

Like and Subside: Slacktivism on Social Justice and Civic Engagement Among Ateneo De Davao Senior High School Learners

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ABSTRACT

The rise of online activism has contributed to the phenomenon known as slacktivism, where individuals engage in social movements through low-effort online actions such as liking, sharing, commenting, and using a hashtag without meaningful offline participation. While online platforms amplify awareness, they often replace traditional civic engagement, leading to diluted social movements that risk becoming fleeting trends rather than sustained efforts for change. This study examines Ateneo de Davao University Senior High School (AdDU SHS) learners' motivations for online activism, the challenges in attaining genuine social change posed by slacktivism, and their strategies for transitioning to traditional civic action, highlighting the critical role of Filipino youth in shaping the nation's future. Using a qualitative research design, the study gathered data from 15 AdDU SHS learners—three from each academic strand—through semi-structured interviews and a researcher-made questionnaire. Thematic analysis revealed that students engage in online activism due to personal and emotional connections to issues, social responsibility, and the accessibility of digital platforms. However, slacktivism presents significant challenges, including superficial support that weakens social movements, fear of real-world repercussions, misinformation, and the limitations of offline activism in addressing large-scale issues, leading to passive engagement. To address these challenges, AdDU SHS learners transition from slacktivism to traditional civic engagement through research, fact-checking, and informed action. While social media raises awareness, they find offline efforts more impactful, beginning with small steps such as joining school programs, clubs, and local initiatives before engaging in larger-scale advocacy. The study recommends (1) that educational institutions integrate civic engagement discussions and structured opportunities for advocacy into the Ateneo de Davao University curriculum to raise awareness and equip students with the skills and motivation to take meaningful action. (2) For school organizations, student-led initiatives should be strengthened to empower students to take on more active roles in social movements. (3) For social media users, critically assessing online activism by ensuring that digital engagement translates into real-world impact, using social media to mobilize meaningful action rather than just performative support.

Keywords: AdDU Slacktivist Learners, Phenomenological Research Design, Semi-structured Questionnaire, Thematic Analysis, Ateneo de Davao University Senior High School

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In an age where a mere “like” or “share” could be mistaken for meaningful activism, the question arose: Were today’s youth true warriors of change, or were they hiding behind their screens, wielding them as shields rather than swords in the fight for social justice? Social media has undeniably become a powerful tool for spreading information and shaping public opinion, transforming how individuals engage with social justice issues. Platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok have created an environment where an activist’s message—a video, slogan, or hashtag—could reach millions within seconds. The allure of this online activism lay in its simplicity and speed, offering a stark contrast to traditional methods such as door-to-door canvassing, petitioning, or participating in risky street protests. In this context, online actions presented a safer and more efficient alternative, holding the potential to foster activism and civic engagement.

However, while social media has transformed civic engagement, particularly in raising awareness about social issues, it also presents challenges. Despite the potential for online platforms to promote values through “ethical consumerism”—such as donating to charity, boycotting products, and supporting nonprofit organizations—and “voter participation,” including registering to vote and participating in elections, there had been a noticeable decline in youth participation in community development (Cadano, 2024). This decline was attributed to both technological and societal shifts and the perceived complexity of civic engagement, often seen as a demanding and time-consuming process. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2018), young Filipinos are significantly less likely to engage in lobbying compared to their counterparts in Vietnam and Myanmar, with female youth being 44% less likely to participate in political activism than males. Geographic disparities further highlight this decline, as interest in politics is notably lower in rural areas (52.8%) compared to urban areas (66.8%).

Revitalizing youth civic engagement has been crucial for community development and empowering young people to voice their concerns on issues directly impacting their lives. This urgency had been underscored by the demographic reality in the Philippines, where UNFPA PH reported that 30 million individuals aged 10-24, comprising 28 percent of the population, represented the largest generation of young people in the country’s history (*Young People*, 2018). These young people played a pivotal role in driving social change by studying the conditions of marginalized sectors, building connections, exchanging ideas, addressing issues, and bridging differences to create a more empowered society (Labor, 2018). Ensuring sustained youth civic engagement is essential for fostering an inclusive and progressive society, where young people actively contribute to meaningful change and the betterment of their communities.

The phenomenon often labeled as “Slacktivism” highlighted a paradoxical behavior—blending the intent of activism with the reality of minimal effort. According to the United Nations, slacktivism involves individuals who support a cause by taking minimal actions but lack genuine commitment or dedication to creating real change (Muslic, 2017). This superficial engagement had been detrimental to offline activism, as it normalized easy and ineffective political participation, potentially encouraging apathy (Jovicevic, 2016). Such shallow participation often led to the formation of echo chambers on social media, where users were only exposed to views that reinforced their existing beliefs. These environments stifled critical thinking and diminished the diversity of perspectives essential for robust social movements. A clear example was the rise of online boycott campaigns, where users rallied against companies or individuals

whose actions conflicted with their values. The danger arose when these virtual protests spilled into the real world, targeting unsuspecting individuals, shaming them, or even exposing their identities on social media for engaging in routine behaviors.

On a global scale, social media has transformed activism into a powerful, borderless force, as seen with various digital movements that have mobilized millions of people worldwide. The conflict, which had been ongoing for decades, saw a dramatic intensification in early 2023 with severe military confrontations, airstrikes, and a humanitarian crisis that drew international condemnation and concern. The violence primarily involved Israeli airstrikes in Gaza and retaliatory rocket fire from Palestinian groups, resulting in substantial casualties, with over 28,000 Palestinians killed and thousands more injured, alongside significant damage to infrastructure and homes (Rajvanshi & Serhan, 2024). Social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram have allowed the sharing of information widely through various forms of online activism, such as using hashtags like “#FreePalestine” and “#StandWithIsrael,” as well as viral videos, live streams, and infographics. This diverse range of online activities has captured worldwide attention and garnered significant backing, highlighting the influential role of social media in raising global awareness and fostering solidarity. For instance, in the United States alone, videos tagged with “#Israel” and “#Palestine” on TikTok had received approximately 2 billion views each in the past 30 days. Moreover, the hashtag “#FreePalestine” appeared on 233,000 posts within the same period, significantly outnumbering the 6,000 posts tagged with “#StandWithIsrael” (Harwell, 2023).

These statistics demonstrated the immense reach and influence of online activism. A striking example was the AI-generated image with the text “All eyes on Rafah,” which had been re-shared over 46 million times and viewed over 12.6 million times on platform X amid Israel’s attacks on Gaza’s Rafah (Shamim, 2024). The hashtag “#alleyesonrafah” had also been featured in videos that garnered millions of views on TikTok and sparked a trend in comment sections as users spread the slogan, achieving remarkable visibility. According to RNZ News (2024), the simplicity and emotional resonance of the slogan contributed to its virality, making it a potent tool for rallying international awareness and support. Similarly, the global boycott movement against Israel, including the “#BoycottStarbucks” campaign in November 2023, highlighted the broader Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aimed to mobilize international pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian territories. The “#BoycottStarbucks” campaign generated 7,000 TikTok videos and amassed 51 million views within 30 days, with activists on social media working to shift the traditional narrative on the Palestinian issue (Tenbarga, 2023). Companies like Starbucks and McDonald's had been targeted due to their perceived support for Israel's military actions in Gaza, which had resulted in significant civilian casualties (Rajvanshi & Serhan, 2024). While these online activities had been instrumental in sparking global discussions and rallying support for various causes, including the Israel-Palestine conflict, the challenge remained in translating digital engagement into tangible actions and policy changes.

The National Youth Survey conducted by YouthLedPH and Social Weather Stations in March 2021 revealed that 60% of Filipino youth engaged with political content on social media by liking or sharing posts, 54% sought out news on political issues, 49% engaged in discussions about these topics either in person or online, 33% followed politicians, political commentators, and related accounts, and 27% actively posted their insights on societal and political matters (Tinampay, 2021). Social media has thus become a powerful tool for political activism in the Philippines, as exemplified by the hashtag “#NasaanAngPangulo.” This hashtag, trending on Twitter Philippines alongside

"#UlyssesPH," became a rallying cry for citizens demanding accountability and effective disaster response during Typhoon Ulysses (Geducos, 2020). The digital campaign had not only captured national attention but also demonstrated the immense power of social media, generating thousands of tweets and over 210 thousand posts on Facebook under the hashtag.

This hashtag became a focal point for citizens demanding accountability and efficient disaster response, highlighting the role of digital platforms in mobilizing public sentiment and pressuring officials (David et al., 2016). However, despite its success in raising awareness and holding leaders accountable, the campaign highlighted a critical limitation: translating online activism into concrete, sustained actions. This paradoxically mirrored the very call of Filipinos for their leaders to be more communicative, present, and tangible during times of crisis. The resurgence of the hashtag during Typhoon Paeng in October 2022, when President Marcos faced similar criticism, further illustrated the recurring challenge of ensuring that digital movements led to lasting, real-world impact (Malasig, 2022). Beyond political activism, slacktivism has also been used to empower Filipinos to speak out against social injustices and find people with similar struggles and experiences. For instance, the #HijaAko movement, inspired by #MeToo, sought to create a shared online space for justice, offering victims a sense of "virtual justice" through collective affirmation and digital evidence. However, this reliance on social media as an alternative to legal action highlights how online activism can dilute the essence of social justice movements, as digital validation may replace concrete systemic change (Bautista, 2023).

In Davao, social media has become a crucial platform for local activism, mainly through the "#DavaoIsNotForSale" campaign. This movement began in early 2023 in response to proposed development projects that many residents believed would harm the city's heritage and identity. Initiated by a group of concerned citizens and local organizations, the campaign aimed to address these threats to Davao's cultural landmarks and natural resources. Using the hashtag "#DavaoIsNotForSale," they sought to rally the community against these developments, fostering a collective voice to protect their city's character and environment. Furthermore, residents utilized social media to voice their concerns and rally support, emphasizing their commitment to preserving local culture and the environment. More than 80% of Davao City's population uses social media daily (Admin, 2022).

These digital tools amplified their message, fostered community dialogue, and mobilized action. According to Salisi et al. (2019), research conducted in various regions of the Philippines, including Mindanao, highlighted the prevalence of the most commonly used social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, among students. Mindanaons, specifically Dabawenyos, often practiced slacktivism on social media by engaging in campaigns that required minimal effort, such as sharing posts and using hashtags like "#DavaoIsNotForSale" and "#BBMResign". As a result, the campaign fully captured public attention, creating a space for dialogue and mobilization within the city. The sentiment behind movements like "#DavaoIsNotForSale" was evident in the resistance expressed during the rally, where leaders and respondents emphasized the need for actual grassroots initiatives rather than top-down approaches (Empedrad & Piquero, 2024).

In an ideal scenario, online activism would have acted as a powerful driver of fundamental social change, effectively translating digital support into meaningful actions that tackled societal issues. Instead of just amassing likes and shares, social media campaigns would have encouraged individuals to engage deeply with the causes they supported and moved from virtual backing to active, community-based involvement. The most successful movements used social media to rally initial support. Then, they complemented it with concrete, on-the-ground efforts, embodying the principle of "walking the walk" alongside "talking

the talk" (Rees, 2024). This study did not reject online activism as a valid form of engagement but advocated for its enhanced effectiveness as part of a broader strategy for change. It promoted a culture where online actions spurred ongoing offline efforts by emphasizing the need to blend digital advocacy with traditional activism. This approach aimed to build a society where people were aware of social issues and motivated to take consistent, meaningful actions to address them.

While research on online activism and slacktivism has expanded significantly over the past decade, a critical gap remains in understanding the user's experiences and the challenges they face at a deeper level. Most existing studies focused on proving slacktivism as a legitimate form of social and political action or assessed its effectiveness through metrics like social media engagement and user activity in online movements. Even similar research efforts that explored the impact of social media on student activism primarily relied on quantitative methods, such as surveys. For instance, Marcaida (2020) suggested that future research should explore the relationship between digital and traditional activism, particularly in examining whether online protests translated into offline actions. Marciada also recommended deeper exploration into Filipino youth's perceptions of online activism, including related concepts like clicktivism and slacktivism and the quality of activism expressed online. Additionally, this study addressed a contextual gap, focusing on the underexplored topic of slacktivism among Filipino youth, particularly those in Mindanao and within the senior high school demographic—a critical phase where social media activity peaked and preparation for adulthood began.

The low barrier to participation in online activism could dilute the impact of social movements. Even if a cause gained viral popularity, many participants might have been driven by the trend's popularity rather than genuine support. A prime example was the 2014 ice bucket challenge, which saw over 17 million people worldwide dumping ice water on their heads to support the ALS organization. The intent behind the ice bucket challenge had not been to give people a reason to post content of themselves on their social media feeds but to allow people to temporarily experience what it was like for a person living with ALS by shocking their bodies with cold water, to raise awareness, and to raise money for ALS research (Wilson, 2018). However, the true intent of the challenge was lost on many, as some participated merely because it was funny, exciting, or trending, without understanding the cause or donating to it. Individuals who engaged in the movement might have either continued to support the cause or shifted their attention to the next viral phenomenon, which could have affected the sustainability of online activism and its ability to effect lasting change.

Moreover, there was significant debate among scholars. Some critics argued that slacktivism merely provided a “feel-good” effect without tangible outcomes, while other studies defended it as a valid form of civic engagement. However, research on how slacktivism influenced participants' willingness to engage in more substantial civic actions remained limited. This study aimed to address this gap by exploring the impact of slacktivism on subsequent civic engagement and identifying strategies to help respondents overcome the barriers that hindered their activism.

The purpose of this study is to explore the prevalence of slacktivism among Ateneo de Davao Senior High School (AdDU SHS) students, examining why they prefer online activism over traditional civic engagement. It sought to identify the risks of slacktivism, its effectiveness in driving real-world change, and possible alternatives to enhance civic involvement beyond social media. This research sought to 1) establish the appeal of slacktivism and the reasons that deter AdDU SHS learners from engaging in offline activism and civic engagement. More precisely, it aimed to 2) evaluate whether slacktivism contributed to

practical changes in the real world, and in doing so, the study aimed at 3) determining whether there was a way to improve students' involvement in social justice work and traditional civic activities.

Theoretical Framework

Slacktivism branched out into many theories from the social sciences lens, mainly because it stemmed from different actors in the discourse of slacktivism. Uses and Gratifications Theory, which advanced in 1944, was considered relevant in this research paper about slacktivism, as this theory mainly focused on the actors of slacktivism rather than the victims of the social issue. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, introduced by Katz and Blumler and advanced by Lazarsfeld and Stanton, primarily explains that this communication theory describes individuals utilizing the media to meet their specific needs (Drew, 2024). This theory first emerged as an experimental approach to explore general lessons about better communication or the unintended consequences of messages (Liu, 2015). It described how individuals utilized the media to satisfy their social, psychological, and spiritual needs and felt content when those needs were met. Put another way, the theory focused more on what individuals did with media than what it did to them (Katz, 1959, as cited in Moon et al., 2022). Actors of slacktivism had shown how this theory applied to their actions; through liking, sharing, and posting materials about social injustices, wherein they often utilized these actions to improve their psychological and social engagement in media (Nazeer & Ashfaq, 2023). Therefore, slacktivists primarily focused on social media as a vessel to feel content simply by speaking out about social injustices.

According to Moon et al. (2022), this theory rested on three main assumptions:

(1) users actively engaged with the media, fulfilling their needs through specific motivations—in the context of slacktivism, for example, digital activists used smartphones to meet intrinsic needs like social interaction, entertainment, convenience, and information, forming expectations and experiencing gratification as they interacted with social media. (2) Their engagement was goal-oriented, intentional, and motivated; unlike traditional media consumption, where users might have passively watched TV or listened to the radio, users in the context of UGT (Uses and Gratifications Theory) and activism deliberately used smartphones to access information, convenience, social interaction, and advocacy purposes. (3) Users engaged with media in a highly interactive manner, as mobile technology's interactive nature blurred the lines between sender and receiver, a characteristic that was especially significant in past activism.

The theory contended that actors often found consolation whenever they liked, posted, or shared materials online that they thought were advantageous to the issue. According to Dodd and Dookhoo (2015), when slacktivists engaged in social issues online, they fulfilled gratifications of self-expression and belonging or participation in a group; slacktivists were involved in a transient activity that was a product of social relationships. That research explained how slacktivists exclusively utilized the media to gain a sense of belonging in a group and for their self-expression rather than contributing assistance to social issues being advocated. With that, viable solutions to social injustices were only achieved if civic engagement was involved and little to no effort was asserted.

This theory operated on the principle that slacktivists satisfied their psychological, social, and technological needs through clicks in information consumption, sense of presence, interest immersion, and social interaction. The researchers used this theory to identify the motives, challenges, and systematic approaches to overcome slacktivism. As a communicative lens, it allowed the researchers to understand the roots of slacktivism.

This suggested that this phenomenon was rooted in its ability to enhance the social relationships of individuals online, thereby boosting, promoting, and expanding their social networking. The Uses and Gratifications Theory helped explain why individuals turned to social media platforms for activism by revealing the underlying motivations that drove their media use. Such an approach was apt for this research, given that the objective was to determine the impact of social media platforms on real-world activism and its effectiveness in promoting genuine social change.

Statement of the Problem

This study focused on understanding the influence of social justice movements on AddU SHS learners and the community at large. It aimed to determine how the learners transformed the trends into reality and ascertained the success levels of their coping strategies. Therefore, providing these insights helped enlighten the primary factors inhibiting meaningful civic participation among young people. Furthermore, the research delivered potential solutions and interventions that could be adopted to enforce social resilience among AddU SHS learners, thereby achieving a higher social justice agenda. Specifically, this research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the motivations of AddU SHS learners to engage in online trends and movements for social justice causes?
2. What were the challenges presented by slacktivism in fostering genuine social change among the AddU SHS learners?
3. What were the strategies of AddU SHS learners in overcoming the challenges associated with transitioning from slacktivism to more traditional forms of civic engagement?

Significance of the Study

The given study contributed significantly to the progress of the field of social sciences by highlighting these dynamics. It was enlightening to understand how online actions and interactions translated into offline interactions concerning democratic citizenship and called for more efficient intervention. Implications from this study offered the potential to contribute to educational practice and public policy by bridging the online and offline divide in activism and fostering further enfranchisement and substantive civic engagement in a digital age.

Educational Institutions. This study can also be beneficial for educational institutions, especially for the learners of the AddU SHS community, to know the problem's nature and the students' approaches to civic engagement. Recognizing that slacktivism is commonly observed and potentially impacts the student's behavior in the long run, this study may help AddU-SHS adjust its curricula and co-curricular activities. From this, students can derive enhanced intervention strategies that can motivate them to participate more thoughtfully in social justice.

School Organizations. This study could be helpful to school organizations in the AddU SHS in terms of the efficiency of their current and/or proposed activities. Hence, due to the exploration of slacktivism and its effect on students' actions, the research can assist these organizations in bettering their approaches. For instance, it could result in discovering more fun techniques like conducting awareness activities including workshops on activist promotion, writing campaigns by students involving different touching articles/blogs, and utilizing bulletin boards and social accounts for passing social justice information.

Social Media Users. Ultimately, this study could be of interest to social media users in general (especially AddU-SHS learners) who want to become more aware of the limitations of slacktivism. With a clearer

understanding of the gap between online gestures and actual impact, students can then make their online and offline civic actions more thoughtful and meaningful. This research will help students to better connect online activism with real-life results thus fostering genuine and genuine engagement in civic affairs.

Future Researchers. This study can be useful to future researchers, extending the current understanding of slacktivism and the impact of the phenomenon on students' civic engagement. It presents a general outline regarding online activities and offline activism which can be further developed and broadened depending on the given context or target group. Through defining present trends and studying the existing void in the literature, this study contributes to the development of methodological approaches toward online activism and its effects. Moreover, it can be used as a starting point for deeper research and provide ground for a more in-depth analysis of factors that can affect civic involvement and the development of new relevant approaches that can enhance people's participation.

Scope and Delimitation

This paper aimed to examine the connotation that students of Ateneo de Davao Senior High School in Bangkal, Davao City had on slacktivism and its repercussions on their civic engagement. The research design employed by the researchers was a single, extensive phenomenological investigation with a qualitative technique. The phenomenological approach was used for this study to actively focus on the lived experiences of individuals, which merely gathered in-depth information through interviews and observations. According to McLeod (2024), phenomenological inquiry seeks to provide phenomenal insights and understandings of the significance of human experience. Since the study investigated the human experience of individuals, the phenomenological technique was the most appropriate research method, as it allowed the researchers to truly comprehend the emotions and sentiments of interviewees and dig deeper into what it was like to encounter various obstacles in life events. Moreover, it aimed to explore students' perceptions, understanding, and attribution of meaning to the phenomenon of slacktivism, particularly in terms of awareness creation and ethical sensitivity mobilization.

According to Creswell & Poth (2017), the number of respondents in phenomenological studies was 15, as is common in phenomenological approaches. Therefore, the research limited the sample size to 15 male and female students from Grades 11 and 12 within the age group of 16 to 19 years. respondents were chosen using a purposive sampling method in order to properly respond to the research questions aimed at the investigation. The researchers looked for the qualities of a young activist, defined as a socially conscious individual with a deep understanding of current societal issues, driven by a strong motivation to combat social injustices, actively advocating for meaningful social change, and having direct experiences with online activism, using social media platforms to engage in and support various social justice causes. Interviews were conducted with respondents online platforms such as Google Meet. The outcome of the study was only applicable to the opinions of the respondents and was not generalized beyond them. All respondents' identities were kept private, and the anonymity of all responses was guaranteed.

However, the delimitations of the study involved its use of internet-based interviews, which reduced interaction and made it difficult to capture non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions that provided deeper insights into respondents' emotions and attitudes. This may have resulted in less rich data, particularly since some respondents preferred to turn off their cameras, reducing the sense of closeness and complicating the understanding of their experiences. Another limitation was that the study's

application to students at Ateneo de Davao University Senior High School was limited, which may have restricted the depth of insights due to challenges in integrating diverse qualitative data from the interviews. Focusing solely on AdDU-SHS limited the generalizability of findings to other educational contexts and narrowed the perspective by missing out on diverse viewpoints from students at other institutions. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of AdDU-SHS may not have been representative of other schools, affecting the relevance and applicability of the findings to wider social movements. Lastly, interviewing a vast population may have led to logistical issues and time constraints, making it harder to gather detailed responses and increasing the risk of sample bias due to unclear student distribution across both grade levels.

Definition of Terms

This research used various terminologies to further explore certain concepts that might have caused confusion to some readers. To ensure mutual understanding and accuracy, this section highlighted the definitions of these terms to shed light on the contexts within the research:

Activism. Actions taken by Ateneo de Davao Senior High learners that sought to effect changes socially or politically, both online and offline. This included how the students in AdDU SHS engaged in advocacy, protests, or any movements.

Activist. Socially conscious individuals with a deep understanding of societal issues. They were driven by a strong motivation to combat social injustices and actively advocated for meaningful social change. Additionally, these learners had direct experiences with online activism, using social media platforms to engage in and support various social justice causes.

Boycott. This referred to how AdDU SHS learners used social media platforms to organize actions in refusing to have dealings with a brand, product, or company as a means of protest or coercion.

Civic Engagement. The active participation in efforts to improve the well-being and quality of life within AdDU SHS learners' respective communities, would have involved political actions like voting and political involvement or non-political activities such as volunteering and socio-civic community engagement.

Echo Chambers. Learners encountered only beliefs or opinions that coincided with their own, reinforcing their existing views and preventing them from considering alternative perspectives.

Offline Activism. Activism is conducted through conventional means such as joining Ateneo de Davao SHS advocacy clubs and organizations, signing student petitions, and creating advocacy videos and slogans.

Online Activism. The use of digital platforms or social media by AdDU SHS learners to raise awareness and advocate for social or political issues.

Slacktivism. The act of supporting a cause with minimal effort through online activities such as liking, sharing, commenting, using a hashtag, and changing one's profile picture without engaging in more concrete or sustained action.

Slacktivist. An AdDU SHS learner or individual who engages in online activism for social justice causes through low-effort actions without actively contributing to meaningful, offline change.

Social Change. Deliberate actions and interventions aimed at addressing societal issues for the common good. This included reforms in policies, programs, and shifts in societal norms and behaviors, all designed to promote inclusivity, equity, and positive transformation within Ateneo de Davao SHS and other vulnerable communities.

Social Justice. Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society, in which individual rights are recognized and protected.

Social Media Engagement. The level of participation by AddU SHS learners in online platforms, measured through likes, shares, and comments, is a reflection of their awareness of social justice issues.

Social Movements. Collective actions by AddU SHS learners that aimed at addressing or protesting major societal concerns through community service and collaborative projects in clubs or organizations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed the existing literature relevant to analyzing the research questions and providing deeper context to the identified problem. Specifically, the review explored the motivations and social issues that drove people to engage in various forms of activism, both online and offline. Key themes addressed included the motivations behind slacktivism, its accessibility and ease of use, its role as political participation and social justice mobilization, as well as the concept, forms, and implications of slacktivism. Additionally, the chapter discussed the criticisms of slacktivism, the effectiveness of online activism, student activism, traditional activism, and the correlation between digital and traditional activism.

Motivations Behind Slacktivism

New media has birthed the concept of ‘slacktivism’ where activism can be done with little to no effort and is carried out on the internet. Though often viewed as redundant and counterproductive, slacktivism can also motivate individuals in broader activism through online platforms. With that said, it is crucial to analyze the underlying motivations that drive slacktivism in today's postdigital society (Ralston, 2022). Several studies have already sought to understand what the driving force is behind slacktivism. Chapman and Coffé (2016), contrary to this suggestion, found that individuals primarily engage in slacktivism actions, such as changing a profile picture for a cause, to raise awareness, affirm their identity, and because they believe these actions may create change. Their study highlighted how identity formation plays a significant role in slacktivism, with respondents feeling a sense of satisfaction in aligning their actions with their values. This was amplified in Leyva's (2017) work, where it was established that slacktivism among UK millennials was for both self-satisfaction and a sense of involvement. They also pointed out that the mere presence of these initial activities for instance giving a minimal amount to charity and seeing no further action as a result was useful in examining if a subject would do anything more useful for the cause. The research by Chapman and Coffé (2016) showcases similar results to the meta-analysis conducted by Boulianne (2015), which showed strong associations between online and offline activism and raised questions about slacktivism being ineffective. In the same way that Chapman and Coffé prioritized identity as motivation for slacktivism, Kristofferson et al. (2014) argued that the public observability of slacktivism might deter one from following through with further engagement. The tension between reaffirming an identity and the previously observed action of slacktivism highlights an important area of exploration to better understand how public and private contexts influence continued activism. Although there are various reasons why individuals engage in slacktivism, the most significant factor is the ease with which one can participate in online movements. While this ease of participation is motivating, its true importance lies in the accessibility it offers. Slacktivism, by nature, allows for a more inclusive form of activism, enabling individuals with varying levels of commitment to engage in social justice causes. The next section will explore how social media platforms have transformed activism by

making it accessible to virtually anyone, regardless of their level of involvement. By examining the simplicity and availability of slacktivism, this study contributes to a better understanding of the key factors that contributed to its widespread appeal in digital spaces.

Accessibility and Ease of Use of Slacktivism

With the rise of social media and digital platforms, slacktivism — a form of low-effort online activism — has become increasingly accessible. Social media is not hindered by geographical, linguistic, legal, or political boundaries. Therefore, its users are capable of creating dialogues regarding all manner of social, economic, ethical, cultural, racial, gender, and political inequities with members of previously unreachable communities (Chapman, 2016). Thus, actions like liking, sharing, or signing online petitions enable widespread engagement in social and political causes without substantial effort. It has, however, noted that this increases questions on the relevance of this kind of participation in promoting other forms of sustainable citizens' engagement and societal political change.

The accessibility of slacktivism, in particular, was widely documented. Halupka (2017) noted that social media facilitated engagement in politics through low-commitment opportunities, or what was called "clicktivism." Click engagement requires little more than refreshing one's social media feed, aiming to grow the number of individuals engaged with social issues rather than requiring time-consuming actions like writing a letter or attending a meeting. Boulianne (2015) completed a meta-analysis of social media activism and found that the relative ease with which slacktivism allowed for engagement meant that many individuals could face or augment the cost of social media engagement in a way that raised awareness of social problems. Gladwell (2014) emphasized that online petitions presented a particularly easy way to engage in activism by allowing a quick accumulation of signatures, though he criticized the activities for their lack of depth and engagement.

Other studies investigated how social media extended a profound influence on people's lifestyles, defining it as the many cheap and easily accessible electronic devices that helped individuals create, access, contribute to, or bond over a common cause (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016, as cited in Tapio, 2023). In relation to this, Sharma et al. (2021) noted that activism through the use of technology had benefits that could not be observed in activism conducted through other means. Additionally, Sharma emphasized that there was not much effort involved and that it was a relatively cheap means of reaching out and displacing hegemonic discourses. Seelig (2018) expanded on this by capturing the attention that millennials gave to social causes on the internet, as well as their reasons for participating in activism both offline and online. In a pilot survey of 107 undergraduate communication students at a midsize southeastern university, Seelig discovered that, among the respondents who engaged in online participation, the most frequently practiced activities were clicking on shared links (95%), "liking" or "favoriting" posts (91%), and posting comments on links, photographs, or status updates (91%). Additionally, 91% of respondents agreed that social media provided several approachable communication points, and a comparative assessment of online and offline activism yielded positive responses at 70%.

In conclusion, social media has become a powerful tool that has revolutionized society, especially in the twenty-first century due to its features such as ease of use and provision of communication, cooperation, and sharing of information across the world. It is evident that platforms such as social media have billions of users thus providing the ability for users to connect, share social causes, and in the process change the course of others seamlessly. This has also led to an increase in cases of online activism whereby people can come up with messages and counter the main frames with ease. Therefore, there is a special

significance of social networks for defining such aspects of human life as personal lives and social protests. This upcoming section aims to delve into the realm of slacktivism in the context of participation; examining its influence on conduct and its contributions to the broader discourse surrounding politics.

Slacktivism as Political Participation

In the modern digital era, political involvement has taken on new dimensions, largely shaped by the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These platforms have significantly altered how people engage with political issues, allowing them to participate in movements with just a post or a click (Tufekci, 2017). While participation once required attending physical protests or signing formal petitions, it now often involves online activities that can rapidly reach wide audiences. Kareem (2019) notes that social networking sites (SNS) have evolved into political filtering platforms, where users tend to select friends based on shared political views, thus creating echo chambers. This behavior, observed in events like the 2016 United States election, the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement, and the Brexit vote, has led to actions such as ‘unfriending’ or hiding posts that conflict with one's views. These patterns of behavior have sparked ongoing debates about the nature of political engagement in the digital age, with some questioning whether online actions are as impactful or meaningful in fostering real-world change.

Social media has been employed significantly in political campaigns to encourage citizens to participate in politics. For instance, the Not Too Young to Run campaign in Nigeria leveraged Facebook and Twitter to advocate for a constitutional change that would reduce the voting age to 18. This campaign utilized hashtags such as “#NotTooYoungToRun” to raise awareness about the bill and exert pressure on lawmakers to support it. Additionally, clicktivism was instrumental in reaching out to politicians and pressuring critics of the bill, ultimately leading to its legislation (Uwalaka, 2020). In the same way, social media was actively used in the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign, such as “#ImWithHer” and “#MAGA” rallying supporters. The Arab Spring also demonstrated how social media, including Twitter and Facebook motivated diffuse co-ordinate political activism and real-time protest coordination (Tufekci, 2017). These campaigns show that clicktivism is capable of mobilizing the masses, shifting political agendas, and inciting change with differential levels of sustainability. There is another impactful campaign, which was “#MeToo” which used the Twitter platform to create awareness of sexual harassment cases and molestation (Lopez, 2018). However, it was more of a political nature because it influenced policies to be enacted and changed legislation concerning workplace harassment. This digital campaign allowed millions of people to engage in the discussion by either sharing stories or showing their support through the hashtag, which makes them a prime example of low-effort political mobilization through social media platforms.

Although social media has been recognized as an invaluable tool in the exercise of political rights, there is always criticism of the extent of involvement. In a similar fashion, Kristofferson et al. (2014) pointed out that slacktivism has low-effort actions as compared to the old-school type of activism such as protests or volunteering. This critique is for example observable in a critique of campaigns like “#BringBackOurGirls,” which, while rallying around the kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls, could not mobilize sustained political action beyond the sharing of hashtags on social media (Vie, 2014). The campaign received millions of retweets and attention across the world but did not lead to meaningful political action or policy changes, thus the prospects of such movements. However, other studies focus on the benefits of slacktivism in enhancing political consciousness and participation. For instance, Howard

et al. (2016) studied the recent digital campaign for El Bronco—an independent candidate in Mexico to win the elections where social media constituted an essential platform. The campaign showed that social media is an effective way of exercising the right to vote as long as it is integrated with classical active political participation like the use of protests, banners, or other methods of raising society's voice. Boulianne's (2015) work builds on this by demonstrating that, indeed, social media use for political purposes leads to participation, especially of the youth who may not be involved in conventional political forums.

In conclusion, social media has dramatically altered political participation, with slacktivism and clicktivism emerging as key tools in online activism. Campaigns like “#NotTooYoungToRun” in Nigeria has shown that online engagement can drive real political outcomes by energizing young people and putting pressure on lawmakers. Though critics argue slacktivism lacks substance, research reveals that it can act as a starting point for broader political involvement, especially for younger generations. Events like the Arab Spring and the 2016 U.S. election also demonstrate how decentralized online actions can amplify political messages and mobilize large groups. However, concerns linger about its ability to foster sustained political engagement. For instance, the “#BringBackOurGirls” movement gained significant online attention, but the momentum faded without lasting change. Overall, slacktivism plays a meaningful role in raising awareness and engaging people in political movements, though its limitations point to the importance of combining online efforts with real-world actions for lasting impact. This same contradiction appears in social justice mobilization, where slacktivism has been instrumental in spotlighting systemic problems. In the following topic, Researchers will examine how slacktivism functions within these movements and assess its potential to inspire real-world, concrete changes.

Slacktivism as Social Justice Mobilization

Social justice is built on equal distribution of wealth, opportunity, and privilege that ensures rights are not violated. As Kareem (2019) stated, this argument addresses marginalization as well as discrimination. Transformations in the mobilization of social justice have been promoted by technology, particularly social media, where people have become empowered and at the same time raised the awareness levels of the issues. Social media now acts as an enabler in mobilizing justice either through hashtags, videos, or unrecorded stories about trauma and calling out for change (Mendes et al., 2019). The general purpose of this discussion is to discuss the most important online campaigns and factors that drive digital engagement in social justice, thereby trying to clarify what makes digital advocacy so dynamic.

Research into online activism commonly looks at the effectiveness of such campaigns as potential agents of tangible social change. Online movements have been observed to raise awareness regarding human rights issues to quite an extent. For instance, it has been noted that the “#MeToo” movement gained momentum towards the end of 2017 to highlight systemic issues of sexual harassment and assault efficiently. The “#MeToo” hashtag was used in over 1.7 million tweets in the first month alone, leading to significant increases in media coverage and public discussions about sexual harassment (Ho, 2020). The “#BlackLivesMatter” movement has played an essential role in awareness over the past few years of racial injustices and police brutality (Thomson, 2018). Along the same lines, these movements show the broad extent to which social digital platforms can be utilized for support and advocacy of social justice causes. Thomson's research found that engagement with the “#BlackLivesMatter” hashtag increased by 32% during major protests, reflecting its significant role in amplifying calls for racial justice and mobilizing both local and global support.

Social justice causes are among the most engaged topics in online activism, largely because they appeal to both emotions (pathos) and a sense of moral obligation (ethos), compelling individuals to take action. This can be attributed to the ability of social justice issues to mobilize support through social media platforms. Döveling et al. (2018) emphasize this, noting that digital communities not only share common goals and understanding but also engage continuously in shared endeavors. According to Eckert (2006) as cited in Döveling et al (2018), this forms what he describes as "communities of practice." These communities, through acts such as participating in online commemorative practices, construct what are called "digital affect cultures," characterized by emotional alignment and a shared sense of belonging. Numerous empirical studies explore these digital affect cultures and highlight the role of emotional engagement in fostering online solidarity. Hemmings (2012) as cited in Battisti & Bruno, (2023) argues that this emotional closeness to others' experiences, even from a distance, can create a productive sense of dissonance—critical for understanding inequality and misrepresentation, and driving people to act in solidarity. This suggests that personal values can motivate individuals to stand up against social injustices, even without directly experiencing or witnessing them. The mere awareness of others' suffering can be sufficient to spur involvement in these causes.

Further exploring this idea, Nau et al. (2022) conducted an analysis of 570 tweets from feminist hashtag campaigns, using Plutchik's structural model of emotion to examine the emotional range expressed within the first 24 hours of the movement. Their findings revealed that emotions such as sadness, trust, anger, fear, and disgust were predominant, which aligns with prior research indicating the negative emotional tone of digital feminist campaigns (Mendes et al., 2019; Schneider & Carpenter, 2019, as cited in Nau et al., 2022). However, Nau et al. also highlighted the complexity of these emotions, showing that they serve not only as expressions of outrage but also as mechanisms for solidarity, validation, and collective healing. Additionally, the study distinguished between emotion and affect, where emotions were conscious articulations of shared outrage, while affect—an abstract and unformed intensity—primarily motivated participation in the "#MeToo" movement. This further underscored the critical role of affect in driving online activism, as even in the absence of explicit personal accounts, affect functioned as a key driver of engagement.

To conclude, online activism was useful in increasing awareness and mobilization of the global response to issues concerning social justice, but the impact of such online activism varied in bringing actual change in real life. The justice mobilization on the online platform demonstrated how social media played a significant role in supporting equality and human rights while providing people with varied ways of participating and making an impact on social justice issues worldwide (McDuffie & Ames, 2021). While many digital campaigns successfully mobilized communities for social justice, some raised concerns about a more passive form of participation known as "slacktivism." To better understand this phenomenon, it was important to explore the concept, various forms, and implications of slacktivism in the context of social media activism.

Concept, Forms, and Implications of Slacktivism

Slacktivism is often called armchair activism, which means that individuals believe they are upholding a difference in society by supporting a cause by liking a post, signing up for an online petition, and remaining inoperative offline (Ruzicka, 2019). On this account, slacktivism is quite often characterized as having little to no impact since it emphasizes expression and awareness over action. In this topic, some of the most used forms of social media slacktivism that will be tackled are clicktivism, hacktivism, hashtag

activism, and online petitions. The presented definition of slacktivism and its forms is important for understanding its depth, impact on social media, and long-term impact on the real world.

Clicktivism

Clicktivism, often defined as a form of online activism that involves minimal effort, such as liking and sharing, is characterized as a way for individuals to express support for social causes without engaging in more substantial actions (Cooper, 2023). It allows people to contribute to causes using digital platforms, even if their engagement remains limited to online interactions. Clicktivism emerged with the rise of social media platforms in the early 2000s, offering an easy way for individuals to engage in social causes from the comfort of their homes (Dookhoo, 2015). While clicktivism can enhance visibility and foster an online community, research indicates that it may lead to a false sense of accomplishment and a cycle of superficial participation. Those engaged in clicktivism are less likely to participate in offline activism, potentially overshadowing more impactful forms of activism and diminishing real-world engagement (Marcaida, 2020). Despite its role in raising awareness for various causes, the effectiveness of clicktivism in translating online support into real-world action remains debatable. Some studies have delved deeper into this dilemma, exploring both the shortcomings and the underlying motivations behind clicktivism. For instance, Newton (2022) investigated how clicktivism impacts offline participation in modern slavery advocacy, finding that while clicktivism raises awareness, it often falls short of driving substantial offline action. The research noted key factors influencing online engagement included time availability, social media access, and communication skills. On the other hand, Bapitie and Carter (2022) examined how empathy and helping attitudes predict clicktivism related to climate change on Facebook through an online survey of 164 UK students. They found that cognitive empathy and sympathy significantly predicted clicktivism, whereas traditional predictors like time spent online were less influential.

Hashtag Activism

Hashtag activism is another form of slacktivism that involves using social media hashtags to promote a cause, raise awareness about social or political issues, and mobilize people to engage in advocacy. In this context, social media platforms serve as communication channels where hashtags are heavily utilized to create and participate in conversations around various movements, thereby increasing visibility and engagement (Goswami, 2018). Recent studies have indicated that hashtag activism is a prominent method of online protest, facilitating information dissemination—movements like “#BlackLivesMatter” are often cited as some of the most effective hashtag-driven campaigns in recent history (Zulli, 2020). This study emphasized a platform studies approach, a set of methods that look into the computer systems underpinning online activism, and observations gathered from the hashtags conducted from December 2014 and December 2015 on Facebook and Twitter. Each tweet associated with such hashtags acts as a form of protest, drawing attention from stakeholders and contributing to broader societal change.

Hacktivism

Hacktivism, a blend of “hacking” and “activism”, involves the use of unauthorized computers to access to promote political, social, or ideological goals. It is access to systems without authorization for information exposure, disrupting services, or propagating messages. Unlike most hackers, hacktivists are engaged in bringing about change and are also more concerned with drawing attention to issues such as injustice or censorship. However, this raises ethical concerns related to legality and potential harm. Over the past 30 years, early manifestations, including the WANK worm, as well as Digital Zapatistas, continued with different varieties and became supreme in 2011, “the year of the hacktivist,” through groups like Anonymous (Karagiannopoulos, 2020). People hack to support agendas that they consider socio-political

in nature, making them feel that they are inadequately represented or poorly served otherwise. They use it to vent their anger over things they believe they are being unfairly treated or to challenge the oppressive or evil authority. DDoS attacks, used by hackers to disrupt online services by overwhelming them with traffic, have increased in frequency. These attacks serve as a tool for hackers to gain attention.

A major example was in 2012, when the Anonymous group targeted websites, including the U.S. Department of Justice and major music companies (Gareeva et al., 2020). Targeting such influential entities, Anonymous protested what they felt were injustices upon copyright enforcement and also sought to upset the authority of institutions that they believed suppressed freedom of information and expression. According to George and Leidner (2019), hacktivism is categorized as a gladiatorial activity, which denotes high engagement and impactful forms of online activism. This involves using hacking techniques to challenge injustices and advocate for causes, distinguishing it from lower-stakes activities like clicktivism. It examines hacktivism's role, its respondents, and its targets within the broader context of online activism. This aligns with Romagna and Leukfeldt's (2023) study, which examines hacktivism and hacker culture together, focusing on the incentives that drive individuals to engage in these actions. They utilized the social identity model of collective action to address the essential elements: morality, social identity, and perceived injustice, all of which are important in explaining why people engage in such actions. As a result, it emphasizes the role of hacktivism in bringing about social change, as well as how it will affect future online activism techniques.

Online Petitions

In their typical incarnation, online petitions invite the visitor to sign with their name, contact information, and sometimes a short comment in favor of what's being addressed (Epstein, 2021). These are then sent to the higher authorities or organizations as one voice of the signing people's demands for the change they want (Middleton, 2019). Online petitions symbolize an easy, effective means through which people can participate in civic action and influence decision-making processes (Elnoshokaty et al., 2016). An example is the issue of police brutality and systemic racism in America. George Floyd, an African-American man, was killed by Officer Derek Chauvin, who knelt on his neck while Floyd was handcuffed. This incident sparked widespread protests and online activism, demanding justice and reform (Mato, 2020). The campaign for George Floyd's justice is a key example of online activism. It used social media to gather over 17 million signatures on Change.org, calling for accountability for the police officers involved in his murder. Another example is Lorelei HoJay's petition demanding justice for Breonna Taylor, which also utilized social media to mobilize support and demand action from officials. These petitions highlighted police brutality and systemic racism, leveraging online platforms to drive widespread advocacy and influence public and official responses (Gruenberg, 2020).

Although these movements have huge upsides, they also have their downsides. The potential impacts of online petition activism include mobilizing support and influencing decision-makers by joining a community of advocates, which can lead to significant changes if petitions gather substantial backing. Therefore, the movement's popularity in mainstream media is crucial to collect a sizeable number of signatures. Most campaigns require a high degree of dissemination, not only by conventional media but also on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Also, it is essential in these situations for legacy media to pay attention to the issue in order to provide publicity and to serve as a link between petition campaigns and decision-makers (Vromen et al., 2022, as cited in Setyoko et al., 2023). However, risks

involve sharing personal information with organizers, which could be misused, and the need to verify the credibility of the petition and the site to ensure data privacy and effectiveness.

In conclusion, slacktivism encompasses various forms and concepts, including but not limited to clicktivism, hacktivism, hashtag activism, and online petitions or E-petitions. While these forms can often enhance social awareness—through actions like liking and sharing—they may have limited tangible impact. For instance, while hacktivism can be a radical form of protest, it also involves significant risks and costs. Similarly, although online petitions can mobilize support, their effectiveness is frequently questioned. Despite the potential benefits, these forms of slacktivism are often subject to criticism regarding their actual impact and effectiveness.

Criticisms of Slacktivism

Critics of slacktivism argue that liking, tweeting, or sharing shows low-stakes or superficial support for a cause, rather than actual dedication to civic involvement or collective action that in-person activism demonstrates (Obar, 2014, as cited in Ralston, 2022). Having said that, understanding how true activism works involves more meaningful and effective actions such as participation in rallies, having face-to-face conversations to inspire and influence others by sharing their experiences and perceptions, and working together with others to create an in-depth impactful action. These movements establish a solid foundation for fostering stronger and improved connections with others. Thus, this study discusses the rise of the growing body of criticisms directed at slacktivism.

The latter side of this spectrum is often referred to as "slacktivism," a term coined by Ozard and Clark in 1995 to describe supporting political movements with minimal effort or resources. Over time, it has become a tool to divide the political left into "real" and "fake" activists, fueling ongoing online discourse and social media action. In other words, it refers to people who engage with and support causes by doing manageable actions like liking, commenting, and sharing photos or videos online, without making a substantial effort toward tangible change. Often viewed as less effective than traditional activism, slacktivism raises concerns about whether online participation translates into real-world impact. McKelvey (2019) highlights this issue through Charlotte Robinson, a student who expressed frustration with micro-engagement as a form of slacktivism. She argued that when individuals retweet, use a hashtag, or share a post, they may feel a sense of moral satisfaction simply for displaying awareness. However, awareness alone is not enough. As Anderson (2023) explains, meaningful activism must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility to act. This responsibility includes critically assessing the implications of an action and understanding how to contribute to broader social movements. Without such proactive engagement, awareness risks becoming a passive acknowledgment of injustice rather than a catalyst for change. Respondents must recognize that their online interactions—sharing, commenting, and posting—play a crucial role in shaping discourse and influencing social justice outcomes.

While they may not genuinely donate money or engage with the cause, some nonetheless participate in order to appear good in front of their peers on social media. The slacktivism effect is driven by a specific need for self-esteem, when people engage in low-cost actions, particularly in public, they demonstrate support for a charitable cause, which enhances their self-image (Moussaoui et al., 2022, as cited in Kristofferson et al., 2014). This boost in self-worth can lead them to feel that further, more demanding actions are unnecessary. Critics argue that this "feel-good" motivation often results in superficial engagement, lacking deeper commitment and effectiveness (Foster et al.,

2019). This is further supported by Zohouri et al. (2020) whose study evaluates the impact of online activism in the digital era, whether it makes a meaningful difference, and examines strategies for further improvement to facilitate impactful participation in social and political discourse. Additionally, Zohouri et al., (2020) found out that those individuals who assert that they feel empowered and experience feelings that align positively after online activism, tend to do more. However, it also entrusts the phenomenon of "slacktivism," where web-based activism with minimal effort has the effect of giving a false sense of accomplishment, which questions its legitimacy against traditional protests. This critique underlines the relevance of the actions within the discourse of politics without inheriting in the politics of significance to legitimacy. Despite these critiques, Piat (2019) emphasizes that all forms of activism, whether online or offline, are valuable and legitimate, as they can foster a "feel-good" motivation and positive emotions. Small online actions often lead to greater offline participation, reinforcing their significance. While offline activism is important, slacktivism should be recognized as a meaningful way for individuals, especially youth, to engage in social and political action, driven by a desire for connection and a sense of accomplishment.

In conclusion, the criticisms of slacktivism highlight the need for more effective online activism such as lack of meaningful effort, weak engagement, and focus on looking good from the perception of others. The limited impact of slacktivism stresses the importance of developing strategies that ensure online engagement results in real-world change. The next topic will explore how online activism raises awareness and organizes large movements that lead to real, tangible change, with a focus on its role in amplifying marginalized voices.

Effectiveness of Online Activism

Online activism has undoubtedly influenced modern social movements. Rohm et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of digital platforms in increasing political engagement and promoting democratic efforts, demonstrating that platforms like social media were important for circulating information and organizing collective action.

However, they acknowledged the limitations of online activism, particularly the issue of "slacktivism," in which online participation did not always lead to continued real-world action, as emphasized by Valenzuela et al. (2016). This analysis delved into the effectiveness of online activism by examining the impact of both online and offline actions, the strategic use of different media types, and the challenges such as digital illiteracy and slacktivism. The discussion aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how online activism could drive meaningful change and the factors that influenced its success.

While online activism could help benefit street protests and civic engagement, the results varied, and digital illiteracy remained a barrier. As Chapman (2016) highlighted, a major challenge with using social media for activism was its tendency to become passive. It demanded little to no prior knowledge about a subject or movement before engaging. Additionally, because online activism unfolded within the public domain of the internet, individuals could participate without necessarily sharing or upholding the core values of the movement they claimed to support. This opened the door for respondents who joined causes not out of genuine commitment or understanding but rather for personal, self-serving reasons, diluting the movement's authenticity and impact. Piat (2019) took an opposing perspective, suggesting that slacktivism, while frequently seen as superficial, had actual value and could lead to vital offline participation. This rejected its negative reputation and portrayed it as a legitimate form of civic action. In support of this view, Li et al. (2021) illustrated how the success of the Sleeping Giants movement in

pressuring companies to withdraw ads from extremist platforms served as a compelling example of how online activism could lead to significant offline actions. This underscored the validity of Piat's claim by demonstrating that online activism could indeed drive real-world outcomes. Finally, the efficacy of online activism was complex, including the use of smart media to gather resources and encourage collaboration, as well as constraints in transforming online acts into long-term impacts.

Examining online activism showed that its impact depended on the strategies used. Research by Ribeiro (2019) as cited in Rohm et al. (2023), on 1,170 Instagram posts from a prominent feminist movement demonstrated that 99.6% of posts were designed to mobilize or sensitize the audience. The posts utilized media types such as photographs (41.88%), arts (33.42%), and videos (18.72%), with a focus on narrative building (30.5%) and alliance building (24.9%). Despite these efforts, slacktivism remained a challenge, as only 18% of online actions translated into offline activities, even though 64% of users engaged with the content (Tufekci, 2017). Furthermore, Shi (2016) researched media applications in online activism, highlighting the effectiveness of various strategies. Public media applications were employed in 55.1% of cases for collaboration and 45.5% for resource mobilization, while individualized media applications were used for collaboration in 39.8% of cases and for resources in 49.4%. These statistics underscored the strategic importance of selecting the right media tools for achieving specific goals. Studies showed that online activism focused on civic development often achieved better results than activism centered on human rights and political issues (Rohm et al., 2023). Additionally, functional online activism involved not only spreading awareness but also ensuring that online engagement resulted in meaningful outcomes. Effectively mobilizing resources through well-chosen media was essential for maximizing the success of online activism.

In conclusion, online activism has proven to be a powerful tool in shaping modern social movements, with its effectiveness largely determined by the strategies and media used. While digital platforms could significantly enhance political engagement and support various causes, challenges like slacktivism and digital illiteracy continued to affect their overall impact. The strategic use of media, whether public or individualized, played a crucial role in mobilizing resources and achieving desired outcomes. For activists in the Philippines, this understanding was particularly relevant. By leveraging effective digital strategies and addressing potential barriers, individuals could harness the power of online activism to drive real change and engage more meaningfully in various causes. Moreover, the following topic delved into how online activism has shaped advocacy efforts in the Philippines, highlighting the role of social media and online platforms in amplifying voices and mobilizing support for national and local movements.

Online Activism in the Philippines

Online activism in the Philippines has significantly expanded political engagement and mobilization through social media, but it faces various challenges in advancing causes and addressing societal issues. Social media platforms facilitate the rapid distribution of information and coordination for community-based movements. As of the Digital 2020 report, Filipinos are among the most active online users globally, spending an average of 9 hours and 45 minutes per day on the internet (Agojo et al., 2023). Despite this high level of online engagement, the overall impact of online activism remains a subject of frequent debate. With that said, this discussion will delve into the current state of online activism in the Philippines, focusing on the ways in which Filipinos utilize social media platforms. The analysis will also display the key issues faced by digital activists and the reasons for the growth of online activism within two critical junctures: during the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Academic studies on the interplay between youth activism and social media usage in the Philippines emphasize how crucial social media platforms (SMPs) are for political engagement (Agojo, 2023). According to Abing et al. (2022), these online tools not only offer engagement opportunities but also promote issue awareness. For activists, Twitter, with its 206 million monetizable active users globally and nine million Filipino users as of 2021, provides a swift and effective platform for action (Statista, 2021). It enables like-minded individuals to reach a wide audience, facilitating awareness campaigns and political mobilization. This corroborates with research by Adorna et al. (2022), which revealed that millennials turn to Twitter for political activity due to its perceived safety, ease of use for sharing information, speed, and reach of information dissemination. The lower presence of trolls, the platform's role in fostering political engagement, the value of anonymity, and its ability to streamline political processes were also highlighted through in-depth interviews.

Social media is not only a potent tool for promoting political awareness but also for gathering information and aiding fellow Filipinos during crises. For instance, following consecutive typhoons in August 2013, students utilized Twitter to gather and reshare information, as well as communicate with loved ones, rather than engage in political discussions (Paladin et al., 2015, as cited in Agojo, 2023). Similarly, Bautista and Lin (2017) as cited in Agojo (2023) found that Filipino staff nurses primarily used instant messaging applications to exchange information, socialize with colleagues, and express grievances about their duties. Despite the widespread use of SMPs for activism and information dissemination, the downside of misinformation persists. A 2022 Pulse Asia report revealed that a significant percentage of respondents—69% from the National

Capital Region, 67% from Balance Luzon, 47% from the Visayas, and 43% from Mindanao—view bloggers and vloggers as the top sources of misinformation. This highlights a critical issue: the rampant spread of fake news on social media, where propagators exploit the lack of censorship in the Philippines. Misinformation can distort messages, damage activist credibility, and polarize public opinion, ultimately leading to confusion and skepticism about the legitimacy of social justice movements (Marcaida, 2020). The unchecked flow of disinformation poses significant risks to the effectiveness of online activism in the country. However, SMPs have also been useful in propagating social awareness with journalists using social media to inform the public as regards mis and disinformation (Balod & Hameleers, 2021, as cited in Agojo, 2023).

The Philippines has long been active on social media platforms (SMPs), but the COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point for activism. Haßler et al. (2021) as cited in Beduya et al. (2022), noted that social movement organizations (SMOs) shifted their activities online as street protests became impossible due to lockdowns. Despite these restrictions, youth organizations like La Salle Students for Human Rights and Democracy, Anakbayan Vito Cruz, and Rise for Education-Taft maintained political engagement through SMPs, organizing protests and community projects whenever feasible (De Jesus et al., 2020, as cited in Agojo, 2023). These platforms also became a space for the youth to voice their frustrations with the Duterte administration's handling of the health crisis (Mendoza, 2020, as cited in Agojo, 2023), particularly after the controversial passage of the Anti-Terrorism Bill of 2020, which raised concerns about freedom of speech and human rights violations. Challenges arose as marginalized groups, already facing digital literacy issues, were further burdened by government surveillance during the pandemic. Papineau (2023) highlights events from June 12, 2020, when authorities attempted to prevent a rally against the Anti-Terrorism Bill under the pretext of COVID-19 restrictions. Environmental defenders were arrested during lockdowns, which many activists viewed as the state's attempt to stifle dissent (Mongabay, 2020, as cited

in Papineau, 2023). Additionally, activists, labor leaders, and public figures were subjected to "red-tagging," being labeled as "terrorists" or "communists" by state authorities without evidence (Tan, 2022). This practice intensified digital repression, especially as laws justified online surveillance in the name of national security (Lim, 2019), creating a hostile digital landscape for activists during the pandemic. In response, many Filipinos turned to social media to express dissatisfaction with the government's pandemic response and to protest the growing authoritarian measures. However, while social media served as a crucial tool for activism, it also became a battleground where state authorities weaponized platforms against dissenters. Activists faced increasing repression, as SMPs were used to undermine their democratic rights and restrict opposition to far-right governance. This complex relationship between online activism and state repression during the pandemic highlights the resilience of Filipino youth and their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing political landscape. As social media became both a tool for mobilization and a space of surveillance, it laid the foundation for a new generation of activists—particularly students—who continued to challenge the status quo.

Student Activism

One of the most prominent forms of youth activism was student activism, which referred to the involvement of students in higher education institutions working to create change in social, political, environmental, and economic spheres. Understanding the motivations behind student engagement in contemporary issues was crucial for grasping the broader role youth played in societal change. This study examined the rise of student activism and explored how educational institutions contributed not only to mobilizing activism but also to fostering political awareness and life skills in young individuals. The research highlighted that student activism served as a platform for developing leadership, civic engagement, and community involvement skills. Unlike general volunteerism or participation in non-activist student organizations, involvement in progressive activist groups specifically equipped students to take leadership roles in addressing social inequalities based on race, gender, immigration status, and other identity markers (Farago et al., 2018). This demonstrated the unique role of activism in shaping students into socially conscious leaders. Educational institutions, particularly university campuses, played a critical role in raising awareness of social issues and providing a space for students to mobilize and use their skills to create meaningful change. For example, the University of the Philippines viewed activism as a vital aspect of its academic environment, promoting discussions that challenged conventional thinking and encouraged academic voices to engage with public discourse (Concepcion, 2024). Through such environments, universities helped nurture civic identity among students, influencing their willingness to engage in activism.

A 2015 report by the Higher Education Research Institute supported this by noting an increasing likelihood of students participating in protests, with Black students reported as being twice as likely to engage in activism compared to their white peers (Morgan & Davis, 2019). This pattern was evident across more than 84 campuses between 2014 and 2016, where student activists issued socio-academic and political demands focused on improving racial and ethnic diversity, enhancing racial literacy training for faculty, staff, and students, and integrating diverse contributions into the curriculum (Davis et al., 2017, as cited in Morgan & Davis, 2019). These findings suggested that students were often motivated by issues that directly affected their campus experience, particularly those related to race and inclusion, illustrating the direct link between student activism and institutional reforms.

Farago et al. (2018) examined the influence of student activism on academic and professional development through their study of the Local to Global Justice (LTGJ) organization, which hosted an annual social justice forum. Their findings indicated that participation in LTGJ positively impacted students' academic experiences, leadership skills, and community engagement. Survey data from a population of 40 students, faculty, and community members revealed that LTGJ provided valuable opportunities for applied learning, critical thinking, and activism. The study highlighted how student activism fostered personal and professional growth by integrating academic learning with social justice efforts, particularly through intersectional discussions on class, gender, race, and other social issues. Drawing from Freire's 1970 framework of critical consciousness, the study emphasized that education should empower students to recognize oppression and become agents of change. The study concluded that student involvement in LTGJ not only promoted leadership development but also strengthened students' commitment to community engagement, showcasing the role of student organizations in promoting civic participation and addressing societal challenges.

In conclusion, student activism played a pivotal role in shaping both individual development and broader societal change. Through active participation in advocacy and reform movements, students cultivated essential leadership, civic engagement, and critical thinking skills. Educational institutions served as crucial platforms for this form of activism, providing spaces for students to engage with real-world issues and challenge existing social norms. Moreover, as seen in examples like the University of the Philippines and the LTGJ organization, student activism not only enriched academic life but also connected students to their communities, deepening their commitment to creating lasting social change. Ultimately, student activism proved to be a dynamic avenue through which young people could fulfill their civic responsibilities while addressing pressing social issues. However, there were still various forms of activism students could explore as they transitioned into the real world and expanded their political and social awareness, which would be expounded in the next theme.

Modes of Offline Activism

With the rise of online activism, differentiating between online and offline forms of engagement became increasingly important. Offline activism refers to activism conducted through established, physical means, such as joining advocacy clubs, signing petitions, or participating in protests. Noland (2017) conceptualized offline activism as social cause engagement through actions like donating, volunteering, or joining organizations. These methods had long been used in movements for social change, and debates continued over whether traditional or modern online activism was more effective. Traditional civic actions, also called "real" activism, included long-standing in-person practices that had historically achieved tangible results (Cooper, 2023). Defining offline activism is critical when assessing its efficiency in achieving social change, especially in comparison to the digital alternatives that dominated modern movements. This study, therefore, focused on the motivations behind engagement in offline activism and the specific modes employed by activists to advance their causes. One key distinction between offline activism and other political actions was its broader scope. Actions like voting and contacting representatives remained within the framework of conventional politics. However, offline activism often extended beyond such boundaries, encompassing more grassroots efforts such as neighborhood organizing and protest marches (Cooper, 2023). This aligned with Honwana's (2014) argument that social and economic pressures, coupled with political marginalization, often pushed young people into organized protest movements as a form of resistance. These protests, led by marginalized youth, challenged the

political status quo and contributed to the broader political conversation. Offline activism was often sustained over long periods, allowing movements to build formal organizations or operate through informal networks. Unlike single events like rallies, social movements were continuous efforts to effect legal or social change, allowing activists to refine their methods, from informal protests to formal advocacy campaigns. As Jasper (2014) explains, protest movements were one of the most prominent forms of traditional activism, relying on collective action for success. While some protests involved large groups, others, like hunger strikes, could be highly individualistic but still draw significant attention.

One of the major strengths of offline activism was its capacity to mobilize people for direct action. Protest movements, for example, provided a clear avenue for activists to express dissatisfaction with existing conditions while proposing alternative solutions (Jasper, 2014). However, Honwana (2014) noted that many young activists struggled to articulate a cohesive agenda, often uniting in opposition to the status quo without presenting clear, long-term solutions. This suggested that while offline activism could be effective in challenging existing power structures, its success depended on activists' ability to present a clear vision for change.

In conclusion, traditional activism, through its various forms such as protest movements and civic engagement, continued to be a powerful tool for driving social change. Offline activism provided an essential platform for individuals, particularly those marginalized or excluded from formal political processes, to push for radical changes that conventional systems often failed to address. This form of activism allowed for more sustained efforts, as respondents could form organizations and networks that challenged established institutions. Collective action was critical for the success of these movements, as reaching larger audiences and amplifying their message became a central focus. However, the rise of digital platforms in the 21st century introduced new avenues for activism, as modern activists increasingly utilized blogs, social media, and mobile apps to promote their causes and rally support. This shift raised important questions about the future of activism—whether online activism could complement traditional methods or pose a threat to the effectiveness of more conventional civic participation. This evolving landscape of activism would be explored in the following discussion, as researchers examined whether online activism offered a viable alternative or risked undermining the long-established practices of traditional civic engagement.

Correlation of Online and Offline Activism

Offline activism dates back to the 1970s as a movement addressing inequalities, injustices, and discrimination. Today, it has merged with online activism, where platforms like X, Instagram, and Facebook serve as tools for mobilizing social movements. However, in some cases, online activism transforms into slacktivism, raising concerns about its effectiveness in fostering real change. Given this, understanding how online activism affects offline activism and its impact on students' civic engagement is crucial.

Several studies emphasize that online activism significantly influences offline actions, particularly traditional activism. Dumitraşcu (2020) asserts that traditional and online activism work in tandem to amplify advocacies, with online activism serving as a catalyst for offline actions. This suggests that individuals who engage in digital advocacy online often see it as a stepping stone for broader civic participation. Another study by Agojo et al. (2023) argues that online activism enhances offline activism by streamlining processes and guiding individuals in their civic engagement efforts. Thus, rather than existing in opposition, both forms of activism complement each other, allowing digital spaces to serve as

educational and mobilizing platforms for offline movements. Online activism has played a crucial role in addressing social issues such as racial inequality, feminism, and social injustices, facilitating communication, driving progress, and promoting equitable resources and values.

However, some studies challenge the assumption that online activism directly fosters civic engagement. Milošević-Dorđević and Žeželj (2017) emphasize that active participation in civic movements depends on factors such as the platforms used and the engagement probability of online materials. Given the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation in digital spaces, online advocacy efforts may be dismissed or fail to translate into tangible action. Similarly, Halimatusa'diyah (2024) argues that online activism often consists of token actions—small, symbolic gestures that form only a fraction of broader civic engagement efforts, such as involving policymakers and stakeholders. Due to the complexity and scale of social issues, these token actions have minimal influence on true civic engagement, leading to the emergence of the term

“slacktivism.”

In conclusion, the relationship between digital and offline activism remains a subject of ongoing debate. While online activism has the potential to empower civic engagement, the rise of slacktivism raises concerns about its effectiveness. The question of whether slacktivism weakens online activism or enhances civic participation among students remains unresolved. Addressing this issue requires examining how organizations, governments, and individuals approach activism—both in terms of quantity and quality—which will be further explored in the next discussion.

Appraising the Potential for Connective and Collective Actions

Exploring how passive slacktivism on social media platforms such as Instagram, Messenger, and X (formerly Twitter) contributes to both online and offline activism remains an important discussion in digital advocacy. Slacktivism, characterized by minimal actions like "liking" posts or sharing hashtags, is often dismissed as ineffective. However, this review examines how these seemingly minor activities can support larger collective efforts. Specifically, it focuses on how online platforms facilitate connective actions by linking individuals to like-minded groups and causes, while offline activism offers structured avenues for organizing real-world initiatives like protests and boycotts. Understanding this interplay can provide insight into how digital and physical activism can complement each other to drive meaningful social change.

An online experiment explored how the cognitive processing of messages from personal sources (friends, family) versus impersonal sources (organizations) affects engagement in connective actions on social media. Findings revealed that messages from personal sources significantly influenced users' willingness to engage in passive activism (Benkler, 2015). This effect was mediated by cognitive elaboration and strengthened when the source was perceived as credible, highlighting the role of personal trust in online activism. Moreover, the study addressed the criticism that social media activism is merely a superficial engagement mechanism by demonstrating its potential as a form of collective action. Foster et al. (2019) found that individuals who recalled past experiences of empowerment exhibited stronger intentions for collective action, suggesting that emotional engagement can enhance the effectiveness of social media activism.

A broader review of online and offline activism examined whether social media activism hinders or supports offline protests. While some argue that online activism remains disconnected from real-world actions, most evidence suggests a positive correlation between the two. Social media facilitates offline

mobilization by fostering community, shaping norms, and documenting activism, though it can also increase visibility and risk repression in restrictive environments (Elsevier, 2019). A study on Egypt's social movements identified two key pathways through which social media influences offline action: one centered on content sharing and perceived efficacy, and the other on content internalization and collective identity (Bernroider, 2022). These findings underscore the role of social media in social learning and mobilization, demonstrating how online activism can serve as a bridge to real-world engagement. In conclusion, while passive slacktivism on platforms like Instagram, Messenger, and X may appear minimal, it can still contribute to activism when paired with personal connections, emotional engagement, and mobilization efforts. Social media fosters community and collective identity, reinforcing the link between digital advocacy and offline activism. Thus, rather than viewing online activism as a substitute for traditional activism, it can be seen as a complementary tool that enhances civic participation and strengthens social movements.

Synthesis of the Reviewed Literature

The related literature thoroughly examines the roles that both digital and traditional forms of activism play in driving social change. It provides a detailed discussion on how each form contributes to mobilizing individuals, raising awareness, and influencing societal issues. The researchers added a range of studies on online activism to emphasize both its potential and challenges. The concept of slacktivism is explored, highlighting that while digital platforms offer a convenient means for individuals to engage with causes and express support, this often falls short of leading to meaningful offline actions or real societal impact. By including these studies, the literature underscores the limitations of relying solely on online activism and sets a foundation for exploring strategies to enhance its effectiveness. This discussion is crucial for understanding how online activism can be better integrated with traditional methods to achieve more solid social change.

To further elucidate the intricacies of online activism, the literature review breaks down the concept of slacktivism, which includes various forms such as clicktivism, hashtag activism, hacktivism, and online petitions. These forms of activism rely primarily on online platforms to raise awareness, often requiring minimal offline engagement. While these forms enhance visibility and create a sense of participation, they are often criticized for having limited real-world impact, leading to concerns about superficial involvement. For instance, clicktivism promotes awareness but often fails to drive meaningful action, whereas hacktivism can create significant disruptions but raises ethical and security concerns. The literature highlights the need for future research to explore ways to translate online activism into concrete social and political changes, addressing the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.

In the Philippine context, the review draws on research documenting the high level of internet use and its role in crisis management. This is relevant as it shows how Filipinos' extensive online activity has influenced their engagement in social and political issues. However, the complications of misinformation and digital surveillance underscore the need for strategies to counter these challenges and improve the effectiveness of online activism.

Educational institutions play a central role in fostering civic engagement among students. Schools and universities are not just places for academic learning but are also critical in nurturing active and informed citizens. Student-led movements within academic settings are crucial for developing leadership skills and driving social change. By examining how students organize, advocate, and push for reforms, research reveals the profound impact of educational environments on shaping the values and actions of young

individuals. This underscores the importance of supporting and empowering student activists, as their engagement enriches their educational experience and contributes significantly to broader societal transformations.

Offline activism is examined to contrast its direct impact with the often limited long-term solutions it provides. It is shown that while offline activism can produce immediate and tangible results, it may fall short of sustaining long-term change. Integrating digital tools with traditional methods is proposed as a way to address these shortcomings. This approach highlights how combining digital and traditional strategies can overcome the limitations of each and enhance overall effectiveness. By merging the strengths of both methods, a more comprehensive and impactful approach to activism can be achieved.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focused on the method of gathering data by the researchers for their research study. In line with that, this chapter was anchored to determine the structure of the research design, locale of the study, unit of analysis, sampling method, research instruments, data collection and data analysis, and ethical considerations. Furthermore, this chapter explained the procedures and instruments that were used in gathering information and perspectives from the respondents, as well as deepening the understanding of the researchers regarding the flow and strategy of their research.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. Qualitative research focused on understanding the lived experiences of individuals, aiming to gather rich, in-depth information through interviews and observations. According to McLeod (2024), qualitative inquiry was designed to offer insights into the significance of human experiences, making it especially suitable for exploring complex emotional and experiential dimensions. By utilizing this approach, the research was well-equipped to explore the deeper meanings behind individual experiences, providing a framework for interpreting how personal and collective experiences shaped perceptions and behaviors and analyzing the complexity of student perceptions toward slacktivism and civic engagement.

This study also used the phenomenological method to investigate the perceptions, emotions, and meanings that students from AdDU SHS associated with slacktivism. This method was particularly appropriate for the investigation of student perceptions of slacktivism because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of how students experienced and interpreted their own participation in online activism (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015). Slacktivism, a form of minimal online activism often perceived as lacking genuine impact, was a complex and subjective phenomenon. By using phenomenology, the study examined not just the behavior itself, but also the emotional and cognitive processes students underwent when engaging in slacktivism. This approach was particularly suitable for the study because it facilitated a thorough exploration of how students experienced and interpreted their participation in online activism. It enabled the research to explore how students perceived the significance of their actions, what drove them to participate, and how they viewed their impact on civic engagement and ethical awareness. This comprehensive understanding aligned with the study's objective to uncover the complex emotional and cognitive dimensions that influence student engagement in slacktivism.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the Ateneo De Davao Senior High School Bangkal campus, located at 3H64+7P2, McArthur Highway, Talomo, Davao City, Davao del Sur, Philippines. This location was selected for its accessibility, which enabled researchers to reach respondents and conduct efficient data collection easily. Importantly, this choice aligned with their goal of making a meaningful contribution to the community by improving youth civic engagement. Furthermore, Davao City's proximity to conflict areas in Mindanao provided a rich context for understanding how online activism was used to address pressing social issues. As home to various Lumad tribes, Davao City also offered a diverse cultural landscape that provided valuable insights into how the youth could effectively promote Indigenous rights, preserve cultural heritage, and advocate for issues such as land rights and environmental concerns. In addition, Davao City was known as one of the most progressive cities in the country and had a relatively high level of internet penetration and access to social media platforms. Therefore, Ateneo de Davao University Senior High School students were likely to have encountered civic engagement or slacktivism, making them ideal respondents for this research. Moreover, as the study was based in an academic environment, the findings contributed to enhancing the educational frameworks of other institutions.

Unit of Analysis

This study utilized individuals from the AdDU SHS unit, involving respondents in grades 11 and 12, of any gender, who ranged in age from 16 to 19. The data included both male and female respondents, totaling 15 individuals in this study. The individuals mentioned were the most accessible within the study's geographical area, which significantly enhanced the feasibility of conducting this research. In addition to their accessibility, these individuals were also highly engaged in online activism, which further enriched their relevance for this study. As stated by Chen and Xiao (2022), since social media became an integral part of their lives, affective variables may have been conditioned by their experiences in online engagement. Their active participation in activism across digital platforms made them ideal candidates for providing in-depth information and a well-rounded understanding of the study's focus areas, hence making them the most relevant respondents for the study.

The selected age group of 16-19 years old was particularly essential as it represented young individuals who were more engaged with social media and current social injustices, being particularly influenced by social media in their awareness and activism regarding social issues (Morin, 2024). The researchers sought the qualities of a young activist. First, respondents had to demonstrate social consciousness, be aware of current societal issues, and be sensitive to social justice concerns. Additionally, they needed to have direct experience with online activism, specifically using social media platforms to like, comment, share, or engage in any way with various social justice campaigns. A strong motivation for social change was also essential, as respondents needed to actively advocate for meaningful social change and show a commitment to combating social injustices. These qualities ensured that the selected respondents had relevant experiences and perspectives that aligned with the study's objective of exploring the impact of slacktivism on students' civic engagement.

Furthermore, Davao City actively experienced social injustices, such as alleged vote buying regarding the charter change in the area. This sparked the social movement "Dabawenyos are not for sale," making this a crucial study for Davao City, as Davaoeños continued to experience social injustice, involving both local and national contexts. As a result, AdDU SHS learners aged 16 to 19, with the stated qualities, were deemed appropriate for the research study because they were located within Davao City, and their use of

social media might have enhanced the study's findings. Through this, the researchers aimed to provide insights into how social issues in Davao City related to the broader themes of social justice, enhancing the relevance of the research in a local context. This could also have helped in understanding varying engagement levels among AddU SHS learners, which could assist in identifying factors that influenced slacktivism.

Sampling Method

To gather meaningful insights into the experiences and perspectives of students regarding slacktivism and civic engagement, it was essential to select a sample that aligned with the research objectives. For this study, purposive sampling was employed to carefully choose 15 respondents from AddU SHS. Along with that, there were three respondents for each strand: HUMSS, ABM, PRE-SCI, PRE-EA, and PRE-CS. This ensured informative power and that the responses collected were diverse enough to conclude that they encapsulated the whole AddU SHS student population. According to Lakens (2022), the quality of the collected data relied more on the adequacy of the sample size for drawing conclusions than on the specific justification used. The informativeness of the data depended on the research question and the chosen parameters for determining sample size.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, was a non-probability technique in which respondents were intentionally selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research focus. This method was particularly valuable in qualitative research, especially phenomenological studies, as it enabled the researcher to concentrate on individuals who had direct and significant experiences related to the phenomenon being studied (Nyimbili, F., & Nyimbili, L., 2024). In this case, the respondents were chosen for their ability to provide valuable insights into slacktivism and civic engagement, ensuring the data collected was both rich and pertinent to the topic.

The decision to include 15 respondents followed the recommendations of Creswell and Poth (2017), who proposed that phenomenological studies typically involved 5 to 25 respondents. A sample size of 15 struck a balance between depth and manageability, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives while ensuring the data could be thoroughly analyzed. This number was sufficient to capture varied experiences among students without overwhelming the analysis, supporting a focused exploration of their perceptions and engagement with social justice through slacktivism.

Research Instrument

In this study, the researchers employed a semi-structured in-depth interview as the primary research instrument. A semi-structured in-depth interview was defined as a qualitative research method that allowed for a flexible and conversational approach, enabling researchers to explore complex topics while guiding the conversation with predetermined questions (Ruslin et al., 2022). These interviews were conducted online to ensure accessibility and convenience for respondents, allowing them to express their thoughts openly in a comfortable and adaptable setting. Semi-structured In-Depth Interview (IDI) served as the primary source of data for qualitative research as it allowed for flexibility in exploring respondents' experiences, perceptions, and motivations (Adams, 2015). This method was deemed most appropriate for the study as it struck a balance between guided questions and open-ended responses, enabling the researchers to delve deeply into how students perceived slacktivism, how it impacted their social justice and civic engagement efforts, and what motivated their online behaviors. The semi-structured format

provided the ability to ask follow-up questions based on responses, which was crucial for understanding complex attitudes and personal nuances concerning online activism and online engagement. Additionally, the researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire coupled with semi-structured interviews in order to ensure extensive data collection. According to Creswell (2014), a well-developed questionnaire was capable of delivering significant information regarding attitudes and behaviors, which provided depth to the study. A custom questionnaire was adopted to ensure that the focus of the study was specific and to fill in the gaps present between the currently available tools. In this case, the researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire for more comprehensive and contextualized answers from the respondents, especially in their status as Senior High School students residing in Davao. This method ensured that the questions set achieved specificity and alignment with the research question in regard to the specific objectives of the study, while also addressing issues not included in the existing questionnaires. The questionnaire of this study contained open-ended questions aimed at gathering quality data on students' perceptions of slacktivism and civic engagement. Rouder et al. (2021) emphasized that open-ended survey questions allowed respondents to provide detailed, unconstrained answers. With this approach, the questionnaire was administered during the interviews, allowing the researchers to capture a comprehensive view of the respondents' online activism experiences and granting them the freedom to express their thoughts and ideas in their own words. Specifically, the flow of the interview questions was as follows: students' motivations in engaging in online activism, challenges of slacktivism in driving social change, and students' strategies in shifting from online activism to traditional civic engagement. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, both the semi-structured in-depth interview and the researcher-made questionnaire were validated by at least two experts within the institution: the researcher's Practical Research 2 teacher, Ms. Jennyve Cabantog, and the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, Ms. Amor Y. Lee. Their feedback ensured that the instruments effectively captured the study's objectives and adhered to the ethical principles of nonmaleficence and beneficence of the learners at AddU SHS.

Data Collection Method

The researchers utilized a semi-structured In-Depth Interview to gather the necessary information for the study. The steps they took are as follows:

Step 1. The researchers acquired the permission of the school to conduct the study, particularly from the assistant director for academic affairs and the senior high school director. This was done by sending a formal request via email, seeking permission to conduct interviews with students under the school's name.

Step 2. The researchers carefully identified suitable respondents based on the study's context. A brief introduction outlining the research background and questions was explained to help potential respondents recognize their eligibility and willingness to engage. Interested individuals shared their contact information, such as their AddU email address, for communication. Eligible respondents had to meet the following criteria: be at least 16 years old, a bona fide Ateneo de Davao University Senior High School student, knowledgeable about social justice issues, and have experience liking, sharing, commenting, or engaging in other forms of online activism.

Step 3. An email confirming the participant's approval was sent directly to them through an informed consent letter. They were informed of the background, scope and delimitations, objectives, potential risks, and methods that would be used in the interview to ensure that they understood the intentions of the researchers and the study. The respondents were asked to acknowledge their receipt of the email by returning the signed informed consent file. The email also

included an attachment outlining the topics and questions to be discussed during the interview, providing respondents with a general overview of the interview flow to facilitate comprehensive responses. This approach allowed them to raise any questions or concerns and to decide whether to proceed with the interview. Should a participant choose to withdraw, the researchers moved forward with the next available candidate.

Step 4. The researchers coordinated with each participant to schedule a mutually convenient time for the interview. Flexibility was prioritized to accommodate respondents' schedules.

Step 5. To proceed with the data collection process, data was collected through online interviews via Google Meet. The interviews began with an introduction and covered topics such as motivations for online activism, challenges of slacktivism in driving social change, and strategies for transitioning from online to traditional activism. **Step 6.** Before proceeding with asking the questions, the researchers obtained consent to record and document the study both in digital and traditional formats, specifically through screen recording, voice recording, and note-taking. The documentation was done throughout the duration of the interview, focusing on the question-and-answer portion.

Step 7. All insights and responses gathered during the interviews were compiled and transcribed into a well-organized Google document. This data was analyzed for subsequent chapters of the study.

Data Analysis

After collecting all the necessary data for the research, the researchers proceeded with the data analysis. Given the topic and focus of the study, the most suitable method for analysis was thematic analysis, as it allowed for identifying patterns and effectively organizing and interpreting qualitative data. In 2006, psychologists and leading proponents of thematic analysis, Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, emphasized the flexibility of this method in analyzing qualitative data (Dawadi, 2020). According to Ayton (2023), this method involved a systematic process of generating codes from textual data, leading to the development of themes that reflected respondents' experiences and perspectives. Key steps in the process included text segmentation to identify meaningful sections, creating a codebook to categorize and define codes, structural coding to align responses with research questions, and content coding to explore relationships within the data.

Step 1. Begin by thoroughly reviewing the transcripts or data sources as part of data familiarization. Read through the data multiple times to gain a deep understanding and make early notes of initial thoughts, impressions, and observations (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Step 2. In the process of text segmentation, segment the text by identifying and isolating meaningful sections, key phrases, or passages that directly relate to the research questions (Pak & Teh, 2017). This process helps in recognizing preliminary patterns, such as recurring themes or ideas.

Step 3. Once the data is segmented, develop a codebook to categorize the identified themes into organized categories (Suh, 2021). Clearly define each code to ensure consistency in the coding process, and assign labels based on themes or concepts, such as “motivations for online activism” or “challenges in civic engagement.”

Step 4. Structural coding will then be applied to ensure the respondents' responses are aligned with the specific research questions, systematically organizing the data based on the key themes of motivations, challenges, and strategies (Williams & Moser, 2019).

Step 5. Finally, content coding will be used to explore relationships and connections within the data, identifying patterns such as correlations between motivations and challenges or the ways students describe

their transition from online engagement to offline civic participation (Elliott, 2018). This step will help uncover deeper insights into how students experience and navigate slacktivism and civic engagement. Thematic analysis was chosen for this study since it aligns with the exploratory nature of the research questions, which aim to uncover the motivations, challenges, and strategies of AdDU SHS learners in engaging with social justice movements. The method's flexibility allows themes to emerge directly from the data, ensuring that our analysis remains grounded in the respondents' lived experiences. This approach helps provide a detailed understanding of how online activism translates into offline civic actions, shedding light on the broader implications of slacktivism for youth civic engagement.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations, as highlighted by Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), were central to ensuring that research involving human respondents was conducted with integrity, encompassing aspects such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, managing potential conflicts of interest, and mitigating risks of harm. It included the moral duties of researchers to safeguard the interests of the respondents, claim the reliability and honesty of their studies, and ensure the honest reporting of their results. Ethical considerations were of utmost importance as they created trust between the researcher and the respondents, protected individuals from harm, and ensured that the findings were true and helpful. Adhering to ethical standards was necessary in order to preserve the dignity of both the individuals and the research results.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Badampudi et al. (2022) discussed the importance of distinguishing between anonymity, where researchers could not identify subjects, and confidentiality, where identities were known but protected. Anonymity and confidentiality protected respondents from harm and therefore were key areas of consideration. In this study, respondents were assigned numbers as a way to keep anonymity. Respondents were not identifiable by any means. To protect the privacy of respondents, during online interviews, they had the option to not use the camera, and during face-to-face interviews, they could wear some sort of face obstruction, such as glasses or masks. Informed consent was acquired so that respondents were made adequately aware of the performance context of their own data.

Principle of Nonmaleficence. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) suggested that the research design had to consider the potential harm to respondents, the researcher, the wider community, and the institution. When considering the potential for harm, the approach was, in descending order, to eliminate, isolate, and minimize the risk. To implement the nonmaleficence principle in the research on slacktivism among AdDU-SHS learners, the questions were created in such a way that they did not include sensitive or potentially distressing topics. Respondents were informed that they could skip any questions that made them uncomfortable. They were also told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any risks or negative consequences.

Moral principle of Beneficence. The principle of beneficence in research, as noted by Penn LPS Online (2024), referred to the ethical obligation to maximize potential benefits while minimizing harm to respondents. Through this scholarship, the researchers stood on the former by applying the results of online activism and its subsequent influence for increased concern about academic welfare and that of the respondents. The researchers ensured that the study respondents were informed about the results of the study by providing them with access to the findings. This method showed the importance of their involvement in larger discussions about social engagement. Besides, it pointed out the first-hand benefits that the respondents reaped, which, in the end, constituted a greater good.

Intellectual Property. The Illinois Institute of Technology (2024) article, citing the World Intellectual Property Organization, stated that intellectual property (IP) encompassed trade secrets, copyrights, trademarks, and patents, all of which legally protected distinctive ideas and innovations. Ethical concerns frequently arose in IPRO initiatives, particularly when appraising each group member's contributions if the project resulted in a patent. Concerns also arose about statements made by corporations, mentors, or project sponsors. To protect their rights, researchers asked students to sign confidentiality and intellectual property agreements, which raised additional ethical concerns about student autonomy and recognition.

Voluntary Participation. According to the American Psychological Association (2003), to ensure that participation in the research was truly voluntary, respondents were made aware of the study's goals and methods when qualified respondents were identified. This information was clearly communicated via email, along with the informed consent document, which outlined their right to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without incurring penalties. During the interview process, researchers reiterated this right to ensure that respondents felt comfortable and fully informed throughout their involvement. Researchers refrained from providing extravagant or improper incentives that might coerce people into taking part, avoiding any undue influence. This emphasis upheld the moral necessity of study respondents' voluntary involvement, protecting them from coercion and encouraging a friendly environment.

Informed Consent. As emphasized by Siegle (2023), informed consent was a fundamental principle in research ethics, wherein respondents had to be fully informed about the study's details before agreeing to participate. This entailed information not only on the purpose and methods of the research, funding sources, and probable risks and benefits of such research but also on study duration, the institutional approval number, and how these factors related to their specific clinical situations or interests. After receiving and understanding the information, respondents were free to provide their consent by completing a form. By choosing to participate voluntarily, they confirmed that they had been fully informed about the background of the phenomena and signed an informed consent form. Respondents were also given an outline of the interview questions for reference and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties.

Honesty and Objectivity. Lal and Sharma (2023) stated that researchers should respect objectivity and honesty in their work. This included giving precise and accurate explanations of their data, methods, and results without manipulating, inventing, or reporting data in a biased manner. Research had to be conducted in a completely objective manner, with no personal biases or other factors that could skew the results.

Researchers protected the integrity of the study process by making a conscious effort not to impose previous assumptions or expectations on their observations or results. This meant that their work was consistent and reliable. To ensure that everything discovered was supported solely by the data collected and not by conjecture, they reduced any potential biases, standardized research procedures, increased the validity of their findings, and maintained the integrity of their research process through adequate documentation.

Non-judgment. According to Mental Health First Aid USA (2019), in research ethics, non-judgment involves approaching individuals with an open mind, free from bias and preconceived notions. This practice required self-reflection to ensure a calm and receptive state of mind, along with fostering acceptance and empathy for respondents' diverse experiences—active listening, utilizing verbal cues, and maintaining positive body language further enhanced engagement and trust. Additionally, the researchers

were culturally sensitive, adapting their interactions to respect respondents' backgrounds, particularly since the research population was diverse. Moreover, maintaining a non-judgmental attitude was essential, as it helped respondents feel more comfortable discussing their views and experiences with slacktivism, especially given the phenomenon's negative connotations.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the responses of Ateneo de Davao learners and the analysis of the researchers' inputted data. This inputted data can be analyzed and interpreted to find similar answers from the respondents, forming themes based on the similarities observed in each answer and their personal experiences. Based on the themes formed, it can answer the proposed research questions. It will deliberate on the three (3) statements of the study: (1) Motivations of AddU SHS Learners to Engage in Online Trends and Movements for Social Justice Causes, (2) Challenges presented by slacktivism in fostering genuine social change among the AddU SHS learners, and (3)

Strategies of AddU SHS Learners in Overcoming the Challenges Associated with Transitioning from Slacktivism to More Traditional Civic Engagement. With all of these data combined, the researchers can uncover strings that are interconnected with each other and able to pinpoint specific scenarios in which slacktivism both thrives and falls.

Motivations of AddU SHS Learners to Engage in Online Trends and Movements for Social Justice Causes

The researchers have examined the motivations of AddU SHS learners to engage in online trends and movements for social justice causes. At this point, three (3) primary themes are identified: (1) Emotional Resonance and Personal Connection, (2) Fulfilling the Drive to Inspire Change Through Social Justice Advocacy, and (3) Accessibility and Ease of Use of Social Media. This section sheds light on why Ateneans engage in social justice causes, discussing what motivates them to take action: deep connection and relatability, amplifying voices and awareness, and the ease of social media platforms on information dissemination. The findings presented in this part will help uncover the reasons why individuals engage in social justice causes and reveal the appeal of online forms of social movements among AddU SHS learners.

Emotional Resonance and Personal Connection

The emotional impact and personal relevance of social justice issues inspired learners to engage, often driven by shared experiences or empathy for those affected. When Ateneans could relate to the struggles faced by others, whether through similar life experiences or a genuine understanding of the injustices, they were more likely to feel encouraged to take action. This connection enhanced their awareness and ignited a passion for advocating change, ultimately fostering a sense of responsibility to contribute toward a more equitable society. In recent times, Ateneans have become more socially aware and empathetic regarding issues concerning them and those around them. This theme was evident in the respondents' responses:

"I would say it's a bit of both because I would say that the social issues that I'm super passionate about are those that I really see and understand, especially regarding feminism, women's rights, sexual

harassment, and the like. It's definitely something that is a bit more personal to me because, of course, I am a woman and I've experienced this, and it's a bit more, I can relate to it easier, which is why I would say my emotions are affected."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 15]

"During that time, it was the month of Ramadan for Muslims, and I came across a video of Gaza being bombed and Muslim worshippers being shot at with rubber bullets while praying in the mosque by the IDF. The video made me very angry, and it made me wonder how the Palestinians have endured that for more than 70 years, which pushed me to post or repost videos about the genocide happening in Palestine to spread awareness about the situation. From then on, I did my best to educate others online and personally."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 14]

The responses from the respondents indicate a similar perspective on how emotions evoke online actions. As Ateneans engage in digital online activism, the eagerness and response are primarily caused by emotional conflict and personal connection. Social justice issues are some of the most actively discussed subjects in online activism, primarily because they resonate with people's emotions (pathos) and evoke a sense of moral duty (ethos), motivating individuals to take action (Döveling et al., 2018). Another study, which discussed feminist hashtag campaigns online, states that anger, fear, and disgust were predominant in the emotional range of individuals who interacted with the campaign (Nau et al., 2022). Alongside this, respondent 14 discusses how these shared social injustices causes online can evoke such emotions in them, emphasizing the genocide happening in Gaza. This case also explains how, even from a distance, individuals can correlate themselves to the issue due to its emotional impact on them (Hemmings, 2012, as cited in Battisti & Bruno, 2023). This underscores the power of empathy and the ability of social media to amplify awareness and concern, fostering a sense of community among individuals online who may feel compelled to advocate, even from afar. Lastly, according to Eckert (2006), as cited in Döveling et al. (2018), the communities that act through these issues form a deep emotional connection to each other, forming a social digital construct called "Digital Affect Cultures." That said, the responses gathered from the respondents highlight how emotions come into play in online activism. Due to similar experiences or deep connection and relation to the social injustices advocated online, Ateneans are surely motivated to speak up for themselves and individuals with limited actions due to external influences.

Fulfilling the Drive to Inspire Change Through Social Justice Advocacy

At its essence, this drive revolves around using online platforms as tools for social change. Learners are strongly responsible for educating others on pressing social issues and amplifying marginalized voices, ensuring these messages reach wider audiences. The fulfillment gained from knowing their actions have a tangible, positive impact fuels their commitment to advocacy. This sense of purpose boosts self-esteem and deepens their involvement in social justice movements, inspiring them to create lasting change within their communities and beyond. This theme is apparent in the respondents' responses:

"Participating in online activism helped me recognize my role in advocating for equality and somehow created a sense of empowerment in myself. Sharing stories and supporting people not only enhanced my self-image as someone committed to justice but also gave me a sense of gratification knowing my actions contributed to a larger cause for everyone. One time, one of my friends saw my story and commented on it, saying it was nice of me to actually take action upon it and not just like and share the issue."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 6]

“The response was incredible because my friends and family began sharing my campaign, knowing that my posts were inspiring to others. (...) Many people appreciate those who advocate for causes they believe in, which can enhance your reputation within certain social circles. For example, some of my former schoolmates have told me that my reputation has improved because they see me advocating for important causes.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 11]

Speaking out for social change hinges on the desire to use online platforms to amplify voices and inspire collective action, as reflected in respondents' experiences with online campaigns. These online tools offer engagement opportunities and promote issue awareness (Abing et al., 2022). One respondent shared that participating in a social media campaign for climate action inspired friends and family to engage, emphasizing the rewarding feeling of influencing others to consider environmental impact. Similarly, another respondent described how sharing personal stories and supporting others online enhanced their self-image as someone committed to justice while receiving positive feedback for taking meaningful actions beyond merely liking and sharing posts. Respondents expressed a strong desire to raise awareness about critical issues, believing that educating others is the first step toward driving meaningful change. Messages from personal sources significantly influence users' willingness to engage in passive activism (Benkler, 2015). These experiences align with Chapman and Coffé's (2016) findings that slacktivism fosters identity affirmation and satisfaction when actions reflect personal values. At the same time, the challenges of moving beyond surface-level engagement, as highlighted by respondents, echo Kristofferson et al.'s (2014) insights on the influence of public observability on deeper activism. These shared experiences illustrate how online activism empowers individuals while highlighting its potential as a platform for encouraging broader societal awareness and effecting justice for all.

Accessibility and Ease of Use of Social Media

The accessibility and ease of use of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have transformed how individuals, particularly students, engage in activism and social justice movements. These platforms bridge the gap between awareness and participation by offering user-friendly functions, instant updates, and interactive tools. Social media empowers users to connect with like-minded individuals, share diverse content formats, and engage with trending campaigns effortlessly. In a generation where convenience and speed are valued, the digital space has become an effective enabler of advocacy, making it easier than ever for beginners to champion causes, spread awareness, and take meaningful action. The respondents' responses highlight this theme:

“The accessibility of social media made it really convenient for me to be active in movements and campaigns because you no longer have to watch the news to know something or read newspapers to be socially aware. (...) Back in junior high school, we had a partner community, TALIKALA Incorporated, whose objective was to support prostituted women against social stigmas and unwanted perceptions. Then our group had an IG page about it to conduct a donation drive and send it to the organization. Social media was very convenient to the point that we were able to reach out to many people, even those far from Davao.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 4]

“The accessibility of social media platforms enhances my involvement in movements and campaigns by making it easier to stay informed and connect with like-minded individuals who share the same thoughts as I do. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook offering updates and interactive content, further allow me to participate in these conversations and quickly spread awareness without barriers of time and location.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 6]

“For me, the accessibility of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitates immediate engagement. Learners often find that these platforms lower barriers, allowing for more spontaneous participation in social justice movements. Specific instances, such as trending hashtags on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, can serve as catalysts for this participation, making it feel easy and crowd-supported.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 13]

The widespread adoption of social media has revolutionized activism, particularly in a fast-paced society where time and effort are highly valued. Research by Adorna et al. (2022) revealed that millennials turn to Twitter for political activity due to its perceived safety, ease of sharing information, speed, and reach of information dissemination. Similarly, many respondents emphasized that staying updated on social movements is far easier through social media than traditional media, such as watching the news or reading newspapers. Social media platforms provide user-friendly features like account following and instant post notifications, making information dissemination and updates seamless. As Tufekci (2017) points out, these platforms have transformed how people engage with political issues, enabling participation with a post or a click. The low barriers to entry, such as trending hashtags and crowd-supported campaigns, make it easier for individuals to discover and support causes. Another significant factor driving social media activism is its cost-effectiveness and minimal effort requirement. Sharma et al. (2021) emphasize the unique advantages of technology-driven activism, highlighting its affordability and ability to challenge dominant narratives easily. This aligns with respondents' views that social media platforms allow them to engage in activism without significant financial or physical investment, making participation more accessible.

The ability to remain anonymous on social media also stood out as a dominant theme. Respondents noted that creating an online persona gives users the freedom to express their beliefs without fear of societal judgment or backlash, barriers often encountered in offline settings. Social media's vast reach offers another clear advantage, allowing respondents to connect with audiences from distant locations and build support for their causes. Boulianne (2015) found that the ease of engagement through slacktivism enables more individuals to contribute to raising awareness about social issues. Respondents echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that social media facilitates knowledge sharing through diverse and engaging content formats, such as posters, videos, and images. This accessibility is further supported by Seelig's (2018) pilot survey of undergraduate communication students, which revealed that the most frequent online activities included clicking on shared links (95%), liking or favoriting posts (91%), and commenting on content (91%). Moreover, 91% of respondents agreed that social media provides accessible communication channels, and 70% expressed favorable views of online activism compared to

offline efforts. By offering an accessible, cost-effective, and inclusive avenue for advocacy, social media is a powerful motivator for students to participate actively in social justice campaigns.

Challenges Presented by Slacktivism in Fostering Genuine Social Change

The researchers have examined the challenges presented by slacktivism in fostering genuine social change in students in AdDU SHS. In this section, four (4) primary themes are identified: (1) Superficial and Unsustainable Support in Viral

Campaigns, (2) Impact of Misinformation on Online Efforts, (3) Fear of Judgement and Retaliation From Opposition, and (4) Limitations of Digital Actions. This section addresses the difficulties of slacktivism in converting virtual participation into genuine, meaningful action, the rise of fake news to render digital campaigns ineffective, and the emotional barriers to preventing the public from transitioning from superficial gestures and empty representation to real commitment. These findings provide an analysis to help shed more light on the issue of slacktivism for developing genuine social change and reveal the lack of distance between advocates' actions and actual change among AdDU SHS learners.

Superficial and Unsustainable Support in Viral Campaigns

In the age of social media, viral online campaigns have become powerful tools for raising awareness and mobilizing support for various causes. However, the rapid spread of these campaigns often comes with significant challenges: superficial and short-lived engagement. While many Ateneans participate by liking, sharing, or commenting on posts, they acknowledge that involvement rarely extends beyond the digital space. This fleeting support, often driven by trends rather than genuine commitment, underscores the difficulty of sustaining momentum and translating online actions into meaningful, long-term contributions. The respondents' responses reflect this theme:

"There are videos that are better trending at one point and then die down immediately. (...) I think there's a type of disadvantage because people would usually see that type of content in their past already, and if they see it again, or if they keep seeing it on their For You Page, maybe they'll just swipe away until it disappears from their database."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 5]

"The rapid rise in fall of trends make it harder for the causes to build lasting, meaningful impact since they may not receive that attention or resources needed for sustained action. Uhh, an example is the boycott in terms of the war between Israel and Palestine. Many people advocated in their Instagram stories to "Hala, let's boycott this product", "Hala, let's boycott this brand", pero sa close friends pala nila or privately, kasi naga post sila ng...naga engage pa rin sila, naga buy pa rin sila ng mga products na yun."

Verbatim Response

"The rapid rise and fall of trends make it harder for causes to build lasting, meaningful impact, as they may not receive the attention or resources needed for sustained action. An example of this is the boycott related to the war between Israel and Palestine. Many people advocated on their Instagram stories, saying things like, "Oh, let's boycott this product" or "Oh, let's boycott this brand," but in private, among their close friends, they were still engaging with and buying those products." English Translation

[Respondent 10]

“When it becomes like um something na that it becomes a trend to support a certain issue, it dilutes the entire point of the movement because the movement now comes into, okay, reshare this and let's get as many reshares as we can instead of the value and the essence of the social movement or the social issue.”

Verbatim Response

“When it becomes a trend to support a certain issue, it dilutes the entire point of the movement. The movement then becomes about resharing and getting as many reshares as possible, rather than focusing on the value and essence of the social issue.”

English Translation

[Respondent 15]

Support is the cornerstone of long-lasting and successful social movements. Social media platforms, through hashtags and viral trends, play a crucial role in generating visibility and fostering engagement (Goswami, 2018). However, campaigns that peak and fade too quickly often struggle to maintain support, as Uwalaka (2020) observed in Nigeria's "Not Too Young to Run" campaign. This campaign initially gained traction through hashtags and social media advocacy but required significant offline mobilization to achieve legislative success. Respondents emphasized that viral campaigns are often hindered by the short attention spans of social media users, who quickly move on to the next trending topic, even if unresolved issues persist. This fleeting attention undermines the ability to sustain awareness and motivate further action, as online activism heavily relies on engagement metrics such as likes and shares. Once a trend subsides, resources and momentum for the movement also diminish, making it harder to push for meaningful change. As Anderson (2023) argues, awareness alone is insufficient—it must be paired with a sense of responsibility to act.

Respondents need to recognize that their actions, even online, shape social discourse and drive outcomes. However, some respondents noted the disconnect between online advocacy and real-world behavior. Many people advocate publicly for causes but privately contradict their actions, reflecting the lack of accountability fostered by digital platforms. Kristofferson et al. (2014) explain that the public nature of slacktivism often deters individuals from engaging further, as the tension between maintaining a public identity and following through on actions limits sustained participation. Campaigns like “#BringBackOurGirls” exemplify this, where global attention and millions of retweets failed to translate into substantive political action or policy changes (Vie, 2014). Moreover, while the virality of campaigns can boost participation, it also risks diluting their essence when motivations shift from genuine concern to bandwagon participation. Chapman (2016) highlights that engaging with online activism does not require deep knowledge or a shared commitment to the cause, further contributing to its superficial nature. While viral campaigns can spark initial interest and awareness, their reliance on trends and fleeting engagement often undermine their long-term impact.

Impact of Misinformation on Online Efforts

With the rise of digital advancements, online platforms serve as vital instruments for social causes. However, the rapid spread of misinformation has emerged as a challenging obstacle, disrupting the validity and credibility of one's subject. Thus, the Atenean students uncover the impact of misinformation on online efforts, the challenges it creates, and the strategies needed to protect the integrity of online activism efforts. In this theme, the respondents' responses evidently reflect their experiences:

“From my experience, simplified online content does not help me critically engage or understand social issues because it lacks proper context and information. Instead, it contributes to the spread of misinformation, especially on current social issues on the internet. This affects people—myself included—

because we cannot fully comprehend these social issues, and it impacts our ability to engage with them in a meaningful way.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 2]

“Simplified online content would lead to so many questions to the minds of the audience, which might lead to misunderstandings and eventually misinformation. By not being equipped with the right information, then we are, we do not have the power to advocate for these kasi again, we are not equipped with the right information, kaya hindi rin right ang ma give natin sa people around us.”

Verbatim Response

“Simplified online content leads to many questions in the minds of the audience, which can result in misunderstandings and eventually misinformation. By not being equipped with the right information, we lack the power to advocate for these issues because, again, we are not equipped with the right knowledge, and therefore, we cannot provide accurate information to those around us.”

English Translation

[Respondent 10]

The prevalence of misinformation on online platforms has negatively affected individual's ability to fully understand social issues, reducing their willingness to engage with these problems meaningfully. One of the challenges faced by Atenean students in fostering genuine social change is the widespread misinformation. Respondents shared a similar perspective, stating that simplified online content or misinformation often leads to confusion, hindering access to factual information and critical analysis. This confusion significantly impacts their ability to determine whether online posts are based on facts or misinformation. According to Marcaida (2020), misinformation can distort messages, damage activist credibility, and polarize public opinion, ultimately leading to confusion and skepticism about the legitimacy of social justice movements. In addition, most respondents emphasized that when individuals cannot fully grasp the complexities of these issues or understand their root causes, it can only lead to ineffective approaches or minimal support, ultimately hindering meaningful progress.

In an era of uncontrolled misinformation, several respondents noted the importance of conducting proper research, fact-checking, and verifying multiple sources to avoid being misled. Social media platforms, while often criticized for spreading misinformation, also serve as tools to inform the public when used responsibly, as evidenced by journalists who actively leverage these platforms to counter disinformation and promote accurate reporting (Balod & Hameleers, 2021, as cited in Agojo, 2023).

Ultimately, this highlights the challenges slacktivism presents through oversimplified actions that can exacerbate misinformation rather than address the root causes of social issues. To cause genuine social change, individuals must move beyond online efforts and engage in information that tackles factual evidence and encourages meaningful action.

Fear of Judgement and Retaliation From Opposition

Advocating for social change is often constrained by the fear of judgment and retaliation, stemming from systemic oppression and societal norms. Responses from interviews state that the fear of judgment, coupled with limited resources and entrenched cultural expectations, discourages individuals from fully engaging in activism. However, digital platforms provide a relatively safer space for expressing support for causes they advocate for. These platforms act as stepping stones for advocacy, allowing people to voice

their concerns and gradually overcome the barriers that oppression imposes. This theme can be seen in the respondents' responses:

"I think learners are usually discouraged from acting upon these issues offline because online you get to have the freedom of speech and also do it anonymously. And not having to face the person differently to talk about these issues. Unlike when you really talk about these issues face to face, you might be physically harassed per se, or you might get into trouble for your stance on certain social issues."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 1]

"So even though I would I-I advocate and um I'd love to say I advocate for social change and I'd love to um promote social issues, (...) I am aware that um some people (see) me as an aggressive online activist. (...) So, I prefer to ano sometimes I prefer to not post at all and just advocate for social change in a manner that's um in a manner that's more silent, in a manner that's not online, but rather face-to-face. (...) I have found I-I have found myself many times considering whether I am actually advocating for the right um for the right kind of thing."

Verbatim Response

"So, even though I would advocate and love to promote social change to raise awareness of social issues, I am aware that some people might see me as an aggressive online activist. (...) Sometimes, I prefer not to post at all and advocate for social change in a manner that's more silent and not online, but rather face-to-face. (...) I have found myself many times considering whether I am actually advocating for the right cause."

English Translation

[Respondent 2]

"Okay, so first, it could be the fear of judgment na ma-receive na mga learners sa, ano, based on their stance na gina-spread nila, na gina-show off nila online. And I think fear of judgment can (...) also result in lack of confidence kay may mga maybe may mga instances na learners feel their voices are not strong enough to challenge this issue or to speak about this issue."

Verbatim Response

"Okay, so first, it could be the fear of judgment that learners might receive based on the stance that they spread or show off online. And I think fear of judgment can (...) also result in a lack of confidence like there are instances where learners feel their voices are not strong enough to challenge this issue or to speak about this issue."

English Translation

[Respondent 12]

The human person has the natural tendency for self-preservation, avoiding actions and environments they deem unsafe for them despite having strong motivations in the first place. A recurring theme is the fear of judgment or societal constraints, limiting open participation in online and offline activism. Respondents frequently expressed how internal struggles, such as feeling unprepared to act immediately, prevent them from fully engaging in causes they care about. One respondent emphasized the task of processing and relating before participating in activism, reflecting the need to end up emotionally ready as well as practically capable. Mendes et al. (2019) argue that such emotional preparation is often supported through solidarity inside digital communities, wherein respondents can reflect before engaging.

Similarly, other respondents highlighted that retaliation can become an avenue for suppression of voices and stances from those who believe otherwise. These dangers—red-tagging, physical harassment, and

threats—can be amplified when engaging in traditional activism, which dissuades individuals from public participation. These concerns resonate with Tan's (2022) findings that activists, labor leaders, and public figures in the Philippines had been subjected to red-tagging, being labeled as “terrorists” or “communists” by state authorities without evidence. Such practices intensified the risks for those involved and created a negative connotation of activism in a hostile environment for those in and beyond the activism sphere. Another frequently mentioned challenge is judgment and criticism from others. Respondents explained that discouragement from face-to-face criticisms could erode confidence in their capability to enact change due to the belief that if they cannot even convince the people closest to them, it will be harder to do so with others.

This highlights how societal judgment creates hesitation, pushing individuals towards much less visible forms of activism, such as digital participation, where anonymity offers a safer space. Mendes et al. (2019) highlight how online spaces provide opportunities to bypass societal constraints. Similarly, Halupka (2017) emphasizes the role of online areas in fostering solidarity. Respondents shared that being viewed as an aggressive activist or receiving hate online can lead to second-guessing their stances or choosing more passive forms of advocacy. The quick judgment and “cancel culture” prevalent in social media discourage individuals from openly supporting controversial causes, further reducing the impact of online activism. Respondents stated that minimal efforts and superficial engagement reflect a lack of genuine commitment among respondents, with online activism being easier but less effective than actually taking action offline. Overall, these underscore the dual-edged nature of online activism: while it lowers the threshold for participation and creates inclusive spaces, it also faces challenges in fostering sustained, meaningful advocacy.

Limitations of Digital Actions

The emergence of technology has revolutionized how people interact and engage with social issues, both nationally and globally. However, despite its advantages, some Ateneans feel a sense of helplessness when addressing large-scale issues like poverty or international conflicts. While significant in raising awareness, actions such as signing online petitions or sharing posts often feel inadequate in creating meaningful or tangible change. Online activism has proven effective in amplifying community-based issues, but when faced with more deep-rooted and complex societal challenges, many respondents acknowledge its limitations. This theme is expressed in the participants' responses:

“For example, the news about the West Philippine Sea. I don't really have anything to contribute to it other than to repost or do anything like that. But physically, I cannot do anything about it. So that's why I think that it's limited as well. Because I can't do anything about international conflicts. I don't have anything to say for the government. So in such part, I can only see myself not as a bystander because I do try to share it. But it makes me feel like I'm restricted in what I can do and what I should do.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 5]

“When it's something regarding an individual reaching out for help and support, for me, I think it suffices for me, especially as a student, to give my support to them via social media. However, if it's a collective group of people or animals, whatever, etc., that requires my support as a social media user, I think that it makes me—it's not that I think that, it really does make me feel hopeless that I don't have enough ability to give as much help as I can, but to just mainly sign a petition or share the message.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 9]

While respondents acknowledged the global reach of online activism, they also viewed it as a double-edged sword. Chapman (2016) emphasized that social media was not constrained by geographical, linguistic, legal, or political boundaries, allowing users to create dialogues on social, economic, cultural, racial, and political inequalities with members of previously inaccessible communities. However, when addressing large-scale issues, particularly those involving complex systems or vast populations, respondents felt their ability to make a tangible impact was limited—especially as students. Online petitions, for instance, provided an accessible way to participate in civic action and influence decision-making processes (Elnoshokaty et al., 2016). However, the effectiveness of such petitions often hinged on their visibility in mainstream media, as demonstrated by Vromen et al. (2022) as cited in Setyoko et al. (2023). Publicity and media attention served as crucial links between petition campaigns and decision-makers, amplifying their reach and potential influence. Ultimately, when the actions available to individuals were confined to digital modes, the scale and depth of their impact were similarly constrained. Although online activism was valuable for raising awareness and initiating dialogue, its limitations often left individuals feeling that their contributions to resolving large-scale societal problems were insufficient.

Strategies of AddU SHS Learners in Overcoming the Challenges Associated with Transitioning from Slacktivism to More Traditional Civic Engagement

The researchers accumulated information about Ateneans' strategies in navigating the challenges of moving from online advocacy to more active and traditional forms of civic participation. In this section, four (4) primary themes were identified: (1) Education and Research, (2) Online and Offline Activism Collaboration, (3) Participating in Offline Activities, and (4) Educational Opportunities for Amplifying Civic Engagement. These strategies emphasized the value of involvement in activities such as community discussions, clean-up initiatives, and campaigns to create a balance between digital and real-world engagement. Furthermore, it highlighted the role of collaboration and shared purpose in driving impactful social change.

Education and Research

Despite the perceived limitations of online activism in fostering genuine social change, Ateneans viewed online tools as an invaluable tool for educating themselves about social issues. In the digital age, understanding new and complex topics necessitates thorough research, a process made more accessible through the internet. This enabled individuals to grasp the root causes and contributing factors of various issues, backed by factual evidence and empowered them not only to become more socially aware but also to inspire others to do the same by sharing their knowledge. The respondents' responses aligned with this theme:

"I think Facebook has helped me to be informed about the ongoing social issues and mga upcoming local events dito sa country natin or even here in Davao City. (...) Although Facebook might be a great resource or great resources for me to become civic involved kay I also do research in Chrome which is I research sa Chrome kung ano ba ang information ito like true ba ito based on fact or (...) is this information reliable enough para para isabi ko sa friends ko parang ganun." Verbatim Response

"One of the platforms I use is, of course, Facebook. I think Facebook has helped me stay informed about ongoing social issues and upcoming local events in the country, including here in Davao City. (...) While Facebook is a great resource for staying updated, I also use Chrome to do further research. I double-check the information I see online to verify if it's true or based on facts, ensuring that it is reliable enough to share with my friends."

English Translation

[Respondent 12]

"One effective strategy for me is educating oneself and peers on specific social issues to foster a deeper understanding. This helps move beyond surface-level support and encourages meaningful discussions about the implications of various issues. The second strategy is engaging content creation like crafting compelling posts, videos, or art that encapsulates a cause that can attract more engagement, encouraging others to share and discuss."

Verbatim Response

"One effective strategy for me is educating oneself and peers on specific social issues to foster a deeper understanding. This helps move beyond surface-level support and encourages meaningful discussions about the implications of various issues. The second strategy is engaging content creation. Crafting compelling posts, videos, or art that encapsulate a cause can attract more engagement, encouraging others to share and discuss."

English Translation

[Respondent 13]

"I truly invite myself to look into those articles because I really like seeing the opinions of other people. Additionally, I would say that I try my best to engage in conversations with people who have separate beliefs from me. Even if they don't see the point in, you know, women's rights or upholding those beliefs, I always make it a point to talk to those people and to really understand where they come from. Additionally, not only from news sites but even from social movement Instagram accounts or the likes."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 15]

The youth's natural curiosity, open-mindedness, and adaptability made them well-suited to engage with causes that aligned with their personal ideologies. Respondents emphasized that online platforms acted as a catalyst for discovering campaigns to support and staying updated on the progress of social movements. This was supported by Ribeiro (2019) as cited in Rohm et al. (2023), who analyzed 1,170 Instagram posts from a prominent feminist movement and found that 99.6% of the posts aimed to mobilize or sensitize the audience. These posts utilized diverse media formats such as photographs (41.88%), art (33.42%), and videos (18.72%), with a focus on narrative building (30.5%) and alliance building (24.9%). The respondents' learning strategies primarily revolved around researching issues of interest using news articles and social media platforms to gather credible information. To combat misinformation, they practiced fact-checking and strived to understand multiple perspectives to avoid assumptions and false support. This approach transformed them from mere recipients of information into reliable sources, whether by resharing posts, engaging in discussions through forums and comment sections, or creating their own content as advocates.

Similarly, Shi (2016) underscored the importance of selecting appropriate media tools in online activism, highlighting that public media applications were used in 55.1% of cases for collaboration and 45.5% for resource mobilization, while individualized media applications facilitated collaboration in 39.8% of cases and resource mobilization in 49.4%. Lastly, respondents utilized social media to maintain social consciousness by following organizations and advocacy pages. These platforms not only connected them with like-minded individuals but also helped them discover current events and programs within their communities. Online platforms served as a launching pad, equipping students with the knowledge and resources needed to translate their online awareness into tangible civic engagement. This was validated

by Milošević-Dorđević and Žeželj (2017), stating that in order for individuals to participate actively in civic engagement movements, one had to consider the platforms used and the engagement probability of the materials. This empowered them to take meaningful action, proving that even as students, they were capable of contributing to addressing social issues and enacting change.

Online and Offline Activism Collaboration

In today's digital age, the landscape of activism transformed, offering various modes of engagement with distinct advantages and challenges. Within this context, Ateneans demonstrated the ability to discern which social issues were best addressed through either online or offline activism. By weighing factors such as reach, immediacy, and the nature of the issue, this analysis aimed to illuminate the strategic decision-making process that underpinned the success of social movements. Furthermore, students recognized the significant role of integrating both online and offline efforts to amplify impact, fostering a collaborative approach that enhanced the overall effectiveness of activism. This theme was supported by the respondents' responses:

"In online activism, it's for raising awareness, mobilizing larger groups, or/and sharing information more quickly, especially on the issues that require immediate attention. And for offline activism, it is better suited for building personal connections, engaging in direct actions, and creating more lasting and localized impact through

face-to-face interactions."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 6]

"For me, if it's within my community, then it's more effective to use offline activism. (...) But if it's an issue that's beyond physical capabilities, to go there to address it yourself or to participate in that issue basically, then it's more appropriate to show online activism wherein you also gain other people's support internationally, you can further share the message more efficiently."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 9]

These sentiments aligned with studies like Rohm et al. (2023), which highlighted the role of digital platforms in increasing political engagement and promoting democratic efforts. Social media, in particular, proved crucial for circulating information and organizing collective actions. Additionally, De Jesus et al. (2020) as cited in Agojo

(2023), emphasized that youth organizations such as La Salle Students for Human Rights and Democracy and Anakbayan Vito Cruz sustained political engagement during restrictive periods like the COVID-19 pandemic through online platforms, showcasing the resilience of online activism. On the other hand, respondents agreed that traditional, offline activism was more effective in addressing immediate, community-based issues. The personal interactions in such engagements fostered deeper connections among advocates and delivered more localized impacts. Traditional activism, as noted by Jasper (2014), thrived on its ability to sustain movements over time, allowing for the establishment of formal organizations or informal networks. Protest movements, a prominent form of offline activism, relied on collective action and had the capacity to mobilize large groups or even individual efforts, such as hunger strikes, to draw attention to pressing issues. The respondents' responses align with this theme:

"Kasi ayun nga, if you do something face-to-face, if a whole lot of people do something face-to-face, then that can be seen, that can be heard, that can be recorded and sent online, and that can create a huge

movement. (...) Kasi if you only do things face-to-face, how can other people who aren't in the vicinity participate? (...) And I think that is the beauty of having both platforms, both offline and online."

Verbatim Response

"Because, as mentioned earlier, if you do something face-to-face, and if a whole lot of people do something face-to-face, then that can be seen, that can be heard, that can be recorded and sent online, and that can create a huge movement. (...) Because if you only do things face-to-face, how can other people who aren't in the vicinity participate? (...) And I think that is the beauty of having both platforms, both offline and online."

English Translation

[Respondent 5]

"Sure, you can repost, you can like, you can share posts but it's different when you really act on it or when you talk about it when you speak in conversations. (...) So, I'd say that slacktivism, sure, okay, it's an okay step if you want to be an advocate online but definitely have the parameters to go beyond just going online and making sure that you as an individual will always become a role model for what you believe in."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 15]

The respondents collectively recognized the importance of collaboration between online and offline activism. While online methods offered efficiency in spreading awareness and building global audiences, offline efforts ensured direct action and personal connection. This dual approach was supported by Piat (2019), who suggested that slacktivism, often dismissed as superficial, could serve as a gateway to more meaningful offline participation. Dumitraşcu (2020) further asserted that digital and offline activism complemented one another, with online advocacy often serving as a precursor to civic engagement. Similarly, Agojo et al. (2023) argued that digital platforms maximized the impact of offline actions, creating a synergistic effect that shaped societal change. Ultimately, while digital actions like sharing posts or raising awareness played a role, true

transformation occurred when collective and connective actions converged. Halimatusa'diyah (2024) underscored that token digital actions were but one aspect of broader social engagement that involved leaders and various stakeholders in driving meaningful change. The integration of both modes of activism, therefore, not only bridged gaps but also amplified efforts toward achieving social justice and advocacy goals.

Participating in Offline Activities

Engaging in tangible actions like discussions, clean-up drives, donation initiatives, or advocacy campaigns helped bridge the gap between slacktivism and traditional civic engagement. Additionally, collaborating with like-minded individuals or organizations fostered a sense of shared purpose and strengthened collective efforts for social change. Together, these strategies underscored the importance of moving beyond online activism to create meaningful, lasting impacts in society. The respondents' responses exemplified this theme:

"A lot of students use Arrupe uh or utilize Arrupe as um as a way to actually be more civic involved, especially since um Arrupe is like the- is concerned for ano for ad-advocating for social change. (...) I also have activities outside of school, (...) which is um outreach programs in our organization where we reach out to um from the needy to people in jail cells and people who are affected by flood areas."

Verbatim Response

“A lot of students use Arrupe as a way to be more civic involved since it focuses on advocating for social change. (...) I also have activities outside of school, (...) such as outreach programs in our organization. We reach out to people in need, including those in jail cells and communities affected by flooding.”

English Translation

[Respondent 2]

“My advice would be to start small by taking concrete actions like attending local meetings, volunteering, or donating to a cause rather than just liking or sharing posts online. It is also important to focus on deepening your understanding of the issues, connecting with others who are advocating with the same advocacy, and committing to consistent and meaningful actions that go beyond your virtual support.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 6]

“Whenever there's an opportunity for me to incorporate this topic, for example, like recitation that is related, projects, or a class-group discussion, then I would take those opportunities, especially if I'm knowledgeable enough about it. (...) And lastly, I believe in my church. I can raise that concern so that we can also support them in prayers and in whatever support we can give, financial, etc. That's my strategy.”

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 9]

A lot of Ateneans started getting involved by taking small steps, such as joining a school program or attending local meetings. This helped them get comfortable with civic engagement and build confidence, eventually leading to participation in bigger projects like nonprofit organizations that could make a real difference. Farago et al. (2018) pointed out that being part of activist groups helped people build leadership skills, and this was true for learners as well. They were not just making a difference; they were learning and growing along the way. For many learners, the journey into offline activism began with small, personal actions, such as talking to friends or integrating their beliefs into everyday conversations like class discussions or even prayers. Starting with people they trusted gave them the courage to speak up. Howard et al. (2016) suggested that mixing personal advocacy with offline activism could make a bigger impact, reflecting how small, honest efforts could grow into something larger.

Another way learners overcame the challenges of slacktivism was by partnering with others who shared the same passions. They found that working with friends or like-minded peers kept them motivated and gave them a sense of purpose. Döveling et al. (2018) explained that these connections created a sense of belonging, which helped learners stay engaged. Working together with others made their efforts feel stronger and more impactful. Engaging in dialogue and debating with diverse viewpoints was also a significant part of becoming more involved in activism. Learners reported that debates and open discussions helped them grow in confidence and critical thinking. Kareem (2019) suggested that engaging with different perspectives helped individuals think more deeply about their beliefs, allowing them to realize that activism was not only about convincing others but also about learning and standing firm in their own convictions.

Education was key to feeling prepared for real-world activism. Many learners found that attending workshops and seminars helped them gain the skills and confidence needed to take action. Halimatusa'diyah (2024) emphasized that meaningful activism involved deeper connections and collaboration, not just raising awareness online. This aligned with the learners' belief that education helped them turn their passion into action and equipped them for real, lasting change, enabling them to develop strategies grounded in a deeper understanding of what activism truly entailed. Ultimately, this emphasized

that transitioning from slacktivism to more impactful civic engagement could be a manageable and empowering process when individuals were equipped with practical tools and strategies that could be seamlessly integrated into their daily routines.

Educational Opportunities for Amplifying Civic Engagement

Utilizing school programs, events, and support systems helped students gain experience in activism and promote causes within a structured and supportive community. This involvement not only helped students develop essential skills in supporting effective civic engagement but also fostered a sense of belonging and collective purpose as they worked alongside their peers to make a meaningful impact. Leveraging the various school programs, events, and support systems available within the educational environment provided valuable opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in online and offline activism. This theme was evident in the respondents' responses:

"By integrating these activities into the curriculum, it really helps students engage more in civic actions. In Ateneo, for instance, we have subjects like CST and PPG. In PPG, we are encouraged to develop a project that aims to address a specific issue. In CST, we are tasked with discussing an issue and further analyzing it in order to understand it better and engage ourselves in creating positive change."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 10]

"Schools could organize workshops and seminars addressing topics like civic responsibility, the democratic process, and social justice. This initiative would encourage students to critically reflect on their role as citizens. Establishing platforms for students to express their opinions, such as student councils or forums, can cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their community."

Verbatim Response

[Respondent 11]

"For me, um we can encourage extracurricular activities by establishing clubs focused on social justice, environmental advocacy, or community service can provide students with outlets to engage in activism. Support for these organizations including funding and resources. (...) And lastly, kay mag integrate tayo ng civic education of it so that sa atin, kay sa schools can ano can incorporate civic education into (the) curriculum, emphasizing the importance of mga social responsibilities, mga critical thinking, and active citizenship."

Verbatim Response

"For me, we can encourage extracurricular activities by establishing clubs focused on social justice, environmental advocacy, or community service, which can provide students with outlets to engage in activism. Support for these organizations, including funding and resources, (...) And lastly, integrate civic education so that schools can incorporate civic education into the curriculum, emphasizing the importance of social responsibilities, critical thinking, and active citizenship."

English Translation

[Respondent 13]

As more schools incorporate activism into their clubs and organizations, students tend to learn more about what is happening around them. Upon analysis, respondents have emphasized how school organizations and clubs play an important role in advocating and seeking opportunities to involve themselves in civic engagement. As respondents stated, schools should utilize their initiatives to inform and spark action for students effectively. In the same context, general volunteerism or participation in non-activist student organizations and involvement in progressive activist groups specifically equips students to take

leadership roles in addressing social inequalities (Farago et al., 2018). This results in a strong bond between the community and inspires socio-civic organizations and clubs to leverage its utilities so that the students can amplify their voices and engagement.

As clubs and organizations continue to promote civic engagement, schools should also incorporate their educational curriculum in activism. Generally stated in the data, subjects like Philippine Politics and Governance, World Religion, and Media Information Literacy open up political views and cultural differences. Concerning this, the University of the Philippines views activism as a vital aspect of its academic environment, promoting discussions that challenge conventional thinking and encourage academic voices to engage with public discourse (Concepcion, 2024). This explains how subjects in schools partnering with communities and institutions can amplify civic engagement among students.

Lastly, schools should also allow students to gain active leadership in open discussion and allow them to advocate for these issues, creating safe spaces for students to amplify their voices. As respondents have shown above, they opened up about how schools should be unbiased and allow students to speak up about their beliefs. This is also confirmed by another study stating that integrating a diverse range of contributions to issues will have great contributions to the curriculum, which then helps them be more civically engaged (Davis et al., 2017, as cited in Morgan & Davis, 2019). With this, they may enhance their active leadership in civic engagement and overcome challenges that may hinder their activeness in offline and online activism.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the researchers present their findings from extensive research and data collection, structured around three primary research questions. These questions are designed to delve into critical aspects of social engagement among AdDU SHS learners: (1) Motivations of AdDU SHS Learners to Engage in Online Trends and Movements for Social Justice Causes, (2) Challenges Presented by Slacktivism in

Fostering Genuine Social Change and lastly, (3) Strategies of AdDU SHS Learners in Overcoming the Challenges Associated with Transitioning from Slacktivism to More Traditional Civic Engagement. By focusing on these key areas, this chapter aims to serve as a vital resource and foundational element in addressing the overarching issue of slacktivism. It seeks to provide substantial data and insights that will be beneficial for understanding the current landscape of social activism among students and filling the research gaps through recommendations.

Summary of Findings

This study explored how AdDU SHS students in Bangkal, Davao City, navigate slacktivism and the ways in which they can maximize their impact on social justice advocacy and civic engagement. The summary will capture shared experiences, thoughts, and feelings about slacktivism by looking at common patterns in students' responses. Recognizing these recurring themes is essential because it helps paint a more accurate picture of how students see and engage with online activism. It also sheds light on whether slacktivism inspires real change or simply takes the place of deeper involvement in social causes.

Motivations of AddU SHS Learners to Engage in Online Trends and Movements for Social Justice Causes

In the digital era, activism is no longer restricted to rallies and protests. It thrives in online spaces where emotions and personal connections drive engagement. The research findings revealed that the motivation to participate in online trends and movements for social justice often stemmed from empathy and shared experiences with marginalized communities. Exposure to online content, such as videos and posts about racial injustice, human rights violations, and environmental advocacy, fueled awareness and a desire to take action. This engagement was not merely performative but rooted in a sense of responsibility to amplify voices and educate others. By participating in online activism, whether by sharing content, initiating discussions, or engaging in advocacy campaigns, learners sought to contribute to meaningful conversations and inspire social change.

Moreover, the respondents highlighted that the accessibility and interactive nature of social media significantly influenced their participation in digital movements. They found online platforms effective in spreading awareness rapidly and mobilizing support for various causes. For many, online activism provided an avenue for self-expression and social validation, as their contributions helped shape online discourse. However, while the ease of engagement through liking, sharing, and posting increased participation, it also raised concerns about the depth of commitment and the transition to offline civic engagement. The study underscored that online activism, combined with informed advocacy, empowered students to navigate social justice issues critically and contribute to collective action.

Challenges Presented by Slacktivism in Fostering Genuine Social Change

The findings indicated that slacktivism may initially create interest in social justice issues but often leads to minimal engagement beyond digital platforms. Ateneans who engaged in online activism may have felt a sense of accomplishment through likes, shares, or online petitions. However, this type of engagement rarely led to deeper involvement in meaningful actions. One of the challenges associated with slacktivism was the lack of continuous motivation for students to translate awareness created online into actual activism offline, which included community engagement or protesting. Such actions could bring about meaningful and lasting societal change.

Furthermore, slacktivism contributed to a disjointed approach to social justice, in which efforts are dispersed across different digital platforms rather than being coordinated and collective. It was this context, quite often, that failed to provide enough momentum to create meaningful change. With no particular sources from which students could connect online activism with grassroots activity, the message remained largely absent from the depth of change envisioned by activism. Ultimately, the challenges call for more concrete routes that could connect online activism directly with tangible, long-term social change by ensuring that the awareness they gained translated into real-world actions.

Strategies of AddU SHS Learners in Overcoming the Challenges Associated with Transitioning from Slacktivism to More Traditional Civic Engagement

The findings revealed that AddU SHS learners utilized various strategies to overcome the challenges of transitioning from slacktivism to traditional civic engagement. First, education and research played a crucial role, as students used online platforms like Facebook and Google Chrome to stay informed about social issues, fact-check information, and deepen their understanding of civic matters. This self-directed learning enabled them to make informed decisions and engage in meaningful discussions with peers.

Second, students strategically integrated online and offline activism, recognizing that digital platforms effectively raised awareness and mobilized large audiences. At the same time, engaging in civic activities beyond social media allowed for more meaningful interactions and direct involvement in social causes. By balancing both approaches, they maximize their impact on social movements.

Most students started with small acts such as joining school programs, volunteering, and advocating during class discussions, church activities, and community engagements. These small steps boosted their confidence and eventually led to more structured involvement. Third, educational opportunities for civic engagement played a crucial role in their activism. Subjects such as Philippine Politics and Governance (PPG) and Catholic Social Teachings (CST) presented real-life issues to students, while extracurricular activities, student organizations, and outreach programs offered formal outlets for civic engagement. These strategies showed that transitioning from slacktivism to offline activism was a gradual but meaningful process. When equipped with the proper knowledge, opportunities, and support, learners moved beyond online activism and actively contributed to social change in their communities.

Implications of the Study

The implications of this research extend to a wide range of beneficiaries, including educational institutions and their organizations, digital and offline activists, researchers in the field, residents of Davao City, and the youth — particularly students of Ateneo de Davao University. While active student participation is crucial, the study suggests that educational institutions and organizations should work towards facilitating more decisive connective action that bridges the gap between online and real-world activism. Additionally, the theoretical framework established by this study aligns with various professions that intersect with the research, enhancing its relevance and applicability. The study's findings hold significant implications that could shed light on different topics related to slacktivism, including but not limited to online activism, collective and connective action, freedom of speech, and civic engagement, particularly within the context of Ateneo de Davao University.

The research has revealed that online activism often leads to superficial engagement among individuals who may not fully grasp the complexities of social injustices. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of integrating digital and offline activism, encouraging students to leverage these approaches to foster a more profound comprehension of social injustices and promote effective collective action. Moreover, this study articulates several key implications and offers recommendations that deserve the attention of diverse stakeholders. The insights gathered from the data provide valuable perspectives and lessons that could benefit the immediate beneficiaries and the broader discourse surrounding activism and civic engagement. As such, the findings of this research could catalyze meaningful discussions and initiatives among multiple parties, promoting a more profound understanding of the dynamics of slacktivism and its impact on society. These implications, perspectives, concerns, and recommendations can be considered by interested respondents and beneficiaries, including:

For educational institutions, schools must integrate media literacy, critical thinking, and civic education into their academic programs. This has significant implications for theory, reinforcing concepts of digital affect cultures and online activism's role in modern civic engagement. In professional practice, educators and administrators can use these insights to develop research-based teaching strategies that encourage students to engage meaningfully in advocacy, ensuring that academic learning translates into real-world action. The findings also suggest that incorporating media literacy into school curricula can better equip

students to critically assess and participate in online activism, fostering a generation that is both informed and engaged in social change.

Additionally, school organizations should design initiatives that combine digital advocacy with real-world activism. The study contributes to research by emphasizing the role of social media strategies in mobilizing student-led movements. It also informs methodology by implicating interactive, student-centered approaches, such as community partnerships and advocacy training, to maximize engagement. While the study primarily benefits educational institutions and student organizations, its implications extend to society by demonstrating how online activism can be harnessed to drive real-world change and social justice initiatives.

For social media users, social media should be leveraged as a tool for deeper engagement—connecting with organizations, staying updated on projects, and discovering opportunities for real-world civic involvement. Users must critically assess their motivations, moving beyond passive participation—such as simply resharing posts—to focus on long-term commitments rather than participating in short-lived trends. They are encouraged to follow up on movements even after they stop trending and consistently support initiatives to contribute to more sustainable change. However, this does not mean abandoning online activism altogether. Additionally, misinformation undermines meaningful activism. Oversimplified content often lacks depth and context, leading to misinterpretations of social issues and reducing users' ability to engage critically. Social media users must develop strong media literacy skills to combat this, actively fact-checking and verifying sources before amplifying information. While social media fosters interaction and discussion, it also creates space for trolls and anonymous backlash, which can discourage users from advocating for causes. However, rather than silencing engagement, these challenges can strengthen critical thinking skills and push users to refine their arguments and discern socially just positions more effectively. To support this, it is crucial to provide support systems—both online and offline—such as activist organizations and peer networks. A strong real-world support system ensures that social media users do not rely solely on digital spaces to find solidarity, reinforcing that they are not alone in their advocacy efforts.

Moreover, the ongoing research into slacktivism continues to generate significant debate and diverse viewpoints. These studies not only illuminate the intricate nature of online activism but also underscore its potential to effect change in the arena of social injustices. By integrating various interdisciplinary approaches—leveraging insights from sociology, law, political science, and more—scholars can reveal diverse perspectives that enhance the comprehension of this complex phenomenon. While these academic disciplines offer specific frameworks for analyzing slacktivism, there remains an avenue for future research to develop innovative methodologies that delve deeper into the complexity of the digital environment. This exploration could encompass the effects of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence and the distinct interactions that occur on specific digital platforms. Ultimately, such research would contribute to a richer dialogue regarding slacktivism's efficacy and broader implications in an increasingly interconnected offline world.

The study provides valuable insights into how Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) applies to online activism, highlighting its strengths and limitations. UGT suggests that individuals engage with the media to fulfill specific needs, such as seeking information, mobilizing a cause, and shaping their self-identity. However, the findings reveal a gap between perceived benefits and actual impact, as many respondents engage in online advocacy to satisfy a sense of social responsibility or personal gratification, yet this rarely

translates into offline action. This study examines the motivations behind online activism and the social and emotional barriers that discourage

AddU SHS students from transitioning to traditional civic engagement. It reinforces UGT's relevance in understanding how social media gratifies the need for expression and community involvement while exposing its limitations in fostering long-term commitment to social causes. Many users engage in slacktivism not out of deep-rooted concern but due to social pressures to appear politically aware. For future studies on slacktivism and social movements, UGT provides a framework for understanding why individuals engage with social justice trends online and what challenges they face in sustaining this engagement offline. By analyzing these factors, researchers can assess the sustainability of slacktivism and its actual impact on achieving genuine social change.

Future professionals, such as school principals, curriculum developers, and education policymakers, can benefit from this study. As slacktivism becomes a growing issue, meaningful change must be observed sooner or later. By using this research, principals and curriculum developers can develop a framework to understand and analyze the phenomenon of slacktivism, allowing them to incorporate relevant lessons into subjects like social studies and civic education. Furthermore, human rights advocates, environmental activists, and community organizers can use this research to explore solutions and discover more meaningful approaches to activism. By analyzing respondents' answers, they can refine their methods and gain insights into how others engage in activism.

Moreover, future researchers will undoubtedly benefit from the insights gleaned from this study. While the current data is confined to the experiences and views of learners from AddU SHS, it opens up numerous avenues for future research. Scholars can build upon this foundation by broadening the scope of their investigations incorporating a wider range of demographic factors. This could include examining variations based on educational backgrounds, socio-economic status differences, and various affiliations' impact on engagement in online activism. By expanding the dataset and exploring these dimensions, future studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of Slacktivism and its implications in different contexts.

Finally, the Ateneo de Davao Senior High cultivates a comprehensive approach to leadership among its students. As a Filipino University, its job to develop civic culture and consciousness will be leveraged, helping marginalized groups voice out against oppressors. As a Catholic University, the Gospel community will be motivated to address key concerns of students, including self-identity, personal growth, civic society, Christ, and the Church, emphasizing a deeper understanding of the faith and integration of the Gospel within Philippine culture. The institution has the potential to effectively integrate the principles of civic engagement with the personal development of individuals, highlighting the importance of fostering a Christ-centered approach while simultaneously cultivating compassion and conscience. This connection between civic responsibility and personal growth can create a holistic environment that nurtures spiritual and emotional intelligence, reinforcing the idea that true personal fulfillment often comes from serving others and engaging with the community meaningfully. The data collected and analyzed will play a critical role in nurturing these essential qualities within the school community, paving the way for a generation of leaders who are both socially responsible and deeply rooted in their faith. As a reputable institution, Ateneo de Davao University should consistently engage in studies addressing social injustices and challenges online and offline activists face. Also, the institution should amplify these voices, not hinder them, as these discussions can potentially shape students for the future.

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