CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introductory part of this study, which covers the rationale as well as the significance of the study. This introduction is divided into several parts: background of the study, the purpose of the study, statements of the problems, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

The issue of bullying has been noted as a serious matter; bullying has been increasingly recognized as a severe problem that affects many countries throughout the world (Rigby, 2013). He states that prevalence of bullying between countries might differs, but there is an urgency to immediately handle the issue of bullying. Geel et al. (2014) states that bullying is a repeated physical or verbal harassment. Moreover, bullying, referring to Hellstrom et al. (2015), is something hurtful that leads to negative health consequences such as low self-esteem and feelings of not being good enough

Being bullied as a young adult has an immense impact on adulthood. Since adolescents are a stage where individuals are in the process of leaving childhood and coming into age as an adult, they develop and face fundamental changes physically and psychologically. According to Hong et al. (2015), young adults and children who experience bullying may have a higher risk of suicide, anxiety issues, develop low self-esteem, experience loneliness and hopelessness. Moreover, Dombeck (2020) stated that a person bullied in younger years might face difficulties in their later life. Young adults might find it hard to trust people and develop perceptions of self that are easy to victimize. Many experiences interpersonal difficulties, such as fear and avoidance of new social situations. Therefore, bullying should be easily identified at the earlier stage of life.

For young adults, even body issues can become the source of bullying. Knack et al. (2012) reported that young adults who do not conform to their peers' values and norms, for example, in terms of look and attractiveness, will be more likely to be bullied. According to Day et al.(2021), a victim of bullying associated with body image issues will lead to binge eating, dietary restraint, purging, and unhealthy weight control behaviors. Another study done by Lestari (2019) shows that young adults who experience fat shaming have the risk of having Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD).

Therefore, with various, serious, and long-term effects, bullying needs to be immediately addressed. One of the ways is by raising the issue in text which are popular among young adults. As stated by Hughes and Laffier (2016), using text or literature can assist young adults in developing engagement on the topic of bullying and educating them in the important of the issue.

Nowadays, webtoon is one of the most widely read by young adults. Referring to Yecies et al. (2019), the word webtoon is a combination of the word 'web' and 'cartoon.' Founded in 2004 by Junhoo Kim, webtoon has become one of the biggest platforms to read the webcomic. As one of the biggest platforms to read webcomic it is reported by Reid (2019), webtoon attracts about 55 million global visitors monthly and 15 million global readers daily with young adults as their target audiences'.

Many webtoons raise the issue related to look-based bullying. For instance, *True Beauty* by Jukyeong Lim is a story about a girl that was a victim of bullying and decide to change her appearance by using make-up or *My ID Gangnam Beauty* by Gi Maeng Gi that is about a girl who was once bullied for her look and then got plastic surgery to transform her face. For that reason, the research will look into look-based bullying in Lookism (2017). Lookism is different from the other webtoons with look-based bullying because it focuses on the issues of bullying while the other webtoons prioritize other aspects of young adult life, such as romance.

This study aims to examine *Lookism (2017)* to disclose the issues of looks among young adults and the meaning underlying look-based bullying in the text. Theory of representation by Stuart Hall (1997) is employed to analyze the data.

1.2 Purposes of Research

This research aims to analyze the characters look that are bullied and understanding the representation of look-based bullying in *Lookism* webtoon.

1.3 Statements of Problems

This research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the look features of bullied characters that can be found in *Lookism* webtoon?
2. What does look-based bullying represent?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to determine the looks of the characters that are bullied and the representation of the look-based bullying in *Lookism* webtoon

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the result of the study is expected to contribute to the study of bullying and strengthen the knowledge of representation depicted in the webtoon. In line with the theoretical significance, the results of this study are expected to gain public awareness of bullying and facilitate the readers to understand more about the representation of look-based bullying that happens in *Lookism* webtoon.

1.6 Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and descriptive method to approach particular panels that are constructed in selected *Lookism* webtoon episodes. This method is chosen since qualitative methods allow researchers to explore the lives of individuals, understand their lived experiences, and describe and

interpret culture (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the qualitative method is suitable because this study aims to explore the look of the bullied character and reveal the representation of look-based bullying in the webtoon.

1.7 Clarification of Key Terms

Here are some clarifications of the key terms that are used in this study:

1. **Bullying** is a specific type of aggressive behavior towards others intended to harm, repeatedly occurs over time, and involves an imbalance of power in which the person with power attacks the less powerful victim. The aggressive behavior can take various expressions, including physical (e.g., pushing, kicking), verbal (e.g., name-calling, threatening), and relational forms (e.g., purposely excluding, gossiping) (Flanagan, et al., 2013)

2. **Look/ Physical Appearance** is an apparent personal characteristic that is immediately accessible to others during social interactions and contributes to other persons' expectations (Mahoney, 1978).

3. **Representation** is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997).

1.8 Organization of The Paper

This study is organized into five chapters which are as follows:

1. **Chapter I: Introduction**

    This chapter covers the background of the study, the purpose of the research, statements of the problems, the significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

2. **Chapter II: Literature Review**

    This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in the study. It covers the related topic of look-based bullying and the representation of look-based bullying.

3. **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

      This section elaborates on the methodology used in the study, such as research design, stage of research, data collection, data analysis, and data presentation.

4. **Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion**

      The findings and discussion chapter present the results from the conducted research; this chapter also provides the answers to the research questions and discussion from the findings.

5. **Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendation**

      The final chapter of this research contains the conclusion from the study drawn from the findings. It also includes suggestions for further studies.