

## **CHAPTER 5 - SURVEY - FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

The section of this thesis will be utilized for survey findings as well as interpretations of the aforementioned findings. As stated in the methodology section (see Section 3.2), two surveys were conducted, the objective of which was to study mass distraction among internet users of Mizoram, and to learn the relationship between social media activism and offline activism.

This chapter will begin with a presentation of the survey intended to study distraction, which will be followed by the second survey aimed at studying social media activism's relation to offline activism.

### **5.1 Measuring distraction – Survey (1)**

The section of this chapter will provide deliberation of the findings and interpretations of the first survey that was conducted on March and April, 2022. The questionnaire that was shared through Google Form link through various means had 1480 respondents. Firstly, let us consider who those respondents are and what type of demography they consist of.

#### **5.1.1 Sample description**

Out of the total 1480 respondents, 60.4% ( $n=894$ ) said they were from Aizawl, which is the most populated district in Mizoram (See Section 1.4), followed by the second most populated district Lunglei at 9.6% ( $n=143$ ). Considering the difference in population density between the state capital and the other districts, the percentage difference in respondents district-wise distribution seem feasible.

Online sources did not do justice to the distribution and general census of the state that had 8 districts prior to 2018 when it comes to the number of districts. The assembly elections of November, 2018, following which the MNF (Mizo National Front) party won a majority taking 26 seats out of a total 40. Their campaign was led not only by prohibition of alcohol which was popular among NGOs and the Church, but also the development of road infrastructures. The MNF Party's victory also led to the formation of 3 new districts in 2019 which were – 1) Saitual; 2) Hnahthial; and 3) Khawzawl.

Table 6. District-wise distribution of participants (N=1480)

| #                | District  | Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 1.               | Aizawl    | 894         | 60.41%     |
| 2.               | Champhai  | 59          | 3.99%      |
| 3.               | Hnahthial | 45          | 3.04%      |
| 4.               | Khawzawl  | 24          | 1.62%      |
| 5.               | Kolasib   | 66          | 4.46%      |
| 6.               | Lawngtlai | 52          | 3.51%      |
| 7.               | Lunglei   | 143         | 9.66%      |
| 8.               | Mamit     | 53          | 3.58%      |
| 9.               | Saitual   | 43          | 2.91%      |
| 10.              | Siaha     | 31          | 2.09%      |
| 11.              | Serchhip  | 70          | 4.73%      |
| <b>TOTAL (N)</b> |           | <b>1480</b> |            |

A large portion of the respondents that amounted to 57.7% ( $n=854$ ) were male, while 42.02% ( $n=622$ ) were female respondents. Those that chose “Prefer not to say” were 0.27% ( $n=4$ ).

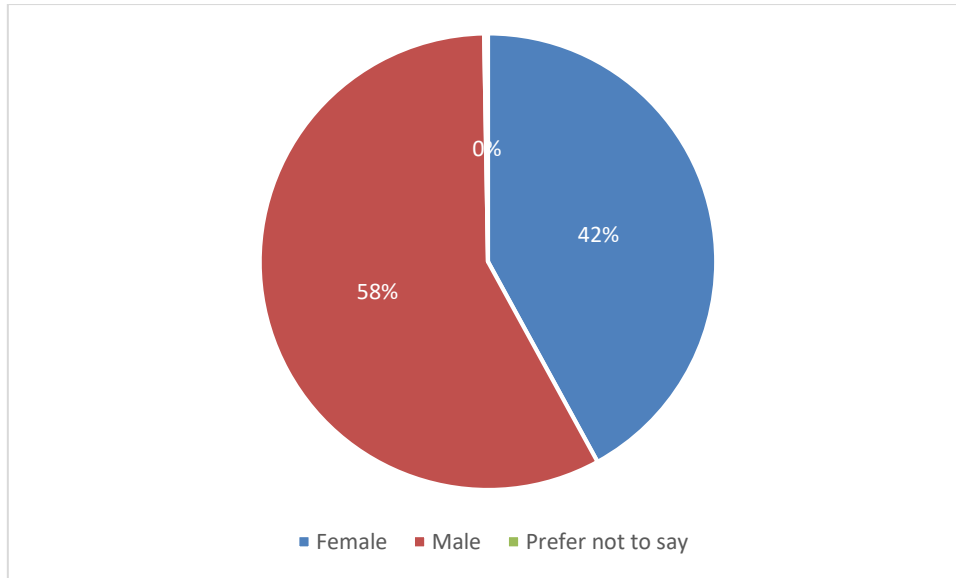


Figure 18. Demography of respondents in terms of sex

Table 7. Age-wise description of respondents

| #  | Age         | Respondents | Percentage |
|----|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. | 15 or below | 5           | 0.34%      |
| 2. | 16 - 30     | 443         | 29.93%     |
| 3. | 31 - 45     | 845         | 57.09%     |
| 4. | 46 or above | 187         | 12.64%     |

The participants of the research were categorized into 4 age groups as seen in Table 5. The largest group to participate were aged between 31 to 45 years that amounted to 57.09% ( $n=845$ ). The second largest among the sample were those aged between 16 to 30 years, which consist of those generally referred to as young adults (18-25), constituted of 29.94% ( $n=443$ ) while only 0.34% ( $n=5$ ) were under the age of 15 years or below.

### 5.1.2 Questionnaire responses

The questionnaire presented questions that employ a 5-point Likert scale in order to study new media use in Mizoram. Respondents were asked to rank between their frequency of use or their

levels of agreement towards a particular statement with 5 being Always or Strongly Agree while 1 means Never or Strongly Disagree, with 3 being Neutral for both cases.

### Frequency of use – internet-based applications

This section was dedicated to finding out which new media Apps netizens of Mizoram use most frequently. The intention was to highlight which apps would garner the highest levels of attention.

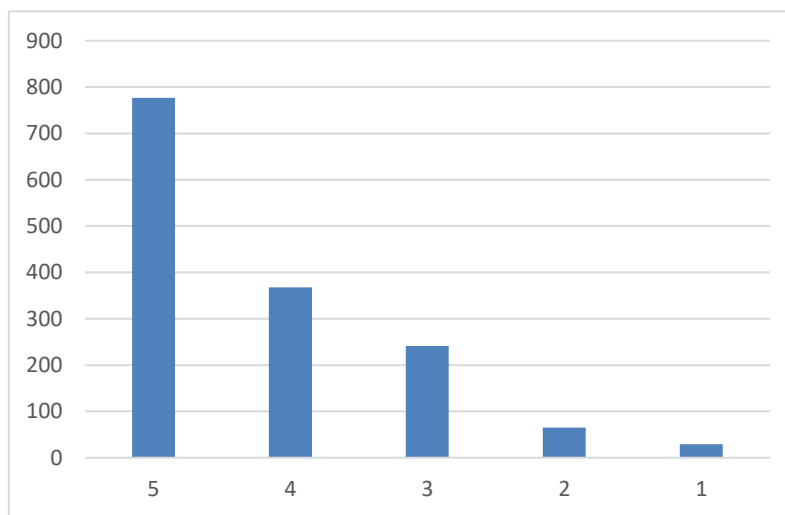
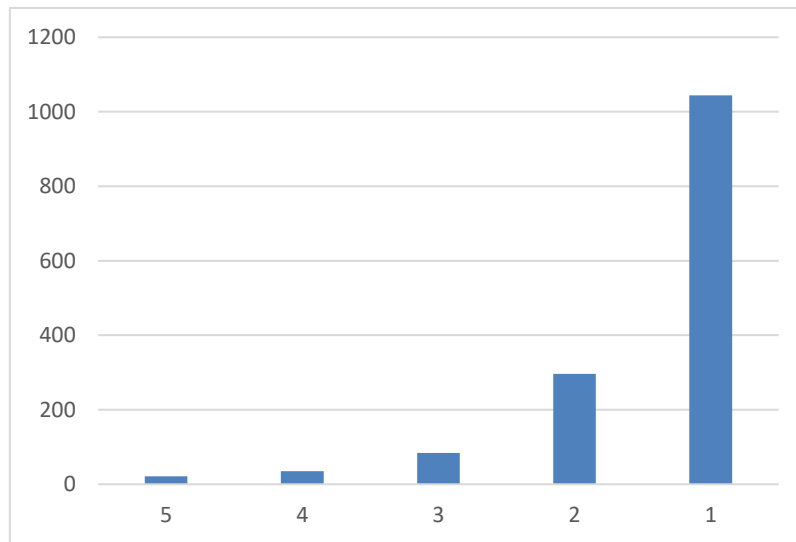


Figure 19. Users' response to frequency of WhatsApp use

Participants were asked how frequently they used WhatsApp. According to the respondents, those that responded Always amounted to 52.5% ( $n=777$ ) which is a little more than half of the respondents. The data indicate that WhatsApp is a highly utilized application on mobile phones with a mere 1.96% ( $n=29$ ) of the respondents claiming they never used the app.

The result could also be a reflection of WhatsApp's general popularity in India. In fact, India is the nation with the highest number of users at 487.5 million users according to *Statista.com* (Bhat, 2023). Since China bans the App, the second nation on the list is Brazil with 118.5 million which is less than a fourth of users in India. However, with regards to penetration rate which is the number of users as a percentage of population, Brazil has higher percentage than India.

The security provided by the end-to-end encryption, the versatility, and ease of use might be the reason why many people are attracted to the App. By 2023, WhatsApp had also developed features that mirror those of Snapchat, Instagram, in its “Story” features and “Status”, while providing social aspects with the ability to create Groups messaging features.



*Figure 20.* Users’ response to frequency of Twitter use

In terms of Twitter use, an astounding 70.54% ( $n=1044$ ) said they have never used Twitter. The netnographic observations also indicated that some Twitter users, even though they have an account, are barely active on the platform (See Section 4.1.1). The number might decrease with the acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk on October, 2022, which was not devoid of negative publicity. However, as discussed in previous sections, the limited use of Twitter does not negate its efficacy when it comes to mobilizing issue amplification.

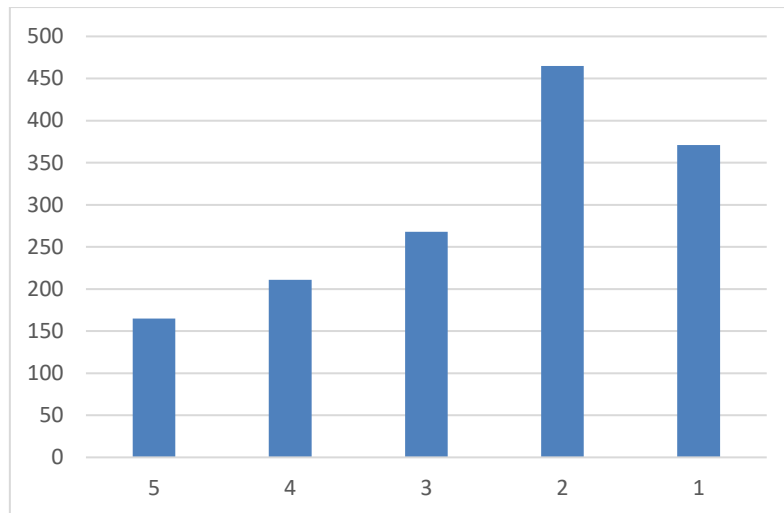


Figure 21. Users' response to frequency of Instagram use

Even though Instagram is generally considered as one of the most popular social media App on the internet, participants' responses were more skewed towards lesser utility. According to *apptopia.com*, Instagram is the second most downloaded app in 2022 with 548 million downloads (Bhat, 2023).

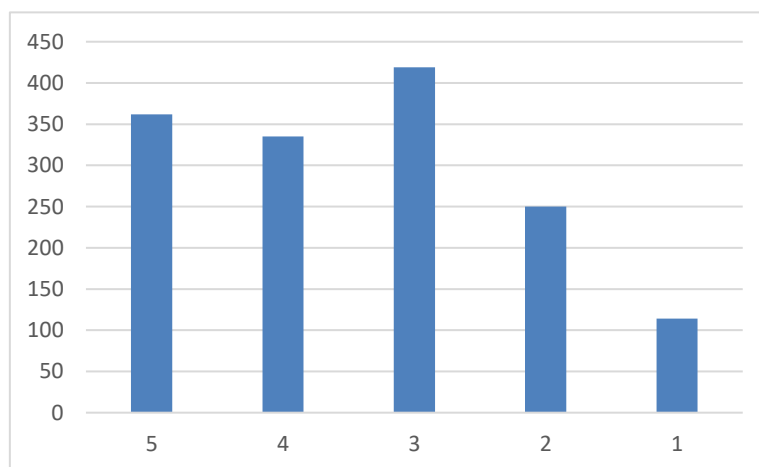
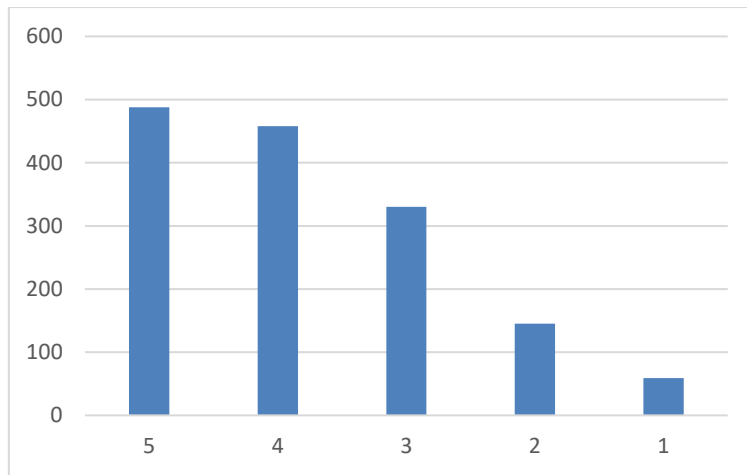


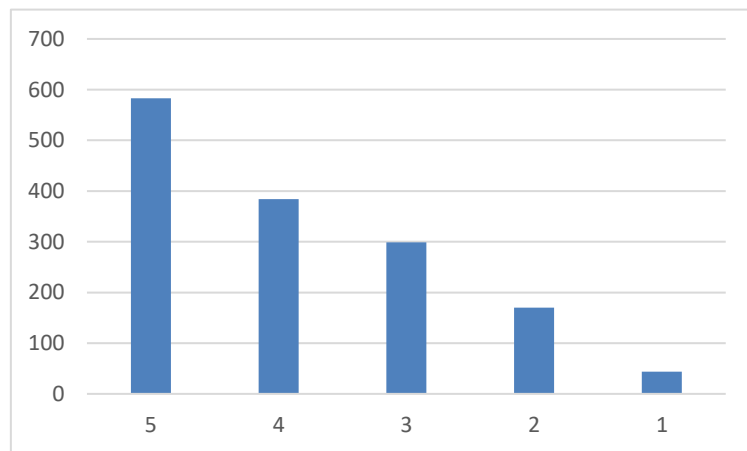
Figure 22. Users' response to frequency of Facebook use

Although most mobile phones in India come with Facebook pre-installed it had a majority neutral answer with 28.31% ( $n=419$ ). The most frequent users that chose Always were 24.46% ( $n=362$ ). Furthermore, participants that chose Sometimes amounted to 22.64% ( $n=335$ ). The proportion of users that don't use Facebook consisted of 7.7% ( $n=114$ ), while those that rarely use it were 16.89% ( $n=250$ ).



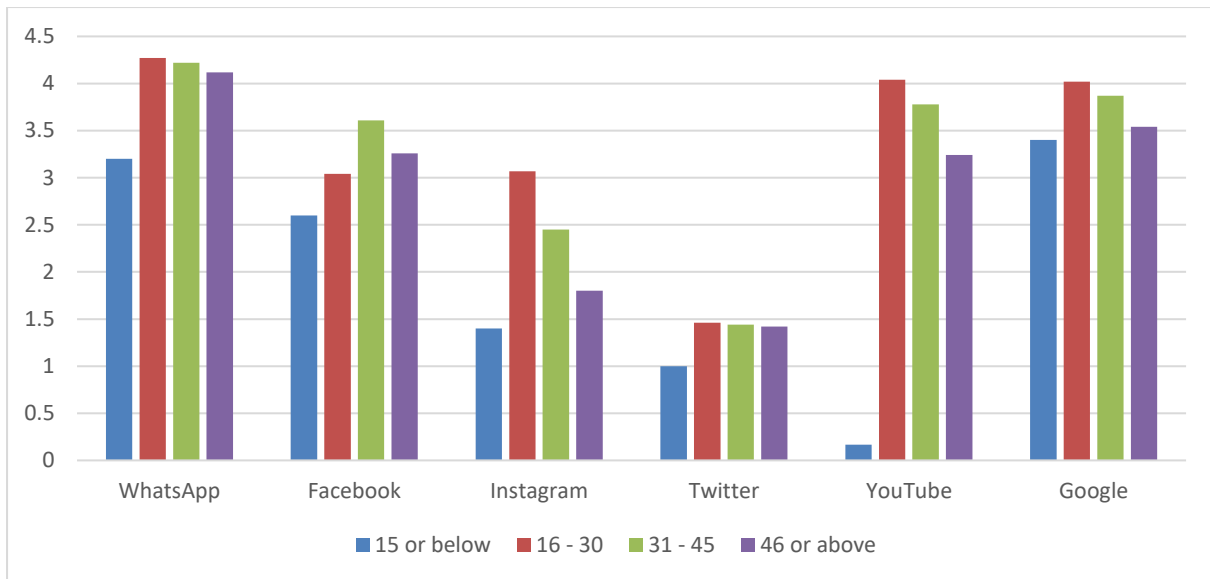
*Figure 23. Users' response to frequency of YouTube use*

YouTube is one of the most consumed media among video streaming sites. 32.97% ( $n=488$ ) respondents claim that they “Always” use YouTube services, while a close 30.95% ( $n=458$ ) said they “Sometimes” use it. Neutral respondents amounted to 22.30% ( $n=330$ ), those that rarely use the platform consisted of 9.8% ( $n=145$ ), and the number of respondents that claim they never used YouTube were 3.99% ( $n=59$ ).



*Figure 24. Users' response to frequency of Google use*

Google as an option for users' responses may be problematic since participants may either view Google (Alphabet) as a search engine, rather than a service provider also that facilitates emails, navigation, translations, storage, video streaming, blogs, etc. However, since Google's attempt at creating a social media platform called Google+ failed and was shut down in 2019 (Hern, 2019), it is safe to say that users mainly use Google to “google” information on the internet.



*Figure 25. Age-wise response to frequency of use*

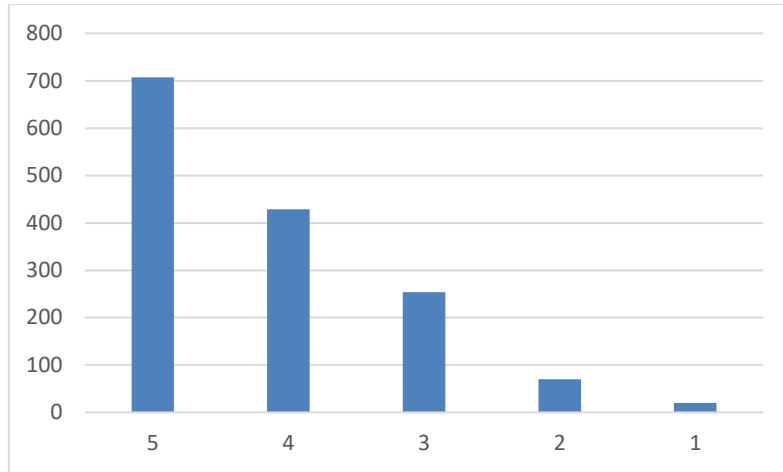
The age-wise comparison of App usage is presented in Figure 25. The measurements presented are the mean values of responses for each age groups with respect to the Apps. The age-wise distribution of the frequency of App utility indicated that participants within the ages between 16 to 30 years are most active in all platforms except Facebook. This is representative of the cultural zeitgeist which reflects this idea that older generation use Facebook more than that of young adults who favour more entertainment-oriented Apps like Instagram.

The data presented in Figure 25 also suggest that even though the general population claim that they don't use Twitter, the highest value among age-groups were those with age between 16 to 30 years closely followed by the ages 31 to 45 years and 46 years and above. Therefore, the data indicates that among Mizo netizens, those aged between 16 to 30 years are the most active in most platforms presented, except for Facebook.

### **Types of usage**

This section was designed to study the purpose for which the Internet and social media are used by participants. Participants were asked how frequently they use the Internet for gathering information, for entertainment, for education, and for relationship building.

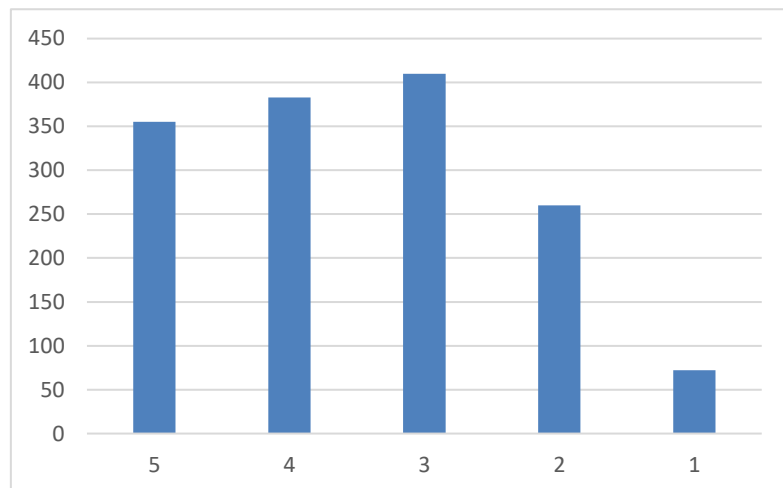




*Figure 26. For gathering information*

The data indicated that netizens of Mizoram use the Internet frequently for the purpose of gathering information. The participants that picked Always amounted to 47.77% ( $n=707$ ), with those that chose Sometimes consisting of 29% ( $n=429$ ).

Participants were then asked whether they used the Internet for entertainment. Although most participants response was skewed towards using the Internet for entertainment, the highest number of responses were Neutral with 27.7% ( $n=410$ ). The percentage response for Sometimes amounted to 25.8% ( $n=383$ ), while those that chose Always consisted of 23.9% ( $n=355$ ).



*Figure 27. Internet use for entertainment*

The researcher believes that the respondents understood the difference between the social aspects of the Internet and that of its entertainment functions even though socializing on

the Internet could easily be considered entertaining for some. Social features of the Internet will take up a section of the questionnaire later on.

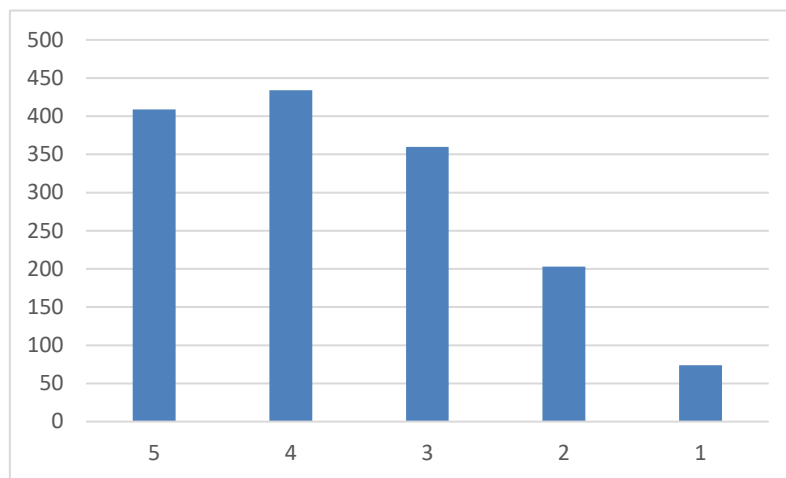


Figure 28. Internet for facilitating education

Participants were then asked to rank their agreement of the sentence that stated that they use the Internet for educative purposes. The responses seem to indicate that a large portion of the respondents use the Internet for education. The highest percentage was Sometimes with 29.32% ( $n=434$ ), closely followed by Always at 27.64% ( $n=409$ ). Neutral responses came at 24.32% ( $n=360$ ), while Rarely amounted to 13.72% ( $n=203$ ). A minute portion of the respondents at 5% ( $n=74$ ) said they never use the Internet for education.

Furthermore, participants were asked how frequently they utilized the Internet for the purpose of maintaining and building relationships.

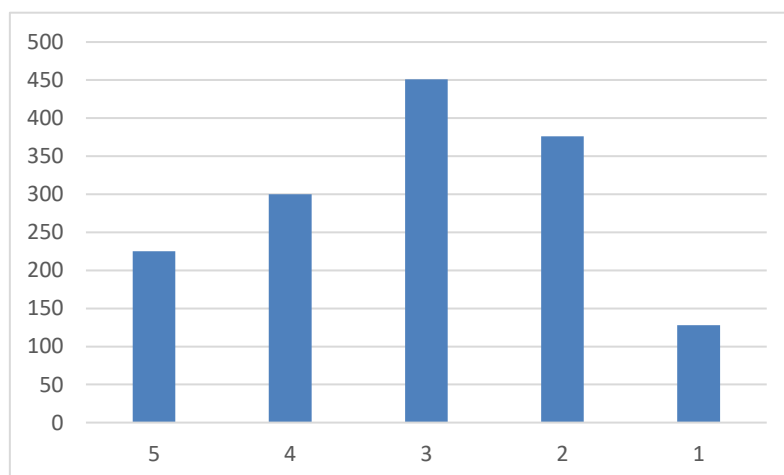


Figure 29. Internet to maintain and strengthen relationships

Respondents seem divided with the statement since a large portion at 30.47% ( $n=451$ ) were indecisive. Participants that rarely use the Internet to maintain and strengthen relationships amounted to 25.41% ( $n=376$ ), while 8.65% ( $n=128$ ) said they never use it for that purpose. Figure 25 shows how 15.2% ( $n=225$ ) claim they Always use the Internet for relationship building, while those that sometimes engage in such activities to be 20.27% ( $n=300$ ).

The participants were then asked how frequently they use social media in the workplace, colleges, school or university. This was clearly stated in the questionnaire in order to prevent confusing participants over the term work, general tasks, and academic assignments.

Similar to the previous responses, the question presented the most inconclusive results. The greatest number of respondents chose Neutral which amounted to 33.51% ( $n=496$ ), participants that chose Sometimes consisted of 22.3% ( $n=330$ ), and those that chose Rarely numbered at 21.49% ( $n=318$ ). Furthermore, respondents that use social media at the workplace, colleges, school or university the most amounted to 13.85% ( $n=205$ ), while those that are never practice the activity consisted of 8.85% ( $n=131$ ).

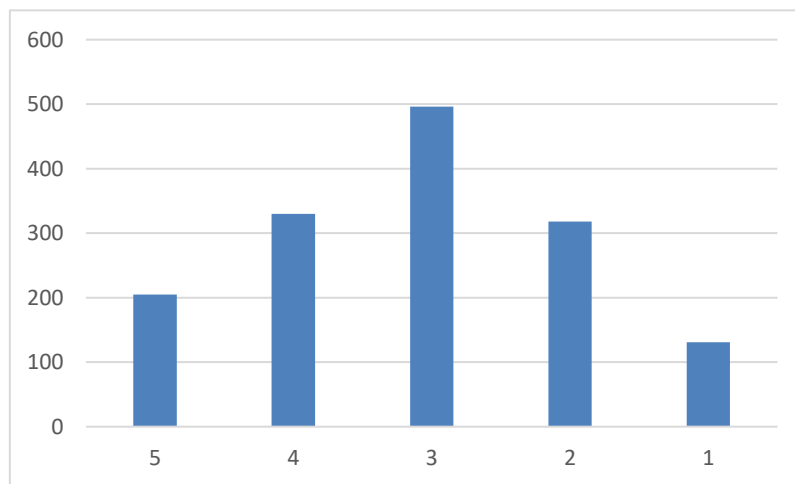


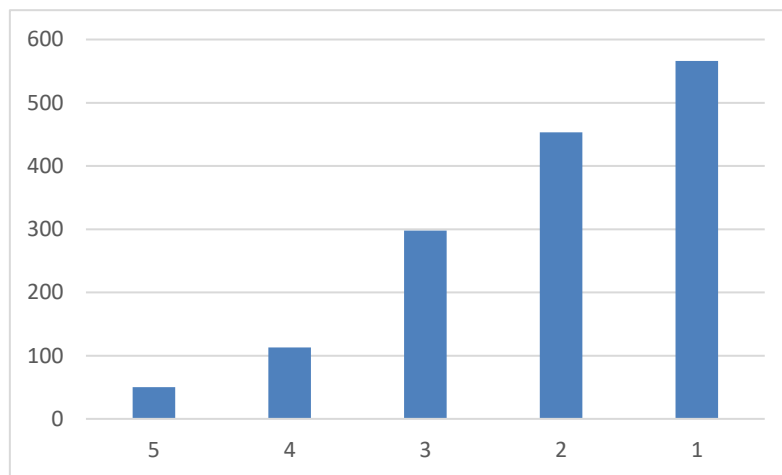
Figure 30. Frequency of use in the workplace

### Social media use in the presence of work

The next section of the questionnaire asked participants to rank their response to statements regarding social media use in the presence of work. Participants were asked to rank their responses from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) at the extreme ends while moderate responses were also provided such as –Agree (4), Neutral (3), and Disagree (2). The 5-point

Likert scale from this point on will follow this pattern. This scale was designed to develop an understanding whether the Internet and social media platforms impact individuals' work performance.

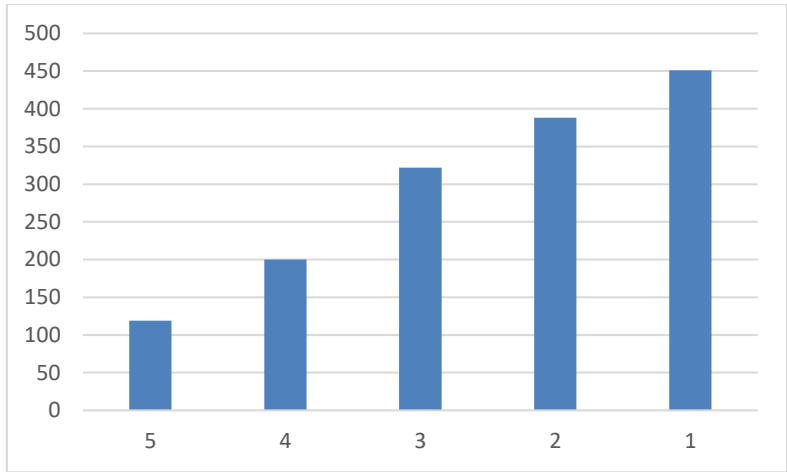
The first statement was “When I am using social media, I don't think about my job/work.” The figure below presents the response.



*Figure 31. Loss of concentration during work*

The data indicated that respondents, while using social media do not lose track of work. Only a small number of participants at 3.38% ( $n=50$ ) claim they strongly agree to the statement. The highest number of respondents that strongly disagree to the statement amounted to 38.24% ( $n=566$ ). The data indicated that a majority of the participants claim that social media use does not make they forget about their work/studies/task.

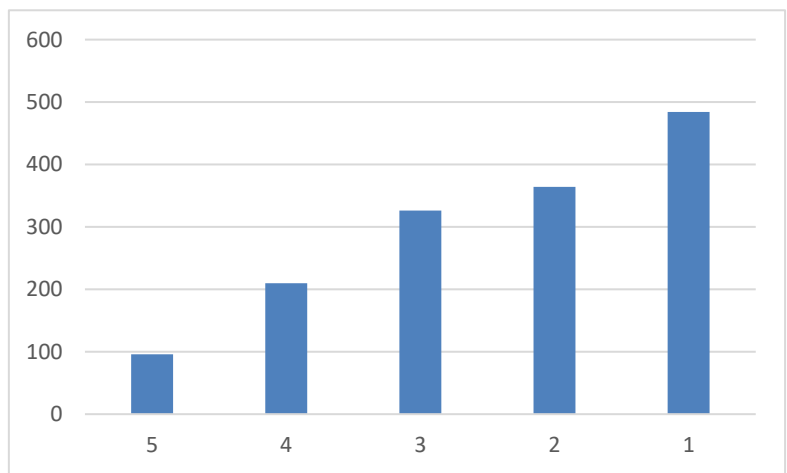
Participants were the asked to state their opinion on the statement “I find that I tend to do a quick check of my social media before starting the work and get entangled/diverted”.



*Figure 32. Frequency at which participants check social media before work leading to diversion of attention*

Similar to the previous responses, participants did not agree to the statement that checking social media does not divert their attention from their work/studies/tasks. Figure 32 saw similar trends as the previous figure, with the highest number of respondents at 30.47% ( $n=451$ ) strongly disagreed with the statement and 26.22% ( $n=388$ ) disagreed.

Participants were asked a similar question along the lines of “I sometimes use social media which further delays my work.” Similar trends were identified which displayed that the highest number of respondents at 32.7% ( $n=484$ ) strongly disagree with the statement. The number saw a gradual decrease as we move towards Strongly Agree which amounted to 6.49% ( $n=96$ ).



*Figure 33. Social media delaying work*

## Levels of distraction

Regarding the statement “I am constantly distracted by the notifications on my new media devices”, participants’ response saw a similar trend as it skewed towards the side that Strongly Disagrees with the statement.

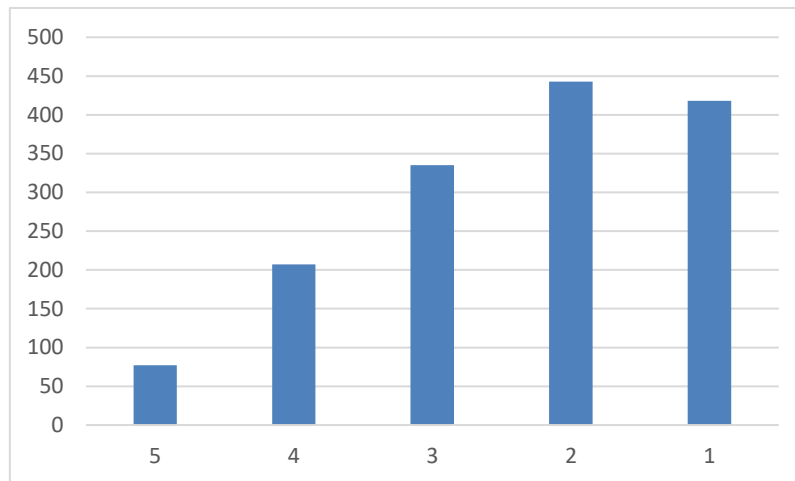


Figure 34. Notifications as a constant distraction

The highest number of respondents seem to disagree with the statement at 29.93% ( $n=484$ ), with 28.24% ( $n=418$ ) strongly disagreeing with it. The data indicated that respondents did not consider the notifications on their devices as a constant distraction. Similar trends were seen when respondents were asked a similar question that stated “I hardly ever notice alerts on my device.” Although the highest level of response was Neutral at 29.39% ( $n=435$ ), the percentage difference was minute when it comes to those that disagree with the statement that amounted to 29.12% ( $n=431$ ). The individuals that strongly disagreed consisted of 23.72% ( $n=351$ ). This trend seems to contradict participants claim that their device notification provides a constant distraction. A large portion of the respondent seem to disagree with the statement that they hardly notice alerts on their devices.

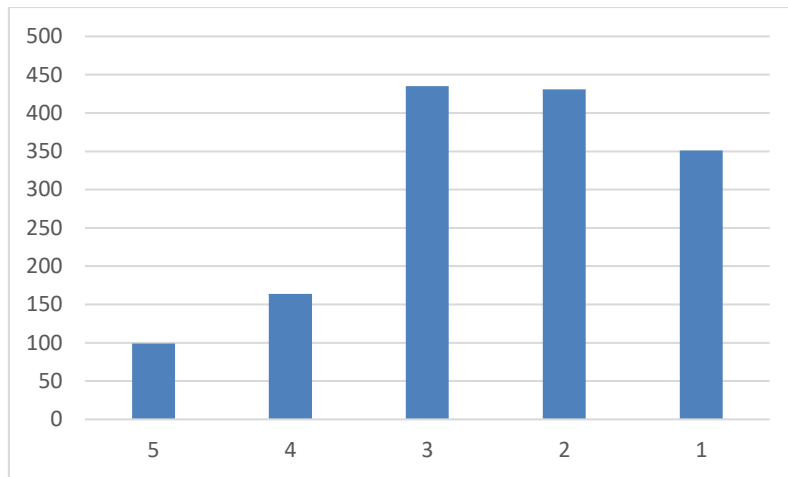


Figure 35. Participants respond to the statement that they hardly notice alerts on their devices

### Social function of social media

The participants expressed their opinion to the statement “I feel a sense of contact with people who care for me, and whom I care for via using social media.” The responses indicate a positive response towards the statement with 31.08% ( $n=460$ ) stating they strongly agree with the statement, 30.27% ( $n=448$ ) claim they agree with the statement while 26.01% ( $n=385$ ) remained neutral.

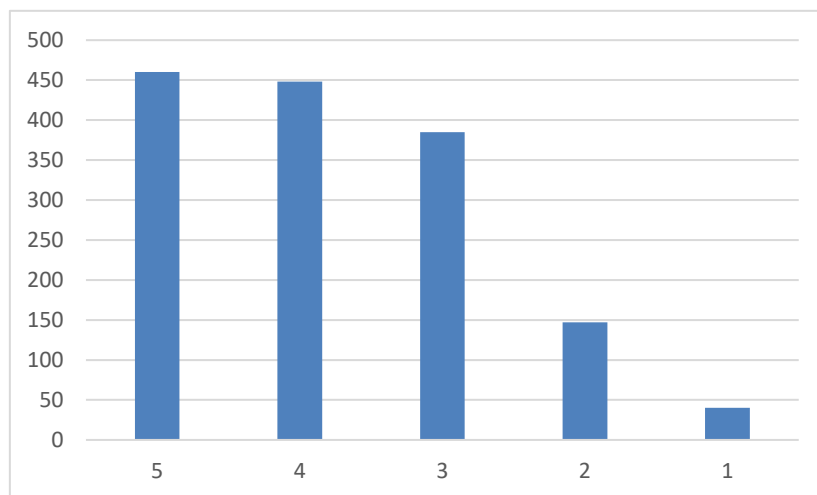


Figure 36. A sense of contact with participants and their social circle

This is no surprise since social media creates connections to those people that constantly update their activities whether they may be friends or influencers, regardless of how authentic those messages may be. The fact that they are active on social media provides a sense of connection to their day to day lives.

A similar question was asked again that stated “I feel close and connected with other people who are important to me via using social media”. The response exhibited the same trend with 30.61% ( $n=453$ ) and 30.95% ( $n=458$ ) respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively.

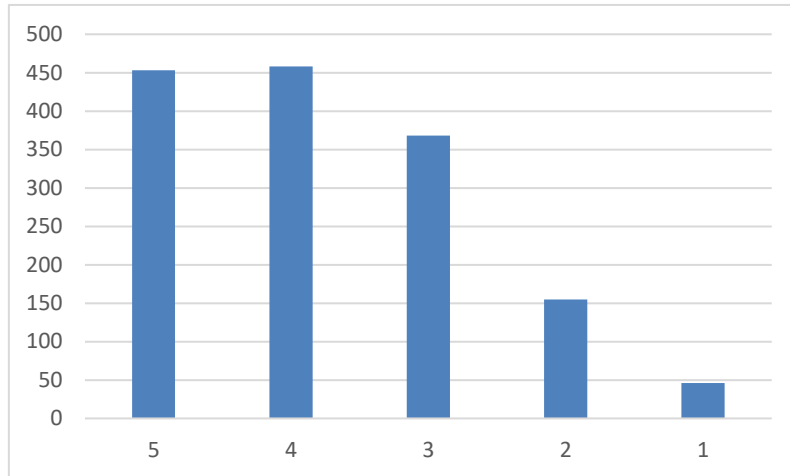


Figure 37. Close connections with people that are important

Next, participants were asked to respond to the statement “I feel a strong sense of intimacy with the people on social media.” The respondents fall towards neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree at 26.15% ( $n=387$ ), 28.31% ( $n=419$ ), and 25.54% ( $n=378$ ) respectively. Only 12.64% agreed while 7.36% strongly agreed to the statement.

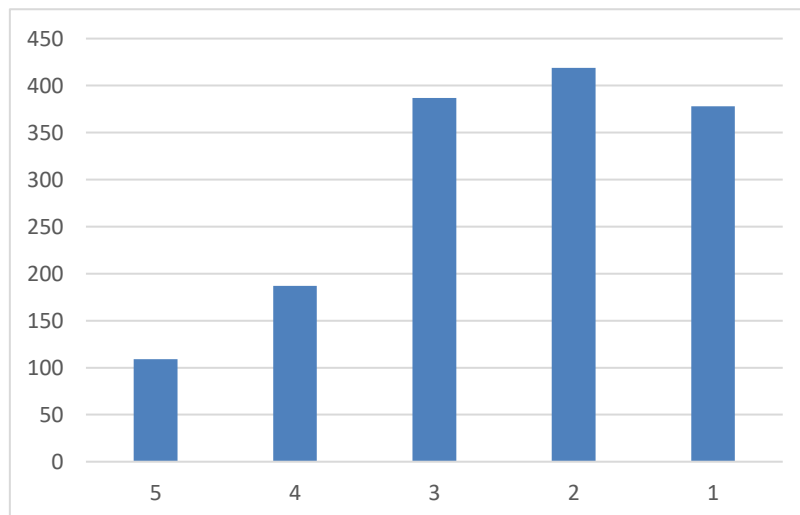


Figure 38. Strong sense of intimacy with people on social media



Even though respondents were quick to say that they had good relations with people they know and care about, a strong sense of intimacy seems to be reserved to other social settings.

Participants were then asked if they have had quarrels or heated arguments on social media with people they know in real life, and whom they usually get along with. The study aimed at studying if social media fosters negative attitudes and turn people more aggressive than they usually are as stated in one of the literatures (Lanier, 2018). The response however seems to indicate that social media spaces does not have this effect, at least not to Mizo netizens. In fact, 57.64% ( $n=853$ ) claim to strongly disagree to this statement while 23.04% ( $n=341$ ) disagreed as well.

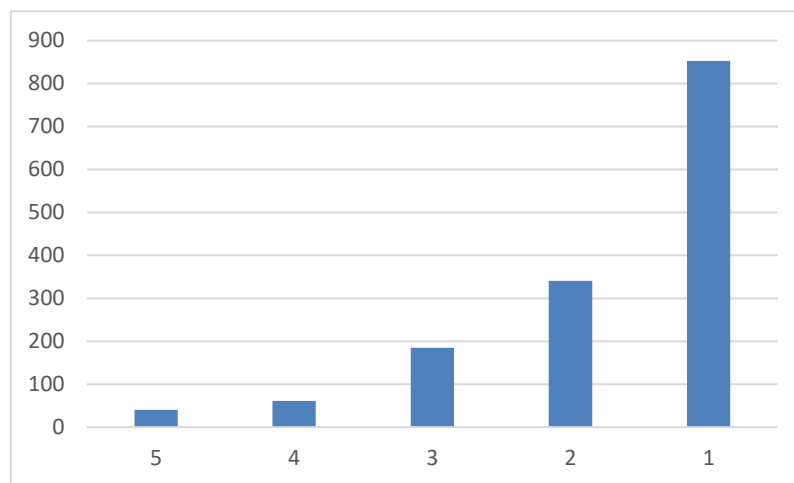
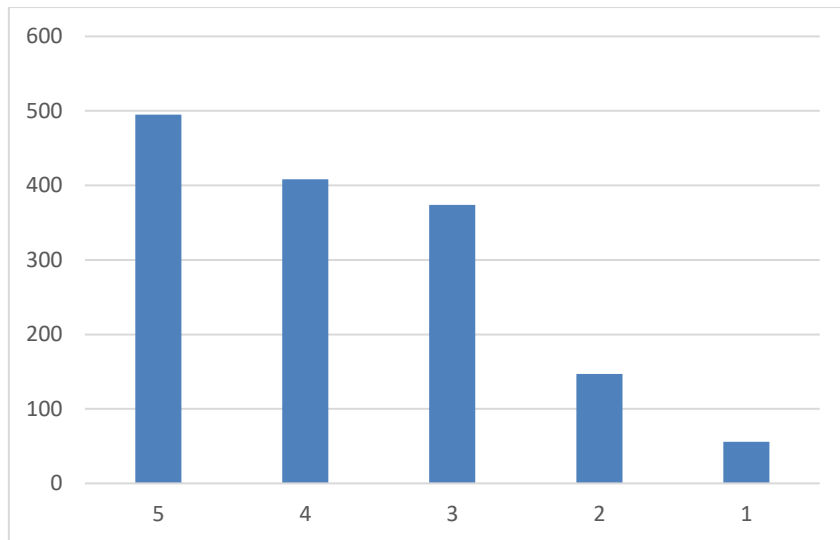


Figure 39. Disagreements/Arguments with others on social media

### Perceptual load of work

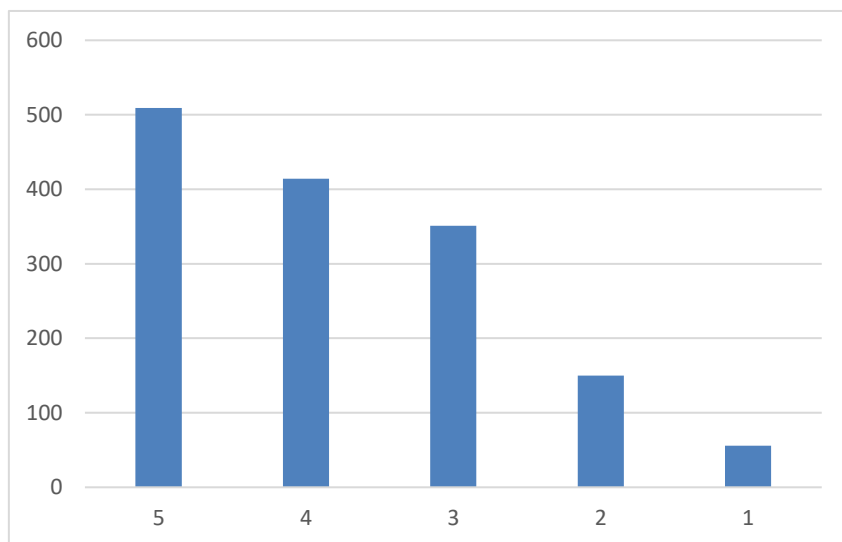
Since the severity of distraction may be evaluated with regards to how much cognitive capacity/perceptual load required to do a work/studies/task, the participants were asked to respond to the statement “It takes me a lot of concentration to process my work.”

The large portion of the participants claim that their work/studies/tasks require a great deal of concentration. The highest number of responses at 33.45% ( $n=495$ ) claim they strongly agree with the statement while 27.57% ( $n=408$ ) agreed with the statement. The number gradually decrease as Neutral responses amounted to 25.27% ( $n=374$ ), Disagree consisted of 9.93% ( $n=150$ ), and a mere 3.78% ( $n=56$ ) expressed their strong disagreement.



*Figure 40. Perceived cognitive capacity required for work performance*

A similar question was asked again twice to test the reliability of the previous question. The response exhibited the same patterns as it did in Figure 40.



*Figure 41. Cognitive effort required for work to get done*

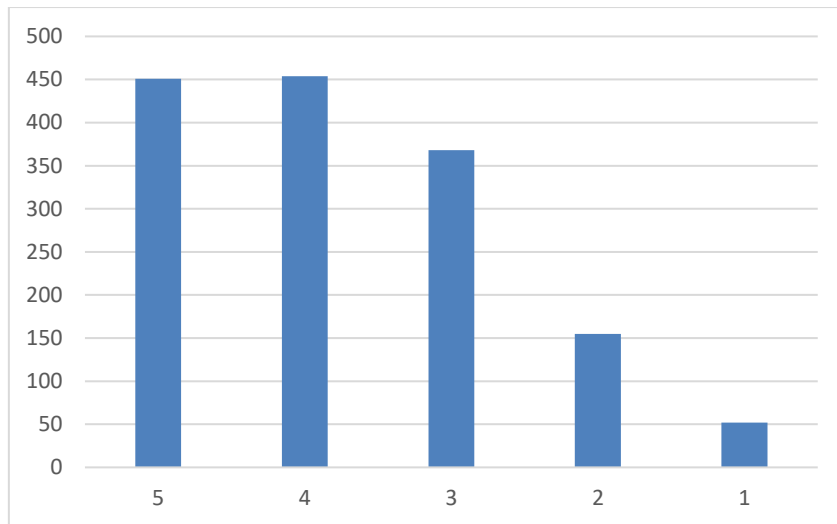


Figure 42. Response to whether participants' work is cognitively demanding

### Self-assessment of work performance

This section will consider participants' self-assessment of their work performance. The first statement given goes "My performance in my work/studies is excellent." The response indicated that participants have a positive attitude towards their performance in their work/studies. With 33.38% ( $n=494$ ) strongly agreeing to the statement, 38.78% ( $n=574$ ) agreeing, while 22.03% ( $n=326$ ) were neutral on the subject. Only a few respondents seem to have a poor attitude towards their work performance.

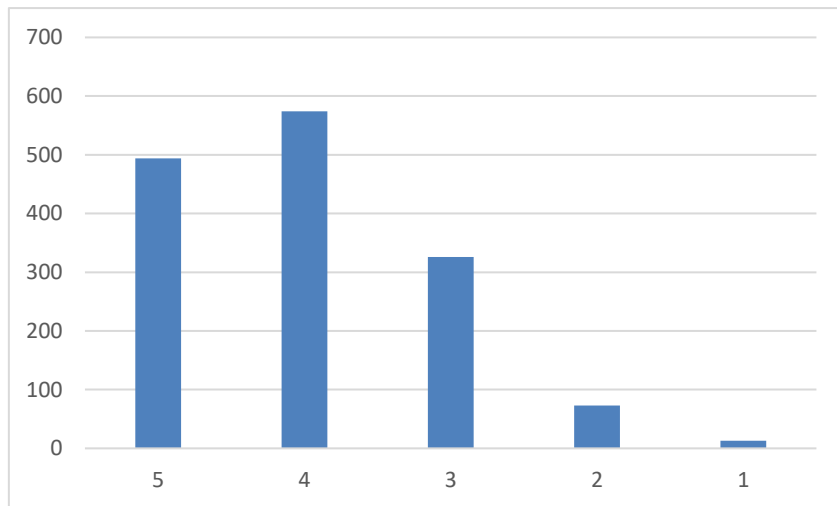


Figure 43. Participants self-assessment of work performance as excellent

The same question was stated again in a different context. The statement being “I am satisfied with my performance in my work/studies.” The resultant response had the same trends as seen in Figure 42.

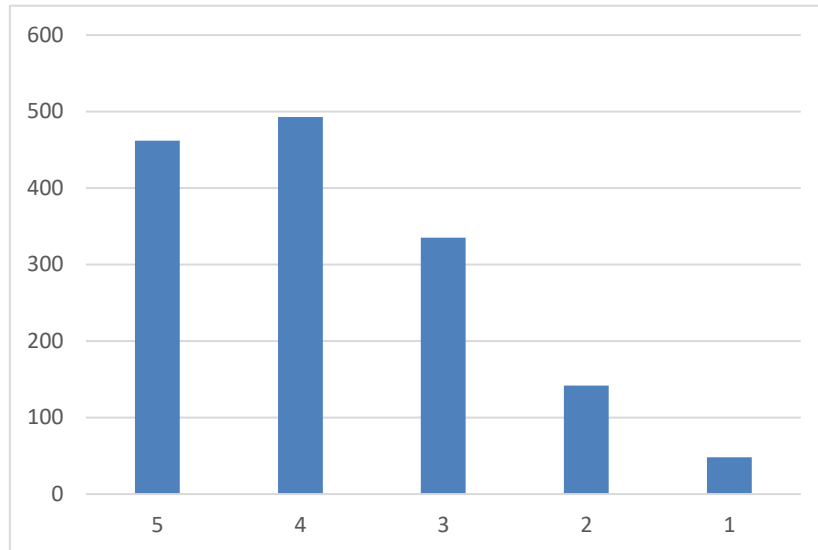


Figure 44. Participants on whether they are satisfied with their work performance

Participants were then asked to respond to the statement that they finish their work/studies/task on time to which a high percentage at 42.30% ( $n=626$ ) claiming they strongly agree, 31.62% ( $n=468$ ) agree with the statement, while 16.76% ( $n=248$ ) remained neutral.

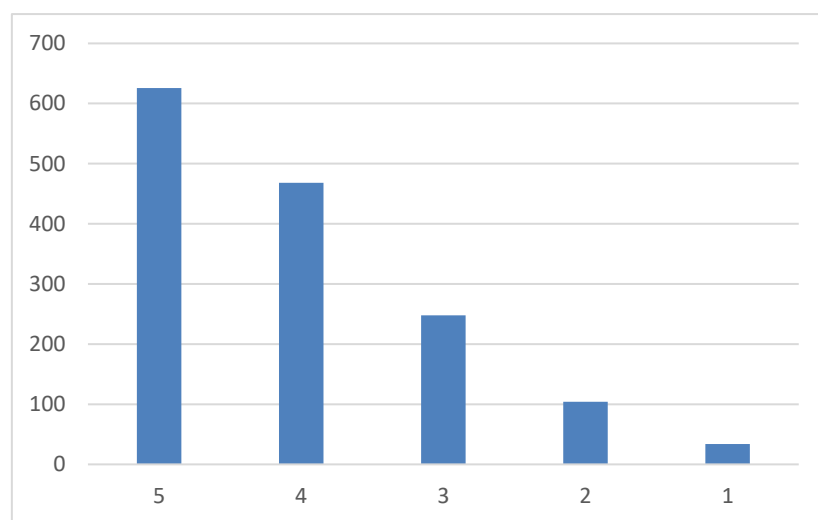
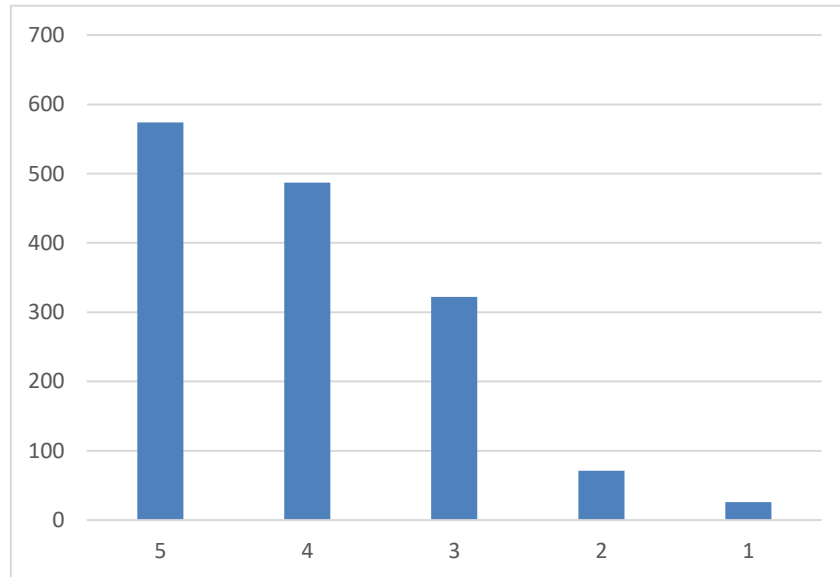


Figure 45. Participants on whether they finish their work on time

Finally, participants were asked to respond to statements that declare that they are able to concentrate on their work/studies/tasks even when other interesting things are present. The

respondents that amounted to 38.78% ( $n=574$ ) strongly agreed with the statement, 32.91% ( $n=487$ ) agreed, while 21.76% ( $n=322$ ) chose Neutral. A small number of individuals at 4.8% ( $n=71$ ) and 1.76% ( $n=26$ ) chose Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively.



*Figure 46.* Response to whether participants can do work regardless of distractions

A similar statement was framed differently and declared for the participants who responded quite similar to the previous pattern. The sentence “I am able to concentrate on my work/studies” was presented to which that chose Strongly Agree were the highest in number at 40.61% ( $n=601$ ), another 33.45% ( $n=495$ ) agreed, while 18.85% remain neutral to the statement. A small portion that consisted of 5.27% ( $n=78$ ) disagreed while only 1.82% ( $n=27$ ) strongly disagreed to the sentence.

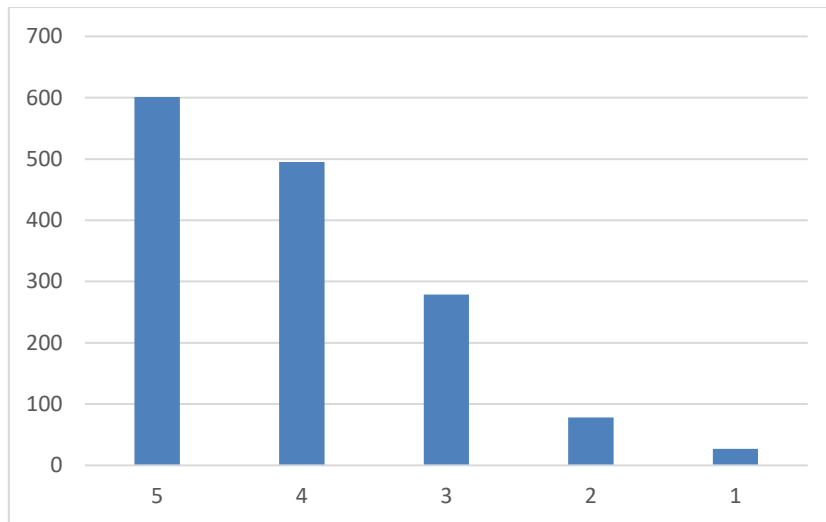


Figure 47. Participants response to the ability to concentrate on work/studies

### 5.1.3 Summary of findings

The distracting elements of the Internet and social media did not seem to have extensive impact on Mizo netizens' work/studies/task performance. In face the findings suggest that not only are Mizo respondents able to concentrate on their work regardless of distractions, a large portion of them claim that their work/studies/task performances are satisfactory. A high percentage also claim they finish by deadlines. Although notifications on their devices don't seem to distract a large portion of the respondents, almost the same percentage of people disagree with the statement that they hardly notice notifications.

Apart from intimacy, respondents seem to feel a sense of connection on social media with people they care about. A large percentage of respondents also claim they do not have disagreements or conflicts with people they get along with outside of social media.

The main aim of this survey was to study levels of distraction Mizo netizens may experience in the presence of work/studies/tasks. However, the data shows how minute Mizo netizens feel distracted from their work even though a large portion of the respondents claim that their work/studies/task require a lot of concentration.

## **5.2 Relating social media activism and offline activism – Survey (2)**

The main purpose of this second survey is to establish a relationship between social media activism and offline activism.

### **5.2.1 Sample description**

The number of respondents amounted to a sample population of N=917 of which 32.1% ( $n=294$ ) were female and 67.9% ( $n=623$ ) were male. The respondents were divided into those aged between 16 to 30 years which amounted to 26.3% ( $n=241$ ), respondents between 31 to 45 years covered a majority of the entire population with 60.5% ( $n=555$ ), and 46 years old and above being the least in number amounting to 13.2% ( $n=121$ ). The respondents were also asked to choose from a list, the occupation that best reflects their current circumstances. The majority of participants reported being employed, with 46.3% ( $n=431$ ) identifying as an employee or staff and 31% ( $n=291$ ) identifying as self-employed. Participants that identify as students amounted to 6.1% ( $n=56$ ) of the total population, unemployed participants measured at 12.5% ( $n=115$ ) while 2.2% ( $n=20$ ) were retired. Only 0.44% ( $n=4$ ) of the respondents chose none of the possibilities that were presented (see Table 9).

The sample description shows a sex ratio of 3 male for every female participant. However, the study does not lean towards gender studies and find it acceptable even though the difference in ratio is quite extensive. Even though the option of choosing ages 15 years and below was provided, the response from the participants in terms of age exhibited no respondents in that category.

In order to identify hashtag usage during the four events listed, the most common hashtags related to each event were provided. These include the hashtags that represent each event as #Zophai #AssamPolice for E1; #ShashankOut #SupportChuaungo for E2; #NoCAB #NoCAA for E3; and #Zophai #AssamPolice for E4 (see Figure 4).

Table 8. Survey 2 Sample Description

| Variables         |                | <i>n</i> | %    |
|-------------------|----------------|----------|------|
| <b>Gender</b>     | Male           | 623      | 67.9 |
|                   | Female         | 294      | 32.1 |
| <b>Age</b>        | 16 – 30        | 241      | 26.3 |
|                   | 31 – 45        | 555      | 60.5 |
|                   | 46 and above   | 121      | 13.2 |
| <b>Occupation</b> | Student        | 56       | 6.1  |
|                   | Employee/Staff | 431      | 46.3 |
|                   | Self-Employed  | 291      | 31   |
|                   | Unemployed     | 115      | 12.5 |
|                   | Retired        | 20       | 2.2  |
|                   | Other          | 4        | 0.44 |

### 5.2.2 Participants response to questionnaire

The medium through which individuals were provided their primary sources of information gathering was found to be predominantly social media. The participants responded social media (including messaging Apps) as a major source of information for the events with a substantial 91.6% ( $n=840$ ). Television was second in number with 4.6% ( $n=42$ ) which is a considerable difference (see Table 11). The prevalence and dependence of Mizo netizens on social media for information gathering is extensive. This data suggest how dependent users are of new media devices.

Furthermore, to identify which social media platforms/applications participants used for engagement, respondents were asked to select from a list of five prevalent Apps. According to the results of the investigation, WhatsApp was the by far the most widespread application used at 82.6% ( $n=757$ ), followed closely by Facebook at 63.2% ( $n=580$ ), Instagram measured at 10.3% ( $n=94$ ), Twitter accounted for 8.2% ( $n=75$ ), just 2.7% ( $n=25$ ) used Telegram, and 1.2% ( $n=11$ ) were respondents that used all Apps. In addition, 3.16% ( $n=29$ ) of the participants claim they have never used any of the Apps listed (see Table 10).

The respondents were given free option to choose any or all of the events (that were listed) that they recognized. From their responses, it was noted that a large majority of



participants were aware of (E4) the police shooting that transpired between Assam and Mizoram police forces on July 26, 2021 compared to the rest of the events. The number amounted to 88.4% ( $n=811$ ) while E1 and E2 were almost similar in terms of recognition with 71.3% ( $n=654$ ) and 71.6% ( $n=657$ ) respectively. Although, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, ignited many protests across the nation, it was the least known among the list with 50.5% ( $n=463$ ). Additionally, 47% ( $n=431$ ) of the total respondents claim to be familiar with all four events while 1.7% ( $n=16$ ) said they were unaware of the events (see Table 11).

Table 9. Social media ranked in terms of use for engagement

| <b>Social Media Platforms/App(s)</b> | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>%</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| WhatsApp                             | 757             | 82.6     |
| Instagram                            | 94              | 10.3     |
| Facebook                             | 580             | 63.2     |
| Twitter                              | 75              | 8.2      |
| Telegram                             | 25              | 2.7      |
| None of the Above                    | 29              | 3.16     |

WhatsApp and Telegram are technically messaging apps by design. However, since the introduction of groups on these applications, it exhibits social elements that could be considered to fall under social media. According to the responses, WhatsApp is the most used app at 82.6% ( $n=757$ ), followed by Facebook at 63.2% ( $n=580$ ), and third most used app was Instagram at just 10.3% ( $n=94$ ). Twitter users accounted for only 8.2% ( $n=75$ ) while Telegram shows even lesser users at 2.7% ( $n=25$ ).

Smartphone users have the option of downloading and installing from a huge library of free, easily accessible apps (some apps even come pre-installed). The apps mentioned in Table 4 are all free, therefore, it is most likely for users to use more than one of them. Social media platforms don't even require smartphones to access them. Any computer with a browser and access to the Internet can be used. Most of the respondents use WhatsApp and Facebook, which amounted to 36.7% ( $n=337$ ) of the participants. Those that utilize only WhatsApp came at 30.9% ( $n=284$ ), and participants that chose only Facebook amounted to 12.9% ( $n=118$ ) (see Figure 49). Furthermore, respondents that chose to fill up the optional field responded with Apps such as YouTube, while others mentioned having face-to-face conversations as well

although that does not fall under the category and were subsequently excluded. This is due to the fact that YouTube is considered a video streaming platform while face-to-face conversations don't constitute a social media platform.

Table 10. Event Recognition and Medium of Communication (N=917)

| <b>Event Recognition</b>                | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>%</b>     |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| Event 1                                 | 654             | 71.3         |
| Event 2                                 | 657             | 71.6         |
| Event 3                                 | 463             | 50.5         |
| Event 4                                 | <b>811</b>      | <b>88.4</b>  |
| None of the above                       | 16              | 1.7          |
| All 4 events                            | 431             | 47           |
| <b>Medium of Communication</b>          |                 |              |
| Through Word of Mouth                   | 7               | 0.80         |
| Newspapers                              | 12              | 1.30         |
| Television                              | 42              | 4.60         |
| Social Media (including messaging Apps) | <b>840</b>      | <b>91.60</b> |
| Radio                                   | 2               | 0.20         |
| Other Sources                           | 14              | 1.50         |

The next section provides a glimpse into hashtag activism<sup>23</sup>. As in every social media activism, hashtags are words or keyword phrases to group conversations in an effective way around common themes or topics (Jackson & Welles, 2015; Jackson, et al., 2020). An important aspect of social media is the ease at which contents can be searched. Here, hashtags are utilised as a type of social tagging that enables users to include metadata in posts made on social media (Zappavigna, 2015). In addition to the events discussed in this article, a number of hashtags that were regularly used during the social media activism were presented for selection in the survey's questionnaire.

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<sup>23</sup> Although hashtag activism has been studied in Section 4.7, the researcher felt that adding a portion regarding hashtags on the survey would help in identifying how familiar participants of the survey were to the hashtags that that were utilized during the four events.

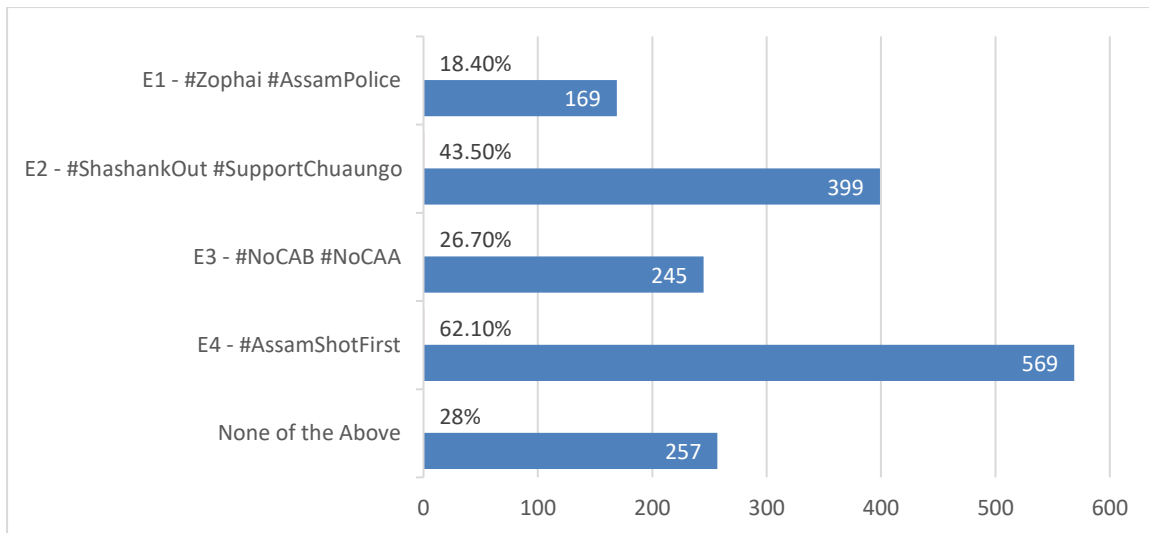


Figure 48. Hashtags used for social media activism

The popularity of E4 has been discussed at length in **Section 4.1**. This data that the survey provides support with reference to the degree to which the event influences public discourse. However, 28% ( $n=257$ ) still claim that they have never used any of the hashtags that were listed in the questionnaire.

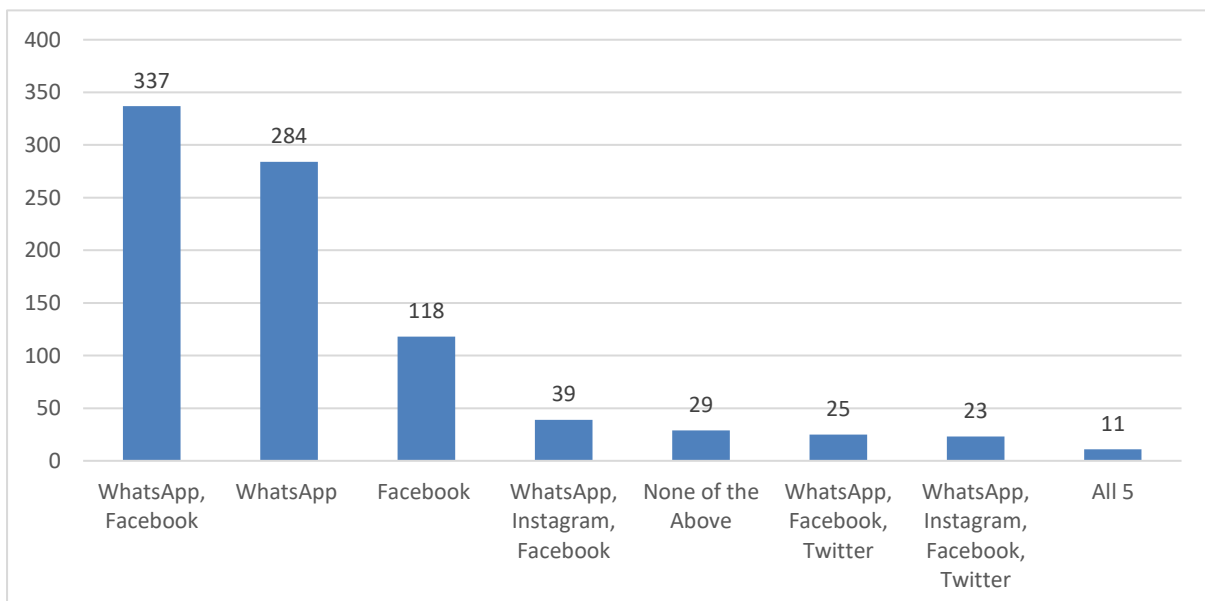


Figure 49. Choice-based combination of social media Apps

### 5.2.3 Hypothesis testing

To test the hypotheses proposed in Section 3.2.2.1, the study will present findings for social media activism, approach recognition, and offline participation. The relationship between these

will be analysed using Mann-Whitney  $U$  test on SPSS as mentioned in the methodology section (see Section 3.2.2).

**Social Media Activism:** The frequency with which respondents participate in social media engagement regarding contentious issues mention in the events listed in Section 3.1.3. According to the responses, participants that chose Often peaked at 25.6% ( $n=235$ ), Always made up 18.3% ( $n=168$ ), Neutral measured at 20.7% ( $n=190$ ), Rarely accounted for 23.1% ( $n=212$ ), and Never was lowest in number at 12.2% ( $n=112$ ).

**Approach Recognition:** Regarding the method of approach to social issues, participants were asked to respond to the notion that “active participation in social issues requires more than social media interactions,” to which 71.4% ( $n=655$ ) said they strongly agree, 15.7% ( $n=144$ ) agreed, 7.6% ( $n=70$ ) had a neutral response, 3.4% ( $n=31$ ) disagreed, and 1.9% ( $n=17$ ) strongly disagreed. The research participants seem to agree that societal issues require more than just social media involvement, despite the fact that there are various means to address them.

**Offline Activism:** When participants were asked if they had taken part in any protests or gatherings in connection with the aforementioned events, 72.3% ( $n=663$ ) indicated they had not, while the remaining 27.7% ( $n=254$ ) claimed they had. This will comprise our two groups for study.

### 5.2.3.1 Results

With regards to social media activism, the respondents that did not participate in offline activism ( $n=663$ ) had lower mean ranks at 424.55 than the individuals that did ( $n=254$ ) at 548.93,  $U = 61359$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $r = -.215$ , which is a statistically significant difference. Value of  $r$  is computed from  $Z$  using the conversion formula,  $r = Z/\sqrt{N}$ .

In the case of approach recognition, the two groups did not show a statistically significant difference. Mean ranks for those that did not engage in offline activism ( $n=663$ ) and those that did ( $n=254$ ) were 449.35 and 484.19 respectively,  $U = 77801.5$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $r = -.074$ .

Table 11. Mann Whitney U Test (Ranks)

|                                | Offline Activism (Categories) | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Social Media Activism (Levels) | No                            | 663 | 424.55    | 281475.00    |
|                                | Yes                           | 254 | 548.93    | 139428.00    |
|                                | Total                         | 917 |           |              |
| Approach Recognition (Levels)  | No                            | 663 | 449.35    | 297917.50    |
|                                | Yes                           | 254 | 484.19    | 122985.50    |
|                                | Total                         | 917 |           |              |

Table 7. Test Statistics<sup>24</sup>

|                        | Social Media Activism (Levels) | Approach Recognition (Levels) |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mann-Whitney U         | 61359.000                      | 77801.500                     |
| Wilcoxon W             | 281475.000                     | 297917.500                    |
| Z                      | -6.516                         | -2.244                        |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .000                           | .025                          |

Since the critical value ( $p$  value) is less than the pre-specified alpha of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in both cases of social media activism  $H_1$  as well as approach recognition  $H_2$ . In other words – the degree of social media activism and approach recognition has a positive correlation with offline activism. Therefore, higher levels of participation on social media activism provides higher probability that an individual would engage in offline activism. Furthermore, individuals in Mizoram that agree to the idea that active participation requires more than interactions over social media are more likely to engage in offline activism.

<sup>24</sup> Grouping Variable: Offline Activism (Categories)

### 5.3 References

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