

Communication Model for Preventing Sexual Violence against Children and Women through Digital Media

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Abstract

Purpose: This study identifies the communication model used by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB (Division of Women and Children's Empowerment) to prevent sexual violence against women and children and develops a model suitable for digital media. The study focuses on the agency's website, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Methods: A qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the officials of the DP3AP2KB who are responsible for prevention, for the protection of women and children. The digital media of the agency and the prevention programmes were also observed. Tangerang City was selected because its population is dense, and highly connected to the internet.

Findings: Digital media were used mainly for activity information, with little prevention content. Only the website, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp were operated, and a linear, one-way model was applied. Limited staff, skills, and budget were the main obstacles. Accordingly, a circular model was formulated in which interpersonal, group, and digital communication are combined in one flow of planning, production, distribution, feedback, and evaluation.

Originality: The novelty lies in the theoretical contribution. Prevention communication is reformulated from a linear transmission model into a circular communication-management model for a local government agency. Whereas existing interactive and computer-mediated models treat digital media only as channels, digital communication is here placed inside institutional programme planning and closed by feedback and evaluation, so that it is theorised as a governance mechanism, not a campaign tool. The social ecology perspective is thereby extended into a public agency's digital environment.

Keywords: Digital Communication Model, Sexual Violence Prevention, Social Ecology, Women and Children.

Introduction

Every part of human life has been changed by the development of technology, and the ways in which people work and interact with each other have been changed as well. The internet is now used as a daily necessity, and several impacts are produced by it. One of the impacts is sexual violence, which is treated as an urgent issue at present. Human rights are violated by sexual violence. Sexual violence is generally defined as unwanted sexual behaviour, both physical and non-physical, that is committed by another person. Long-term effects are experienced by the victims, and their lives are seriously threatened. Prolonged trauma, psychological disorders, and even suicidal tendencies have been reported among victims ([Bentivegna & Patalay, 2022](#)). In a report of the World Health Organization in 2021, it was stated that about 33% of women in the world had been exposed to sexual violence, and the heaviest burden was carried by developing countries such as Indonesia. The condition is treated as a critical emergency, international attention

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has been given to it, and many prevention approaches are therefore needed ([Rumble et al., 2020](#); [Umam et al., 2021](#)). The same increase is reflected in Banten Province, and in Tangerang City in particular, where a worrying trend has been recorded over five years, as is shown in [Figure 1](#).

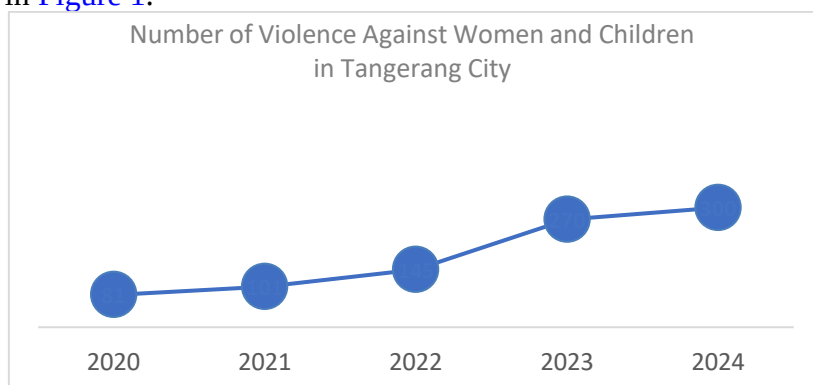


Figure 1. Number of cases of violence against women and children in Tangerang City, 2020–2024 (source: DP3AP2KB Tangerang City)

As is shown in [Figure 1](#), the number of cases has been raised every year. Eighty-one cases were recorded in 2020, 101 cases in 2021, 145 cases in 2022, 270 cases in 2023, and 300 cases in 2024. Such a trend is treated as a serious concern, because children and women are still placed in the most vulnerable group. The rise is caused by several factors. Economic conditions, the use of social media, and social and cultural values by which male dominance over women is strengthened are among the factors that contribute to it.

This study was carried out in Tangerang City together with the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB). From the initial identification, it was found that no suitable prevention policy had been prepared, although the number of cases had been raised for five years ([Medie, 2019](#)). Tangerang City is a dense urban area in which social, economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are varied, so that the potential for sexual violence is high. Economic, social, and gender factors are known to be related to sexual violence ([Miranda, 2020](#)). Population density and community heterogeneity are also treated as problems, because different norms and behaviours are formed in each group and sexual violence may be triggered by them ([S. Chen et al., 2025](#)).

Sexual violence against women and children is also driven by pornography, and harassment is frequently experienced in virtual space ([Rogers et al., 2023](#)). New problems are created by the development of technology, so that prevention in virtual space must be prepared as well. Internet addiction among adolescents has been reported as one of the causes of sexual violence ([Rakhmawati et al., 2021](#); [Tamarit et al., 2021](#)). According to Statistics Indonesia of Banten Province in 2023, the highest internet access for the population aged five years and over was recorded in Tangerang City, and the risk of sexual violence against women and children may be raised by this condition. Information and knowledge can be reached easily by children through digital media, but a large potential for sexual violence against children is carried by it as well ([Stănicke et al., 2024](#); [Stoilova et al., 2020](#)).

Pornography is regarded as one of the causes of sexual violence against children in Tangerang City. Information can now be reached by everyone through mobile phones, and acts of sexual violence against children may be influenced when the phones are used for watching pornography ([Anggraini & Maulidya, 2020](#); [Pradini et al., 2024](#)). New problems are also produced by social media, because real space has been moved into

virtual space in which male dominance is still reproduced. Sexual violence has even been created through conversations in WhatsApp groups (Lina Wati & Saifulloh, 2020).

It should be noted that a smart city approach has been adopted by the Tangerang City Government, and e-government has been applied in its public services. Digital technology is used intensively in this approach. Public information and public services can be reached easily through the Tangerang Live application, which is integrated with the applications of every agency in Tangerang City, including the DP3AP2KB. Efficiency, easier administrative services, faster handling of public reports, and stronger collaboration between the government and the community are obtained through this platform (Aditya et al., 2023). Unfortunately, prevention content is still rarely produced in the digital media of the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB, and this condition is not in line with the smart city that has been developed in the city.

Many prevention programmes have been carried out, but the number of cases of sexual violence against children in Tangerang City has not been reduced by them. One communication barrier that was identified by the researchers is the way in which digital media are used in the prevention programme, and no evaluation of that programme has been made although it has been implemented for a long time (Wati et al., 2023). Social protection, and especially the prevention of sexual violence against women and children, is therefore treated in this study as an issue that can be handled through digital media.

Social media are considered increasingly important for spreading information, for shaping public opinion, and for raising social awareness. Websites and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have been used by individuals, by organisations, and by governmental and non-governmental agencies for educating the public (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020). Sexual violence has also been raised through digital campaigns (Ratnasari & Sumartias, 2021; Manikonda et al., 2018; Safitri & Angeline, 2019), such as the #MeToo and #GerakBersama movements in Indonesia. It has been shown that open discussion can be encouraged by social media, that a space to speak can be given to victims, and that the authorities can be pushed to respond more quickly.

Challenges are nevertheless faced when digital media are used for prevention. Inaccurate information may be spread, social stigma may be placed on victims, and the risk of digital exploitation may be raised (Im et al., 2022). Therefore, the extent to which digital media can be used effectively for preventing sexual violence against women and children is analysed in this study, and digital media strategies for advocacy and for education are identified.

Digital media are defined as devices such as personal computers, tablets, mobile phones, and cameras, together with systems such as software, applications, virtual reality, and less tangible forms of technology such as the internet and social media (Anderson & Subrahmanyam, 2017). In this study, digital media are limited to the internet-based media that are operated by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB for preventing sexual violence against women and children, namely the website, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

The novelty of this study is placed in its theoretical contribution rather than in the description of a new model alone. In earlier studies, digital media have mostly been treated as tools for campaigns or for reporting (Adams et al., 2021; Agueli et al., 2024; Vahedi et al., 2024), and the existing interactive and computer-mediated communication models are stopped at the exchange of messages between the sender and the audience. In this study, prevention communication is reformulated as a circular communication-management process in which interpersonal communication, group communication, and digital communication are combined within one flow of planning, message production,

distribution, feedback, and evaluation, and in which digital communication is placed inside the programme planning of a local government agency. The social ecology perspective is thereby extended into the digital environment, so that the individual, relational, community, and institutional levels are connected through digital media, a condition that has rarely been examined in a public agency. Through this model, insight is expected to be given to policymakers, to activists, and to the wider community on how digital media can be used for building awareness, for improving education, and for encouraging concrete action against sexual violence towards women and children.

Methods

The constructivist paradigm was applied in this study, because the communication model of the DP3AP2KB is treated as a reality that has been constructed by the agency itself, and the strength of that construction for preventing sexual violence in Tangerang City is examined. A qualitative method with a case study approach was used, so that the use of digital media for preventing sexual violence against women and children in Tangerang City, Banten Province, could be described and explained. From the initial observation, it was found that only activity information was contained in the website and in the social media accounts of the agency, while prevention content had not been produced. An action approach was also used, so that practitioners and direct users of digital media were involved in developing, in implementing, and in evaluating digital media solutions for prevention. A case study is defined as an exploration of 'a bounded system' or of 'a case or several cases' through in-depth data collection over time, in which digital media are treated as 'rich' sources of information within a context ([Creswell & Miller, 2019](#)).

The research design was arranged comprehensively and was adjusted to the local context of Tangerang City. Data were collected through interviews and observation. Interviews were held with the officials of the DP3AP2KB who are responsible for preventing sexual violence against women and children, namely Mr. Titto Chairil Setiadi as Head of the Technical Unit for the Protection of Women and Children, Mrs. Yanti as Secretary of the DP3AP2KB, and Mr. Wilopo as Head of Women's Protection and the Fulfilment of Children's Rights. The prevention programmes that had been carried out were observed, and in-depth observation was also made of the website and of the social media accounts that are used by the agency. The interview and observation data were analysed through data reduction, data verification, conclusion drawing, and data presentation. The data were then validated through triangulation of sources and triangulation of methods.

Results

Digital media have been used by the Tangerang City Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning (DP3AP2KB). The website, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube are operated, while Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok are not used. From the observation of the website ([DP3AP2KB](#)), it was found that only the profile, the programmes, and the activities of the agency were presented. Very little prevention information was provided, and activity information was dominant. The use of digital media was therefore assessed as not optimal. The utilisation of digital media in the prevention programme over five years is presented in [Figure 2](#).

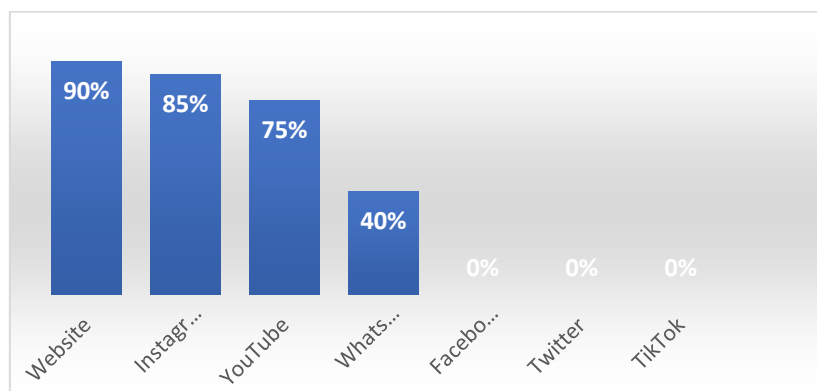


Figure 2. Percentage of digital media utilisation by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB (source: Researchers' observation)

As is shown in [Figure 2](#), digital media have been used mainly for activity information during the past five years. Activity information was contained in 90% of the website content, in 85% of the Instagram content, and in 75% of the YouTube content, while only 40% was reached by WhatsApp. It should be noted that WhatsApp is used only for internal coordination and is not used for preventing sexual violence against women and children in Tangerang City.

The condition above was explained in the interviews. Human resources who are able to manage digital media have not been provided, as was stated by an informant: *“we have not created content on the prevention of sexual violence, because we are constrained by the availability of human resources, that is, people who are skilled in creating media content”* (Interview with Wilopo, DP3AP2KB Tangerang City, 7 February 2025).

A limited budget was mentioned as another obstacle. At present, priority is given by the Tangerang City Government to liveable settlements, to economic empowerment, and to public facilities and infrastructure. This was confirmed in the interview: *“the budget allocation for the prevention of sexual violence against women and children is minimal, and the budget is only directed to outreach activities”* (Interview with Tito, DP3AP2KB Tangerang City, 7 February 2025).

The prevention programmes of the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB are still delivered face to face. One example is the Community-Based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) programme, in which community members are gathered directly. Massive outreach to schools in Tangerang City is also carried out.

A similar condition was found on the Instagram account of the agency ([DP3AP2KB Tangerang City](#)), on which only activity information is presented and the level of informativeness is limited. Very little prevention content is also found on YouTube ([DP3AP2KB](#)). Within five years, only a kaleidoscope video of agency activities has been uploaded, while Twitter has not been used at all for prevention messages. The management of prevention content on the website and on the social media of the agency is presented in [Figure 3](#).

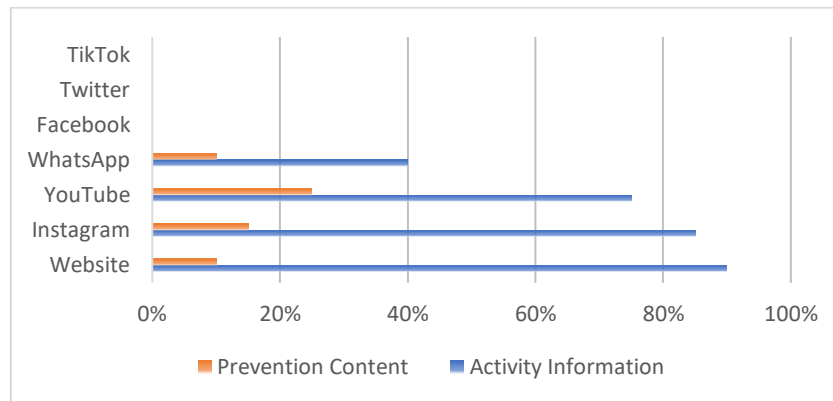


Figure 3. Comparison of activity information and prevention content on the digital media of the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB (source: Researchers' observation)

As is shown in Figure 3, prevention content is still produced at a low level. Prevention content covers only 10% of the website, 15% of Instagram, and 25% of YouTube, while WhatsApp is used mainly for coordination and only 10% of its use is related to prevention. Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok are not used at all by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB. The use of digital media platforms for preventing sexual violence against children and women in Tangerang City is therefore still very limited.

The digital communication model that is applied by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB for preventing sexual violence against children and women can be classified as a linear model. In this model, digital media are used only for delivering activity information, and prevention content is not included. The linear model is also applied through outreach programmes and through regular face-to-face meetings (Nair et al., 2020). Communication is therefore still carried out in one direction, and only information is delivered. Based on the findings above, the linear communication model is presented in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Linear communication model of the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB (source: research findings)

As is shown in Figure 4, communication is carried out in one direction from the top to the bottom. In the first stage, the DP3AP2KB is placed as the communicator of prevention messages. In the second stage, prevention messages are prepared, and outreach, education, invitations, and campaigns are included in them. In the third stage, the messages are delivered through the media channels that are owned by the agency, namely the website, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. In the fourth stage, the

messages are received by the community of Tangerang City. At the end of the flow, two obstacles are found, namely the limited number of human resources for managing digital media and the limited budget for prevention programmes.

The findings show that digital media are still used by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB in a traditional and one-way manner. Prevention messages are only delivered to the public, while feedback, participation, and dialogue are not provided. This was confirmed by Wilopo, by whom it was stated that feedback on the prevention programme had not been collected, because the programme had only recently been implemented in all 13 districts and 104 urban villages of Tangerang City and the first priority was placed on the delivery of the programme itself.

Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention are included in the communication strategies that have been implemented by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB. In primary prevention, the culture and the norms of the community are addressed, so that patriarchal values are reduced, a child-friendly environment is created, and gender equality is promoted. In secondary prevention, the PATBM programme is used, and outreach and educational materials on the prevention of violence against children are delivered to the community. Areas in which the number of cases is high are prioritised. In tertiary prevention, individuals or perpetrators of sexual violence are targeted, intensive monitoring is carried out, and regular counselling is provided under the Family Learning Centre (PUSPAGA).

Discussion

Based on the findings, an interactive communication model is recommended, because two-way communication is emphasised in this model. Through two-way communication, a fast response can be given by the government, in this case by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB, and the community can be involved in prevention. Messages that are delivered through digital media can then be answered by community responses and feedback ([Y. Chen et al., 2024](#)).

Great potential is carried by the interactive communication model for preventing sexual violence against children and women. Dialogue between the communicator and the audience is emphasised in this model, and community participation is required as well. The model can be applied to digital media when prevention content is created together with the community of Tangerang City ([Gómez et al., 2025](#)). Digital media can also be used as a means of education, of advocacy, and of community mobilisation, so that awareness is raised and protection is given to victims ([Azizah & Tri Lestari, 2025](#); [Wilk et al., 2025](#)). Information can be spread, public opinion can be built, and concrete action can be encouraged through a suitable communication model. Programme evaluation and feedback are also included in the interactive model, and prevention programmes can be improved through them ([Fernandes et al., 2024](#); [Orchowski et al., 2023](#)).

The computer-mediated communication model is recommended as well. In this model, the communication process is carried out through electronic media such as e-mail, instant messaging, or social media ([Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019](#); [Wells & Dennis, 2016](#)). Communication technology is now treated as the key to message delivery. When media are used regularly in prevention programmes, a shift from traditional information systems to technology-based systems is shown ([Rochim et al., 2020](#)). The success of such programmes is also supported when social media are activated for delivering messages on the prevention of child sexual abuse ([Jones et al., 2020](#)).

Two-way communication is facilitated by social media, and the platforms can be

used easily by many people. Social media are also regarded as an ideal communication channel in emergency situations, because they are cheap, easy to use, and easy to access, so that their position beside traditional mass media is strengthened (Bhuvana & Aram, 2019; Collins et al., 2016). The importance of a digital platform for reporting sexual harassment has been recognised by the government, because technology has entered the daily life of the community through mobile phones. Cases can therefore be reported by victims without a visit to a reporting office (Corcoran et al., 2020; Loney-Howes et al., 2022). Where human resources are not yet able to use social media for prevention, training on content creation and on media management can be held by the DP3AP2KB, so that the skills and the knowledge of its staff are improved (Richardson & Wilson, 2024; Setyaningsih & Al Ramadhan, 2022). Communities that are vulnerable to sexual violence must also be reached directly, and not only through social media. Door-to-door programmes can be conducted by facilitators, and prevention on social media can be taught to families through them (Ghidei et al., 2022; Hjelm, 2024).

Great potential is also carried by digital media when they are used systematically and strategically for preventing sexual violence against children and women (Patterson et al., 2022; Price et al., 2024). Through a combination of strong messages, of suitable platforms, and of the involvement of many parties, a safer environment for children and women can be created. An understanding of early sexual education can also be given to parents through social media, so that children are protected from sexual violence. Children can be taught to protect themselves, to understand which parts of the body may and may not be touched by other people, and to call for help when such an act occurs (Rohmah et al., 2024; Saladino et al., 2023).

Educational content by which awareness is raised, online complaint spaces by which safe access is given to victims, online communities by which social support is provided, and online campaigns by which a wider audience is reached are also produced through digital media (Erčulj & Pavšič Mrevlje, 2023; Heard et al., 2024). However, social media must be used wisely and responsibly, so that they can be relied upon as an effective instrument against sexual harassment (Idris et al., 2023). A crucial role is played by social media in preventing sexual violence against women and children. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have become effective tools for spreading information, for education, and for building communities by which prevention efforts are supported (Ma et al., 2025).

Through digital media, education and skills are provided for parents, for adolescents, for teachers, and for the community, so that their knowledge of the prevention of sexual violence against women and children is increased and skills for avoiding such violence are obtained (Price et al., 2024). Based on the models that have been discussed above, a circular communication model is recommended for preventing sexual violence against women and children in Tangerang City, as is presented in Figure 5.

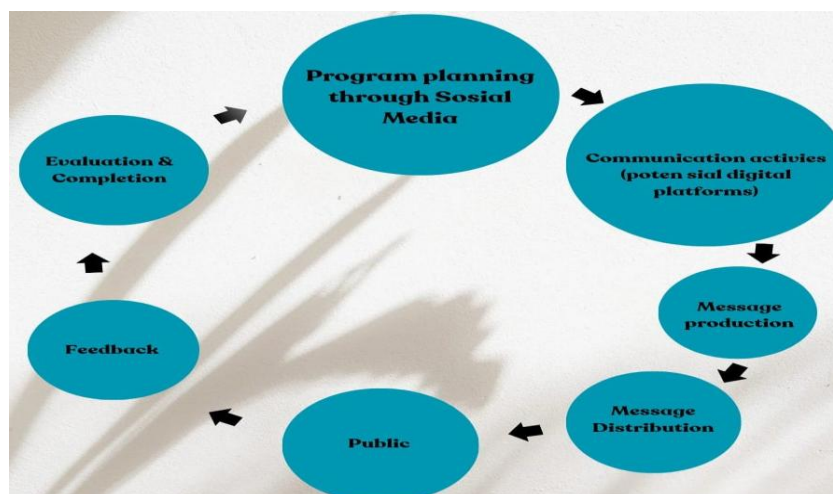


Figure 5. Recommended circular communication model for preventing sexual violence against women and children (source: researchers' analysis)

As is shown in Figure 5, the prevention programme is arranged in a circular flow. Programme planning through social media is placed first, and it is followed by communication activities on the potential digital platforms, by message production, by message distribution, by reception by the public, by feedback, and by evaluation, before the cycle is returned to planning. Media are therefore treated as an integral part of institutional programme planning, and media planning is arranged in blocks within the larger planning of programme development (Camoiras-rodr, 2024). Institutional planning is formulated first, and the communication messages are then formulated, so that communication planning and target audiences are required. When communication planning is clear, media targets and objectives can be identified and media planning can be arranged in a more focused way (Bajari, 2021; Seco et al., 2025). Digital-based prevention has been shown to reduce sexual violence, because a wide reach is provided by digital media for accessing prevention messages (Philbrick et al., 2021). Face-to-face prevention programmes are usually dominated by women and male participants are rare, so that messages for men can be delivered through digital media (Minckas et al., 2020). Prevention of sexual violence against women and children must involve all genders.

The selection of digital platforms must be carried out carefully, because the success of prevention is determined by the accuracy of the platform that is chosen. Every audience can be reached by digital media with their different characteristics, and the potential for prevention is increased when the platforms are used on a large scale. Content management is included in the communication activities. Messages by which the patriarchal culture is addressed, which is identified as the main cause of sexual violence against women and children, are contained in the content, and the content must be easy to create, interesting, and adjusted to the audience of each platform (Pant et al., 2023).

Feedback must be provided in the implementation of prevention programmes, because input on the content that has been created is obtained through it, and the extent to which public behaviour is changed by the content can be measured. Feedback can be collected from the direct responses of the public or of the audience to the content (Orchowski et al., 2023). After the feedback stage, the prevention programme is evaluated. Through the evaluation, the effectiveness of the programme in reducing the number of cases of sexual violence against women and children is determined. The success and the sustainability of the programme can be measured with the evaluation instruments that are available (Kelly et al., 2021).

Several limitations are found in this study. The communication model that is proposed has not been tested, and a statistical representation of the effectiveness of the prevention programme in Tangerang City is still required. The findings strengthen the communication model contextually, especially from the experiences, the perceptions, and the social contexts of the participants. However, because the study is exploratory and the depth of the data is emphasised, the results cannot be generalised widely to the whole population. Contextual meaning and interpretation are emphasised rather than statistical representation, so that the application of the model must be adjusted to the social, cultural, and digital conditions of other regions. Further studies are therefore suggested in other regions of Indonesia, so that communication patterns, policies, and cultures can be compared, and so that the prospect of artificial intelligence (AI) models based on big data for preventing violence against women and children can be examined.

Conclusion

Digital media have not been used optimally by the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB for preventing violence against women and children. Only the website and several social media accounts are operated, activity information is dominant, and prevention content is very limited. This condition is caused by the limited number of staff, by the limited skills in digital media management, and by the limited budget. A linear communication model with a top-down flow is applied, and neither evaluation nor feedback has been carried out. An interactive communication model is therefore recommended, in which feedback and responses are exchanged between the Tangerang City DP3AP2KB and the community, together with a computer-mediated communication model in which digital platforms are used for prevention. Both models are relevant to the local context of Tangerang City, where digital media are used intensively by the population. The model may also be developed for other regions of Indonesia, and further research on artificial intelligence (AI) models based on big data for preventing violence against women and children is recommended.

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. Lina Wati was responsible for the conceptualisation, the methodology, the data collection, and the preparation of the manuscript. Rialdo Rezeky Manogari Lumban Toruan was responsible for the interpretation of the data, for the discussion of the results, and for the critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organisations related to the material discussed in this manuscript.

Generative AI Statement

The authors used QuillBot to improve language and readability during manuscript preparation. All outputs were reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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