pila ka day madumduman mo sya and the antis ka matulog daw ga replay ang scene sa imo nga head.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Kat	“Daw indi mo bala ma-basta, daw kalaw-ay—daw kalaw-ay sa feeling ‘di ko ma-explain. Basta indi ka bala sanay sa amuna nga magtan-aw sang mga videos nga mga ano—nga mga like torture.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Natalie	“Sakto kay before ma-depart ako ma-content moderator, amu ko nakita nga mga videos or mga picture sang mga disgrasya na, kulbaan gid ko ya, ga kudog ang akon nga kamot, wala na ko ga open Facebook one week.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Mental Trauma		Natalie	“Siguro ang challenge, ang naging challenge ko gid during my work as a content moderator kung pano ko—ko sya [uhmm] di ko sya madala outside of work like ang mga makita ko nga hindi sya maka

				apekto sa daily ko nga sa outside sang work ko nga, hindi gid sya maka apekto sa akon mentally and emotionally.”
Coping Mechanisms	Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness		Mikaela	<p>“Ang nami lang bi is may ara kami everyday wellness. So, may ara kami nga mga work counsellor mismo. If may ara kami videos and daw bothered kami and kumbaga affected gid kami mentally, pwede kami ka tap sa amon nga work counsellors. Pwede kami nila i-pull out, pwede kami maka talk sa ila if ever amuna. Pero everyday we are provided either 15 mins wellness break, 1 hour wellness break, or 30 mins wellness break. Nakadepende siya kay workforce if pila ka wellness break if [uhmm] how long is your wellness break sa muna nga day, pero usually may duwa ka ka 15 mins sa isa ka week, may duwa ka ka 30 mins sa isa ka week, and may ara ka isa ka 1 hour sa isa ka week.”</p>
Coping Mechanisms	Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness		Kat	<p>“Oo, tapos may ano kami may wellness nga tagaan kami wellness didto sa company bala mo 30 mins kis-a 1 hour tapos ang may gina-talk kami na nga WOCO (Workplace Counsellor) bala something amuna tapos ginahambal namon mga</p>

				problema namon about sa ano nga na.”
Coping Mechanisms	Workplace Support Employee’s Wellness		Hannah	“Yeah [hmm] I forgot the term, pero duwa kabilog like may ara nga fast lang—kamustahanay with the ano namon and may ara man nga if you have problems and you need someone to talk to may ara nga available.”
Challenges in the Workplace	Colleague Support		Hannah	“[Hmm] [Uhhh] Very challenging siya kay dali ako maapektuhan but because of people sa work [uhmm] I get to enjoy as a content moderator.”
Coping Mechanisms	Colleague Support		Mikaela	“[Uhhh] Through sa amon nga mga Q’As, kay every time may mga questions kami, gina-cater gid nila. Every time may mga confusions kami sa policies dabi, gina-try man nila pa-inchindi samon and we were given ano [uhmm] 1 hour before the shift, I mean 1 hour before kami mag-start moderation, may ara gid kami calibration with our Q’A para aligned kami sa mga new policies and mga updated nga mga ano—answers sang mga client namon with regards man sa mga questions namon if may mga confusions man kami.”
Coping Mechanisms	Colleague Support		Candy	“Huo. Tapos gina-share gid sa colleague, like daw

				wala ko ya gina sarili [interrupted].”
Coping Mechanisms	Self-Care Routines		Kat	“Actually, gatan-aw man ko gihapon TikTok videos didto mo. Ang mga satisfying videos daw ga amo ko na [laughs] para lang ma-clear lang dayon mind ko.”
Coping Mechanisms	Self-Care Routines		Hannah	“Like even before ko pa sya ni na ubra is whenever I’m stress like ga lakat, like walking—before ga walking sa Esplanade. So, now like if feeling ko daw like wala problema sa mga tawo sa work, I just feel heavy lang gid ko ya. What I do is during lunch break ga walk ako from our building going to Festive Walk balik naman dayon.”
Coping Mechanisms	Self-Care Routines		Natalie	“I think [while laughing] ang coping mechanisms bala sang ga work pako, kay lagaw gid ya like amu na kada day off, makwa ang sweldo, lagaw kung diin—diin muna everytime maka lagaw ko, maka pahuway akon eyes kay sometimes daan like outside work—mag call ko sa Facebook or TikTok, daw amu man dyapon makita ko, gaka disgrasya, so kung may time gid ko—galagaw ko para ‘di ko pagkamtan akon nga phone—di ko mag check sang phone kay sa boarding house man daan

				mapalso daw ma ano ka gid ya bala, ma-inganyo ka gid ya kay bored ka pero kung ara ka outside with your friends ‘and family, amu na wala ka ga check sang imo nga phone.”
Coping Mechanisms	Self-Care Routines		Candy	“Coping mechanism siguro, kung stress gid ko ya ano—coffee, amo na.”
Coping Mechanisms	Financial Motivations		Kat	“Syempre [uh] syempre family kay ako—isa man ko sa mga naga-support sa ila bala sa mga—sa balay amuna.”
Coping Mechanisms	Financial Motivations		Mikaela	“Ako actually, ang nagapa motivate gid sakon nga mag [uh] magpadayon is amuna, while waiting for my graduation ceremony, kay sang summer ko nag graduate. So while waiting for my graduation ceremony, at least I’m earning—I mean, kaya ko ibakal akon needs and wants nga wala gapangayo sa parents ko [hmm] huo.”
Coping Mechanisms	Financial Motivations		Natalie	“[Laughs] More on sweldo gid ya pero curiosity man kay daw everyday daan daw may something new ka man nga makita”
Coping Mechanisms	Financial Motivations		Candy	“Siguro sakon—para gid sakon, syempre para ano—for the money.”
Insights			Kat	“[Uhhh] Syempre damo [uhmm] first dapat ano ka ang strong person, kag ay you have a strong personality, kay kung

				<p>[uhmm] kung indi ka—indi strong personality mo, dasig ka mas depressed sa amuna nga work kay actually damo na ko na experienced like syempre—mag watch ka sang mga TikTok videos nga may mga [uhmm] torture nga mga amuna ho — torture tapos mga killing tapos mga [uhmm] SPG nga mga videos so need mo na—need mo gid ya mag [uh] strong personality mo para di ka dayon ma-stress sa work.”</p>
Insights			Candy	<p>“Siguro mas naging wider ang perspective ko sa life like damo ko na encounter nga abi ko makita ko lang sa mga movies and all gale those in real life may mga amo na nga scenarios.”</p>
Insights			Candy	<p>“Like, may mga positive man and negative man pero daw more gid ya [ah] nga ang ano—positive changes.”</p>
Insights			Natalie	<p>“[Uhmm] Siguro mas naging ano na ko sa social media, naging mas aware and then siguro makita ko kis-a nga mga di manami nga videos sa social media—gina report ko na sya kay hambal ko ay hala daw disturbing ni gale kay daw na adapt ko ang batasan ko as a content moderator nga dapat di makita sang iban kay what if para sa iban disturbing</p>

				sya tapos ako may makita ko nga graphic content sa Facebook, Instagram, amuna gina-report ko kay para ma-take down sya.”
Insights			Hannah	Like you see different videos, you get to know the culture, the people, like a lot.”

Appendix G
Curriculum Vitae

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Sharlotte Church Antaran

Age: 22 years old

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: March 4, 2001

Place of Birth: Kalibo, Aklan

Present Address: Barangay Baybay, Tangalan, Aklan

Contact Number: 09081306307

Email Address: sharlottechurch.antaran-20@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City



CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Maria Nicole J. Bergantinos

Age: 21 years old

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: July 1, 2002

Place of Birth: Tanza Gua, Roxas City, Capiz

Present Address: Tigayon, Kalibo, Aklan

Contact Number: 09388755644

Email Address: marianicole.bergantinos-18@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City



CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Elyssa Maffet A. Bono

Age: 23 years old

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: March 21, 2000

Place of Birth: Iloilo City

Present Address: Kalibo, Aklan

Contact Number: 09480321986

Email Address: elyssamaffet.bono-18@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City



CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Vanessa Dian

Age: 22 years old

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: October 14,2000

Place of Birth: Iloilo City

Present Address: Deca 3 Phase 2 Block 26 Lot 8, Balabag, Pavia

Contact Number: 09060636855

EmailAddress: vanessadian-20@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City



CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Aljane May Nangan

Age: 22 years old

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: May 23, 2001

Place of Birth: Guimbal, Iloilo

Present Address: Barangay Ubos Ilawod, Noble St, Miagao, Iloilo

Contact Number: 09270790806

Email Address: aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City



CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Neclar M. Sevilla

Age: 22 years old

Sex: Male

Date of Birth: December 27, 2000

Place of Birth: Tapon, Glan, Sarangani Province, South Cotabato

Present Address: San Isidro, Jaro, Iloilo City

Contact Number: 0939 276 4382

Email Address: neclar.sevilla-18@cpu.edu.ph

College/Department: College of Arts and Sciences

Institution: Central Philippine University

Address of Institution: Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City

Appendix H

Turnitin Similarity



REVIEW, CONTINUING EDUCATION and CONSULTANCY CENTER

Central Philippine University
Jaro, Iloilo City

Tel. No. 329-1971 local 1008 email: rceccsec@cpu.edu.ph

Website: rcecc.cpu.edu.ph



September 14, 2023

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the proposal entitled “**THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CONTENT MODERATORS UNDER TIKTOK**” by **Antaran, Sharlotte Church, Bergantinos, Maria Nicole J., Bono, Elyssa Maffet A., Dian, Vanessa J., Nangan, Aljane May N., and Seviliena, Neclar M.** has undergone Turnitin Similarity Checking/Plagiarism Scanning with a passing percentage of **8%** and has passed the requirements (Chapter 1-3).

Prepared by:

Handwritten signature of Pinky E. Lutero-Tongol.

PINKY E. LUTERO-TONGOL
Staff-in-charged

Approved by:

Handwritten signature of Lenny Rose P. Mucho.

LENNY ROSE P. MUCHO, EdD.
Director, CPU-RCECC

Appendix I

Certificate of Technical Review



Appendix J

Certificate of Validation



CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY
 College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social Sciences
 1st Floor Valentine Hall, Jaro Iloilo City
 Tel. No. (033) 329 - 1971 local 1068
 www.cpu.edu.ph | soesci@cpu.edu.ph



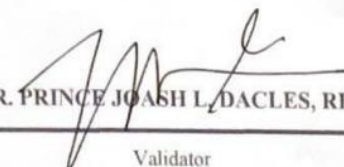
CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

This certification attests that the research study entitled "*The Lived Experience of Content Moderators Under Tiktok*", prepared and submitted by Ms. Sharlotte Church Antaran, Ms. Maria Nicole J. Bergantinos, Ms. Elyssa Maffet A. Bono, Ms. Vanessa J. Dian, Ms. Aljane May N. Nangan, and Mr. Neclar M. Sevilena, 4th Year Bachelor of Science in Psychology, had undergone validation by the expert and had passed through careful examination and were proven substantially useful for their study.

This certification is given out upon the request of above – named and for any legal purpose this may serve.

ISSUED, this 12 day of SEPTEMBER 2023.

Attested by:


 MR. PRINCE JOASH L. DACLES, RPh
 Validator



CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY
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Department of Social Sciences
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Tel. No. (033) 329 - 1971 local 1068
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CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

This certification attests that the research study entitled "*The Lived Experience of Content Moderators Under Tiktok*", prepared and submitted by Ms. Sharlotte Church Antaran, Ms. Maria Nicole J. Bergantinos, Ms. Elyssa Maffet A. Bono, Ms. Vanessa J. Dian, Ms. Aljane May N. Nangan, and Mr. Neclar M. Seviliena, 4th Year Bachelor of Science in Psychology, had undergone validation by the expert and had passed through careful examination and were proven substantially useful for their study.

This certification is given out upon the request of above – named and for any legal purpose this may serve.

ISSUED, this ____ day of _____ 2023.

Attested by:

MS. PAULINE MARIE D. WONG, RPh, RPsy

Validator



CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY
 College of Arts and Sciences
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 1st Floor Valentine Hall, Jaro Iloilo City
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CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

This certification attests that the research study entitled "*The Lived Experience of Content Moderators Under Tiktok*", prepared and submitted by Ms. Sharlotte Church Antaran, Ms. Maria Nicole J. Bergantinos, Ms. Elyssa Maffet A. Bono, Ms. Vanessa J. Dian, Ms. Aljane May N. Nangan, and Mr. Neclar M. Sevilla, 4th Year Bachelor of Science in Psychology, had undergone validation by the expert and had passed through careful examination and were proven substantially useful for their study.

This certification is given out upon the request of above – named and for any legal purpose this may serve.



ISSUED, this 14 day of September 2023.

Attested by:


 MS. JADE S. ERMITAÑO, R^Pm, R^{Psy}

 Validator

Decision Letter

 <div style="text-align: center;"> RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines 329-1971 to 79 local 3336 </div> 	RERB Form No. 22-1 Version No. 04 Date of Effectivity: 17 May 2023
DECISION FORM	

Date: October 23, 2023

NAME OF PROPONENT: **ANTARAN, SHARLOTTE CHURCH
BERGANTINOS, MARIA NICOLE
BONO, ELYSSA MAFFET
DIAN, VANESSA
NANGAN, ALJANE MAY
SEVILLENA, NECLAR**

Institution: CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY

Re: **"THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CONTENT MODERATORS UNDER TIKTOK"**

RERB code: 2023-366-UG-BONO et al.

Dear Mr/Ms. Bono,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your request and the following supporting documents dated **September 20, 2023**:



1. Letter of application for research ethics review addressed to CPU- RERB Chair
2. Accomplished RERB Application (Form 07-1)
3. Full protocol/Research proposal (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) with references.
4. Informed Consent Form (CPU-RERB template)
5. Certificate of Technical Review/Approval sheet of proposal signed by (3) three members of the technical panel and the Dean
6. Turnitin Similarity Certificate from CPU-RCECC
7. Budget
8. Curriculum Vitae/Resume of the Researcher/Investigator and Co-Researchers with 2x2 photograph
9. GANTT Chart/Timelines/Table of schedule
10. Two (2) Hard Copies (*Soft Bound in Blue or Black cover*) of the above documents placed inside a long clear plastic envelope
11. Soft Copy of the above documents emailed to researchethics@cpu.edu.ph

The above documents underwent **Expedited Review** which generated the following list of recommendations:

1. Please provide a clear operational definition of "content moderators"
2. Check tenses of verb in chapter 3
3. Specify purposive snowball sampling method
4. Please clarify this statement "however 5 participants already reach the data saturation". Under sub-topic participants of the study

- *This form contains the CPU-RERB recommendations. Please comply within (15) days and wait for the Ethical Clearance before the conduct of the study.*

Resubmission Form

 RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines 329-1971 to 79 local 3336	
RESUBMISSION FORM	RERB Form No. 08-1 Version No. 03 Date of Effectivity: 17 May 2023

INSTRUCTION TO THE RESEARCHER/s: This form shall be filled-out by the researcher upon receipt of the Decision form. Obtain an electronic copy of this form and provide the information required in the space provided. This form shall be signed by the researcher and adviser before submission to rec-resubmission@cpu.edu.ph

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Title of the Study	"The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators Under Tiktok"		
Version number/Date			
RERB Code	2023-366-UG-BONO et al.	Study Site:	
Name of Researcher	Antaran, Sharlotte Church	Contact Information	Tel No.
	Bergantinos, Maria Nicole	Antaran: 09081306307	Mobile No.
			Fax No.
Co-researcher (if any)	Bono, Elyssa Maffet	Bergantinos: 09388755644	Email:
	Dian, Vanessa	Bono: 09392764382	Antaran: sharlottechurch.antaran-20@cpu.edu.ph
	Nangan, Aljane May	Dian: 09060636855	Bergantinos: marianicole.bergantinos-18@cpu.edu.ph
	Sevillena, Neclar	Nangan: 09270790806	Bono: elysaamaffet.bono-18@cpu.edu.ph
		Sevillena: 09392764382	Dian: vanessa.dian-20@cpu.edu.ph
			Nangan: Aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph
			Sevillena:

			neclar.sevillena-18@cpu.edu.ph
Institution of researcher/s	Central Philippine University		
Address of Institution	Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City		

RERB Recommendations	Response of Researcher	Section and page number of revisions
Please provide a clear operational definition of "content moderators".	<p>We provided a clear operational definition of content moderators.</p> <p>"In this study, content moderators are individuals working in a company which is in-charge of reviewing and assessing user-generated content, specifically on an online platform called "Tiktok" to make sure the contents comply with the platform's community standards, terms of services, and legal requirements."</p>	Chapter 1: Definition of Terms — Page 10
Check the tenses of the verbs in chapter 3.	We manually checked paragraphs under Chapter 3 and revised verbs and sentences that needed revisions.	Paragraphs from chapter 3 — Pages 38 - 42
Specify purposive snowball sampling method.	<p>We specified further information in relation with the purposive snowball sampling method as well as the purposive sampling itself.</p> <p>"This study will be conducted in Iloilo City and will utilize a purposive</p>	Chapter 1: Scope and Delimitation — Page 13

	<p>sampling method where a clear and well-defined criteria or purpose are given in selecting our participants to ensure accurate research findings; out of purposive method, the researchers will also use a purposive snowball sampling method where the availability and willingness of our initial or existing participants will refer or introduce other potential participants.”</p>	
<p>Please clarify this statement "however 5 participants already reach the data saturation". Under sub-topic participants of the study.</p>	<p>We clarified the statement regarding the data saturation.</p> <p>“Ideally, we have estimated 8-10 participants, if the data process will no longer have new information or it has the same result, we will no longer pursue the estimated participants and will limit to 5 participants only.”</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Participants of the Study — Page 30</p>
<p>Revise “Ethical consideration” section. Follow the proper sequencing. It should be written after the “Research Instrument” section.</p> <p>The following is the content of Ethical Consideration, discuss as a sub-paragraph:</p>	<p>We followed the proper sequencing.</p> <p>“Ethical considerations” is now located after the “Research Instrument” section.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 31</p>

<p>1. Seeking approval from the RERB office and other related offices/institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prior to the conduct of the study. 	<p>We revised and followed proper sequencing.</p> <p>"A. To conduct a study on the lived experiences of a TikTok content moderator, the researchers will typically need to follow ethical guidelines and obtain the necessary approvals. This may include seeking approval from a Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) or a similar ethics review committee. Additionally, they might require permission or cooperation from TikTok as a platform and consent from the content moderators involved. It's crucial to ensure the protection of participants' rights and privacy when conducting such research."</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 32</p>
<p>1. Risk Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify research related risk based on the following categories: negligible, low, minimal, more than minimal, and high risk) and discuss how to mitigate the identified risk. 	<p>We revised and followed proper sequencing. Specified the research-related risk according to categories from negligible, low, minimal, more than minimal, and high risk. We also added information on how to mitigate the given risks and followed the proper sequencing.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 32 - 33</p>
<p>2. Benefits assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - should be summarized to make it more 	<p>We summarized this section for a more comprehensive layout. We also followed the proper sequencing.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 34</p>

<p>comprehensive to your respondents.</p>	<p>"C. The benefits of this study will provide a knowledge and in-depth understanding about the perspective of the existence, purpose, and difficulties of content moderators in our society to the researchers and those who are part of this research study. The participants will also be able to benefit with this study for their personal voice and experiences will be heard, and can help them improve their productivity in their field."</p>	
<p>3. Withdrawal criteria of participants - state withdrawal criteria.</p>	<p>We provided statement regarding the withdrawal criteria of participants.</p> <p>"D. The criteria for withdrawal in this study consist of various conditions. Initially, individuals who choose to withdraw from the study at any point are taken into account. Furthermore, participants who supply incomplete or inadequate information, and those who do not provide the required data, are also eligible for withdrawal. Additionally, individuals identified as content moderators residing outside of Iloilo City, participants without any connection to the social platform industry as content moderators, and participants who partake in unethical behaviors during the study by spreading</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 34</p>

	<p>falsehoods or deliberately misleading the Researchers, are also considered for withdrawal.”</p>	
<p><i>4. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants/respondents</i> - discuss how to anonymize & keep the confidentiality of your respondents.</p>	<p>We provided and discussed on how to keep the participants' confidentiality throughout the process.</p> <p>“In order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, their full names will not be disclosed in the research. When conducting interviews, researchers will only use participants' screen names. The researchers will also ensure that their personal information is not mentioned or shared with anyone. Access to the gathered data will be restricted, as soft copies will be stored in a password-protected folder and hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure room that is inaccessible to others. Confidentiality is a precious principle that ensures the connection and trust of the participants and the researchers, and it is the researchers' duty to preserve and secure their privacy and identities.”</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Pages 34 - 35</p>
<p><i>5. Voluntary, non-coercive recruitment of participants/respondents</i> - provide a statement on voluntary & non-coercive recruitment.</p>	<p>We provided a statement in relation to voluntary, non-coercive recruitment of respondents. We followed the correct order of sequencing.</p> <p>“F. Participation in this study is purely</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 35</p>

	<p>voluntary. Participants can choose to participate or not without pressure, intimidation, or undue influence. If the participants choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, the participant can stop responding to the informed consent or the interview. The researchers prioritizes the protection of the well-being and rights of those involved in the study."</p>	
<p>6. Disposal of research materials/data</p> <p>- discuss how to dispose of research materials.</p>	<p>We revised and added further information regarding how to dispose of research materials both in digital and physical data. We followed proper sequencing.</p> <p>"G. In concern of the disposal of research materials, all gathered data after the conduct of this research will be disposed accordingly to maintain confidentiality of the participants, security, and environmental responsibility. This will be done in the manner of shredding all the hard copies from the secured drawer where only the researchers have the access. For the digital data such as audio or video recordings, it will be removed or deleted from all used devices, and will be made sure that nothing will remain in deleted history. This process will be performed by the researchers as soon as the final defense is done."</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations —</p> <p>Page 35</p>

<p><i>7. Contribution to local capacity building and benefits to local communities</i></p> <p>- discuss possible contributions of your study.</p>	<p>We revised and discussed the potential contributions of our research study. Additionally, we followed proper sequencing.</p> <p>"H. This study aims to contribute to the local communities a comprehensive understanding of the existence, and purpose of content moderation in our society. The data that will be gathered will be used as a tool to educate and emphasize the impact and value of content moderators in this modern technological era. The knowledge that this study will present can influence the perspective and behavior of an individual to perform properly online, in the goal of understanding the importance of internet etiquette."</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 36</p>
<p><i>8. Incentives or compensation for participants</i></p> <p>- provide a statement on giving of incentives.</p>	<p>We revised and provided further discussion relating to the releasing of incentives for the participants. We also followed the correct order of sequencing.</p> <p>"I. Incentives, when thoughtfully designed and ethically administered, can serve as powerful motivators, enhancing performance, and establishing rapport. The participants who will accomplish the data gathering process will receive items of gratitude</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Page 36</p>

	<p>from the researchers in a form of gifts which will be a coffee glass tumbler with lid and straw that the participants can use to their office work or simply on the go trips as a means of keeping the drinks in hot or cold temperature in their personal choice of beverage to enhance their productivity during work or in an ordinary day alongside with pastries. The incentives will be given to the participants in a gift bag."</p>	
<p><i>9. Disclosure or declaration of potential conflict of interest</i> - provide statement on declaration of potential conflict of interest.</p>	<p>We provided statements on declaration of potential conflict of interest such as personal relationships, financial interests, employment or affiliations, personal bias, and personal view. We followed the exact sequencing.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Ethical Considerations — Pages 36 - 38</p>
<p>Please provide a separate section for Dissemination Plan after Ethical consideration section.</p>	<p>We provided a "Dissemination Plan" which is in a different section located after the "Ethical Considerations".</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Dissemination Plan — Pages 38 - 39</p>
<p>On the Informed Consent Form:</p> <p>→ Delete Instructions to the researchers</p> <p>→ Specify the year February to November? (No. 8)</p>	<p>→ Instructions to the Researchers are removed.</p> <p>→ We specified the year from February 2023 to November 2023.</p>	<p>RERB Informed Consent Form</p>

<p>→ Consider below minimal risk (No. 9)</p> <p>→ Delete burning as means of disposal and add discussion on how you will dispose the audio/voice recordings (No. 15)</p> <p>→ Revise, "the purpose of research is to generate new knowledge to whom and how then will you share your findings?" Provide a concrete plan and do not delete the last paragraph "As a participant..." (No. 16)</p>	<p>→ "Below minimal risk" is acknowledged.</p> <p>→ We deleted burning as a means of disposal and added further explanation on how to dispose of physical and digital data that we will possibly acquire.</p> <p>→ We revised the parts and provided a plan which discusses "the purpose of research..."</p>	
---	--	--

Researcher/s:



Shariotte Church Antaran

Signature over Printed Name



Maria Nicole Bergantinos

Signature over Printed Name



Elyssa Mallet Bono

Signature over Printed Name



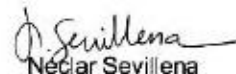
Vanessa Dian

Signature over Printed Name



Aljane May Nangan

Signature over Printed Name



Nedar Sevilla

Signature over Printed Name

Ethical Clearance



RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
 CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY
 Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines
 329-1971 to 79 local 3336



ETHICAL CLEARANCE

RERB Form No.22-2
 Version No.: 04
 Date of Effectivity: 17 May 2023

Date of Approval: November 20, 2023

RERB Code: 2023-366-UG-BONO et al.

Protocol Title: **"THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CONTENT MODERATOR UNDER TIKTOK"**

Version No. 02

Researcher/s: **ANTARAN, SHARLOTTE CHURCH
 BERGANTINOS, MARIA NICOLE J.
 BONO, ELYSSA MAFFET A.
 DIAN, VANESSA J.
 NANGAN, ALJANE MAY N.
 SEVILLENA, NECLAR M**


Upon resubmission of the following documents, Research Proposal Chapters 1, 2, and 3 with references and Informed Consent Form, the above protocol is hereby **APPROVED** by the CPU-RERB. This ethical clearance is valid from **November 20, 2023 to November 20, 2024**.

The researcher/s are hereby required to submit the following:

- ✓ Progress Report on or before **December 20, 2023** to researchethics@cpu.edu.ph
- ✓ Final Report Form and one (1) copy of the completed protocol **within one (1) month** after completion of the study.



For any amendment or alteration in the protocol that will change the nature, or the level of risk involved after approval, the Research Ethics Review Board must be notified through writing and accomplishing the following forms as needed: Protocol Deviation Form, Serious Adverse Events, Amendment Form, and/or Early Termination Report.

Very truly yours,


JOY G. RASO, PhD
 Chair, CPU-RERB

Date: 11/20/23

Progress Report

 <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines 329-1971 to 79 local 3336</p> </div> 	RERB Form No. 09-1 Version No. 01 Date of Effectivity: 17 May 2023
<p>PROTOCOL REVIEW OF PROGRESS REPORT</p>	

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESEARCHER/s:
 This form is required thirty (30) days after your Data Collection. Obtain an electronic copy of this form and supply All information required in the space provided. This form shall be signed by the researcher and adviser before submission to researchethics@cpu.edu.ph

GENERAL INFORMATION

Title of Study	"The Lived Experiences of Content Moderators Under Tiktok"		
RERB Protocol No.	2023-366-UG-BONO et al.	Study Site	
Name of Researcher	Antaran, Charlotte Church Bergantinos, Maria Nicole Bono, Elyssa Maffet Dian, Vanessa Nangan, Aljane May Sevillaena, Neclar		
Contact No.	Antaran: 09081306307 Bergantinos: 09388755644 Bono: 09392764382 Dian: 09060636855 Nangan: 09270790806 Sevillaena: 09392764382	Email Address	Antaran: sharlottechurch.antaran-20@cpu.edu.ph Bergantinos: marianicole.bergantinos-18@cpu.edu.ph Bono: elysaamaffet.bono-18@cpu.edu.ph Dian: vanessa.dian-20@cpu.edu.ph Nangan: Aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph Sevillaena: neclar.sevillaena-

			18@cpu.edu.ph
Co-researcher (if any)			
Institution	Central Philippine University		
Address of Institution	Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City		
Ethical clearance effectivity period:	November 20, 2023 to November 20, 2024		

PROGRESS REPORT

1. Start of study: February 2023
2. Expected end of study: January 2024
3. Number of enrolled participants: Five (5) Participants
4. Number of required participants: Five (5) Participants
5. Number of participants who withdrew: Zero (0)
6. Deviations from the approved protocol: None
7. New information (literature or in the conduct of the study) that may significantly change the risk-benefit ratio: None
8. Issues/problems encountered: Difficulty in looking for research participants

Recommendations (For RERB use only)

DECISION: (For RERB use only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for further information <input type="checkbox"/> Noted and Accept report
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Comments of Primary Reviewer (For RERB use only)	
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RERB Primary Reviewer: (For RERB use only)

Signature over Printed Name

Date:

Researcher/s:



Antaran, Charlotte Church
Signature Over Printed Name


Bergantinos, Maria Nicole
Signature Over Printed Name


Bone, Elissa Maffet
Signature Over Printed Name


Dian, Vanessa
Signature Over Printed Name

Nangan, Aljane May
Signature Over Printed Name

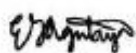

Sevillaena, Neclar
Signature Over Printed Name

Date: December 15, 2023

Adviser:

Ms. Eria Grace Agutaya
Signature Over Printed Name:

Date: December 14, 2023

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line across the middle, and a loop on the right.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Eria Grace Agutaya' written in a cursive style.

CPU-RERB

Final Report

<div style="text-align: center;"> RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD CENTRAL PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY Lopez Jaena St., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines 329-1971 to 79 local 3336 </div>	RERB Form No. 13-1 Version No. 01 Date of Effectivity: 17 May 2023
FINAL REPORT FORM	

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESEARCHER/s:
 This form is required upon completion of the study. Obtain an electronic copy of this form and supply all information required in the space provided. This form shall be signed by the researcher and adviser before submission to researchethics@cpu.edu.ph

GENERAL INFORMATION

RERB Protocol Number	2023-366-UG-BONO et al.	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	21/05/2024
Protocol Title	Rated SPG: "Filthy Sensual and Unfiltered" A Click for Viewing Pleasure: The Lived Experiences of Tiktok Content moderators		
Principal Investigator/s	Nangan, Aljane May N.		
Department/College	College of Arts and Sciences		
Contact No.	09302670812	*Email Address	Aljanemay.nangan-20@cpu.edu.ph
Co-investigator/s (if any)	Antaran, Charlotte Church Bergantinos, Maria Nicole J. Bono, Elyssa Maffet A. Dian, Vanessa J. Sevilena, Neclar M. Agutaya, Eria Grace L.		
Contact No.	Antaran - 09081306307 Bergantinos- 09388755644 Bono- 09392764382 Dian - 09060636855 Sevilena- 09392764382	Email Address	Antaran: Sharlottechurch.antaran-20@cpu.edu.ph Bergantinos: Marianicole.bergantinos-18@cpu.edu.ph Bono: Elyssamaffet.bono-18@cpu.edu.ph Dian: Vanessa.dian-20@cpu.edu.ph Sevilena: Neclar.sevilena-18@cpu.edu.ph
Institution of Researcher/s	Central Philippine University		
Address of Institution	Lopez Jaena, St., Jaro, Iloilo City		
Effective period of Ethical Clearance	From: November 20, 2023 To: November 20, 2024		
(*for RERB) Primary Reviewer/s			
Type of Study	<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical <input type="checkbox"/> Epidemiology <input type="checkbox"/> Observational study		

	<input type="checkbox"/> Document Review <input type="checkbox"/> Individual based <input type="checkbox"/> Genetic
	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Others, specify _____
Review Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Board <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expedited

FINAL REPORT

1. Start/end of the Study: February 2023 to May 2024
2. Number of enrolled participants: Five (5) Participants
3. Number of required participants: Five (5) Participants
4. Number of participants who withdraw: Zero (0)
5. Deviations from the approved protocol: None
6. **Issues/problems encountered:** A significant challenge in the research was the reluctance of participants during interviews to divulge detailed information about their work, impeding the acquisition of thorough data and insights. Additionally, recruiting participants posed challenges, with many showing disinterest and time constraints when invited for interviews. To mitigate this, researchers assured anonymity and privacy. They employed structured questioning and follow-ups to foster openness, creating a supportive environment devoid of judgment. Building rapport from the outset, actively listening, and expressing genuine interest in participants' perspectives facilitated engagement.
7. **Summary of findings:** The study revealed that content moderation posed significant challenges for participants, especially in dealing with unpleasant videos, fulfilling precise work standards, and managing their exposure to disturbing material. Each individual's tolerance varied, affecting their ability to handle graphic content as required by their roles. Despite the psychological toll and criticism regarding modifiable work standards, participants appreciated the convenience and flexibility of their duties. They employed personal coping mechanisms to manage work difficulties, and a focus on wellness was noted as beneficial. Overall, participants reported that their experiences in content moderation had broadened their perspectives on work and life.
8. **Conclusions/Recommendations:** The study concluded that content moderation significantly impacted participants' mental health, causing sleep difficulties, trauma, and a harsh confrontation with reality due to graphic and explicit content. These experiences underscore the demanding nature of the job and its toll on mental well-being. Despite the flexibility and convenience of their roles, the dangerous nature of handling such content was emphasized, requiring advanced skills to apply appropriate policies. To cope, participants prioritized self-care routines, highlighting the importance of personal well-being in managing job demands. Their exposure to diverse and distressing content led to deep insights into human behavior, fostering empathy and a nuanced understanding of societal norms and values. This role not only enhanced their professional abilities but also contributed to personal growth and a broader perspective on digital interactions.

Recommendations: Researchers recommend that content moderators prioritize their well-being by creating personalized self-care routines, including breaks, mindfulness, and seeking support from colleagues or mental health professionals. They should advocate for access to mental health resources through their employers and foster supportive communities via peer groups and online forums. Continuous training is essential for improving coping skills and resilience. Social media companies must prioritize moderators' welfare by implementing mental health policies, providing comprehensive training, adequate staffing, and access to mental health resources. Users should avoid sharing harmful content, report violations, and engage respectfully online to support moderators and maintain a safer environment. Advocating for moderators' well-being and fostering positive, inclusive communities is crucial. Future moderators should practice self-care, set