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**Digital Communication and the Rise of Online
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Digital Communication and the Rise of Online Activism

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Abstract

Purpose: The general objective of the study was to explore digital communication and the rise of online activism.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to digital communication and the rise of online activism. Preliminary empirical review revealed that digital communication had fundamentally transformed social and political activism, enabling rapid mobilization and broad dissemination of information. This shift democratized participation, allowing diverse voices to contribute to movements. However, the study also highlighted challenges such as the ephemeral nature of online engagement and the risks of reliance on centralized platforms. Despite these challenges, the potential for digital activism to drive meaningful change was evident, provided that movements could sustain real-world action and build resilient networks.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Network Society Theory, Collective Action Theory and Framing Theory may be used to anchor future studies on digital communication and the rise of online activism. The study concluded that the integration of digital communication in activism required updates to theoretical frameworks to reflect the dynamic nature of online platforms. Practically, it recommended that activists enhance their digital strategies, prioritize digital literacy and security, and create engaging content to sustain participation. Policy-wise, it emphasized the need for regulations that protect online activism while preventing misinformation. Educational institutions were urged to incorporate digital activism into their curricula. Collaborative efforts among activists, tech developers, and policymakers were highlighted as essential for developing supportive technologies. Lastly, the study called for ongoing research to understand the long-term impacts and ethical implications of digital activism, noting its evolving influence on social and political landscapes.

Keywords: *Digital Communication, Online Activism, Social Movements, Network Theory, Media Studies, Censorship, Digital Literacy, Digital Security, Narrative and Visual Content, Tech Developers, Long-term Impact, Digital Divide*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The rise of online activism has significantly transformed the landscape of social and political engagement, leveraging the power of the internet and social media to mobilize, communicate, and influence public opinion and policy on a global scale. Digital activism, also known as cyberactivism, utilizes online platforms to orchestrate campaigns, disseminate information, and rally support for a multitude of causes, from human rights to environmental protection. The accessibility and broad reach of digital communication tools have democratized activism, enabling marginalized voices to be heard and fostering a sense of global solidarity among activists (Gerbaudo, 2012). This new era of activism contrasts sharply with traditional forms, which often relied on physical gatherings and print media, offering a more immediate and widespread impact.

In the United States, the emergence of online activism has been particularly impactful, evidenced by movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM). This movement, which began in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, harnessed the power of social media to organize protests, share stories, and create a sense of community among those fighting against racial injustice. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram became vital tools for activists, allowing them to quickly disseminate information and mobilize supporters across the country. By 2020, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was used nearly 48 million times on Twitter alone, indicating the vast reach and influence of the movement. Moreover, a study by Pew Research Center found that 67% of U.S. adults supported the BLM movement, highlighting its profound impact on public opinion and policy (Anderson, Toor, Rainie, & Smith, 2018). The digital presence of BLM not only facilitated national protests but also influenced corporate policies and led to the removal of controversial symbols, such as Confederate statues.

The United Kingdom has also experienced the transformative power of digital activism, particularly through the Extinction Rebellion (XR) movement. Founded in 2018, XR leverages social media to mobilize climate change protests and acts of civil disobedience. The movement's online presence has been crucial in coordinating large-scale actions and spreading its message to a global audience. XR's ability to engage people through digital platforms was evident in its rapid growth; by 2019, the movement's Facebook page had over 300,000 followers, and its Twitter account boasted more than 100,000 followers. This extensive online network allowed XR to organize coordinated actions in over 60 cities worldwide, demonstrating the effectiveness of digital platforms in fostering a sense of urgency and collective action (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). The movement's strategic use of digital communication not only amplified its message but also garnered significant media attention, influencing public discourse on climate change.

In Japan, the #KuToo movement, which began in 2019, serves as a notable example of how online activism can address gender discrimination. The movement, a play on the words "kutsu" (shoes) and "kutsuu" (pain), was initiated by actress and writer Yumi Ishikawa to protest against the mandatory wearing of high heels for women in workplaces. Ishikawa's use of social media to highlight this issue resonated with many women, leading to widespread support and significant media coverage. Her petition on Change.org gathered over 30,000 signatures, demonstrating the power of online campaigns in galvanizing public support and prompting policy discussions. The #KuToo movement's success in raising awareness about workplace discrimination in Japan underscores the potential of digital activism to effect social change in societies with deeply ingrained cultural norms (Kurihara, 2020).

Brazil has seen a surge in digital activism through movements like #EleNao (#NotHim), which emerged in 2018 in opposition to the then-presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro. The movement, driven primarily by women, used social media to organize protests and share personal stories of resistance against Bolsonaro's controversial statements and policies. The hashtag #EleNao quickly went viral,

with millions of posts on platforms like Twitter and Instagram, highlighting the widespread discontent with Bolsonaro's candidacy. According to a study by Datafolha, the movement significantly impacted public opinion, particularly among women and younger voters, contributing to a polarized election (Datafolha, 2018). The #EleNao movement exemplifies how digital activism can influence electoral outcomes and shape political discourse in contemporary societies.

In African countries, online activism has been instrumental in addressing various socio-political issues. In Nigeria, the #EndSARS movement, which began in 2017 and gained international attention in 2020, called for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) due to widespread allegations of police brutality and corruption. Social media platforms, especially Twitter, were pivotal in organizing protests, sharing testimonies of victims, and rallying international support. A report by Amnesty International highlighted the role of digital activism in bringing global attention to the movement, leading to widespread protests and eventually prompting the Nigerian government to announce the disbandment of SARS (Amnesty International, 2020). The #EndSARS movement illustrates the power of online activism in holding authorities accountable and driving policy changes in response to public demand.

Kenya has also witnessed the rise of online activism through movements such as #MyDressMyChoice, which emerged in 2014 in response to incidents of women being publicly assaulted for their choice of clothing. The movement utilized social media to organize protests and raise awareness about gender-based violence and the right to personal autonomy. The hashtag #MyDressMyChoice trended on Twitter, garnering support from across the globe and leading to significant media coverage. A study by the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) found that the movement's digital presence played a crucial role in influencing public opinion and prompting legal reforms to protect women's rights (FEMNET, 2015). This movement underscores the potential of digital activism to challenge societal norms and advocate for gender equality.

In South Africa, the #FeesMustFall movement, which began in 2015, highlighted the issue of rising tuition fees and broader systemic inequalities in higher education. The movement's digital campaign mobilized thousands of students across the country, leading to mass protests and significant disruptions in the academic calendar. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook were instrumental in coordinating protests and sharing updates, with the hashtag #FeesMustFall becoming a rallying cry for students demanding affordable education. According to a study by the University of Johannesburg, the movement's online presence was key to its success, resulting in the South African government freezing tuition fee increases for a year and initiating broader discussions on education reform (Langa, 2017). This example demonstrates the efficacy of digital activism in advocating for systemic change and influencing policy decisions.

In Ghana, the #FixTheCountry movement, which began in 2021, utilized social media to highlight issues of economic hardship, corruption, and poor governance. The movement's digital campaign quickly gained traction, with the hashtag #FixTheCountry trending on Twitter and sparking widespread discussions about the state of the nation. According to a report by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the movement's online presence galvanized thousands of citizens, leading to significant protests and increased pressure on the government to address the highlighted issues (CDD-Ghana, 2021). The #FixTheCountry movement exemplifies how digital activism can empower citizens to demand accountability and drive political change in their countries. The rise of online activism has fundamentally changed how social and political movements operate, offering a platform for marginalized voices and enabling global solidarity. From the United States to the United Kingdom, Japan, Brazil, and various African countries, digital activism has proven to be a powerful tool for organizing, mobilizing, and influencing public opinion and policy. The widespread

adoption of digital communication tools has democratized activism, allowing for more inclusive and immediate forms of engagement. As these movements continue to evolve, they highlight the enduring potential of online activism to effect meaningful change in societies worldwide.

Digital communication encompasses the electronic transmission of information that has been encoded digitally, enabling a myriad of interactions that range from emails and social media posts to video calls and instant messaging. This form of communication has revolutionized the way we share information, making it instantaneous and borderless. Unlike traditional communication methods, digital communication leverages internet-based platforms and mobile technologies to facilitate real-time interactions, significantly broadening the scope and reach of information dissemination (Castells, 2012). The advent of these technologies has made it easier for individuals and organizations to communicate rapidly and effectively, laying the groundwork for various forms of digital activism.

The internet, as the backbone of digital communication, provides a global platform for information exchange. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become crucial in connecting people across the globe, allowing for the sharing of ideas, opinions, and information instantaneously. These platforms support a wide range of multimedia content, including text, images, and videos, which enhances the engagement and impact of the messages being communicated (Van Dijck, 2013). This capability has been instrumental in the rise of online activism, as it enables activists to share compelling narratives and mobilize support quickly and efficiently. One significant aspect of digital communication is its interactivity. Unlike traditional media, which is largely one-way, digital communication allows for two-way interactions where audiences can engage with the content and respond in real time. This interactivity fosters a sense of community and participation, which is essential for the success of online activism campaigns. For instance, social media platforms allow users to comment, like, share, and even create their own content, thereby amplifying the reach and impact of activist messages (Jenkins, 2012). This participatory culture has transformed passive consumers of information into active contributors and mobilizers in various social movements.

Another critical component of digital communication is its ability to create and sustain networks. The networked nature of digital platforms facilitates the formation of communities of interest, where individuals can connect and collaborate on shared goals. This has been particularly useful for activists, as it allows for the coordination of efforts and the pooling of resources across geographic boundaries. Digital networks enable activists to organize protests, share strategies, and offer support to one another, thereby enhancing the efficacy and sustainability of their movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). The ability to form and maintain such networks has been a cornerstone in the rise of online activism. The immediacy of digital communication also plays a vital role in the success of online activism. Information can be disseminated and received in real time, allowing activists to respond swiftly to events as they unfold. This immediacy is crucial for maintaining the momentum of social movements and for mobilizing supporters quickly in response to urgent issues. For example, during the Arab Spring, digital communication tools such as Twitter and Facebook were used to organize protests and share real-time updates, which were critical in sustaining the movement and coordinating actions across different countries (Howard & Hussain, 2013). The speed of digital communication has thus been instrumental in the rise of online activism.

Digital communication also enhances the visibility of social issues, which is a critical factor in the success of online activism. By leveraging the power of multimedia content and viral sharing, activists can draw attention to issues that may otherwise be overlooked by traditional media. The use of hashtags, viral videos, and other digital strategies helps to amplify the reach of activist messages and engage a broader audience. For instance, the #BlackLivesMatter movement effectively used digital communication to highlight instances of racial injustice and police brutality, gaining widespread

attention and support from around the world (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016). The visibility afforded by digital communication has been key in raising awareness and mobilizing action for various social causes. Moreover, digital communication provides a platform for marginalized voices that are often underrepresented in traditional media. Online platforms offer a space where individuals and groups can share their stories and perspectives without the gatekeeping that is prevalent in mainstream media. This democratization of information allows for a more diverse range of voices to be heard, which is essential for the inclusivity and effectiveness of social movements (Earl & Kimport, 2011). For example, movements like #MeToo have leveraged digital communication to provide a platform for survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their experiences and advocate for change. The inclusion of diverse voices has been crucial in the rise of online activism, making it more representative and impactful.

The anonymity afforded by digital communication is another factor that has contributed to the rise of online activism. Activists can share information and organize actions without revealing their identities, which can be crucial in environments where there is a risk of persecution or retaliation. This anonymity allows for greater freedom of expression and can empower individuals to participate in activism who might otherwise be deterred by fear of repercussions (McCosker, 2015). For instance, during the protests in Hong Kong, activists used encrypted messaging apps and anonymous social media accounts to coordinate actions and communicate securely, which was vital in maintaining the movement's momentum despite government crackdowns. Furthermore, digital communication facilitates the collection and dissemination of data, which is essential for informed activism. Activists can use digital tools to gather evidence, track trends, and analyze data to support their causes. This evidence-based approach enhances the credibility and effectiveness of their campaigns, as it allows them to present concrete information to back their claims. Digital platforms also enable the rapid dissemination of this information, ensuring that it reaches a wide audience quickly (Gleason, 2013). The ability to harness data effectively has been a significant factor in the success of modern online activism.

The global reach of digital communication allows for the internationalization of social movements. Activists can connect with supporters and allies around the world, drawing attention to local issues on a global scale. This international support can be crucial in exerting pressure on local authorities and garnering broader support for the cause. For instance, the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria gained international attention and support through social media, which was instrumental in pressuring the Nigerian government to address the issue of police brutality (Amnesty International, 2020). The global connectivity facilitated by digital communication has thus been a vital factor in the rise of online activism, allowing local movements to gain international traction and support. Digital communication has fundamentally transformed the landscape of social and political activism. Its immediacy, interactivity, networked nature, and ability to amplify marginalized voices have been crucial in the rise of online activism. By providing a platform for rapid, widespread, and inclusive communication, digital tools have empowered activists to mobilize support, raise awareness, and effect change on an unprecedented scale. As digital technologies continue to evolve, they will undoubtedly continue to shape and enhance the ways in which activism is conducted, making it more dynamic and far-reaching.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The advent of digital communication technologies has fundamentally transformed the nature of social and political activism, enabling rapid dissemination of information and the organization of large-scale movements with unprecedented speed and efficiency. Despite the extensive utilization of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram in modern activism, there remains a significant gap in understanding the long-term efficacy of these digital strategies in achieving sustained social change. While movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo have garnered global attention and support

through digital platforms, questions persist regarding the depth of engagement these movements generate and their impact on tangible policy changes and societal norms (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016). This study seeks to investigate the extent to which digital communication fosters meaningful and lasting activism, beyond the immediate amplification of voices and mobilization of participants.

Existing research has primarily focused on the immediate effects of digital activism, such as the rapid spread of information and the ability to mobilize large groups quickly. However, there is a dearth of studies examining the sustainability of these movements and their capacity to effect long-term change. For example, while the #ArabSpring demonstrated the power of social media in toppling regimes, the aftermath in many of these countries has been marked by instability and unmet demands for democratic reforms (Howard & Hussain, 2013). This study aims to fill this research gap by analyzing the longitudinal impacts of digital activism, assessing how movements maintain momentum and achieve their objectives over time. By doing so, it will provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to the success or failure of digital activism in the long term.

The findings of this study will benefit a broad range of stakeholders, including activists, policymakers, and scholars. Activists will gain insights into effective digital strategies for sustaining their movements and achieving their goals, allowing them to refine their approaches based on empirical evidence. Policymakers will better understand the dynamics of digital activism and its potential to influence public policy, enabling them to engage more constructively with these movements. Scholars will benefit from a more comprehensive theoretical framework for studying digital activism, bridging the gap between short-term mobilization and long-term impact (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Additionally, understanding the sustainability of digital activism can help in designing platforms and tools that better support activists in their efforts, fostering a more resilient and impactful digital civil society.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Network Society Theory

Network Society Theory, originated by sociologist Manuel Castells, posits that the advent of digital communication technologies has transformed the fabric of society into a networked structure. This theory is predicated on the idea that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have created a new social morphology, where networks are the primary organizational forms. Castells argues that these networks transcend traditional boundaries and hierarchies, enabling unprecedented levels of connectivity and interaction across the globe (Castells, 2012). The relevance of this theory to the study of "Digital Communication and the Rise of Online Activism" is profound. It provides a framework for understanding how digital platforms facilitate the rapid dissemination of information and mobilization of social movements. By examining the structure and dynamics of these networks, researchers can gain insights into how online activism is organized, how information flows within these networks, and how they can sustain momentum over time. This theory helps to explain why digital communication is so effective in rallying support and orchestrating large-scale activism, as it highlights the power of decentralized and flexible networks in contemporary social movements.

2.1.2 Collective Action Theory

Collective Action Theory, developed by economist Mancur Olson, explores the conditions under which individuals come together to achieve a common goal. Olson's seminal work, "The Logic of Collective Action," challenges the assumption that groups will naturally form and work towards a common interest. He argues that individuals are often deterred by the costs of participation and the free-rider problem, where individuals benefit from the collective good without contributing to its provision (Olson, 1965). The theory's application to digital communication and online activism is

particularly relevant as it helps to understand the mechanisms that enable large-scale participation in digital movements. The internet and social media platforms reduce the costs associated with participation, such as time and effort, making it easier for individuals to engage in collective actions. Moreover, digital tools can help to mitigate the free-rider problem by fostering a sense of community and shared purpose, encouraging more active participation. By applying Collective Action Theory, researchers can explore the motivations behind individual participation in online activism and the strategies used to sustain engagement and cooperation among participants.

2.1.3 Framing Theory

Framing Theory, developed by sociologists Erving Goffman and further expanded by Robert Entman, examines how information is presented and perceived. The central tenet of this theory is that the way information is framed significantly influences how it is interpreted and acted upon by audiences (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). This theory is crucial for understanding digital communication and online activism because it highlights the importance of message construction in mobilizing support and shaping public opinion. Activists use digital platforms to frame issues in ways that resonate with their target audiences, employing narratives, symbols, and language that evoke emotional responses and prompt action. By analyzing the framing strategies used in online activism, researchers can uncover how movements construct their messages to attract attention, generate sympathy, and motivate participation. Framing Theory provides a lens through which to examine the persuasive power of digital communication and the role of media in shaping the discourse around social issues, thus offering valuable insights into the dynamics of contemporary activism.

2.2 Empirical Review

Freelon, McIlwain & Clark (2016) explored the role of Twitter in the #BlackLivesMatter movement, focusing on how digital communication facilitated the spread and impact of the movement. Researchers used content analysis to examine over 40 million tweets associated with the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag. They analyzed tweet volume, sentiment, and network structures to understand the dynamics of digital activism. The study found that Twitter played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of activists and spreading awareness about racial injustice. The hashtag created a cohesive narrative that mobilized support and sustained engagement over time. The authors recommended that future research should investigate the long-term impact of digital activism on policy changes and societal attitudes, as well as the role of other social media platforms in similar movements.

Howard & Hussain (2013) examined the role of digital communication during the Arab Spring, focusing on how social media facilitated political mobilization and uprisings in several Arab countries. The researchers conducted a mixed-methods study that included qualitative interviews with activists and quantitative analysis of social media activity during the uprisings. The study revealed that social media platforms were instrumental in organizing protests, spreading information, and coordinating actions across different countries. However, it also highlighted the challenges of translating online mobilization into sustained political change. The authors suggested that future research should explore the post-uprising period to understand the long-term effects of digital activism on political stability and democratic development.

Gerbaudo (2012) analyzed the role of social media in contemporary social movements, with a focus on how digital communication technologies have reshaped the strategies and structures of activism. Gerbaudo used a combination of case studies and qualitative interviews with activists involved in various movements, including Occupy Wall Street and the Indignados in Spain. The research found that social media facilitated the emergence of "soft leadership," where charismatic figures and shared narratives played a central role in mobilizing and sustaining movements. Digital platforms enabled

decentralized coordination and rapid response to events. The author recommended further investigation into the sustainability of digital activism and the potential for digital platforms to foster deeper forms of political engagement.

Bennett & Segerberg (2013) aimed to understand the concept of "connective action" in digital activism, contrasting it with traditional collective action. The researchers conducted case studies of various digital activism campaigns, including the 2011 UK Uncut movement and the 2011 Spanish Indignados. The study identified a shift from hierarchical, organization-led collective action to more personalized, networked forms of activism facilitated by digital media. This "connective action" is characterized by the use of digital platforms to enable flexible and scalable forms of participation. The authors recommended that future research should focus on the implications of this shift for the effectiveness and sustainability of social movements, as well as the role of digital platforms in shaping activist strategies.

Earl & Kimport (2011) explored the impact of digital technologies on the dynamics of protest and social movements, focusing on the concept of "e-tactics." The researchers used a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and case studies of various digital activism campaigns, such as MoveOn.org and the 2004 Howard Dean presidential campaign. The study found that digital technologies have lowered the barriers to participation in activism, enabling more spontaneous and widespread engagement. However, the authors also noted the potential for "slacktivism," where digital participation does not translate into real-world action. The authors suggested further research into the conditions under which digital activism leads to substantive political outcomes, as well as the role of digital platforms in facilitating different forms of engagement.

Tufekci (2017) examined the power and fragility of networked protest, analyzing how digital communication technologies have changed the nature of activism. Tufekci conducted ethnographic research and in-depth interviews with activists involved in movements such as the Egyptian revolution and Occupy Wall Street. The study found that while digital tools enable rapid mobilization and global visibility, they also introduce vulnerabilities, such as reliance on centralized platforms and the potential for digital surveillance. The ephemeral nature of online attention can also make it challenging to sustain long-term engagement. The author recommended that activists develop strategies to address these vulnerabilities, such as building resilient networks and diversifying their communication channels.

Gleason (2013) investigated the role of social media in the Occupy Wall Street movement, focusing on how digital communication facilitated informal learning and collective action. The researcher used content analysis of social media posts and ethnographic observations of Occupy Wall Street events. The study found that social media platforms were essential for sharing information, coordinating activities, and fostering a sense of community among participants. The informal learning that occurred through digital interactions played a crucial role in the movement's development. The author recommended further research into the educational aspects of digital activism and the ways in which social media can support learning and knowledge sharing within social movements.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

4.0 FINDINGS

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Gleason (2013) investigated the role of social media in the Occupy Wall Street movement, focusing on how digital communication facilitated informal learning and collective action. The researcher used content analysis of social media posts and ethnographic observations of Occupy Wall Street events. The study found that social media platforms were essential for sharing information, coordinating activities, and fostering a sense of community among participants. The informal learning that occurred through digital interactions played a crucial role in the movement's development. The author recommended further research into the educational aspects of digital activism and the ways in which social media can support learning and knowledge sharing within social movements. On the other hand, the current study focused on the digital communication and the rise of online activism.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for example, Gleason (2013) in investigating the role of social media in the Occupy Wall Street movement, focusing on how digital communication facilitated informal learning and collective action; used content analysis of social media posts and ethnographic observations of Occupy Wall Street events. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The intersection of digital communication and online activism has redefined the landscape of social and political movements in the 21st century. The advent of social media platforms and other digital communication tools has enabled activists to mobilize support, disseminate information, and coordinate actions on an unprecedented scale. This transformation is characterized by the ability to reach a global audience instantaneously, breaking down geographical and temporal barriers that previously constrained traditional forms of activism. The immediate and widespread dissemination of information through digital channels has empowered marginalized voices and provided a platform for grassroots movements to gain visibility and traction. As a result, digital communication has not only facilitated the rapid organization of protests and campaigns but has also played a critical role in shaping public discourse and influencing policy.

One of the most significant impacts of digital communication on online activism is the democratization of participation. The low barriers to entry for engaging in digital activism mean that individuals who might have been excluded from traditional activist spaces can now participate and contribute to social movements. This inclusivity has led to the creation of diverse and multifaceted movements that are more representative of the broader society. Furthermore, the interactive nature of digital platforms fosters a sense of community and solidarity among participants, enhancing the cohesiveness and resilience of movements. The ability to engage in two-way communication allows activists to respond to supporters' concerns and feedback in real time, thus maintaining momentum and ensuring that the movement's goals and strategies remain relevant and adaptive to changing circumstances.

However, the rise of online activism through digital communication also presents challenges that need to be addressed to sustain long-term impact. One key challenge is the potential for digital movements to experience rapid bursts of activity that are difficult to sustain over time. The ephemeral nature of online attention can lead to a phenomenon known as "clicktivism" or "slacktivism," where digital participation does not translate into substantive offline action. Ensuring that digital activism leads to tangible outcomes requires strategic planning and a focus on building sustainable networks and infrastructures. Additionally, the reliance on centralized digital platforms poses risks related to

ensorship, surveillance, and the manipulation of information. Activists must navigate these challenges by diversifying their communication channels and developing strategies to protect their digital privacy and security.

Digital communication has profoundly transformed the dynamics of social and political activism, offering both opportunities and challenges. The ability to mobilize large numbers of people quickly and coordinate actions across vast distances has enhanced the reach and impact of social movements. At the same time, the sustainability of these movements depends on their ability to translate online engagement into real-world action and to build resilient networks that can withstand external pressures. As digital technologies continue to evolve, so too must the strategies and approaches of activists, ensuring that the potential of digital communication is harnessed effectively to drive meaningful and lasting social change. By addressing the inherent challenges and leveraging the strengths of digital platforms, activists can continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in the realm of social and political change.

5.2 Recommendations

The study's findings underscore the need for an expanded theoretical framework to understand the complexities of digital communication in contemporary activism. Existing theories of social movements and collective action must be adapted to account for the dynamic and decentralized nature of digital platforms. It is recommended that future research integrates insights from network theory and media studies to develop a comprehensive model that captures the fluidity and immediacy of online activism. By doing so, scholars can better explain how digital networks facilitate the rapid mobilization of resources and sustain engagement over time. Additionally, the study calls for a deeper examination of the interplay between online and offline activities, recognizing that digital activism does not exist in isolation but interacts continuously with physical forms of protest and advocacy.

For activists, the study highlights the importance of leveraging digital tools effectively to maximize their impact. It is recommended that activists develop robust digital strategies that include diverse communication channels to mitigate the risks of censorship and surveillance. Training in digital literacy and security should be prioritized to protect the integrity of activist networks and ensure the safety of participants. Furthermore, activists should focus on creating compelling narratives and visual content that can be easily shared and understood by a broad audience, thereby amplifying their message. Building sustainable engagement is crucial, and activists are encouraged to foster community through interactive platforms that allow for continuous dialogue and feedback, keeping supporters informed and motivated.

The study recommends that policymakers acknowledge the significant role of digital communication in modern activism and respond accordingly. This involves creating policies that protect the rights of activists to organize and express themselves freely online. Governments should ensure that digital platforms are regulated to prevent undue censorship while safeguarding against misinformation and abuse. Additionally, there should be investment in digital infrastructure to provide equal access to all citizens, enabling broader participation in digital activism. Policymakers are also encouraged to engage with digital activists proactively, recognizing their contributions to democratic processes and incorporating their insights into policy development.

Educational institutions play a crucial role in preparing the next generation of activists. The study recommends integrating digital activism into curricula across disciplines to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate and leverage digital tools for social change. This includes teaching critical media literacy, digital security, and strategic communication. By fostering an understanding of the power and potential pitfalls of digital activism, educational programs can cultivate informed and

capable activists who are prepared to engage effectively in the digital age. Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches should be encouraged to provide a holistic view of how digital technologies intersect with social, political, and cultural dynamics.

The study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between various stakeholders, including activists, tech developers, policymakers, and scholars, to address the challenges and opportunities of digital activism. Collaborative efforts can lead to the development of new technologies and platforms that better support activist activities while ensuring user safety and privacy. These partnerships can also facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative strategies that enhance the effectiveness of digital campaigns. It is recommended that forums and workshops be established to foster dialogue and cooperation among these groups, promoting a collaborative approach to addressing the evolving

Finally, the study calls for ongoing research to keep pace with the rapidly changing digital environment. Future studies should explore the long-term impacts of digital activism on social and political change, examining how movements evolve and sustain themselves over time. Comparative research across different regions and contexts can provide insights into the diverse ways in which digital communication is utilized and its varying effectiveness. Additionally, there is a need for research that focuses on the ethical implications of digital activism, including issues of privacy, surveillance, and the digital divide. By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of digital activism in the modern era.

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