HOW MILLENNIALS ENGAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM: A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS APPROACH

by

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ABSTRACT

Millennials are the world's digital natives and its largest generation. A general perception of this generation is that they lack engagement in social-political issues. This study explores how Millennials are engaging in social media activism and whether online activism is driving offline activism behaviors. A quantitative survey of 306 participants was conducted to learn more about the gratifications Millennials obtain through social media and whether associations exist between their online and offline activism behaviors. The results showed that Millennials engage in online activism behaviors to a greater extent than offline activism behaviors. Millennials primarily gratify intrinsic needs for interaction and belonging by engaging in social media activism behaviors. So-called "slacktivism" behaviors were most common among Millennials engaging in online activism. Similarly, online activism behaviors that require greater investment from Millennials were a good predictor of activism behaviors that occur offline. Results also demonstrate that, at an individual identification level, Millennials self-perceptions as activists predicted engagement in both online and offline activism.

Keywords: activism, Millennials, offline activism, online activism, slacktivism, social media activism

Dedicated to the people who commit their lives' work to ensuring that significant issues are heard and addressed by the American people. You are creating change. Thank you.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Millennials – those born between 1982 and 2001 – are the largest generation in American history, surpassing their Baby Boomer parents by some 17 million. They are 95 million strong, more affluent, better educated, and more ethnically diverse (Howe & Strauss, 2009). Millennials are defined by an Internet and media landscape that permeates nearly every facet of their daily lives. Through the Internet, their perspectives and views are shaped by a global community.

Millennials demand access to technology and represent those who are most likely to use social media. Social media is the way they stay connected with others. This generation accesses their social media accounts multiple times throughout the day to share their stories, banish boredom, and learn about current affairs (Dua, 2014; Miller, 2013). Millennials are a generation that embraces diversity and are inclined to form active communities where they can participate in discussions and join cultural conversations (Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012). They actively seek out others who uphold the same morals and values that they do and form collective movements. As Millennials have adapted to the information rich age that is propelled by technology, they are rising to the challenge of traditional times (Stein & Dawson-Tunik, 2004).

Social media has quickly become the new age tool for Millennials. This generation represents the heaviest group of users of these mediums. While it is commonly used for leisure, social media is also being utilized as a tool to drive change. Social media enables immediate communal activity among Millennials and provides a platform for freedom of expression (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Through social media, Millennials are able to form collective societies and initiate organizational action. Millennials engage in social media activism which is increasingly playing a role in bringing social-political issues to the forefront of the public debate (Rigby,

2008). This generation is active and given their interconnected nature, they can mobilize in online communities and prompt offline activism (Gagnier, 2008).

However, the reasons why Millennials engage in social media activism are unknown. Are they simply following the behaviors of others in their social networks or do they truly care about these issues and want to contribute to making a change? It is important to understand the relationship between social media activism and other advocacy behaviors such as rallies, boycotts, information sessions, and so on that occur in an offline context. In general, Internet activities have been deemed “slacktivism” where the impact of these efforts are limited and they only exist to allow participants to feel that they have done something of value (Christensen, 2011). According to Vie (2014), activities like changing your Facebook status to support a cause creates awareness for these issues that can then translate into tangible action. Whether slacktivism can provoke offline activism among Millennials has not been determined so there is a gap in the research. Given Millennials quest for instant gratification, engaging in social media activism activities may occur in isolation and have no impact on their offline activism behaviors.

Social media fulfills intrinsic needs for Millennials which stimulates participation on these platforms. Millennials gratify their needs for socializing and information access through social media which is associated with their engagement in civic actions (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). Social media makes social-political issues salient to Millennials through their social connections and trending Internet topics. However, although Millennials have a heightened sense of issues affecting others, they are only partaking in online activities that are more convenient for them rather than offline activities that can provoke social and political change.

By using uses and gratifications, this study analyzes the ways in which Millennials are engaging in social media activism and what gratifications they fulfill by engaging in social media activism. The study explores whether Millennials' social media activism behaviors translate into offline activism and whether identification as an activist predicts online and offline activism. A greater understanding of how Millennials participate in social media activism has implications for this new age of activism among this growing demographic. By determining what motivates Millennials to use social media, activists can better mobilize this generation on social media platforms by creating more compelling messages that gratify them. Activists can also determine how online activism can incite offline activism and develop advocacy activities that create tangible change and urge millennial engagement. These findings have significant ramifications for offline civic actions about social-political issues.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Millennials are a civic generation and advocates for change (Terrace, 2014). According to McCafferty (2011), new media technologies like social media have provided a modern platform for individuals to engage in activism as they can easily reach their social connections and make them aware of social-political issues. Marwell, Oliver, and Prahl (1988) contend that the centralization of network ties has a positive effect on collective action. However, social media can also lead to slacktivism where online activism does not translate to offline action (Bell, 2014). Millennials may perceive that they are actively making a difference by supporting a cause online, yet in reality their actions on social media are not prompting offline activism or affecting change.

Millennials and New Media

Millennials grew up in an era of development, terrorism and the great recession. While new technology was booming, Millennials also witnessed the onslaught of 9/11 and the hardships of the economic decline. They are a generation that is shaped by their times (Raines, 2002). The introduction of the Internet, mobile technology and social networking sites occurred as Millennials were coming of age; therefore, this group includes some of the earliest digital natives (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008). Because Millennials never had to adapt to new media, they are its most avid users – 81 percent of Millennials are on Facebook (Pew Research Center, 2014) and 59 percent are on Twitter (Bennett, 2014). Millennials are also active users of Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat, which have risen in popularity among this generation as they prefer more visual content. A report by comScore indicates that the leading social media apps among 18-34 year olds based on smart phone penetration are Facebook (76 percent), Instagram

(43 percent), Snapchat (33 percent), Twitter (24 percent), Pinterest (18 percent), Google+ (18 percent), Vine (11 percent), and Tumblr (6 percent) (Lipsman, 2014).

Social networking sites have opened the door to millions of Millennials across the globe to connect and interact with each other like never before. Geraci and Nagy (2004) write that Millennials were born in an era that puts them in "control of their media environment" (p. 17), and they thrive in this hyper-connected, fragmented media landscape. With the growth of smart phone use among Millennials, they are utilizing social media between 20-21 hours every month (Nielsen, 2014). While Millennials are adept at multitasking and are not committed to any single social media platform, Facebook remains the dominant network for this generation (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015; Miller, 2013).

Smith (2012) affirms that Millennials are constantly online for networking, news and entertainment purposes. Millennials essentially want to stay connected with others, keep abreast on current affairs, and also amuse themselves or moderate boredom. According to the Cassandra Report, where 3,044 Millennials were surveyed across 10 countries, 77 percent thought "it was important to be informed about current affairs and news", and 60 percent said they relied on the social media platforms to be updated on the news (Dua, 2014). Social media is the local TV for Millennials and 57 percent report that they obtain news from Facebook at least once a day (Mitchell, Gottfried, & Matsa, 2015; American Press Institute, 2015). There are sizable minorities of Millennials who report obtaining news from Instagram (26 percent), Twitter (13 percent), Pinterest (10 percent), and Tumblr (7 percent) according to the American Press Institute (2015). However, breaking news is more common on Twitter and 59 percent of users utilize the platform to stay informed on news as it is happening compared to just 31 percent of Facebook users (Barthel, Shearer, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2015). For example, in April 2011, news first

broke of Osama bin Laden's death on Twitter, which prompted traditional media outlets to leap on the story and determine if the news was credible (Bennett, 2011). Millennials are constantly connected and crave over-stimulation in their media choices so social media is the ideal platform for them as the timeline or newsfeed is consistently updated with news stories and status updates.

Millennials' social media use may also be attributed to key characteristics of this generation. According to Tapscott (2009), norms that define Millennials' social media use include freedom, collaboration and entertainment. With social media, Millennials have freedom of expression and they can choose who can and cannot be a part of their social network; Millennials can easily collaborate with friends and acquaintances on social networking sites and come together to support a common cause; and Millennials also seek high entertainment value compared to previous generations (Tapscott, 2009). Given these personality traits, Millennials' utilization of social media has resulted in more mutual interests and collective ideals. Together, as a unified front, Millennials believe that they can initiate real-world changes.

Collective Action

Millennials are less divided on social issues, religion, and their views about the government than previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2011). They share interests and work together to achieve common goals, but it is difficult to do so efficiently according to Olson's (1971) collective action theory. Activism behaviors among Millennials are spurred by widespread awareness and interest in the collective good. In this study, collective action is used as a concept that drives activism among Millennials and social movements like activism can be evaluated using collective action theory (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). According to Melucci (1996), collective action is not only a reaction to constraints of the environment, but it

also creates symbolic meanings which the social 'actors' – the collective group – are able to recognize.

According to Kanter and Fine (2010), idealism combined with social media's ease spurs Millennials' zealousness for causes. Collective action is largely taking place online rather than through traditional offline methods. According to Postmes and Brunsting (2002), collective action is possible online as individuals rely on group memberships and social identities. As Millennials are such heavy social media users, these platforms are the easiest way for them to reach their cohorts. According to Marwell et al. (1988), social ties are imperative for collective action as participants are more likely to mobilize for a social movement if there is first a social link established. This is contrary to a study conducted by Harlow and Harp (2012), whether respondents' activism occurred mostly offline, mostly online, or equally online and offline, they all participated equally in offline activism.

Millennials believe in equal opportunity and as such, they take on a collective identity for a common cause, work together to attain common goals, and retain freedom over their actions (Melucci, 1996). Norms of reciprocity suggest that if an individual took action toward a cause or social movement for another individual, that individual is likely to support them in the same way. Valenzuela, Park & Kee (2009) contend that social trust and Facebook may have a reciprocal relationship and norms of reciprocity of trust can lead to collective action. For example, if an individual signed a petition on equal rights that one of their social connections posted on social media, that social connection will likely return the favor and support a cause the individual brought to their attention. Millennials are a powerful source of change known as free agents and take advantage of social media to organize, mobilize, and communicate (Kanter & Fine, 2010).

Hence, social media is an essential tool Millennials are using to garner collective support from their mass network of social connections.

There is great value in social networks and the relations it creates among people to achieve goals. Social capital has numerous entities and functions best when there is trustworthiness, information channels, and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988). Millennials are open-minded and transparent online and trust their social connections on social media platforms (Raines, 2002). As these connections provide detailed information about themselves online, there is reduced uncertainty about these individuals and a form of trust is built (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). While these connections are an important source of information about current events and often share interesting facts and news, according to Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014) there needs to be a strong triggering event that occurs in a social media context in order for individuals to have a sustained reaction.

Connections made within social networks can be weak and weak ties rarely lead to high-risk activism but social media can play a role as an organizing mechanism (Gladwell, 2010; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011). Individuals can have hundreds of Facebook 'friends' and Twitter 'followers' and they can be a source of new ideas, information, and action. However, while it is easier to mobilize Millennials through social media, these connections are inclined to take any action that does not require much from them, such as signing an online petition, but are not likely to engage in risky grassroots efforts, such as public protests. On the other hand, Abdulla (2011) contends that the Arab Spring uprisings proved that social media can reflect a larger offline movement. In 2011, the Arab world saw an awakening of freedom of expression and it was started purely online through social media platforms. Tunisian protesters organized on social media before taking to the streets of the nation to participate in demonstrations and sit-ins to

demand political changes (Cole, 2014). This Twitter revolution also paved the way and stirred protesters in other Arab nations including Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen, prompting social unrest in these nations (Ghannam, 2011). A study by Tufekci and Wilson (2012) of participants of Egypt's Tahrir Square protests found that social media use greatly increased the probability that an individual attended the protests on the first day. The Egyptian government was so threatened by social media that it blocked Internet access, but it was too late – Egyptians were already rallying large groups of supporters in protest (Abdulla, 2011). Arabs had the common goal of ousting their dictators and weak ties joined together to create offline action and affect change.

Social Media Activism

New media technologies have transcended the way Millennials engage in activism. Activism refers to the "practices of individuals challenging the status quo in order to bring about social, political or economic change" (Harlow & Guo, 2014, p. 465). Vegh (2003) defines online activism as a movement that is politically motivated and relies on the Internet. Online activism includes proactive actions to achieve a common goal or reactive actions against certain controls and the imposing authorities (McCaughey & Ayers, 2013). According to Lee and Hsieh (2013), online activism is similar to traditional offline activism behaviors because there are costs and risks imposed toward the individual to participate in such activities. Therefore, collective action is necessary because a single individual cannot obtain the goal alone, and there is a collective good at stake that will benefit everyone – even those who did not participate in the activism behavior.

According to McCaughey and Ayers, (2013) there are three types of Internet activism: (1) awareness/advocacy; (2) organization/mobilization; (3) action/reaction. Awareness is created

when relevant information about a cause can be accessed, while advocacy occurs when actions for the movement are carried out. In online communities, it is easier to organize and mobilize groups as they may already have signed up to receive information as part of the awareness phase. Vegh (2003) discovered that the Internet is used for mobilization in three different ways: (1) to call for offline action, such as rallying a public demonstration by posting details online; (2) to call for an action that normally happens offline but can be done online, such as emailing your state representative; and (3) to call for an online action that can only be carried out online, such as a spamming campaign. Lastly, the action/reaction phase includes "hacktivism" where activists may hijack a trending hashtag or engage in online disobedience to support a cause. For example #WikiLeaks was a popular hashtag on Twitter used by hacktivists to counter privacy threats posed by the government (McDougall, 2012). The international activist and hacktivist group Anonymous is known for seeking information for social justice, exposing vulnerabilities, and trolling popular stories over the Internet (Milan, 2013).

Social media activism has become a part of twenty-first century activism that is either initiated online and moved offline or remains purely in the social media realm (Gerbaudo, 2012). Unlike Baby Boomers and Generation X, Millennials have developed a sense of community and social media has become an important tool for organizing and implementing social movements across the globe (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). As a group, Millennials have learned to rally together around similar causes and according to Langman (2005), the Internet has been used to garner support for numerous public stances ranging from boycotts to protests.

Social media has played an important role in both political and social activism (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). These researchers have developed a four-stage model to understand the maturity levels of protests utilizing social media: (1) triggering event, (2) media

response, (3) viral organizations, and (4) physical response. A triggering event is an incremental event that causes a social reaction to it and may be the result of a murder, abuse of power, hostility or even distrust. A triggering event breaks the status quo of society, is autonomous, and citizens organize around it as a collective group (Olson, 2009; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). With the advent of social media, the triggering event creates a traditional media and virtual media response through social media channels. Mass media aggregate the information about the triggering event while social media presents the information in a disaggregated form so activists know the precise moment actions occurred (Kiss & Rosa-García, 2011). Once the triggering event leads to a collective group supporting a common interest, a viral organization that provokes change is formed. Simple, consistent and compelling messages are developed by activists and influences online and offline mobilization (Kanter & Fine, 2010; McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). The physical response aims to take the protest from the virtual world and place it into the physical world to show its strength and power (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). A single physical response may also be a catalyst to convert more individuals into activists and prompt duplication of the physical response in other areas or regions. Overall, as these events and actions may follow each other in an unpredictable way it is difficult to determine the single lynchpin that incites involvement in social media activism.

In March 2013, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) launched the red HRC logo in response to oral arguments the Supreme Court was hearing for two landmark marriage equality cases. The HRC campaign prompted Facebook users to change their Facebook profile pictures to a picture of the red HRC logo and quickly captured media attention from media outlets like *ABC News*, *The Washington Post*, *Mashable* and *NPR* ("HRC Goes Viral," n.d.). The campaign went viral with corporate endorsements from Bud Light, Kenneth Cole, Maybelline and Marc Jacobs

International as well as celebrity endorsements from Leonardo DiCaprio, Fergie, Alicia Keys and Ellen DeGeneres ("HRC Goes Viral," n.d.). According to McCarty (2014), the campaign was launched at 2 p.m. on March 25, 2013 and within 24 hours, there were 189,177 shares, 95,725 likes and more than 10 million impressions of the logo worldwide by social media activists. Facebook considers the campaign one of the most successful campaigns in its history with a 120 percent increase in profile picture updates (McCarty, 2014). According to Vie (2014), this move of support raised awareness about an important issue and there is evidence that the campaign may have also prompted action – thousands to gather outside the Supreme Court in support of marriage equality.

Due to the 24/7, real-time nature of social media, activists must work quickly to disseminate information to supporters (Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2014). Online activism is a rapid movement since activities that translate from online to offline may result in civil infringements such as law enforcement disrupting a public protest because they were made aware of the details of the protest in advance. Lee and Hsieh (2013) contend that slacktivism, also known as low-cost, low-risk online activism, can affect other civic actions that occur offline. Slacktivism includes clicking "like" or "retweet" to show support for a cause, signing online petitions, sharing videos about an issue, and changing your profile picture to support a cause – but not engaging in offline activism.

In an experiment conducted to test whether signing or not signing a petition online would boost or reduce consequent charity contributions, Lee and Hsieh (2013) found that when participants signed an online petition, they were more likely to donate to a related charity. Conversely, if participants did not sign the petition, they were more likely to donate a significantly higher amount of money to an unrelated charity. Consistency and moral balancing

effects have significant implications for Millennials as exposure to online activism affects ensuing offline actions. According to Lee and Hsieh (2013), individuals strive toward consistency in their actions in an attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance. However, moral balancing effects posit that performing a good deed frees an individual's conscience to "slack off" on an impending good deed (p. 1). The moral licensing effect proposes that past good deeds allow bad future deeds while the moral cleansing effect proposes that past bad deeds permit more good deeds (Lee & Hsieh, 2013).

Based on the moral balancing effect, if Millennials participated in online activism for one cause, they may be unlikely to have the same enthusiasm to participate in another cause as they believe their good deed is done. On the other hand, based on the moral licensing effect, if Millennials did not participate in online activism for a cause, they may have a higher likelihood to do so in the future. As Millennials' enthusiasms change often they support organizations at times when they are prompted to do so but then just as easily go away; therefore, online participation is not sustained (Kanter & Fine, 2010). Millennials are engaging in short-term slacktivism behaviors that create a "feel good" spirit among these individuals who believe they have taken an online action of value when it is in fact an action that is rarely followed by real, offline change.

One form of slacktivism that Millennials engage in is clicktivism, which Bell (2014) contends is an inadequate form of activism but one that muddles the lines between the two (Harlow and Guo, 2014). Like slacktivism, clicktivism is a low-risk, low-cost activity conducted through social media that seeks to "raise awareness, produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity" (Halpuka, 2014, p. 117-118). Clicktivism is a reaction to content on social media and is not premeditated like other online social media activism behaviors such as

clicking “like” or “share” on a post or signing an online petition (Halupka, 2014). For example, Change.org is a petition tool that allows someone to create an online petition and draws signatures from thousands of individuals every year; the petitions and campaigns often raise awareness about cultural, social, and political issues. When Millennials sign an online petition, they are simply engaging in a short-term activity that was prompted by one of their social connections. This means that their likelihood of participating in an offline activity related to the petition they signed online is low. In order to conceptualize clicktivism as a legitimate political act, Halupka has developed seven key dimensions of clicktivism and they include: (1) situated online – occurs in a digital environment; (2) an impulsive gesture – it is a response that it highly spontaneous; (3) noncommittal – is disposable and requires no future action; (4) does not draw upon specialized knowledge – it is an extension of the user’s current knowledge about the digital environment; (5) easily replicated – must be simple enough to be reproduced by the public; (6) engages a political object – as a responsive act, clicktivism must engage a political object to differentiate from a cause; (7) an action performed – committed by the individual so is it is independent of the campaign. Halupka (2014) also identifies popular forms of clicktivism such as social buttons and creating memes online as part of activism behaviors. Clicktivism in essence is highly flexible and it is easy to be an active participant. Drumbl (2012) found that Kony 2012 became a hugely successful viral campaign to stop the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda and end its control over child soldiers in that country. While the advocacy group Invisible Children was able to raise awareness online, it did little to sustain the campaign as clicktivism has a short attention span and a limited shelf life (Drumbl, 2012). This means social media activism may remain in an online setting unless there is a great triggering event that initiates its move to an offline setting.

Offline Activism

Hirsch (2014) believes that every generation reinvents social activism to meet impending needs of that time. Millennials engage in a number of online and offline activism activities. Often, these activities are brought to their attention through the social media platforms they utilize regularly, or simply because their social connections are also supporting (or not supporting) certain causes or organizations. Organized activists are commonly referred to as pressure groups, grassroots organizations or social movement organizations (Werder, 2006).

According to Jackson (1982), there are five communication tactics that activist groups employ to pursue their goals: (1) informational activities such as interviews and media relations; (2) symbolic activities such as boycotts; (3) organizing activities such as networking and conducting meetings; (4) legal activities such as petitioning and being involved in legislative activities; and (5) civil disobedience such as sit-ins and trespassing. Graeff, Stempeck, and Zuckerman (2014) found that while broadcast media serves as an amplifier and gatekeeper, media activists work to co-create the news and influence the framing of controversies. For instance, Trayvon Martin was an unarmed black teenager who was shot and killed by neighborhood watch volunteer, George Zimmerman, in February 2012. Local media first broke the story of Martin when a neighbor came forward to discuss what she overhead during a scuffle between the two. This led national and international news sources to cover the story and media activists across the nation to organize meetings and local support groups in response to what they perceived to be the senseless killing of an unarmed, black teenager (Graeff et al., 2014). As the story unfolded, the news was framed around the racial identity of Martin, who was black, and Zimmerman, who is white and made the social issue of racial inequality salient yet again. The shooting death also had political ramifications as supporters of Martin have worked to overturn

the controversial “stand-your-ground law” in Florida which led to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting. After the acquittal, prominent black leaders in the community called for acts of civil disobedience in order to garner support throughout the nation. These activist groups followed Jackson’s (1982) communication tactics and were able to bring the issues of race inequality in America and arguments against the controversial law into the forefront of the public debate. Offline activism was driven by a need for social justice and grassroots movements were mobilized by Millennials who felt that they could identify with Martin because he was a young minority.

The shooting death of Michael Brown in August 2014 raised the racial debate in America once again. Brown was shot by a white police officer during an altercation and people across the nation gathered in Ferguson, Missouri to show their support. Collective action began online and the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (which started at a local level after Zimmerman’s acquittal) gained national recognition as it was used to effectively bring groups of people together for candlelight vigils, marches and protests (Brown, 2014). However, some of these acts of civil disobedience turned violent and looting and a state of unrest was evident in Ferguson as its citizens were angered by authority and wanted to see justice served. Justice was the common goal supporters and protesters were working toward and there were movements across the nation calling for judicial reform (“Ferguson shooting: Protests spread across US,” 2014). Jackson’s (1982) communication tactics for an activist group are still being utilized for the Black Lives Matter activist movement as the killings of more unarmed black teenagers and men occur. However, activist messages are disseminated online rather than through more traditional offline settings like in-person meetings. There are still isolated social movements and causes across the nation bringing attention to racial inequality and pleading for stricter judicial action.

Activist groups are organized to influence organizations for a cause and include pressure groups, special interest groups, grassroots opposition, social movements, or issues groups (Grunig, 1992). From an organizational perspective, these groups come together for different purposes and work to achieve a specific response from the organization, whether it is demanding that the organization not support a controversial cause or changes to the organization's products and services that would make it safer for the general public. According to Rawlins (2006), dangerous stakeholders – those that become coercive to achieve their claims – have urgency and power and may use formal channels to affect change. This means that organizations should always be wary of these types of stakeholders as they can have a detrimental impact on organizational goals.

According to Werder (2006), one of the main purposes of activism is to influence organizational action. Social media activism is gradually playing a more important role in holding corporations accountable for taking a stance on these issues (Dodd & Supa, in-press; Dodd & Supa, 2014). A recent study by The Global Strategy Group (2014) found that 56 percent of participants thought corporations should take a stance on social-political issues and that Millennials became much more favorable toward companies that took stances on issues compared to other generations. The study recommends that corporations focus specifically on the millennial audience as there are significant opportunities with this generation.

Social Media Uses and Gratifications

Millennials utilize social media to fulfill various intrinsic and extrinsic needs. While they use numerous communication tools, one social media platform does not replace another (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). Instead, various platforms become integrated into the individual's use of online forms of communication (Baym, Zhang, & Lin, 2004). The advent of new media

technologies has revived uses and gratifications theory. According to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973), uses and gratifications is used to explain how individuals use media to satisfy their needs, to understand motives for media behavior, and to identify the consequences that precede needs, motives and behaviors. Essentially, uses and gratifications theory uncovers media use motivations and can determine why Millennials utilize social media platforms (Sun, Rubin, & Haridakis, 2008; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004).

According to Rubin (1993), at the core of uses and gratifications is the concept of audience activity. 'Audience activity' includes a range of meanings: (1) utility – motivations for communicating; (2) intentionality – purposive nature of communicating; (3) selectivity – communication choice based on prior interests' and (4) imperviousness to influence – audiences are obstinate (Blumler, 1979). Therefore, all audience members are not equally active. This demonstrates why new media technologies may only initiate online actions for passive audiences, but drive active audiences to engage in offline actions.

Ruggiero (2000) suggests that new media technologies like the Internet have three key attributes: (1) interactivity, (2) demassification, and (3) asynchroneity. Interactivity is the degree to which individuals have control over their actions and how quickly communication technologies can respond to the user's commands (Ruggiero, 2000). Social media is considered highly interactive as Millennials have control over the messages they communicate and these messages are instantly dispersed to those inside and sometimes even outside their social media networks. According to Ruggiero (2000), with demassification, the user has the ability to choose from a wide variety of media. Millennials have the ability to be selective in their choices of social media networks and can utilize the best platform that fulfills their individual needs. Asynchroneity highlights the concept that messages can be staggered in time (Ruggiero, 2000).

This becomes of particular importance in social media as a message or image can live on forever on a user's homepage and once it is posted, it will receive more impressions as it can be seen multiple times by the same individual. With platforms like Twitter where a tweet can be retweeted, the reach of that tweet is expanded greatly when more social connections retweet it.

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found distinctions between the instrumental and ritualized Internet use. Information-seeking was the most salient use of the Internet and has a purposive, satisfactory orientation while ritualized Internet use was linked to affinity and past actions. Millennials' simultaneous uses of multiple social media platforms suggest that each fulfills a specific need (Quan-Haase and Young, 2010). For example, Facebook is used to manage acquaintances while Twitter allows individuals to follow and be followed by people they have never met before (Gladwell, 2010). Since Facebook is the most popular social media platform among Millennials, they are able to fulfill a variety of fundamental needs on this platform due to the ease of utility. Millennials are able to join groups and organizations, receive constant updates from these groups as well as their acquaintances, and become aware of and potentially participate in events as well. Twitter on the other hand is utilized for information access and participation in trending topics (that are often prompted by the latest news cycles). Other social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat are used primarily for photo and video sharing and some of this content easily becomes viral. With blogs like Tumblr, users may choose to only read posts or engage further by clicking to view external links or commenting and this requires greater elaboration from the individual (Kaye, 2010).

Audiences may derive gratifications from three sources including media content, exposure to the media as such, and the social context that characterizes the situation of exposure to different media (Katz, et al., 1973). Social media easily meets all three criteria as it is a readily

available form of media with a high exposure rate that can be accessed instantaneously. In a study of gratifications sought on social networks utilizing mobile devices, Cheng, Liang and Leung (2014) found that the technological convenience (accessibility), information exchange (cognition needs) and social interaction (recognition needs) predicted civic engagement offline. These findings suggest that civic attitudes on social networks accessed from mobile devices are positively related to civic offline activism.

In a study of 2,603 students, Valenzuela et al. (2009) found that greater use of Facebook led to higher civic engagement and political participation. In another study, researchers found that there were four primary needs for participating in a Facebook group and they included socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information (Park et al., 2009). Findings of the study indicated that users who seek information were more likely to participate in civic activities like organizing support group meetings. On the other hand, users who seek entertainment and utilize the platform for recreation are likely to be involved with comfortable activities like an organization for hobbies the individual enjoys.

From the research it is evident that social media has a large impact on collective action which incites activism among Millennials. As Millennials take specific steps to engage in activism and social movements, these actions may be driven by a requirement to fulfill their intrinsic needs. Millennials are becoming increasingly involved in driving social media activism and garnering support from others within their social networks to participate in the collective good. Millennials utilize social media for a variety of purposes such as fulfilling social needs, information access, and entertainment (Smith, 2012). By determining the reasons why Millennials utilize social media, activists will be able to better mobilize them online and initiate their participation in offline actions.

The current study will connect social media activism behaviors to the uses and gratifications achieved by Millennials who are heavy users of these online platforms. Moreover, this research seeks to identify whether millennial engagement in social media activism behaviors prompts offline activism. Connecting the reasons why Millennials participate in definitive social media activism behaviors and the potential relationship of these behaviors with offline activism provides a better understanding of motivations to engage in activism. Determining whether self-perceptions as an activist impacts engagement in both online and offline activism behaviors also have implications for activist causes.

The following research questions were developed to determine the ways Millennials engage in social media activism, which gratifications they fulfill, how this is related to offline activism behaviors, and whether self identification as an activist prompts activism engagement.

RQ1: In what ways are Millennials engaging in social media activism?

RQ2: Which gratifications do Millennials fulfill by engaging in social media activism?

RQ3: How are social media activism behaviors associated with Millennials' engagement with offline activism behaviors?

RQ4: Does greater identification as an activist predict (a) online and (b) offline activism?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

An online survey (Appendix A) was administered to a sample of 343 Millennials utilizing uses and gratifications measures in combination with specific behavioral and demographic items. Prior to distribution, the proposed research and survey instrument received approval from the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board.

Participants

Participants in this study were a convenience sample of undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Central Florida. Students were recruited from communication classes at the university. Some participants received course credit for taking part in this research. A total of 343 students were invited to participate and 306 students completed the survey. Of the convenience sample, 102 (33.3%) were men and 204 (66.7%) were women. Of the participants, 159 (52%) were White or Caucasian, 59 (19.3%) Hispanic/Latino, 43 (14.1%) Black, 31 (10.1%) Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 (.3%) was Native American, and 13 (4.2%) reported themselves as "Other." The majority of the sample, 213 (69.6 %) were 18-21 years old and 96 (31.4%) were juniors in college. In the survey, an initial filter question asked participants if they were born between the years 1982 – 2001. Data from participants born before 1982 and after 2001 was not included in this study.

Facebook was the most commonly used social media platform and 74.5% of participants indicated they used this platform daily. In this study, 62.5% of participants used Instagram and 60.8% used Snapchat on a daily basis. Only 38.8% of participants used Twitter daily. From the sample the least utilized social media platforms were Pinterest and Tumblr and respectively 44.6% and 57.2% of participants never used these platforms. Overall, participants were moderate

users of the social media platforms addressed in this study ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.36$) (See Appendix B).

Procedure

A link to an online survey hosted in Qualtrics was distributed to participants through the online learning platform, Webcourses. Participants had the opportunity to take the survey over four weeks in the fall 2015 semester. The first section of the survey measured social media uses and gratifications among Millennials. The second section of the survey measured online and offline activism behaviors to determine whether these behaviors were related. The third section measured how participants identified themselves with regard to social-political issues.

Last, in order to allow for additional statistical analyses, participants were asked the frequency of their social media use across several popular social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Snapchat). Participants were also asked demographic questions including age, gender, race, and year of study. Using participants' self-reports on Internet motives, social media activism behaviors, offline activism behaviors, and perceptions of the impact of engaging in social-political issues, these variables were analyzed to address each of the research questions and identify whether any significant associations exist. Data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Measures

In order to measure the uses and gratifications Millennials experience when engaging on social media platforms, previous work on Internet motives by Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), and Sun et al., (2008) was used. This work was linguistically adapted to fit this study in terms of uses and gratifications sought through social media. A modified version of the Internet motives

scale from Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) and Sun et al. (2008) with an acceptable internal consistency that combines interpersonal, media, and Internet motivations was used in this study. The uses and gratifications items for this study comprised of 32 items regarding how Millennials use social media platforms for: interpersonal utility and social interaction (10 items), passing time (8 items), information seeking (6 items), convenience (3 items), entertainment (3 items), and control (2 items). Participants used a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7) to rate statements on the modified Internet motives scale. A high score indicates greater uses and increased gratifications from utilizing social media platforms, while a low score indicates less uses and diminished gratifications among participants.

To measure activism behaviors, statements based on activism research from McCaughey and Ayers, (2013), and Jackson (1982) on social media, Internet activism, and activist groups, and Valenzuela's (2013) study on social media and protest behaviors was used. To measure participants' activism behaviors, participants were asked to rate 44 statements. Participants first responded to 22 items about how they use social media for online activism behaviors. Statements included: "Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet" and "Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media". Four negatively-coded social media attitude-behavior statements were also included. These statements were used to determine whether these participants actively try to avoid engagement in social-political issues online and include "I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media". These four items were reverse coded so higher scores will indicate less engagement in online activism, while lower scores will indicate more engagement in online activism. All 22 statements were rated on a 7-pont Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Higher scores on these online behaviors indicate active engagement in social media activism while low scores indicate that participants do not engage in social media activism behaviors.

Participants then responded to 22 items about how they engage in offline activism behaviors. Statements included: “Participated in rally or march” or “Mobilized offline support for a social-political issue”. Four negatively-coded offline activism behavior statements were included. These statements were used determine whether participants actively try to avoid engagement in social-political issues offline and include “Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues offline”. These four items were reverse coded so higher scores indicate less engagement in offline activism, while lower scores indicate more engagement in offline activism. All 22 items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Higher scores on these offline behaviors indicate that participants actively engage in offline activist behaviors, while low scores indicate that they do not engage in offline activist behaviors.

Finally, since identity plays a key role in the likelihood to engage in activism (Langman, 2005), section three asked participants to evaluate 7 statements about the extent to which they identify with social-political issues. These items explored the relationship between self-perceptions and perceived reality. A modified version of the fan identification scale from Wann and Branscombe (1993) was used to develop these statements and a new scale with good internal consistency was created (Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .88$).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

RQ1 sought to understand the ways Millennials are engaging in social media activism. To address this question, the mean scores and standard deviations for the online activism responses were analyzed on a 7-point scale. Table 1 displays these results.

Table 1
Online Activism Responses

In the past 6 months, I have:	M	SD
Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue	5.28	1.95
Shared or retweeted a post about a social-political issue	4.46	2.27
Posted a status/tweeted about a social-political issue	4.23	2.31
Generated awareness about a social-political issue using social media	3.99	2.17
Commented on a post about a social-political issue	3.94	2.26
*I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network.	3.87	1.56
Signed an online petition	3.86	2.38
*I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media.	3.85	1.99
Unfriended or unfollowed someone on social media because of their social-political posts/tweets	3.84	2.33
*I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues.	3.81	2.06
*Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online.	3.71	2.11
Friended or followed a political leader or decision maker on social media	3.49	2.28
Shared socially- or politically-charged images or photos on social media	3.40	2.10
Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet	3.28	2.16
Mobilized online support for a social-political issue	3.18	2.06
Shared my experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media	2.95	1.97
Prompted social connections to sign an online petition for a social-political issue	2.86	1.96
Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media	2.78	1.87
Changed my social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue	2.38	1.78
Donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media	2.25	1.64
Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media	2.23	1.59
Contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media	2.10	1.52

*Reverse coded items

Overall, participants somewhat disagreed to performance of the online activism behaviors (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = 1.20). On a 7-point scale, participants reported the strongest agreement to the item: “Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue” (*M* = 5.28, *SD* = 1.95). Participants indicated the strongest disagreement to the item: “Contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media” (*M* = 2.10, *SD* = 1.52).

In order to further understand the variability of these online activism behaviors, an exploratory principal components factor analysis was conducted on the set of 22 items about online activism behaviors. The factorability of the 22 online activism behaviors was examined. Most of the online activism behaviors were highly and significantly ($p < .05$) correlated with one another. Well-recognized criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .91, above the recommended value of .60, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (231) = 3,685.58, $p < .001$). A principal components analysis with orthogonal rotation was run in an effort to explore if the online activism behaviors comprised a smaller set of important independent composite variables. Factor loadings were suppressed at < .40 to ensure only strong loadings (~ .50) on each factor were analyzed (See Appendix C for full factor loadings). Four new factors were uncovered with eigenvalues greater than 1.0: nine “slacktivist behaviors,” five “mobilize others,” four “tangible online activism,” and four “negative perspectives.” Table 2 displays these results.

Table 2
Factor Analysis of Online Activism Responses

	Components			
	1	2	3	4
Shared or retweeted a post about a social-political issue	**.84**			
Posted a status/tweeted about a social-political issue	**.83**			
Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue	**.83**			
Commented on a post about a social-political issue	**.78**			
Generated awareness about a social-political issue using social media	**.63**			
Shared socially- or politically-charged images or photos on social media	**.60**			
Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet	**.57**			
Friended or followed a political leader or decision maker on social media	**.54**			
Unfriended or unfollowed someone on social media because of their social-political posts/tweets	**.47**			
Prompted social connections to sign an online petition for a social-political issue		**.82**		
Signed an online petition		**.77**		
Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media		**.64**		
Mobilized online support for a social-political issue		**.56**		
Shared my experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media		**.54**		
Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media			**.81**	
Donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media			**.79**	
Contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media			**.64**	
Changed my social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue			**.59**	
Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online.				**.88**
I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media.				**.87**
I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues.				**.85**
I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network.				**.60**

*Note: Factor loadings < .40 are suppressed
Component 1 = Slacktivist Behaviors
Component 2 = Mobilize Others
Component 3 = Tangible Online Activism
Component 4 = Negative Perspectives

Nine items that relate to relatively easy and convenient engagement in online activism loaded onto *slacktivist behaviors* (eigenvalue = 4.97). This component explained 23% of the total variance in the items. The items that loaded on component one are indicative of online activism behaviors that require little time and energy to partake in. For example, clicking the "Like" button on Facebook requires a lower investment than signing an online petition with regard to social-political issue engagement. The slacktivist behaviors factor loads onto "posted a status," "liked or favorited a post," or "commented or shared a post about a social-political issue," "used an activist hashtag," "generated awareness about a social-political issue through social media," "shared a socially- or politically-charged image on social media," "friended or followed a political leader or decision maker," and "unfriended or unfollowed someone because of their social-political posts/tweets."

Five items that relate to engaging in collective action on social media loaded onto *mobilize others* (eigenvalue = 3.24) and explained 15% of the total variance in the items. The items that loaded on component two are related to engagement in online activism behaviors that have the explicit goal of mobilization of others with regard to social-political issues. Prompting others to sign a petition or sharing information about civic unrest like a protest may require a greater investment and higher elaboration and awareness from a Millennial. More central to this factor, these online activism behaviors are outward facing, aimed at mobilizing others in one's network. This factor loads onto "signed an online petition," "prompted social connections to sign a petition for a social-political issue," "shared information about a protest or boycott related to a social-political issue," "shared your experience about participating or supporting a social-political issue," and "mobilized online support for a social-political issue."

Four items that relate to online activism that results in offline activities loaded onto *tangible online activism* (eigenvalue = 3.09), which explained 14% of the total variance in the items. The items that loaded onto component three are related to activities that require substantial input and ownership from the individual. For example, changing a profile picture represents an outward representation of the self, and donating money to a cause is an invested and concrete way in which individuals can support social-political issues online. This factor loads onto "changed my social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue," "donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media," "attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media," and "contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media."

Four items that relate to non-engagement in online activism loaded onto *negative perspectives* (eigenvalue = 2.80) which explained 13% of the total variance in the items. The items that loaded onto component four are relative to non-engagement in online activism activities. For example, all four items were negatively-worded and seem to reflect a general negative outlook that millennial participants have toward engaging in online activism behaviors. This factor best reflects the negative perceptions Millennials have with regard to social media as a platform for the promotion of social-political agendas. For example, some may not believe Facebook is an appropriate channel for this type of discourse, which is likely reflected in this factor loading. This factor loaded onto statements such as "generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online," "I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media," "I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues," and "I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network."

Next a reliability analysis was performed to examine the internal consistency of the four factors produced by the principal components analysis. The reliability analysis revealed that the Slacktivist Behaviors formed a reliable scale with excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .90). The reliability analysis for Mobilize Others formed a reliable scale with good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .86). The reliability analysis for tangible online activism formed a reliable scale with acceptable internal consistency and would not improve with the removal of any items Cronbach's α ≥ .79). The reliability analysis for Negative Perspectives formed a reliable scale with good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .84). Table 3 displays the alpha reliabilities and descriptive statistics for these results.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Four Online Activism Factors

Components	No. of Items	M	SD	α
Slacktivist Behaviors	9	4.01	1.65	≥ .90
Mobilize Others	5	3.12	1.65	≥ .86
Tangible Online Activism	4	2.23	1.26	≥ .79
Negative Perspectives	4	3.81	1.59	≥ .84

Descriptive statistics for each of the four factors identified were generated. Overall, mean scores across these online activism behavior scales demonstrated that Millennial participants engaged primarily in slacktivist behaviors (M = 4.01, SD = 1.65). As a seemingly valid point of comparison, tangible online activism behaviors received the lowest overall mean scores (M = 2.23, SD = 1.26). The negative perspectives of online activism and mobilize others were nearly equivalent with regard to average scores: (M = 3.81, SD = 1.59) and (M = 3.12, SD = 1.65), respectively.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant mean differences between the four new factors – slacktivist behaviors, mobilize others, tangible online activism, and negative perspectives. Five of the six pairs in the analysis produced a significant *t* value: slacktivist behaviors and mobilize others ($t_{(299)} = 11.67$, $p < .001$), slacktivist behaviors and tangible online activism ($t_{(296)} = 19.85$, $p < .001$), mobilize others and tangible online activism ($t_{(302)} = 11.60$, $p < .001$), mobilize others and negative perspectives ($t_{(302)} = -5.63$, $p < .001$), and tangible online activism and negative perspectives ($t_{(299)} = -13.73$, $p < .001$). There was no significant mean differences between slacktivist behaviors and negative perspectives ($t_{(297)} = 1.71$, $p = .089$). This is a valid finding as Millennials who engage in slacktivism do not have negative opinions about online activism behaviors. Table 4 displays these results and descriptive statistics.

Table 4
Paired-Samples T-Test of Four Online Activism Factors

Pairs	M	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Slacktivist Behaviors-Mobilize Others	.87	1.29	11.67	299	.000
Slacktivist Behaviors-Tangible Online Activism	1.74	1.51	19.85	296	.000
Mobilize Others-Tangible Online Activism	.86	1.29	11.60	302	.000
Mobilize Others-Negative Perspectives	-.67	2.08	-5.63	302	.000
Tangible Online Activism-Negative Perspectives	-1.57	1.98	-13.73	299	.000
Slacktivist Behaviors-Negative Perspectives	.20	2.02	1.71	297	.089

An examination of the means indicated that the slacktivist behaviors-tangible online activism pair had the highest mean ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 1.51$) while the tangible online activism-negative perspectives pair had the lowest mean ($M = -1.57$, $SD = 1.98$). Descriptive statistics for the other pairs are as follows: slacktivist behaviors-mobilize others ($M = .87$, $SD = 1.29$), mobilize others-tangible online activism ($M = .86$, $SD = 1.29$), mobilize others-negative

perspectives (*M* = -.67, *SD* = 2.08), and slacktivist behaviors-negative perspectives (*M* = .20, *SD* = 2.02).

Next, RQ2 sought to identify the motives for engagement in social media activism. To answer this question, the uses and gratifications responses were first used to determine how Millennials are utilizing social media for: interpersonal utility/social interaction; to pass time, information seeking; convenience; entertainment; and control. Interpersonal utility/social interaction consisted of 10 items (*M* = 5.02, *SD* = .82) including "To show others encouragement" and had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .80). Passing time consisted of 8 items (*M* = 5.12, *SD* = 1.05) including "Because it allows me to unwind" and had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .83). Information seeking consisted of 6 items (*M* = 5.92, *SD* = .92) including "To get information easier" and had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .89). Convenience consisted of 3 items (*M* = 5.65, *SD* = 1.04) including "Because it is cheaper" and had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .69). Entertainment consisted of 3 items (*M* = 5.93, *SD* = .98) including "I just like to use it" and had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .91). Control consisted of 2 items (*M* = 2.72, *SD* = 1.31) including "I want someone to do something for me" and had good internal consistency (Cronbach's α ≥ .81).

Table 5
Motives for Millennials Social Media Use

Motives	M	SD	*α*
Interpersonal utility/social interaction	5.02	.82	≥ .80
Pass time	5.12	1.05	≥ .83
Information seeking	5.92	.92	≥ .89
Convenience	5.65	1.04	≥ .69
Entertainment	5.93	.98	≥ .91
Control	2.72	1.31	≥ .81

Mean scores across the six uses and gratifications scales demonstrated that participants utilize social media primarily for entertainment (M = 5.93, SD = .98) and information seeking (M = 5.92, SD = .92). Control received the overall lowest mean scores (M = 2.72, SD = 1.31) indicating that Millennials do not engage in social media to request their social connections to do something or tell them what to do. Millennials also utilize social media for convenience (M = 5.65, SD = 1.04), to pass time (M = 5.12, SD = 1.05) and for interpersonal utility/social interactions (M = 5.02, SD = .82).

Next, for RQ2, a backward stepwise multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationship between uses and gratifications with online activism behaviors. The six scales for uses and gratifications were simultaneously entered into the model as independent variables: interpersonal utility/social interaction, pass time, information seeking, convenience, entertainment and control. The dependent variable, online activism, was regressed on the independent variables to reveal which outcomes contributed to an overall significant model.

Using the principal of parsimony, an overall significant model was found: $F_{(294)} = 8.94$, $p < .001$. However, each of the independent uses and gratifications variables failed to reach significance as predictors of online activism in the model. Passing time and information seeking were removed at the third, and final, iteration of the model. Interpersonal utility/social interaction ($\beta = .241$) and control ($\beta = .126$) were significant predictors of online activism behaviors. Entertainment ($\beta = .114$) and convenience ($\beta = -.116$) neared significance ($p < .063$) in the overall significant model. Interpersonal utility/social interaction, control and entertainment were positively associated with online activism behaviors while convenience was negatively associated with online activism. Together these four predictors accounted for 10% of the

variance in online activism behaviors. See Table 5 for the overall significant model and Table 6 for coefficients of this analysis.

Table 6
Model Summary for Online Activism

R	R^2	R^2 adj	*df1*	*df2*	*F*	*p*
.33	.11	.10	290	294	8.94	< .001

Table 7
Coefficients for Backward Stepwise Regression Analysis for Online Activism

Variables	B	SE B	*β*	*t*	*p*
Interpersonal Utility/Social Interaction	.37	.10	.241	3.66	< .000
Control	.12	.05	.126	2.18	.03
Entertainment	.14	.08	.114	1.86	.06
Convenience	-.13	.07	-.116	-1.92	-.06

Thus, RQ2 finds that motives such as "get more points of view," "tell others what to do," "enjoyment," and "communicate with friends and family" share a stronger association with social media activism than passing time and information seeking motives such as "occupy my time" and "get information easier" respectively.

RQ3 sought to understand how online and offline activist behaviors are related to one another. A backward stepwise regression was used to determine which online activism factors predict offline activism. The four scales for online activism were simultaneously entered into the model as independent variables: slacktivist behaviors, mobilize others, tangible online activism, and negative perspectives. The dependent variable, offline activism, was regressed on the independent variables to reveal which outcomes contributed most to an overall significant model.

All of these factors except for slacktivist behaviors were significant predictors of offline activism behaviors ($p < .001$) in an overall significant model $F_{(288)} = 110.71$, $p < .001$. Slacktivst behaviors were removed at the second, and final, iteration of the overall significant model. Tangible online activism ($\beta = .446$), mobilize others ($\beta = .307$) and negative perceptions ($\beta = .211$) were positively and significantly associated with offline activism behaviors. Together these three predictors accounted for 53% of the variance in offline activism behaviors. See Table 7 for the overall significant model and Table 8 for coefficients of this analysis.

Table 8
Model Summary for Offline Activism

R	R^2	R^2 adj	*df1*	*df2*	*F*	*p*
.73	.54	.53	285	288	110.71	< .001

Table 9
Coefficients for Backward Stepwise Regression Analysis for Offline Activism

Variables	B	SE B	*β*	*t*	*p*
Tangible Online Activism	.35	.04	.446	8.58	< .000
Mobilize Others	.19	.03	.307	5.85	< .000
Negative Perceptions	.13	.03	.211	5.18	< .000

Thus, RQ3 finds that online behaviors such as “signing an online petition,” “donating money,” or “sharing my experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media” share a stronger association with offline activist behaviors than do slacktivst behaviors such as “likes,” “comments,” “shares” and “using activist hashtags.”

RQ4 sought to understand whether greater identification as an activist predicts online and offline activism. To address this question, an activism identification scale was created using 7

items (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = 1.26). For example, “I see myself as a social-political activist.” The scale had good internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha \geq .88$).

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine the relationship between activism identification and both online and offline activism behaviors. First, activism identification was entered into the model as the independent variable. The dependent variable, the online activism scale, was regressed on the independent variable to reveal whether an overall significant model. A significant model was found ($F_{(293)} = 210.85$, $p < .001$). Activism identification ($\beta = .648$) was a predictor of engagement in online activism and accounted for 42% of the variance in online activism. See Table 10 for the significant model and Table 11 for the coefficient of this analysis.

Table 10
Model Summary for Simple Linear Regression of Online Activism

R	R^2	R^2 adj	*df1*	*df2*	*F*	*p*
.65	.42	.42	292	293	210.85	< .001

Table 11
Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Online Activism

Variable	B	SE B	β	*t*	*p*
Activism Identification	.63	.04	.648	14.52	< .000

Next, for RQ4, activism identification was entered into the model as the independent variable. The dependent variable, the offline activism scale, was regressed on the independent variable to determine whether a significant model existed. A significant model was found: $F_{(295)} = 184.79$, $p < .001$. Activism identification ($\beta = .621$) was also a significant predictor of engagement in offline activism and was positively associated with the variable as well. Activism

identification accounted for 38% of the variance in offline activism. See Table 12 for the significant model and Table 13 for the coefficient of this analysis.

Table 12
Model Summary for Simple Linear Regression of Offline Activism

R	R^2	R^2 adj	*df1*	*df2*	*F*	*p*
.62	.37	.38	294	295	184.79	< .001

Table 13
Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Offline Activism

Variable	B	SE B	*β*	*t*	*p*
Activism Identification	.50	.04	.621	13.59	< .000

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study examined how Millennials engaged in social media activism and the gratifications they fulfill by engaging in these online activities. It also examined how social media activism is associated with engagement in offline activism and whether identification as an activist predicts online and offline activism among a sample of Millennials. Results determined that overall, millennial respondents did not have a strong inclination to engage in social media activism behaviors, but participated in these behaviors to a greater degree than in offline activism. However, it was also found that millennial participants utilize various platforms to fulfill intrinsic needs, such as information seeking and entertainment. The results from this study also highlighted the relationship between online and offline activism behaviors. Further, results indicated that identification as an activist predicted online and offline activism among Millennials.

The most important finding in this study is that Millennials are primarily slacktivists when it comes to engaging in social-political issues and some generally refrain from engaging in these issues both online and offline. When Millennials do engage in social media activism they are fulfilling interpersonal utility/social interaction gratifications of expression, belonging and participation. This study found that the tangible online activism behaviors within online activism are the best predictors of offline activism among Millennials as these activities are more difficult to engage in than slacktivism behaviors. Millennials who identify themselves as activists are more likely to engage in both online and offline activism behaviors. This research is valuable as it points out that millennial engagement in online activism does not naturally translate to offline activism which is a key concept as activists try to obtain support from this growing demographic.

The first research question analyzed what ways Millennials engage in social media activism and the results explained that generally, Millennials are not partaking in social media activism behaviors to a high degree. Of the online activism behaviors that they are engaging in, Millennials are engaging in slacktivism. According to the results of this study participants displayed slacktivism behaviors that were generally "clicktivism" which are convenient to them such as liking, favoriting, sharing or retweeting a post about a social-political issue. As a low-risk activity, clicktivism is an easy way for Millennials to participate online as it required little to no prior knowledge about an issue to react to it online. Halupka's (2014) dimensions for clicktivism highlights that these activities are impulsive gestures that are spontaneous and noncommittal. That means that although a Millennial may show support for a social-political issue online, this act is a one-time, isolated incident that may not necessarily affect that individual's future activity or partiality to show additional support for that issue. As important social-political issues become salient to Millennials through social media, it is also easy for them to replicate social support their social connections may have shown (Halupka, 2014). By posting a status or tweeting about a social-political issue – the third most common online activism behavior Millennials in this study displayed – this generation is passive about activism. Based on Lee and Hsieh's (2013) moral licensing effect, Millennials may also refrain from engaging in social media activism if they have recently done so and are content that they have participated in an activity of significance (in their mind). Prior research has also demonstrated that Millennials feel strongly about collaboration with their social networks online (Tapscott, 2009). Indeed, this research found that mobilizing others demonstrated greater overall mean scores than did more tangible activism behaviors. The combination of these seems to indicate that when Millennials engage in online activism, they are most likely to engage in behaviors that (a) are low-effort, but

also (b) encourage others in their networks to engage in similar behaviors. Prompting others to participate in similar behaviors has grounds in collective action where Millennials unite to support a common cause.

Based on the online activist responses, Millennials responses loaded heaviest on the slacktivism behavior items. This further emphasizes that while Millennials may care about social-political issues, they primarily show support for these issues from behind their smartphone and laptop screens. So it begs the question – is slacktivism an authentic form of activism among these digital natives? Past research from Bell (2014) has highlighted that slacktivism is insufficient activism and viral campaigns like Kony 2012 have shown that slacktivism is fleeting and does little to incite substantial change. While the viral video prompted 5 million tweets, 100 million YouTube views, and 66% of the Twitter conversation supported the anti-Kony campaign in just its first week, these actions proved insignificant (Kanczula, 2012). It has been more than three years since the campaign, Kony is still being pursued with the assistance of U.S. troops, and the vast majority of the population that engaged in slacktivist behaviors to raise awareness of this issue probably does not care anymore and less even know he's still alive. Therefore, slacktivism behaviors, while convenient for Millennials, are likely not addressing actual change for real issues facing the world because it is more difficult to engage in.

Another factor from the online activism responses was the mobilization of others, which proves that Millennials are inclined to also engage in online activism behaviors that can affect change. Reponses loaded heaviest on "Prompted social connection to sign an online petition for a social-political issue" so Millennials are in fact, attempting to mobilize their social connections. According to Lee and Hsieh (2013), after an individual has signed an online petition they have a greater likelihood of donating to an associated charity. Generating support for online petitions

has become relatively easy through social media; all that's typically required of the signee is their first and last name, and zip code. This modern form of advocacy is propelled by organizations like Change.org, to generate support for campaigns online. According to Kanter and Fine (2010), the millennial generation is reverent about social media and causes, so online petitions are possibly the great mediator. With regard to "real" change, then, there seems to be something of a bystander effect which suggests that the probability of individuals offering assistance is inversely related to the number of people. Seemingly, when Millennials encourage others to engage in online activism behaviors, these resulting behaviors may actually be slacktivism behaviors (and the data supports this as a whole for the millennial demographic as they are heavy slacktivists). Thus, perhaps widespread online slacktivism behaviors results in the notion that someone else will take responsibility – a concept referred to as "diffusion of responsibility" in the social psychology literature (Darley & Latane', 1968).

From the third factor, tangible online activism, responses to "Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media" loaded highest. This is noteworthy as it shows that Millennials are making an effort to garner monetary support for issues that matter to them. However, the question remains – was this support just a share or retweet from a social connection that only required a slacktivist action to partake? Tangible online behaviors are the greatest predictor of offline activism as it requires more exertion from the individual in order to fulfill these requirements. In this study, the three of the four behaviors for tangible online activism can be easily replicated offline. An individual can attempt to raise funds, donate money to a cause, or contact a political leader in an offline context as well. With norms of reciprocity, tangible online activism may be heightened among social connections (Valenzuela, et al., 2009). For example, if my Facebook friend saw my post about a cause and donated money to support it,

I will most likely donate to a cause they've posted about as well. This finding also shows support of Millennials' control gratification. Millennials may gratify their needs to ask someone to do something for them and tell others what to do by mobilizing them online. Millennials do in fact have social influence and can easily garner mass reach through social media.

The negative perceptions factor shows that overall Millennials do not like engaging in social-political issues online. This can be a result of Millennials' general narcissistic tendencies. For Millennials, narcissism was found to predict reasons this generation utilizes social networking sites such as wanting their friends to know what they're doing, believing their friends were interested in what they're doing, and ensuring that their social media profiles projected a positive image (Bergman, Fearrington, Davenport, Bergman, 2011). Millennials may refrain from voicing their personal opinions about social-political issues online as these views may not be reflective of their social connections and can impact the positive image they are attempting to project through their profiles. Millennials may also refrain from engagement because they do not like being told what to do or requested to take action on a cause they care little to nothing about.

The second research question determined what gratifications Millennials fulfilled by engaging in social media activism. Among Millennials, their gratifications for interpersonal utility/social interaction were highly associated with their online activism behaviors which parallel's Smith's (2012) finding that Millennials are constantly online for networking purposes. Interpersonal utility/social interaction motives for utilizing social media platforms include "to participate in discussions," "to belong to a group with the same interests as mine," "to express myself freely," and "to get more points of views." These seemingly conventional gratifications can drive online activism as they satisfy basic needs of belonging and interacting with others. According to Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), interpersonal utility is a functional alternative use

of the Internet that is reflective of motivations of individuals who interact less with others face to face. Therefore, as Millennials generally have greater access to their social media connections, they are more prone to engage in online activism behaviors. By fulfilling more interpersonal utility/social interaction motives with engagement in social media activism, an increased focus on these motives can lead to greater online and potentially offline activism among Millennials. This has great implications as interpersonal gratifications can be a viable solution for slacktivism behaviors for Millennials. If online activism behaviors could address interpersonal utility/social interaction gratifications, this could prompt increased online mobilization and more tangible online behaviors from Millennials.

The relationship between interpersonal utility/social interaction and online activism behaviors is so strong because Millennials care about causes and social media provides a platform for social-political issues that creates awareness and bolsters interest in being involved. The items on the interpersonal utility/social interaction scale were closely related to collective action. According to collective action theory, while individuals have shared goals, it's difficult for them to work on these goals resourcefully – but that is changing with social media (Olson, 1971). With a shared identity and focus on a common cause, these gratifications are easily satiated by the interpersonal utility and social interaction that social media activism provides (Melucci, 1996). Two common norms among Millennials are freedom and collaboration – both of which social media activism helps them to fulfill (Tapscott, 2009). Millennials believe in the freedom of expression and are open to new ideas and concepts that social media provides them with through social interaction and engagement. These norms drive their willingness to support issues and may also prompt their engagement in offline activism.

Control and online activism also showed a strong association, even though control showed the lowest mean score of the gratifications. Activism requires a Millennial to exert some form of control in order to create a reaction. In a study conducted by Huebner and Lipsey (1981), they found that the locus of control – the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them – was significantly associated with environmental activism. Millennials have an innate belief that they can affect change and utilize social media because they "want someone to do something for them" or want to "tell others what to do." Social media activism requires control in order to provoke effective action among cohorts. Through social media, connections are once removed from the individual so it is easy to request something of them as this request takes place in an online platform and not face to face.

For the third research question, an association between online activism and offline activism was found. The tangible online activism factor was the greatest predictor of offline activism. These activities are active and high-energy requiring Millennials to further elaborate on them and commit to taking a stance on a social-political issue. Thus, if an individual is likely to show greater support for an issue beyond slacktivism actions, he or she has a greater probability of supporting that issue offline as well. Millennials care about social perceptions and upholding 'social' beliefs. Therefore, if they changed their profile picture to support equal pay rights or raised money to support this issue, they feel a need to completely commit to it. They want to prove to others and themselves that they are passionate about a cause and some believe that partaking in a tangible online activism behavior means they're committed to an issue beyond just online as well.

Millennials rally to support shared causes and have a strong network of social connections to mobilize. According to Vegh (2003) one of the ways that the Internet is used for

mobilization is to call for an online action that can only be carried out online. Millennials are inclined to engage in mobilization efforts online because they are able to create greater awareness on a much larger scale. For example, they may have a greater return on signatures for their online petition as geographical distance between them and their connections are not a hindrance to participation. Internet activism is driven by awareness/advocacy which Millennials achieve by sharing information about a protest or boycott, organization/mobilization which Millennials achieve by mobilizing online support for a social-political issue, and action/reaction which Millennials achieve by prompting their social connections to sign a petition (McCaughey & Ayers, 2013). However, consistent with the current study, some Millennials tend to refrain from engagement in social-political issues online.

The negative perceptions factors predicted offline activism. If a Millennial is not willing to voice their social-political beliefs on social media or use social media to engage in these types of issues this may indicate that they are engaged in these issues offline already. However, while Millennials are an open-minded generation, there is pressure on social media to follow the norm. For individuals who have social connections that do not voice their opinions about social-political issues, those Millennials may believe they are going against the norm and would prefer not to engage in those types of issues online. Millennials believe that engaging in social-political issues is not one of the main reasons they use the platform and this is consistent with the data as information seeking is one of the key motives for online engagement. Consequently, lack of engagement in social-political issues online may reflect higher motives to engage in these activities offline. Based on the moral cleansing effect, if Millennials view their detachment from social media activism as a bad deed, this permits them to engage in more good deeds like offline activism (Lee & Hsieh, 2013). However, individuals need consistency in their lives so in order to

avoid cognitive dissonance they may choose to either engage in social media activism or refrain from doing so all together.

The fourth research question explored whether identification as an activist predicted activism online and offline. Activism identification predicted both online and offline activism behaviors among participants. This suggests that as online media platforms support social movements, activist identities have developed among Millennials (Langman, 2005). Millennials are more aware of issues because of social media and are acting on it; however their actions are primarily slacktivism behaviors. In other words, the results of this study indicate that slacktivists – by a large majority – may be claiming the 'activist' title. Millennials tend to have inflated views of themselves and may believe that their general slacktivist activities drive real-world change. Therefore, they are self-proclaimed activists because they tweeted using an activist hashtag in the past or shared an article about a social issue.

According to Harlow and Harp (2012), U.S. activists were more likely to use social media for activism and also say that their activism occurs primarily online. As the U.S. is a first-world democracy with access to the Internet, social media may just be the 'new age' platform that can propel offline activism. Online activism plays a crucial role in "contemporary activism" (Harlow & Harp, 2012, p. 1). Online activism has a much greater reach and although social media connections are weak, collectively they have ability to impact change and be a driving force for offline activism (Gladwell, 2010; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011). Indeed online activism breeds awareness and support, but it is the offline activists that must turn this mobilization into something useful and it is they who solidify change.

This research has paved the way for further examination of the connection between online and offline activism behaviors, and as related to individual identification as an activist. As

previous research on this topic has been partial, this study provides substantive results that highlight how to better engage Millennials in online and offline activism behaviors as a disconnect between engagement in online activism and offline activist behaviors exists. This disconnect is grounded in both gratifications achieved through online activist behavior and identification as an activist. By understanding which gratifications Millennials sought to achieve through the performance of specific independent components of online activism, this research sets the stage for targeting gratifications to encourage change. For example, the entertainment and convenience gratifications are important for Millennials with regard to online activism. Thus, social media activism campaigns should seek to entertain individuals and also be highly convenient in order for greater engagement. These are individual-level variables that can be further explored and accounted for in planning and creating awareness for activism campaigns. A greater understanding of uses and motivations can bridge the gap between online-offline behaviors. Garnering millennial support around social-political issues has implications for the political future of the U.S. and beyond. Depending upon the support these important issues garner from grassroots movements that drive the public debate, this can result in changes to laws, rules and regulations that govern our democracy and create effective change.

Practical Implications

Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are the most commonly used platforms among Millennials yet social media activist campaigns are centered on Facebook and Twitter (Rotman, Vieweg, Yardi, Chi, Preece, Shneiderman, Pirolli, & Glaisyer, 2011). In order to garner increased support from this generation, activists need to develop entertaining visual content that create awareness and also provoke a reaction among Millennials on Instagram and Snapchat. As Millennials seek convenient gratifications for engaging in online activism behaviors, activists

must also make the barrier to engagement easier for this demographic while remaining valuable i.e. prompting non-slacktivist actions.

Social media can be the driver of offline activism if so many offline behaviors that create ‘real’ change did not have to occur in a face-to-face environment. For example, in 2012, 7,000 website including Wikipedia had a blackout, a website shutdown where no information on the site could be accessed, to protest the proposed Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and Protect IP Act (PIPA) in Congress (“Wikipedia Blackout: 11 Huge Sites Protest SOPA, PIPA on January 18,” 2012). Support for the bill eventually declined and it was not passed on through the judicial system. If activist campaigns can bring similar approaches to social media, Millennials may be more likely to engage in ‘protest’ and more civic activities.

As Millennials are narcissists and self-identifying as an activist indicated online and offline activism behaviors, it’s important that activist actions reinforce this belief for Millennials. For example when a donation is made online to a campaign, a simple ‘Thank you’ is common. However, Millennials require more to strengthen their self-perceptions as activists. Social media activist campaigns have to boost the egos of Millennials in order to get them rallied for action. Millennial engagement in social media activism is paramount for offline civic actions surrounding social-political issues so it’s important to garner their support and sustain it in the long term.

Limitations

The current study had a few limitations as it relates to participants and explanation of research. A college student sample was used which is not representative of the millennial generation as a whole. Therefore, this data cannot be extrapolated to the general millennial population. As the majority of this sample was college undergraduates, they only represented the

young millennial population as 70% of the participants were 18-21 years old. In general, young Millennials are becoming more self-aware and conscious of issues in the world, but they're still learning and growing. At this age range, these young Millennials will be voting in the next general election for the first time in their lives and social-political issues are now beginning to impact them as they determine party affiliations and which candidates support the social-political issues that they believe are important. In the sample, the number of female participants was twice the size of male participants so this gender was highly underrepresented in this study. In a study on pro-environmental issues, Steger and Witt (1989) found that women displayed higher levels of perceived policy influence and political participation compared to men. While the gender difference in this study was a result of more females registered in communication classes than men, greater gender equality in the sample may have highlighted different online and offline activism behaviors.

In the explanation of research for the survey instrument, the title of this project was revealed to participants. A recent study from the Pew Research Center ("Most Millennials Resist the 'Millennial' Label," 2015) found that most Millennials resist the "Millennial" label and while this generation is the largest living generation, only 40% of adults 18-34 years old consider themselves as part of the Millennial generation. The reference to the term "Millennials" may have impacted self-reports of participants on the survey.

Future Research

Gratifications that motivate Internet use can be further explored for this research. Within interpersonal utility/social interaction, there may be sub-factors that Millennials respond to greater than others. A better understanding of these key motives can allow activists to tailor their social media campaigns to fulfill those motivations. While this study only looked at associations

between uses and gratifications and online activism, future research can compare uses and gratifications with each of the four sub-components for online activism behaviors to see if any clear predictions exist between the variables. The online activism scale can also be narrowed to focus on solely social media activism behaviors i.e. behaviors that only occur on a social media platform. This study can create greater predictions for the types of social media activism tactics that would drive millennial engagement.

Future research should consider whether online activism behaviors are influenced by which social media platforms Millennials utilize frequently. Does increased engagement on Facebook create more awareness and engagement in online activism behaviors? This can be taken a step further to analyze what social media platforms are conducive to activism. Facebook commonly adds a donation button to the home page of user's profiles to allow them to support any disaster relief efforts and has seen great traction on this front. Perhaps activists can also utilize this platform and others for their efforts to garner millennial support. Making activism involvement efforts more salient to individuals in a social media context may create greater mobilization and garner increased support.

Twenge (2013) found that social media has decreased empathy for others, civic engagement, and political involvement. Future research can study whether Millennials' empathy make them more or less inclined to participate in activist activities. This study can be further expanded to look at whether empathy has effects on online and offline activism behaviors. Future research can also explore male and female differences in likelihood to engage in social media activism. Perhaps online gratifications show gender differences that can be useful for social-political issues targeted around a specific sex e.g. women's rights or paternal leave.

This study provides greater insight into Millennials' social media activism and its effects on offline activism. According to Smith (2012), Millennials utilize social media for a variety of purposes. Therefore, a greater understanding of Millennials motivations and how they currently engage in online activist behaviors has repercussions for collective action that activists strive to create. Identity factors also contribute to engagement in both online and offline activism among Millennials which are key concepts that social media activists should be mindful of when creating messaging and strategy for online campaigns. The findings of this study can inform future studies on how social media activism is the millennial generation's modern-day soapbox.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

INTRODUCTION: IRB information, informed consent

FILTER QUESTION: Were you born between the years 1982 – 2001? Yes or No

SECTION ONE: USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

Please respond to the following statements regarding the ways in which you typically use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, SnapChat, and others) on the following scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

I utilize social media platforms:

Interpersonal Utility/Social Interaction

1. To help others
2. To meet new people
3. To participate in discussions
4. To show others encouragement
5. To belong to a group with the same interests as mine
6. To express myself freely
7. To give my input
8. To get more points of view
9. To tell others what to do
10. Because I wonder what other people are talking about

Pass Time

1. Because it passes time when I'm bored
2. To occupy my time
3. Because it allows me to unwind
4. Because I have nothing better to do
5. Because it relaxes me
6. Because it's a habit, just something to do
7. Because I can forget about school, work, or other things
8. Because there's no one else to talk to or be with

Please respond to the following statements regarding the ways in which you typically use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, SnapChat, and others) on the following scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

Social media platforms allow me:

Information Seeking

1. To get information for free
2. To look for information
3. To see what is out there
4. To get information easier
5. To learn what my social connections are posting about
6. To keep up with current issues and events

I use social media platforms:

Convenience

1. To communicate with friends, family
2. Because it is cheaper
3. People don’t have to be there the exact time you post a comment or send a message

Please respond to the following statements regarding the ways in which you typically use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, SnapChat, and others) on the following scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

For me social media is:

Entertainment

1. Entertaining
2. I just like to use it
3. Enjoyable

With social media:

Control

1. I want someone to do something for me
2. I tell others what to do

SECTION TWO: ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM

Please respond to the following statements regarding the ways in which you engage in the following behaviors online using social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, SnapChat, and others) on the following scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

In the past 6 months, I have:

Online Activism

1. Posted a status/tweeted about a social-political issue
2. Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue
3. Commented on a post about a social-political issue
4. Shared or retweeted a post about a social-political issue
5. Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet
6. Signed an online petition
7. Mobilized online support for a social-political issue
8. Generated awareness about a social-political issue using social media
9. Prompted social connections to sign an online petition for a social-political issue
10. Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media
11. Shared your experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media
12. Shared socially- or politically-charged images or photos on social media
13. Changed your social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue
14. Donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media
15. Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media
16. Unfriended or unfollowed someone on social media because of their social-political posts/tweets
17. Friended or followed a political leader or decision maker on social media
18. Contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media
19. Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online.*

20. I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media.*
21. I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues.*
22. I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network.*

Please respond to the following statements regarding the ways in which you engage in the following behaviors offline using social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, SnapChat, and others) on the following scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

In the past 6 months, I have:

Offline Activism

1. Attended an in-person informational session about a social-political issue
2. Volunteered with an organization that supports social-political issues
3. Encouraged others to sign a petition offline
4. Participated in fundraising activities offline to obtain donors
5. Donated money to support a cause surrounding a social-political issue
6. Participated in a boycott
7. Participated in rally or march
8. Participated in a sit-in or public protest
9. Shared information offline about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue
10. Shared your experience with others offline about participating/supporting a social-political issue
11. Created posters or fliers surrounding a social-political issue
12. Distributed information offline surrounding a social-political issue in-person
13. Participated in a “tabling” or informational event
14. Mobilized offline support for a social-political issue
15. Generated offline awareness about a social-political issue
16. Debated a social-political issue with friends or family in-person
17. Wrote a letter and sent it by traditional mail to a political leader or decision maker
18. Contacted a political leader or decision maker by telephone
19. Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues offline.*

20. I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs offline.*
21. I do not use offline platforms to engage in social-political issues.*
22. I do not agree with many offline views of those in my close network.*

SECTION THREE: ACTIVISM IDENTIFICATION

Please respond to the following statements regarding your perceptions about social-political issues “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

1. It is important to me to be involved with social-political issues.
2. I see myself as a social-political activist.
3. My friends see me as a social-political activist.
4. When a social-political issue is raised, I follow the issue regularly via any of the following a) on social media b) in person or on television c) television news of a newspaper.
5. It is very important that I am a social-political activist.
6. I dislike people who are not social-political activist.
7. I display the logo or sign of a social-political issue on social media, at my place of work, where I live, or on my clothing.

SECTION FOUR: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

In the past 6 months, how frequently have you used the following social media platforms on a scale from “Never” (1) to “Always” (7).

1. Facebook
2. Twitter
3. Instagram
4. Pinterest
5. Tumblr
6. Snapchat

Please respond to the following items to facilitate additional statistical analyses.

1. Age
    - 18-21 years old
    - 22-25 years old
    - 26-29 years old

- 30-33 years old
- More than 33 years old

2. Gender
    - Male
    - Female
3. Race/Ethnicity
    - White
    - Hispanic or Latino
    - Black or African American
    - Native American or American Indian
    - Asian/Pacific Islander
    - Other
4. Year of Study
    - Freshman
    - Sophomore
    - Junior
    - Senior
    - Graduate Student
    - Other

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	102	33.3
Female	204	66.7
Total	306	100.0

Age

	Frequency	Percent
18-21	213	69.6
22-25	62	20.3
26-29	21	6.9
30-33	10	3.3
Total	306	100.0

Race/Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
White	159	52.0
Hispanic/Latino	59	19.3
Black/African American	43	14.1
Native American/American Indian	1	.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	31	10.1
Other	13	4.2
Total	306	100.0

Year of Study

	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	49	16.0
Sophomore	58	19.0
Junior	96	31.4
Senior	67	21.9
Graduate Student	25	8.2
Other	11	3.6
Total	306	100.0

Usage of Social Media Platforms

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	306	6.30	1.546
Twitter	304	4.23	2.648
Instagram	304	5.56	2.302
Pinterest	305	2.96	2.210
Tumblr	306	2.68	2.333
Snapchat	306	5.42	2.419

APPENDIX C: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX FOR ONLINE ACTIVISM

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Posted a status/tweeted about a social-political issue	.830	.203	.068	.110
Liked or favorited a post about a social-political issue	.831	.100	.000	-.060
Commented on a post about a social-political issue	.775	.162	.188	.110
Shared or retweeted a post about a social-political issue	.836	.217	.015	.104
Used an activist hashtag in a social media post/tweet	.569	.367	.279	.203
Signed an online petition	.199	.770	.086	.021
Mobilized online support for a social-political issue	.451	.563	.333	.113
Generated awareness about a social-political issue using social media	.634	.435	.230	.145
Prompted social connections to sign an online petition for a social-political issue	.180	.817	.295	.035
Shared information about a protest or boycott surrounding a social-political issue on social media	.299	.641	.355	.085
Shared my experience about participating/supporting a social-political issue on social media	.416	.540	.336	-.048
Shared socially- or politically-charged images or photos on social media	.603	.366	.236	.058
Changed my social media profile picture surrounding a social-political issue	.225	.335	.585	.109
Donated money to a social-political issue that originated on social media	.108	.193	.793	.010
Attempted to raise money for a social-political issue using social media	.083	.116	.807	-.041
Unfriended or unfollowed someone on social media because of their social-political posts/tweets	.466	.076	.382	-.139
Friended or followed a political leader or decision maker on social media	.538	.086	.490	.138
Contacted a political leader or decision maker through e-mail or social media	.088	.358	.636	-.079
*Generally speaking, I prefer not to engage in social-political issues online.	.103	.095	.069	.878
*I do not like to voice my personal social-political beliefs on social media.	.137	.099	.026	.869
*I do not use social media to engage in social-political issues.	.189	.162	-.037	.852
*I do not agree with many online views of those in my social network.	-.102	-.155	-.055	.604

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Sasha Dookhoo**

Date: **July 30, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 07/30/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	How Millennials Engage in Social Media Activism: A Uses and Gratifications Approach
Investigator:	Sasha Dookhoo
IRB Number:	SBE-15-11444
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Kanielle Chap

IRB Coordinator

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