



No More Sexual Violence: @_perEMPUAN_ and the Advocacy for Victim-Centred Approach to Gender-Based Violence on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how digital platforms are utilised as tools for anti-sexual violence campaigns, with a particular focus on perEMPUAN, a woman-led advocacy initiative based on Instagram. By centring the campaign against sexual harassment and violence, this research explores how perEMPUAN builds narratives, mobilises public discourse, and fosters collective awareness in digital spaces. Employing a qualitative netnographic approach, the study draws on three main sources: narrative content posted on the Instagram account @_perEMPUAN_, audience responses observed in the comment sections, and an in-depth interview with the community's founder, Rika Rosvianti (also known as Neqy). The findings reveal five thematic categories that reflect the campaign's core strategies and recurring issues: (1) relationships between public figures and their followers, (2) domestic violence, (3) victim-blaming narratives, (4) the conceptual framing of sexual harassment and violence, and (5) depictions of sexual violence as tragedy. The analysis draws on George and Leidner's (2019) theoretical framework on the hierarchy of digital activism. The findings point to a distinct division of roles between the advocacy community and its digital audience, particularly in how public discourse around sexual violence is shaped and negotiated in online spaces.

Keywords: Public education; social movement; sexual violence

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Introduction

Sexual violence is a pervasive form of gender-based violence, encompassing physical, structural, and cultural dimensions (Susiana, 2019). According to the *World Report on Violence and Health* (2022) by the World Health Organisation, sexual violence includes a wide range of acts—both physical and verbal—directed towards a person's sexuality without their consent (Krug et al., 2022). While sexual violence can affect individuals across all gender identities, women remain disproportionately impacted. Alarmingly, the report notes that fewer than two per cent of women report their experiences to formal authorities. Supporting this, data from Indonesia's National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan/ Komnas Perempuan) reveals

that between 2001 and 2012, an estimated 35 women per day experienced sexual violence, yet only 4,336 cases were formally reported over the entire period.

This significant gap between incidents and reporting is deeply shaped by cultural and social barriers. A prevailing culture of victim-blaming continues to discourage survivors from coming forward—often attributing blame to a survivor's clothing, behaviour, or physical appearance. In parallel, sensationalist media coverage tends to trivialise or sensationalise sexual violence, rather than treating it as a systemic issue. Discourses such as the so-called "rape fantasy" have historically discredited women's testimonies, framing them as fabricated or exaggerated (Paradiatz et al., 2022).



These forms of structural silencing not only marginalise survivors but also reinforce narratives that normalise gender-based violence.

In response to these conditions, digital platforms have emerged as important tools for anti-sexual violence campaigns—enabling new forms of public engagement, survivor support, and educational outreach. One such initiative is perEMPuAn, an Indonesian feminist digital community that operates primarily through its Instagram account, @_perEMPuAn_. This platform advocates for the prevention of sexual violence through feminist-informed education, myth-busting, and survivor-centred narratives. As part of broader alliances like the Coalition for Safe Public Spaces (Koalisi Ruang Publik Aman/KRPA) and the Youth Coalition Against Sexual Violence (Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil Anti

Kekerasan Seksual/KOMPAKS), perEMPuAn situates itself within an ecosystem of grassroots digital advocacy that leverages social media to counter stigma and promote structural change.

This study focuses on the ways in which perEMPuAn uses Instagram as a platform for its anti-sexual violence campaign. It specifically examines the educational strategies and narrative practices deployed by the community to foster public awareness and promote justice for survivors. Special attention is given to the use of hashtags and visual-textual content as tools for visibility and engagement, and how these practices contribute to wider conversations about survivor agency, collective healing, and digital resistance.

By analysing perEMPuAn as a case study of online anti-violence activism, this research aims to: (1) identify the forms of educational content developed



by the community to inform the public about sexual violence prevention, and (2) explore how survivor-centred perspectives are promoted and sustained through social media. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to scholarly discussions on the transformative potential of feminist digital communities, while also offering practical insights into the role of social media in challenging rape culture and supporting survivor empowerment.

Literature Review

The rise of social media as a space for activism has transformed how societies confront gender-based violence, especially sexual violence. While early studies emphasised its power to foster visibility and participation, recent scholarship highlights the complex tensions involved—where digital storytelling and feminist

ethics intersect with platform algorithms, emotional risks, and structural constraints. Numerous scholars have explored how online platforms enable survivors of sexual violence to reclaim narrative agency. Movements like #MeToo and #NiUnaMenos demonstrate how personal testimony, when collectivised, can disrupt dominant discourses of shame and silence (Alaggia & Wang, 2020; Dawson, 2020; Medina, 2023). The act of naming and sharing experiences online allows survivors not only to break isolation but also to connect with others across borders. Yet, many of these analyses are situated in Euro-American contexts, often assuming a universality that flattens cultural, political, and infrastructural differences. There remains limited exploration of how similar strategies are used—and reconfigured—within countries like Indonesia, where



survivors must navigate different sociolegal constraints, digital cultures, and public attitudes toward gender-based violence (McCarthy et al., 1973).

The case of #IAmNotAfraidToSayIt in Ukraine, as analysed by Martsenyuk & Phillips (2020), offers a valuable comparative perspective. The campaign, which emerged from a single Facebook post in 2016, evolved into a cross-border conversation around sexual violence, triggering both solidarity and backlash. The study highlights how survivor narratives can produce visibility but also provoke discomfort and denial within the broader public sphere. Despite its digital format, the campaign led to important institutional discussions, including reforms in sexual harassment regulations in educational settings. Yet, as the authors argue, these effects

were not automatic; they were shaped by the political will, media coverage, and activist pressure that accompanied the viral moment. The Ukrainian case demonstrates that storytelling, while necessary, must be accompanied by sustained engagement and structural pushback to yield transformative change.

This dual nature of digital advocacy—as both empowering and precarious—has been a central point of tension in the literature. Merlyna Lim (2013) cautions against the over-romanticisation of online activism, arguing that much of what circulates on social media remains symbolic and short-lived. Her phrase “many clicks but little sticks” points to the disconnect between viral engagement and long-term political outcomes, particularly in Indonesia where state responsiveness remains limited. At the same time,



dismissing digital participation as merely performative risks overlooking the material and affective labor invested by those sustaining these campaigns. Kidd & McIntosh (2016) offer a more balanced view, introducing the idea of techno-ambivalence—an approach that recognises social media’s contradictory capacity to both enable and dilute political action. This framing allows for an examination of how activists themselves negotiate hope and exhaustion, urgency and vulnerability.

Feminist digital communities that center survivor narratives must also contend with the affective burden of platform participation. While participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2009) suggests that audiences can actively shape discourse, the emotional cost of being visible—especially for survivors—can be profound. Online disclosure may empower some, but it can

retraumatise others, especially when responses involve victim-blaming, harassment, or indifference. Communities like @_perEMPUan_ perform constant affective labor: moderating comments, curating sensitive content, responding to disclosures, and holding ethical space for pain that the broader public often dismisses. These acts of care are seldom recognised in traditional analyses of activism, yet they are critical to the endurance and credibility of feminist digital work.

In this context, online anti-sexual violence campaigns cannot be understood solely in terms of reach, virality, or hashtag visibility. Rather, they must be read as ongoing attempts to reconfigure public discourse, institutional accountability, and collective memory. Feminist digital activism involves not only confronting external structures—patriarchy, media sensationalism,



impunity—but also managing the internal economies of emotion, care, and fatigue. In Indonesia, @_perEMPuan_ exemplifies a model of sustained, survivor-centred campaigning that relies not on viral spikes but on consistent engagement, educational framing, and feminist ethics. Its approach pushes against the idea that visibility is an end in itself and instead reframes visibility as a relational practice—one that requires protection, context, and ongoing negotiation. While existing literature offers important insights, there remains a gap in studies that link survivor-centred activism with long-term, everyday practices of emotional sustainability and digital care work—especially in Southeast Asian contexts. This research contributes to closing that gap by analysing how @_perEMPuan_ builds a digitally networked and ethically

responsive campaign that resists both the spectacle of trauma and the disposability of digital attention.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the theoretical framework of digital activism with a specific focus on how social media-based campaigns against sexual violence are initiated, mobilised, and sustained. While digital activism is often examined as a broad form of online political participation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; George & Leidner, 2019), this research positions anti-sexual violence campaigns as a particular strand—one that not only carries political messages but also responds to social stigma, power asymmetry, and the need for public education. In this context, digital platforms serve not only



as tools for mobilisation but also as key sites for discourse production and public engagement.

George & Leidner (2019), building on Milbrath's (1965) model of political participation, offer a hierarchical view of digital activism comprising three levels: digital spectator activities (e.g., liking or sharing posts), transitional activities (e.g., signing online petitions or contributing to digital campaigns), and digital gladiatorial activities (e.g., initiating movements, leading discourse, and coordinating advocacy). These levels are not mutually exclusive; rather, they represent interconnected modes of participation. This framework is particularly useful for understanding the layered dynamics of digital advocacy work and the distribution of roles among different actors within a campaign.

The case of @_perEMPuan_ illustrates how a single digital community can occupy all three levels of participation. As a movement initiator, @_perEMPuan_ plays a gladiatorial role by consistently producing educational content and challenging dominant narratives surrounding sexual violence. In addition, it engages in transitional activities by collaborating with allied organisations, promoting joint campaigns, and amplifying petitions. At the spectator level, the campaign relies on its followers to extend its visibility through likes, shares, and comments. These interconnected roles form a relational ecosystem in which digital participation reinforces the campaign's broader objectives.

To deepen this framework, the study also draws on Martsenyuk & Phillips' (2020) analysis of



the #IAmNotAfraidToSayIt campaign in Ukraine. Their work demonstrates how survivor disclosures on social media can serve both as political resistance and as mobilising discourse. Importantly, their analysis shows that online engagement around sexual violence is not passive: it requires clear narrative framing, community support, and continuous discursive effort—all of which align with the gladiatorial and transitional roles outlined by George & Leidner (2019). Martsenyuk & Phillips (2020) also highlight the fragility of visibility, noting that public disclosures often entail emotional and reputational risks for survivors. This insight is especially relevant for understanding the calculated strategies used by @_perEMPuan_ to create safer narrative spaces, avoid sensationalism, and maintain ethical standards while still

engaging a wide audience. In this way, their study complements the hierarchical model of digital activism by showing how each level of participation—especially those involving voice and visibility—carries political and emotional consequences that shape a campaign's trajectory.

In sum, this framework offers a structured lens to analyse how @_perEMPuan_ organises its advocacy strategy, distributes roles among digital actors, and sustains issue visibility over time. Rather than focusing solely on quantitative metrics such as engagement rates or follower counts, the study emphasises the interdependence of digital actions and the strategic use of technology in promoting anti-sexual violence campaigns—particularly in settings where institutional responses remain weak or inaccessible.



Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach combined with netnography to analyse digital activism around sexual violence. Qualitative methodology, as described by Creswell (1998), enables an in-depth, descriptive, and inductive examination of social phenomena, capturing multiple perspectives through verbal, textual, and behavioural data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Netnography, an adaptation of ethnography to digital spaces, facilitates the study of online cultures and advocacy networks. It draws from participant observation while accounting for anonymity, digital interaction, and platform-specific dynamics. Like traditional ethnography, it may include interviews, discourse analysis, and thematic coding to understand the lived experiences of survivors in digital contexts. Netnographic research thus

involves understanding social environments within digital spaces, including language use, emoticons, and hashtags.

For data collection, this study primarily draws on narratives related to victims of sexual harassment and violence as presented on the @_perEMPUan_ social media account. The researcher also monitors debates and discussions in comment sections, as well as relevant hashtags linked to the advocacy account. Additionally, an interview was conducted with the account initiator, R. Rika Rosvianti, using a semi-structured interview guide and with prior consent from the interviewee. Supplementary data were gathered through literature and document reviews sourced from books, articles, and journals. The data collection period spanned from July 12, 2024 to August 21, 2024.



Bogdan & Biklen (1982), as cited in Moleong (2007), define data analysis as the process of organising, processing, and interpreting research data to extract meaningful findings before dissemination. Miles & Huberman (1992) describe two models of qualitative data analysis: the flow model of analysis and the interactive model of analysis. This study utilises the latter, wherein all research activities are interconnected and dynamically ongoing throughout the data collection process. According to Miles & Huberman (1992), this model involves four interrelated stages occurring iteratively: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification.

Result

The History and Profile of perEMPuAn Community

The founding of perEMPuAn in 2011 should not be interpreted merely as a reactive response to a series of rape cases occurring in moving public transportation vehicles. Rather, it marked a critical intervention grounded in personal experiences and a broader critique of societal complacency toward sexual violence. Founders R. Rika Rosvianti and Astrid Malahayati Fathma initiated the movement after becoming aware of three such incidents. As survivors of sexual harassment themselves, they observed a recurring pattern wherein awareness and recognition of violence often emerged only retrospectively. This delay in comprehension underscores the pervasive normalisation of sexual violence in public and everyday settings.



Neqy (Rika Rosvianti), one of the founders, further emphasised the emotional burden carried by survivors who, despite resisting such violence, often struggle to articulate or process their experiences—particularly when they lack an initial understanding that what occurred constitutes a form of violence. The initial development of perEMPUn stemmed from a written post by the founders, which sought to compile common tactics used by perpetrators and practical guidance for self-defense in the face of sexual harassment. This early endeavor marked the transition from personal testimony to a collective project of knowledge production and resistance. The establishment of perEMPUn's digital presence—initially on Twitter (now X) and Facebook, and later focusing on Instagram—demonstrates the strategic use of social media as a space for feminist

pedagogical intervention. The name perEMPUn itself carries symbolic significance. The capitalised element “EMPU,” derived from the Sanskrit term for “ownership,” serves as a political statement asserting bodily autonomy and the right to self-defense. Through this naming, the movement situates itself within a broader discourse of gendered power and linguistic reclamation, where the act of naming becomes part of its resistance strategy.

From 2016 to 2020, perEMPUn—particularly under Neqy's leadership—engaged actively in public advocacy and digital campaigning, most notably in collaboration with Komnas Perempuan to push for the passage of the Sexual Violence Eradication Bill (RUU Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual), which has since been enacted as the Sexual Violence Crime Law (UU Tindak



Pidana Kekerasan Seksual). In her capacity as campaign coordinator, Neqy represented both individual and organisational perspectives, reflecting the increasingly hybrid nature of digital activism that merges grassroots mobilisation with formal institutional engagement.

Currently operating via the Instagram account @_perEMPUn_, the initiative functions as a digital platform focused on public education, advocacy, and community-based awareness. While it initially centred its efforts on women, perEMPUn has since adopted an inclusive approach that acknowledges the reality that sexual violence affects all gender identities. Its primary objective lies in fostering collective digital consciousness that empowers individuals to identify, respond to, and support those affected by sexual violence—whether themselves or others.

The scope of perEMPUn's activities has grown to include both online and offline strategies. Key achievements include the distribution of free digital booklets, the organisation of surveys and seminars across educational institutions, the documentation of violence on public transportation, and institutional partnerships with PT Kereta Commuter Indonesia. These partnerships facilitated offline campaigns such as the installation of informational banners across 93 KRL commuterline stations and the dissemination of infographics within train carriages. Such efforts illustrate perEMPUn's commitment to bridging digital discourse with physical space, thereby expanding the terrain of feminist intervention.

In addition, perEMPUn's engagement with broader civil society coalitions—such as the KRPA—and its execution of a



large-scale public survey involving over 62,000 respondents further demonstrate its role as a central actor in shaping both public perception and policy on sexual violence. Although the organisation does not provide direct services, it fulfills a critical intermediary function by mapping survivor needs, referring individuals to appropriate services, and responding to community requests for support and collaboration. Moreover, perEMPUan cultivates an interactive digital community wherein followers not only consume information but also participate in a collective process of witnessing, storytelling, and mutual support. Audiences frequently share personal narratives in comment sections and tag the account when encountering relevant content. This mode of engagement

illustrates a decentralised model of advocacy based on solidarity and shared agency rather than top-down direction.

In sum, perEMPUan represents a significant case of feminist digital activism in Indonesia. Its trajectory—from a personal response to a broader, inclusive movement—demonstrates how survivor-led initiatives can challenge dominant cultural narratives, influence institutional discourse, and build sustainable models of public engagement. By leveraging digital tools while maintaining a strong presence in offline spaces, perEMPUan exemplifies the potential of integrated advocacy strategies that center lived experience, collective action, and structural change (Interview with Rosvianti, one of the founders, 21 August 2024).



@_perEMPUAN_ in the Perspective of Digital Social Movements

1. Digital Gladiatorial Activities

Gladiators are individuals who actively contribute to advancing the agenda of social movements. Drawing from George & Leidner (2019), gladiators do not rely on traditional pathways such as lobbying to influence policy; instead, they are the agents of change themselves. Some gladiators operate within organised mass groups, while others act independently. Traditionally, gladiatorial movements have often centred on political activities such as women's representation and other governmental political agendas. However, in recent years, gladiatorial activities—especially within the digital realm—have shifted focus away from electoral politics toward

broader societal benefit. George & Leidner (2019) identify several forms of digital activism including data activism, exposure, and hacktivism.

Firstly, data activism encompasses a range of digital actions within political and social domains, both active and passive. A key element of data activism is the capability of individuals to access, control, and utilise data from various entities to disseminate benefits for particular causes. In this context, perEMPUAN, as a community prioritising the prevention and response to sexual violence, continuously amplifies public awareness of this issue. They often collaborate with other communities engaged in direct case handling, such as @perempuanberkisah and @advokatgender on Instagram. Moreover, perEMPUAN remains receptive to requests for assistance, especially from



women. Through their advocacy efforts via posts and Instagram stories, perEMPUan consistently delivers value to its followers.

Secondly, exposure refers to the dissemination of information. Actors engage in activities to share information across Social Network Sites (SNS), the press, and various platforms. Exposure has a significant potential to influence governmental sectors and wider audiences. It also pertains to content release, which can provoke public debate and societal conflicts (Benkler, 2011). Such conflicts can either raise public consciousness or generate new issues. In digital activism, exposure is a crucial mechanism that yields both positive and negative outcomes. perEMPUan exemplifies this by sharing narratives drawn from societal phenomena such as domestic violence, sexual harassment between celebrities and fans, and lesser-known

sexual disorders. For instance, posts like “Is Unplanned Pregnancy Considered Sexual Violence?” address discourses around pregnancy within marriage and unsafe abortion cases, supported by related data and myths about contraception. Additionally, perEMPUan regularly reposts content concerning sexual harassment facts via Instagram stories.

Thirdly, hacktivism involves acts of hacking carried out to achieve social or political objectives (Jordan, 2002). Hacktivists target specific entities, often motivated by the desire to extract advantageous data. According to Coleman (2011), hacktivism entails security breaches conducted through programming and implies exertion of power over others’ data. Political-intentioned hacktivism can have broad impacts on governments, organisations, and industries.



However, this theoretical framework does not align with perEMPUan's practices, as the community does not engage in hacking activities to advance their educational agenda. Therefore, this aspect of the theory is incongruent with the observed phenomenon.

2. Digital Transitional Activities

Transitional actors operate between gladiators and spectators; their engagement is more passive than gladiators but more active than spectators. This means that actors at this level engage in actions that are more passive than those of gladiators but more active or aggressive than those of spectators. The activities performed by transitional actors require greater resources and energy to amplify the causes they advocate. Consequently, their impact tends to be more substantial than

that of spectators. According to George & Leidner (2019), there are four categories of activities within this level: political consumerism, digital petitions, botivism, and e-funding.

Firstly, political consumerism refers to the capacity of individuals to support actors or principles they endorse, which encompasses both boycotting (purchasing products initiated by preferred actors) and boycotting (refusing to purchase products from opposing companies). Political consumerism relates to an actor's political attitudes and their relationship with commercial organisations. In the case of perEMPUan, political consumerism is not practiced, and therefore no linkage to consumerism is observed in their activities. Secondly, digital petitions are utilised when the public collectively opposes government decisions or seeks to submit appropriate legal appeals.



Once a minimum number of online signatures is achieved, the government is compelled to respond to the issue or interest at hand. perEMPUAN actively promotes digital petitions to raise broader audience awareness and to support the realisation of improved policies. Thirdly, botivism—a fusion of “bot” and “activism”—refers to the use of automated bots to execute various digital activism agendas. For example, bots may assist in explaining phenomena to audiences. However, a key concern is that many users may be unaware that posts generated by bots are not authored by humans. In this study’s case, perEMPUAN does not employ bots in the creation of their content. Fourthly, e-funding involves activities aimed at generating financial resources for specific objectives. This is facilitated through websites or applications that simplify

audience access. Fundraising efforts are typically triggered by events requiring monetary support. Similarly, perEMPUAN conducts an e-funding initiative called *Dolanan (Donasi Bulanan)* or monthly donation to help advance the dissemination of educational content on their Instagram account.

3. Digital Spectator Activities

The role assumed by digital spectators significantly drives the volume of activity within digital activism who brings in the largest mass of participants and involves the majority of the digital audience. According to Rainie et al. (2012) and Vaast et al. (2017), digital spectator activities account for the participation of nearly two-thirds of social media users in the political dynamics of social media platforms.



In each agenda, digital spectators typically engage in three primary actions: clicktivism, metavoicing, and assertion.

The first is clicktivism, which refers to audience engagement through liking posts shared by certain activists—posts that they support, appreciate, or choose to follow. In a social context where digital platforms significantly influence everyday life, clicktivism represents the most common form of public support or appreciation for a particular opinion, movement, or issue without requiring direct involvement. It is a low-effort action facilitated by access to technology, social media, digital devices, and stable internet connectivity. While clicktivism may appear to be a form of participation that requires minimal commitment, it can substantially contribute to advocacy efforts when conducted en masse.

Consequently, movements or issues promoted through digital platforms benefit from increased content visibility.

The second activity is metavoicing, which involves actions such as retweeting, reposting, and commenting on social media posts. Majchrzak et al. (2013) describe this phenomenon as an “echo chamber”—a conceptual space in which the existence and reinforcement of information are amplified through users' interactions. Metavoicing is observable across multiple social media platforms such as Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and others. This activity requires greater involvement than merely liking a post, as it reflects an audience's attempt to express their opinions. As with clicktivism, the dissemination power of



metavoicing is largely dependent on the number of users who participate in amplifying a particular piece of content.

The third activity undertaken by digital spectators is assertion. Assertion entails sending messages or information directly to others in the form of text, images, audio, or video. It may also involve creating posts and directly contacting representatives of a particular movement. Although digital access is widely available, assertion requires greater effort and engagement compared to simply liking or commenting. As such, fewer individuals tend to engage in this type of activity. Nevertheless, assertion can produce more substantial impacts for the cause or issue being championed. When assertion becomes a normalised

practice, it can open avenues for meaningful dialogue between members of a movement and opposing stakeholders.

From the above explanation, it can be observed that the digital audience of perEMPUn tends to fall into these three categories. The high number of likes, shares, and comments on posts from @_perEMPUn_ indicates that the concept of digital spectator activities is indeed at work among the digital observers of the perEMPUn community. For instance, in a post titled *"Stop Romanticizing Sexual Violence in Fictional Narratives"* from the #ThinkingThursday series, the account received 2,286 likes, 49 comments, and 4 shares—reflecting substantial support for the notion that sexual violence is often romanticised in fictional stories, including both literature and film. Similarly, another post titled *"Sexualizing Breastfeeding Mothers is Sexual Violence"*



from the #WhyWednesday series received 2,288 likes and 50 comments. In the comment section, digital audiences shared their concerns and voiced agreement that such sexualisation is unacceptable. These interactions align with the theoretical framework proposed by George & Leidner (2019), illustrating how the audience of the perEMPUan community actively engages in digital spectator activities on Instagram.

Netnographic Study of the Instagram Account @_perEMPUan_

The perEMPUan community shares a variety of perspectives on the issue of sexual violence. This study employs a netnographic approach to examine the content shared by the account, with the author categorising posts based on the five topics that receive the highest levels of engagement on Instagram @_perEMPUan_.

These topics include: (1) the relationship between idols and fans, (2) domestic violence, (3) victim-blaming in cases of sexual violence, (4) conceptual understandings of sexual violence and harassment, and (5) sexual violence in the context of tragedy.

The first topic explored in this study is the relationship between idols and their fans, which has generated considerable engagement on Instagram @_perEMPUan_. A notable example is a post titled *"The Romanticisation of Sexual Violence in Fictional Narratives"*, which received 2,286 likes and 49 comments. In the comments section, users expressed their views on a range of fictional stories—both written and in a film—that address this issue. These discussions are grounded in the observation that possessive behaviour by fictional characters, as well as non-consensual

acts, are often normalised in storytelling platforms such as Wattpad and alternate universe (AU) fanfiction on X (formerly Twitter). This post attracted the highest number of viewers among all content published by @_perEMPuAn_. Several comments criticised the normalisation of male characters perpetrating violence against their partners, highlighting the

problematic nature of such portrayals. Others noted that romantic narratives in fiction should not be interpreted as applicable to real-life relationships. Furthermore, audience disappointment was evident in comments referencing the presence of Stockholm Syndrome, in which sexual violence is portrayed as romantic.

Picture 1. The first category of netnography



Source: Post by @_perEMPuAn_ on Instagram, available at https://www.instagram.com/p/CelbQbSVl0r/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBINWFIZA==



The second aspect of this netnographic study focuses on posts related to domestic violence. One such post by @_perEMPuan_, titled *"The Sexualisation of Breastfeeding Mothers Is Sexual Violence: Have You Learned Why Breastfeeding Shaming Constitutes Violence Against Mothers?"*, seeks to raise awareness about the existence of harassment experienced by breastfeeding mothers. This post generated a strong response, as evidenced by 2,288 likes and 49 comments from the audience.

This particular entry, part of the #WhyWednesday series, explores how society—especially men—tends to perceive breasts primarily as sexual objects. As a consequence, the act of breastfeeding in public is often regarded as inappropriate or taboo. The post also highlights various negative impacts resulting from the sexualisation of breastfeeding

mothers. This content sparked significant engagement among @_perEMPuan_'s digital audience.

The majority of commenters agreed that the sexualisation of breastfeeding mothers constitutes a form of harassment and sexual violence. Some spectators expressed surprise and concern that, in today's era, breastfeeding in public is still viewed as shameful. Furthermore, certain comments proposed alternatives, such as the increased provision of nursing rooms in public spaces to better protect mothers from sexual violence and harassment. In addition, one woman shared her personal experience, stating that she breastfeeds her child and chooses to ignore people's remarks when doing so, asserting her right to feed her baby without interference.

Picture 2. The second category of netnography



Source: Post by @_perEMPuAn_ on Instagram, available at https://www.instagram.com/p/CSJy6EAl3ih/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Third, this example highlights how the general public still tends to blame victims for the sexual violence they experience. This is reflected in one of @_perEMPuAn_'s posts, which responded to a content piece from an Indonesian hijab brand that was perceived as engaging in victim blaming. The post, which garnered 287 likes and 18 comments, sparked reactions from netizens in response to a statement made by the Director of the brand Rabbani at the

time. Members of the public expressed disappointment and anger toward the statement delivered by the figure. Followers also voiced their concern and spoke up, emphasising that clothing—regardless of whether it is modest or not—should never be used as a justification for committing acts of harassment or sexual violence.

Picture 3. The third category of netnography



Source: Post by @perEMPuAn_ on Instagram, available at https://www.instagram.com/reel/CnmQ9_op6Mp/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA=

Fourth is a netnographic analysis of a post discussing concepts or phenomena that need to be understood in acts of sexual violence or harassment. The content titled "*Apakah Ekshibisionisme adalah Kekerasan Seksual?*" gathered 849 likes and 12 comments. In this post, perEMPuAn educates the audience about how exhibitionism—namely,

the act of exposing parts of the body with sexual motivation—carried out by exhibitionists, is a form of sexual violence. Exhibitionism often happens to women and can cause trauma for the victims. Furthermore, this content received comments from people expressing how disturbing this behavior is. Some people shared their experiences when they encountered

unpleasant incidents related to these exhibitionists. With a similar pattern in each of their

stories in the comment section, the perpetrators showed their genitals to others, especially women.

Picture 4. The fourth category of netnography



Source: Post by @_perEMPuAn_ on Instagram, available at https://www.instagram.com/p/Ce3edPZPJRu/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Fifth is a netnographic analysis of sexual violence and tragedy in Indonesia. The perEMPuAn community once discussed sexual violence in relation to the 1965 tragedy through a post titled "#Menolak Lupa Kekerasan Seksual Massal 1965" ("#Refusing to Forget the Mass Sexual

Violence of 1965"). In this post, they explored how sexual violence occurred as a result of propaganda. This propaganda targeted Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement), a women's organisation affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party, which was accused by the New Order (Orba) regime of being

responsible for the torture and murder of generals during the G-30-S 1965 incident. Although there was no evidence of torture found on the generals, the Orba regime arrested, tortured, and committed acts of sexual violence against many Gerwani members. This content, which garnered 1,766 likes and 12 comments, also educated audiences on the types of sexual violence that took place following the G-30-S 1965

event. In response, audiences expressed their disappointment in the comment section, such as the user @ilmadarajat who wrote: “🥺🥺🥺 Hopefully justice for the victims can be realised soon...”—a comment that reflects audience sympathy towards the victims. The use of various emojis in the comment section of this post allows us to understand the severity and emotional weight of this tragic event.

Picture 5. The fifth category of netnography



Source: Post by @_perEMPuAn_ on Instagram, available at https://www.instagram.com/p/CUcezNtvthl/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==



During the netnographic analysis, the author of this article identified several limitations that affect user interactions on Instagram, including those experienced by the perEMPUn community. It is important to acknowledge that Instagram is one of the most widely used platforms, which encourages the rapid dissemination of information. However, there are drawbacks to using this platform. Instagram offers only basic features such as likes, comments, and shares. Although users can freely insert emojis in the comment section, unlike Facebook, Instagram does not offer a reaction feature that allows users to express a range of emotions such as agreement, happiness, anger, sadness, or admiration through different emojis. This restriction on expression—being limited to “likes”—makes it difficult to discern how many users are

actually angry, sad, or happy when engaging with perEMPUn’s posts. As a result, we can only assume approval from users who choose not to comment based on the number of likes a post receives. Furthermore, the absence of a “dislike” button alongside the “like” feature adds to the limitations in understanding public responses. We are unable to fully comprehend how those who are unwilling, hesitant, or too busy to comment actually feel about the content.

In addition, another limitation concerns the dissemination of perEMPUn’s content. The perEMPUn community often reposts content related to sexual violence and harassment cases through Instagram Stories. However, this feature is only available for 24 hours. This presents a challenge for audiences who do not access Instagram within that time frame,



as they may miss the stories shared by @_perEMPuan_. For individuals who are not active social media users, there is a risk of being left behind and losing the opportunity to learn, as the content has already expired. This is especially unfortunate given that education on sexual violence is urgently needed and should remain accessible over a longer period, particularly because incidents of sexual violence continue to be widespread in society.

perEMPuan and the Victim's Perspective

In its ongoing discourse, the perEMPuan community consistently advocates for a victim-centred perspective in its digital communications. This commitment is evident in several of its posts that articulate the lived realities and psychological experiences of survivors of sexual violence. First, in a post

titled *"The Absence of Resistance Does Not Mean Consent"*, part of the #SharingSaturday and #MitosFaktaperEMPuan series, the community addresses the psychological condition commonly experienced by survivors, known as tonic immobility—a state of temporary paralysis often triggered by trauma or fear during instances of sexual assault. In this post, @_perEMPuan_ asserts that the presence or absence of resistance cannot serve as the sole criterion for identifying acts of violence. The community also underscores the pervasive issue of victim blaming, which further marginalises survivors by holding them accountable for incidents beyond their control. This misplaced emphasis on victim resistance as a condition for defining sexual violence ultimately imposes an additional emotional burden on survivors.



Second, in a random post from the #TalkingTuesday series, perEMPuAn again demonstrates its support for a victim-centred framework through the use of meme-based communication. The first slide of the meme states unequivocally that sexual violence is never the victim's fault. The second slide emphasises the importance of not objectifying others. Subsequent slides highlight how societal narratives frequently blame victims based on their clothing, thus reinforcing harmful stereotypes and perpetuating a culture of victim-blaming.

Third, another post by @_perEMPuAn—featuring the logo of KOMPAKS—expresses solidarity with a campaign demanding that a well-known Muslim fashion brand issue a public apology and remove one of its advertisements. The ad in question implies that women should wear modest

clothing to prevent men from having “impure thoughts.” The community criticises this message as a form of victim-blaming, shifting responsibility from the perpetrator's behavior to the victim's attire and thus perpetuating the notion that it is women's responsibility to prevent sexual violence.

From these examples, it is evident that the perEMPuAn community actively protects and promotes the victim's perspective in its content. However, a notable limitation emerges: the absence of first-hand survivor testimonies. This lack of direct narrative from survivors may limit the audience's ability to fully grasp the emotional and psychological impact of sexual violence from the perspective of those most affected.



Political Hashtag on @_perEMPUan_

Political hashtag refers to a form of digital activism in which hashtags (#) on social media are employed to amplify and articulate various socio-political issues. According to Rho & Mazmanian (2020), political hashtags serve to organise and categorise the vast array of content circulating on social media into cohesive topics. A prominent example is the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, which encapsulates the public movement advocating for justice and equality for Black individuals. Hashtags, in this context, function as tools to increase both visibility and public discourse. They allow users to trace and engage with the ongoing development of particular issues in real time.

However, Rho & Mazmanian (2020) also highlight a critical limitation of hashtag politics: the potential for misdirected attention. Users may exploit trending hashtags to promote unrelated content or misinformation, such as hoaxes, thereby diverting attention from the core issue. Despite this, hashtags continue to serve as a means of expressing public pressure. In moments of crisis or controversy requiring mass attention, hashtags become an effective and accessible tool for individuals or groups to mobilise collective concern.

Small (2011) adds that political hashtag discourse does not necessarily constitute a primary forum for dialogic exchange. Instead, hashtags are primarily used to transmit short, declarative messages to a broader audience. Small (2011) further argues that while hashtags themselves may not



yield substantial transformative impact, they play a key role in amplifying content, including news and articles, which may later be picked up by mainstream media outlets.

The perEMPUn community strategically employs hashtags in nearly all of its content. A recurring example is the use of #perEMPUn in its Instagram posts. However, a significant limitation emerges when evaluating the effectiveness of this digital strategy. Due to Instagram's hashtag functionality, searching for #perEMPUn does not exclusively yield content from the @_perEMPUn_ account. Instead, it returns a broader array of posts tagged with variations such as #perempuan (Indonesian for "woman"), which dilutes the specificity and branding of the hashtag. As a result, the perEMPUn community is unable to fully

control or claim the hashtag for the exclusive dissemination of its ideas, messages, and campaigns. This undermines the potential effectiveness of their hashtag politics strategy, as the tag is not functioning as a unique or clearly identifiable marker for their movement's content.

Conclusion

Sexual violence remains a pervasive issue that limits access to safe and supportive environments, particularly for women. In many cases, survivors are silenced by structural barriers, victim-blaming narratives, and a lack of institutional responsiveness. Within this context, online campaigns have emerged as a strategic avenue for raising awareness, challenging dominant discourses, and facilitating public engagement. This study examined



@_perEMPUAN_ as a case of Instagram-based advocacy, highlighting how digital platforms can be used to build and sustain anti-sexual violence campaigns.

Using George & Leidner's (2019) framework on the hierarchy of digital activism, the study identified how @_perEMPUAN_ functions across three interconnected levels: as a "gladiator" initiating digital campaigns and producing educational content; as a transitional actor collaborating with allies and supporting collective efforts; and as a spectator of broader audience participation through digital spectator activities. These layered roles reveal how an online campaign can organise its strategies to maintain visibility, build networks, and invite ongoing public involvement.

The study also shows that platform-based activism is shaped by both technological affordances and expressive limitations. While Instagram offers broad reach and visual immediacy, it constrains symbolic expression—such as the intended emphasis on the stylised capitalisation in "EMPU"—and restricts interactive depth through limited features for feedback or nuanced emotional responses. These constraints illustrate that digital activism is not only about content, but also about how platform design structures communication.

Findings further indicate that participation in digital campaigns does not always follow a linear trajectory from passive to active involvement. In the context of @_perEMPUAN_, even seemingly simple actions—such as likes, shares, or empathetic comments—



contribute to the campaign's momentum and resonance. These actions suggest that audience involvement in online anti-sexual violence campaigns often operates through affective alignment and symbolic gestures, which should be recognised as meaningful within broader political participation models.

By categorising @_perEMPuan_'s content into five thematic areas—(1) relationships between public figures and fans, (2) domestic violence, (3) victim-blaming, (4) definitions of sexual harassment, and (5) the framing of sexual violence as tragedy—this study provides insight into how issue framing, narrative structure, and engagement patterns contribute to the sustainability of a digital campaign. The findings demonstrate that successful online advocacy is shaped by

both internal motivations (such as the founders' experiences) and external sociocultural factors that influence public responses.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the literature on online anti-sexual violence campaigns by showing how digital communities navigate strategy, participation, and message framing through platform-based advocacy. It emphasises the need to further explore how different levels of digital activism function in practice, especially in contexts where institutional support is limited. Future research could examine how platform-specific features shape participation styles, and how campaigns like @_perEMPuan_ adapt their messaging strategies to maintain relevance, credibility, and public trust in rapidly shifting digital environments.



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