
Relationship of Slacktivism and Conflict in Human Interaction and Social Change Among Senior High School Students

Ma. Czarene Bernadette S. Taruc, Rica Mae F. Esteban, Maria Zairol D. Gallopa, Jera Nicole B. Huenda, Alexis G. Manangan, Samantha Nicole D. Maoirat, Aliya Clarisse H. Sibulo and Lorelie M. Pasana, MAT

ABSTRACT

As the pandemic propagates, people's ability to make physical contact is limited, and they switch to technology. Technology is primarily used for communication in identifying alternate methods of accomplishing their tasks. As a result, social media usage has increased and has become prevalent. Even upon these phenomena, numerous issues remain unresolved and keep occurring, giving rise to slacktivism. Slacktivism is defined in this study as engaging in online activities without making a significant effort to advance a social cause. This study aims to determine whether slacktivism and conflict in human interaction and social change are associated. The researchers collected data from participants via an online survey to answer the research questions. The responses of the participants were aggregated using a seven-point Likert scale by utilizing the Spearman rank to analyze the data gathered and determine if the variables are related. Hence, the findings of this study show that the frequency of slacktivism has a significant relationship with the intensity of conflict in human interaction and the avidity for social change. Consequently, the more slacktivism a person engages in, the more avid they are for social change.

Key words: Slacktivism, frequency of slacktivism, conflict in human interaction, conflict intensity, avidity for social change

People get more engaged in using social networking sites during the pandemic hence it became their primary means of communication with the rest of the world. As a health preventive measure implied by the government, they are restricted from having physical interactions. Nonetheless, despite the pandemic, the world encountered a range of problems. The prevalence of the use of social media to get involved with concerns being addressed and voice their opinions leads to the emergence of slacktivism. Slacktivism is a term coined to describe the effortless online activities that individuals engage in, such as sharing or interacting with posts related to a specific subject or social cause, with the aim of creating social awareness or support. Lane and Dal Cin (2017)¹ in their article "Sharing Beyond Slacktivism: The Effect of Socially-Observable Prosocial Media Sharing on Subsequent Offline Helping Behavior", stated that slacktivism is a new form of social and political

engagement of the youth using online forms. This approach provides numerous options and possibilities for individuals to have their opinions heard.

Within the realm of slacktivism, there are various subcategories identified by Piat (2019)², including clicktivism, hacktivism, making small donations, and signing petitions. These activities are considered low-risk and low-cost forms of slacktivism that can help bring about change and raise awareness regarding important issues. By participating in these actions, individuals can initiate long-term changes by further engaging with the issue at hand, potentially leading to the development of a full-fledged movement.

The concept of slacktivism is particularly relevant in today's society, as social media platforms are extensively used for communication and engagement with the wider community. It is within this context that the researchers have chosen to explore the topic of slacktivism. Their aim was to educate people about what slacktivism entails

and help them assess the effectiveness of slacktivism in generating social change. By doing so, individuals engaged in slacktivism can become aware of their contributions and evaluate whether they are actively promoting social change that benefits the development of society.

To achieve this objective, the researchers plan to examine the correlation between slacktivism, conflict in human interaction, and the desire for social change. By analyzing these factors, they seek to shed light on the potential impact of slacktivism on society and provide valuable insights for social media users who participate in slacktivist activities. Ultimately, their research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of slacktivism in shaping social change and its implications for societal development.

This research aims to demonstrate the following hypotheses: the null hypothesis states that there is no connection between slacktivism and conflict in human interaction as well as the eagerness for social change. Contrary to it, the alternative hypotheses propose that there is a relationship between slacktivism and conflict in human interaction as well as the eagerness for social change. To ascertain the objective of the study, the researchers seek to find out the frequency of slacktivism, the most prevalent intensity level of conflict in human interaction, and the eagerness for social change among senior high school students at Far Eastern University – Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, as well as the relationship among these variables. The study's significance lies in its potential to provide insights into how slacktivism affects conflict intensity and social change among young people. By understanding this relationship, educators and policymakers can develop strategies to encourage more meaningful forms of activism among young people that can lead to positive social change. Additionally, the study can serve as a guide for future researchers who wish to explore this topic further.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Though the target population were Senior High School students because of their knack in social media and their possible engagement in social or political issues in online platforms; only the students of Far Eastern University – Dr. Nicanor Reyes in the Senior High school department were chosen for this study.

The one hundred and seventy (170) senior high school participants were chosen using purposive sampling technique, which was chosen because the

researchers wanted to make sure the participants fit the criteria and were not chosen randomly.

The study employed a quantitative approach and a correlational research design to determine the significance of the relationship between slacktivism and two variables: conflict in human interaction and avidity for social change. The use of a quantitative approach enabled the researchers to precisely draw conclusions from the data collected, while correlational research was necessary to examine the existence of a significant relationship between variables without attempting to control them. This design allowed for the exploration of the relationship between variables while providing valuable insights into the complex dynamics of social media behavior and its impact on social and political issues. By utilizing a correlational design, the study was able to investigate the extent to which changes in one variable may be associated with changes in another, providing a more nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to slacktivism and its effects on social and political engagement.

The survey questionnaire was administered online through Google Forms and was divided into four sections. The first section was designed to collect demographic information from the respondents. The second section included the Online Activism Scale, a questionnaire developed by Dookhoo (2015)³ to measure social media activity related to social-political issues. The third section comprised a scale used to assess the most prevalent conflict intensity levels in human interaction among the respondents, based on the research conducted by Cusack, et al. (2020)⁴ on the six levels of conflict intensity. The final section was specifically designed to gauge the perspectives of senior high school students on current events, which allowed the researchers to determine their level of avidity for social change. By utilizing a multi-section survey questionnaire, the researchers were able to gather a comprehensive set of data from the participants, which provided a more thorough understanding of the complex relationship between social media use, conflict in human interaction, avidity for social change, and online activism. The use of Google Forms as a platform for data collection allowed for easy distribution and data management while ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

To collect data for the study, the researchers employed various forms and surveys. Prior to the main survey, they distributed pre-surveys to identify students who met the study's criteria, specifically those who actively engage in social media platforms. They also provided consent forms to inform the students about the study's purpose,

data privacy, and related information. The main survey utilized a researcher-made questionnaire, administered to participants through online platforms like messenger or telegram. To ensure the quality of the data, the researchers tested the survey's internal reliability using Cronbach's Alpha during the pilot phase. The coefficients obtained were required to be between 0.65 and 0.8, or higher in some cases, to ensure questionnaire's reliability. They also used the weighted mean to determine the prevalence of each variable, which aided them in computing the final average and establishing the relationship between the variables. Additionally, they assessed normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which can handle sample sizes of up to 2000. They used the Spearman rho correlation to analyze the survey data and determine the correlation between slacktivism, conflict in human interaction, and willingness for social change among senior high school students. This statistical method assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between two ranked variables. Finally, they guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality to their respondents by having them sign a consent form.

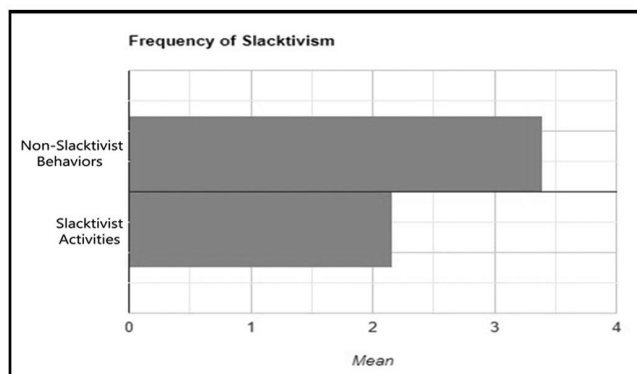


Figure 1. Chart representation of the data gathered regarding slacktivist activities and non-slacktivist behaviors

slacktivism activities using a calculated average of three components: slacktivist behavior, mobilizing others, and tangible online activism, yielding a mean response of 2.16, suggesting that senior high school students engage in slacktivism activities rarely. Conversely, the mean response for negative perspectives indicating non-slacktivist behavior was 3.39, indicating that senior high school students are not heavily involved in slacktivism. Non-slacktivist activities were found to be more frequent than slacktivist activities (Figure 1). The top five items on the online activism scale indicated that senior high school students were primarily engaged in clicktivism, which requires minimal effort (Table 1).

Regarding the intensity of conflict, the results showed that adolescents were willing to effect social change, with a mean score of 5.43 on social media. Respondents expressed their disagreement most frequently on the issue of government addressing problems in the country, with a prevalence-weighted mean of level 2 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

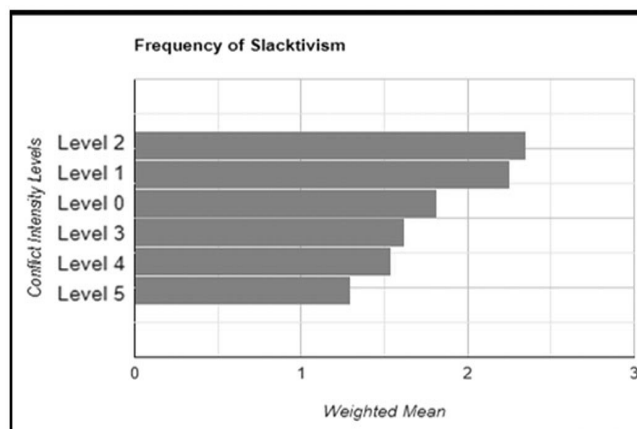


Figure 2. Chart representation of the data gathered regarding on what extent does the conflict the respondents conduct in the social media setting

RESULTS

The target population for this study consists of senior high school students enrolled in Far Eastern University – Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, selected through purposive sampling techniques based on their convenience and qualifications.

The participants were required to be active on social media, which is a popular platform for social and political engagement among today's tech-savvy generation. The study evaluated the frequency of

The relationship between slacktivism activities and human interaction among senior high school students was found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance, with $\rho = 0.601$, leading the researchers to reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis. Furthermore, the relationship between the frequency of slacktivism activities and the avidity for social change among senior high school students was found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance, with $r_s = 0.384$, as indicated by the Spearman rho correlation.

Table 1. Online Activism Scale and results to measure the frequency of slacktivist activities and non- slacktivist behaviors.

Component 1: Slacktivist Behavior	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue	3.86	Sometimes
Generated awareness about a social-political issue using social media	3.18	Occasionally
Friended or followed a political leader or decision maker on social media	2.89	Occasionally
Shared or retweeted a post about a social-political issue	2.80	Occasionally
Shared socially- or politically-charged images or photos on social media	2.69	Rarely
Posted a status/tweeted about a social-political issue	2.41	Rarely
Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet (Ex. #SaveLumadSchools)	2.31	Rarely
Unfriended or unfollowed someone on social media because of their social political posts/tweets	2.19	Rarely
Commented on a post about a social-political issue	2.02	Rarely
Mean Response	2.71	Rarely
Component 2: Mobilize Others		
Signed an online petition	2.64	Rarely
Mobilized online support for a social-political issue	2.48	Rarely
Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media	2.42	Rarely
Prompted social connections to sign an online petition for a social-political issue	2.24	Rarely
Shared my experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media	2.06	Rarely
Mean Response	2.37	Rarely
Component 3: Tangible Online Activism		
Donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media	1.69	Never
Changed my social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue	1.64	Never
Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media	1.56	Never
Contacted a political leader or decision maker through email or social media	1.41	Never
Mean Response	1.58	Never
Component 4: Negative Perspectives		
I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media	3.76	Sometimes
I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues	3.41	Occasionally
Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online	3.24	Occasionally
I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network	3.13	Occasionally
Mean Response	3.39	Occasionally

Table 2. Perspectives on recent issues and its results to measure the avidity for social change.

Perspective on Social Issues	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
The government should ensure that everyone has a job	6.31	Strongly
Extrajudicial killings should stop	6.15	Agree
Any offender or convicted felon should be barred from holding a political position	5.88	Agree
Same sex marriage should be legalized	5.86	Agree
Divorce should be legalized	5.84	Agree
Freedom of speech should not be abridged	5.80	Agree
Celebrities with no background in politics should stay out of politics	5.57	Agree
War on drugs should not involve killings	5.49	Agree Somewhat
Abortion should be legalized	5.18	Agree
For certain crimes, the death penalty should be reinstated	4.04	Uncertain
Suicide is incurable	3.58	Uncertain
Mean Response	5.43	Agree

Table 3. Spearman correlation of frequency of slacktivism with the intensity level of conflict in human interaction and avidity for social change

Variables	rho	VI	Decision
Conflict Intensity Scale	0.601	S	Reject H0
Perspective on Recent Issues	0.384	S	Reject H0

DISCUSSION

The results of the survey conducted among senior high school students at FEU-NRMF showed that these students engage in slacktivism activities only rarely. The most common level of conflict intensity was Level 2, which is expressed disagreement, where various stakeholder groups engage in conversation and debate but do not take tangible steps to influence their interests. This finding supports the theory proposed by Cabrera, Matias, and Montoya (2017)⁵, which suggests that social media is primarily used as a platform to express support for a cause.

Upon analyzing the data, it was found that there is a moderate relationship between slacktivism and conflict. Students who engage in more slacktivism activities tend to have a higher intensity level of conflict in their human interactions. Moreover, the frequency of slacktivism activities is positively related to students' avidity for social change. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and there is indeed a relationship between slacktivism and conflict in human interaction as well as social change.

It is important to note, however, that these findings cannot be generalized to the entire slacktivist community in FEU-NRMF as the survey was conducted in mid-March, before political issues became more prevalent. Additionally, some students may not have actively participated in slacktivist activities because they were unregistered voters. Nonetheless, the results of this study can guide slacktivists to act more carefully and for the betterment of the nation, thus reducing conflicts that arise when taking action.

The conclusion of the study highlights the significant relationship between slacktivism, conflict in human interaction, and social change. The findings show that students who engage in more slacktivism activities tend to encounter higher levels of conflict when engaging in debates or discussions on social media platforms, and when the frequency of slacktivism activities is higher, students have greater avidity for social change. It is also evident that exposure to social media and slacktivism

activities of varying extents can shape or influence a person's opinion on particular topics encountered on social media.

Moreover, the study emphasizes that the subject of slacktivism and its impact on conflict and social change is essential in today's society, as everyone should be concerned with the betterment of society. The study's results should encourage people to cooperate toward a common good rather than fostering conflict.

However, it is important to note that the survey was conducted in mid-March when sociopolitical issues were not yet pervasive. Therefore, the low frequency of slacktivism activities compared to prior expectations can be attributed to this factor. Nevertheless, the study's findings still provide valuable insights into the impact of slacktivism on social change and conflict in human interaction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although further research is necessary to identify the precise mechanisms by which slacktivism can facilitate social change, this study's findings demonstrate that slacktivism is linked to the conflict in human interaction and social change, regardless of how small the extent of individuals' engagement in slacktivism activities may be. This study can assist in directing slacktivists towards actions that benefit society and reduce conflict that arises during the implementation of such action.

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