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- Author (s):** Kelvin Inobemhe¹, Sharifatu Gago Ja'afaru², Tsegyu Santas², and Aminat Trust Ogbesoh²
- Affiliation (s):** ¹Glorious Vision University Ogwa Edo State, Nigeria
²Nasarawa State University Keffi, Keffi, Nigeria
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Role of Social Media in Enabling Communication Mobilisation and Management during 2020 #EndSARS Protests in Nigeria

Kelvin Inobemhe^{1*}, Sharifatu Gago Ja'afaru², Tsegysu Santas², and Aminat Trust Ogbesoh²

¹Glorious Vision University Ogwa Edo State

²Nasarawa State University Keffi Nigeria

Abstract

The current study focuses on the use of social media for the purpose of communication in the process of mobilising and managing the 2020 #EndSARS protests across Nigeria. The study specifically sought to ascertain the effectiveness of the platforms and the challenges encountered in efforts at mobilisation and management of the protests. Primarily, the research is based on secondary data. Additionally, theoretical foundation of the study is laid on medium theory. It was established that social media platforms, especially Facebook and Twitter (now X) featured prominently in the mobilisation and management of the protests. The study also argues that there was a need for social media platforms on the basis of the scale of the protest. The user base of social media platforms in Nigeria is substantial, making them essential for amplifying the protests. Since communication strategy is crucial throughout the life of a social movement, such as the #EndSARS, there was a need to explore the use of social media platforms. However, platforms, such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, and others became effective in different ways. Hence, the study identified the challenge of the capacity to identify real communicators saddled with the responsibility of managing activities of the protests. The study concluded that social media played prominent roles in the success of the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Nigeria.

Keywords: communication, #EndSARS, protest, social media, social movement

Introduction

Citizens interact with authorities or governments in several ways whenever they are dissatisfied with the polity. One of the main ways to show displeasure is through protests, and it is a type or way of communication

*Corresponding Author: inobemhekelvin@gmail.com

between the people and government. Social protest refers to a form of political expression with the intent to achieve political or social change through positive influence on attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge of the public (Loya & McLeod, [2020](#)). Globally, protests can be in the forms of civil disobedience, demonstrations, public displays, and other ways, such as boycotts, lobbying, online activities (social media activism) and several other avenues where humans demand social and political change as they deem desirable.

Significantly, in all human activities, communication is an integral aspect in respect of the success of a protest. Loya and McLeod ([2020](#)) succinctly captured that a central factor in the success of a protest is communication as it is useful in various protest activities, including mobilisation, facilitation of information exchange, coordination, integration, identity formation, and overall management. According to them, protests often serve a number of democratic functions as they are avenues usually considered by individuals or group of individuals to express themselves. Protests are engines for social re-engineering and change for communities, organisations, and nations. Hence, for any protest to be successful, communication remains a significant factor.

Communication is one of the ways citizens express their displeasure over a particular situation. It is noteworthy that technology has transformed the way humans communicate with one another. The age of information and communication in 21st Century is greatly impacted by technologies. In line with the foregoing, David and Mariswamy ([2014](#)) observed that globalised information services and resources are products of the information society made possible through the instrumentation of the new media. By extension, other key aspects, including mass communication also saw the impact as the previously popular one-to-many model is being phased out by many-to-many model of web communication.

One of the most popular technologies that has occasioned the sweeping changes in the world of information and communication is the internet. Long before the emergence of the ICT innovation, Marshal McLuhan predicted the global village where the world would be interconnected with the aid of technology. The internet, indeed, has led the revolution as people around the globe took advantage of the massiveness of the network bringing about modifications in the ways and manner they work, live, learn, communicate, and earn (David & Mariswamy, [2014](#)). This is manifested in

its breaking of communication boundaries due to the wide reach and connectivity to all forms of computer and other mobile technological devices, such as mobile phones.

Digital technologies, such as the new media and social media in particular are described as being increasingly pervasive (Murthy, [2018](#)). Such pervasiveness appeared glaring in their adoption or multiplicity of use in the wake of the Arab Spring (Murthy, [2018](#)). The foregoing implies that the use of social media platforms for the organisation of protest started gaining popularity in the earliest part of the previous decade (2010-2020). In general, social media is the tool used for promoting human interactions that can be considered unhindered due to their various unique characteristics. Some of the characteristics include interactivity, immediate feedback, ease-of-use, user-generate contents, and more. It is based on the foregoing that Kente and Abimiku ([2022](#)) posited that "social media, therefore, promote interaction and public participation in over various issues of human concerns" (p. 102). The above-mentioned assertion underscores the important roles of social media in human communication and interaction; one that it is almost a propeller of some sort.

It is, therefore, pertinent to note that same technologies have power in political mobilisation and civic engagements, whether for elections or protests. According to Umoro and Nnabuiife ([2022](#)), civic engagement refers to deliberate efforts by the citizen of a country aimed at enthroning good governance. It is also the pattern of citizens' participation in community life geared towards the improvement for others or for the purpose of shaping the future of the community (Adler & Goggin, [2005](#)). According to Hendricks ([2019](#)), civic engagement has to do with attempts or efforts of stakeholders with focus on ensuring a participation in community or political activities. Civic engagements are people-centered, and include efforts of group of individuals often tailored towards ensuring that policies and programmes of the government align with specific dreams and aspirations of the people.

In reality, civic engagement may involve collective and individual actions designed to point out and proffer solutions to issues of public concern and may take on different forms, ranging from individual voluntarism to organisational involvement to electoral participation (Adler & Goggin, [2005](#)). Relatedly, Longley ([2020](#)) categorised civic engagements into electoral participation, volunteerism, activism, and advocacy. To bring

about social or political change, people often come together to raise awareness and gain the support of the wider public. Nowadays, social media goes beyond being just a tool for activism; it creates a space for those who might have previously been unable to get involved due to work or other life responsibilities (Khiry, [2020](#)).

Social media has been recognized as a key factor in elevating the level of civic engagement across various forms. However, other factors all add up to make for success in political mobilisation and civic engagement. In reality, the use of social media during the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria demonstrated their powers in the area of civic engagements in the country (Umoro & Nnabuife, [2022](#)). Furthermore, Umoro and Nnabuife asserted that "although Twitter and other social media platforms are veritable platforms for social mobilisation and social action, but may not necessarily be the only variable for political uprising" (p. 174). Aside social media, other factors such as unified agenda, economic effects, persistence on the side of the protesters, absence of formal leadership structure, ability to wade off partisan politics, long silence from the seat of power, unimaginable unemployment and poverty rate, coordination and logistics, and the support from Nigerians in diaspora, all played a role in the successes recorded during the protest (Kabir, [2020](#)). These successes are said to be resounding and heard across the world.

However, social media in the hands of the people (through the ever-advancing technological innovation) wield so much power in the organisation and management of all forms of organised protests. Social media serves as a platform for the underrepresented society thereby giving a voice to the silenced while providing platforms for protesters and political organisations or groups to organise events and disseminate related information in a seamless manner (Barnett, [2019](#)).

As observed by Loya and McLeod ([2020](#)), new media technologies are useful in the organisation and management of social protests in modern times. It is based on the foregoing that this study assesses the adoption of social media-enabled communication in respect of the mobilisation and management of the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The study is an expository on the effectiveness of the social media-enabled communication strategies adopted for the protest, especially in the areas of mobilisation and management. This study also focuses on some of the challenges encountered in the use of such communication strategies in the entire

process that led to the overhaul of the SARS in the world's most populous Black Nation.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Ascertain the place of communication within the context of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria.
2. Find out the need for communication strategy in social movement mobilisation and management.
3. Determine the effectiveness of social media in social movement mobilisation and management.
4. Identify challenges associated with social movement mobilisation and management.

Conceptual Review

The concepts of communication, management, social media, and mass mobilisation are the primary ones for review in this study. Communication is seen as the actionable transfer of information from a place, group, or person to another by speaking, writing, or using a medium through which parties are able to derive understanding (Ntara & Evans, [2023](#)). Furthermore, it involves the exchange of ideas or messages between individuals or groups in the process (Asemah et al., [2022](#)). Management, on the other hand, describes the administration and coordination of tasks toward achieving a goal (Herrity, [2024](#)). Accordingly, the administration referred to in the concept of management include activities whereby strategy of the organisation is set to coordinate the efforts of staff to accomplish the desired goals and objectives by applying available resources.

Social media refers to the internet-based applications that rely on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0 and enable contents that are created and generated by the users (Kaplan, [2018](#)). In other words, the applications are prominent for user-generated content capabilities. The implication of the foregoing definition is that social media enables its users to self-generate content and heavily rely on the internet to function. As computer-mediate technology, social media is largely interactive and may also facilitate ideas, knowledge, and /career interests coupled with other types of expression through networks and virtual communities

(Anyaneyulu, [2024](#)). Hence, this implies that the platforms are highly interactive and collaborative in nature.

Mass mobilisation refers to the process involved in the convening of a large number of people towards a common goal (Faster Capital, [2024](#)). It can also be seen as a method through which a centralised political organisation seeks to implement widespread changes in a particular society (Nojumi, [2002](#)). Accordingly, these attempts aimed at occasioning social change are people-centred and the need to get them to be part and parcel of the process is considered as the very first step at achieving success. Therefore, they are usually mobilised to own and actively participate in the process; hence, the mass mobilisation name for the process. However, the current study focuses on the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter (Now X), and YouTube to mass-mobilise Nigerians to take part in the 2020 #EndSARS.

Literature Review

Communication is considered as a vital tool for connecting society within states, a tool for the facilitation of an all-inclusive political system that gives voice to the poor and other marginalised groups, and enables or strengthens social accountability and citizen participation (Haider et al., [2011](#)). In other words, communication is essential in the development process as it provides the platforms and links between the government and the governed. Invariably, with communication, a lot can be achieved by stakeholders.

Communication is important to any project or action (Shaheen & Haneef, [2014](#)). It has been instrumental in community mobilisation for a long time, as with it, policy makers, opinion leaders and other stakeholders (local, state, and federal governments, professional groups, religious groups, businesses, and individual community members) at different levels can be engaged on meaningful approaches (Shaheen & Haneef, [2014](#)).

Aside the use of tools or channels, such as the mass media (radio, television, newspaper, magazine), social media (Facebook, X, Instagram), and so on, social movements also take specific communication strategies for reaching the target audience; whether it is mobilisation or management. According to Shaheen and Haneef ([2014](#)), such strategies could come in the form of communication for social change or participatory development communication. Organisations, for instance Mentally Aware NG, SERAP – Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, EndSARS Legal Aid,

The Food Coven, Flutterwave, and more (Lewis, [2020](#)), took advantage of these strategies to embark on fruitful mobilisation efforts towards achieving set goals and objectives for social movement. However, the use of prominent channels such as new media characterised communication for social change in modern times. Therefore, much of the literature for this study focused on the use of ICTs and digital technologies such as new media of which social media is an aspect. Building on the perspective of Vliegthart and Walgrave ([2012](#)), who argue that one of the strategies employed by movements to engage with the media is to seek alternatives, including the use of social media, the literature focus of this study aligns with this approach.

In a study conducted by Dumitrica and Felt ([2020](#)), mediation (a concept that describes the ways in which the intervention of communication in meaning process) was given prominence and discussed extensively. Most significantly, the study noted that social media brought new experiences to the organisation and management of social movements. Furthermore, Dumitrica and Felt ([2020](#)), noted that from the example of the Arab Spring, it is now glaring that technology is the modern tool for collective action and social media leads in that regard due to its ubiquity, connectivity, and ease-of-use. Yet, on the benefits derived therefrom, that is from the innovations, Mason ([2014](#)) asserted that social movements and protesters are now able to take advantage of available media technologies to increase visibility and to ensure their voices are heard (amplification).

Different scholars have delved into the matter of the usefulness of modern technologies especially social media to protest or social movement (Jenzen et al., [2020](#)). According to Bimber et al. ([2012](#)), most of the scholarships on the topic have their focus on the functions of the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as channels or platforms for news sharing and as tools for organising protest actions. However, little attention has been given to the use of visual artefacts together with social media to impact social change in our world (Neumayer & Rossi, [2018](#)). Nevertheless, the use of digital artefacts utilised during offline protest actions and across other forms of online activism provides rich arrays or troves of visual imagery, which may include memes, photos, videos, posters, and collages. However, the researchers had hardly analysed them as they tend to prefer text over images giving the former so much attention (Bennett & Segerberg, [2013](#); Jenzen et al., [2020](#)).

Protesters' ability to communicate their demands in a clear tone makes a protest more effective (de Haan et al., [2022](#)). In other words, the use of carefully crafted social change communication will yield positive results for protest movement and; therefore, is a major distinguishing factor. As much as clear communication is required from protesters for the movement to be heard, is for drafters or the message to ensure that there is clarity and the purpose is well defined to either attract more persons to join the movement or to get the authority to act upon the request (devoid of ambiguity). In itself, protest is a form of communication for social change because it is a tool used for the communication of contestation and grievances (Oyedemi, [2020](#)). Therefore, when protesters embark on street demonstrations, they communicate, and it is used to get the message across. In the same vein, communicating a clear message is necessary to get the buy-in of the protesters to embark on mass action.

A major challenge to communication amid protest is that of noise and sometimes chaos. Protests are often vibrant, loud, with a spectacular display of energy which sometimes comes in form of support or opposition and it is a problem, at least, from the perspective of the communicator (Adi & Lilleker, [2017](#)). Another major challenge with communication in protest is that they are often chaotic. Resultantly, dialogue or communication may be ignored in the early stages (de Haan et al., [2022](#); Loya & McLeod, [2020](#)).

According to Olanrewaju ([2016](#)), change in its entirety is a difficult process as individuals only embrace change when there is paradigm shift or commensurate change in both their perceptions and mentality. For any meaningful change to take place, collective efforts must be made in the process of communicating change in behaviour, knowledge, practice, and attitudes. Olanrewaju further stressed that in the discourse on the ways to use communication to actualise change in society, certain pertinent questions are visualised, such may include, how can we bring about a change in the orientation of the people? What language should be used to communicate change? Therefore, social change requires the input from all stakeholders, the attitudinal input from the people, and a commensurate attempt by authority to bring about the desired change as expressed by the people through various methods, namely protest, letter, debates, and so on.

Additionally, Olanrewaju ([2016](#)) explained that the change process "requires that people rise above the present circumstances and contribute to seek and exhibit relevant habit, knowledge, and practices that will change

the society for good. There is the need for re-orientation of people through proper communication and information" (p. 19). Furthermore, Olanrewaju cited the case of Nigeria stressing that it is impossible to bring about social change in Nigeria without first changing Nigerians. He stressed that we should be the agents of change just as there can be no meaningful system reforms without a reform of the people, as a reformed system will be undermined by unreformed minds. Contrarily, a reformed mind will lead reforms in every sense of the word.

A further challenge to effecting social change in Nigeria is the language of communication (Olagbaju, [2015](#)). The language in which the process will be communicated is another probing question in respect of the social change process. Since social change may be achieved through social movement, the need to get the majority of people involved becomes a requisite task that must be accomplished. In the same vein, organisers of social movement may also face the same problem on choosing the best language strategy to adopt in the mobilisation of achieving change. The dilemma could be the language that will be most accepted and effected on whether the choice is English, Pidgin English, or other major languages understood by people in the country.

Theoretical Framework

The current study is based on medium theory which revolves around conveying the meaning of messages and the importance of the channels of communication. The theory can be traced to Marshal McLan and Harold Innis (Strate, [2012](#); Tremblay, [2012](#)). Medium theory's core assumption advocates that media comprises not just channels of communication but also the diverse set of settings enabling communication to occur with direct impact on the meaning, varying its meaning and sense of information being transferred (Asemah et al., [2022](#)). Furthermore, Asemah et al. ([2022](#)) averred that distinct features or characteristic of each medium matter in this regard. Knowledge of the features of the concerned media form is important, and these could be in the form of video, audio, or texts, which are necessary to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of communication through specific media type or form. It has also been averred that "the medium affects perception". The medium theory is also referred to as "channel theory or media formalism" (Asemah et al., [2022](#), p. 171).

The theory is also based on the postulation that the channel of communication has extended impact on the entire process. Asemah et al. (2022) lend credence that channels, such as the internet, radio, television, and newspaper have far-reaching impact on the target audience regardless of the message delivered through them. This is based on the postulations of McLuhan (1964), who stated that "technology in any aspect was a way in which humans amplified their own abilities; the car is an extension of the feet, clothing is an extension of the skin, mobile communications are an extension of the voice" (p. 171).

McLuhan was further quoted to have challenged conventional definitions with his claim that the medium is the message (Asemah et al., 2022). He also explained that there are different types of channels and such difference manifests in content and patterns with which they awaken and alter human thoughts and senses. The medium has also been described as "the symbolic environment of any communicative act" (Asemah et al., 2022, p. 172). The medium theory is relevant to this study because it provides explanations to the ways a media can be influenced in physical and psychological propagation of messages

Methodology

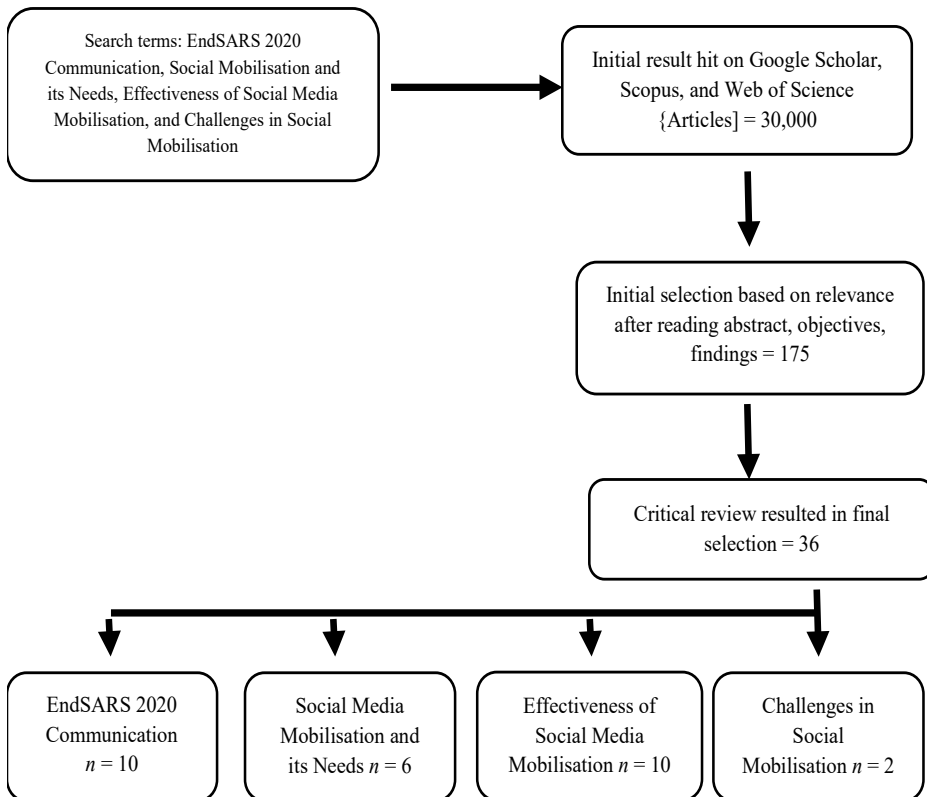
This study is qualitative and takes into account the existing and relevant literature on the use of social media as a mobilisation tool during the EndSARS campaigns in Nigeria in the later part of 2020, the ones considered as largely successful. Keywords included in the search conducted on the Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Scopus were "EndSARS 2020 Communication," "Social Media Mobilisation and its Needs," "Effectiveness of Social Media Mobilisation," and "Challenges in Social Mobilisation." Initially, the search resulted in over 30,000 relevant articles. However, a careful review of abstracts, objectives, and findings led to the exclusion of 29,825 articles, leaving behind 175 articles. Further pruning was done based on the inclusion criteria which included the research questions as well as the findings and conclusion of the secondary data sources. At the end, the number of articles for the final analysis remained 28 ($n = 28$). From the results, the researchers identified relevant thematic areas for analysis and discourse. Accordingly, the breakdown of the finally included articles comprised EndSARS 2020 Communication = 10, Social Media Mobilisation and its Needs = 6, Effectiveness of Social

Media Mobilisation = 10, and Challenges in Social Media Mobilisation = 2.

Critical review was conducted for the analysis of the secondary data collected from various databases. The discussion was based on the relevant literature that focused on the protests, as well as their mobilisation and management. Based on the existing and relevant literature regarding the protests, a thematic discussion of the study is carried out. The diagram below is a flow chart that demonstrates the search criteria and final selection of the articles.

Figure 1

Flow Chart of Article Search and Screening Process



Results & Discussion

Keeping in view the objectives of this study, a thematic discussion of the findings of the qualitative literature is presented below vis á vis the objectives.

Communication and Protest

In any clime, communication is an important factor and it is one that distinguishes man from other living things. According to Olanrewaju (2016), society itself is woven around communication and information exchange between and among individuals whether through interpersonal, cultural, and in informal or formal setting or channel depends so much on it. Furthermore, Olanrewaju averred that, in the same manner, civil society also thrives on the platform of quality communication among stakeholders or units while stressing the need for a country to have vibrant and active civil society.

Civil society makes a nation achieve success across different areas through the instrumentation of pressures and movements. However, a country needs civil society with all its quality and vibrancy of communication networks linking organisations or institutions, groups, and individuals in pursuit of a common goal (Olanrewaju, 2016). Buttressing the need for civil society, Olanrewaju further notes that actualising or effecting positive change in society is much more a simplified task in situations where people can engage in discussions about things that affect them. Put in another way, interactive techniques in form of planned communication will likely to yield positive results, such as social change. Often times, communication takes place between the government and the people when they express themselves through demonstrations, sit-ins, and other avenues of mass action.

Social change is not a linear process and behaviour is the catalyst because change is linked by processes which include feedback (Ramafoko, 2016). According to Ramafoko, there are four key drivers of change, that is dialogue and debate, social learning, action and reflection, and self and community efficacy just as change takes place in three domains namely individual, community and the larger society. In other words, change is expected to take place at the level of an individual, community, and the broader society. Furthermore, Ramafoko revealed that the three action points for social change include media, social mobilisation, and advocacy.

At the level of social mobilisation, communication is useful to the point that it can be used for community efficacy, peer engagement, reflection and action, critical voice for advocacy, provide the requisite between the people and identifiable services whilst holding services accountable (Ramafoko, [2016](#)). Whereas, at the level of advocacy, Ramafoko noted that communication can be used to mobilise political and social support, examine barriers to anticipate change, and advocate for healthy policies.

As observed earlier, protest is a form of communication. According to Oyedemi ([2020](#)), protest is one of the visible ways through which opposition or support of an ideology or practice can be communicated. Furthermore, he noted that there are two perspectives from which protest as communication can be understood. First is that, protest is a form of communication of perceived grievances, and second is that, protest makes use of varied genres of communication and a multiplicity of media types to communicate discontent or grievances. Above all, Oyedemi described protest as performance based on the action of an individual or a collective action of group of individuals. Protesters are the performers of the action, taking the stage as antagonists or protagonists to effect social change, social justice, or retain control of power. Likewise, the people that marched through the streets of major urban centres in Nigeria played the referenced significant role during #EndSARS.

Though most protests all over the world are often tagged disruptive, terroristic, and as avenues for constituting nuisance through demonstrations and direct actions, they have been adjudged important and vital instruments or tools for political negotiation and engagement, giving people the voice (de Haan et al., [2022](#)). Communication is an important aspect of negotiations and violence and it is the reason of the assertion that negotiation and violence are two ends of a continuum of communication (van der Merwe, [2013](#)). It is so because negotiations and violence are both intended to convey message either of approval or disapproval. According to van der Merwe, physical violence becomes the alternative when people feel they have exhausted all other channels of communication or in event such means are blocked. In line with the foregoing, those who participated in #EndSARS also expressed similar grievances and reservations. Notably, the process of de-escalating violence in conflict situation requires taking accounts of all sides of the story and to sympathetically assess actions with

a view to finding solutions. This is the point where negotiations entail. In any of the foregoing reference cases, communication is at place.

In a study by Poulakidakos et al. ([2020](#)), it was revealed that social movement adopt communication media and deploys strategies based on the affordances of the particular media technology. Different media forms have distinct affordances relevant to activism and these provide social movements the chance to assess and then settle for a specific media technology or forms depending on the capacity and affordances. These affordances include civic engagement, freedom of expression, access, and others. It is noteworthy that social movements and the individual activists that are movers select communication technologies and available media, as well as utilise their technological affordances to align with their various activist strategies (Cammaerts, [2018](#); Cammaerts et al., [2013](#)). In modern times, the internet and associated technologies have been found to be useful and affordable and are also the channels or tools that prove to be more effective and persuasive in respect of diffusion of actions and ideas in various parts of the world (Carty & Onyett, [2006](#)).

Need for Communication Strategy in Social Mobilisation and Management

Communication encompasses all methods used to persuade people toward achieving set goals and objectives, and without it, achieving social change becomes significantly challenging (Well Made Strategy, [2020](#)). Put succinctly, no social change intervention effort can succeed without effective communication. With communication, a lot can be achieved in the process of change, for example, it can be useful in the formulation of policies, creating opportunities and building support for socio-political reform, influence important/key stakeholders in any society, and campaign for change in attitudes and practices anywhere in the world. In any case, communication helps solve a myriad of societal issues ranging from social to political.

However, for communication to be effective, a lot of planning must go into the designing and development of objectives, strategy, and tactics. Also, it must be targeted at a definitive audience with clear message capable of persuading them to take specific actions (Well Made Strategy, [2020](#)). It is imperative to note that the foregoing is what strategic communication is all about. Furthermore, Well Made Strategy avers that whereas

communication is an essential tool required to build a robust conversation around an issue, good communication evolves overtime and is continuously made possible only when it is with the right people in the correct way or fashion. Every social movement requires effective mobilisation and management and the significant aspect is to ensure that the right strategy is adopted, message is clearly communicated, and the most effective channel is utilised in the process.

For protest action or movement to be effective, it must have developed communication strategies that can be deployed to spread messages. Such methods must be multi-faceted and targeted at varied groups in different ways (Oyedemi, [2020](#)). It is so required because protest movements need several interest groups who may contribute resources, exert unique influences, and bring on board fresh ideas. Therefore, a communication strategy well designed and executed is one of the most important ingredients to actualise the set goals. Among several other benefits, good communication strategy woven into the fabric of or expressed in quality message theme helps create strategic partnerships, increase sustainability of a social movement, and establish a winning culture (winning minds and hearts of so many persons). These are all sides to the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

Protests rely immensely on communication to gain the popularity they deserve in order to thrive and bring about the desired change. On the need for communication in social movements, de Haan et al. ([2022](#)) noted the need to professionalise media approach that in turn ensures that the protest achieve international or global acceptance. This is achievable through a proper assessment of the situation and adoption of a suitable strategy that can be used to advance a cause in modern times. During the 2020 #EndSARS, communication was seen to be a focus of some of the visible organisers as the platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (now X), trended messages relating to the protest. With the hashtag EndSARS across Twitter, it was clear that the people understood the meaning and importance of professional communication approach to effective mobilisation.

Communication strategy is crucial throughout the life of a social movement. Accordingly, de Haan et al. ([2022](#)) maintained that a good communication strategy, which includes meticulous documentation of events during a protest with the use of channels, such as social media, is necessary to inspire public outrage and to ultimately achieve the desired

social change. In other words, even after the mobilisation stage, communication is needed to manage protest in order to get more and more people to subscribe to protest idea with social change being the end product. In the management of the #EndSARS of 2020, communication was a priority and it was mainly on social media as the traditional media in the country initially snubbed the movements, as the activities were either underreported or left unreported altogether.

A study by Poulakidakos et al. (2020) revealed that technologies and media offer certain affordances and those are used to embark on mobilisation for direct action. It was also further stated by them that communication technologies and media are utilised for the purpose of coordination of the protest action, as well as connecting individuals who are taking part in the movement action. According to Cammaerts (2018), communication technologies and media are also useful for recording protest activities, production, and mediation of the circulation and archiving of the artefacts created for the protest. From one end of the country to another, the 2020 #EndSARS protest was covered and reported by the citizens themselves who actively participated in the activities. This promoted the concept of citizen journalism as they resorted to self-help on account of the snub, they earlier got from the traditional media platforms in the country.

Effectiveness of Social Media in Social Movement Mobilisation and Management

In modern times, social media offers veritable tools for protest organisation and management. According to Poulakidakos et al. (2020), modern technologies are effective in the social movement, from mobilisation to coordination and the entire management processes. As a result of the growth and development in digital technologies, social media has become more significant tool in dissemination strategies adopted by the activists (Cammaerts, 2018; Prentoulis & Kyriakidou, 2019). Furthermore, Cammaerts averred that social media is useful in sharing information, spreading the word, to be organised and get prepared for future (direct) action, to establish interconnectedness for similar struggles, and to keep followers and sympathisers motivated to the cause of the social movement.

In the study by Bennett and Segerberg (2012), it was revealed that with the advent of social media, more personalised types or styles of public engagement have been introduced, a feat achieved via the sharing-of-

content capacity of the platforms. In this regard, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so many other social media platforms used to share content across virtual spaces. A study by Spasojevic (2017) found that social media played significant role in the effective mobilisation of protesters in the 2009 Green Movement uprising in Iran and that of Egypt in 2011 (popularly known as Arab Spring). Most significantly, such platforms served as tools for building collective identity, mobilization, and for framing a cause, just as they were used for the management of the uprising. From the foregoing, it is evident that social media platforms proved useful during the various cases cited in the study and same was the case with 2020 #EndSARS in Nigeria.

Among various other benefits and areas of effectiveness, social media channels have been found to be useful in protest mobilisation and management in that they serve as tools for information exchange (as seen in Ukrainian and Turkish protests of 2013-2014), and also used to communicate motivational appeals and emotional themes (Jost et al., 2018). Furthermore, this study revealed that online communication often starts as mere conversations but frequently morphed into some sort of serious debates on crucial ideological issues that may occasion a serious social or political change. Some examples provided in the study include the online discussions in respect of the Newton, Connecticut Elementary School tragic shooting in 2012, and the issues surrounding a possible US Military intervention in Syria. The #EndSARS in Nigeria followed the same pattern and was adjudged to have achieved significant success.

Aside facilitating relationships that exist between social movements, social media is also greatly effective in the resources-mobilisation related activities in a bid for social and political change (Ajisafe et al., 2021). Here, resource mobilisation refers to the human and material resources required to affect social and political change in modern times. The central hub of 21st-century communication is social media, with all other aspects of modern communication revolving around it. Therefore, to mobilise people to sign-off for a social movement, social media is considered as an effective tool. It can also be used to mobilise financial support through networking (Auter & Fine, 2017; Drummond et al., 2017). This is also possible through events and other avenues for any cause aimed at social and political change. In the case of #EndSARS, protesters solicited for funds online while

drawing the attention of the international community to their #5for5 demands during the protest.

Furthermore, Ajisafe et al. (2021) declared that social media can completely modify information and communication flow in society just as it is responsible for the restructuring of public spheres. Relatedly, Cammaerts (2015) stated that social media network has equally served different purposes for races, ethnic groups, or individuals especially in respect of sharing identities, improving, and collecting feelings or emotions. Due to this, it has morphed a modern and unique type of virtual collective identity upon which social movements now build protests and actions. It is believed that modern social movements are built on such moves as exemplified in other climes, such as the Arab Spring across Arab Nations and that of BlackLivesMatter in North America.

According to Ajisafe et al. (2021), social media has also powered the instant validation of information, a feature that overrides the glaring biases of the system media, a transformation that gave "social movements the ability to propagate a beneficial narrative and appeal to social sympathy" (p. 4). During the #EndSARS protest, the protesters (mostly young Nigerians in their prime) promoted the cause and challenged with authority to admonish the Nigerian Police to be part of the movement as they were also being protected in their quest for reforms of the justice system of the country. This narrative drew the attention of people across the country, the African continent, and the world.

Challenges Associated with Social Movement Mobilisation and Management

From the perspective of the use of communication, there are certain challenges faced in the mobilisation and management of social movements. Adi (2019) noted that the major challenge with the use of communication for social movements is that certain communication strategies, such as the ones aimed at value change or modifications often times segment or divide rather than uniting the society. Adi further explained that the foregoing presents the major conundrum for communicators who may have their hands full trying to devise means to send the message of the movement clearly without ambiguity. Again, when they pass the message, Adi averred that interpretation rests on the receivers.

Another challenge revealed by Adi (2019) was related to the problem of identifying the real communicator who should be saddled with the responsibility of drafting a strategy that works for the actualisation of the goals and objectives of a protest. As Adi points out, those who voice dissent, including protesters and activists, often use similar communication strategies and tools. This raises the important question of who exactly is behind the message being shared. The myriads that face people in the process of ascertaining the real communicator, the best channel to use, and the most effective communication strategy to adopt pose a challenge to the communication process in social movement. These issues were also glaring during the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, as it was tagged a leaderless movement.

Another challenge to the use of communication for social movement may be distractions from emotional and external noise (University of Waterloo, 2019). This is so because humans react emotionally to certain ideas, concepts, words, and other cues, such as gestures of the communicator or speaker, just as noise from our environment could cause distractions to the listener. In the communication, noise is considered a barrier. Similarly, noise could cause hindrance when using deploying strategies for communication in social movement mobilisation and management. One other challenge identified by University of Waterloo was related to the distorted focus, that is the act of focusing on negatives instead of the positive aspects of a communication. Hence, a message can be delivered and the recipient in the interpretation process due to distorted focus ascribe opposite meaning of the message.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a need for communication before, during, and after protests, basically for the purpose of accountability and responsibility. Before a protest or any social movement, communication is required for planning and mobilisation. During the protest, communication becomes imperative to manage people and events and is important to avoid chaotic moments. And in the aftermath of a protest, communication is also of great essence when it comes to evaluation and assessment. During the #EndSARS protest, the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter were prominently used for the purpose of organising and managing the different elements and people who were actively involved in the process. Therefore, this study recommends that organisers and mobilisers for social

movements should also explore social media as a veritable tool on account of the lessons from the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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