

Social Media Activism and Civic Skills as Predictors of Civic Responsibility among Senior High School Students

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Abstract

Poor civic responsibility among senior high school students is a growing concern, with limited understanding of how social media activism and civic skills influence their engagement. This study aimed to determine the predictive influence of social media activism and civic skills on students' civic responsibility. A descriptive-predictive design was used, with data collected from 300 senior high school students through simple random sampling. Descriptive statistics revealed that students generally exhibit high levels of social media activism and civic skills, with political awareness being notably low. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between social media activism and civic responsibility ($r = 0.813$), and between civic skills and civic responsibility ($r = 0.845$). Social media activism explained 66.1% of the variance in civic responsibility, while civic skills explained 71.4% of the variance. Regression analysis confirmed that both predictors significantly influenced civic responsibility, with civic skills having a slightly stronger impact. These findings suggest that promoting both social media activism and civic skills is essential for fostering civic responsibility. Future research could explore additional variables, such as political awareness or specific educational interventions, to further understand the remaining variance in students' civic responsibility and improve strategies for increasing youth engagement.

Keywords: social media activism; civic skills; civic responsibility; regression analysis

1. Introduction

Civic responsibility of students is alarmingly low, reflecting a growing disinterest in active participation and engagement within their democratic society (Branson, 1998). This issue is evident in students' increasingly low expectations of participating in civic and political activities (Schulz, 2024). Moreover, the rise of online behaviors such as slacktivism further underscores the weakening of authentic civic involvement and the decline of meaningful student participation in democratic processes (Zuchowska Skiba, 2023).

Civic responsibility among youth remains insufficient and inconsistent across the globe. In Canada, for example, youth participation in democratic processes continues to be low, with voter turnout reaching only 37.4% in the 2008 federal election—raising concerns about young people's political engagement (Pammett &

LeDuc, 2003). Similarly, in the Czech Republic, engagement in civic activities such as volunteering and helping strangers is also low, reflecting ongoing challenges in establishing an active civic culture (Nadace Via, 2019). Moreover, in many OECD countries, voter turnout among 18–24 years old is, on average, 12% lower than that of adults aged 25–50. In some nations such as Lithuania, Portugal, and Slovakia youth turnout deficits exceed 30%, further highlighting a significant global pattern of under-engagement among young electorates (OECD, 2024).

In the Philippines, youth civic engagement continues to be limited. Although young people express interest in social issues, only a small number actively join civic organizations or participate in local projects (Commission on Population and Development, 2022). Many remain distant from civic responsibilities such as voting and public service, which leads to weakened participation in democratic processes (Rappler, 2022). A sense of disillusionment toward political systems and institutions is evident, contributing to decreased trust and involvement (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2023). These trends highlight the continuing challenge of translating civic awareness into actual participation among Filipino youth.

In Davao City, civic responsibility among the youth remains inconsistent and event-based rather than sustained. While over 4,300 youth joined the Youth Environment Summit in April 2025, this turnout does not reflect long-term civic engagement (Philippine Information Agency, 2025). Programs like the Rampa initiative by the Davao City Youth Development Office struggle with limited reach and impact despite involving Sangguniang Kabataan leaders (Philippine Information Agency, 2025). Civic volunteerism among Senior High School students is also irregular, with social competence showing only partial influence on their participation (Roncesvalles, Bete, & Nuñala, 2024). Community groups such as the Pag-asa Youth Association face funding shortages, limiting their ability to sustain clean-ups and outreach activities (City Government of Davao, 2024).

Despite existing efforts, there is little research on how social media activism and civic skills influence civic responsibility among senior high school students. With ongoing social and environmental issues, it is urgent to understand these factors to better promote consistent youth engagement in civic life.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study, *Social Media Activism and Civic Skills as Predictors of Civic Responsibility among Senior High School Students*, is significant in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)—by strengthening youth participation in democratic and civic processes in the digital age. By examining how social media activism and civic skills shape civic responsibility, the findings may contribute to broader efforts to promote informed, ethical, and participatory citizenship essential to building peaceful, inclusive, and

accountable societies. The study may help parents foster socially responsible and civically aware behavior among young people both online and offline, while also providing empirical evidence that future researchers can build upon in examining youth civic engagement, digital citizenship, and social responsibility. Overall, this research offers timely insights into how digital behaviors and civic competencies can be leveraged to empower young citizens and support sustainable, community-oriented development aligned with national and global SDG targets.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the significance of social media activism and civic skills as predictors of civic responsibility. Specifically, it aims to achieve the following questions:

1. What is the level of social media activism in terms of follower engagement, counter engagement, expressive engagement, and latent engagement; the level of civic skills in terms of civic actions, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, political awareness, and leadership skills; the level of civic responsibilities in terms of civic knowledge, students' perceptions and behaviors, students' attitudes towards societal threats, and influence on civic education outcomes among senior high school students?
2. Is there a significant relationship between social media activism and civic responsibility, and civic skills and civic responsibility among Senior High School students?
3. Is there a significant influence of social media activism and civic skills on civic responsibility among Senior High School students?

1.3 Hypotheses

This study was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between social media activism, civic skills, and civic responsibility among senior high school students.

H_{o2}: There is no significant influence of social media activism and civic skills on civic responsibility among Senior High School students.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

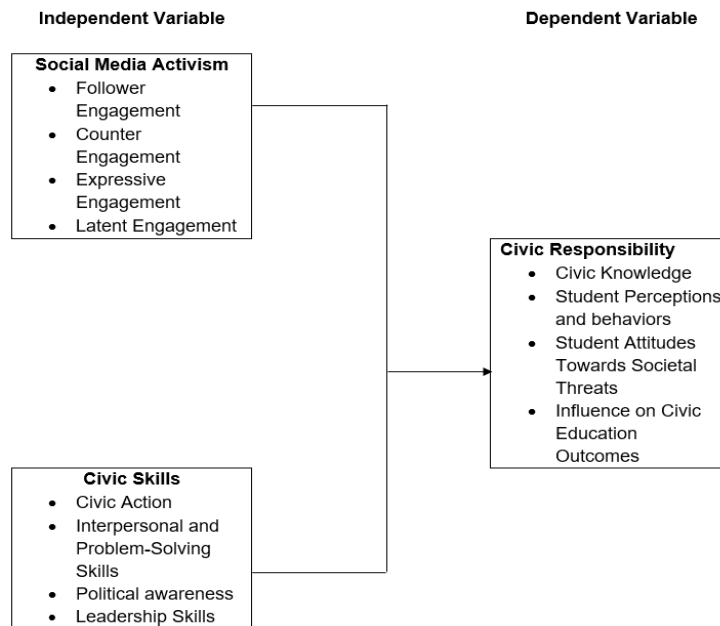


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. Methodology

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design using a descriptive-predictive approach to examine the predictive relationships of social media activism and civic skills with civic responsibility among senior high school students. This design is appropriate when variables cannot be manipulated and are examined as they naturally occur, allowing the analysis of relationships without experimental intervention (Hsu et al., 2021). The correlational approach enables the assessment of both the strength and direction of associations among variables and supports prediction without implying causality (Hong & Kim, 2021). This methodological approach is consistent with previous studies examining digital engagement and civic competencies as predictors of civic outcomes (Hatamleh et al., 2024).

The participants consisted of 300 senior high school students enrolled during the Academic Year 2025–2026. This sample size was selected to enhance statistical power and improve the generalizability of the findings. Late adolescence represents a critical developmental stage in which civic identity, civic engagement, and civic responsibility are actively formed, particularly within digitally mediated environments (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018; Schulz et al., 2018; IEA, 2023). A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that each eligible student had an equal probability of selection, thereby minimizing sampling bias and strengthening representativeness (Thomas, 2020). The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, a commonly applied method in social science research (Statology, 2023).

Data were collected using three structured questionnaires measuring social media activism, civic skills, and civic responsibility. The Social Media Activism questionnaire, adapted from Boulianne and Theocharis (2018), assessed civic-related online engagement across four indicators: follower engagement, counter engagement, expressive engagement, and latent engagement. The Civic Skills questionnaire, adapted from Levine (2016), measured competencies related to active citizenship, including civic action, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, political awareness, and leadership skills. The Civic Responsibility questionnaire, adapted from Wray-Lake et al. (2017), evaluated civic knowledge, perceptions and behaviors, attitudes toward

societal issues, and influences on civic education outcomes. All instruments used a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger manifestations of the measured constructs. Items under the political awareness indicator were negatively worded and were reverse-coded prior to data analysis to ensure that higher scores consistently represented higher levels of civic skills.

Prior to the main data collection, the instruments underwent expert validation to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. A pilot test involving 30 senior high school students, who were not included in the main sample, was conducted to assess the reliability of the instruments. Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable (Taber, 2017). The results indicated excellent internal consistency for Social Media Activism ($\alpha = 0.902$) and Civic Responsibility ($\alpha = 0.941$), and good internal consistency for Civic Skills ($\alpha = 0.844$). Each variable consisted of four indicators, confirming that the overall survey questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory to excellent reliability.

Ethical standards in educational research were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by excluding identifying information from all records, and data were handled responsibly to protect participants' rights and well-being (Llego, 2023). Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to summarize the variables and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression analysis, to examine relationships and predictive effects among social media activism, civic skills, and civic responsibility (Akoglu, 2018; Schober et al., 2018; Hayes, 2025).

3. Results

In this section, the results of the study are presented. Specifically, presented are descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and the summary of findings.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 comprehensively presents students' level of social media activism, civic skills, and civic responsibility. The table also contains the number of respondents, standard deviation (SD), mean, and descriptive level.

Table 1: Descriptive Table

Variables	N	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
	300			
Social Media Activism		0.658	3.018	High
Follower Engagement		0.73	3.056	High
Counter Engagement		0.701	3.048	High
Expressive Engagement		0.775	2.879	High
Latent Engagement		0.684	3.09	High
Civic Skills		0.61	2.94	High
Civic Action		0.745	3.022	High
Interpersonal and Problem-Solving Skills		0.681	3.211	High
Political Awareness		0.894	2.346	Low
Leadership Skills		0.689	3.183	High
Civic Responsibility		0.665	3.201	High
Civic Knowledge		0.688	3.21	High

Students' Perceptions and Behaviors	0.68	3.102	High
Students' Attitudes Toward Societal Threats	0.737	3.273	Very High
Influence on Civic Education	0.691	3.218	High

Presented in Table 1 shows that social media activism, the first independent variable, obtained an overall mean of 3.018 with a high descriptive level and a standard deviation of 0.658. This result indicates that students are generally engaged in social media activism, particularly in reacting to sharing and discussing civic and societal issues online. The indicators follower engagement ($M = 3.056$, $SD = 0.730$), counter engagement ($M = 3.048$, $SD = 0.701$), expressive engagement ($M = 2.879$, $SD = 0.775$), and latent engagement ($M = 3.090$, $SD = 0.684$) were all rated high.

The mean values indicate that students generally engage in social media activism, while the closeness of the standard deviation values suggests that this level of participation is consistent among students, implying that social media activism is a common experience that may positively support students' civic involvement.

Meanwhile, civic skills, the second independent variable, showed an overall mean of 2.94 interpreted as high, with a standard deviation of 0.610. This indicates that students are generally able to apply civic skills in community and social situations. The indicators civic action ($M = 3.022$, $SD = 0.745$), interpersonal and problem solving skills ($M = 3.211$, $SD = 0.681$), and leadership skills ($M = 3.183$, $SD = 0.689$) were all rated high, showing that students sometimes participate in collaborative and leadership activities. However, political awareness ($M = 2.346$, $SD = 0.894$), described as low, implying weak understanding of political matters. This finding suggests a clear weakness in students' civic skill profile, their lower and less consistent political awareness highlights the need to strengthen political education to promote more informed and consistent civic participation.

Finally, the dependent variable civic responsibility obtained an overall mean 3.201 described as high with a standard deviation 0.665. This shows that students are generally civically responsible, as reflected in civic knowledge ($M = 3.210$, $SD = 0.688$), students' perceptions and behaviors ($M = 3.102$, $SD = 0.680$), students' attitudes toward societal threats ($M = 3.273$, $SD = 0.737$), and influence on civic education ($M = 3.218$, $SD = 0.691$). The mostly similar standard deviation values imply similar levels of civic responsibility among students. Therefore, the findings suggest that students are high civic responsibility, with consistent levels across indicators, and that their civic responsibility may be further strengthened through sustained engagement in social media activism and the continuous development of civic skills.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2 is the correlation table. It explicitly contains the two predictive variables namely, social media activism, civic skills, and the criterion variable, civic responsibility. The table presents data on the r -value, variance (r squared), p -value, and the decision on the null hypothesis.

Table 2: Table of Correlation

Variables	Civic Responsibility			
	r -value	r^2	p -value	Decision on H_0
Social Media Activism	0.813	0.661	$< .001$	Reject
Civic Skills	0.845	0.714	$< .001$	Reject

The relationship between social media activism and civic responsibility shows a high positive correlation, with an r -value of 0.813. This means that as students engage more in social media activism, their civic responsibility also increases. The r^2 value of 0.661 (66.1%) means that 66.1% of the variation in civic responsibility can be explained by social media activism, suggesting that social media activism plays a major

role in shaping students' sense of civic responsibility. The p-value of $< .001$ is very small, leading to the decision to reject the null hypothesis, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that encouraging positive and responsible social media activism can help improve students' sense of civic responsibility.

Moreover, the relationship between civic skills and civic responsibility also shows a high positive correlation, with an r-value of 0.845. This indicates that as students' civic skills improve, their level of civic responsibility also increases. The r^2 value of 0.714 (71.4%) means that 71.4% of the variation in civic responsibility can be explained by civic skills, showing that civic skills have a strong influence on students' civic responsibility. The p-value of $< .001$ confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that developing students' civic skills can greatly help in strengthening their civic responsibility.

Overall, the findings show that both social media activism and civic skills are important factors related to civic responsibility, as shown by their high r-values and significant p-values. The r^2 results indicate that a large portion of civic responsibility is explained by these two variables, although other factors may still play a role. These results suggest that schools and educators should focus on activities that promote social media activism and enhance civic skills to help build a stronger sense of civic responsibility among students.

3.3 Regression Analysis

Table 3 presents the significance of the degree of influence of social media activism and civic skills on civic responsibility among senior high school students. The table includes several columns: predictor, estimate, standard estimate, SE (Standard Error), t (t-value), p (p-value), and decision on the null hypothesis.

Table 3: Table of Degree of Influence

Predictor	Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t-value	p-value	Decision on H_0
(Intercept)	0.359	0.154		2.331	0.021	Reject
Social Media Activism	0.359	0.084	0.355	4.255	$< .001$	Reject
Civic Skills	0.598	0.091	0.549	6.569	$< .001$	Reject

In Table 3, the intercept has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.359, with a standard error of 0.154, a t-value of 2.331, and a p-value of 0.021. This suggests that when both social media activism and civic skills are zero, the baseline level of civic responsibility is 0.359, which is statistically significant. The t-value of 2.331 indicates that the intercept is significantly different from zero, meaning that civic responsibility has a meaningful starting value, even in the absence of the predictors.

For social media activism, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.359, with a standard error of 0.084 and a t-value of 4.255. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating a highly significant relationship. This means that for every 1-unit increase in social media activism, civic responsibility increases by 0.359 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.355, which means that for every 1 standard deviation increase in social media activism, civic responsibility increases by 0.355 standard deviations. The high t-value and low p-value support the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming the significant influence of social media activism on civic responsibility.

In the case of civic skills, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.598, with a standard error of 0.091 and a t-value of 6.569. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating a very strong and statistically significant effect. The standardized Beta of 0.549 suggests that civic skills have a stronger effect on civic responsibility than social

media activism. For every 1 standard deviation increase in civic skills, civic responsibility increases by 0.549 standard deviations. This significant result, along with the rejection of the null hypothesis, reinforces the role of civic skills in shaping students' sense of civic responsibility.

Finally, the overall results show that all predictors, including social media activism and civic skills, have a statistically significant impact on civic responsibility, as indicated by the very low p-values. The t-values for both predictors are high, providing strong evidence that these factors play an important role in fostering civic engagement. The rejection of the null hypothesis for both predictors confirms that social media activism and civic skills are key contributors to students' civic responsibility.

4. Discussions

Elaboration of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study is presented in this section.

4.1 Discussion on the Descriptive Results

Social Media Activism

The results indicate that students show strong engagement in social media activism, participating in reacting to posts, sharing content, and discussing social and civic issues online. Their involvement is evident across different types of engagement, including following, countering, expressing, and observing discussions. These patterns show that social media has become a familiar space where students can learn about social concerns and take part in conversations that affect their community and society.

This engagement is supported by existing studies. Research shows that social media helps young people become more involved in civic issues by making participation easier and more accessible (Valeriani & Vaccari, 2016). Additionally, discussing social and political topics online, even through simple actions like liking or commenting, can increase civic awareness and interest (Bode, 2016). These findings suggest that social media activism can support students' civic involvement by allowing them to express their views and stay informed about important issues.

At the same time, some studies note that online activism often involves simple actions that may not lead to real-world participation. Social media can create a sense of involvement without necessarily encouraging more meaningful action offline (Boulianne, 2015). This indicates that while students actively participate in various forms of social media activism, the overall impact depends on whether these online actions translate into responsible and thoughtful civic behavior beyond the digital space.

Civic Skills

The results show that students have a high level of civic skills, which they apply in community and social situations through teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership activities. They are able to participate in group work and take initiative, showing that they can contribute to their community and take part in . This suggests that students are developing practical skills that help them engage in social and civic life.

Research supports this idea. Studies show that civic skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving help young people get involved in community activities and build confidence in their civic roles (Pigza, 2016). Developing these skills encourages students to take part in community efforts and strengthens their sense of responsibility toward society.

At the same time, some studies point out that having civic skills does not always mean students understand political issues well. Low political awareness can limit their participation in government or policy matters (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018). This means that while students can use civic skills in social situations, improving political education is important so they can engage responsibly and make informed decisions in broader civic matters.

Civic Responsibility

The results indicate that students demonstrate a high sense of civic responsibility. They are aware of civic issues, act responsibly in their communities, maintain positive attitudes toward societal challenges, and recognize the importance of civic education. The consistency in their responses across civic knowledge, perceptions and behaviors, attitudes toward societal threats, and the influence of civic education suggests that students are generally capable of thoughtful participation. These findings highlight that students' civic responsibility can be further strengthened through ongoing learning and active engagement in social and civic matters.

Research supports this observation. Studies show that students with higher civic knowledge and skills are more likely to participate meaningfully in society. Engaging in discussions about social and political issues, even through online platforms, can increase awareness and encourage responsible civic behavior (Ballard et al., 2017). These studies suggest that educational programs, practical experiences, and opportunities for reflection can nurture and expand students' civic responsibility.

At the same time, some research cautions that awareness and knowledge alone do not always lead to meaningful action. Students may show interest in civic issues but participate only superficially if guidance or opportunities are limited (Koons, 2023). This shows that while students generally demonstrate high civic responsibility, it is important to provide continuous support, practical engagement experiences, and thoughtful platforms including social media activism to ensure that this responsibility translates into consistent and meaningful participation in real-world civic life.

4.2 Discussion on the Correlation Results

The correlation analysis showed that social media activism has a strong positive relationship with civic responsibility among students. In other words, students who actively participate in social media activism tend to show a greater sense of responsibility toward society. This supports previous studies which explain that social media allows young people to learn about social issues, share opinions, and take part in civic discussions. As a result, online activism can help students become more aware of their civic duties and responsibilities (Fernández-Villà and Musu, 2021).

Moreover, it also shows a strong positive relationship between civic skills and civic responsibility. This means that students who have stronger civic skills are more likely to act responsibly in society. Skills such as critical thinking, communication, and cooperation help students better understand social issues and participate in civic activities. Therefore, developing these skills through education and community involvement helps students become more active and responsible citizens (Owen and Irion-Groth, 2024).

Overall, it showed that both social media activism and civic skills are important factors related to civic responsibility. However, these factors do not fully explain civic responsibility, since other influences may also play a role. Still, previous studies highlight that encouraging responsible social media use and strengthening civic skills in schools can help students grow into informed and responsible citizens (Guo and Chen, 2021)

4.3 Discussions on the Degree of Influence

Civic responsibility is essential for students to actively contribute to their communities and society. The results suggest that social media activism positively influences students' civic responsibility. In other words, when students learn to use social media to share information, engage in discussions, or participate in digital campaigns for civic purposes, they tend to develop a stronger sense of civic duty. This aligns with research showing that structured social media activities can increase young people's awareness of and participation in civic issues (Askari, 2022).

Similarly, civic skills also have a positive influence on students' civic responsibility, indicating that students with better communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities are more likely to act responsibly in their communities. In fact, research demonstrates that developing civic skills through education and community involvement enhances students' understanding of social issues and encourages meaningful participation (Feitosa, 2020).

However, some studies argue that social media engagement alone may have limited effects if it does not translate into real-world action, a phenomenon called “clicktivism” (Kim et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the overall evidence suggests that both social media activism and civic skills play important roles in fostering students’ civic responsibility, highlighting the value of combining responsible online engagement with skill development for meaningful civic participation.

4.4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conducted among 300 senior high school students using the simple random sampling. The results conclude that social media activism and civic skills significantly influence civic responsibility. Both variables show strong, significant relationships with social media activism, with civic skills emerging as the stronger predictor of civic responsibility. These findings emphasize the critical roles of both social media activism and civic skills in fostering a sense of civic responsibility among students.

4.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future researchers further explore how social media activism and civic skills influence civic responsibility, possibly including other factors such as peer influence, family guidance, or digital literacy to better understand students’ civic behaviors. Senior high school teachers and school administrators may design programs and activities that link online activism with real-world civic participation, fostering responsible digital behavior and active citizenship. The Department of Education may consider integrating initiatives that promote civic engagement and democratic values in the curriculum, while parents are encouraged to guide their children in applying civic skills both online and offline. Overall, these recommendations aim to strengthen students’ sense of social responsibility by connecting digital actions, civic competencies, and community involvement.

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