



## Analysis of Wattpad E-community: A Model-Based Virtual Collaboration

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### ABSTRACT

This study conducted an Analysis of Wattpad E-Community: A Model-Based Virtual Collaboration. Specifically, it sought to answer the following: (1) What information can be obtained based on the analysis of Wattpad E-Community in terms of (a) strengths, (b) weakness, (c) opportunities, and (d) threats?; and (2) What program can be proposed based on the S.W.O.T analysis of Wattpad E-Community?. This descriptive-quantitative research collected data via survei which were analyzed and interpreted using Weighted Mean, ranking, and verbal descriptors. The SWOT analysis indicated that ideal platform, learning experience, and sociable environment are among the group's strengths, whereas excessive liberty, technical difficulties, and exclusivity belong to its weaknesses. In addition, the discovered opportunities in the group include possibility to meet and learn from professionals/expert, development of online learning community, and potential feasibility in data gathering, while possibility to transfer to another e-community, cyber security hazards, and frequent power outages are considered as threats. Therefore, it is recommended to propose the implementation of Project VIBE (Virtual, Interactive, and Boundless Engagement), alongside the application of the improvements and revisions generated from the results of the SWOT Analysis.

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## Introduction

Instructional design in literature continues to evolve through time due to the 21<sup>st</sup> century innovations in education and because of the new demands as well as dilemmas that emerge. Teaching becomes more learner-centered and collaborative learning is encouraged in the curriculum around the world (Henri & Pudelko, 2003).

A published study by IŞIKLI & Tarakcioglu (2017) in the Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies (JLLS) that investigates the difficulties in teaching English literature to students in Turkey gathered findings which included attitudes of authorities, wrong choice of teaching methods, lack of student awareness of the importance of learning literature, and lack of motivation among the problems, with the latter being the most serious. This information suggests the need for an approach that focuses on eradicating obsolete practices in teaching that the students find ineffective (Spiridon et al., 2020).

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Similar implications are emphasized by Magulod (2018) in his research entitled *Innovative Learning Tasks in Enhancing the Literary Appreciation Skills of Students* conducted in three colleges in the Philippines, among which are “that there is a need to enhance the literary appreciation skills of students with the use of interesting learning tasks, strategies, and methods” and “that if reading experience is remembered as a delightful, enjoyable pursuit, students will be encouraged to read more.”

Over the past years, Filipinos especially the youth are more engaged in contemporary literature that are locally made by freelance authors whose works can easily be accessed and be given feedback through online applications such as Wattpad. Ever since its creation in 2012, the app has been widely used by readers and writers and a phenomenon called “Wattyfever” came into existence in the Philippines (Contreras et al., 2015). Wattpad is an online platform that enables writers and readers to come together since the authors are able to upload their works as e-books and anyone can access the published pieces of electronic literature. Some e-books are priced and others can be retrieved easily without payment. Readers can also give their rating and feedback using the platform. Today, the medium exists as a website and an application.

The phenomenal spread of Wattpad’s influence resulted in the information of communities that existed through online and digital means, including a Facebook group with the name “Wattpad Is Love Kulitan” or WPILK. This group is composed of members across the country who interact daily and conduct activities such as conventions, debates, and even tournaments which are solely based on their interest in literature (Kirby et al., 2019). This type of group that can also be referred to as “e-community” originated from the ubiquity of various types of social media for the reason that the users may have realized their capability of seamlessly connecting to other people with the aid of the internet and form circles that revolve around certain interests or goals (Beaton, 2015).

Adopting this scheme of unifying individuals for a purpose and making them independently yet cooperatively engage in activities of their own in the field of education would be beneficial on the part of educational institutions, school administrators, curricularists and instructional policy makers, teachers, and even students. It is because once it is treated as a strategy in learning, it will be in line with the principles of modern education that features autonomous learning, collaboration, and application of contemporary and advanced methods. At the time studies and simulations are initiated, researchers may also begin to evaluate this venture further. An exploration that seeks to analyze the said virtual collaboration of people or e-community in order to come up with an innovative approach in teaching and learning literature of various era and origin is therefore considered an imperative.

### **Statements of the Problem**

This study aims to conduct an Analysis of Wattpad E-Community: A Model-Based Virtual Collaboration. Specifically, it plans to answer the following questions:

1. What information can be obtained based on the analysis of Wattpad E-Community in terms of:
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- a. Strengths;
- b. Weaknesses;
- c. Opportunities; and
- d. Threats?

2. What program can be proposed based on the S.W.O.T analysis of Wattpad E-Community?

### Research Methods

This study is descriptive-quantitative; it identified and validated the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Wattpad e-community as the study's subject. The subject of this study is a Facebook group named "Wattpad Is Love Kulitan" (WPILK) consisting of 300 members from various parts of the Philippines. The researchers used Stratified Sampling Method in order to get the sample size from the whole population. From 300 members, the sample size of 171 members is taken using the Slovin's formula.

The admins of the Facebook group where the e-community exists was notified through an electronic letter informing them about the study and asking for their permission to gather data prior to the distribution of survey forms as well as to join their group throughout the course of the research. As the responses were submitted, the Google forms were automatically tallied the results through infographics which can be transformed into a spreadsheet. After one week, the researchers checked and compiled the responses and created tables for presentation, analysis, and interpretation.

The survey questionnaire used for this study was patterned on the existing questionnaires used for SWOT Analysis. The questions were modified in order to make it appropriate for the study. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were predetermined based on researches about online communities. This instrument were checked and validated through a dry-run to non-respondents who gave suggestions on how to improve the questionnaire and its presentation. The four-point Likert scale was also used as an ideal way to rate the validity of each of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, with "1" being "Strongly Disagree" and "4" as "Strongly Agree" (Joshi et al., 2015). Weighted mean was used in order to know the average response and the ranking method was used to identify the most relevant items in the table.

### Findings

#### SWOT Analysis Results of Wattpad E-Community

**Table 1** SWOT Analysis Results of Wattpad E-Community

Strengths	Opportunities
Ideal Platform	Possibility to Meet and Learn from Professional/Expert Members
Learning Experience	Development of Online Learning Community
Sociable Environment	Potential Efficiency in Promotion of Literary Works
Weaknesses	Threats

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Technical Difficulties	Possibility to Transfer to another E-Community
Excessive Liberty	Cyber Security Threats
Exclusivity	Frequent Power Outages

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Based on the results of the SWOT Analysis conducted in this study, displayed o Table 6 are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Wattpad E-Community. The strengths that the Wattpad E-Community possess include ideal platform, learning experience, sociable environment. Technical difficulties, excessive liberty, and exclusivity are considered to be among the present weaknesses of the Wattpad E-Community. As factors that can cause progress to the Wattpad E-Community, the opportunities that the virtual group can take advantage are the possibility to meet and learn from professional/expert members, development of online learning community, and potential feasibility in data gathering. The possibility of members to transfer to another e-community, cyber security hazards, and frequent power outages are viewed as threats that might put the Wattpad E-Community and its members in danger or at risk of potential harms.

Findings confirm the initial assumptions for this study, which suggest that the results will contain active participation and engagement, inaccessibility and distractions, possible application for education, and virtual hazards. Given this outcome, it can be implied that the features of the Wattpad E-Community as well as its programs and policies that resulted to the strengths of the virtual group can be adopted in creating a project to be used in teaching and promoting literature that imitates said model. Moreover, the weaknesses must be addressed by adding remedial and proactive solutions or by improving existing measures. To maintain the progress of the project, the discovered opportunities and threats must also be taken into consideration.

The results also fortified the theories that back up the objective of this research to make a literature-based virtual community as an educational innovation. The Community of Practice by Etienne Wenger and Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning are accentuated by the strengths and opportunities related to the social aspect of Wattpad the e-community, and the theory of Technological Determinism by Thorstein Veblen (year) was made more convincing because of the attitude that the members of the Wattpad E-Community exhibited in terms of the use of technology and how the creation of a modern platform prompted the existence of their group and its objectives, which in return caused the achievement of learning outcomes of its members.

In addition, the findings are also congruent to the related literature and studies from (Abdelmalak, 2015; Abubakar & Garko, n.d.; Băcă, 2020; Garza et al., 2021; IŞIKLI & Tarakcioglu, 2017; Murdock & Williams, 2011; Naji et al., 2019; Spiridon et al., 2020) which, in one way or another, all recommended the idea of building a virtual community of learners for an enhanced and maximized educational experience.

Therefore, the second assumption in this study which is to propose Project VIBE (Virtual Interactive and Boundless Engagement), an initiative that features the nature and design of the Wattpad E-Community as well as the application of the improvements and revisions

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generated from the results of the SWOT Analysis, is acceptable, appropriate, and recommended.

### **PROJECT VIBE (VIRTUAL, INTERACTIVE, AND BOUNDLESS ENGAGEMENT)**

Imitating the Wattpad E-Community that the study analyzed and examined, Project VIBE is an initiative that aims to make its members have a sense of belonging with fellow literature enthusiasts through an online community of practice, a platform that nurtures peer learning and collaboration, and various opportunities for being a member of a literature-based e-community.

#### ***Design***

Project VIBE aims to create an e-community that is patterned on the Community of Practice by Etienne Wenger that features three elements: domain, community, and practice. The domain in this project, which is the common interest or core subject of the group, will be literature. The community will be consisted of literature enthusiasts as well as students who are enrolled in literature classes, for they have reading and learning literature as their mutual practice that will be exercising in the e-community. The group will be a form of an online assemblage that utilizes web tools and applications to have virtual gatherings and engagements.

#### ***Features***

The project will be utilizing Facebook Group as its main platform. This will be managed by the Head Admin and his/her subordinates. Members of the group can express themselves by using the features of the said platform, such as sharing information or expressing thoughts, ideas, opinions, and experiences through posts. They can also give announcements, set events, discuss topics, and create virtual rooms for online meetings. Since the main group will be divided into subgroups, their medium of communication will be Facebook Messenger Group Chats. The Subgroup Representatives are responsible in supervising their respective sections. The group are also encouraged to explore other tools other than the main platform and medium of communication to accomplish their objectives.

#### ***Administration/Management***

The group will be under the supervision of Head Admin, who is concerned for the overall monitoring and organization. He/she will also act as the director of the group in order to set the visions and goals for the e-community. As the chief executive officer, the head admin will also be in charge of appointing the officers, including the secretary, and other appointees as well as the delegating of tasks and assigning the future successors. The Subgroup Representatives, as well as their secretary and assistant representatives, are determined by their constituents. They will serve as the leaders in their own subgroups. The head admin and the subgroup representatives will have their own core group and they will communicate on a regular basis to give updates, discuss concerns, and create plans for the e-community. They will also set the policies and implement rules and regulations.

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### ***Policies***

There shall be policies in the e-community for admission or recruitment, execution of activities, organization of subgroups, and management of members. These will be discussed by the admin and the members of the group so as to make the policies suitable and appropriate for them. The policies will be composed of guidelines, rights and responsibilities, and set of rules which will be implemented, regulated, and/or enforced by the leaders and facilitators of the group.

Below are the specific matters and concerns that must be covered by the policies:

- a. Admission and Recruitment
- b. Attendance
- c. Responsibility of Facilitators
- d. Rules
- e. Plan of Activities
- f. Guidelines on Activities
- g. Other important matters

### ***Activities***

The e-community encourages activities that are fun and interesting for the group. Members will not just participate, but will also be organizing their own activities. The subgroups are expected to propose and organize their own events for each month. They will be the ones to set the guidelines for their event, and they should consult the head admin for approval.

The activities in the e-community will include:

- a. Games and Competitions
- b. Group Meetings
- c. Group Sharing
- d. Monthly Celebrations
- e. Virtual Parties
- f. Webinars
- g. Workshops
- h. Collaborative Project
- i. Mentorships
- j. Recognitions

Aside from the listed activities, members can also independently create engagements, share their works, upload their performances, and contribute to the discussions of the group

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through posts. By doing so, they will earn badges – another feature of Facebook Group. Aside from the badges that the officer automatically have, members can also be awarded badges such as *Visual Storyteller*, *Conversation Starter*, and others which will appear beside their names.

### **Conclusion**

This study inferred that ideal platform, learning experience, and sociable environment are all considered by the respondents as significant existing strengths of their e-community. There is a manifestation that the respondents confirm that technical difficulties, excessive liberty, and exclusivity are among the weaknesses of the Wattpad e-community. It can be gleaned from the findings that the possibility to meet and learn from professional/expert members, the development of online learning community, and the potential feasibility in data gathering are considered as observable opportunities that will benefit the Wattpad e-community and its members. The implication that e-community competitors, cyber security threats, and frequent power outages are among the potential threats for Wattpad E-community can be deduced from the results.

Consequently, the researchers came up with the conclusion that the features of the Wattpad E-Community as well as its programs and policies that resulted to the strengths of the virtual group can be adopted in creating a project to be used in teaching and promoting literature that imitates said model. Moreover, the weaknesses must be addressed by adding remedial and proactive solutions or by improving existing measures. To maintain the progress of the project, the discovered opportunities and threats must also be taken into consideration.

Therefore, the researchers advise that for the features of the Wattpad E-Community that resulted to its strengths be adopted. These include the usage of Facebook Group as the platform, the application of the group's policies and programs, the imitation of its organizational management, and the simulation of its activities. Moreover, the rules and regulations of the group must be intensified, be added, and be properly implemented in order to control the behavior of the members. Guidelines in activities should be crafted well and trainings for the facilitators must also be exercised so as to prevent any technical difficulties. As proactive measures, it is noted that the members' engagement should be monitored to make sure no members feel excluded or left out and that activities must be simpler and require more accessible resources. Further, the weaknesses must also be seen as challenges so as to convert them into fuels for strength. For instance, the technical difficulties should be observed as a sign for the admins to create a fun activity that will challenge the facilitators and members to have a better way of handling and organizing events. The weaknesses will then be converted into strength by learning resilience.

In implementing an e-community, all of the opportunities must be seized to obtain progress and they should always be taken into account to be realized by the members. The security of an e-community must be strengthened through strict admission policies and rules to protect the group from malicious cyber hazards must be regulated. Also, the facilitators

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should always ensure the activeness and consistent interest of the members to keep them committed to the group and makes the activities feasible even with the frequent power outages. To make the threats less frightening and discouraging, they must be seen as opportunities to be resourceful and trustworthy, which will inspire the creation of activities and programs that are more safe, inclusive, and creative.

Based on the preceding conclusion, this study recommends that Project VIBE (Virtual Interactive and Boundless Engagement), an initiative that features the nature and design of the Wattpad E-Community as well as the application of the improvements generated from the results of the SWOT Analysis, should be proposed and be implemented.

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