United We Stand: Exploring the Online Reconstruction of Anakbayan UP Diliman's Online Collective Identity among Its Members

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Abstract

This study inquired into how the members of Anakbayan UP Diliman reconstructed and reinforced their organization's group identity in response to the threat of media manipulation and misinformation on their image. Using an integrated framework consisting of the Communication Theory of Identity and the Social Identity Theory, the researchers described how individual members aligned their online identities with that of the group's in order to show a united front as they were being targeted by what was deemed as the government's exaggerated reaction to students' walk-out.

After analyzing the posts of individual members vis-à-vis the content of the group's Facebook page, the researchers were able to pinpoint "intersectionalities" where the members' individual identities and the group's online identity met. These areas of convergence served as potent ground for examining how individuals reinforce the group's stand on relevant issues, and more importantly, aid in fighting off possible media manipulation on the group's image of resistance.

Keywords: *Online community, online identity, online collective identity, computer-mediated technology*

Introduction

Recent studies consider social media as an important tool in influencing the agenda of social movements and in guiding collective action locally or globally (Lopes, 2014). Current student activists are now utilizing social media in pushing for social movements, capitalizing on the convenience that this online platform provides and its ability to reach and engage an unbelievably large number of audiences. Young activists in the Philippines, in particular, consider the expression of their political opinions on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to effectively increase awareness and interest of their disengaged peers about national political issues (David, 2013).

While social media can be used to raise concerns against government policies and projects, among others, it can also be a tool for expressing opposing views and a venue for dissenting opinions against student activist groups. This was seen in the comments section of viral social media posts that showed students of UP Diliman participating in a walkout (CNN Philippines, 2018). The same interaction was also present in content that showed then Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque issuing a statement on behalf of the Malacañang Palace, implying that student activists "waste the money the country spends for free education" (Ballaran, 2018). Evidently, while social media platforms play a key role in the construction and reconstruction of a group's identity for contemporary activism (Gerbaudo & Treré Treré, 2015), these may also be used to sow doubts on an activist group's collective identity and stand on an issue.

The power of social media in sending messages to a larger audience has greatly influenced the way identity is presented both by groups and individuals. The need to explore the collective identity and stand of student activist groups and how it is presented by individual members is relevant to the frequency and intensity of the social media usage of today's youth.

Aside from being a useful tool in social mobilizations and voicing out of opinions for student activist groups, social media can also become an outlet for media manipulation and misinformation, particularly

during what many consider the current "post-truth era". As such, this study argues that a clear and consistent collective identity, both in offline and online spaces, is necessary for student activist groups to counter these malicious efforts in line with performing meaningful political and civic youth engagement. The examination of collective and individual online identities is an illustration of the complexity of creating what may be deemed as a counter-force against media manipulation. Communities, whether offline or online, are still pivotal in discourse-making. However, this study likewise articulates that within communities, there are forces that shake and affirm the alignment between the group and the individual.

The basic premise of this study is rooted in how media manipulation on the framing of the "voice of resistance" as disruptive and anti-government, has gained intensity in the last two years. The researchers' need to investigate this particular kind of group identity-making by a left-leaning student group can be considered as an important critique of media manipulation. It is easy to spot how a common student protest such as a walk-out can be packaged as evil. Therefore, the upsurge found in the Anakbayan UP Diliman's Facebook page regarding the government's callous labelling of the walk-out as a slap on tax-payers' money offers an exciting scholarly puzzle. Although this study does not attempt to make any statement of causality between the government's media manipulation and Anakbayan's reactions in its online space, it likewise offers the readers the understanding of how group and individual identities can take on a dynamic and continuing reconstruction during extreme periods of scrutiny by no less than the government and its public supporters.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

As noted by Gerbaudo and Trere (2015), while there is a wealth of sources that tackle the topic from the strategic and organizational perspectives, there is a gap of information on how collective identity construction is done through personal online expressions. This study aimed to look at the how identities among organizations are formed using a more communication-oriented approach.

Although some researchers look at organizational identity and collective identity as two different concepts, many scholars see both as synonymous and related (Hardy et al., 2005; Pratt, 2003). Albert and Whetten (1985), further define organizational identity as the vital and distinguishing quality of an organization. However, Gioia et al., (2000) question this and argue that organizational identities are more likely to be flexible, inconsistent, and subject to constant changes that come from its members. Therefore, collective identity is created, repeated, and ratified through the representational and revelatory processes of communication (Fiol, 2002; Hardy et al., 2005; Kuhn & Nelson, 2002; Sillince, 2006).

In addition to this, the Montreal School of James Taylor, François Cooren, and their colleagues at the Universitè de Montrèal (Cooren et al., 2011), describe communication as co-orientation, a process wherein individuals make their practices directly paralleled with their common goals (Taylor & Van Every, 2011). This process involves two distinguished forms: conversational modality, which consists of interactions between people and the venue where the experience of the organization take place (Cooren & Taylor, 1997), and textual modality, which represents the figurative exterior where the conversations evolve. "Conversations and texts form a self-organizing loop as they operate dialectically—texts are simultaneously the antecedents and consequences of conversations" (Koschmann, 2012, p. 65).

This perspective further aids the important role of various communication processes in the construction of collective identity among the group and its members. This research aimed to look at the way the members convey the common objectives of the group through various messages expressed online, particularly in addressing the issue of student walkouts and the pronouncements of the current administration against it.

Furthermore, there is also limited literature that discusses the topic in the Philippines setting, much more so, when applied to student activism. With this study, researchers aimed to shed light on how Filipino student activists, both individuals and groups, may better utilize social media platforms in reinforcing their collective identity

and expressing online solidarity, resulting in being able to lobby more effectively and wield greater influence offline and online when championing social justice and societal reform advocacies. Establishing and strengthening the identity of youth organizations through their communication processes come at a critical time when the current administration has resorted to aggressive state-initiated maneuverings to silence dissenting opinions.

Research Problem

How do Anakbayan UP Diliman members reconstruct their collective online identity in order to present a unified front on the issue of student walkouts?

Objectives

1. To explore the online collective identity and stand of Anakbayan UP Diliman with regard the issue of student walkouts;
2. To identify individual members' identity and stand on the issue of student walkouts, and
3. To compare and contrast key findings in order to find out themes and conversations where the individual and the communal identities intersect.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Collective Identity in Social Movements

The concept of collective identity is complex; and it is associated with different definitions based on several studies and observations. Scholars have consistently suggested that, collective identity is essentially a sense of "one-ness" or "we-ness" shared among the members of a group that consists the collectivity, which is rooted in either the real or imagined characteristics and experiences they share, and relative to or contrasting to the characteristics of those who donot belong in their group (Snow, 2001).

Melucci (1996) defines collective identity as the process of creating a system of actions within a specific group consisting of a common goal,

through shared meanings in accordance with the group members interactions with one another – its elements binding together and becoming a recurrent process, which are all necessary in achieving the group's objectives. Collective Identity is a shared experience - the belongingness among the group members - which connects them within their own communities and a greater cause, providing them enough drive to continuously get involved and engage themselves as they work on their objectives even in the long run (Friedman and McAdam, 1992; Polletta and Jasper 2001).

Melucci (1996) has also identified the process of creating a collective identity as a continuous process that forms, maintains, and unifies a collective social actor. Collective identity serves as a crucial element in effective social mobilization, specifically "the importance of sustaining an imaginary of 'friendship' and 'sharing' in their use (Gerbaudo, 2012). It is considered more as a process rather than a characteristic of the social actors (Snow, 2001).

Therefore, when the collective identity stops aligning with the movement, it becomes one of the major reasons why there is a sudden shift downward on the group's identity . The group must continuously work on its collective identity, including on those identities from previous times that also need to undergo reconstruction if necessary (Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

Social Media Activism

The continuous evolution of technology has made social media one of the most widely used tools of communication at present time. This development has played a vital part in creating, organizing, and implementing social movements around the world. It has also become an important resource in mobilizing the collective action of civic organizations (Eltantwy, 2011).

According to Shirky (2011), as forms of communication evolve into a more multifaceted and more engaging sphere, these have provided the social communities with better access to information, more chances of being involved in public discourse, and opportunities to

develop their capability of taking on collective action. He also added how these media helped in the coordination of social movements in different parts of the world, even if some government authorities laid restrictions on these social activities. Moreover, Lim (2013) suggests that social media carefully produce an ideal public space where users can participate more culturally and socially, though this may or may not translate into civic or political engagement.

Social media have become central venue for constituting and negotiating collective activism (Thorson et al., 2013) bringing about increased participation and engagement in social movements and presenting alternate participation structures (Enjolrasa et al., 2013). In addition, studies have been conducted wherein the frequency of an individual's social media usage is shown to be closely related with his or her protest behavior and engagement on political issues (Gil de Zuniga, et al., 2012?). This explains how social media play its part in the mobilization of social movements in the present time – showing an increased engagement among protesters not only through the physical space but also in the virtual world.

Recent studies also considered social media as an important tool in influencing the agenda of social movements, as well as in guiding collective action locally or globally (Lopes, 2014). These also facilitate the coordination and movement of direct actions offline (Cammaerts, 2015). Social media platforms are effective tools of information diffusion in social movements because of their ability to reach a much larger audience in a short period of time. These "digitally mediated collective action formations," while more personalized, tend to be larger, faster in scaling, and can attract more new people, even those at odds in some key issues (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Online Collective Identity vs. Offline Collective Identity

Social media platforms play a key role in the construction and reconstruction of identity for contemporary activism (Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015). The internet allows the convenient management of collective action because it does not require expensive and complicated substructures (Della Porta & Mosca, 2005). It also serves

as a venue for 'organizing without organizations' (Earl et. al., 2014). The nature of the internet also influences the groups' membership structure because it provides easier access to a larger number of individuals through a simple click of a button, which can be a challenge to the groups' accustomed perceptions of the qualities of their members (Chadwick, 2013).

Protest identities online become more fluid and easily adjusted since these have been regarded as common features of digital media. Kavada (2015) argues that these platforms do not provide much clarity on the boundaries between the inside and the outside factors of social movements in terms of inclusiveness and direct participation. Juris (2012) also adds that such platforms consist of individualizing mechanisms and facilitate the involvement of individuals on the same causes but do not progress into a common identity which is easily developed through face-to-face communication.

While the process of establishing the common language within the collective identity of social groups usually takes place offline, the emergence of social media then becomes an integral part in supporting the activities happening in the physical space by broadcasting them on various platforms online (Kavada, 2012).

Presentation of Self Online

As human beings in a social world, there is a need to communicate oneself to others. One way of doing so is self-presentation - the process wherein individuals present an image of themselves to their fellow human beings (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Majority of their time is involved with various interactions with others which mold the people's perceptions of themselves, then mirrored in the ways they project themselves while interacting with others (Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). In addition, humans pleasantly present themselves to others through different self-presentation techniques, which involve traits and attitudes that contribute in shaping the impressions of others with the hopes of reaching anticipated, immediate, relational goals (Lee et al., 1999, p. 702).

One critical element of self-development is self-presentation (Baumeister & Tice, 1986). To achieve success in affecting the audiences' impressions, human beings are required to deliberately be in-charge of the information they want to show the audiences (Leary and Kowalski 1990; Schlenker 2003). Their actions are controlled and adjusted based on how they intend to present themselves to others, while also considering the different motivations within.

Individuals exert much effort to achieve the kind of self-impression they want for themselves in the process of balancing their character performances (Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012). Various approaches of self-presentation are also opportunities for humans to construct new identities (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Both presentation of oneself and management of impression require mindful efforts in controlling certain preferred traits to achieve the desired impression to certain viewers (e.g., Leary, 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). These impressions are defined by Leary (1996) as what a certain person aims to display to others and to also succeed in getting the desired perception from an audience.

The presence of new communication technologies such as social media has altered the way individuals present themselves to others. Despite the limitations and lack of richness of electronic communication in comparison with the traditional face-to-face interactions, this technological development still has its advantages when it comes to an individual's presentation of oneself (Miller, 1995). Shaping the impression of others on oneself by using self-presentation tactics does not only apply to face-to-face interactions, but also in online environments (Zhao et al., 2008). Without the nonverbal cues, communication between and among individuals may be less full but at the same time, its absence gives them the opportunity to present themselves more creatively and innovatively (Papacharissi, 2002). Walther (1996) also suggests that social networking sites and their features such as asynchronicity and lesser communication elements allow individuals to achieve enhanced self-presentation.

Review of Literature: A Synthesis

The presence of social media as a primary communication tool today has greatly influenced the way individuals interact with each other and the way they present themselves to others. What used to be a platform for plainly exchanging messages has now become a diverse tool serving whatever purposes social media users need.

In the context of social movements among student activist groups, expressing collective identities on different channels has become an interesting topic in the study of social science and communication. Exploring the way collective identities have changed over the years while they adjust to the continuously evolving communications technology provides scholars with a better understanding of the changing intentions behind the actions of these groups over time. This also sheds light on the way individual members restructure the group's identities through their individual social media accounts as evidenced by their posts online.

The focus of this study revolves around exploring how student activist groups can utilize their online identities as important counter-force against manipulation and misinformation on their group's image. By reaffirming the group's collective identity through online reconstruction among its members, individual activists were able to voice out and express opinions that reinforced counteracting points of view, which, in turn, served as alternative means to view contemporary issues.

The chosen group, Anakbayan UP Diliman, is one of the most established and most active youth organizations in the country known for voicing out opinions on social issues and participating in social mobilizations. The organization has a robust and active Facebook page that has thousands of followers and consistent member engagement. This study centered on how the members of Anakbayan UP Diliman reinforced their organization's collective identity and stance on the issue of student walkouts online. Through textual analysis and comparison of the group's official statement and individual members' wall posts on Facebook, researchers investigated how members

reconstructed the organization's collective identity by aligning how they projected themselves and expressed their opinions regarding the issue on student walkouts.

STUDY FRAMEWORK

This study used two theories in inquiring into how Anakbayan UP Diliman's collective identity is reconstructed and reinforced through its members' individual Facebook posts. These theories are: Communication Theory of Identity and Social Identity Theory.

Communication Theory of Identity

The Communication Theory of Identity postulates that identity is inherently a communicative process, wherein communication is not a mere element of identity, but rather a means to create and express identity (Hecht, 1993).

According to Hecht (1993), there are four layers or frames of identity which are not mutually exclusive from one another but function independently and work together: Personal, Enacted, Relational, and Communal.

Identity as a personal frame refers to the individual's self-image and how people define themselves; identity as enacted is how the individual communicates with others, or the messages an individual sends that "express identity" (Carron, 2013, p.20); identity as relational is how an individual identifies himself/herself through others; and identity as communal shows that identities are characteristics of communities (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

According to Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau (2003), identity is something "held in the collective or public memory of a group that, in turn, bonds the group together" (p.237) and that identities naturally emerge out of groups and networks. The outcome of this bond is a collective identity for the group or organization.

The resulting formation of the group's collective identity leads to the enshrinement of certain characteristics that the group holds onto and then to the sharing of all members so that the collective identity remains the same even after the passing of time or the induction of new members. Furthermore, some characteristics or assumptions from the personal frame can then be "carried over and applied to identity as a communal frame" (Carron, 2013, p.21).

Using the concepts and frames of the Communication Theory of Identity, this study will utilize the communal and enacted frames of identity to analyze the collective identity of Anakbayan UP Diliman and its members through the group's shared characteristics as expressed in the group's official statement regarding student mobilizations.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory posits that individuals who identify to be part of a certain social category will differentiate themselves from those who do not belong to the same category, with the main intent of enhancing their group's image (Tajfel, 1974). Tajfel also identifies the key processes that lead to the determination of an individual's social identity as follows: Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Social Comparison.

According to Tajfel (1974), Social Categorization pertains to how an individual divides people into groups in order to have a better grasp of his environment, while Social Identification happens when the individual establishes himself/herself as part of a particular category. These processes lead to Social Comparison, which refers to the individual's means of setting his/her group (the In-Group) apart from other groups (the Out-Groups), mainly to enhance the group's image. Guided by this theory, this study gauges the social identities that the members of Anakbayan UP Diliman members' project through their Facebook posts. For this study, these theories and concepts are used to compare and contrast Anakbayan UP Diliman's official statement on the issue of student mobilizations vis-a-vis individual member's posts regarding the issue of student walkouts. By doing so, an analysis of the intersections of the key messages between the group and individual

posts allows the researchers to assess whether and how the group's collective identity is reconstructed.

INTEGRATED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Using the lens of Communication Theory of Identity, as shown in Fig 1, it is significant to note that identity is an aspect and an influence of communication (Jung & Hecht, 2004). As such, by analyzing the Enacted, we will be able to identify the Communal frame, which stands for the shared characteristics that bonds the members of the group together.

For the individual, his/her identity is indicated in his/her expression of Self Categorization, Self Identification, and Self Comparison as depicted in the rectangle in the right. The created Identity then seeks out and labels people as either part of the group or of the out-group. Thereafter, a further look into the intersections of group and individual messages would raise consistent themes and stories as parts of the reconstruction of the group's online collective identity See the depiction in Fig. 1.
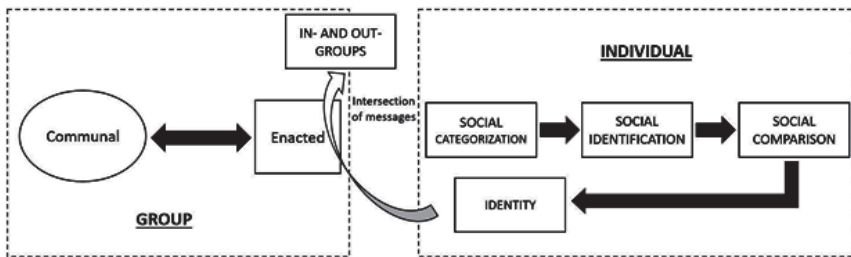

Figure 1: *Integrated Theoretical Framework*

METHODS and PROCEDURES

Research Design

This qualitative study explored the reconstruction of Anakbayan UP Diliman's online collective identity through its members' individual posts. The researchers looked for intersections on the conversations

fostered by the group's and the individual member's' posts about the issue of student walkouts.

The researchers analyzed the content of the official statement of the group, as well as the posts of the individual members, followed by contextualization of the conversations generated by these posts. Furthermore, comparative analysis was done in order to compare and contrast the findings.

Research Methods

To describe the reconstruction and reinforcement of Anakbayan UP Diliman's collective identity through individual members' posts and comments, the researchers used textual analysis and comparative analysis as research methods.

Textual Analysis

This method was used to determine key facets of Anakbayan UP Diliman's online collective identity and the projected identity of the organization's members, focusing on posts and comments that were posted on the issue of student walkouts.

To zero in on Anakbayan UP Diliman's stance on the issue of student walkouts, researchers identified key themes, stories, and conversations on the official statement that the group resealed online, specifically through its official Facebook account. To explore whether members' Facebook posts on the issue of student walkouts reinforced the group's collective identity, members' shared posts and comments on the specified issue were also examined for the same themes, stories, and conversations that were derived from the official statement.

Comparative Analysis

This method was used to compare and contrast the themes, concepts, and information derived from the Textual Analysis that was administered. More specifically, it was used to explore whether the members' posts and comments reconstructed the group's

collective identity and reinforced its stance on the issue of student walkout. Reference frames were derived from the concepts and indicators that emerged during the first-stage analysis and were examined for connections. Since a high level of connection was determined, then the researchers argue that this is an indication of effective organizational cooperation, and thus of collective identity reconstruction.

Concepts and Indicators

Information derived through the above-mentioned methods was analyzed and processed using the following concepts:

Stance on the Issue - This referred to whether the group's and individual's posts and comments indicate whether they were pro or against student walkouts , including additional statements that elaborated on their collective or individual reasons.

Social Identification or Affinity - This referred to how the group's and individuals' posts and comments reconstructed or deconstructed a cohesive message, specifically the point of communication or messaging that was group-sanctioned.

Social Comparison - This referred to how the group's and individuals' posts and comments patterns of communication dealing with the members of their perceived out-group, which in turn referred to people and groups whom they perceived to have an opposing political stance.

Intentionality - This referred to the motivations behind posting the group's and individual's posts and comments.

Cohesive Story - This referred to the topics of conversations that the groups' and individual's posts and comments sought to foster.

Selection of Informants/Participants

The researchers used purposive sampling to identify key participants or Anakbayan UP Diliman members who were enrolled as undergraduate students in the university. Due to the scarcity of studies on a group's online collective identity and its reconstruction among its members on social media, the researchers decided to zero in on a specific case (issue of walkouts) as a source of data and learning.

The informants were selected based on the following criteria:

Ages 18 to 25 years old

Moderately active user of social media (minimum of 1 hour/day - Facebook and Twitter)

Willing to have their social media posts examined and accessed

Actively participated in the group's offline and online activities within the last six months as this study began.

No specific gender

The criteria described above were important in ensuring that the informants have enough engagement with the group (online and offline) and for the study to have varied viewpoints of the informants.

Data Construction Procedures and Instruments/Protocol

Specific concepts and indicators were used as the main frames of references for the analysis of content. Reconstruction of the group's identity through the members' posts and comments were gauged based on how individual posts aligned with the group's post and comment based on *Stance on the Issue, Social Identification or Affinity, Social Comparison, Intentionality, and Cohesive Story*. Intersections in terms of the stories and conversations of the group's and the individuals' posts were also looked into.

The researchers coordinated with the principals of the Anakbayan UP Diliman organization for their consent and assistance in identifying fifteen (15) of their members who fit the criteria stated above. The selected informants were contacted via e-mail and Facebook, with the request of being granted access to their Facebook walls in case they werein private mode or settings. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, the researchers proceeded to conduct textual analysis to analyze posts and comments posted by these informants, as well as official posts and comments released by the Anakbayan UP Diliman on the issue of student walkouts.

Method of Analysis

The official statement of Anakbayan UP Diliman regarding the issue of student walkouts was analyzed according to the categories of *Stance on the Issue, Social Identification and Affinity, Social Comparison, Intentionality, and Cohesive Story*. In the same manner, the contents of the wall posts of the individual members of Anakbayan UP Diliman were also analyzed correspondingly to the same categories. Key messages and stories were studied according to how individual members present and project themselves online through their Facebook wall posts regarding the issue of student walkouts. The analysis focused on how individual members identify themselves through their posts as part of a social category and in the process establish their social identity.

The data collected were then categorized into themes to better understand the interpretations, shared stories, and conversations; and were then further analyzed through comparative analysis. The motivation was to explore intersections between the two groups of messages to identify points of commonalities, conversations, and intersecting themes. This was necessary to establish the alignment of the group's collective identity with the individual posts, thus enhancing the group's collective image through successful collective identity reconstruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The issue of student walkouts has been covered by the group - Anakbayan UP Diliman - and its members by focusing on different aspects, communicating the message "that it was indeed an issue" in different styles and in various themes. In order to get a clearer grasp of how the communal identity with regard to this issue was reinforced by individuals' posts on the same topic, the researchers focused on finding intersecting themes and conversations that emerged from their analysis of the data.

A. Online Collective Identity of Anakbayan UP Diliman Regarding the Issue of Student Walkouts

To derive key information about the collective identity of Anakbayan UP Diliman on the issue of student walkouts, the researchers conducted textual analysis on the group's official statement, results of which are indicated in succeeding sections.

Stance on the Issue

As a group, Anakbayan UP Diliman clearly supported and endorsed student walkouts. On its official statement, the group actively invited its social media audience to be part of the bigger walkout that was staged on February 3, 2018. The group rationalized its support for this act of demonstration as a means to continue the tradition of activism in UP and to perform its responsibility as Iskolar ng Bayan. Part of this responsibility was to show solidarity with the aggrieved sectors of society by: airing out and surfacing issues that affect the poor, exposing the shortcomings and the excesses of the government, and pushing for change in the country.

In response to the government's statement that student activists waste taxpayers' money, the group maintained an opposite stand, citing that it was the government that did so by allocating budget to programs that did not benefit the poor. The issue of education—and how it can be experienced outside the classroom—was also used to defend the act of joining out-of-classroom demonstrations.

The group's overall stance of favoring student walkouts was highlighted through the different messages and conversations in its official statement. Key messages were divided into two essential themes: ***calls to stop the government from oppressing the people and calls to demand the government to serve the people.***

Messages that focused on ***calls to stop the government from oppressing the people*** zeroed in on the different programs that caused adverse effects on sectors that the group considers to be its affiliate. The group highlighted different policies that it deemed unfair, along with how these policies serve as justifiable reasons for students to take to the streets and show solidarity with the aggrieved parties.

On the other hand, messages that focused on *calls to demand the government to serve the people* were used to air out the grievances and adverse opinions that Anakbayan has regarding the Duterte administration. Key messages that fell under this category were used in order to present viable alternatives as to what the government should be doing in order to provide for Filipinos' basic needs and fundamental rights.

The group's official statement showed different reasons behind the its conviction on why students needed to join walkouts. Anakbayan UP Diliman, through its official statement, highlighted the need for continuous on-the-street acts of vigilance to show opposition against government's continuous efforts to suppress the rights of groups that it views as affiliates.

Social Identification and Affinity

In addition to highlighting key arguments in response to the government's statement against student walkouts, Anakbayan UP Diliman also used a tone and style that clearly allowed readers to identify with a common sense of resistance. The official statement employed a cohesive, aggressive, critical, and combative tone and style throughout the material. It appealed to both the rational and emotional faculties of the reader by highlighting how the government implements policies and programs that are adversely affecting the

people - specifically, the sectors that they consider to be part of their in-group.

Further, the statement expressed hope and determination in addressing the issue of the student walk-out by calling for unity and participation. The official statement effectively situated student walkouts within a larger protest - or bigger battle - against some of the administration's actions. There was constant mention of how it is the responsibility of students to join the walkouts and to show unity with the aggrieved societal sectors.

Apart from highlighting rationalizations as to why students should join walkouts, the official statement also had a subtle emotional tone. The overall emotion that may be derived from the official statement was the group's outrage, especially the parts where the group started tearing down the materials containing the government's policies that they continue to oppose. There was a certain level of both frustration and optimism usually injected towards the end of a statement which called for collective action. The official statement was peppered with emotional cues and rational points that the audience may relate with, connect to, and identify to be Anakbayan UP Diliman's special brand of politics.

Social Comparison

It is worth noting that the group was not active in addressing the concerns of the members of its "out-group" (or those who have the opposite opinion on the issue of student walkouts). There was a mixture of both positive and negative comments in the comments section of the group's official statement, but none of these comments received a response from the group's official account. There was deliberate stance to avoid engaging in a debate with those having dissenting opinion.

In the text of the official statement itself, there were strong references though that indicated how Anakbayan UP Diliman considered the Duterte administration as part of the out-group. Previously discussed messages - those that referred to how the group opposes certain

government policies and opposes the government's statement on the issue of student walkouts - were clear indicators of how the group sets itself apart from the administration.

Intentionality

The overall intention of the official statement was to respond to the Malacañang statement that accused students who joined the walkout of wasting taxpayers' money. The group countered this by stating that the government and not the students, is the one wasting public funds by prioritizing programs that do not necessarily benefit the masses.

Moreover, the official statement was also crafted to serve as a call-to-action to upcoming walkouts and demonstrations. This intention was clearly communicated through the way the group stressed the importance of collective action and highlighted the context of why this kind of on-the-street demonstration is necessary.

Essentially, the intention of the official statement was not only to serve as a response to the government's efforts to discredit and invalidate students' efforts in joining the walkouts. The document was also seamlessly used to highlight the different "oppressive" realities observed by the group, as well as to call for support and action, specifically by joining student walkouts and demonstrations.

Cohesive Story

The process of rationalizing the legitimacy of student walkouts was evidently anchored on the grand story that the walk-outs did not only affect the student activists but also the affiliate sectors considered part of their in-group. While there were parts that sought to address the specific statement of Malacañang, the grander story was consistently brought back and linked to the "anti-people" policies that the government was pushing for and implementing.

The writing style and tone used to craft the official statement also helped in highlighting the group's convictions. Through the use of straightforward, defiant, and active words and expressions, the group

was able to fully impress the need for a united front - composed of students, jeepney drivers, vendors, and other sectors - and for continuous collective action, which could best be done through walkouts and on-the-ground mobilization. There was an incessant call for an urgent involvement with mass struggle in the streets.

By situating the group's call-for-action within stories of oppression and urgent need for actions, the group was able to rationalize why it was important for students to join walkouts and mobilizations. This was then used to point out that the people's tax money was not wasted on them, but on the government whose interest was. Not for the people. The walk-outs were framed to be an act of resistance for the people and not against them. To call-out the government was to serve the people and the government does not represent the masses.

Anakbayan UP Diliman is a student organization known for voicing out its opinions on relevant social issues. It is known for its identity as "contrarian"; and this collective identity was apparent on its official statement, the context that was used to rationalize the key point of the group's arguments, and the consistent call to action to be part of on-the-ground mobilizations.

While the statement initially served to be a response to the government's pronouncement that aimed to put the group in bad light, the statement was not only limited to addressing it. Instead, it was used to highlight stories and issues that the group deemed important and are, thus, reflective of the group's solidarity, integrity, principles, and identity.

Past literature has shown the role that a group's collective identity plays in creating a shared system of experiences and beliefs, which propel individuals towards achieving a common goal (Melucci, 1996). As evident in the official statements of Anakbayan UP Diliman, the group exhibited a shared identity that supports collective action and consistently calls for participation. Among students, the group highlighted various reasons as to why participation in walkouts was encouraged and deemed necessary.

B. Identity of Individual Members Regarding the Issue of Student Walkouts

Using the same categories, the researchers performed textual analysis on posts of 15 Anakbayan UP Diliman members. The process was limited to posts published between the time when Malacañang pronounced its stand on the issue of student walkouts, which was on 3 February 2018, and the time the group was called for participation to a major demonstration that happened on February 23, 2018.

Stance on the Issue

All of the 15 member-participants in this study were found to be in favor of student walkouts. All of them actively supported and encouraged participation for such efforts. Through the posts and captions, they consistently highlighted the importance of such action in order to instigate social change.

While their captions and comments zeroed in on various topics, the messages that they used may be classified into the following themes: ***Calling Out the Government, Showing Solidarity with Aggrieved Sectors, Continuing UP's History of Activism, and Extending Education Beyond the Classroom.***

To solidify their stance on the issue of student walkouts, individual members used messages that involved ***calling out and policing the government***. There was emphasis on the need to call out and express opposition against "anti-people" policies that are being implemented by the government. They actively sent out the message that it is everyone's responsibility to stand up for basic rights in the face of adversity. There was also consistent emphasis on activists' fearless stance on government's threats; and instead, the it is the government that should be threatened by what the activists could achieve, especially if various aggrieved sectors come together.

Across individual posts, members also used expressions that ***showed solidarity with the aggrieved sectors***. Through these messages, they were able to emphasize that walkouts and mobilizations are key

mechanisms that allow them to call for justice for the oppressed, the marginalized, the weak, and the voiceless. In addition to this, they highlighted that the youth - along with the other sectors of society - should come together to ask for change and should be united under one goal and purpose. There was a strong message that the youth is a sector to be reckoned with.

Individual posts also focused on ***continuing UP's history of activism***. These messages stressed how the University of the Philippines possesses a rich and long-standing history of activism across its ranks. It was consistently expressed that, as state scholars, UP Diliman students have a bigger responsibility to serve the people. The study-participants were in unison in calling for other students to use their intelligence and talent to be of service to others. There was a common call to renew vows of solidarity with the people by rising up to the occasion during these important period in history. The sense of urgency was reiterated and highlighted – that it is now, here, and today, that the youth are being challenged to heed the call.

Finally, the informants divulged how education can also happen in the streets and how ***extending education beyond the classroom*** is possible. In fact, they expressed that it can happen best when students are on the streets and fighting beside the masses. In relation to the issue of student walkouts, they are of the opinion that being a student activist - skipping classes to join walkouts - does not automatically make you a bad student. They were subverting mainstream notions of the proper of way of being educated. In fact, they were resisting the status quo on propriety in achieving education.

All posts reflected the members' stance of favoring students joining walkouts and demonstrations. Such acts show solidarity against the government's unfair policies, play a relevant role in society, instill a sense of responsibility among social media audience, and highlight the out-of-the-classroom learning experience.

Social Identity and Affinity

The individual member's posts and comments varied in tone from one material to another. Majority of the posts had sarcastic, aggressive, defiant, and passionate tones, which are similar and consistent with the tones used in the official group statement. At the same time, there were posts that indicated humorous, supportive, and inspired tones. In addition to this, the individual posts utilized a persuasive writing style which emphasized the importance of collective action and goaded audiences towards support and participation. It can be classified into two categories: ***formal and serious***, and ***casual*** and ***humorous.***

Further, the individual posts were composed as short one-liners, which functioned to support the post, photo, or video being shared. There were also lengthier posts, which contained justifications and insights in joining the student walkouts and student activism in general. Calls to action and hashtags were also utilized for emphasis.

The emotional tones of the posts and captions changed depending on the messages of their post, the news article being shared, the overall narratives of the posts from like-minded individuals who also received the posts, and the level of urgency mentioned in their call-to-action posts. The most notable emotions displayed were: anger and outrage, defiance and determination, admiration and pride, and hope and optimism.

Anger and Outrage appeared whenever the individual member was talking about Duterte, his administration, and his administration's programs labelled as "anti-people" by the members. **Defiance and Determination** were displayed whenever the message was about the threats of the president himself and when the content covered Duterte's pronouncements.

On the other hand, **Admiration and Pride** were apparent when members talked about the individual and group efforts that they or someone they know witnessed during the weeks leading to the walkout and the walkout itself. The individual members also exuded

with strong emotions when they talked about the history of student activism, its place in the struggle against the dictatorship (then and now), and the activists commitment to social justice. Finally, messages showed **Hope and Optimism** whenever the individual members talked about the size of the crowds they witnessed during the walkout, the determination of the students and the other societal sectors that joined the walkouts, to fight for their rights, and the nostalgia that accompanied throwback pictures of protesting students during the Marcos era.

Despite using varying angles, arguments, tone, and writing style, the individual member's posts showed a cohesive and consistent message in support of student walkouts. They display strong cohesive identification and solid affinity by highlighting the important role of students in fighting for the rights of others, and the potential impact of collective action against Duterte and his programs and policies.

Social Comparison

The overwhelming majority (14 out of 15) of the individual members who were included in the study did not post direct messages or comments about other users with opposing views. There is one individual member who tried to both rationally reason with other users with differing opinions and dismissed them as "paid trolls."

For the others who did not post anything that was directly aimed at the members of their "out-group", five of them posted subtle potshots against people who were anti-protest movements (specifically the walkouts) and those who were part of the government and are government supporters and gave adverse pronouncements against the protest movements (specifically the walkouts).

Intentionality

It can be surmised that all of them believed in the righteousness and urgency of their cause, as there was a clear intention to call for action and participation in upcoming walkouts and demonstrations. In addition to this, the individual posts also provided a grander context

around the issue of joining student walkouts and highlighting the role that these play in society as whole.

Individual members manifested the abovementioned intentions through their Facebook posts by: sharing the organization's content that talked about the student walkouts, sharing content that they found to be relevant to the issue of student walkouts, which appealed to them personally as they voice similar thoughts, and sharing contents that are in line with their views, including posts from person and organization. It was also a practice for members to use hashtags employed by both their organization (to indicate their affinity with the group) and by unaffiliated parties (to connect with non-affiliates and to expand the reach of their messages). Members also posted original content, which included their personal narratives, observations, pictures of the walkouts, and videos of the protests.

Cohesive Story

The individual posts and captions capitalized on different narratives and stories in relation to the issue of student walkouts. There were posts specifically crafted in response to the Malacañang pronouncement regarding the issue, but most of the individual content focused on calling for participation in the walkouts. Varying stories and narratives that were used to contextualize and rationalize the need for collective action focused on how joining walkouts and mobilizations were means to serve the people, justify the identity of an "Iskolar ng Bayan", and to show solidarity with other less privileged sectors. Another common argument focused on how members of the out-group used baseless accusations that diminished their credibility.

Individual posts were rooted on the importance of joining student walkouts and demonstrations, but were expressed using different points of view and arguments. Different kinds of content were also published and shared using varying tones and writing styles, but the position of members remained the same nonetheless.

Through their posts and captions, the members of Anakbayan UP Diliman expressed their opinions not just on the issue of student

walkouts, but also in relation to the importance of student activism as a whole. There were posts that served the purpose of defending student activists against Malacañang's opinion on the issue, but majority of the content focused on stories geared towards rational and emotional calling for collective action and inviting their social media audience to be part of the demonstrations.

C. Comparison of the Group's Online Collective Identity and the Members' Individual Identity

Upon analyzing Anakbayan UP Diliman's official statement and the members' individual posts, the researchers compared key findings in relation to the issue of student walkouts. By doing so, the researchers were able to identify points of commonalities and intersecting themes and points of conversations across the communal and individual messages.

Stance on the Issue

With regard to the issue of student walkouts, the stance of individual members reinforced the stance of the group. Both the group (through its official statement) and the members (through their individual posts) were in favor of student walkouts.

In the official statement, Anakbayan UP Diliman expressed different points as to why it was properand necessary for students to join student walkouts and mobilizations. Though appropriated using their own style and tone, individual members mirrored these points through their posts.

The key messages and rationalizations reinforced their stance on the issue - both seen in the individual posts and the group statement, including the different roles that student activists play in the context of communal action. Their roles are: ***State Watchdogs, Empowered Youth, Responsible U.P. Students, and Beyond-Classroom Learners.***

Activists play the role of ***state watchdogs*** when they surface the "anti-people" policies that are being pursued by the government and

when they call for better action. In relation to the issue of student walkouts, Anakbayan and its members justified why walkouts and demonstrations are necessary to instigate change.

As the ***empowered youth***, students should actively engage in uniting with the different sectors of society in order to ensure that people's basic and fundamental rights are defended.Anakbayan and its members promoted this role to empower the youth who recognized the need to address issues that concern different sectors of society and who show solidarity with oppressed groups.

UP has always had a long-standing tradition and history of activism. In line with the role of being ***responsible U.P. students***, there is a need to keep this tradition living by "being at it, being out there," visible and heard. On the student walk-out issue, Anakbayan UP Diliman and its members emphasized this role in order to give a sense of responsibility to current students and to call for a more active participation.

Finally, beyond-classroom learners, Anakbayan members believed that education is not confined within the four walls of the classroom. They indorsed this role to respond to the Malacañang pronouncement accusing them of wasting taxpayers' money and invalidating this assertion.

The above-mentioned roles, which are apparent in both the group's official statement and the members' individual posts, showed that the group and its members did not only have the same stance on the issue; but that they also used the same means of rationalization and reasoning for such stand.

Social Identity and Affinity

Majority of the individual posts were composed in tone similar with that of the group's official statement. The individual posts exhibited tones of defiance, aggression, and passion, clearly in line with the observed critical aggressive, critical, combative, determined, and hopeful tones of the group's official statement. Individual posts were consistent with the group's official statement in using formal and

serious composition of arguments, which are usually apparent through persuasive and compelling styles that aim to call for participation for the student walkouts.

However, there were posts and captions that deviated from the tone and writing style of the group's official statement. These posts often used humorous and sarcastic tones composed as shorter one-liner messages.

The individual members' posts sustained key messages that were found in the group's official statement. In particular, the individual posts reinforced and enriched the rationale and importance of conducting and joining student walkouts through the following themes, which were aligned with the different roles that they played when rationalizing their support for student walkouts:

First was the identification of student walkouts as an instrument in fighting human and basic rights. This was emphasized in the case of students having an avenue to engage with different sectors, raise awareness on societal issues, and deliver their collective positions on these issues to the government and the public for consciousness raising. These messages were also closely related to the description of student walkouts as a means to support and be one with the oppressed sectors of the society.

Second, student walkouts were viewed as part of a rich tradition and history of student activism in the University, showcasing how students have been serving Filipinos over the years through participation in mobilizations. Photos accompanying the posts showed student demonstrations during the Marcos era to the present to emphasize this point.

Finally, the individual messages stressed the importance of student walkouts as a critical and necessary mobilization that students should join during times of social oppression. The individual posts served as vehicles of outrage where the individual members could vent their opposition to Duterte, his creeping dictatorship, his "anti-people" programs, and his dubious relationships (*"US-Duterte"* and Duterte

with the oligarchs/big businessmen) online. These points were also covered extensively by the official statement of Anakbayan.

The arguments that were highlighted in the official statement were reflected in separate posts, and were done using similar tones and styles, save for posts where individual members tried injecting their own humor and sarcasm.

Social Comparison

The overwhelming majority of the individual members did not post anything on their Facebook timelines about other users with an opposing stance. This is in line with what the group posted in its official statement. The group did not bother replying to negative comments from users with different views.
The lone individual member, on the other hand, who replied to a user with an opposing stance (*"Do you have the data for what you're claiming?"*), applied reason and dismissal (*"You're a paid troll."*) on the said opposition.

Intentionality

The group's official statement in response to Duterte's assertion that students who join the walkouts were wasting taxpayers' money, was reflected on a number of the members' posts, but most of the individual content tackled the issue in its totality and chose to focus on rationalizing the need for students to join walkouts, in general. When it came to the intention of calling for participation, specifically for the walkout on 23 February 2018, both the group's official statement and the member's individual posts reflected strong intention to promote walk-outs. Majority of the individual members even used jargons and content syntax consistent with what the groups' official statement extensively used. Both the official statement and the individual posts used performative writing styles that capitalized on both functional and emotional modes of reasoning.

Cohesive Story

There were points of similarities observed between the members' individual posts and comments and the group's official statement. First, the significant function of mass mobilizations was highlighted, which in this particular case referred to how student walkouts helped make the voices of the students and the marginalized sectors heard. It was presented as an effective means to raise societal issues to the public, demand accountability from the President and the government for their anti-people policies and programs, and fight for the rights of the marginalized sectors in the society.

Second, cohesive messages were also observed in relation to the critical role and importance of students in joining student walkouts. Stories about the tradition of student activism in the university going back to the Marcos era underlined the responsibility of students to participate and fight alongside oppressed sectors against existing policies. In addition, the participation of students in walking out of their classrooms and joining protest movements were conveyed as a learning experience outside of the classroom. These messages particularly addressed the President's comment about students joining walkouts as a waste of public funds, wherein it was argued that students get exposed to social realities and issues that they will not learn inside the classroom, and as such, are not wasting time and the taxpayers' money.

Third, similarities in the stories of the group's statement and the individual members' posts were seen through the positive statements towards the success of the conducted student walkouts. It was also emphasized that the walkout is just the beginning of future mobilizations against Duterte and his policies, especially as the force of student activists is getting stronger as it continues to increase in number and capacity.

Finally, the messages also relayed a sense of urgency on the continued state-implementation of oppressive policies and programs; thus, a strong necessity for students to participate and join future walkouts and demonstrations.

These intersecting themes and stories are consistent in both the communal content and the individual posts and comments. All of them were used to rationalize the need for student walkouts. Through these intersections, individual members were able to not only reinforce the organization's stance and point of view, but also reconstruct the group's identity because they supported and illustrated actions that are aligned with that group (voicing out their opinions on key issues and participation in mass demonstration). While the individual posts were composed using the members' own style, they all reflected the use of similar jargons, syntax, and key messages that were also conveyed in the group's official statement. Finally, through consistent calls for action and participation, it was apparent that both Anakbayan UP Diliman, as a group, and its individual members, share the same goal of enlisting more people to their cause.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After analyzing pertinent content using predetermined concepts, the researchers were able to pinpoint intersectionalities where the members' individual identities and the group's online identity met. These areas of convergence served as potent ground in examining how individuals reinforce the group's stand on relevant issues, and more importantly, aid in fighting off possible media manipulation on the group's image.

Anakbayan UP Diliman's Online Collective Identity

Through its official statement on the issue of student walkouts, Anakbayan UP Diliman was able to express its identity as an active student organization that voices out its opinions on key issues and takes part in protest movements. The statement was used not just to express that it is in favor of this kind of demonstration, but also to highlight the different messages and rationalizations as to why this kind of collective action is important.

The official statement utilized a mix of rational and emotional communication cues and style in order to connect and promote affinity with intended audience. The whole argument in the statement

was contextualized in a cohesive story that presented the act of joining protest demonstrations as students' means of serving and giving back to the community.

Individual Members' Online Identity

Upon analysis of fifteen members' posts on the same issue, the researchers found that the members were strongly of the same stance and position with the group regarding the issue of student walkouts. The members of Anakbayan UP Diliman were able to defend their stand on the issue by rationalizing the need for youth activism and student solidarity with other sectors of society.

In line with what was observed with the group, members were also not active in responding to social media users with opposite stance on the issue. Instead, they focused on exhibiting identification and affinity with the group by maintaining key messages and arguments that were present in the official statement.

The posts and captions of individual members utilized various styles ranging from formal and combative messages, which were more aligned with that of the group's official statement, and casual and sarcastic one-liners. The key intention of calling for participation in student walkouts and demonstrations was also consistently maintained. The overall story and context presented in the official statement were also apparent on how members situated and defended their participation in student walkouts; and on how they rationalized protest demonstrations as means to actively play their role in helping fight for the rights of the masses.

Anakbayan UP Diliman's Collective Identity and Members' Individual Identity

In conclusion, the group's collective online identity was reconstructed and reinforced through its members' individual posts using the common themes and points that they presented in order to achieve common goals and intentions. The group and the individuals shared the same rationalizations as to why participating in student

walkouts was an appropriate course of action. While not addressed directly, members also helped in reinforcing the group's response to Malacañang's statements against student walkouts, by defending the need for student activism as a whole.

Taken in its totality, the arguments that pertained to the collective identity of the group were discernible and reflected in the individual content posted by its members. More importantly, the online collective identity that was reconstructed and reinforced by individual members also served as a potent tool in fighting off the possibility of media manipulation of the offline identity of their organization. The solid and consistent voice of the group continues to be a legitimate counter-voice. It is important to point out that both the group's and its members' tone of discourse-making remained restrained and focused on a cause they deemed important. The cause might sound a cliche to some already, but to them, this remains relevant. The internal solid stance echoing among the members while avoiding the tendency to target violently dissenting views was observed in troll-filled on-line pages. There was a consistent level of civility that this page was able to maintain.

It can also be inferred that a targeted group's social identity was univocally asserted as a protective mechanism against a dominant institution's negative pronouncements against it. Data show that a few lines from the President's spokesperson, for instance, can already create such an internal upheaval of support from within, further reconstruction and affirming the alignment between group and individual identities of resistance. Many would maintain their criticism that activists thrive in being targeted by authorities. They are even accused of merely resisting for the sake of resisting. However, as the findings of this study show, the group's identity is affirmed by individual's hard work. There was no simplistic echoing of *"amens"* among them, but rather a concise and well-argued assertions of the critical voice opposing what they feared as media manipulation and misinformation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the years, the world has witnessed a changing landscape when it comes to protests, identity formation, and professions of beliefs. This is especially true for the students of the University of the Philippines. The University has always been considered as the bastion of student activism reflected by its culture of protest and resistance. Whereas the activists of yore rely on good, old-fashioned mass mobilizations in the form of guerilla committees and lightning demonstrations, the student activists of today have more means of communication that allow for easier mobilizations.

This phenomenon is not limited to student activist groups though. Future research can be done about the collective identities of other groups and subcultures as well. The same methodology can also be used to probe into the reinforcement of the collective identity online of these groups, especially those that thrive in social media.

Back to this study's subject, future researches can be made with regard the effects of the fully reconstructed and strong collective identity online on ideological discourse-making. Researchers can look into how much of this counter-force, the ever-noisy protesters' voice, is able to shake policy-makers, influencers, and other social media movers. Also, for a country so involved with social media, especially Facebook, it is interesting to see how much real change in actual government policy can be made by a group with a fully reconstructed online collective identity.

Furthermore, social media can also become an outlet for media manipulation and misinformation, aside from being a useful tool in social mobilizations and voicing out of opinions for student activist groups. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), the prevalence of misinformation in social media is considered to be one of the primary threats to our society today (Howell, 2013), which is also why the strong individual and collective identities of student activist groups online continue to play an important role in being a counter-force in the age of media manipulation and misinformation.

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