How Social Media Communication Mobilizes Supporters for Social Causes

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media has transformed how organizations communicate with stakeholders and mobilize public participation in social causes. Digital platforms allow organizations not only to disseminate information but also to cultivate engagement and encourage collective action among supporters. This study aims to examine how organizational communication on social media contributes to supporter mobilization in the context of digital activism. The research adopts a qualitative conceptual approach using secondary data derived from existing academic literature on social media communication, organizational communication, and digital activism. Relevant scholarly publications were systematically reviewed to identify patterns in communication functions used by organizations in digital environments. The analysis is guided by Resource Mobilization Theory, which provides a framework for interpreting how communication practices facilitate the accumulation and activation of supporter resources. Through conceptual analysis, the study examines three key communication dimensions: informational communication, community engagement, and action-oriented mobilization. The findings indicate that these communication functions operate sequentially to transform audiences from passive information receivers into active participants in collective action. The study concludes that social media communication functions as a strategic resource that enables organizations to mobilize attention, build supporter networks, and coordinate participation in digital activism. These findings contribute to the literature by extending Resource Mobilization Theory and providing a conceptual framework that integrates organizational communication and digital activism studies.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed the communication landscape for organizations by enabling rapid and interactive engagement with stakeholders (Noor & Hersey, 2024). Organizations increasingly rely on digital platforms to disseminate information, coordinate activities, and maintain relationships with their audiences (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Compared with traditional communication tools such as organizational websites, social media platforms provide greater opportunities for interaction and real-time dialogue (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Scholars have noted that digital communication technologies allow organizations to communicate directly with supporters without the

mediation of traditional media channels (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). This transformation has broadened the communicative capacity of organizations and expanded their ability to reach diverse audiences. Social media platforms also create spaces where individuals and organizations can exchange information and collaborate around shared interests (Dennis, 2019). In this evolving communication environment, organizations must adapt their strategies to effectively engage with stakeholders. Understanding how organizations use social media communication therefore becomes increasingly important in contemporary organizational studies.

The growing adoption of social media has also reshaped how organizations promote social causes and engage in advocacy (Guo & Saxton, 2020). Digital platforms allow organizations to communicate social issues to broad audiences and encourage public participation in collective initiatives (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Through online communication, organizations can coordinate campaigns, promote events, and encourage supporters to contribute resources or participate in advocacy efforts. This process is particularly relevant in the context of digital activism, where online communication plays a crucial role in mobilizing supporters. Many nonprofit and advocacy organizations now rely on social media to raise awareness about social problems and encourage public involvement in addressing them (Noor & Hersey, 2024). The ability to mobilize supporters through digital platforms has become an essential component of contemporary activism and organizational communication strategies (Guo & Saxton, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these communication strategies depends on how organizations structure and utilize their messages. Examining the communication patterns that facilitate supporter mobilization therefore holds significant relevance for both research and practice.

Existing scholarship has begun to explore how organizations use social media to communicate with stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Research has shown that social media platforms enable organizations to share information, interact with audiences, and encourage participation in organizational initiatives. Studies examining nonprofit organizations' use of Twitter have identified several distinct communication functions within organizational messages (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). These functions include informational communication, community-building communication, and action-oriented communication that encourages supporter participation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Informational communication typically involves sharing news, updates, or reports relevant to stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Community-oriented communication focuses on strengthening relationships with followers through interaction and dialogue (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Action-oriented communication encourages audiences to engage in specific activities such as donations, volunteering, or advocacy (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). These findings demonstrate that organizational social media communication can serve multiple purposes beyond simple information dissemination. The classification of communication functions provides an important foundation for understanding how organizations utilize digital platforms.

Despite these insights, existing research primarily concentrates on categorizing different types of organizational social media messages (Noor & Hersey, 2024). Much of the literature focuses on identifying the content and characteristics of messages rather than examining the broader communication processes they represent (Noor & Hersey, 2024). While the classification of message types provides useful descriptive insights, it offers limited explanation of how communication strategies contribute to supporter mobilization. In particular, previous studies often treat informational, community-building, and action-oriented messages as separate categories rather than interconnected

stages of communication (Noor & Hersey, 2024). As a result, the dynamic relationship between these communication functions remains insufficiently explored. The mechanisms through which organizations transform audiences from passive information receivers into active supporters are still not fully understood. This limitation highlights the need for a more integrated conceptual perspective on organizational social media communication. Understanding the progression from information sharing to mobilization remains an important challenge for current research.

Another area that remains underexplored concerns the role of community engagement in enabling digital activism. Social media platforms allow organizations to establish networks of supporters who interact, share information, and participate in conversations about social issues (Dennis, 2019). These interactive processes can strengthen relationships between organizations and their audiences and foster a sense of collective identity among supporters (Wasif et al., 2024). However, the connection between community-building communication and supporter mobilization has not been sufficiently theorized in existing studies. While dialogue and interaction are often recognized as valuable communication practices, their role in facilitating collective action is not always clearly explained. This gap becomes particularly significant when considering the increasing importance of digital activism in contemporary society. Organizations frequently rely on online communities to mobilize supporters for campaigns, advocacy efforts, and fundraising initiatives (Dennis, 2019; Guo & Saxton, 2020). Clarifying how community engagement contributes to mobilization therefore remains a critical area for further investigation.

A related limitation in the literature is the lack of integration between studies of organizational social media communication and broader theories of activism and mobilization. Research on social media communication often emphasizes message characteristics or platform features without linking these findings to theoretical frameworks that explain collective action. Conversely, studies of activism and social movements sometimes overlook the specific communication strategies organizations use in digital environments (Choi et al., 2020). This separation between communication studies and mobilization theory limits the ability of researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of digital activism. Bridging these perspectives can provide deeper insights into how communication practices influence participation and engagement. Integrating communication research with mobilization theory can also clarify how digital platforms facilitate organizational strategies for mobilizing supporters. Such integration would contribute to a more holistic understanding of how organizations utilize social media in pursuit of social and organizational goals.

Addressing these gaps is important because social media communication plays an increasingly central role in contemporary organizational activity. Organizations must not only inform the public about their activities but also cultivate engagement and encourage participation from supporters. Effective communication strategies are therefore essential for transforming audience attention into meaningful involvement in organizational initiatives. Without a clear understanding of how communication processes support mobilization, organizations may struggle to fully utilize the potential of digital platforms. Scholars have also emphasized the importance of examining how communication strategies shape public engagement and participation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Noor & Hersey, 2024). Investigating the progression from informational communication to mobilization can provide valuable insights into the strategic use of social media. Such analysis can help clarify how digital communication contributes to

broader processes of collective action and activism. This makes the study of organizational social media communication particularly relevant in the digital age.

Guided by these considerations, this study seeks to examine how organizational communication on social media can facilitate the mobilization of supporters. The study focuses on the relationship between informational communication, community engagement, and action-oriented messages within organizational social media strategies. By examining these communication functions through a theoretical perspective of mobilization, the research aims to explain how digital communication can transform audiences into active participants. The study therefore explores how communication practices may function as stages in a broader process of supporter engagement. Particular attention is given to the role of community-building communication in connecting informational messages with mobilization efforts. Through this perspective, the research seeks to clarify the communicative mechanisms that support digital activism and collective participation. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for explaining how organizations leverage digital platforms to advance their missions. The investigation thus focuses on the communicative pathways that link awareness, engagement, and participation.

This research contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of social media in organizational communication and digital activism. By examining the progression from information dissemination to supporter mobilization, the study provides a conceptual perspective on how communication functions interact within digital environments. The analysis also highlights the importance of community engagement as a potential bridge between awareness and collective participation. In doing so, the study aims to extend existing research that has primarily focused on classifying social media messages. The integration of communication functions with a mobilization perspective can offer a deeper understanding of how organizations utilize digital platforms strategically. Such insights are increasingly important as organizations rely more heavily on social media to engage stakeholders and coordinate collective action. Exploring these dynamics can help illuminate the communicative foundations of digital activism. This line of inquiry therefore holds significance for scholars interested in organizational communication, social media studies, and activism research.

2. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) using conceptual and literature-based analysis to examine how organizational communication on social media facilitates supporter mobilization. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to understand the conceptual relationships between informational communication, community engagement, and mobilization within digital communication environments (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than measuring causal relationships through numerical indicators, the study focuses on interpreting patterns, theoretical arguments, and conceptual insights presented in existing scholarly works (Merriam, 2009). The qualitative design enables the researcher to explore how communication functions operate as stages within a broader process of supporter engagement and digital activism. This approach is particularly suitable for examining complex communication phenomena that involve meaning, interpretation, and contextual understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study applies Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) as the analytical framework, guiding the interpretation of how communication practices may contribute to the mobilization of supporters in digital environments. Through this framework, the

research analyzes how informational communication, community interaction, and action-oriented messages relate to processes of awareness, engagement, and participation.

The data used in this study consist of secondary sources drawn from academic literature related to social media communication, nonprofit organizational communication, and digital activism. These sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and previously published empirical studies that examine organizational use of social media platforms. The population of analysis consists of scholarly publications discussing organizational communication strategies in digital environments, while the unit of analysis is the conceptual explanation of communication functions and their role in supporter engagement and mobilization. Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of relevant literature identified using academic databases and digital libraries (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Relevant publications were selected based on their relevance to organizational social media communication, stakeholder engagement, and mobilization processes. The analytical dimensions guiding the review include three primary communication functions: information dissemination, community engagement, and action-oriented mobilization (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). These dimensions are examined to understand how communication practices are theoretically linked to supporter participation and digital activism.

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the research, several strategies were applied during the literature analysis process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was strengthened through the use of peer-reviewed academic publications as primary data sources, ensuring that the analysis was based on reliable and academically validated research. Consistency was maintained by applying a systematic approach to literature selection and by analyzing sources according to clearly defined analytical dimensions (Moher et al., 2009). Dependability was supported through careful documentation of the literature review process, allowing the analytical procedures to be transparent and replicable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study also applied conceptual triangulation by examining findings from multiple studies and theoretical perspectives to reduce interpretive bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process, including proper citation of all referenced works to respect intellectual property and academic integrity. Since the study relies exclusively on published secondary data and does not involve human participants, issues of informed consent and personal confidentiality do not arise, though responsible scholarly conduct and accurate attribution were strictly maintained.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 From Information to Mobilization: Communication Pathways in Digital Activism

The relationship between communication practices and supporter mobilization can be understood through the perspective of Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). This theory suggests that collective action depends on the ability of organizations to mobilize resources, including attention, participation, and social networks. Within digital environments, communication becomes a strategic mechanism through which organizations transform public awareness into active engagement. The analytical framework used in this study conceptualizes organizational communication on social media as a sequential pathway consisting of informational communication, community engagement, and action-oriented mobilization (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). These dimensions function as conceptual indicators that help interpret how organizations structure their communication strategies to activate supporters (Guo & Saxton, 2014;

Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Informational communication introduces social issues and organizational activities to audiences, while community engagement fosters interaction and relational ties among supporters. Action-oriented communication subsequently encourages audiences to translate their engagement into concrete participation. By examining how these communication functions operate together, it becomes possible to interpret the role of digital communication in facilitating activism and supporter mobilization (Guo & Saxton, 2014). This theoretical perspective therefore provides the foundation for analyzing how communication practices evolve from awareness-building toward collective participation.

Analysis of the literature indicates that informational communication often represents the initial stage of organizational engagement with audiences in digital environments (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Organizations frequently begin by disseminating updates, reports, and issue-related content to inform followers about their activities and the social problems they address. These informational messages serve an important awareness-building function by introducing audiences to organizational missions and broader social concerns (Guo & Saxton, 2020). Through repeated exposure to informational content, followers become more familiar with the organization and the issues it promotes (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Informational communication also helps establish credibility and transparency, which are important factors in maintaining public trust (Guo & Saxton, 2020; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Within digital activism contexts, awareness creation represents a necessary foundation for subsequent engagement. Supporters are unlikely to participate in campaigns or advocacy activities if they lack sufficient knowledge about the issues involved (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Informational communication therefore plays a strategic role in expanding the audience base that can potentially be mobilized (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

Beyond the dissemination of information, organizations increasingly employ communication strategies designed to cultivate interaction and engagement with their audiences (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Community-oriented communication practices include responding to followers, acknowledging supporters, and initiating dialogue around shared concerns. These practices create opportunities for followers to interact not only with the organization but also with other supporters who share similar interests (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Through these interactions, online spaces can gradually evolve into communities where participants exchange ideas and reinforce collective identities (Edrington & Lee, 2018). The development of such communities contributes to strengthening emotional and social connections between organizations and their supporters. These connections are important because they increase the likelihood that individuals will remain engaged with organizational initiatives (Edrington & Lee, 2018; Guo & Saxton, 2014). Community-building communication therefore functions as a bridge between awareness and participation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). By strengthening relational ties among followers, organizations create networks that can later be activated for mobilization purposes (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

As community engagement intensifies, communication strategies often shift toward encouraging specific forms of supporter participation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Action-oriented communication invites followers to contribute resources, attend events, participate in campaigns, or engage in advocacy efforts. These messages represent a transition from engagement to mobilization, where communication is used to coordinate collective activities (Guo & Saxton, 2014). In digital activism contexts, action-oriented messages often include calls to donate, volunteer, sign petitions, or support policy initiatives. Such communication practices demonstrate how organizations attempt to

transform passive audiences into active contributors (Guo & Saxton, 2020). The success of these mobilization efforts often depends on the relational foundations established through earlier communication stages. Supporters who feel connected to the organization and its community are generally more willing to participate in collective actions (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Action-oriented communication therefore represents the culmination of a communication pathway that begins with awareness and develops through engagement (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Within the logic of resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), this stage reflects the activation of social networks as resources that can support organizational objectives.

The interaction between informational, community-oriented, and action-oriented communication highlights the dynamic nature of organizational communication strategies in digital environments. Rather than functioning as isolated categories, these communication practices operate as interconnected components of a broader engagement process (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Informational messages attract attention and introduce social issues to potential supporters. Community-oriented communication strengthens relationships and fosters shared identities among followers (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Action-oriented messages then leverage these relationships to mobilize participation. This progression reflects how communication strategies can gradually transform audiences into active participants within organizational networks (Guo & Saxton, 2014). The digital environment facilitates this progression by enabling continuous interaction between organizations and their supporters (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Social media platforms allow organizations to communicate rapidly, respond to feedback, and sustain engagement over time (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). These capabilities enhance the capacity of organizations to mobilize supporters through strategic communication practices (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

The findings also suggest that digital activism cannot be understood solely in terms of mobilization messages themselves. Instead, mobilization emerges from the cumulative effects of communication practices that gradually cultivate awareness, trust, and engagement among supporters. Organizations that rely exclusively on calls for action without establishing informational and relational foundations may struggle to generate sustained participation (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Conversely, communication strategies that combine awareness-building, engagement, and mobilization are more likely to activate supporter networks effectively (Guo & Saxton, 2014). This observation reinforces the importance of examining communication processes rather than isolated message types (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). The interplay between informational and relational communication practices appears to be particularly important in sustaining digital activism (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Supporter participation is often influenced by the strength of their connections to organizational communities and shared values (Edrington & Lee, 2018; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Digital communication therefore functions as both a relational and mobilizational resource for organizations (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend the application of Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) to contemporary digital communication environments. Traditional formulations of the theory emphasized material resources and organizational structures as key determinants of collective action (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The analysis presented here highlights the role of communication practices as resources that facilitate mobilization in digital contexts (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Social media communication enables organizations to generate attention, cultivate engagement, and coordinate participation across distributed networks of

supporters (Guo & Saxton, 2020). This perspective refines the theory by emphasizing the importance of communicative resources alongside traditional organizational resources (Guo & Saxton, 2014). The findings also confirm earlier research suggesting that organizations often rely heavily on informational communication while incorporating elements of dialogue and mobilization (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). However, the analysis demonstrates that these communication functions should be interpreted as interconnected stages within a mobilization process rather than independent categories (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). This interpretation contributes to a more integrated understanding of how digital communication supports activism.

These insights also illuminate contextual dynamics associated with governance and organizational engagement in digitally mediated environments. Social media platforms provide organizations with tools to interact directly with stakeholders and mobilize public participation in social initiatives (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). In governance contexts where public engagement and collective action are essential, digital communication strategies can play a significant role in shaping participation patterns. Organizations that successfully combine informational, relational, and mobilizational communication practices are better positioned to activate networks of supporters (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Such communication strategies enable organizations to build communities around shared concerns and coordinate collective responses to social issues (Edrington & Lee, 2018). By clarifying the pathways through which communication facilitates mobilization, the analysis contributes to addressing the theoretical and empirical gaps identified earlier. It demonstrates that digital activism is not solely the product of mobilization appeals but emerges from broader communication processes that cultivate awareness and engagement over time (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

3.2 Community Engagement as a Mechanism for Digital Activism

The role of community engagement in digital activism can be understood through the perspective of Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), which emphasizes the importance of networks, relationships, and collective identity in facilitating collective action. Within this framework, social movements and organizational campaigns rely not only on material resources but also on social connections that enable individuals to coordinate their participation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In digital environments, communication practices that encourage dialogue and interaction contribute to the formation of such networks (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Social media platforms provide organizations with the ability to cultivate communities where supporters interact with each other and with organizational actors (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). These communicative interactions serve as relational resources that strengthen collective identification with a cause (Edrington & Lee, 2018). The analytical dimension of community engagement therefore functions as an intermediate stage that connects awareness-building communication with mobilization outcomes (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). By examining how organizations create interactive communication spaces, it becomes possible to interpret how digital communities contribute to activism. The theoretical lens thus highlights community engagement as a key mechanism through which digital communication facilitates collective participation (Guo & Saxton, 2014; McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Empirical insights from the literature suggest that community-oriented communication practices play a crucial role in sustaining audience engagement. Organizations frequently use interactive communication strategies such as

acknowledging supporters, responding to followers' messages, and initiating discussions around social issues. These practices demonstrate that communication on social media is not limited to the transmission of information but also involves ongoing interaction between organizations and their audiences. When organizations actively respond to supporters, they signal openness and accessibility, which can strengthen relational trust (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Such interactions create opportunities for followers to feel recognized as members of a broader community rather than passive recipients of information (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Over time, repeated interactions contribute to the development of relational bonds that reinforce commitment to organizational causes (Edrington & Lee, 2018). The presence of these relational bonds increases the likelihood that followers will remain engaged with organizational initiatives. Community-oriented communication therefore helps transform audiences into networks of connected supporters (Edrington & Lee, 2018).

Another important aspect of community engagement involves the formation of shared identities among supporters. Digital platforms enable individuals who share similar values or concerns to connect and exchange perspectives in online spaces. Through ongoing communication, supporters begin to develop a sense of belonging to a collective community that is organized around a particular issue or mission. This process of identity formation is significant because collective action often depends on individuals recognizing themselves as part of a shared cause (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Communication practices that highlight shared values, acknowledge supporters' contributions, and encourage participation in discussions reinforce this collective identity (Edrington & Lee, 2018). As supporters interact with each other, they contribute to the creation of a social environment that sustains engagement over time. The formation of such communities also increases the visibility of organizational causes by amplifying messages through interpersonal networks (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Consequently, community engagement strengthens both the relational and communicative infrastructure necessary for digital activism (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

The emergence of interactive communities also contributes to the circulation and amplification of organizational messages. When supporters actively participate in conversations, they become informal communicators who extend the reach of organizational communication. Social media interactions allow followers to share information with their own networks, thereby expanding the visibility of organizational campaigns (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). This process can create ripple effects in which communication spreads beyond the immediate audience of the organization. Community engagement therefore enhances the diffusion of messages through peer-to-peer communication networks (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Such diffusion processes are particularly important in digital activism because they enable organizations to mobilize large audiences without relying solely on formal communication channels (Guo & Saxton, 2020). As supporters engage with messages and share them within their networks, they contribute to the collective dissemination of information and advocacy messages. The communicative activity of supporters thus becomes an integral component of organizational mobilization strategies (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

In addition to facilitating message diffusion, community engagement strengthens emotional connections between supporters and organizational causes. Interactive communication often allows supporters to express opinions, share experiences, and receive acknowledgment from organizational representatives. These exchanges can foster feelings of recognition and inclusion, which reinforce supporters' attachment to the organization (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Emotional engagement is particularly important in

activism contexts where individuals are motivated not only by rational considerations but also by shared values and collective concerns (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Communication practices that acknowledge supporters' contributions help cultivate a sense of mutual commitment between organizations and their audiences (Guo & Saxton, 2020). This sense of commitment can increase supporters' willingness to contribute time, resources, or advocacy efforts. Community engagement therefore plays an important role in transforming awareness into sustained involvement. Through relational interaction, organizations create social environments that encourage continued participation (Edrington & Lee, 2018).

From the perspective of Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), these relational dynamics can be interpreted as the development of social resources that support collective action. Social networks formed through community engagement provide organizations with access to distributed pools of supporters who can be mobilized when needed. Communication practices that maintain engagement within these networks ensure that supporters remain informed and connected to organizational activities. When mobilization opportunities arise, organizations can activate these networks to coordinate participation in campaigns, events, or advocacy efforts (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The existence of strong relational ties within supporter communities increases the likelihood that mobilization appeals will receive positive responses (Edrington & Lee, 2018). Community engagement therefore enhances the organizational capacity to mobilize supporters effectively (Guo & Saxton, 2014). In digital environments, communication becomes the mechanism through which these social resources are cultivated and maintained (Treem & Leonardi, 2012).

The analysis also indicates that the effectiveness of digital activism depends heavily on the quality of interactions within online communities. Organizations that actively engage with their supporters tend to cultivate more vibrant and responsive communities. Conversely, organizations that rely primarily on one-way informational communication may struggle to generate sustained engagement. The presence of interactive communication practices therefore appears to be an important factor in determining the strength of supporter networks. These findings suggest that digital activism is not simply the result of persuasive mobilization messages but also the product of sustained relational communication (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Supporter participation emerges from ongoing interaction that gradually strengthens commitment to organizational causes (Edrington & Lee, 2018). This observation emphasizes the importance of viewing communication as a relational process rather than merely a tool for transmitting information (Noor & Hersey, 2024). In digital environments, relational communication practices play a central role in sustaining activism (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

These insights refine existing theoretical discussions about digital activism by highlighting the relational foundations of mobilization. While earlier studies have emphasized the informational potential of social media (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012), the present analysis demonstrates that engagement within digital communities plays an equally significant role. The development of relational networks allows organizations to mobilize supporters more effectively when calls for action are issued. This perspective extends Resource Mobilization Theory by emphasizing the role of communication networks as resources that sustain collective participation (Guo & Saxton, 2014; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The findings also contribute to addressing the gap identified earlier regarding the relationship between engagement and activism. By demonstrating how community interaction strengthens supporter networks, the analysis clarifies the mechanisms through which digital communication facilitates mobilization. These

insights enhance the understanding of how organizations can strategically utilize social media to cultivate active communities of supporters (Guo & Saxton, 2020; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

3.3 Social Media Communication as a Resource Mobilization Strategy

Resource Mobilization Theory emphasizes that collective action depends on the ability of organizations to accumulate and activate various forms of resources, including attention, networks, and participation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In contemporary digital environments, communication itself functions as a strategic resource that organizations can mobilize to coordinate supporters and sustain activism. Social media platforms provide organizations with communication infrastructures that enable rapid dissemination of information and continuous interaction with audiences. Through these platforms, organizations can attract attention, build relationships, and coordinate collective participation around shared causes. The analytical framework used in this study interprets social media communication through three interconnected functions: informational communication, community engagement, and action-oriented mobilization (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). These communication dimensions represent stages in a broader mobilization process that transforms audiences into active participants. Informational communication generates awareness and expands the potential supporter base. Community engagement strengthens relational ties among followers. Action-oriented communication subsequently activates these networks for collective participation.

To clarify how these communication functions operate as mobilization mechanisms, Table 1 summarizes the relationship between communication practices and mobilization outcomes.

Table 1. Communication Functions and Their Role in Resource Mobilization

Communication Function	Communication Characteristics	Mobilization Implication
Information Dissemination	Sharing updates, reports, news, and issue-related content with followers	Builds awareness and expands the audience base that can potentially be mobilized
Community Engagement	Dialogue with followers, recognition of supporters, responses to messages, interactive discussions	Strengthens relational ties, builds collective identity, and sustains supporter networks
Action-Oriented Communication	Calls for donations, volunteering, advocacy participation, event attendance	Activates supporter networks and converts engagement into collective participation

Source: Processed by the researcher, 2026

As shown in Table 1, informational communication represents the initial stage of mobilization by expanding the visibility of organizational causes and attracting potential supporters. Through the circulation of issue-related content, organizations generate attention and awareness among audiences who may previously have had limited exposure to the cause. Awareness functions as a critical resource in mobilization processes because individuals must first recognize the importance of a social issue before they become willing to participate in collective action (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). Informational messages therefore contribute to building the cognitive foundation necessary for activism. By continuously sharing updates, reports, and issue-related information, organizations cultivate familiarity with their mission and objectives. This awareness-building process gradually expands the pool of individuals who can

potentially become supporters. Within the logic of Resource Mobilization Theory, public attention represents an intangible resource that organizations can later convert into engagement and participation (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Community engagement constitutes the second stage of mobilization by transforming dispersed audiences into relational networks of supporters. Interactive communication practices such as responding to followers, acknowledging supporters, and initiating discussions strengthen relational ties between organizations and their audiences. These practices signal openness and accessibility, encouraging followers to participate in conversations surrounding the organization's mission (Saxton & Waters, 2014). As interactions accumulate, followers begin to perceive themselves as members of a shared community connected by common concerns. This sense of belonging reinforces commitment to the organization and strengthens identification with the cause being promoted. The formation of such relational networks is essential for mobilization because collective action often depends on the existence of supportive communities (Spier, 2017). Community engagement therefore generates social capital that organizations can later activate for campaigns and advocacy efforts.

Action-oriented communication represents the stage at which mobilization becomes visible through concrete participation. Messages that encourage donations, volunteering, advocacy activities, or event participation directly invite supporters to contribute resources or effort to organizational initiatives. These messages rely heavily on the relational foundations built through earlier communication stages. Supporters who have developed trust and identification with an organization are generally more willing to respond positively to calls for action (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). In digital activism contexts, these mobilization messages often spread rapidly through supporter networks as followers share content within their own communication circles. The diffusion of mobilization messages through peer networks amplifies the reach of organizational campaigns (Breuer et al., 2015). As a result, communication networks become infrastructures through which collective participation is coordinated.

The interaction between informational communication, community engagement, and mobilization messages demonstrates how social media communication operates as a strategic mobilization mechanism. Rather than functioning independently, these communication functions form an integrated pathway that gradually transforms audiences into mobilized networks (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). Informational communication generates attention and awareness, community engagement cultivates relationships and shared identities, and action-oriented communication activates these networks for participation. This progression illustrates how organizations accumulate and activate different types of resources through communication practices. Digital platforms facilitate this process by enabling continuous interaction between organizations and their supporters (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Through sustained communication, organizations can maintain engagement and coordinate participation across distributed networks.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings extend the application of Resource Mobilization Theory to contemporary digital communication environments. Traditional interpretations of the theory emphasized material resources and organizational structures as primary determinants of collective action (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The analysis presented here highlights the importance of communicative resources in facilitating mobilization within digitally mediated activism. Social media communication enables organizations to mobilize attention, cultivate social networks, and coordinate participation through relatively low-cost communication infrastructures (Eltantawy &

Wiest, 2011). This interpretation refines existing theoretical discussions by recognizing communication practices as central components of mobilization strategies. It also confirms previous studies suggesting that organizations rely heavily on informational communication while gradually incorporating engagement and mobilization practices (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).

The analysis also contributes to addressing the research gaps identified in the introduction regarding the relationship between social media communication and digital activism. By interpreting communication functions through the lens of Resource Mobilization Theory, the study clarifies how awareness-building, relational engagement, and mobilization appeals operate as interconnected components of organizational communication strategies. Digital activism emerges not merely from isolated calls for action but from broader communication processes that cultivate engagement and collective identity over time (Breuer et al., 2015). This perspective integrates insights from organizational communication research with theoretical discussions of collective action. As a result, it provides a clearer explanation of how organizations strategically utilize social media to mobilize supporters in contemporary digital environments.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how organizational communication on social media contributes to supporter mobilization within the framework of Resource Mobilization Theory. The analysis demonstrated that social media communication operates through a progression of interconnected functions: informational communication, community engagement, and action-oriented messaging. Informational communication plays a foundational role by raising awareness and expanding the audience base around social issues and organizational missions. Community engagement then strengthens relational ties between organizations and their supporters through dialogue, recognition, and interactive participation. These relational interactions foster collective identity and sustain networks of supporters who share common concerns. Action-oriented communication subsequently activates these networks by encouraging concrete participation such as advocacy, volunteering, and donations. Together, these communication functions form a mobilization pathway that transforms audiences from passive information receivers into active participants in digital activism. The findings highlight that effective digital activism depends not only on mobilization appeals but also on sustained communication processes that cultivate awareness and engagement over time.

The study contributes to the literature on organizational communication, social media studies, and digital activism by offering a conceptual explanation of how communication functions operate within mobilization processes. First, it extends Resource Mobilization Theory by emphasizing the role of communication as a strategic resource in digitally mediated activism. While traditional formulations of the theory focused primarily on material resources and organizational structures, this study demonstrates that communication practices themselves function as mechanisms for accumulating attention, cultivating networks, and coordinating participation. Second, the research integrates insights from social media communication studies with theoretical perspectives on collective action, thereby addressing a gap between these two research domains. By conceptualizing informational communication, community engagement, and mobilization messages as interconnected stages, the study provides a more dynamic interpretation of organizational communication strategies. This framework helps clarify how digital platforms enable organizations to gradually transform audiences into

mobilized supporter networks. In doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the communicative foundations of contemporary digital activism.

Although the present study provides conceptual insights into the mobilization potential of social media communication, several areas remain open for future research. Subsequent studies could empirically examine how different organizations implement communication strategies across various social media platforms and organizational contexts. Comparative research could also explore whether the information–community– action pathway operates similarly across nonprofit, governmental, and advocacy organizations. In addition, future research may investigate how audiences respond to different types of organizational communication and how these responses influence participation in digital activism. Examining interaction patterns between organizations and followers could further clarify the mechanisms through which online engagement evolves into collective participation. Longitudinal studies may also help reveal how sustained communication practices influence the growth and stability of supporter networks over time. Furthermore, research that incorporates multiple digital platforms could provide a broader understanding of how communication strategies operate across interconnected media environments. These directions would contribute to refining theoretical explanations of digital mobilization and expanding knowledge about the role of communication in contemporary activism.

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