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Social media-based advocacy in social work practice for domestic violence survivors: a mixed-methods study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social media in the digital advocacy practices of social workers at the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) of Kendari City in handling domestic violence (DV) cases. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study integrated content analysis and engagement metrics of the DP3A's official social media accounts on Instagram, Threads, and Facebook (Quantitative Phase) with semi-structured in-depth interviews with social workers, social media administrators, and DV survivors (Qualitative Phase). A total of 73 posts were analyzed. Findings reveal that institutional activity content dominates (42.5%), while service-oriented content, including reporting procedures, contact information, and confidentiality assurances, remains markedly limited. Advocacy and campaign content generated the highest average engagement (10.0 per post), indicating audience responsiveness to social messaging. Qualitative findings indicate that survivors prefer private communication channels due to fear and stigma, suggesting that low public engagement does not equate to content ineffectiveness. A digital advocacy process model encompassing four phases, digital information exposure, initial contact, preliminary assessment, and formal service referral, is proposed. The study recommends strengthening survivor-centered content strategies, developing digital response protocols, and fostering cross-sector collaboration to optimize social media as an advocacy instrument for domestic violence services.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence (DV) constitutes a violation of human rights that continues to represent a serious problem in Indonesia. Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (2025) or The National Commission on Violence Against Women recorded 401,975 cases of violence against women in 2023, with cases in the personal/domestic sphere accounting for over 70% of all reported gender-based violence cases. Beyond these figures, survivors face interrelated physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences (Stubbs & Szoek, 2022; Gunarathne et al., 2023). Structural barriers such as economic dependency, psychological pressure, and social stigma further

impede survivors in seeking assistance (Bauer et al., 2026; Hulley et al., 2023; WHO, 2012).

The government has responded through Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence and the establishment of DP3A (Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak/Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection) and UPTD PPA (Unit Pelaksana Teknis Daerah Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak/Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children) service units across various regions (UU RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2004 Tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga, 2004; KemenPPPA, 2023). Nevertheless, data from the National Survey on Women's Life Experiences (SPHPN) indicates that

one in four women has experienced violence, yet only a small fraction reports to formal services, a gap that KemenPPPA (2023) characterizes as a “tip of the iceberg” phenomenon. Structural barriers, including withdrawal of complaints and limited legal follow-through, have continued to impede the effective implementation of the law (KemenPPPA, 2024). At the local level, preliminary observations at the DP3A of Kendari City identified approximately 23 reported domestic violence cases within a single year, while the actual prevalence is estimated to be considerably higher (Suryanti & Muttaqin, 2023).

Amid these challenges in service access, digital transformation presents new opportunities. As of 2024, Indonesia has over 185 million internet users, representing 66.5% of the total population (APJII, 2024; We Are Social & Kepios, 2024), fundamentally altering the ways in which survivors seek assistance and the ways in which service agencies reach vulnerable populations. Aldkheel et al. (2021) and Zhang & Li (2025) note that social media has emerged as a significant environment in which domestic violence survivors share their experiences and seek support, a pattern further documented through systematic reviews of online victimization disclosure (Gorissen et al., 2023; Gueta et al., 2024). Within social work practice, Afrouz & Lucas (2023) affirm that social workers have broadly adopted digital platforms, including WhatsApp, Zoom, and social media, as instruments of intervention, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, though such adoption has often occurred without formalized protocols or ethical guidelines, a concern also raised in the context of technology-facilitated domestic violence responses (Bailey et al., 2024; Woodlock et al., 2020).

However, a significant gap persists in the existing literature. The majority of studies focus on individual survivor perspectives or public awareness campaigns, while research that specifically examines the utilization of social media by social workers as a structured advocacy instrument remains markedly limited, including how human service organizations strategically deploy institutional social media accounts for

advocacy purposes (Xue et al., 2024). From a methodological standpoint, no study has yet combined content analysis and engagement metrics of institutional social media accounts with field interview data in the context of domestic violence advocacy in Indonesia (Snelson, 2016; Xue et al., 2024).

Preliminary observations at the DP3A of Kendari City identified three phenomena: social workers employ WhatsApp, Instagram, Threads, and Facebook to communicate with survivors; the DP3A maintains official social media accounts on three platforms; and a portion of survivors first became aware of protection services through digital platforms. To address this gap, the present study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Ivankova et al., 2006), integrating content analysis and engagement metrics of the DP3A Kendari City social media accounts (Quantitative Phase) with in-depth interviews with social workers and domestic violence survivors (Qualitative Phase), to address three research questions: (1) what are the patterns of social media use by the DP3A as an advocacy instrument; (2) how do social workers utilize social media in supporting survivors' access to services; and (3) what are the barriers and opportunities in implementing social media-based advocacy at the DP3A of Kendari City.

METHODS

This study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, a mixed-methods approach in which quantitative data analysis is conducted in the first phase, followed by qualitative data collection to explain the quantitative findings in greater depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). Phase 1 analyzed the content patterns and engagement metrics of the official social media accounts of the DP3A of Kendari City on Instagram, Threads, and Facebook. Phase 2 conducted in-depth interviews with social workers and domestic violence survivors to explain the digital findings from the perspectives of both the practitioners and recipients of advocacy services. The design framework is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods Design Framework

Component	Phase 1 (Quantitative)	Phase 2 (Qualitative)
Priority	Dominant	Supplementary
Sequence	First	Second, following Phase 1 findings
Purpose	To analyze content patterns and engagement metrics of the official DP3A Kendari City social media accounts	To explore the meanings, barriers, and opportunities of digital advocacy from the perspectives of social workers and survivors
Data type	Posts, likes, comments, content categories (public data)	Semi-structured in-depth interview transcripts
Analysis	Content analysis and descriptive statistics of engagement	Thematic analysis, Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2019)

Source: Adapted from Creswell & Poth, 2018

Research Site and Timeline

The study was conducted at the DP3A of Kendari City, Southeast Sulawesi Province, from December 2025 to April 2026. The DP3A was selected as the research site because it is the governmental institution responsible for the protection of domestic violence survivors and maintains an active presence across the three social media platforms that constitute the objects of analysis.

Phase 1: Content Analysis and Engagement Metrics

The data source for Phase 1 comprises all posts published on the official social media accounts of the DP3A of Kendari City on Instagram, Threads, and Facebook, from the date of each account's creation through April 2026. The unit of analysis is

each individual post (photograph, infographic, video, or text). Data were collected through systematic observation of publicly available content, following the ethical approach outlined by Williams et al. (2017) and the methodological framework for content analysis established by Neuendorf (2017) and recorded in a structured coding sheet encompassing: upload date, platform, content format, thematic category, number of likes, number of comments, and the presence of hashtags.

Each post was coded into one of five categories developed deductively on the basis of Xue et al. (2024), as presented in Table 2. This deductive coding approach is consistent with established content analysis procedures that operationalize prior theoretical frameworks (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017).

Table 2. Social Media Content Coding Categories

Content Category	Description	Example Indicators
Education/Information	Content explaining domestic violence, survivor rights, or DP3A services	Infographics, DV statistics
Advocacy/Campaign	Content encouraging reporting or inviting public participation	Campaign hashtags, calls to report
Services/Announcements	Information on procedures, schedules, or DP3A contact details	Hotline numbers, operating hours
Institutional Activities	Documentation of official DP3A activities	Training photographs, coordination meetings
Other	Content outside the above categories	Holiday greetings, general content

Source: Adapted from Xue, 2024

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the frequency distribution of posts per month, percentage distribution of content categories, mean engagement per category, comprising likes and comments as behavioral indicators of audience interaction (Drossos et al.,

2024), and a comparative analysis of activity across platforms. Coding reliability was ensured through intercoder reliability testing, with a Cohen's Kappa value of ≥ 0.70 (Landis & Koch, 1977), a widely accepted threshold in qualitative content analysis (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Coding was performed

by the researcher and one additional coder with familiarity with the research content categories, with a consensus discussion protocol employed to resolve any discrepancies in judgment.

Phase 2: In-Depth Interviews

Phase 2 employed semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings attributed by informants to the digital advocacy phenomena identified in Phase 1 (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Semi-structured

interviews are particularly suited to mixed-methods studies in which the qualitative phase is used to explain or expand upon quantitative findings (Roulston, 2021; Knott et al., 2022). Informants were selected using purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020), comprising social workers, social media administrators, and domestic violence survivors who had previously received services from the DP3A of Kendari City, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Research Informant Details

No.	Informant Category	Criteria	Number
1	Social workers	Currently active at DP3A Kendari City; involved in survivor accompaniment and service advocacy	3 persons
2	Social media administrators	Managers of the official DP3A accounts involved in digital content production and publication	1 person
3	DV survivors	Have received services from DP3A and first learned of the services through social media	4 persons

Source: Research Data, 2026

The profiles of internal informants, comprising social workers and the social media administrator, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Internal Informant Profiles

Code	Position	Primary Involvement
PS-1	Social Worker	DV case accompaniment and referral
PS-2	Social Worker	Survivor advocacy and inter-agency coordination
PS-3	Social Worker	Community education and case accompaniment
ADM-1	Social media administrator	Management of Instagram, Threads, and Facebook posts

Source: Research Data, 2026

The profiles of survivor informants are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Survivor Informant Profiles

Code	General Characteristics	Initial Information Channel
K-1	DV survivor who received services	Instagram
K-2	DV survivor who received services	Friends and WhatsApp
K-3	DV survivor who received services	Facebook
K-4	DV survivor who received services	Instagram and family referral

Source: Research Data, 2026

The interview guide was developed on the basis of the literature review and Phase 1 findings, encompassing the following dimensions: social media usage practices, content strategies, digital interactions with survivors, barriers, and opportunities. Interview data were analyzed using the interactive thematic analysis model of Miles et al. (2019), which involves iterative cycles of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process was guided by the trustworthiness criteria established by Nowell et al.

(2017), ensuring that themes were derived in a systematic and transparent manner.

Data Integration and Trustworthiness

Integration was carried out through a connecting strategy, whereby Phase 1 findings were used to inform the development of the Phase 2 instruments, and a joint display was presented at the discussion stage (Fetters et al., 2013; Guetterman et al., 2015). The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was maintained through source and method triangulation, thick description, an audit trail, and

member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study also adhered to ethical research principles, including full informed consent from survivor informants and the guarantee of informant identity confidentiality. The study also adhered to ethical research principles, including full informed consent from survivor informants and the guarantee of informant identity confidentiality, in accordance with the ethical framework for social media research outlined by Williams et al. (2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the content analysis and social media engagement within the advocacy practices of social workers in handling domestic violence cases at the DP3A of Kendari City. The

analysis was conducted using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, beginning with quantitative content analysis and engagement metrics, followed by qualitative interpretation through interviews to explain the digital patterns identified. The platforms analyzed include Instagram @dp3a.kotakendari, Threads @dp3a.kotakendari, and the Facebook page of the *Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak* (Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency) of Kendari City.

Social Media Usage Patterns

Based on the analysis, a total of 73 posts were analyzed across three platforms. Instagram recorded the highest number of posts, followed by Facebook and Threads, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of Social Media Posts by Platform

Platform	Account/Page	Total	Percentage	Key Characteristics
Instagram	@dp3a.kotakendari	37	50.7	Posters, infographics, reels
Threads	@dp3a.kotakendari	14	19.2	Short messages, brief service information
Facebook	DP3A Kota Kendari	22	30.1	Institutional documentation, announcements
Total		73	100	

Source: Research Data, 2026

The distribution of posts indicates that Instagram serves as the primary digital communication platform for the DP3A of Kendari City, given its visual orientation and suitability for publishing posters, infographics, reels, and activity documentation. Facebook functions as a supplementary platform for reaching a broader audience, while Threads serves as a text-based channel for brief communications.

The interview findings further explain how these platforms are used in practice. Social workers stated that social media is mainly used as an initial communication gateway, while sensitive domestic violence cases are redirected to safer and more private channels, such as WhatsApp, telephone contact, or direct office services. One social worker explained "If someone asks about a case through social media, we generally do not address it in the comments. We direct them to personal contacts or office services so that it is safer" (PS-1).

This finding suggests that the role of social media in domestic violence advocacy should not be understood only through the number of posts or the level of public interaction. In sensitive cases, social media often functions as an entry point for

information exposure, while the actual advocacy process continues through private and formal service channels. This multi-platform presence reflects a recognition by the institution that different audiences may be reached through different channels, consistent with Aldkheel et al. (2021), who noted that domestic violence survivors engage with multiple social media environments when seeking information and support.

Posting frequency does not, however, automatically indicate the effectiveness of digital advocacy. In the context of domestic violence, the effectiveness of social media is assessed not merely by the frequency of posts, but by whether the content provides information that survivors can immediately act upon and whether it directs them to safe communication and service pathways. This distinction between institutional activity and survivor-centered utility becomes more apparent when the content categories are examined in greater detail.

Content Categories and Advocacy Orientation

Posts were classified into five content categories. Table 7 indicates that institutional

activity content constitutes the most dominant category, accounting for 42.5% of all posts.

Table 7. Distribution of Social Media Content Categories

Content Category	Total	Percentage	Description
Education/Information	17	23.3	Information on DV, women's and children's rights
Advocacy/Campaign	10	13.7	Anti-violence campaigns, calls to report
Services/Announcements	9	12.3	Contact information, service schedules, and reporting procedures
Institutional Activities	31	42.5	Meetings, coordination, training, official activities
Other	6	8.2	Ceremonial greetings, general posts
Total	73	100	

Source: Research Data, 2026

The dominance of institutional activity content is explained in part by the internal reporting routines of the institution. The social media administrator acknowledged this pattern directly “The easiest content to post is usually activity documentation, because every activity needs to be reported. Content specifically about service procedures has not been produced very frequently” (ADM-1).

This finding reveals that the skew toward institutional documentation is not the result of indifference toward survivors, but rather reflects the structural logic of government reporting obligations. Hulley et al. (2023) similarly found that institutional barriers, including limited human resources, unclear protocols, and organizational culture, significantly impede the translation of survivor-centered intent into actionable service delivery. The present findings corroborate this pattern: the absence of a structured digital advocacy protocol mirrors the

structural barriers that prevent survivors from accessing services in the first place.

While institutional documentation serves important functions of public accountability, it does not necessarily address the immediate needs of survivors. Domestic violence survivors require specific, actionable information: where to report, what services are available, whether services are free of charge, whether their identity will be kept confidential, and what concrete steps to take following an act of violence. The content distribution identified in this study suggests a significant gap between what the institution currently produces and what survivors most need to find.

Content Relevance to Domestic Violence Issues

The analysis assessed the level of relevance of each post to the issue of domestic violence, using three categories: directly relevant, indirectly relevant, and not specific to domestic violence.

Table 8. Relevance of Social Media Content to Domestic Violence Issues

Content Relevance	Total	Percentage	Description
Directly relevant to DV	12	16.4	Addresses DV, reporting mechanisms, and survivor protection
Indirectly relevant	37	50.7	Women's and children's protection, gender-based violence broadly
Not specific to DV	24	32.9	General institutional documentation and ceremonial content
Total	73	100	

Source: Research Data, 2026

Only 16.4% of posts directly address domestic violence. The majority of content carries indirect relevance, focusing on broader themes of women's and children's protection. Survivor perspectives from the interviews reinforce the significance of this gap. When asked about her experience accessing information through the DP3A's social media, one survivor stated “What I was looking for

was not just a poster, but information about where to go, what to bring, and whether my identity would be kept safe” (K-3).

This testimony illustrates that general protection messages, while raising broad awareness, may not meet the immediate communicative needs of survivors in crisis situations. Survivors require direct and actionable guidance, including reporting

procedures, emergency service contacts, psychosocial and legal support options, and explicit assurances of identity confidentiality. This finding is consistent with Zhang & Li (2025), who observed that survivors actively seek specific, actionable information rather than generalized awareness content when navigating online support environments. The present study extends this observation to the institutional level, demonstrating that even officially managed social media accounts may fall short of providing the targeted information that survivors need to initiate help-seeking.

Advocacy Elements in Social Media Content

The analysis further assessed whether posts incorporated key service-oriented advocacy elements, including calls-to-action, service contact information, reporting procedures, confidentiality assurances, and encouragement to report. To provide a platform-based interpretation of digital advocacy practices, these elements were examined across Instagram, Threads, and Facebook, as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Service-Oriented Advocacy Elements Identified across Social Media Platforms

Advocacy Element	Instagram	Threads	Facebook	Total	% of Total Posts
Call-to-action	12	3	6	21	28.8%
Service contact information	4	2	2	8	11.0%
Service procedures/reporting procedures	3	1	1	5	6.8%
Confidentiality assurances	1	0	1	2	2.7%
Encouragement to report	6	2	3	11	15.1%

Source: Research Data, 2026

Table 9 shows that service-oriented advocacy elements remain limited across the DP3A's social media platforms. Instagram contains the highest number of advocacy elements, which is consistent with its position as the most frequently used platform. However, the overall presence of practical service information remains limited. Only 8 posts contained service contact information, 5 posts included service or reporting procedures, and only 2 posts explicitly mentioned confidentiality assurances.

It is important to note that Table 9 refers to advocacy elements identified in publicly available social media posts, not to the number of individual domestic violence cases handled through each platform. Individual case data and private digital communication were not presented in this table in order to protect survivor confidentiality. Therefore, the table focuses on content-based advocacy indicators that can be ethically analyzed from public posts. One survivor's account directly reflects the practical consequence of this deficit "I saw the information on Instagram, but I did not dare to leave a comment. I feel more comfortable if there is a WhatsApp number I can contact directly" (K-1).

This statement highlights two interrelated issues. First, the absence of clearly visible contact information in the majority of posts creates a barrier for survivors who are ready to seek help but cannot easily identify how to do so safely. Second, the near-absence of confidentiality assurances is particularly consequential in the domestic violence context. Survivors frequently hesitate to report due to fear, shame, or concern that their identity may be disclosed. Gunarathne et al. (2023) found that survivors in low- and middle-income country contexts are particularly sensitive to identity exposure, making open digital interactions highly unlikely even when survivors are actively seeking help. Confidentiality statements and service pathways should therefore constitute routine elements rather than exceptions within the DP3A's digital content strategy.

Engagement Metrics by Platform

Engagement was calculated by summing the likes and comments on each post. Instagram yielded the highest engagement, with an average of 10.3 per post, followed by Facebook (4.2) and Threads (2.4).

Table 10. Engagement Metrics by Platform

Platform	Number of Posts	Total Likes	Total Comments	Total Engagement	Average/Post
Instagram	37	354	27	381	10.3
Threads	14	30	4	34	2.4
Facebook	22	84	8	92	4.2
Total	73	468	39	507	6.9

Source: Research Data, 2026

Instagram's higher engagement reflects the platform's visual-based character, which is consistent with the content format produced by the DP3A. The relatively low volume of public comments across all platforms, however, requires contextual interpretation rather than being read as a sign of content ineffectiveness. Social workers emphasized that the comment section is not an appropriate space for case discussion, and that survivors are actively redirected toward private channels "If someone asks about a case through social media, we generally do not address it in the comments. We direct them to personal contacts or office services so that it is safer" (PS-1).

This practice aligns with the observations of Hulley et al. (2023), who identified fear of perpetrator retaliation and privacy concerns as primary barriers to public help-seeking among

domestic violence survivors. The deliberate avoidance of open comment-based communication by both social workers and survivors means that standard engagement metrics, likes and comments, are structurally limited as indicators of advocacy effectiveness in this context. The DP3A should therefore consider a broader set of indicators, including direct messages, inquiries via WhatsApp, saved posts, and actual referrals to services, to more accurately assess the reach and impact of its digital advocacy content.

Engagement by Content Category

Advocacy/campaign content generated the highest average engagement (10.0 per post), indicating that audiences are more responsive to social messaging and calls-to-action than to institutional documentation.

Table 11. Engagement by Content Category

Content Category	Total	Average Likes	Average Comments	Average Engagement
Education/Information	17	7.8	0.7	8.5
Advocacy/Campaign	10	8.9	1.1	10.0
Services/Announcements	9	6.2	0.6	6.8
Institutional Activities	31	5.1	0.4	5.5
Other	6	4.7	0.2	4.9

Source: Research Data, 2026

Although institutional activity content was posted most frequently, it yielded the lowest average engagement (5.5 per post). Advocacy and campaign content, by contrast, generated the highest audience response despite comprising only 13.7% of total posts. Education and information content also demonstrated relatively strong performance at 8.5 per post. These findings provide an empirical basis for recommending a shift in content proportion away from institutional documentation toward education and advocacy content that is more oriented toward the needs of survivors.

This misalignment between posting frequency and audience responsiveness reflects a broader pattern identified in the digital advocacy literature.

Afrouz & Lucas (2023) noted that social workers have broadly adopted digital platforms as instruments of intervention, yet this adoption has often occurred without formalized protocols or strategic content frameworks. The present findings confirm this at the local government level: while the DP3A maintains an active social media presence, its content strategy is driven more by institutional reporting routines than by an evidence-based understanding of what content generates meaningful engagement or supports survivor decision-making. Developing a content strategy that systematically incorporates advocacy, service information, and confidentiality messaging, guided by engagement data, would represent a significant step toward

realizing the full potential of the institution's digital platforms.

From Institutional Communication toward Survivor-Centered Digital Advocacy

Data integration across quantitative and qualitative findings, as presented in Table 12,

reveals a consistent pattern: the DP3A of Kendari City's social media presence is reasonably active, yet its function as an advocacy instrument requires substantial strengthening.

Table 12. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Integrated Interpretation
Institutional activity content is most dominant (42.5%)	Administrator: documentation follows institutional reporting routines	Social media remains oriented toward institutional documentation
Advocacy/campaign content: highest average engagement (10.0)	Social workers: campaign messages more readily attract public attention	Advocacy-oriented content has greater potential to increase engagement
Service/announcement content constitutes only 12.3%	Survivors require contact numbers, reporting procedures, and service information	Gap between survivors' information needs and the availability of service content
Confidentiality assurances present in only 2.7% of posts	Survivors emphasize fear and safety as primary concerns	Confidentiality messaging needs to be strengthened in digital advocacy content
Public comments are relatively low	Survivors prefer private channels (WhatsApp, direct contact)	Low public engagement does not equate to low content impact

Source: Research Data, 2026

The findings reveal a fundamental tension between institutional communication and survivor-centered advocacy. The DP3A's social media serves important institutional functions, documenting activities, demonstrating program implementation, and maintaining public visibility, yet domestic violence survivors require information that is immediate, specific, and action-oriented. Content that supports survivor decision-making, including service pathways, confidentiality assurances, and reporting mechanisms, remains limited despite qualitative data indicating that these are precisely the elements survivors need most.

The higher engagement recorded for advocacy and campaign content confirms that audiences are responsive to social messaging. However, campaigns are only effective when linked to actionable service information: contact numbers, locations, reporting steps, and explicit guarantees of survivor identity protection. These findings both confirm and extend the observations of Aldkheel et al. (2021) and Zhang & Li (2025), who noted that social media has become a significant environment for domestic violence survivors to seek support. While prior research focused primarily on survivor-initiated disclosure in peer communities, the present

study shifts the analytical lens to institutional social media accounts, revealing that the potential of these platforms as advocacy instruments remains significantly underutilized. The gap between what survivors seek-actionable service information, confidentiality assurances, and reporting pathways, and what institutions currently provide constitutes a critical missed opportunity.

The findings also highlight the importance of social worker involvement in managing digital content. Digital advocacy on domestic violence requires ethical and professional consideration; it cannot be treated merely as a public relations task. Social workers need to be involved in ensuring that content does not victim-blame survivors, does not expose sensitive information, and that response protocols for incoming messages are in place. This resonates with Afrouz & Lucas (2023), who emphasized that social workers have broadly adopted digital platforms as instruments of intervention, yet this adoption has often occurred without formalized protocols or ethical guidelines. The present study confirms this pattern at the local government level: while social workers at the DP3A of Kendari City recognize the communicative value of social media, their engagement with digital

platforms remains largely reactive and undirected, lacking the structured advocacy framework necessary to transform digital presence into meaningful survivor support.

The primary barriers identified include a shortage of human resources who combine digital communication skills with social work knowledge, the absence of systematic use of analytics, ethical barriers in handling sensitive digital communications, and barriers on the part of survivors themselves, including fear, stigma, economic dependency, and limited digital literacy. The preference for private channels such as WhatsApp reported by K-1 and K-3 aligns with Gunarathne et al. (2023)'s observation that survivors in low and middle-income country contexts are particularly sensitive to identity exposure, making open digital interactions highly unlikely even when actively seeking help.

Notwithstanding these barriers, social media offers tangible opportunities to strengthen domestic violence advocacy through more structured service content, periodic educational content series, digital response protocols specifying when social worker involvement is required, and cross-sector collaboration with legal aid institutions, women's organizations, and health facilities. From a methodological standpoint, this study addresses the gap identified by Snelson (2016) and Xue et al. (2024) by combining content analysis and engagement metrics of institutional social media accounts with field interview data, an approach not previously employed in the context of domestic violence advocacy in Indonesia. The sequential explanatory design proved effective in revealing not only what content is produced, but why certain patterns emerge and what their implications are for survivors, a level of analytical depth that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone could have achieved.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that social media has become an integral component of digital advocacy practices at the DP3A of Kendari City in connecting domestic violence survivors with protection services. Instagram emerged as the platform with the highest level of activity and engagement, yet institutional activity content continues to dominate overall posting patterns. Content directly addressing

reporting procedures, service contacts, and confidentiality assurances remains markedly limited, although these are precisely the types of information most needed by survivors. The low volume of public comments reflects the sensitivity of domestic violence issues and survivors' preference for private communication channels, rather than indicating content ineffectiveness.

Based on these findings, this study recommends increasing survivor-centered service content, developing structured digital response protocols, and employing social media analytics more systematically. The proposed digital advocacy process, encompassing digital information exposure, initial contact, preliminary assessment, and formal service referral, offers a practical framework for women's and children's protection agencies seeking to optimize social media as an advocacy entry point. Theoretically, this study contributes to the scholarship on digital social work in Indonesia and demonstrates the value of a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design for analyzing institutional digital advocacy.

This study is subject to several limitations. The analysis was restricted to publicly accessible content, as backend analytics data were unavailable to external researchers. Private communication channels, such as direct messages and WhatsApp, which were identified by survivors as preferred contact points, could not be examined due to ethical and technical constraints. As the study was conducted at a single institution, the findings should be generalized to other regions with caution. Furthermore, likes and comments as engagement indicators do not fully capture the impact of digital advocacy in sensitive issue contexts. Future research integrating actual service referral data would provide a more comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of social media-based advocacy for domestic violence survivors.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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